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EASTERN AND WESTERN VERSIONS OF FOLKTALES ABOUT *THE GIRL SEEKING HER BROTHERS*: THEMES OF EMOTION, SONG, AND JOURNEY

ELENE GOGIASHVILI

ABSTRACT

The international oral narrative about a girl who seeks her brothers belongs to one of the most widespread tales in European and Middle Eastern folklore, indexed as ATU451 in *The Types of International Folktales*. These tales are well-known in European folklore and literature through the literary treatments by the Grimm Brothers and Hans Christian Andersen. In the worldwide folkloric versions, the motif of a sister who seeks her brothers coexists with the transformation of the main characters into animals. The paper concentrates on topics as follows: the relationship between siblings, animals, and music, and the search journey. The paper focuses on Georgian, Middle Eastern, North African and European folktales. Different ways of narration show how these folktales have formed their specific variety, which arose in adaptation to local circumstances.

Keywords: Fairy Tale, Folklore, Singing Animals, Journey.

INTRODUCTION

Oral narrative traditions encompass tales of journeys, experiences, ideas, and discoveries. Within the broader context of folklore, it is precisely in the domain of magic tales that the entire world comes into being. Folktales have the capacity to encourage individuals to reflect on human responsibility for the world from a vantage point that differs from the conventional scholarly perspective.

Adventures narrated in fairy tales can be read as traces of ancient customs and activities that refer to ritual rehearsals. Fairy tales reflect social relationships, human feelings and desires. Fairy tales build a bridge between ancient times and the present. They link people and countries. We do not read them as imaginative stories, but rather as having preserved some of the ancient knowledge in their motifs and images. They tell them in a way that can touch everyone's heart, even today.

The paper focuses on Georgian, Middle Eastern, North African and European folktales about the girl who seeks her enchanted brothers. Different ways of narration show how these folktales have formed their specific variety, which arose in adaptation to local circumstances.¹

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The international oral narrative about a girl who seeks her brothers belongs to one of the most widespread tales in European and Middle Eastern folklore, indexed as ATU451 in *The Types of International Folktales* (Uther 2004). These tales are well-known in European folklore and literature through the literary treatments by the Grimm Brothers *The Seven Ravens* (KHM 25), *The Twelve Brothers* (KHM 9), *The Six Swans* (KHM 49), and *The Wild Swans* by Hans Christian Andersen. In the worldwide folkloric versions, the motif of a sister who seeks her brothers coexists with the transformation of the main characters into animals. The paper concentrates on topics as follows: the relationship between siblings, animals, and music, and the search journey.

The methodological approach of the paper relies on a combination of certain folkloric and cultural premises for the following reasons: “Folktale symbolism is usually related to a multiplicity of factors; anthropological perspectives stress the relation of folktales to culture; and folktales can shed light on the internal processes of the human mind when studied in conjunction with social acts, beliefs, and rituals. Thus, the meaning of a folktale depends on its references to a common cultural background and on the diachronic underlying ideas and values of a given folk group” (Kaplanoglou 2016: 1).

It is worth accentuating that despite the increasing popularity since the late 19th century of the famous printed fairy tales from Western Europe, many countries have kept their authentic styles of narrative tradition. From the perspective of comparative research, the type ATU 451 with its motif-complex and creative composition presents an interesting cause for study. In the context of the European and Eastern narrative traditions, the study of the national repertoire with its local specifics opens up possibilities for the comparative study of folktales in the transnational context.

STRUCTURE OF THE FOLKTALE TYPE ATU451

The Georgian folktale “The Nine Brothers” and its variants have the following content:

After knowing that she has brothers, the girl seeks and finds her brothers in a remote place and keeps a house for them. They live happily. The brothers tell her to take care of the fire and be careful of the demonic neighbour giant. Once she forgets to watch the fire. After the girl asks the neighbour for help, the giant comes regularly to suck her blood. When the brothers discover this, they kill him. The girl takes herbs from the grave of the giant. Her brothers eat them and they are changed into deer. The animal brothers leave home and their sister follows them. They live in a forest. A king finds the young woman in the forest and marries her. All the brothers are with her.

One day, a servant woman throws her into the water and substitutes herself for the Prince’s wife. She commands the servants to kill the deer. The deer go to the river and cry. Meanwhile, their sister has been turned into a fish-woman. One of the deer sings a song: *Sister, sister like an apple,/ we will be killed,/ the water in the bowl is boiled,/ and the knife is sharp.*

The sister answers with a song: *Please go and tell the king,/ why he forgot his word given to me.*

The king let the fish be captured and brought to the palace. The false bride orders the fish to be cooked and that no fishbone is to fall on the ground. The cook follows the orders, but one of the fishbones is thrown on the ground and a Populus tree sprouts. The tree uses its leaves to caress the prince when he passes by, and the false bride also wants it chopped down. A splinter of the plane tree survives and is taken by an old woman to her house. The girl comes out of the splinter to do chores at the old woman's house but is discovered and adopted by the old woman. The husband discovers his true wife. After the couple's reunion, the animal brothers are transformed into men (Ketelauri 1977, 538-548; my summary and translation).

All the Georgian variants of this plot are recorded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and published by several editors: *The Nine Brothers and a Frog* (Umikashvili 1964: 67-69), *The Nine Brothers* (Chikovani 1969, 119-124), *The nine brothers and a sister* (Ketelauri 1977, 538-548) etc.

The starting episode of the folktale "The Nine Brothers" is well-known in South Caucasian and North African folktales, which follow the pattern of the tale type ATU451: The brothers ask their mother to give a sign when their new sibling is born. The symbol for a girl is a spindle and a plugh or stick for a boy. The brothers like to have a sister, not a brother again. They receive the wrong information. An evil woman hoisted a sign which meant that a boy was born. The brothers leave home. The little sister grows up and knows she has brothers. She goes to find them.

Georgian folktale is very close to an Armenian folktale *Seven Brothers and One Sister* (Aleksidze 1976, 150-152). Here must be mentioned the Arabic versions of the tale type ATU451: Moroccan folktale *The Little Sister with Seven Brothers*, Western Saharan *Shreser Dahbú*, Egyptian *The Sister of the Seven* and North African *The Daughter and the Black Woman* (Aris 1991, 39-46; Frobenius 1921, 133-137; Stumme 1898).

The Moroccan folktale *The Little Sister with Seven Brothers*, edited by Jilali El Koudia and Roger Allen, tells about a girl who finds out that she has brothers and asks her parents to let her go to seek them. She is accompanied by a she-camel, a pair of black slaves. They reach a stop with two fountains, a white one that makes people white, and a black one that makes people black. The pair washes themselves in the white fountain and forces the princess to bathe in the black one.² Then they reach a kingdom, where the elder brother became a sultan the other brothers are governors in different provinces.

The woman on the camel introduced herself as his sister and the man with her as her husband. The slave simply watched from the side. The sultan embraced his sister and her husband and took them into his palace. He gave them a nice place to

² It must be noted that physical ugliness and deformity (although a politically incorrect term by today's standards) have long been considered a sign of internal ugliness in folktales. Just as beauty represents inner goodness, physical ugliness is used to stereotype inner ugliness, especially in the literature of previous centuries.

live, and their slave was given a small room set apart. Then the sultan sent messages to his brothers, and they all arrived to welcome the sister. Thus, the couple stayed in the palace, enjoying a luxurious life.

Sometime later, the camel herd flees and the slave (the true sister) is made to herd them. She laments her fate and the camels, out of pity, join in her sorrow and become thin and emaciated.

O camels of my brother! / How can you eat and drink / When the free has become slave / And the slave free?

The camels listened to her intently and started to cry.

One of the brothers, the sultan, discovers the strange incident and questions the slave herd. She confesses the whole story and the camels begin to eat healthier again. The sultan orders some guards to take the false sister and her companion to the black fountain to restore their true form and to punish them.

The sisters-in-law are jealous of the girl. They let her eat a snake egg. Finally, the truth is discovered, the seven wives were punished. The sister and her brothers lived happily ever after (Koudia 2003, 33-38).

The tale type ATU451 is widely recorded in Europe and in the Middle East, as well as in India and the Americas. In Europe only, there exist over two hundred versions collected and published. Ulrich Marzolph, in his catalogue of Persian folktales, listed four Iranian tales he grouped under type ATU451 *The Girl Seeks her Brothers*. These tales closely follow the second part of the Georgian folktale *Nine Brothers*: the brothers depart from home, and the girl looks for them and is welcomed by them as their sister. One day, when the brothers are out on a hunt and the heroine is cleaning up the place, a cat comes and puts out the fire. Thus, the heroine has to look for fire with a cannibalistic creature (Marzolph 1884, 93). Scholars and folktale catalogues report variants of the tale type across Europe, and the Middle East, although the number of brothers and their animal form may vary between tales. French scholar Nicole Belmont identified two forms of the tale type in Europe: one essentially present in the Germanic area and Scandinavia, and another she dubbed the Western version. She noted that in this Western version, the youngest sister after she settles with the brothers, asks for fire from a neighbouring ogre, and a tree sprouts in their yard and bears fruit that causes the transformation. In the tale of the Brothers Grimm, there are six brothers and they are transformed into swans. In other European variants, the number of brothers alternates between three, seven, or twelve. The other variation is in the result of the brothers' transformation: in some versions, they are ducks, in others ravens, and even eagles, geese, peacocks, blackbirds, storks, cranes, jackdaws or rooks (Belmont 2006, 185-194).

WEST-EUROPEAN VERSIONS OF THE ATU451

One of the well-known versions of the ATU451 is *The Twelve Brothers* by Grimm Brothers (KHM 9):

A king wants to kill his twelve sons, but only if his thirteenth child is a girl. This way, she alone can inherit his kingdom. The Queen tells this to their youngest son Benjamin, and that she will give them a warning with a flag. A white flag

indicates that a baby boy was born, and a blood-red flag indicates a girl was born and that the boys should run far away. After twelve days of waiting in the forest, the sons see a red flag, indicating that they shall be sentenced to death. The brothers get so angry at their father's cruel betrayal that they swear bloody revenge on every girl and move to an enchanted cottage deep in the forest, where they must feed on animals. In the meantime, the Queen gives birth to a beautiful girl with a star on her forehead.

Ten years later, after hearing of their existence from her mother, the sister leaves to find them where the queen hid them for precaution. She first finds a now older Benjamin, who happily greets her and then introduces them to their other brothers, convincing them to stop their revenge on girls. Together, the siblings live in harmony. Some time later as the sister rips out twelve white lilies out of ignorance, her brothers turn to ravens and fly away. An old woman said there could be one way to rescue her brothers, she decided not to speak and not to laugh for seven years, to save her brothers.

A hunting king finds her and marries her. His mother, however, slanders the girl's silence and tries to get the king to burn her as a witch. The young king is torn as he does love his wife but ultimately gives in with tears in his eyes. As the pyre is lit, the seven years pass and the twelve ravens arrive: they recover their human forms as soon as they touch the ground, then they put out the flames and free their sister. The girl is now free to talk and she explains to her husband what's going on. With the cruel mother-in-law executed, they with the brothers all live happily together (Grimm 2023).

A close version of the Grimm's *The Twelve Brothers* is *The Wild Swans* by Hans Christian Andersen:

In a faraway kingdom, there lives a widowed king with his twelve children: eleven princes and one princess. One day, he decides to remarry. An evil queen turns the princes into swans with a magic spell. Princess Elisa flees from her evil stepmother and her brothers take her to a distant land where she is safe from the queen. She learns from a good fairy how she can transform the swans back: she should collect nettles from cemeteries and weave them into shirts for her brothers. However, she has to promise not to say a word until the task is completed; otherwise, her brothers will die. One day she is surprised at work by a hunting party. This is led by the king of the country, who falls in love with the supposedly mute Elisa and wants to make her his wife despite the archbishop's objections. He takes her to his castle, where she secretly continues her work. When Elisa's supply of nettles runs out one day, she goes to the cemetery of a nearby church at night to pick up new ones. There she comes across a group of witches, whom she fearlessly approaches. However, she is observed by the king's archbishop, who also thinks she is a witch and reports this to the king. The king believes the archbishop and with a heavy heart orders a witch trial. Since Elisa cannot speak or defend herself because of her promise, she is found guilty and sentenced to death at the stake.

On the way to her execution, she continues to weave the shirts for her brothers, which angers the onlookers so much that they try to take the shirts away

from her and tear them up. Then Elisa's brothers appear and save the princess. People take this as a sign of innocence, but the executioner wants to continue with the execution. Elisa manages to throw the shirts over her brothers and the princes assume their human form again, only the youngest brother keeps one wing because his shirt is not completely finished. After the people hear the story of Elisa and her brothers, the king asks for her hand in marriage again. Elisa agrees and becomes the new queen (Andersen 1872).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SIBLINGS

Friendship among siblings and rivalry between siblings exist everywhere in the world. The differences in social contexts, beliefs, and opinions within each family probably influence sibling relationships. Patronage is a common social value in traditional societies. The sibling relationships both in Near Eastern and European fairy tales are divided into three types: positive, negative, and neutral. Each type of sibling relationship is in turn classified as sister-sister, brother-brother, and brother-sister. A positive relationship between siblings exists when they sympathize with each other in the face of danger or an unpleasant situation. According to the research of Hasan El-Shamy, (1) The brother-brother relationship is predominantly negative and fraught with conflict. Negative sentiments cohere around feelings of jealousy over parental favors, financial advantages, or the beauty of a brother's wife or female companion. (2) The sister-sister relationship is exclusively negative and fraught with conflict. Negative sentiments cohere around feelings mirroring those that dominate the brother-brother relationship. Naturally, the attractiveness of a sister's husband or male companion provides a strong cause of jealousy. (3) The brother-sister and brother-sister-like relationships are exclusively positive and may lead to sexual attraction. This dyadic set of sibling relationships and the attitudes it generates govern the "structure of sentiments" of a significant portion of Arab (and non-Arab) kinship systems and consequent forms of expressive cultures (El-Shamy 2004, 186).

ANIMALS AND MUSIC

In the tale type ATU451 animals and humans help each other. The enchanted brothers as birds put out the flames and free their sister from being buried in the fire in fairy tales by Grimm Brothers and Hans Christian Andersen. In Georgian folktales, the animals give a signal by singing to inform the king. In Moroccan folktales, the animals listen and cry when the heroine sings a sad song.

Animals naturally appear as acting subjects in fairy tales. Just as if they were human, they speak language and are capable of suffering. They show gratitude for the help they receive while punishing carelessness or rudeness. Very often the animals that appear in fairy tales are enchanted people who eventually regain their true form. Given that fairy tales are a very old form of storytelling, this self-evident fact deserves attention. In fairy tales, animals and plants are creatures equal to humans, not inferior and degraded to objects – a view that seems absurd to us today. In fairy tales, animals are brothers and sisters. This becomes particularly

clear in those fairy tales in which siblings are transformed into animals and then transformed back into humans.

There are numerous fairy tales in which animals appear as helpers to the fairy tale hero. These animals often have magical powers or special knowledge that they entrust to the hero so that he can solve various tasks that await him. The magical powers usually work because the animal appears at the right time to magically help the hero out of trouble. In these fairy tales, too, the animal embodies an (often hidden) part of the hero's soul. This can be a wish that the hero does not (yet) admit to himself, repressed or buried knowledge of what to do in a certain situation, or a characteristic of the hero that is suppressed due to external circumstances.

In the Moroccan folktale, the crying camels are the sign that reminds the sultan of his sister. The camels are listening to the sister. This is the symbol of something that has died in the soul of the girl but can be brought back to life, which is represented by the song that the girl sings.

Musical components occur in various fairy tales. The most important groups of these are the motifs with musical instruments and the motifs with singing. While musical instruments only serve to support larger motifs, singing is usually associated with entire independent motifs, to such an extent that the episodes with singing can ultimately dominate the episodes and become the focus of the fairy tale (Schmidt 1950, 144). This central role of singing in fairy tales can be briefly described as a "magical function". In fairy tales, singing is not done for artistic reasons or entertainment, but rather to magically achieve an action. This is where the belief in the magic of music seems most pronounced. The music is in a functional place in each fairy tale. In all cases, there must be music sung in some way by the innocent hero. Singing arises from the relevant cultural-historical situation of the narrator and his community. Since the fairy tale is extremely antiquated and is generally seen as a reflection of prehistoric conditions, many versions have of course retained music and the oldest types of instruments.

From these conclusions, it can be deduced that the fairy tale of the singing heroines and crying animals is important not only for the problem of music in fairy tales but also for the cultural-historical understanding of the function of music itself. Finally, one could formulate the following conclusion: The fairy tale motif of truth discovered through magical music is one of the oldest mythological motifs. The cultural-historical determination of the age and origin of the fairy tale about a sister looking for her brothers provides a new approach to understanding this individual story and perhaps the entire type. Very old layers of folk music live on here with a strength that has not yet been realized, and careful observation and strict use of modern research methods will yield important insights for both areas that meet so attractively here, for fairy tales and music.

It is no coincidence that the deer appears as a favourite animal in Georgian fairy tales and the camel in Moroccan fairy tales. The North Arabian societal and spiritual traditions surrounding the camel motif throughout the pre-Islamic era show some aspects of their traditional belief systems, specifically relating to the

camel imagery. Various pre-Islamic verses highlight the cultural and spiritual relationships pre-Islamic Arabs developed with the camel, particularly the she-camel (Kanaan 2022, 4).

Deer figures appear in large numbers in archaeological finds in Georgia. Researchers are particularly interested in the bronze sculptures (from the 12th-11th centuries BC) and the bronze belts (from the 11th-7th centuries BC). The deer figure has certain symbolic meanings in the Christian religion, which can also be found in Georgian folk poetry.

In the Christian context, the deer appears as a symbol of man's spiritual hunger. This symbolism is inspired by the famous quote from Psalm 42: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God" (Ps. 42: 1). The she-camel of God in Islam is a miraculous female camel sent by God to the people of Thamud in Al-Hijr, after they demanded a miracle from the prophet Salih.

Mircea Eliade finds the source of the mythical character traits of the fairy-tale animals in archaic magical-religious worldviews: It is certainly a prehistoric view, which is not surprising when you know that for hundreds of thousands of years, man was not only interested in hunting lived but also had to accept a mystical blood relationship with the animals. This primal past has never been completely erased. The symbols, contents, and images that arose and were articulated in those legendary times when the animal represented both the mystery of the world and the code that made it understandable have long since lost their function in consciousness; because they have become useless at the level of everyday pragmatic experience. But they still live in the imaginary spheres: in dreams, fantasies, artistic and literary creations, etc. (Eliade 1990, 170).

SEARCH JOURNEY

In many fairy tales, as part of the plot, the hero or heroine goes on a long journey through inhospitable, dangerous areas in search of something or someone. During this quest, he has to pass tests, find magical supporters, or acquire items that give him supernatural powers. After a multitude of difficulties have already been mastered and the hero has proven his physical and moral strength, there is often a retarding moment: the hero has found what he was looking for, but it initially remains out of reach for him; Only after passing a final, special test do the seeker and the person being sought finally come together.

In the Grimm's fairy tale *The Seven Ravens*, after finding and climbing the glass mountain, the girl has to chop off a finger to be able to open the door behind which her brothers, who have been transformed into ravens, are. The search journey as a structural element also occurs in heroic epics, chivalric novels, and fantasy stories.

The trigger for a search is always a lack that either the hero himself or a very important person feels. Accordingly, the happy ending has the character of redemption. What is typical is that not only is the person being sought found, but the power of an evil sorcerer is generally broken.

A second common form of search is a girl's search for her brothers who have been lost. She blames herself for this, which means that in this case, the hike is a real act of penance. The girl usually has to make personal sacrifices:

- cutting off a finger *Grimm's Seven Ravens*
- taking a vow of silence *Andersen's The Wild Swans*
- lose her identity and become a slave *Moroccan folktale*
- enchanted as a fish and tree in *Georgian folktale*

The Christian theme of guilt, atonement, and redemption is particularly evident in Grimm's and Andersen's fairy tales, especially since the bird is the symbol of the soul. From the religious point of view, the religious theme can occur in Georgian and Moroccan folktales. Both Deer and Camel are connected with Bible and Quran metaphors of spiritual grade. On the other hand, both Camel and deer are pre-Christian and pre-Islamic symbols too.

The symbols and metaphors in folktales can only be understood "correctly" if their meaning has first been agreed upon. There are many different approaches to interpreting folk tales. The following two are the most well-known:

(1) Interpretation of origin and history: The folktale is interpreted based on its origin, and the social and religious forms of the past. Its supposed original meaning is established.

(2) Psychological interpretation: Interpretations of folktales that concern the human psyche are common. In more recent interpretations a certain ambiguity is admitted, but in the concrete analysis of individual fairy tales, it is withdrawn again. Psychologists, therapists, educators, and other circles interpret individual fairy tales from their perspective such as psychological interpretation stress that they represent the animal and spiritual sides of our personality, which become separated but must be integrated for human happiness. According to Bruno Bettelheim, the sister as a symbol of motherly care once one has become alienated from home, is the rescuer, and the brother represents the endangered aspect of an essentially inseparable unity (Bettelheim 1975, 79). It remains undisputed that fairy tales have an effect on the psyche and that their use, like a medication chosen and dosed depending on experience, can help individual people.

The folktales about the girl who seeks her enchanted brothers are not like fairy tales in which the marriage comes before the end of the story. Marriage is not the ultimate goal of this tale as it is in many romantic fairy tales. The tale is one of family unity. The brother and sister struggle to find happiness together as a family unit as adults. These folktales are important for their messages about family fidelity through adversity and separation.

CONCLUSION

Folklorists can focus on both the cultural specificity of symbols and their alignment to a cultural set of underlying ideas. However, it is not enough to study folktales as tales only. As folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow said, "It is also necessary to make oneself familiar with the use of folk-tales, their life in tradition, their transmission and spread" (Sydow 1999, 140).

Folktales work through images and scenes. Usually, they do not require any explanation or interpretation, but only a receptive attitude of listening: they transform us by touching our unconscious and in this way convey trust, orientation, and motivation for life. The fairy tales are not only rooted in the wisdom of childhood but also nourish themselves from cosmic realms. Viewed in this way, the fairy tale images can become valuable meditation content, especially for adults. They offer release from constraints and strive toward a positive end. As a result, they seem exhilarating and invigorating. Because they mobilize life-affirming feelings, they exude a certain lightness.

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THE HUT ON CHICKEN LEGS: TOWARDS THE IMAGE GENESIS

MAXIM ANATOL'EVICH YUYUKIN

ABSTRACT

The hut on chicken legs belongs to the images of the Russian folktale which are best known and attract greatest attention, both among the scholars and the readers. However, this image still lacks an exhaustive conception that could help us to understand what its original significance was and in what way the latter was reflected in its distinctive qualities. The present study made it possible to deepen and clarify V.Ya. Propp's idea according to which the hut on chicken legs has been interpreted as a house for the initiation ceremony, and to establish the origin and meaning of this mytheme in connection with the mythopoetic ideas about the winter solstice that were common among the Slavs. Accordingly, various types of fairy-tale plots in which the hut on chicken legs is mentioned obtain an interpretation as representations of the myth of the descent of the solar God (hero) into the underworld through the input opening during the days of the winter and/or summer solstice, that is common to many peoples of the world, or of the ideas of the return of the dead from the other world during the holy holidays, that are known among the Slavs. Consequently, the connection of these plots with the initiation rite can only be secondary. The complexity of the image of the hut on chicken legs which contaminates two archetypal features (the ornithomorphic appearance and the ability to turn around) on the basis of the mentioned mythopoetic concept is noteworthy, while each of the mythemes related to it (Kuuiriṅta 'Crane palace' of Aži Dahāka in the *Avesta*; the rotating houses in Dolgan, Vedic, and Irish epics; J. Chaucer's literary interpretation) is based on one of them only.

Keywords: Slavic folklore, Slavic mythology, fairy tale, hut on chicken legs, Baba Iaga, archetype, genesis, comparison.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most striking and famous images of the Russian folk tale is the hut on chicken¹ legs, usually turning around its axis, the habitat of Baba Iaga, which the hero/heroine visits and where the hero spends the night before performing his main feats.

¹ Sometimes with additional characteristics: "on a cock's shank", "on a ram's horns", "on a dog's shank", "on a dog's heels", etc. (see Novikov 1974: 137).

Much has been done for understanding this peculiar image of East Slavic folklore; however, in our opinion, no comprehensive conception that would explain its origin and functions with reference to all its characteristic features has been put forward so far. In this article, we will try to fill this gap by means of a comparative semiotic analysis based on the methods which V.Ya. Propp used in his work *The Historical roots of the fairy tale*.

Often, for the hut, they try to find a specific historical basis in ancient Russian customs. In this regard, they recall the funeral ritual of the East Slavic tribes described in the *Tale of Bygone Years*: “sobravše kosti vložakhu v sudinu malu i postavękhu na stolpě na putekh” ‘[after cremation] having collected the bones, [they] put them in a small vessel and put them on a pillar on the tracks’, the *Laurentian Chronicle* (PSRL 1926: 14). Data are also drawn on a Ruthenian construction method according to which a log house was placed on stumps with chopped roots in order to protect it from decay on marshy soil and which the name of the Moscow Church of St. Nicholas on Chicken Legs (now defunct) is motivated by (Nekrasov [1924]: 40-41). There is probably a rational grain in these comparisons; however, they concern only the external, formal embodiment of this mytheme in the minds of the people and do not explain either the nature of the connection between the hut and the world of death, or why its legs are chicken, nor its turning.

A.N. Afanas’ev (1982: 258f) finds the prototype of this image in a cloud wandering along the sky. But how does it correspond to the rotating character of the hut’s movement?

Propp interprets this image as an outpost on the way to the afterlife, which can only be entered through it, the entrance to the kingdom of death, modeled during the rite of initiation. As comparative data show, such huts often have the shape of an animal or pronounced zoomorphic features since initiation was conceived as the absorption of a boy by a monstrous animal, after which he was resurrected as another person (Propp 1986: 56ff). If one follows this interpretation, the hut on chicken legs is functionally close to the giantess’ stone courtyard through which, in one of the songs of the Elder Edda, the path of the deceased Brunhild to Hel lay and which she was able to overcome only after a skirmish with the hostess, who did not want to let her through (*Beowulf* 1975: 190).

It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to bring a chicken/rooster under the concept of a monstrous man-eating animal. Besides, Propp does not explain the rotation of the hut.

Some scholars look for reflections of burial rites in this image. V.N. Toporov (1963: 35ff) tries to find a counterpart to the hut on chicken legs in the Hittite *hista-*, *hesta-* ‘mortuary shrine, ossuary, charnel, mausoleum’ (Puhvel 1991: 319ff). V.P. Anikin (1984: 112ff) connects the image of the hut with the custom of the so-called “air burial”, respectively interpreting Baba Iaga as a dead woman; for a convincing critique of this point of view, see (Nazirov 1990: 5ff), who, in his turn, emphasizes the bird features in the image of Baba Iaga, also leaving the rotation of the hut aside. On Toporov’s hypothesis, it is necessary to note that

the priestess ^{SALŠU.GI}, whom he presents as a probable parallel to Baba Iaga, is never mentioned in connection with the *hista-*, *hesta-*.

The insufficiency of the interpretations suggested clearly demonstrates that the study of the nature and functions of the hut on chicken legs is still an actual problem. In order to solve it, we consider it necessary to view the image of the hut in its unity, i.e., understanding its characteristic features in their mutual connections, as different sides of one mythological notion, since “if there is a meaning to be found in mythology, this cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined” (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 431). A detailed discussion of each of them will help us to discover these ties.

THE IMAGE OF BABA IAGA

Before proceeding to consider the image of the hut on chicken legs, one should say a few words about the image of its mistress, in isolation from which it is impossible to analyze it. The main features of the image of Baba Iaga have been convincingly established by researchers. It is apparently of Proto-Slavic origin since she is known in Polish tales as well; her residence, however, usually lacks the features that are characteristic for it in East Slavic folklore (see Wróblewska). There is no doubt that Iaga is connected with the realm of the dead (Propp 1986: 53ff); she is often compared with the deities of death and winter in various religions. Her belonging to the underworld is clearly shown in the fairy tale where she rides out from under a stone in her mortar and then, being defeated, hides under it pursued by the hero, who thus penetrates into the dungeon (see Novikov 1974: 159). The image of the good Baba Iaga, the mistress of the forest, the mistress of animals and birds, genetically goes back to the deity – the patron of the female gender; this mytheme is characteristic for the era of matriarchy (*Ibidem*: 180) and is based on an archaic understanding of the idea of fertility: “Iaga represents the stage when fertility was thought through a woman without the participation of men” (Propp 1986: 75). The researchers emphasize the genetic unity of the “good” and “evil” incarnations of Baba Iaga as reflections of her different perceptions that arose in various historical conditions. Speaking about the deeper origins of this image, it should be borne in mind that the fairy-tale witch is a transformation of the Great Mother (Meletinsky 1994: 9), whose closest representation on East Slavic ground is the image of Mother the Moist Earth (*Mat'-syra zemlia*) embodying the positive beginning of the world and ritual purity.²

² “Among the agricultural tribes, the Great Mother was conceived, on the one hand, cosmogonically, as the Ancestor of the World, the mother of the gods and everything that exists, and on the other hand, as Mother Earth, Mother the Moist Earth and, because of this, the patroness of the harvest” (Rybakov 1981: 401). In the Christian era, the cult of the Great Mother strongly influenced the cult of the Virgin Mary among the Slavs (see *Ibidem*: 14; Tolstoi 1995-2012: 2 316, etc.); the mythological identification of these two images in the Russian religious consciousness survived until very late times, cf.: “the mother of God is the great mother – the damp earth”, Dostoevsky, *The Possessed/The Devils*, 1.4 (translation by Constance Garnett).

The seeming inconsistency of the image of Baba Iaga who acts, on the one hand, as a helper and giver, and on the other hand, as a creature from the underworld, an opponent of the hero, a cannibal and kidnapper of children is rooted in the ambivalence of the image of Mother the Moist Earth as the goddess of both the living and the dead, which is explicitly expressed in the ideas of the Belarusians: “she feeds the living, but accepts the dead” (Tolstoi 1995-2012: 2 316).³ This concept is archetypal: similarly, the Roman *Tellus Mater* ‘Mother Earth’ acted as a deity of the afterlife in certain rituals (Fox 1916: 292). All these data will be needed for further consideration.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE HUT IN FAIRY TALES AND ITS CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES. CONJURING THE HUT

Strictly speaking, the role of the hut in the narrative is exhausted by one short episode, in which its characteristic features are manifested, – the meeting of the wandering hero with it, which usually takes place in the forest thicket, occasionally – on the seashore, in a swamp, etc. To enter the hut, the hero must turn it with the entrance to himself saying a spell: “Stand back to the forest, to me in front” (with options: “to the forest with your eyes, to me with a gate”, “here with your face, and there with your crow”). Analogical formulas also occur in the Polish fairy tales (see Wróblewska). A very informative is the case in which the turn of the hut is oriented according to the cardinal points: “in front of me, backwards to the west” (Novikov 1974: 138). Thus, the path of the tale hero coincides with the daytime path of the sun to the west, to the kingdom of the dead, on the border of which he meets the hut. One archaic Belarusian text clearly says that the hero reaches the hut during or after the sunset: “Zakhodzits’ sontsa. Pryiazdžaiuts’ k lesu, ažno stait’s’ khatka na kurnaj nožtsy i krutsitsta” ‘The sun is setting (or: set). [They] come to a forest where a hut on a chicken leg stands and turns around’ (*Kazki pra živěl...* 1971: 346).

However, much more about the nature of the hut on chicken legs is said by another common version of the incantation formula used by the hero – “Stand in the old way, as the mother put it” (*Stan’ po-staromu, kak mat’ postavila*). It is obvious from the context that this “mother” is not Baba Iaga since the latter appears in this episode in person; it is most natural to assume that here one has in mind the positive hypostasis of the image of the Great Mother, mentioned above, – Mother the Moist Earth, fertilized by heavenly moisture, a fruitful universal mother and nurse, and it was to her world, the world of life, and not of death, that the hut was previously turned. The turning of the hut by the hero, therefore, is not a violation of its nature, but only a reproduction of its natural state in the past. Thus,

³ A transitional stage between the two appearances of Baba Iaga is represented by the figure of the evil one who, however, has a friendly and hospitable daughter (daughters) or a niece aiding the hero. This image splitting is also known beyond Slavic folklore, cf. the analogous character in *Les merveilles de Rigomer* by Jean de Cambrai (the 13th c.): “Une pucele est aparue, | Qui est fors de cambres issue, | Jounete de petit eage, | Mais mout estoit cortoise et saige” (verses 3585-3589). Baba Iaga who acts as a helper is always solitary.

the functioning of the hut is based on the principle of cyclicity: it does not belong entirely to the world of death (as follows from the concept of Propp who completely ignores this formula), but at certain periods of time, in turn, due to some laws, it opens up to one or another world. The positive meaning of the turning of the hut is also indicated by the fact that “in the texts where Iaga plays a negative role in relation to the hero, such formulas [of addressing the hut] are not recorded” (Nikitina & Reili 2008: 57). However, it is impossible to fully understand the nature and function of this mytheme without clarifying the origin of its two most striking features – the presence of chicken⁴ legs and the ability to turn around.

CHICKEN LEGS

There is a reason to believe that initially chicken legs were a feature of the appearance of Baba Iaga herself: the Baltic goddess of vegetation and earth *Lauma, whose image is correlated with that of Baba Iaga in many respects, was sometimes depicted with chicken legs (Běťáková & Blažek 2012: 105-106). Cf. the following statement: “the hut... is, in fact, Baba Iaga herself” (Gimbutas 2004 (1987): 727). The German character Berchta/Perchta, who is close to Baba Iaga as well, appears in some folklore texts as “the big-footed Bertha” – an old woman with a goose’s or swan’s paw instead of a leg (Grimm 1882: 280-281); in the French tradition, it corresponds to La reine Pédauque (< Occitan *pè d’auca* or late Latin *pes aucae* ‘goose foot’) (q.v. the article *Reine Pédauque* in the *Encyclopedia* of Diderot and D’Alembert).⁵ The idea of the non-anthropomorphic nature of this part of the body of Baba Iaga is consistently preserved in the fairy tales in the designation of her leg as of bone (less often, of gold, iron, or clay) (see Nazirov 1990: 7ff where Baba Iaga is elevated to the image of the Tsar-Bird (preserved in the fairy tales), that marries the hero and helps him, and, further, to the image of the Goddess-Bird of the Indo-European agricultural tribes, reconstructed by M. Gimbutas). The same idea is postulated by M. Shapiro (1983: 121ff) as well, although his arguments are often unconvincing: the secondary, taboo Slavic *baba* ‘pelican (and some other animals and plants)’ says nothing about the origin of the ancient mytheme of Baba Iaga; Proto-Slavic **jega* cannot be phonetically and historically deduced from Proto-Samoyed **ɲga* ‘god’, especially since the latter is absent among the Proto-Samoyed lexemes reconstructed by J. Janhunen (1977). We also do not accept the author’s attempt

⁴ Strictly speaking, the definition *kurū* does not indicate the bird’s sex since this adjective meant both ‘chicken’ and ‘rooster’ in Old Russian (ÉSSIA 1974-: 12 133-134), so gender interpretations of this image have no linguistic basis.

⁵ The question arises: how significant is the difference in bird breeds in the Balto-Slavic and Western European traditions for understanding the specifics of these images the mythological symbolism of which is also different? It seems that the image of the geese-swans carrying kidnapped children to Baba Iaga, to the hut on chicken legs (in some fairy tales, Baba Iaga does this herself), clearly illustrates their mythopoetic equivalence. The magical power of Baba Iaga integrates the nature of all these breeds, which is expressed in the fact that she turns her stepdaughter into a goose and the king’s bride into a swan (see Nikitina & Reili 2008: 39).

to attach kammenye baby, i.e., ‘stone women’, rough full-face female figures which have been found in southern Russia and the Eurasian steppe past the Caucasus to Mongolia, to the image of Baba Iaga: the characteristic feature of the kammenye baby is that they hold horns in their hands (Pettazzoni 1954: 162), which is completely alien to Baba Iaga. The fact that an ornithomorphic image⁶ was the prototype of Baba Iaga known from the fairy tales is also confirmed by comparison with the image of the sorceress Circe whose myth presented in the *Odyssey* (canto 10) reveals a striking (still, as far as we know, not noted) coincidence with the considered episode of the Russian fairy tale in almost all its main plot elements. Circe lives in a forest (as Odysseus and his companions see the smoke rising from her dwelling above the forest) and at the same time in an open place; in other words, her house stands in a forest clearing where the fairy tales usually place Baba Iaga’s hut as well. Circe is surrounded by wild beasts tamed by her charms; this clearly shows her function as a mistress of wild animals.⁷ Like Baba Iaga, Circe, after the conflict from which her acquaintance with Odysseus begins, renders him hospitality, feeds him, arranges for the night, enters into sexual intercourse with him⁸ (as Nazirov convincingly supposes about Iaga), and then shows him the way to the afterlife, providing him with necessary instructions. Circe’s characteristic motif of turning people into animals is connected with Baba Iaga in many other fairy tales. The etymology of Circe’s name shows that originally she had the appearance of a bird: *κίρκος, κίρκη*, the name of a (predatory) bird (Chantraine 1970: 534).

On the other hand, this attribute is inseparable from the cult of the dead: in some East Slavic rites, traces that were similar to those of chicken legs, found on the ashes, were considered to be traces of the ancestors (*nav’ia*) (see Gaľkovskii 1916: 202).

By the presence of the ornithological features in its appearance, the hut of Baba Iaga can be compared with the Avestan *Kuuirinta*: according to *Yasht* 5.29-31, 15.19-21, *Aži Dahāka* referred to *Arədvī Sūra Anāhitā* in the land of *Baβri* and to the god of winds *Vayu* in the “cursed” (*dužita*) palace of *Kuuirinta* with a vain plea to exterminate mankind: as established by J. Darmsteter, *kuuirinta* is the Avestan predecessor of the later word *kulenk* ‘crane’, which is confirmed by the legend cited by Hamza al-Isfahani that *Zohhak* built a crane-shaped palace in Babylon and

⁶ The rare mention of Baba Iaga’s wings (see *Ibidem*: 69) as well as the Serbian image of the winged woman (*krilata baba*) (Karadić 2017: 356-363) are also revealing in this regard.

⁷ In the fairy tales, this ancient function of Baba Iaga is largely leveled, but cf. a characteristic remark of the storyteller: “Baba Iaga has children: wolves, bears, foxes, gray foxes, arctic foxes, what kind of animal is in the world – all are her children” (Khudiakov 1964: 270). Thus, a more complete consideration of the available material (both directly related to the subject of our discussion and comparative) makes it possible to refute the superficial skepticism of K.V. Chistov who tries to deny that Baba Iaga has the functions of the owner of the forest and the mediator between the worlds (see Chistov 1997: 56).

⁸ This gives a certain basis for judgments about the gender contrast between the hero and Baba Iaga as one of the binary oppositions in the spirit of structuralism; however, it is still not worth giving it a fundamental importance for this plot because, as will be shown below, a female character can also act in it, instead of the hero-boy.

called it *kulenk dīs* ‘crane palace’ (Darmesteter 1883: 210-212).⁹ According to the *Yajur Veda* (24.22), the crane is a bird sacred to Vayu. Characteristically, Vayu is united with Iaga both by his intermediate position between the two worlds and by his connection with the world of death (in the *Avesta*, he is also characterized as the god of death) (see Duchesne-Guillemin 1962: 179; Malandra). For her part, Iaga sometimes appears as the mistress of winds: “The old woman came out onto the porch, shouted in a loud voice, whistled with a valiant whistle; suddenly rose from all sides, violent winds blew, only the hut is shaking”. In another text, she is called the mother of the winds (Propp 1986: 76).¹⁰ Given the ubiquitous mythological role of the image of a bird, on the one hand, as the embodiment of death carrying the souls of the dead to the afterworld, as well as an intermediary between the two worlds, the messenger of the gods, and on the other hand, as a metaphor for the wind (“a bird is a mythical image of wind” (Afanas’ev 1995: 168), the connection of structures in the form of birds with the cult of deities related to death and wind looks quite natural.¹¹

The fully or partially zoomorphic appearance of the dwelling of a fully or partially anthropomorphic mythological character is the result of the metonymic transfer of the traits of the latter lost by him in the process of anthropomorphization (in accordance with the well-known pattern according to which the properties that made up the essence of the deity himself become his attributes during this process, similarly like the ivy (Evius) and the bunch of grapes, which represented the archaic Dionysus, in the mythology of the classical era only wrap around his thyrsus). A historically earlier development stage of the image of such a house is represented by the natural habitat of the corresponding animal or bird, cf. a hut hidden in the hollow of an old tree, in which Muma Pădurii ‘Mother of the Forest’, an Eastern Romance character close to Baba Iaga, lives (Vulcănescu 1987: 490-491). On the other hand, the chicken legs are in the same row with the parts of human bodies that make up the fence enclosing the home of Baba Iaga in the fairy tale

⁹ We find a real reflection of this tradition in Hindu temple architecture: as is clear from a document dated by the 6th century, the shape of a bird (eagle, Garuda, goose) was one of the three main forms of small one-story temples (Gerasimov 1975: 311). This tradition is rooted in the distant past: M. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba (2015: 36) compares Baba-Iaga’s hut to the Neolithic house-model with a bird’s head and incised plumage, found in Transylvania and described by Gimbutas (1996: 67).

¹⁰ The combination of the functions of the mistress of forests and of that of winds is archetypal, cf. Artemis who deprived the Greeks of the fair wind in Aulis. In Slovene folklore, Rarašek (‘falcon’), the servant of Pehtra Baba, keeps the winds imprisoned in a barrel (Kropej 2012: 247). That this Rarašek can be identified with our chicken is evident from the image of a fiery chicken (*ohnivě kuře*) the name of which is, however, Raráš in a Czech fairy tale (Erben 1905: 23ff).

¹¹ Another archetypal form of Baba Iaga is that of a snake (q.v. Gimbutas 2004 (1987), which allows to establish her identity with the warrior maiden Nastasya Mikulichna in the bylina *Dobrynya and Nastasya* (and, consequently, to consider the verbal duel between the fairy tale character and Baba Iaga as a softened variant of the personages’ combat and further marriage in the bylina (a detailed analysis of the latter is presented in Yuyukin 2020), as well as with Nightingale the Robber (the bylina *Ilya Muromets and Nightingale the Robber*) who is treated as a monstrous guard on the border between the two worlds (just like Baba Iaga) and appears now as a snake and now as a bird (q.v. Yuyukin 2024). Exceptionally, Baba Iaga still preserves her snake image in the folktales (q.v. Novikov 1974: 163).

Vasilisa the Beautiful and with the description of Baba Iaga herself, whose body parts are dispersed throughout the room and give the impression of existing separately each from other (on the latter, see Nikitina & Reili 2008: 58). Behind all these details, one can guess a more general mytheme of some kind of physical decomposition, bodily dismemberment associated with the image of Baba Iaga. But can such an interpretation be considered exhaustive for Baba Iaga's hut? An analysis of its another characteristic feature, the ability to rotate around its axis, will help us to answer this question.

THE ROTATION

In world mythology, the image of the turning house is rare but not unique. It is attested in the epic of peoples quite different both in origin and in the level of their socio-economic development, which makes it possible to attribute it to mythological archetypes. In a Dolgan epic poem, the Son of the Horse Atalamia the Bogatyr features a house revolving on loops, located "at the top of the three heavens, at the tip of a finger"; an old woman simeksin and a girl to whom "people of the whole world yield in magic" live there; the desire to compete with her draws the hero, who consistently follows the path of the sunny side, to this house, and there he defeats the evil shaman abaasy who is wooing the girl (*Folklor Dolgan* 2000: 57ff). In other olongkhos and fairy tales, the image of the revolving house acquires new features: it can be silver, and then it is located both in the upper and in the middle world (*Ibidem*: 155, 161), or iron, located on an iron stump on the top of a boulder that has grown from a pit, in a country where "a man of human blood... cannot reach" (*Ibidem*: 293ff). This house is on the side of the country of death, the hero reaches him, following a rolling ball, which stops at the house, and when he puts the ball in his pocket, doors that were not visible before are opened (*Ibidem*: 219). The latter version is almost identical (with the exception of the absence of the chicken legs) to the Russian hut, to which in those tales where the hero successively visits the three Iaga sisters he is also led by the rolling ball received from the previous Iaga.

In the Ṛgveda, one meets the figure of R̥jṛāśva, who was blinded by his cruel father and cured by the Aśvins, whose name means 'the upright horse', or the turning pole of the heavenly house – the metaphor of the revolving weeks and days (Hewitt 1896: 123; Hewitt 1972: 214, 590).

In the Irish mythological text *Fled Bricrend* (*Fled Bricrenn*) 'The Feast of Bricrenn', we meet the revolving castle of the hero Curoi (Cú Roí) endowed with magical powers (*Fled Bricrend* 1899: 102-103); its doors are only opened to the chosen ones and only at certain moments of the calendar cycle (probably on the days of the solstice, as evidenced by the folklore continuation of this motif in the form of a stone spinning at the solstice at the location of the treasure). After sunset, Curoi casts a spell, as a result of which the castle begins to spin at the speed of a millstone and the entrance to it becomes invisible. This mythological image (later passed into the legends of the Arthurian cycle) approaches the solar circle and is considered a metaphorical embodiment of the notion of the rhythm of the cosmos (Walter 2015: 88).

Extremely interesting is J. Chaucer's image of Domus Dedaly rotating around its axis (verse 1920ff), which is interpreted as an image of the earth, mundus, and which is described by the author as the focus of various kinds of opposites, including life and death ("of deeth, of lyf", verse 1963) (see Gabrovsky 2015: 51). This version of the revolving house is the most abstract, rational, which, of course, is a consequence of its literary processing, but its mythological basis and typological connection with those considered above are beyond doubt.

The mutual comparison of these parallels makes it possible to single out a number of common features that, with a high degree of probability, are inherent in the image of the revolving house.

1. First of all, the matriarchal origins of this mytheme are undoubted. The mistress of the revolving dwelling is always a woman; the echo of this idea is also clear in the Irish text: in the absence of Curoi, the three characters who arrived at his castle are met by his wife, who gives them a warm welcome and makes them take turns guarding the castle at night, as a result of which each of them has to engage in battles with monsters (*Fled Bricrend* 1899: 100ff).

2. The revolving house is a cosmic image that symbolizes the cyclicity and unity of the universe and, in this regard, can be associated with various parts of the cosmos, various levels of the world – the sky, the sun, the earth / the upper and middle worlds, as well as with the lower, afterlife kingdom (in addition to being located on the side of the land of death in the Dolgan text, cf. Curoi's epithet *rí in domain* 'king of the (Lower) world' (Kalygin 2006: 65).

It should be noted that the mythological meaning of the revolving hut precisely corresponds to the original semantics of PIE **uer-* (Sl. *vra-/vre-/vřr-*) 'to turn, rotate', which, on the one hand, is inseparable from the concept of time, cf. Sl. **vert-men* 'time', Lat. *annus vertens, mensis vertens, anniversarius* (Vasmer 1996: 1 361), and on the other hand, from the concept of the feminine on the border between the being and the non-being, cf. *Vrotah*, the name of the Venetic goddess of childbirth (Pokorny 1959: 1157). Thus, the rotation of the hut (duplicated by the spinning, which is characteristic for Baba Iaga in some tales), suggests time as well as a locus of death or a portal between death and life. The episode from *Vasilisa the Beautiful* in which the heroine successively sees three horsemen – white, red, and black – riding to Baba Iaga, whom the latter calls "her faithful servants" the day, the sun, and the night respectively, would confirm Baba Iaga's role as the mistress of time.

3. At the same time, the features of a certain universe in which opposite states of the world merge into one clearly appear in it. This characteristic finds the most distinct expression in the description of Domus Dedaly, but in other examples as well the revolving houses are as if placed in a kind of absolute space, in which the differences in size and distance are neutralized: the location of the Dolgan house is characterized as both the most remote ("at the top of the three heavens") and the closest ("at the finger-tip"); as the saga emphasizes, every night Kuroi protects his dwelling with the spell, regardless of where in the world he is at the moment. The ambivalence of spatial characteristics can also be traced in the hut on chicken

legs: on the one hand, it is clearly small for Baba Iaga alone (“A man is walking in a hut, and Baba Iaga is in it: in front is her head, in one corner is her leg, and in the other – another one” (Afanas’ev 1984-1985: 1 124), but the hero, without apparent difficulty, settles in it, first for dinner and then for the night.

4. This is also the place where the hero is tested, in which he must fight with the forces of evil and win them, which we see in both Dolgan and Irish legends. In the Russian fairy tales, this motif, in connection with the hut on chicken legs, is largely reduced; its echo can be seen in the dialogue of the hero with Baba Iaga, as a result of which he manages to subdue her to his will and force her to fulfill his instructions.

MYTHOPOETICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE IMAGE

The archetypal features highlighted show that the revolving house should be considered in the context of a certain ritual from the era of matriarchy, which was associated with the celebration of a natural phenomenon belonging to the calendar (very likely solar) cycle, considered by traditional consciousness as the triumph of good over evil, of life over death. An attempt to suggest the cosmic explanation of the turning of the hut of Baba Iaga has already been made, cf.: “La semovenza di questa abitazione si prestava ad essere interpretata come una dimora astrale” (Gasparini 2010: 638); however, the author’s argumentation seems not to be approved by the texts: the fairy tales contain no hint that the hut rhythmically turns now from the one side and now from the other; but even if it did, this fact would be insufficient to identify its turning with the change of the lunar phases which are opened now to the east and now to the west. An idea that allows us to link this circumstance with both characteristic features of the hut on chicken legs can be found in the common Slavic beliefs regarding the winter solstice according to which, after the sun turns into summer, the day increases “by a chicken step”: “the barbarians of the night snatched a chicken step” (Russian), “on Koliada the day arrived on a chicken foot” (East Slavic), “na św. Łucie przybywa dnia na kurzą stopę, na Boże Narodzenie przybyło dnia na kurze stąpienie” ‘on St. Lucy has a day for a chicken’s foot, Christmas has a day for a chicken’s foot’ (Polish), “na nový rok o kuří krok” ‘a chicken step for the new year’ (Czech); according to the Bulgarian belief, from the day of St. Andrew before Christmas, the day increases as much as a slaughtered chicken (rooster) jumps (Tolstoi 1995-2012: 3 61). In Bulgarian signs related to the winter solstice, the gradual increase in the length of the day is likened to the movements of a rooster, which first stands still, then begins to tremble, then jumps over the threshold, later jumps over the wattle fence, etc. (Ibidem: 4 29). The spinning bird (*ptitsa-vertenitsa*) in the Russian folk riddle about the sun (Afanas’ev 1995: 106) is directly related to the hut on chicken legs; in turn, the echo of the ornithomorphic solar nature of Baba Iaga is heard in her ability to turn into a golden bird, and in order to carry out the reverse transformation, she needs to go into the hut (Onuchkov 1908: 15) – a circumstance that clearly indicates the former syncretic unity of the images of the hut and of its inhabitant.

A unique evidence of this earlier, entirely ornithomorphic stage of the rotating hut on chicken legs can be found in a tale from Transcarpathian Ukraine where one meets a golden cockerel on a palace roof; it turns around and crows when it sees a stranger approaching. This cockerel lightens the world, and when the hero kills it, everything plunges into the darkness (*Skazki Verkhoviny* 1970: 294); thus, its solar nature manifests itself very clearly. This image surely existed in the Russian folktales too, as *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel* by Alexander Pushkin proves: although several attempts have been made to find a non-Slavic literary source of this poem (*The Legend of the Arabian Astrologer* by Washington Irving and others), it is well known that Pushkin's tales were inspired by folk stories told him by his nurse Arina Rodionovna, about which he wrote in one of his letters.

Thus, the combination of demonic properties with solar symbolism, which is inherent in the image of a chicken/rooster in Slavic traditional culture on the whole, was reflected in the presence of the chicken legs at the hut and in its ability to rotate.¹² In its turn, the connection of Baba Iaga herself with the winter solstice is apparent from the fact that she played an important role in Russian Yule disguises, from which one can conclude that she appears on Christmas (Potebnya 1865: 95; see a detailed description of the presentation of Baba Iaga in the Yule celebrations in Tereshchenko 1848: 162-166).¹³

¹² The interpretation of the image of a chicken as an expression of Baba Iaga's connection with the element of earth (a flightless bird) may be implicitly traced in her characteristics (Baba Iaga cannot overcome the sea or a fiery river, therefore, does not have the ability to fly; her famous mortar does not fly on air at all, as is often thought, but moves without leaving the ground: "As soon as Iaga-Bura grabbed him, she put him in a mortar and galloped through the bushes, through the forests, through the ravines" (Afanas'ev 1984-1985: 1 136); even the aforementioned golden bird does not fly into the hut, but enters, stepping on the ground). However, this semantics cannot be considered the main one for this image. Firstly, the hen/rooster is by no means associated in the fairy tales with the impossibility of flying: for example, Ivan Tsarevich flies to the realm of Helena the Beautiful on a rooster, the owner of which is a big old man-eater, the brother of Baba Iaga (see Nikitina & Reili 2008: 68). And most importantly, the idea of Iaga as a chthonic character seems to be too one-sided: to an even greater extent than with the earth, she is associated with water (she often cracks down on her victims at water sources, her father is called the tsar of the sea, and her elder brother is the tsar of water (see *Ibidem*: 50, 68); cf. also her commonly recognized connection with the goddess *Mokoši* whose name is derived from Slavic *mok- 'wet, moist'). Regular correlations between the images of Baba Iaga and related characters, on the one hand, and of Slavic female water spirits (East Slavic rusalkas, West Slavic bohinkas, Bulgarian samovidas, Serbian vilas), on the other hand, are noteworthy in this regard: goose paws of the rusalkas and bohinkas or chicken claws of the bohinkas, such their attributes as a comb, a pestle, and a mortar. The correlation of Baba Iaga with the celestial elements – the wind (as indicated above), the sun, the moon (see below) – is also clear. More contradictory relationships connect Iaga with the element of fire: on the one hand, she is its guardian and giver (this function most clearly appears in the tale of *Vasilisa the Beautiful*); on the other hand, she often dies in fire (in her own furnace, a fiery river, etc.). Thus, everything indicates that Baba Iaga should be rather considered in connection with the general picture of the universe, the natural principle on the whole (which leads us again to the image of the Great Mother) than with any individual natural element. Actually, the biography of Baba Iaga reflected in the fairy tales is a personification of cosmological and eschatological ideas, the history of the world that arises from water and is doomed to perish by fire. The mythopoetic meaning of the connection between Baba Iaga and the chicken/rooster will be discussed in detail below.

¹³ The very name Iaga, which is cognate with the words of the Indo-European languages with the meanings 'waste', 'annoy', 'sorrow', etc. (q.v. Vasmer 1996: 1 542), is undoubtedly a taboo name (as P. Skok (1971: 780) has supposed) used instead of the name of the Slavic deity of winter and

Analogically, in a Slovak fairy tale, the meeting of the prince with Ježibaba takes place on the summer solstice (*o svätom Jáne* ‘on St. John[’s Day]’); nevertheless, she appears as the embodiment of winter: she wears seventy-seven fur-coats and complains of cold (Kollár 1953: 43ff).¹⁴

death Mara, Mora, Marena (and other forms). This is directly evidenced by naming winter Baba Iaga (Ježi-baba) in the Slovene song performed during the rite of meeting spring: “Zelenega Jurja vodimo, | Maslo in jajca prosimo, | Ježi-babo zganjamo, Mladoletje trosimo!” ‘We are leading the green Yuri, | Asking for butter and eggs, | Chasing Baba Iaga away, | Scattering the Spring!’ (Štrekelj 1904: № 5000) as well as in the analogous Russian chant: “Videlo li, solnyško, | Staruiu iagu, | Babu li iagu – | Ved’mu-zimu? | Kak ona, liutaia, | Ot vesny ušla, | Ot krasnoi begla, | V meške stužu nesla, | Kholod na zemli triasla, | Sama ostupilas’, | Pod goru pokatilas’” ‘Did you see, the Sun, | The old iaga, | Baba Iaga – | The witch-winter? | Well, she, the fierce one, | Went away from the spring, | Ran away from the beautiful one, | Carried chill in her bag, | Shook cold out on the ground, | Stumbled by herself, | Was back running down the hill’ (*Russkaia narodnaia*... 1984: 173). Mara (Marena) usually appears in similar Slavic rites. On East Slavic ground, one can further point out the variant of the tale *Morozko* ‘Frost’, which has been repeatedly noted in the literature, where Baba Iaga takes the place of the title character (Afanas’ev 1984-1985: 1 102-103 = ATU 2004: № 480 *Frau Holle*), and the name of the warrior maiden Marya Morevna if one takes into account the fact that the various variants of this image (the Tsar Maiden, Marya the Tsarevna, the most powerful heroine) are often called the nieces of Baba Iaga (see Nikitina & Reili 2008: 69).

¹⁴ Kollár adduces two variants of this plot (ATU 2004: № 303), which is also represented in the Russian tale *The Magic Hunt* (*Skazki* 1988: 269-270) and in the Romanian tale of Vereia Viteazul (*Din vieața*... 1928: 192-193; Botezatu 1981: 239-240; Botezatu 1995: 210-211; *Wikipedia*). In Kollár’s № 35b, a hunter who intends to go to the underworld rests under a huge tree and fries meat on a fire. He then hears from the tree the voice of an old woman who complains that she is cold. The hunter invites her to go down to the fire to warm up. After she goes down, she strives to touch the hunter’s meat with frogs on a spit saying: “those who fry meat should eat frogs, and those who fry frogs should eat meat”. Then she explains the hunter how to reach the underworld and gives him a number of useful advices. In later variants, this plot is combined with the dragon-fighting one (Slovak, Russian), and a conflict arises between the hero and the old woman, who appears as a malicious witch there. The result is tragic for the hero. In the Slovak and the Russian tales, she turns the hero into a stone until a youngest of three brothers saves the two elder ones and kills the witch. In the story of Vereia Viteazul, the old hag (see on Muma Pădurii above) rips open his belly, takes out the intestines, heart and kidneys, and instead stuffs his belly with horse dung or wood rot. The old hag takes Vereia Viteazul’s viscera to her house on the top of a tree, heals his ripped open belly with magic water, and before releasing him, she says that if he tells someone about what happened, he will die immediately. Vereia Viteazul returns to his palace. This plot represents the oldest stage of the myth of Baba Iaga, in which she, if not completely preserves her original appearance – a bird-like mistress of the forest which is the border between the two worlds, living at the top of a tree and carrying the souls across this border, then clearly hints at it. This is especially visible in the story of Vereia Viteazul. The method of her avenging herself on the hero reflects not so much her perverted sexual fetishism, as Á. Castiñeira Ionescu (1983: 469-471) believes, as her original bird-like nature: she does not kill him in any human way but tears him to pieces, similar to how a bird of prey does with a corpse. The exchange of food she suggests to the hero expresses an inversion one must undergo while crossing the border of life and death, an inversion which stands in line with the turn of the hut. The next development stage is represented in the Russian tale of Medvedko (Afanas’ev 1984-1985: № 141-142) where the hero and his assistants occupy an empty rotating hut on chicken legs in the forest and hunt all days long, while one of them stays at home and cooks meal. Suddenly, Baba Iaga appears from the underground, requires their food, eats all, and cruelly beats two the bogatyr successively, after which Medvedko wins her. The bird-like features already disappeared from her figure. The secondary, corrupted character of this variant is seen from the fact that the aggression of Baba Iaga is unmotivated here as the bogatyr meet her hospitably. It seems to be plausible that a hunter’s or funeral rite of offering a sacrifice in the form of food to the mistress of forest animals or to

The Slovenian Pehtra Baba (Jaga Baba, Ježi Baba) is imagined as the leader of the wild hunt during twelve nights around Christmas and New Year (Kropej 2012: 51).

Another argument in favour of our thesis that the rotating hut on chicken legs symbolizes the winter or summer solstice is provided by the fact that this hut repeatedly figures in the tales of a girl who ran away to the forest in order to avoid an incestuous marriage with her own brother (*Skazki* 1989: 328, 331): this plot is exclusively timed to the summer solstice feast (*Ivan Kupalo*) and is told in numerous songs which are sung on it.

Some comparative data also indirectly point to the connection of Baba Iaga and of the hut on chicken legs with the idea of the solstice. The probable relation of Curoi Castle to the solstice has already been mentioned. Berhta/Perhta is a character embodying the winter solstice by origin (see Tolstoi 1995-2012: 4 18). The Vedic metaphor of the turning house-pole = the revolving time “was transferred to the year of five seasons, it became that which told how Sirius, the dog, who begins to hunt the sun at the summer solstice to the south, leaves his quarry free to return at the winter solstice” (Hewitt 1972: 590).

The connection of the hut on chicken legs with the winter and summer solstice completely fits Propp's interpretation of this hut as an entrance to the afterlife since various mythological traditions record the idea that this entrance opens on the days of the winter and/or summer solstices, and a solar deity or a deity associated with the idea of fertility travels there through it (Mesopotamia (Tammuz), the builders of European megaliths and America's Stonehenge, the Aztecs, the Hopi Pueblo). Widespread beliefs that it is on holy days when the dead wake up, the souls of the dead return from the other world to their homes and take part in the meal of their relatives (Tolstoi 1995-2012: 4 585-586) prove the existence of ideas about the opening of the passage between the two worlds on the solstice among the Slavs as well. The archetypal character of the motif of the open doors in connection with the mytheme of the forest witch's hut is visible in comparison with *Les merveilles de Rigomer* where the hero does not need to conjure the hut as he finds it already open (verses 3461-3465).

Thus, the fairy tale plot under consideration is based on the widespread myth of the descent of the solar¹⁵ hero into the underworld (cf. the close parallel

the female underworld guardian, at first under a tree and later in a special shrine, underlies these episodes. As far as ancient beliefs go to ruin, the veneration is gradually replaced by the conflict, in which the hero resolutely defends his right to remain in the world of life. The tale of Medvedko precisely reflected this transitional stage: for the main hero, Baba Iaga is already an enemy, while his archaic, slightly anthropomorphized companions still belong to the old religion and obey her. After the original sense of this plot was completely forgotten, it is the hero who becomes to require refreshments from Baba Iaga, and the whole this scene takes shape in accordance with realities of the peasant's life and hospitality traditions. It is important that then the old woman always returns, voluntarily or involuntarily, the hero to life: she is equally the mistress of life and death (in the Russian tales, Baba Iaga owns two sources with the water of life and of death), which flows from the ambiguous significance of Mother the Moist Earth (see above).

¹⁵ “The fairy-tale image of Ivan Tsarevich can be considered the reflection of the mythological image of the Tsar-Sun, Herodotus' Kolaksais, in those cases when he is the only or a youngest son of the tsar” (Rybakov 1981: 397).

mentioned above with the myth of Circe and Odysseus)¹⁶ through the entrance that opens during the winter and/or summer solstice, after which he is reborn to a new life. In general terms, this reconstruction corresponds to the belief, well-known among the Slavs, that the sun, after sunset, continues its journey underground illuminating the underworld, shining on the dead (Tolstoj 1995-2012: 5 103). Our reconstruction finds indirect confirmation at the linguistic level: strangely heterogeneous, at first glance, the meanings of Proto-Slavic **korčunŭ* (q.v. ĚSSla: 11 56-58) acquire a coherent and logical relationship if we assume that the semantics of this Proto-Slavic word is based on the mythological idea of the winter solstice (ORuss. *Koročun*, *Koročun* ‘fast before Christmas’, Russ. *karačun* ‘solstice, day of December 12, Spiridon’s day’, dial. *karačun* ‘Christmas rite, carols; Pre-Christmas fast’; Bulg. dial. *kračun* ‘folk holiday of the summer or winter solstice’; Slovak *kračún* ‘Christmas’) inseparable from such concepts as foot and step-by-step movement (**korčiti* ‘to walk, walk’, from which this noun is derived; Bulg. dial. *kračun* ‘big leg/legs’; Russ. dial. *karačun* ‘a child who crawls’), locking/unlocking an entrance/opening (Serbo-Croatian (old, dial.) *kràčŭn* ‘bolt, bushing’, also *kracŭn*), death and the other world (Russ. dial. *karačun* ‘evil spirit, devil, demon’, ‘sudden, unexpected death’). The evolutionary series ‘walking’, ‘death-departure’, ‘transition of the sun to summer or winter’, proposed by O.N. Trubachev, does not seem convincing: the verb **korčiti* denotes only walking in the elementary physical sense of this concept – as a movement performed by the legs (cf. **korkŭ* ‘leg’, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene *korak* ‘step’, *koračiti* ‘take a step/steps or stride’ (ĚSSla: 11 50); figurative meanings similar to those that Trubachev ascribes to it, as well as the sense of changing the position of the subject in space and time, are absent in its semantics; moreover, the Serbo-Croatian *kràčŭn* ‘bolt, bushing’ does not fit into this scheme.

The reconstruction carried out refers primarily to the fairy tales which tell about the fight of the hero against monsters (the plot scheme “The Miraculous Adversary” (№ 300-399 according to (ATU 2004)¹⁷ classification: № 128-130, 136-137, 141, 224-225 in Afanas’ev’s collection (A) (Afanas’ev 1984-1985), etc.). However, the hut of Baba Iaga (sometimes called simply an old woman) is also found in plots of other types which are united by the motif of the return of a child boy, a brother and a sister (the plots of this type are also attributed to the group of fairy tales about a wonderful enemy, A 112, 113, 114: ATU 327A, B, C), a stepdaughter abandoned in the forest (the plot scheme “Wonderful Task”, A 95-97, 98, 102, 215: ATU 480) or of a spouse (the scheme “The Wonderful spouse or other relative”, ATU 400-459)¹⁸ from the world of death. The hero/heroine of these

¹⁶ Cf. the words said about classical myths that tell about the visit to Hades, among which the myth of Odysseus is mentioned: “These heroic legends lie in close-knit connection with episodes of solar myth” (Tylor 1920: 48).

¹⁷ The classification is given according to (SUS 1979).

¹⁸ According to A. Johns, the image of the hut on chicken legs is mainly found in fairy tales in which the hero goes in search of his missing wife (Johns 2004: 156), however, from the material presented here, it is obvious that this opinion is inaccurate and one-sided.

tales turns out to be turned into a representative of the animal world – a bird (*The Feather of Finist the Bright Falcon*, A 234: ATU 432), a frog (*Tsarevna Frog*, A 269: ATU 402), cf. a common belief about the transformation of the souls of the dead into animals and birds (see, e.g., Veletskaja 1978: 13ff). In many of these tales, it is not the hero who acts, but the heroine – a young girl, usually a stepdaughter, who ends up with Baba Iaga as a result of the intrigues of her stepmother, or looking for her lover or brother. As already mentioned in literature, the plots with male and female characters have a united basis, which is confirmed by the presence of a number of common main motifs in them [a search for a betrothed or other relative, a fulfillment of the parental will (whereas the royal will or the filial duty motivates the young man only), a search/test of one's destiny] (see Nikitina & Reili 2008: 61-62). At the same time, the types of relationships with Baba Iaga are different for the hero and the heroine, and for the latter they are more diverse: if the hero invariably subordinates Baba Iaga to his will forcing her to serve him, the heroine sometimes behaves actively as well, which is expressed in conjuring the hut (*Martha the Peasant's Daughter* (Skazki 1988: 332-338), *Prince Danila the Chatterbox* (Afanas'ev 1984-1985: 1 № 114), *The Tale of Dunka the Fool and of Bright Falcon* (Zelenin 2014: 143-145);¹⁹ however, she has no verbal conflict with Iaga since the latter immediately greets her kindly; occasionally, the daughter of Baba Iaga performs the function of the welcoming hostess of the hut, which echoes ibn Fadlan's description of the ancient Russian funeral rite (q.v. below), according to which the daughters of the priestess took care of the girl intended for sacrifice. This group of tales is as close as possible to the tales about the hero-youth; the difference between them probably lies only in the gender of the victim. In other cases, the heroine enters the service of Baba Iaga where, with the help of magical assistants, she copes with tasks that cannot be completed in the usual way and receives a reward (*Vasilisa the Beautiful, Baba Iaga* (Afanas'ev 1984-1985: 1 № 102-103); the plots of this group reflect the rite of initiation or the process of training a young priestess. Finally, the heroine who saves her little brother generally avoids contact with Baba Iaga and takes the boy secretly from her (*The Geese-Swans, The Brother* (Skazki 1989: 294-299). In the tales of the last two types, the spell of the heroine addressing the hut (and sometimes the main characteristics of the latter) is absent, which may indicate their later origin as a result of the transformation and rethinking of the original plot.

THE MYTH OF THE SUN'S DEATH AND THE RUTHENIAN FUNERAL RITE

The myth of the temporary death of the Sun finds a completely natural and expected concrete-figurative embodiment in numerous allusions to the ancient Slavic funeral rite based on solar symbolism, as evidenced by comparison with the description of this rite made by ibn Fadlan (the 10th c.) (*Putešestvie...* 1939: 81-83).

¹⁹ In the most famous version of this tale presented by Afanas'ev under the title *The Feather of Finist the Bright Falcon* (№ 234), the spell as well as the characteristic features of the external appearance of the hut are absent.

Already a colorful portrait sketch of the priestess who led the ceremony (probably reflecting the features typical for the persons of her profession) instantly evokes an association with Baba Iaga who is depicted as a large (hardly fitting in her hut) and strong²⁰ old woman: “came [the old woman who is called] the angel of death and spread out on the bench the beds that we mentioned. And she directs the dressing of it and the preparation of it, and she kills the girls. And I saw that she was a witch (?), big (and fat), gloomy (severe)” (*Ibidem*: 81).

The similarity with Baba Iaga can be traced even in the fact that the priestess had daughters.

In the description of ibn Fadlan, there are such motifs as the parallelism between the burial and sunset (the ceremony began in the afternoon, at a time when the sun was already setting (see *Ibidem*: 151) and the idea of the presence of a gate separating the world of the living from the world of the dead (thrice raised above some kind of their likeness, the girl intended to be sacrificed and burned along with the deceased each time declared that she saw her dead parents, relatives, and master on the other side). The treat arranged by Iaga for the hero is identical to the meal organized by the participants of the ritual for the deceased: “they put him on a mattress, and propped him up with pillows, and brought a nabid (?), and fruits, and a fragrant plant, and laid them down with him. And they brought bread, and meat, and onions, and threw it before him” (*Ibidem*: 81).

Of particular note is the important role that the chicken played in the ritual described: the sacrifice of it was performed twice – for the first time, together with the rooster by all the participants in the action after the sacrifice of three other animals, and in the second – by the girl after looking through the gate three times; thus, each time the chicken sacrifice completed a certain three-part stage of the ritual, which indicates the special significance of this sacrifice. As for the rest of the sacrificial animals (dogs, horses, cows), it is hardly occasional that their set coincides with the variants of the animal-mother of the fairy tale hero (Ivan the Bitch’s son, Ivan the Mare’s son, Ivan the Cow’s son): such a relationship unequivocally emphasizes the importance of the hero’s function as an object of the funeral ritual. To what has been said, it remains only to add a few words about a small, but persistently repeated precisely in those tales with the hut of Baba Iaga in which the female main character appears, detail. A father who leaves his daughter in the hut ties a block to the window for the girl accepts its knock for the knock of her father’s ax. This detail, so stable that, according to Propp, it finds a parallel even in the hymn to the mistress of the forest included in the *R̥gveda* (Propp 1976: 158), becomes clear from comparison with the knocking of pieces of wood against shields, with which the Ruthenians drowned out the screams of the sacrificed girl in the ritual described by ibn Fadlan.

Our assumption does not contradict Propp’s hypothesis about the reflection of the initiation rite in this plot: if this rite was timed to coincide with the winter

²⁰ Cf., for example: “Iaga-Baba came back for axes, dullards, and began to break through this mountain, and broke through it [...] and began to rake the forests, and raked them”, *Marfa the Peasant’s Daughter* (*Skazki* 1988: 337).

solstice,²¹ it is natural to assume that it could, in whole or in part, be a staging of the myth of the solar hero's descent into the afterlife.

CONCLUSION

The study made it possible to deepen and clarify V.Ya. Propp's conception according to which the hut on chicken legs is interpreted as a house for the initiation ceremony and to establish the origin and meaning of this mytheme in connection with the mythopoetic ideas about the winter solstice, which were common among the Slavs. Accordingly, the various types of the fairy tales in which the hut is mentioned are interpreted as representations of the myth, widespread among many peoples of the world, of the descent of the solar god (hero) into the afterlife through the entrance that opens on the days of the winter and/or summer solstice, or of beliefs known to the Slavs about the return of the dead from the other world during the holy holidays, which means that the connection of these plots with the rite of initiation can only be of a secondary nature.

The funeral semantics of the plots in which the hut on chicken legs appears is supported by their regular coincidences with the details of the Ruthenian funeral ceremony described by ibn Fadlan.

Attention is drawn to the complexity of the image of the hut on chicken legs, which, on the basis of the mythopoetic image of the solar bird-swirl (*ptitsa-vertenitsa*) associated with the afterlife, contaminates the two archetypal features (the ornithomorphic appearance and the ability to turn),²² which never combine with each other in the related mythemes.

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²¹ Cf. about the holy holidays among the Slavs: "The regulations regarding the organization of young men's groups, as well as other related features, suggest the preservation of vestiges of puberty rituals" (Brătulescu 2005: 9743).

²² In isolated cases, these characteristics are extended to other demonic locuses: the rotating diamond castle of the dragon, from which the whole universe is seen (Russian); the copper, the silver, and the golden underworld castles on a magpie's leg (Croatian) (Afanas'ev 1982: 258f).

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THE TRICKSTER AS FACILITATOR AND DESIGNER OF PLAY: EXPLORING SUBVERSION AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

HENRIETA KRUPA

ABSTRACT

Tricksters, prevalent across cultures worldwide, have intrigued scholars with their multifaceted nature and enigmatic roles in mythology, folklore, religion, and art. Yet, defining the trickster proves challenging due to their inherent contradictions and complex functions within cultural contexts. This paper explores the trickster's diverse manifestations of features and roles, highlighting their subversive function and transformative potential within societal structures. Drawing from diverse theoretical frameworks including Wittgenstein's language games, Bakhtin's carnivalesque, and Gates' Signifying, the article sheds light on the ways the trickster's playful duplicity challenges established norms and systems, inviting audiences into playful subversion. Building upon Hynes's six-point typology of trickster features, the paper proposes an additional trait, portraying the trickster as a 'Facilitator and Designer of Play'. The article explores the transformative nature of play, emphasising its role in challenging established structures and fostering alternative expressions. Through an exploration of game theories and concepts of play and playfulness, particularly within the work of Sicart, the paper expands upon Hynes's typology and by aligning the trickster with principles of game theories and game design, the study offers a fresh perspective that facilitates understanding the trickster's subversive power. This expanded typology offers a nuanced view of the trickster's transformative function and underscores the significance of play and playfulness within trickster epistemology. Through an inclusive approach to language, a comprehensive exploration of the trickster archetype, and an expansion of Hynes's typology, this paper contributes to on-going discussions on the perplexing trickster phenomenon.

Keywords: trickster, play, game theory, subversion, transformation.

INTRODUCTION

Tricksters are a recurring motif worldwide, appearing in diverse forms across mythology, folklore, religion, and art. Examples include Coyote and Raven in Native American myths, Puck in English mythology, Legba and Eshu in Yoruba and Anansi in West African traditions, Hermes in Greek mythology, Wakdjunga in Winnebago and the Monkey King in Chinese mythology. However, the term

trickster is relatively modern, not commensurate with the ancient origins of the figure it represents. This disparity arises from the trickster's emergence in cultural contexts vastly different from those attempting to define the figure. Although tricksters garnered popularity for their association with dubious characters and their entertainment value, this popularity has led to an overuse of the term, often resulting in its deviation from the essence of what this mythical phenomenon truly represents.

According to The Oxford Dictionary, the term *trickster* was initially employed in 1711 to denote a rogue, cheater, or knave, engaging in fraudulent activities. However, such definition appears somewhat vague, merely aligning the trickster with popular culture's portrayal of deceitful characteristics typical of a liar or a con artist. This oversimplification not only neglects the intricate nature of the trickster phenomenon, failing to acknowledge their essential functions and roles within cultural contexts, but also impedes understanding of this figure. A more precise elucidation of the term did not emerge until the latter half of the nineteenth century, and since then, it has undergone continuous evolution, revision, and redefinition.

In *The Trickster in West Africa* (1980), a well-known trickster scholar, Robert D. Pelton attributes the inception of the trickster category within its mythological context to Daniel G. Brinton. Brinton, focusing on North American mythologies, penned an essay in 1885 titled 'The Chief God of the Algonkins in His Character as a Cheat and Liar', marking the very first use of the term *trickster* to refer to this archetypal figure within a mythical context. Pelton acknowledges Brinton as the trailblazer in identifying the trickster figure, portraying the mythic trickster as a multifaceted character embodying traits of "a gross deceiver, a crude prankster, a creator of the earth, a shaper of culture, and a fool caught in his own lies" (Pelton 1980: 6). Ever since Brinton's pioneering endeavour to delineate the trickster phenomenon in the late nineteenth century, scholars have grappled with a precise definition of the term. What stands out about Brinton's initial attempt is that the term *trickster* encompasses traits and characteristics that many would deem contradictory. Rather than merely associating the trickster with malevolent qualities, Brinton firmly links the trickster to the genesis of the world and culture, forging a crucial connection between foolishness and creation. This connection is also noted by folklorist and anthropologist Paul Radin, who in 1956 undertook a pioneering exploration of the trickster published in his seminal work, *The Trickster*. In this work, Radin meticulously examines the Winnebago trickster cycle of the indigenous tribes of North America, attempting to shed light on this enigmatic figure that has captivated audiences throughout history. Subsequently, a multitude of trickster figures have undergone meticulous scrutiny across various academic disciplines such as anthropology, religion, and psychology, and identified under different names and epithets, tricksters were attributed with diverse qualities and properties. This is because tricksters have assumed numerous guises, exhibiting diverse and often conflicting characteristics, playing varied roles, performing assorted tasks, and fulfilling versatile functions. This lack of uniformity, leading to multidimensionality, the inherent ambivalence and

unpredictability of tricksters, and the distinctive wisdom associated with trickster epistemology have posed challenges in defining the phenomenon. Academic discourse on trickster has thus generated a wide array of discussions and speculations, often yielding contradictory conclusions despite attempts to synthesise findings. In his article, 'The North American Indian Trickster', published in *History of Religions*, esteemed scholar in trickster studies Mac Linscott Ricketts, who underscores the perplexing nature of the trickster phenomenon, concludes that tricksters are one of the most confounding and intricate subjects in the humanities (1966). The challenge in understanding tricksters stems from their embodiment of conflicting features and contradictory functions, each aspect imbued with such ambiguity that it complicates comprehension and frustrates efforts to categorise tricksters within established frameworks. Consequently, those grappling with this concept, upon an encounter with the trickster who inherently subverts conventional systems of meaning, often find themselves confronted with considerable confusion.

Each illumination of the trickster is unique, and what is true for one trickster might not apply to another. As William J. Hynes aptly notes in his article, 'Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters', tricksters embody a plethora of contradictory traits, encompassing "the sacred and profane, life and death, culture and nature, order and chaos, fertility and impotence and so on" (1997b: 34). Attempts to pin down the trickster seem impossible, and an encounter with the trickster often leads to more questions with no answers—a testament to the trickster's epistemology. Jarold Ramsey vividly describes defining the trickster akin to "trying to juggle hummingbirds", highlighting the inherent contradictions and complexities within this figure (*Reading the Fire* 1983: 26). The trickster's embodiment of multiple interrelated yet contradictory functions further complicates attempts of defining this phenomenon. In *The Trickster in West Africa*, Pelton's examination of African tricksters underscores the trickster's ability to evade fixed definitions due to their embodiment of the multivalence and plurality of life and the world we live in that the trickster figure stands for. Pelton views the trickster not merely as an archetype but as an embodiment of liminality: "the trickster is a symbol of the liminal state itself and of its permanent accessibility as a source of recreative power" (1980: 35). He views the trickster's inclination to contradiction and paradoxes as "his inner form", being "a personified limen" (58). Contrary to Jungian scholarship, Pelton sees the trickster's contradictions not merely as archetypal features but as a "symbolic pattern" that reflects the image of humankind, "tacking together the bits and pieces of experience until they become what they are – a web of many-layered beings" (3, 4). For Pelton, the trickster, in its messy ambiguity, mirrors societies, grappling with contradictory aspects of existence, embodying both structure and antistructure. The trickster "embodies all possibilities – the most positive and the most negative – and is paradox personified", as Barbara Babcock-Abrahams in *The Reversible World* notes (1978: 148). Likewise, in *The Signifying Monkey*, Henry Louis Gates views the trickster as "the epitome of paradox" that stands for "the unity of opposed forces", being a figure of "double duality of unreconciled oppositions" (1988: 6, 30).

The trickster thus functions as an integrating force that brings together mutually exclusive elements to reconcile differences, and in this process, the trickster paradoxically illuminates that the extreme opposing forces do not contradict but rather complement one another. In fact, this quality seems to be the essence of Carl Gustav Jung's description of the trickster Mercury, stating: "He is metallic yet liquid, matter yet spirit, cold yet fiery, poison yet healing draught – a symbol uniting all opposites" ('Psychology and Alchemy', 1944, in *The Collected Works* 1968: 295). Rather than seeking a closed definition, understanding the trickster requires contextualisation within its manifestations and functions. If there is a way to understand this inherently elusive phenomenon, instead of trying to stabilise them within rigid boundaries of fixed definitions, one should approach tricksters by examining their roles within cultural production, recognising the trickster's inherent relational nature, and take note of their playfully executed transformative function.

Inspired by Paul Radin's seminal work from 1956, forty years later William J. Hynes and William G. Doty embark on their journey to examine tricksters. They acknowledge the difficulty in defining the trickster but assert that identifying common traits exhibited by tricksters across different cultures can advance our understanding of this enigmatic phenomenon. In their widely-cited book *Mythical Trickster Figures* (1997), Hynes analyses tricksters across various cultures and establishes a set of criteria that serves as a rather loose framework for identifying tricksters within various contexts. In his widely-cited article 'Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters', Hynes proposes a heuristic typology of six core trickster traits that allows for identifying mythical trickster within context (1997b). Rather than offering a rigid definition, Hynes presents these traits as a flexible guide, acknowledging that not all tricksters necessarily exhibit each characteristic to the same extent. Hynes's six-point typology outlines the trickster as being: 1) Ambiguous and Anomalous; 2) deceiver and Trick-Player; 3) Shape-shifter; 4) Situation-invertor; 5) Messenger and Imitator of the Gods; and 6) Sacred and Lewd Bricoleur. While not intended to confine tricksters within fixed boundaries, this typology aims to establish a common standard by which individual tricksters emerge. Each trait may manifest differently across various trickster iterations, allowing for contextual adaptation and audience appeal while maintaining an underlying archetypal pattern. This approach emphasises the dynamic interplay between the trickster archetype and their specific cultural manifestations, encouraging a nuanced understanding of these multifaceted figures.

Expanding upon Hynes's typology, the present article proposes an additional category that characterises the trickster as 'Facilitator and Designer of Play'. This observation stems from viewing the trickster not only as a mythical figure manifesting certain traits but also as fundamentally being aligned with transformative functions the archetypal trickster performs, particularly in the role of being a player. Viewing the trickster's transformative function within cultural production is crucial to what characterises the trickster, and this transformation as being triggered by the trickster's role associated with play, sets the trickster within the context of game theories. The present article offers an in-depth exploration of this newly proposed aspect of the trickster by drawing on studies on game theories,

mainly by game theorist Miguel Sicart, whose examinations of games and game design, addressing concepts of playing and playfulness, although oriented on the nature and function of games in general, may suggest a novel perspective on the trickster's role as a facilitator and designer of play – the one who creates play and invites the audience into playfulness. By situating the playful trickster within the framework of game theories, which emphasises the importance of play and playfulness, this proposed additional category expands upon Hynes's existing typology, offering a nuanced view on this perplexing archetype. Furthermore, this additional category underscores the active involvement of the audience, for which trickster tales in general are aiming for, and highlights the significance of playfulness within trickster epistemology.

Before proceeding further, it is important to acknowledge that tricksters, being inherently multifaceted, embodying the multiplicity of life and defying categorisation, often manifests within androgynous states that reflects their primordial nature. Anthropologist Victor Turner notes that many tricksters “have an uncertain sexual status” as “on various mythical occasions Loki and Wakdjunkaga transformed themselves into women, while Hermes was often represented in statuary as a hermaphrodite” (cited in *Trickster Makes This World*, Hyde 1998: 335). This suggests that the trickster archetype, being innately primordial, predates conventional gender identification, which leads the present study to use gender-neutral language such as the gender-neutral subjective pronoun *they*, and the corresponding objective, possessive, and reflexive pronouns when referring to the trickster, except when citing from other work. In my belief, this approach fosters a pluralistic perspective that encapsulates the trickster's essence, aligning it with the inherently inclusive nature of tricksters. Moreover, employing such linguistic inclusivity facilitates a nuanced loop input that synthesises, adjusts, and aligns the content, in this case the complex and playful trickster phenomenon, with the delivery of the discussion, promoting alignment with trickster performances. What follows is a brief summary of Hynes's typology, continued with a scholarly discussion that has previously linked the trickster to play and playfulness, and finally, the article offers an elaboration on the proposed category that expands Hynes's typology of the trickster trait, identifying the trickster as a ‘Facilitator and Designer of Play’.

TRICKSTER TRAITS IN HYNES'S TYPOLOGY

1. **Ambiguous and Anomalous:** In ‘Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters’, Hynes identifies tricksters as embodying Nicholas of Cusa's notion of the *coincidence of opposites* (1997b, 34). Tricksters transcend binary oppositions such as culture and nature, life and death, and sacred and profane, dwelling on the edge of existing classifications and categories. With a penchant for disorder and disassembly, tricksters challenge established norms and structures, symbolising the multivalence of life.
2. **Deceiver and Trick-Player:** Aptly named, tricksters excel in playing tricks and deceiving, often causing disruptions and disorder. Truth and falsehood become malleable under the trickster's influence, showcased in many mythological tales featuring trickster's cunning performances.

3. **Shape-Shifter:** Hynes identifies the trickster the “master of metamorphosis”, highlighting tricksters’ abilities to change appearances and shapes to facilitate deception (Hynes 37). The distinctive trickery often involves situation-inversion, setting it apart from other forms of deceit. In the role of a shape-shifter, tricksters can change their physical form to whatever form is suited. The trickster’s shape-shifting abilities are not limited by species or gender boundaries, and tricksters can encompass a wide range of transformations. Minor shape-shifting may involve simple disguises such as changing clothes while more significant transformations can alter the trickster’s physical body, transforming into objects or the opposite sex to achieve their goals.
4. **Situation-Invertor:** In their role as situation-invertors, tricksters disrupt and upend societal norms and taboos, delighted in challenging conventions and overturning established orders. No order or taboo is immune to the trickster’s influence; safety can swiftly turn into danger, and vice versa as the trickster effortlessly transforms situations with bewildering ease, challenging societal values and expectations.
5. **Messenger and Imitator of the Gods:** Characterised by an uncertain lineage, tricksters serve as both messengers and imitators of the divine, blurring the lines between the sacred and the mundane. They convey messages, punishments, or cultural elements from gods to humanity, often flouting divine taboos. This intermediary role allows tricksters to facilitate cultural transformations.
6. **Sacred and Lewd Bricoleur:** The final characteristic is the trickster’s role as a bricoleur. The term draws from Levi-Strauss’ concept describing someone adept at using whatever is at hand to devise creative solutions. Tricksters do not respect established definitions and categories, allowing them to repurpose items for inventive ends. In this context, Pelton identifies tricksters as *sacred bricoleurs*, which Hynes extends to *lewd bricoleurs*. With the transformative ability to find the sacred within the profane and vice versa, tricksters challenge societal norms and offer alternative perspectives on the sacred and the mundane through inventive and outrageous acts.

TRICKSTER AND LANGUAGE GAMES

The trickster is characterised by opportunism, adept at recognising and seizing opportunities or even creating them, often through language and linguistic games. Throughout various trickster myths, there is a strong association between the trickster and language, with many mythical tales portraying the trickster as the originator of language and communication, introducing language, facilitating communication, and bringing comprehension to humans. However, the trickster also revels in manipulating and endlessly toying and deferring meaning, adding layers of interpretation and fostering contradictions and paradoxes within signifying processes, ultimately celebrating richness and ambiguity of meaning. The trickster thus delights in playing with meaning and interpretation, often disrupting the conventional associations within the signifying system. Consider

Hermes from Greek mythology, who after establishing the connection between signs and meanings, introducing meaning to the world, reveals the inherent elusiveness of and slipperiness with the relationship between the signifier and the signified. The field of inquiry into interpretation and understanding, known as hermeneutics, bears his name to this day. Yet, it is crucial to recognise that Hermes the trickster embodies not only understanding but also misunderstanding. Indeed, it is often within states of misunderstanding that communication flourishes, with profound understanding emerging from moments of confusion that would not arise within the state of clarity. In trickster realms, even seemingly contradictory concepts like understanding and misunderstanding often work together in a complementary manner. The trickster has a knack for generating, amplifying, and leveraging opposing forces simultaneously, frequently employing them to their advantage by the operations of Socratic non-propositional dialogics. Consequently, the enigmatic trickster sheds light on the inherently multifaceted and ever-expanding polysemic nature of language and the world around us. It is therefore no surprise that the African trickster, Legba, known as “the High God’s linguist” is also entitled to be the “originator of magic” (Pelton, ‘West African Tricksters’, in *Mythical Trickster Figures*, 1997: 126). In *Trickster Makes This World*, Lewis Hyde views the trickster as “the comic linguist” inhabiting the liminal space in the cracks within language and articulation, and as one who emerges at the precise points of articulation and keeps those points open and flexible (1998: 264). The trickster then embodies semiotic instability, shaping meaning not only through understanding but also through misunderstanding, playful manipulation and moulding the language to suit their purposes, ultimately reshapes our perception of reality. The symbiotic relationship between the trickster’s playful deceptive abilities and language is significant—both serve as transformative tools that influence how we perceive reality by introducing new possibilities. Therefore, language often becomes the primary instrument through which tricksters conduct their affairs. As evident in trickster narratives, the trickster’s adeptness at manipulating information, situations, and characters, using linguistic ambiguity, language games, and rhetoric deception to their advantage, outsmarting adversaries and maneuvering their way through any circumstance, often through seemingly innocuous conversations, highlights the trickster’s mastery of linguistic skills, making them uniquely captivating in their playfulness. Consequently, the trickster serves as a constant reminder of how acts of destabilisation, including linguistic ones, and playfulness serve as means to challenge discourse practices.

The trickster’s playful deceitfulness can be regarded as a unique form of duplicity. While conventional deception typically involves straightforward lying, the duplicity enacted by the trickster implies a form of double-dealing through their playful cunning manoeuvres. This also connotes a sense of duality, characterised as a quality of being twofold, and in the case of the trickster, often manifold, as elucidated by Gates’ Signifying Theory, viewing language as a game playfully put in use as a powerful liberating tool by the trickster’s rhetoric trickery. In other words, tricksters often appear to signify something while the true meaning arises from the interplay of the loosened components within the systems of signification.

By unleashing meaning that leads to reconfiguration of various systems, including those of signification, the trickster fundamentally embodies a critical spirit that is inherently liberatory due to playfulness.

TRICKSTER AND GATES' SIGNIFYING GAMES

In their various guises ranging from the selfish buffoon to the cultural hero – as discussed by Michael P. Carroll in his article ‘The Trickster as Selfish-Buffoon and Culture Hero’ (1984) – from the taboo breaker to the sacred figure, and the profane fool to the semi-god, the trickster embodies a non-heroic persona often pitted against more formidable adversaries. Their acts of defiance towards authority, their skilful trickery, and their interaction with the audience hinge on their linguistic prowess, portraying the trickster as a linguistic agent infused with rhetorical energy. Injecting humour, irony, and paradoxes into discourse, the trickster capitalises on the polyvalence of language and fluidity of meaning within the signifying system. Functioning as a bricoleur, the trickster adeptly repurposes anything at their disposal as a tool for schemes, whether it is bodily waste (Pelton 1980) or their phallus (Radin 1956) to confound opponents. Yet, when tangible resources are lacking, language becomes the trickster’s most potent device. Often the essence of the trickery lies in manipulating signifying processes in situations when the trickster dupes opponents into believing that they are speaking on one level of meaning while the meaning is two-folded. Misinterpretation or failure to decode the trickster’s speech frequently results in the overthrowing, outsmarting, and subverting the initial power dynamics. Henry Louis Gates coins the term “trick of mediation” or even “antimediation” to describe this rhetorical trickery, wherein signifying processes are twisted into subversive tropes that playfully engage with dominant discourses (*The Signifying Monkey* 1988: 56). This trickster strategy serves as a response to overbearing discourse, challenging and destabilising entrenched power structures.

In African American literary criticism, the trickster archetype has been utilised as a means to subvert the system of racial oppression from within. Given that African American authors were compelled to navigate within a linguistic and rhetorical framework that marginalised minorities to the cultural status of the *other*, the central question became how to challenge this system when the available signs within predominantly reflected the perspectives of the oppressors. Audre Lorde expresses the situation as that in which “the master’s tool never dismantle the master’s house” (‘Age, Race, Class, and Sex’, 1984: 123). However, Gates delves into the idea that the master’s house could indeed be dismantled using his own tools if those tools were employed unconventionally. This concept is central to Gates’ theory of Signifying in Black literature, which heavily relies on the trickster archetype. Gates derives his theory from the trickster Monkey, a figure present in many African American myths. In these tales, the Monkey consistently outwits the Lion, who represents authority and control being the King of the Jungle. However, the trickster Monkey succeeds in outwitting the Lion by using figurative language, speaking in symbolic code that the literal-minded Lion misunderstands. In other

words, because the Monkey's speech is misinterpreted by the Lion, the trickster Monkey is capable to signify upon the Lion, which leads the Lion to suffer the consequences of his folly. As Gates puts it, "the Monkey dethrones the Lion only because the Lion cannot read the nature of his discourse" (85). In this way, the Monkey uses the Lion's language but is able to reverse the Lion's superior status as the King of the Jungle. This interactive process of communication between the Monkey and the Lion, as Gates explains, operates as the "functional equivalent" for the mechanism that Gates calls "the Signifying Monkey" (1988: 52).

Gates contends that this mechanism is at work within Black literature, enabling the subversion of oppressive systems from within. His theory of Signifying heavily relies on unconventional linguistic strategies such as double talk, revealing the fluidity of meaning that undermines power structures from within. It becomes evident that the trickster, lacking physical superiority and privilege, relies on creativity to subvert hegemonic power structures. Instead of attempting to overpower oppressive systems by force, the marginalised employs cunning tactics. In essence, the trickster tradition aims to challenge dominant structures from within by pushing the boundaries of acceptable thought, thus redefining these boundaries and expanding the limits of both thought and action. Consequently, the trickster introduces a fresh perspective and a different mode of thinking, ultimately bringing about a shift in societal paradigms and fostering change. Therefore, the trickster tradition remains profoundly significant for societies and individuals, particularly during times of crisis. It is clear that the trickster tradition keeps serving transformative functions not only within religious, artistic, and entertainment spheres but also within scientific domains.

In his book *The Signifying Monkey*, Gates elaborates on the notion of Signifying, viewed as a unique mode of discourse related to other African tricksters like Eshu in Yoruba cultures (Nigeria) and Legba in Fon tribes (Benin). He discusses their significance within African American speech as a means of resistance within language, serving to reclaim identities and subject positions. As Gates explains, the Signifying Monkey, a creation of the New World, has derived from the African mythological trickster figures. Characterised by ambivalence, elusiveness, and slipperiness, the act of Signifying has become emblematic of African American rhetorical artistry. Although the term has accrued diverse interpretations and layers of meaning, at its core, it can be understood as a tactic employed in verbal sparring involving veiled meaning, often through indirect means. This process represents an alternative form of communication embedded within various discourses. Thus the term Signifying implies a form of double-talk and linguistic trickery, yet, as Gates acknowledges, it also defies precise definition.

Gates' research is partly grounded in Roger D. Abrahams' exploration of African American folklore, presented in *Deep Down in the Jungle: Negro Narrative Folklore from the Streets of Philadelphia* from 1964. Abrahams primarily interprets the act of Signifying as a set of rhetorical techniques, and describes the act of Signifying as that which involves implying, provoking, boasting, or otherwise communicating indirectly. He describes Signifying as a verbal art that "can mean any number of things", however, "it certainly refers to

the trickster's ability to talk with great innuendo, to carp, cajole, and lie" (Abrahams 1981: 51). It can also involve talking around a subject without directly addressing it. Gates expands on Abrahams' perspective by offering a variety of synonyms for Signifying such as: "talking shit, woofing, spouting, mucky muck, boogerbang, beating your gums, talking smart, putting down, putting on, playing, sounding, telling lies, shaglag, marking, schucking, jiving, jitterbugging, bugging, mounting, charging, cracking, harping, rapping, bookooing, low-rating, smart-talking" (1988: 77-78, emphasis in original). In essence, the crux of Signifying lies in its indirect mode of expression. To effectively Signify, the encoded message must be intentionally veiled within a more apparent one. This dual-layered approach to communication renders the act of Signifying as a form of play, which foregrounds the significance of the playful manner within encoding and decoding processes. Gates observes that "Esu's mouth, from which the audible word proceeds, sometimes appears double; his discourse, metaphorically, is double-voiced" (7). Noting that Esu's speech is being double-voiced, often playing upon itself and containing multiple layers of meaning, Gates points out that it is for this reason that sculptures depict the trickster with two mouths. Additionally, Gates emphasises that Signifying pertains to the manner or style rather than signifying a specific thing. One engages in Signifying through a particular mode of expression or communication or as Gates puts it, "one Signifies in *some way*" (78, emphasis in original).

Gates' theory seems to be rooted in the poststructuralist concept of deconstruction and its way of thinking, which posits that inherent ideologies entrenched in language condition our experiences. Moreover, this deconstructive viewpoint unveils that despite our yearning for a stable, fixed meaning in interpretative practices, the mechanism of language is inherently unstable, with the signifier consistently deferring meaning. Consequently, reality is perceived, shaped, and subjected to diverse perspectives, as evidenced by what deconstructionists term discourse. The deconstructive perspective, asserting that reality is language-determined, underscores that expectations, beliefs, and values are not discovered but rather constructed by language. Similarly, meaning is not inherent in a text but rather emerges through linguistic operations reflecting beliefs and values. Gates' conception of Signifying appears to align with this deconstructive outlook as he also emphasises the ambiguous, unstable, decentring, and dynamic nature of language that moulds reality and meaning. Gates' theory likewise reveals a meticulously constructed signifying system that engages with the complexities of language and addresses issues of representation and power dynamics. However, it is important to note that while discursive strategies like intertextuality, polyglossia, and narrative fragmentation employed by postmodern writers that aim to challenge singular viewpoints and subject positions may share common ground with the trickster tradition, unlike the self-referential postmodernism, the trickster tradition, actively engaging with the audience, aims at a transformative function. In other words, unlike postmodernism, the trickster tradition fosters vitality and innovation, ushering in new possibilities and changes through its playfully dialogic interactions with audiences.

The operations and functions within the act of Gates' Signifying processes are relevant to the trickster's performances, who functioning as a linguistic bricoleur, engages in such acts as verbal deceiving and linguistic trick-playing. Gates emphasises the importance of multiplicity, a concept he traces back to the trickster figure Eshu, whom he regards as embodying indeterminacy within the Signifying process. This indeterminacy is manifested through rhythmic or pattern elements and within the act of interpretation itself. Within Gates' Signifying framework, the trickster can be seen as more than just a character but also as a trope, serving as a narrative device or a mode of language usage for coding and decoding multi-layered meaning. As Gates asserts, the Signifying Monkey serves as the progenitor of Signifying – a rhetorical strategy not aimed at providing information but rather on engaging in playful signifying dynamics, in Gates' words, "a practice that is not engaged in the game of information-giving" but instead, "turns on the play and chain of signifiers" (1988: 52). In this role, the trickster acts as both a facilitator and designer of linguistic play, as this article proposes further below.

By adding complex layers of meaning and implication to the system of signification that serves the privileged, the subjugated have adapted and personalised the system to meet their needs – the action of personalisation of the system design in this context expands to refer to game theories, which undoubtedly situates the trickster within a context of play and consequently, the Play Theory. Furthermore, when it comes to the literary tradition, Gates emphasises that the concept of Signifying is intrinsically intertextual, as "intertextuality represents a process of repetition and revision" (Gates 1988: 82), and here I would add, of substitution and appropriation, which are aligned with the Play Theory, providing a further link with the trickster. To elucidate the Signifying processes further, Gates posits that Signifying entails "the figurative difference between the literal and the metaphorical, between surface and latent meaning", as it "presupposes an 'encoded' intention to say one thing but to mean quite another" (82), indicating a form of a language game and performative play that also posits the trickster within the Play Theory. Although Gates primarily discusses the act of Signifying within the context of African American literary tradition, the concept of Signifying, understood as linguistic and semiotic play, is equally applicable within other contexts. When the trickster, identified by Hynes as a trick-player and by Gates as a player of Signifying processes is approached through the lens of the Play Theory, the trickster's role as a cultural transformer who invites into play and playing indicates that the trickster is not only a trick-player or a player of Signifying but also, and fundamentally so, a facilitator and a designer of play.

TRICKSTER AS FACILITATOR AND DESIGNER OF PLAY

Regarding the connection between the trickster's critical spirit and their transformative function, their acts of deception and trickery, and the systems they engage with one is drawn to Michel Foucault's assertion that some of the most influential forces shaping and perpetuating systems of power are the inherent

games within discourse (*Madness and Civilisation* 2005). Ludwig Wittgenstein explicitly refers to these discursive frameworks as *language games*, as comprehensively summarised in Jean-François Lyotard's interpretation:

What [Wittgenstein] means by this term is that each of the various categories of utterance can be defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put—in exactly the same way as the game of chess is defined by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them (*The Postmodern Condition* 1984: 10).

What follows then is that rules serve as boundaries that delineate the permissible moves within any given context, including language as a tool of discourse. Rules then can be perceived as a form of control; thus, challenging or violating these rules with a critical intention may be interpreted as an act of resistance against control. When it comes to communication, adhering to truthfulness may be seen as compliance with the rules and alignment with the system whereas duplicity could be regarded as an act of resistance. However, it is important to note that deceit devoid of a critical spirit lacks liberatory potential, just as resistance alone may not necessarily be liberatory. For resistance to attain such cultural and societal liberation, it must engage in a dialogue with a broader discourse and become integrated into a larger structure that allows it to actualise its liberating potential. Therefore, the playful duplicity of the trickster differs from mere deception precisely because it embodies this critical spirit within its playfulness. In other words, because the trickster embodies a critical spirit, their performed duplicity serves as a playful form of resistance. The various deceptive language games and linguistic tactics that reshape and transform, the manifold duplicitous semiotic games played out by the trickster in response to dominant discursive power structures indeed serve a critical purpose and perform a critical function. In fact, as previously discussed, Gates' notion of Signifying involves such language games that perform through a double voice, executing the critical function of empowering those who lack discursive authority. It is within these language games when the intended meaning may be subtly concealed and the signified may be hiding in plain sight that allows the signifying processes function precisely with the aim to undermine hegemonic systems of dominance. Therefore, to excel at trick-playing, one must possess a deep understanding of the rules of the play and the boundaries of the game. The trickster, in this regard, is thus not only a proficient player but also a skilled facilitator and designer of play who invites the audience into their transformative play.

The trickery and deceit of the trickster appear in many guises, each however reflecting the inherent inclination of the trickster, the trick-player, towards playfulness, both manifesting and being elicited within the audience. The trickster's trickery operates as a vehicle for the trickster epistemology that privileges the heuristics of showing and discovery over the didactics. While the trick-player may appear to do little more than playing around and performing meaningless trickery, the trickster's play hold profound significance for societal and individual change by facilitating transformations. The trickster's games are not mere frivolities or innocent entertainment; rather, they serve as a platform for

social and personal change. As the ultimate player, but also the facilitator and designer of play, the trickster invites participation in play by creating a space for play where boundaries and constraints are challenged, perspectives expand, and established structures dismantled within playful settings. In *Literary Gaming*, Astrid Ensslin highlights that playing per se “triggers creativity and innovation... that may lead to the (temporary) reversal of power” (2014: 19). This concept resonates with what Mikhail M. Bakhtin discusses in *Rabelais and His World* as the carnivalesque subversion of institutionalised conventions in a suspension of time when authority and power relations are temporarily reversed. Similarly, the trickster’s play exposes the underlying facades that the domineering systems have in play by manipulating the rules and structures of play. It is in playing and through play that individuals confront personal or collective challenges, exerting control over these affairs in a playful way and within the safe environment of playing. Play empowers to experiment and simply play around, and to mould the play world according to preferences. Playing creates a space for an appropriation of events and structures, for mocking and trivialising mechanisms of control. Within this playful realm, individuals can explore, question, and undermine established structures in a playful manner.

In his work *Play Matters* (2014), game theorist Miguel Sicart delves into the essence and significance of games, playing, playfulness, and game design. Although oriented on the nature and function of games in general, Sicart’s studies shed light on the divergent nature of playing and offer insights that extend beyond the realm of games to illuminate various forms of play, including that of the trickster. The trickster, as the quintessential player of tricks, also emerges as a facilitator and designer of play, inviting the audience to participate within a play in order to foster change. The trickster’s play emerges as a form of play that enhances introspection, creativity, and flexibility, fostering processes of transformation. Similar to language, every form of play operates within a set of rules; indeed, play cannot exist without rules. However, akin to linguistic rules, the rules of play are not immutable; they are subject to reinterpretation and manipulation. As Sicart reminds us, in games the rules are just “another prop that can be targeted by the transformative capacities of play” as players develop various strategies and tactics, interpreting, creatively appropriating, and adapting the rules to suit their purposes as the play unfolds (8). Thus, within the act of playing, participants appropriate and mould the rules, rendering them flexible and open to manipulation and adaptation over the course of play. Engaging in play reveals the intricate interplay between reality and possibility, creating a space where alternative experiences can be explored and where individuals can examine their roles and actions within both the realm of play and the broader reality such as who they are, what plays they perform, and what plays they are allowed to perform in life. Through play, hidden practices and values underlying everyday life are brought to light, fostering deeper understanding and reflection. Sicart proposes that play liberates us from moral norms while also making us conscious of their existence, influence, and significance. Through play, we have the opportunity to challenge and breach boundaries, and by such acts, often attention is drawn to them, revealing the

structures that coin our realities as being fundamental or else meaningless constructs.

Similar to the player involved in playing who is empowered to examine and potentially personalise its rules, the archetypal trickster who breaks taboos and disrupts norms to illustrate the consequences of such actions, thereby underscores the significance or arbitrariness of established rules within systems. In ‘Inconclusive Conclusions: Tricksters’, Hynes emphasises the importance of the trickster’s role in challenging rules, which can serve to either dismantle or reaffirm them within the system: “trickster myths can be a powerful teaching device utilizing deeply humorous negative examples that reveal and reinforce the societal values that are being broken” (1997a, 207). Thus, the act of playing itself shares characteristics with the trickster as it is likewise inherently liberating, yet it also illuminates the constraints, boundaries, and norms – both internal and external – which both resist and contribute to order and freedom. Sicart observes that “play can be dangerous” because it stands in stark contrast to the utilitarian, mechanical mind-set promoted by cultural industries (2014: 2). While trickster scholarship agrees that the mythical trickster is inherently playful, however only Hynes briefly touches upon this subject and acknowledges the disruptive potential of the trickster play within established systems. By describing the trickster as a “metaplayer and revealer”, who introduces novel perspectives into systems, and as this article argues through design and invitation to play, the trickster embodies a threatening force to those in control of the system (Hynes 1997a: 202). Hynes observes that as a metaplayer, the trickster’s play combines both “entertainment and education”, where amidst the laughter of the audience, “a deeper unfolding is at work” (205). This connection between play and awareness becomes apparent in the observation that tricksters often associate foolishness and play with wisdom. According to Hynes, “fools and tricksters seem to have an affinity for *linking foolishness and play with wisdom and work*” and both “the foolishness innate in us” and “the wine of wisdom fermenting within us” need expression through play, or as Hynes puts it, “need to be discharged through *games*” (206, emphasis added). Thus, playing leads to a divergent form of awareness and understanding, creating space for what in their article ‘Historical Overview of Theoretical Issues: the problem of the Trickster’ Doty and Hynes term “the transrational” (1997: 30). It is transrational precisely because as Hugo Rahner puts it, “to play is to yield oneself to a kind of magic, to enact to oneself the absolute other, to pre-empt the future, to give the lie to the inconvenient world of facts” (*Man at Play* 1967: 65, cited in Hynes 1997a: 214). While engaged in playing, novel possibilities and alternatives might emerge, with a potential to shape the reality outside of play. This transrational aspect of playing, which Hynes refers to in terms of metaplay, is perceived as “*irrational and threatening* by the orderly and established that may seek to control or suppress it” because “metaplay is fundamentally closer to the inchoate powers of creativity from which ordered social constructs have themselves originated and from which new constructs will arise” and therefore, “such metaplay can easily be perceived as *a menace* to those who represent the existing social constructs” (Hynes 1997a: 214, emphasis added). In other words, the act of playing taps into creative forces from

which social constructs originate and evolve, posing a threat to those who uphold existing social norms and structures.

What follows then is that the inherent freedom within play, brimming with subversive, deconstructive, and transformative potentials, poses a threat to established systems and closed structures. It is not surprising that the playful trickster, whose performances challenge various aspects of societal norms, exposing their instability and susceptibility to change, is perceived a threat to the established order and its inherent logic. Sicart's depiction of play as a dynamic interplay – “a dance between creation and destruction, between creativity and nihilism” or as a “movement between order and chaos” (2014: 3) – further embeds the trickster as a player, who as Radin reminds us, is “at one and the same time creator and destroyer” (1956: xxiii). Consequently, play can be seen as a rebellious endeavour that appropriates the acts of creation and destruction, tapping into innate desires to create as well as destroy, and by oscillating between the desire for order and the *jouissance* for destruction, it gives rise to the Nietzschean Apollonian and Dionysian forces.

Regarded within trickster scholarship as a manifestation of the Freudian *Id* within the personal unconscious and as the Jungian archetypal figure of the collective unconscious, the trickster spirit embodies a playful essence inherent within each individual. This inclination, underpinned by the Nietzschean Apollonian and Dionysian impulses to create and destroy indeed manifests as an act of play in playing. Nietzsche's concept of play is rooted in an impulse, characterised by a will with its “capacity to both create and destroy” (Spariosu 1982; cited in Ensslin 2014: 21). In *Ecce Homo*, published in 1908, Friedrich Nietzsche underscores the significance of irrational play as that which challenges rational constructs upheld by Kantianism: “I know of no other manner of dealing with great tasks, than as *play*; this, as a sign of greatness, is an essential prerequisite” (Nietzsche 2004: 53, emphasis in original). Unlike in Kant, Nietzsche's notion of play surpasses reason and ethics. For Nietzsche, play is a dynamic notion that not only encompasses the entirety of meaning of life but also paradoxically embraces destructive uncertainty. Nietzsche views the entire world as governed by play because, in his view, the human world is akin to Baudrillardian Simulacrum and the primal impulses aligned with play, ingrained in human psyche, constitute a fundamental aspect of human existence. In his attempt to extend the significance of play and game beyond Nietzsche's framework, Martin Heidegger introduces the idea of human reality as a game of being. In his work *Being and Time*, Heidegger posits that human existence is fundamentally play – a game of being, rooted in our engagement with the world, or what he terms *Weltspiel* (translated as the world play – being both players and playthings). The game of being holds significance across all domains of life, impacting the routine experiences of ordinary individuals as profoundly as it does broader social and political contexts. Additionally, this existential game of being is deeply intertwined with language, serving as a medium through which human reality is both constructed and dismantled. Thus, the concept of a play as being human signifies the essence of human existence, mediated through our engagement in life

through play, and play as having the power to construct and deconstruct reality. The archetypal player, acting upon the world through play therefore mirrors the human experience in life, which rooted in *Weltspiel*, is inherently predisposed to play. Consequently, playing is not merely a trivial, pastime activity but a mode of being and interacting with the world – a manner that manifests what it means to be human and what it means to be in the world as human. It is through playing that we exist and we play to be because playing provides the possibility of being, as Heidegger observes. Playing embodies the essence of human existence. Jean-Paul Sartre likewise articulates this idea, suggesting that “the desire to play is fundamentally the desire to be” (*Being and Nothingness* 1966: 742). We engage with the world through play, utilising playing as a vehicle for self-exploration and understanding.

Engaging in play is reflective by being expressive of whom we are but also it is destructive as well as productive by fostering novel insights, thereby promoting transformations and changes. Game theorist Klaus Meier highlights that play provides “opportunities to explore alternative modes of awareness” and fosters knowledge of “radically different possibilities perhaps not readily available elsewhere” (*Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* 1988: 194). Additionally, playing is also deeply personal. Playing is introspective, revealing aspects of one’s personality, including beliefs, biases, dislikes, and preferences as individuals immerse themselves in playful activities. Playing also becomes a kind of commentary on both the external and the internal because “in disrupting the normal state of affairs by being playful, we can go beyond fun... [and] reveal the inner workings of the context that we inhabit” (Sicart 2014: 15). Consequently, playing serves as a reflection on “a trace of character that defines us” (Sicart, 18). As a force for self-expression and introspection, playing fosters understanding of oneself and the world around, and by this understanding that which emerges within play, playing may potentially lead to the dissolution of old patterns and the formation of new ones.

Sicart underscores the transformative nature of play, asserting that the experiences gained through play leave a lasting impact on us: “whatever we do in play stays with us” (2014: 18). Thus, play serves as a medium for self-expression, revealing our being in the world and our making sense of it. Play operates as a deeply introspective force, shedding light on our identities. Moreover, play is both productive and transformative, fostering exploration of new ideas and possibilities while embodying both creative and destructive energies that manifest our attachments to existing structures and systems while also sparking the joy of being able to go beyond these limitations. The archetypal trickster, the ultimate player, explores these forces within us during the act of playing and acts as “an archaic speculum mentis”, an ancient mirror of the mind, conveying wisdom from the depths of the unconscious to the conscious through play in the manner of playing (Radin 1956: xxiv).

Playfulness is empowering, holding a transformative power. While playing is understood as a performance, a set of actions acted out with purpose, playfulness embodies an attitude, a mind-set, and a way of thinking, feeling, behaving, and

interacting with the world, reflecting a playful state of being. Thus, playfulness can be described as an approach to activities, a mode of engagement within various contexts, and notably, as a projection of traits that are characteristic of playing into non-play contexts. Playfulness is then an attitude of interacting with the world in a manner that mirrors the spirit of tricksters. Given that play contexts are not only defined but also often defy strict structures and rules, projecting and infusing elements of playfulness into non-play settings could be seen as a carnivalesque attack on systems that rigidly follow the dictates and rules of structures. For example, within the realm of language as a signifying system bound by rules and structures, playful expressions like puns, satire, irony, language games, and Gates' Signifying practice may pose a threat to the established system from which these emerge. In this context, the present article argues that the archetypal trick-player serves to awaken playfulness, which then by eliciting a projection of elements of play into non-play contexts, unsettles established norms; therefore, the trickster's facilitation of playfulness manifests as a threatening force to system designs with a potential to bring about changes.

By scaffolding playfulness within non-play contexts, often downplaying the seriousness of the situation by creating a space for de-personalisation of the audience/player within play contexts, and by setting up and inviting to play, the archetypal trickster aims to disrupt conventional structures and rules, creating a carnivalesque atmosphere that challenges the status quo. This lifts the audience from strict systems and transforms individuals into liberated players, allowing them to exert control over contexts, and by appropriating that which is not intended for playing, the trickster paves the way for subversion. Moreover, the trickster's scaffolding inversion of non-play situations into playful ones further underscores the transformative potential of playfulness. When it comes to the archetypal trickster, the feature of playfulness is further linked to the trickster trait that Hynes identifies as being a situation-invertor, in this particular context, as converting non-play contexts into play. As Sicart suggests, "playfulness frees us from the dictates of purpose through the carnivalesque inheritance of play" (2014: 29). Therefore, by playfully appropriating domains typically governed by strict structures and systems, the non-play contexts become liberated by play. Ultimately, the archetypal trickster is an agent of liberation, empowering individuals and societies because as Gerald Vizenor observes in *Trickster of Liberty*, "the trickster liberates the mind" (1988: xi). The playful trickster's endorsement of play becomes the epitome of the potential for liberation. Contrary to what Vizenor labels as *manifest manners*, practices that uphold and perpetuate rigid, static, and authoritative truths, the trickster's design and invitation into play serves as a liberating force, challenging these established norms. By introducing and facilitating playfulness into non-play contexts, the trickster creates an alternative space that fosters resistance through playful modes. This playful resistance serves as a means to challenge and subvert entrenched systems, ultimately paving the way for transformation across various paradigms by delivering possibilities through playfulness.

Furthermore, playfulness holds a personal significance. Integrating playfulness into non-playful contexts allows individuals to inject their subjective

viewpoints and creative expressions into formalised settings. Akin to Bakhtinian carnivalesque, playfulness opens space for a critique of official structures strictly designed. This infusion of personal expression transforms impersonal, non-play contexts and environments into spaces allowing for individuality and creativity. As Sicart suggests, playfulness imbues the realms beyond play with liberty and individual self-expression: “That is why playfulness matters: it brings the essential qualities of freedom and personal expression to the world outside play” (2014: 30). Thus, the concept of playfulness extends beyond game studies, with play and playfulness playing a crucial role in defining human existence. “We are because we play, but also because we can be playful” (Sicart, 33-4). Viewing the act of playing and the attitude of playfulness as manifestations of being human, as imbued with transformative potential, and as an avenue for exploration and expression, which are inherently human, elevates play from being solely an entertainment.

Just as a game, or in the case of the trickster, a trick played out, provides an avenue for channelling play through form, so does the trickster’s play serve as a conduit for playfulness, with the trickster acting as both facilitator and designer of play. By this point, it has been established that playing is a transformative endeavour, involving appropriation and negotiation, creation and destruction, as well as expression and reflection. In this light, the act of creating play becomes a creative demonstration of agency akin to what Foucault refers to as *pouvoir*—the sense of being able—and in this case as a designer of play, as being able to direct play; or as Sicart puts it, “to harness, control, steer and produce play for intended purposes” (2014: 86). Designing play revolves around the interplay between the structure/form of play and the systems design, with the crafted systems intended to engage players and the structured form as expressive within the confines of the intended design to convey play through systems. This perspective portrays the form of play as a closed system that frames, organises, defines, and regulates playing, constraining the emergence of play within the system and limiting the roles of players to predefined positions. This reveals that it is the system, rather than the acts of appropriation and negotiation, that gives rise to playing, with play being designed by controlling forces of the system. However, the play designed by the trickster transcends the boundaries of conventional play systems as it is fashioned to operate through processes that are appropriative, creative, context-driven, disruptive, and deeply personal.

The trickster’s designed play therefore prioritises the act of playing itself over the form of the system designs. As a designer of play, the trickster establishes a framework that initiates the process of playing without confining it within the structure. Instead, the trickster allows other elements within the network to come into play, fostering an environment where playing becomes an act of creation, negotiation, appropriation, and expression. Consequently, the trickster emerges as a play designer who constructs a context and opens up liminal spaces for uninhibited free playing to flourish, encouraging exploration through engagement. Given that the trickster’s play involves appropriation and negotiation, the design for play shifts towards establishing a context and creating a flexible space that enables appropriation, expression, and interaction to occur. This approach invites players to

interact with forms rather than adhering to a predetermined system design for limited play. The trickster's play thus arises from the dynamic interplay between control and chaos, with the act of playing itself as an invitation to manipulation of form. In such play, the pleasure arises from appropriating these forms, breaking them up, and distorting them to play with. Within the design principles of play, the disruptive nature of the trickster's play design may also be seen as aiming to "shock, alarm, and challenge conventions", aligning certain designed games with activities inherently associated with the trickster (Sicart 2014: 15). Nevertheless, the trickster's approach to play design revolves around the essence of playing itself, in other words, it is play-centred rather than designer-centred or system-centred. The primary objective of playing is to cultivate freedom through acts such as appropriation, expression, and negotiation among players rather than adhering to restrictions imposed and limitations dictated by the designer. As the designer of play, the trickster functions as an elicitor of playfulness and a facilitator of play, serving as a catalyst that sets play contexts and invites participants to engage in a playful exploration within an open form that is not dictated or imposed by the designer or the system but rather relinquished for the benefit of those involved in playing. Consequently, the trickster functions not only as a player but also as a facilitator and designer of play, seen not as the controller of play but rather as that which establishes and unleashes play into the world, allowing play to speak for itself and be spoken through.

As a play designer, the trickster also corresponds with the characteristics outlined in Hynes's six-point typology, particularly as a situation-invertor by inverting non-play contexts into playful ones, and as a bricoleur, adept at assembling materials for the purpose of play. In this sense, a game designer must possess a deep familiarity with the materials intended to be transformed for the purpose of playing, demonstrate creativity in manipulating them, and have the ability to appropriate and repurpose that which is not intended for playing into objects of play. The archetypal bricoleur trickster thus showcases their skill in appropriating, manipulating, and transforming elements (objects, subjects, systems, etc.) into play objects, demonstrating creative competence by transforming and introducing novel concepts into the world through free play. What is more, in their role of play facilitator and designer, the trickster manifests a thorough understanding of playing and plays—skilfulness in creating subject positions for the players invited to engage in trickster play and mastery over the objects appropriated and manipulated for play. Since design typically involves creation of something new, the art of play design can be seen as a socially transformative endeavour. By introducing novel forms of play, designers disrupt the current state of affairs, mediating fresh interactions between players and the world, thereby challenging established norms and systems. Hence, the trickster, as a play designer, has the ability to disrupt the perception of a stable reality by employing their skills as a play designer that re-designs the traditional rules into novel and often unconventional systems. This process of deconstruction and reconstruction through play can be viewed as "weapons to undermine and overcome the restrictions of mainstream policies and confront them with alternative forms of expression"

(Ensslin 2014: 26). Sicart describes playing as a dual process: both playing within systems and playing with systems, signifying “a dance of resistance and appropriation, of creation and destruction of order” (Sicart 2014: 98). This view aligns with Ensslin’s perspective, suggesting that playing can serve as a tool for subverting restrictive norms and promoting alternative expressions. Here I would like to add that the notion of a system refers to a variety of systems, including language, which identifies the trickster as a player but also, keeping in mind Gates’ Signifying practices, inviting the audience into play, marking the trickster as undoubtedly a facilitator and designer of play. Ultimately, understanding play as a form of rebellion and transformation underscores its potential for reshaping systems and challenging established patterns. The trickster, as both the player and the facilitator and designer of play, embodies this rebellious spirit, inviting us to participate in playfulness. By embracing the pleasure of creating and breaking rules, playing holds the power to redefine systems and system thinking, and fosters expressions of playfulness, revealing its inherent transformative potential. In essence, by inviting into a designed play, the trickster shakes up established ways of thinking and acting, fostering alternative perspectives and possibilities.

CONCLUSION

The significance of the trickster’s subversive function has been questioned by some who argue that every system inherently allows for transgression, neglecting the importance of play and playing that frames the trickster’s unique epistemology. Drawing from Bakhtin’s analysis of the carnivalesque, where he explores how cultural norms are temporarily suspended during festivals, these critics seem to overlook the fact that the playful trickster, who is by this point also identified as a designer and facilitator of play, is restricted by neither the time allowed for transgression nor by an approved system that would dictate the way of transgression. Moreover, it could be argued that the transgressions permitted within a system are often designed to maintain the system’s stability. While there might be some overlaps between the trickster tradition and Bakhtinian carnivalesque in terms of both serving as outlets for subversion, within the context of play and the transformative nature of playing, I contend that the trickster tradition surpasses Bakhtinian carnivalesque precisely due to its inherent transformative potential through play and playing, not bound to space or time allocated for playing. By analogy, Bakhtinian carnivalesque functions within the structured system much like an alter ego functions in relation to the ego, aimed at maintaining equilibrium and perpetuating the system. However, the playful trickster operates within the structured system more akin to how the Jungian shadow operates within the ego, disrupting the system and catalysing its renewal and regeneration through playful subversion. In this view, while Bakhtinian carnivalesque serves to sustain the system by providing a mechanism for monitoring and regulating social norms, the trickster functions to rejuvenate the system, which occurs precisely through play. Additionally, while Bakhtinian carnivalesque represents a dialectical tension between the formal and informal aspects of society, a dichotomy often found in

Western philosophy where the advocacy of one side necessitates the projection of its antithesis to maintain balance, the primordial archetypal trickster, anomalous and ambiguous, embodying both thesis and antithesis, structure and anti-structure, expands these boundaries through play and allows for greater exploration having a transformative function.

In the realm of the trickster archetype, play and playfulness serve as powerful tools for both subversion and transformation. Play, with its inherent freedom and creativity, allows challenging established norms and structures, revealing their limitations, and inviting alternative perspectives. Through playfulness, the trickster disrupts the status quo, prompting individuals to question and embrace unconventional thinking. Moreover, play enables to navigate complex social dynamics. In essence, play and playfulness are integral to the trickster's function to provoke reflection, inspire change, and ultimately, redefine the boundaries of possibility within society. The proposed facet of the trickster archetype, drawing insights from studies in game theories and exploring concepts of playing and playfulness, offers a fresh lens through which to view the trickster as not only a player but also as the one that actively facilitates and designs play experiences, drawing audiences into playfulness. By aligning the playful trickster with the principles of game theories, which highlight the importance of play and playfulness within trickster tradition, this addition to the existing typology proposed by Hynes broadens our understanding of the enigmatic trickster figure.

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READING THE SHAPING EFFECTS OF MYTHS ON SOCIETY AROUND THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ENGINEERING: THE CASE OF ALTAI CREATION MYTH

UĞUR DURMAZ

ABSTRACT

In this article, the *Altai Creation Myth* compiled by Wilhelm Radloff will be analyzed around the concept of social engineering, as used in social sciences. The aforementioned texts collection was preferred because it is widely known and contains a wide processing. In the light of the expressions in the myth text, it will be discussed whether the creators of this structure had any attempt to direct or shape the society. In the light of questions such as why myths are produced by the society, how they are used, how they affect the group structure, it will be investigated whether social control is attempted to be achieved and whether an engineering is applied to the society as a result. As a result of these discussions, myths will be read differently from an interdisciplinary perspective and the results of what kind of effects such products have on primitive people will be explained.

Keywords: Myth, Altai Creation Myth, Social Control, Social Engineering, Folklore.

INTRODUCTION

Communities have internal and external factors in forming their unique characteristics. Group, people, community, society, nation, etc. united around a common goal. A number of elements that enable this unification of people called by many names or that distinguish them from other people have come from the past to the present. In the process of shaping the society, many internal and external factors such as geography, nature, climate, war, religion, education have been effective, while some of these factors have influenced spontaneous formation and change, while others have progressed under the leadership of a person or group around various benefits or interests. While there are many elements for influencing or being influenced in the limitlessness of communication possibilities for today's world, it can also be said that in the past, these had limited possibilities that could affect limited circles. At this point, it is clear that folklore elements are at the forefront in the formation of the unique characteristics of societies. Among these, social norms such as traditions, customs, habits and customs can be considered to be priority areas, but it is possible to see the narratives created by oral culture in the

basic structure that enables the formation and spread of these social norms. Therefore, myths in anonymous literature are important products for analyzing the shaping or engineering of society.

Societies have experienced transitions through the stages that constitute their unique structures in the time it has taken to reach their current state. While these transitions sometimes proceed around necessities in line with needs and conditions, sometimes they are realized with certain directions. The first term that comes to mind at the point of making these directives in a systematic way is social engineering. Social engineering can be defined as “a social discipline applied by states or any private structure/institution/individual; it can be expressed as the entire effort to influence social behaviors, attitudes and resources on a large scale.”¹ The fact that the term engineering, which is a mechanical term, is mentioned in the social sciences inevitably creates the idea that this term is used to build a more technical structure. Of course, the systematic shaping of societies can be done around certain mathematical systems in today’s world, but one of the most important fields that have helped to do this in a softer way from the past to the present is literature and art. At this point, social engineering can shape artistic activities, products, formations and the societies that produce and use them within their own world of ideas. “Social engineering has clear goals such as making changes in the demographic, social texture and historical structure of the society, directing and controlling its reactions, feelings, thoughts and desires. Within the framework of the task that we can call social engineering, the artist/writer also proposes models for the desired change and prepares the intellectual infrastructure in society.”²

In general, it is quite natural that in addition to some works of art produced by societies with aesthetic concerns, products that are produced about issues of general interest and cost the public are also evaluated under this category. There is definitely a producer of these products before the anonymization process, and it is highly likely that these producers have produced these products according to the general opinion of that period or according to their needs and wishes. The fact that these products have been accepted by the majority and passed down to this day, even if their names are not known, is an indication that the ideas, feelings and expressions in the products are accepted or have been accepted. Naturally, although it is not easy to demonstrate that this was done in a systematic way, it is seen that this was done with a systematic approach, especially in the genres created to exhibit the prototype, to show the exemplary structure, to convey the creation and to guide people with the reward-punishment mechanism, which we encounter in the readings around myths. At this point, the idea of keeping society under control is important for the purpose of managing the masses and keeping them together. At this point, the terms social control and propaganda, which are other auxiliary concepts that help to shape the individual and society according to the wishes, are also frequently used structures.

¹ Oğuzcan, 2023, p. 52.

² Kefeli, 2013, p. 28.

The concept of social control is a term used in many fields of social sciences and is generally used to shape the social structure, to keep the society away from determined bad practices or to direct the group where necessary. Social control is defined as the influence of society on the individual for certain behaviors, the regulation of the behavior of individuals and groups, the tools and situations used to maintain and maintain order or prevent deviant behaviors.³ Social control is also a means for people to come together and effectively achieve a sense of unity. Individuals accept and internalize the rules that are prominent in the community they belong to in order to gain access to the layers that are considered valuable according to the rules of the community. Through social control, individuals learn and transmit social norms and become united with the group.⁴ For this reason, social control is frequently used in the infrastructure as a means of enforcement in the social engineering structure. In general terms, it is seen as one of the main factors that ensure the control of the community within the framework of the rules determined in the operation of the reward-punishment mechanism.

Propaganda, another tool used to shape society, is one of the methods used both to manage the functioning of social control and to direct society more consciously and quickly towards the desired direction. "Propaganda is a conscious manipulation aimed at influencing individuals and controlling their behavior".⁵ The most important constructive identity in the functioning of propaganda is the authorities. Structures that emerge from the social structure and become intellectual leaders in ensuring structures such as order, harmony, prosperity and continuity in social life are accepted as authorities.⁶ Individuals, institutions, beliefs, etc. that are considered authorities can consciously direct people to their own thoughts, ideas or actions in order to strengthen and maintain their power. This situation is transmitted to people from higher positions in turn, and a consensus is formed that spreads from the lowest to the highest level of society.⁷ Propaganda, which feeds and facilitates social control mechanisms that stand as auxiliary elements of social engineering in shaping and managing society, has been used effectively from the past to the present. From this point of view, it is possible to examine the situation of the use of propaganda with social control mechanisms in myths, which are the first oral narratives of humanity, both in terms of engineering moves that shape the society and adapt it to the desired structure, and in the emergence and maintenance of norms such as traditions, customs, beliefs and practices that will be accepted by the general public.

1. PROMINENT FUNCTIONS OF MYTHS AS A SHAPER OF SOCIETY

Myths, which are the oldest of the oral culture products produced in human history from the primitive period until today, meet many needs of the society in general. As a result of the answers produced in the face of these needs, the function

³ Ün, 2022, p. 2.

⁴ Azimli & Coşun, 2023, p. 3.

⁵ Atabek, 2003, p. 5.

⁶ Büyükokutan Töret, 2017, p. 199.

⁷ Krech & Crutchfield, 1980, p. 279.

varies in the balance of need. Myths, which emphasize a few noteworthy points in the production of answers to the curiosity, fear, anxiety and expectations of primitive man, have generally emphasized the issues of scientific knowledge and belief, while influencing and shaping society through them.

When considering the connection between myths and scientific knowledge, it would be more accurate to adopt a perspective related to the contextual aspect and the requirements of the time, rather than a perspective in today's sense. Myths are clearly the result of the scientific curiosity of the primitive, especially in the sense that the structure that scientific knowledge responds to in today's sense helps to establish a cause-and-effect relationship in a more primitive way but with basically similar purposes. When we answer the questions of what, where, when, how, why and who in the context of today's experiments, observations and experiences, it is possible to say that primitive man sought answers to his inquiries out of fear and curiosity and found them in myths in a half-real, half-extraordinary way. At this point, myths are primitive man's interpretation and transmission of mysterious structures through symbols. In this way, it should be said that it not only makes sense of external events but also begins to form the meaning world of its own social structure and to ensure the formation of certain rules and acceptances.⁸ Although Malinowski⁹ defines myths as products that increase belief as well as daily utility rather than explanations aimed at satisfying scientific interest, even in doing so, the fact that myths seek answers to questions in general terms and establish rules as a result of reaching certain conclusions from there is a sign of an effort to make sense of the world and adapt to it. The fact that the human being who produces and uses myth has started to systematize all the important events that are important for his own life, no matter how small or big, to put them into rules, and his effort to make sense of the order around him has automatically brought him into the scientific framework.¹⁰ In this context, myths have a socially engineering and directing structure that shapes groups, societies and nations that enable the realization of shaping in the structure extending from individual to social.

When we look at the answers myths give to questions, it will be seen that the supernatural dominates. Of course, it is understandable that the production of knowledge is far from rationality in societies where the possibilities and methods within today's scientific framework are not developed. It is precisely here that the second area of emphasis of myths, belief and religious structure, emerges. When the groups that produced and used myths could not find a solution to their problems, they aimed to solve the problem by resorting to beings or entities whose existence is accepted in the transphysical structure. The main reason why the belief structure is so dominant in myths is perhaps the helplessness brought about by the limited possibilities here. As a result, primitive man tried to make his daily life more meaningful by involving extraordinary structures in order not to leave questions unanswered.

⁸ Bayat, 2005, p. 4.

⁹ Malinowski, 1998, p. 103.

¹⁰ Eliade, 2001, p. 21.

The connection of myths with belief and religion is one of their most important functions. Myths have been the answer to many questions as a result of the need to believe in the process of making sense of the world, especially for primitive man. Not only does it create a sense of curiosity, but it also supports various rituals and belief elements while providing social order by showing the influence of today's religions with this feature.¹¹ However, it is also clear that among the belief systems in primitive times, myths clearly did not constitute as systematic a structure as they do today. Of course, myths had some sanction or influence for the groups that knew and accepted this, but myths were more of a guiding principle in terms of giving meaning to the actions taken and providing a benefit in terms of foreseeing what might happen.¹² Thanks to their structures that can be evaluated from different perspectives, myths stand out and are used philosophically as a source of scientific knowledge and religiously as an example of the world of images, symbols and icons that convey the origin of life.¹³ From this point of view, it is known that myths are valuable in terms of belief for the societies that accept and use them in the process from ancient man to the present day, that they create various taboos, and that they also show people the aspects they should pay attention to in their lives as a guide. In fact, when this belief structure of myths is considered as a religion for certain societies, it forms the infrastructure of various beliefs in the process that remains to this day. Although the new religions replacing the old religions push them back, the minds of the people cannot act so quickly and sharply. For this reason, it is possible to see the returns of the myth world in social norms such as traditions, customs and traditions in the formation of folk beliefs in social memory.¹⁴ One reason why myths have such a contemporary impact is that they have fundamentally similar functions to the religious beliefs prevalent today. In order to make sense of the unknown world or the divine world, myths had the same purpose, just as today's religions provide examples or symbols. In both structures, the scarcity of explicit knowledge is striking, but the aim is to provide it through symbols and symbols that rely on interpretation to reach the truth.¹⁵ As a result of all this, myths form not only the belief structure of the individual world but also the belief structure of social groups and nations, affecting their lives and even shaping them clearly. The narratives that enter the mind through these texts settle here and help shape the lives of the believers, form the behavioral patterns of the group, help the authorities to gain administrative power or help people to shape themselves by entering into certain expectations.¹⁶

Social studies have shown that the shaping of humanity goes back to prehistoric times, when various ideas were given to society, and society was guided and changed.¹⁷ The consciousness of being a group has been effective in the

¹¹ Malinowski, 1998, p. 103.

¹² Park & Burgess, 2017, p. 117.

¹³ Sivri, 2022, p. 51.

¹⁴ Azimli & Coşun, 2023, p. 9.

¹⁵ Bayat, 2005, p. 79.

¹⁶ Göka, 2006, p. 63-64.

¹⁷ Oğuzcan, 2023, p. 53.

transition of people from individual to social structure, which means not only a certain mass, but also a group of people gathered around common goals and accepting similar things.¹⁸ As can be understood from this definition, in order to become a group, the commonalities of the community need to be found or produced. This is where social forming or engineering comes into play. The ability to manage or control the shaped society from a point can also be realized with the help of similar tools. Myths have become a shaping element as a result of these functions they fulfill in the societies they live in. It can be seen that society is also shaped in the light of different factors with myths becoming a guide or model by setting an example for people.¹⁹ Myths help people understand the relationship between the present and the past in their mental perception, and they are also products that can be examined in terms of seeing the formation codes of a community in a cultural sense. They are ideal narratives in terms of understanding the transformation, change and shaping of the cultural heritage of the community of interest from past to present.²⁰ Through the example of the Altai creation myth, the elements that shaped and guided the lives of the Turks in the primitive period will be examined and the questions of how oral culture products can be used in terms of social engineering and whether it is possible to direct communities in the desired way will be addressed.

2. THE IMPACT OF THE ALTAI CREATION MYTH IN SHAPING AND CONTROLLING SOCIETY

The Altai creation myth is an important piece of Turkish culture that has survived from the first examples of oral culture. This text, which has all the general characteristics of myths, basically describes the creation of the universe, the world and human beings, and conveys a series of events between God and Devil (Erlık) around the conflict of good and evil. A closer look at the structure of the text reveals messages and directions given to both individuals and society. At the same time, it is seen that the text makes certain contributions in order to find answers to the questions in the minds of primitive people. At this point, two main points will be mentioned in the analysis of the text in terms of social engineering. The first of these is the commands and prohibitions or recommendations put forward socially on the basis of belief, their transmission structure and their impact on social transformation, and the second is how the society is shaped around a certain view while accumulating knowledge with the answers given to the questions about what and how to satisfy the sense of curiosity of primitive people.

Myths show their most dominant characteristic feature by carrying the elements of belief within the social structure. This makes them not just ordinary narratives, but guiding texts that shape society's need to believe and help it develop in certain situations. In particular, they enable the formation of many basic principles such as aspirations, expectations, beliefs, ideologies and morals, not of

¹⁸ Kağıtçıbaşı & Cemalcılar, 2014, p. 271.

¹⁹ Eliade, 2001, p. 12.

²⁰ Sivri, 2022, p. 50.

individuals, but rather of society or, in other words, of a collective structure. For this reason, the ceremonial, ritualistic structure of the first myths stands out in a very dominant way.²¹ Societies that come together on the axis of belief and use the myth as a guiding light constitute the group structure in social sciences. For communities shaped around group consciousness, the guiding elements such as leader, leader, sacred text, symbolic structure, etc. are unchangeable, tabooed and obligatory to be accepted. Myths are one of the effective elements that enable primitive human groups to stay together, and through them, society can be shaped in line with the wishes of the dominant structure or within the scope of the group's effective power.²² In this context, the Altai creation myth provides examples of good and evil, right and wrong, reward and punishment, or in today's common usage, good deeds and sins, for the communities that accept it.

Although the Altai creation myth appears to be a dualistic system, the phrase "True God" emphasized at the beginning reveals the existence of a unidirectional power while emphasizing the inadequacy of the power of others.

"A wind came up, boiling the waters/ He (Devil) angered God by splashing it on his face/ He (Devil) thought mankind had become one with it/ I have become very powerful, I have become superior to God..."²³

The state of showing superiority emphasized in this passage shows us the first signs of the character structure of the man who will turn into Erlik (Devil) in the rest of the text. Attitudes such as angering God and considering oneself superior to God are clearly an indication of a mistake on the plane of belief. With the emphasis here on the superiority of God, the punishment for angering God is revealed in the following section and constitutes the basic theme of the myth.

In certain parts of the text, God's characteristics are presented to people in the form of intermediate sentences. Instead of presenting them as a list in order, the text relates them to the subject matter wherever necessary and draws the boundaries of human daily life at certain points. The belief that God sees, hears and knows everything, which are also seen in the Abrahamic religions today and which serve to keep the society under control, are also given in the text, thus ensuring that the belief world and social life of primitive people proceed in a certain order. In total, six characteristics are presented as attributes of God. These six characteristics are still valid in today's beliefs. These are: God is everywhere, God knows everything, God commands and is obeyed, God is the only and most powerful, God is forgiving, God sees everything:

(God is everywhere)

"Oh, I'm saved from God," he thinks./ He looked around and found God ready"²⁴

(God knows everything)

"No one knows what God's thought was/ So that the descendants may be descended, he gave orders like this"²⁵

²¹ Bayat, 2005, p. 7.

²² Kağıtçıbaşı & Cemalcılar, 2014, p. 271-272.

²³ Ögel, 2010, p. 451.

²⁴ Ögel, 2010, p. 452.

²⁵ Ögel, 2010, p. 453.

(God Commands and is obeyed)

“We eat from these branches, God commanded it,/ We are his servants, our God said so/ God told us to see these four branches/ Don’t eat any of it, don’t touch your lips”²⁶

(God is only and the most powerful)

“Hearing Mandı Şire, God stood up and said:/ “Fear not, O Mandı-Şire, there is none stronger than me.”²⁷

*(God is forgiving)*²⁸

“God said, laughing: Take this place,/ No more than the tip of the stick”²⁹

(God sees everything)

“My eyes see all goodness/ And I never lose sight of them, wipe their evil”³⁰

These emphasized characteristics are similar to contemporary belief systems and reflect the perception that it is not possible to do anything hidden from God. This is inevitably a useful way of showing that individuals are socially monitored, that what they do is recorded, and that somehow they will be punished or rewarded for it. The emphasized perception of surveillance is also an indication that religion is used as an important tool of control. Especially for individuals who are more sensitive on the axis of belief, it is easier to ensure that they comply with certain social rules by utilizing this aspect, which is why religion/faith is a good social control tool from past to present.³¹ These characteristics given about God will pave the way for the formation of a certain social structure in the new world perception formed in people’s minds, as well as paving the way for self-control. In the society to be shaped in terms of social engineering, belief systems provide both internal and external control. The characteristics attributed to God also serve the functions of easy control of the community and removal of deviant behaviors, which are aimed by social control mechanisms. Individuals who want to be included in the group during the socialization process accept this text as an example and sacred text and begin to apply what is described here to their own lives. These characteristics of God prevent the person from doing wrong by dragging him/her into an internal conflict, and enable the society to gain the right to judge and decide on the person’s actions. Thus, by showing the limits of what is right, the socialization process is paved the way for the socialization process to proceed faster by forming the concept of conscience, which will not only control the person with a social structure but also control himself/herself.³²

²⁶ Ögel, 2010, p. 454.

²⁷ Ögel, 2010, p. 459.

²⁸ It is possible to see his forgiveness in three places in the text. Despite Devil’s evil deeds, it is seen that he forgives him three times and gives him a chance. The first time was after he took soil in his mouth and tried to create soil for himself, the second time after he deceived man, and the third time, as in the example given here, although his whole order was destroyed, he still gave him a place from his own floor. The similarity between the idea of “God’s right is three”, which still exists among the people today, and the trinity here is also striking.

²⁹ Ögel, 2010, p. 461.

³⁰ Ögel, 2010, p. 463.

³¹ Azimli & Coşun, 2023, p. 2.

³² Özdemir, 2023, p. 43; Azimli & Coşun, 2023, p. 8-9.

After this general information about God at the beginning, the text sends a direct message to humans and categorizes them. This categorization is related to the choice of being a party to the God-Erlík (Devil) struggle. In the following words spoken by God, certain rules are laid down around the emphasis on good and bad people:

“With your evil thought, now you have become a sinner/ You filled me with bad feelings for evil/ May your people always keep it in you/ So be it with them, as you’ve told me./ My people, on the other hand, always think clean/ Their eyes see the sun, their souls are bright/ .../ Let those who hide crimes from me be your people/ Let the sinful ones be your property/ Let him who escapes your guilt come and serve me/ Let him who hides his sin come and take refuge in me.”³³

This section, where the conflict between God and Erlík is seen most clearly for the first time while the shape of sinfulness is described, is a warning for the societies using the text. While elements such as bad thinking, evil, hiding crimes are seen as signs of sinfulness, qualities such as clean thinking, emphasis on light, and staying away from the devil are listed as signs of being a good person. The engineering structure used to shape the society has especially activated social control mechanisms here. The main function of social control is to prevent behaviors that are seen as deviations and to develop attitudes against them. This is the ideal method both to reduce the conflict between individuals and to ensure that they can integrate more easily into society.³⁴ “Social control defines people’s deviant behavior. Social control facilitates the identification of a behavior as deviance. Deviance can be expressed as norm violation. Social control does not identify with all processes that contribute to order, but with limited efforts to respond to deviant behavior.”³⁵ As can be seen in the passage, it is not aimed to bring order to an entire social structure, but simply to plant the concepts of good and evil in the minds of the society with a simple classification. As a result, the people who use the text are guided by explaining what deviant behaviors are, as well as the opposite situations.

In the following parts of the text, the characteristics of God and the things to be possessed or avoided in order to be close to him are frequently repeated in the same order. One of the points that is particularly emphasized is the idea that things that are bad, ugly, irregular, broken, defective, incomplete or naked in appearance are not good, are not approved by God and should be avoided:

“A tree left naked, without a limb./ Not pleasing to the eyes, unpleasant to look at!”³⁶

“In this very age, people were hairy/ When they tasted this fruit, the hairs fell out./ Both of them were left hairless, clothesless, naked./ They were embarrassed and looked for a place to hide.”³⁷

“Before this there was neither rock nor stone in the world,/ Nor was there a towering mountain like now/ The devil’s been fighting with fragments falling from the

³³ Ögel, 2010, p. 452.

³⁴ Azimli & Coşun, 2023, p. 5.

³⁵ Özdemir, 2023, p. 43.

³⁶ Ögel, 2010, p. 453.

³⁷ Ögel, 2010, p. 456.

heavens/ The world has become mixed with rocks and stones/ The world is full of mountains and hills/ The mountains became steep and steep with slopes all around/ What happened to our world when it was flat/ This is how God's creation was ruined."³⁸

These three passages from the text are generally sufficient to understand the emphasis on corruption throughout the text. Although the text can be read as an exemplary narrative based on the creation of human beings and objects in the world and the realization of the first sin, when we look at the sub-meanings, with the help of repeated perceptions such as nudity, ugliness, deformity, it performs a mind coding to the society and emphasizes that such situations are negative, bad or the work of Devil. For this reason, social engineering is practiced by equating going naked, disrupting order and opposing the existing order with sin and Devil. For those who see the text as a part of their daily lives, it becomes a list of do's and don'ts. Faith is known to be one of the most important factors in determining the general structure of elements with harsh sanctions such as traditions, customs and regulations in the formation of social norms. The interaction between beliefs and norms also affects the formation of the cultural and historical identity of the society.³⁹ And it is with this kind of list that the foundation of the mold forms of social norms is laid.

The Altai creation myth emphasizes some of the issues in people's daily lives and puts forward behaviors that are accepted or rejected within the framework of good deeds and sins as warnings from the divine power. It includes the idea that these are based on the perception of collaborating with Devil, or that those who do these things become open targets of Devil and become alienated from God by taking his side. Erlik's request for humans and God's refusal to accept this and Erlik's actions to take humans are presented as examples in this respect:

"...I also robbed, deceived and stole again/ I even dropped the one who ran away on a horse./ I put mischief in the heart of those who drink raki./ I took the life of the man who fought with man./ And I will take the minds of those who enter the water./ I'll dunk you in the water and take your life!/ Those who climb the tree, those who climb the rock./ I'll slip him off his feet and throw him to his death."⁴⁰

In this passage, when we look at what devil does, we will see that some of the behaviors that will cause the breakdown of social order are listed. While stealing, drinking, fighting seem to be the most critical of these, warnings are also given to people on an individual basis, emphasizing the idea that one should be careful when entering water and be cautious when climbing high places. Even today, when we look at the beliefs about water, trees and mountains in folk beliefs that exist in daily life, the idea that there are situations that should be cautious continues. The text shows the effect of the elements mentioned here on Erlik, who does the same, in the following section. The death of the people called the devil's people by being thrown out of the sky happened by fulfilling some of

³⁸ Ögel, 2010, p. 460.

³⁹ Park & Burgess, 2017, p. 143.

⁴⁰ Ögel, 2010, p. 457-458.

the conditions mentioned above. Some of them drown in the water, some of them fall to their deaths from the top of a tree, some of them hit a stone and in this way Erlik's people are seen to be destroyed, again emphasizing the sub-meaning of how careful one should be when saying or doing something. The effects and reactions of actions are carried out in such a way that they are reciprocal, which dictates both the idea that God is just as an attribute and that society should be careful in its actions.

In the later parts of the text, it also gives messages about the emergence of certain taboos and what are the unforgivable crimes. Especially in the part where God disconnects from humanity, his words to the helper spirits can be seen as socially formative. These words to a helper spirit named Şal Yime are as follows:

“You protect people, who die a good death,/ I won't accept anyone who kills himself/
To serve God, to serve the Khan/ To fight and die in battle, to die in service/ You
gather people to bring them to me.”⁴¹

Suicide is the most important prohibition in this section on the afterlife. Killing oneself is shown as a situation that is absolutely unacceptable to God, but another point that is particularly emphasized in the section on deaths is the criteria of service to God, service to the ruler, and service to the country, which are presented as good deaths or acceptable reasons for death. This section clearly exemplifies the concept of propaganda, which is still used as the most effective tool for social engineering, and how society is manipulated through its use. Propaganda, although it seems to be a term of today's society, it is accepted that it has been used since the period when the word was effective in the historical process.⁴² At this point, in societies where the shaping effect of belief is strong, propaganda is used by the person, institution, thought or belief, which is usually the ruler or leader or authority of that society, rather than a collective structure in the social sense, to direct the society for a certain interest or situation. And it does this by creating taboos, by leading people away from them or to do the opposite.⁴³ When we look at the text, while death is forbidden as a personal choice, it has turned into a celebrated event when it is for God, then for the political power holder and then for the homeland. The message given to the society is clearly that it is acceptable and even good to die for the ruling class. In this way, while the masses are forbidden from killing themselves, they are willing to die at the behest or request of someone else. Later on in the text, even the existence of God is attributed to the existence of the Khan, and a kind of cult of the holy leader is created by saying, “So that the Great God may be at the head of the Khan”. This inevitably develops a certain pressure and compulsion on the people, and can be interpreted as meaning that what is done to the leader is considered to be done to God, that one must obey him or her and even die for him or her when necessary. As a result, such discourses, which can be used for propaganda purposes, can turn into a structure that forces people to do even the things they do not want to do by putting them under mental

⁴¹ Ögel, 2010, p. 463.

⁴² Atabek, 2003, p. 5.

⁴³ Park & Burgess, 2017, p. 143.

pressure.⁴⁴ The fact that this kind of emphasis is made towards the end of the text reveals that social engineering, social control mechanisms and propaganda are used effectively in myth texts. It is also possible to see a similar structure in another section:

“You will always remember my name when your body is strong/ Don’t make someone else do it, as long as you know the bad thing/ Equal inheritance for all/ May orphans benefit, may they find equality with all/ .../ Everything went well, by God’s word,/ Everything went well, with God’s advice/ .../ Do not go out of the way, learned from God/ This is the origin of power, coming to us from God”⁴⁵

As can be seen, while emphasizing the world order, it is advised to maintain the order and never go out of the way or even resist authority. As a worldly practice, it is emphasized that inheritance should be shared equally, behaviors that would lead to injustice should be avoided, or that one should not impose on others what one has not done on oneself. The main reason for this is that the order of belief also affects social custom and this is of key importance for the survival of society. In the line from the holy being to the holy person to the holy state, disobeying any of these means not fulfilling one’s responsibility to the top.⁴⁶ At this point, it can be seen that individual control becomes easier in the process of shaping society and that people are forced to put themselves into certain molds both from the outside and from their minds. While the person is asked to accept these unconditionally, the fact that there is no possibility to reject them is supported by putting a full stop at the end with the previously given parts.

Myths, even though they are commonly faith-based elements and try to offer something to the society in this way, they also enable primitive people to form their mind world and continue their daily life by showing the source of the things they do not know. The situation to be mentioned here does not correspond to scientific knowledge in today’s sense, but it is a knowledge structure that was created to enable primitive man to understand things more easily and to live properly by answering questions such as how, why and what. In this context, it seems possible for primitive man to make sense of himself, his environment and what is happening with the help of myths and to shape, direct and control culture and life in social terms.

Myths automatically constitute a mass of information in terms of their content in terms of telling the beginning/creation. As a whole of answers to the questions of primitive man about the creation of the place where s/he lived, himself/herself and his/her environment, shaped around the sense of curiosity, myth texts have met the need to know for many years. This is the case not just for one nation, but for all ancient societies, and in a cumulative mass, it affects even today. “The fact that myths are transformed and repeated in literary works is an indication that humanity and the depths of the human soul are based on a common past. In other words, we can easily say that myths are a universe and human design

⁴⁴ Büyükokutan Töret, 2017, p. 199.

⁴⁵ Ögel, 2010, p. 464-465.

⁴⁶ Park & Burgess, 2017, p. 118.

and software. They are almost a database and are passed down from generation to generation through software updates by accumulating data.”⁴⁷ The accumulation of knowledge created by myths is still encountered in oral culture products that continue today as folk beliefs and in narratives among the people. In the Altai creation myth, the creation of many elements from the universe to human beings, from landforms to animals is described. From the beginning of the text, it is possible to see the process of creation in order. First of all, the answer to the question of what existed when there was nothing is given as follows:

“When the earth was the land, it was covered with water/ There was no sky, no moon, no sun, no place”⁴⁸

The idea that water is the beginning of everything has been a subject that has attracted the curiosity of primitive people as well as philosophical debates around the world, and the text given here tries to provide an answer. Then it is explained how the earth was created for human beings. This is one of the parts of the text where the conflict of good and evil begins, because man wants to create a place for himself and for this purpose he takes soil from the bottom of the water and brings it for himself, but since man is not God, the created place almost kills him.

“Man said: -O God, I have thought of my share,/ I took some soil in my mouth, thinking I would have a place,/ God shouted to mankind: – Spit!/ Mankind spat and the spittle scattered the earth./ When the earth was flat, it wrinkled and suddenly withered/ It’s like the hills and mountains are full of places that are over.”⁴⁹

In this section, the text answers two questions, “How did the earth come into being? How did the mountains and hills come into being?” As noted in the section on beliefs, the smooth, good and beautiful things were created by God, while the bad, ugly and deformed things were made by Erlik. Here it is clearly seen that man is a being who destroys the smoothness of the world. By furthering this evil, he will turn into Erlik. As a result of this information, the message of the text to those concerned is clear. Going against God’s wishes and doing other things will lead to disruption of order and will cause you to go out of the way and become evil. As a result of the structure of choosing sides given with this information in terms of social shaping, both the sense of curiosity was satisfied and the main structure of the myth, faith, was emphasized. After the creation of the world, it is the turn of human beings and the human race came to life with the greening of the ugly tree without branches and knots that God saw.

“Let nine people be made, from the root of nine branches
May nine clans be derived, from the essence of nine people”⁵⁰

For the Turks, the idea of descending from a tree contributed to the tree being considered sacred, and was effective in primitive man’s connection of himself with another being. When we look at the mythologies of nations, the idea that different

⁴⁷ Sivri, 2022, p. 50.

⁴⁸ Ögel, 2010, p. 451.

⁴⁹ Ögel, 2010, p. 453.

⁵⁰ Ögel, 2010, p. 453.

beings are chosen as ancestors and that the lineage comes from there is still actively valid today. In the later parts of the text, the conflict between good and evil is clearly evident. It is imprinted in the minds that everything good comes from God and everything bad is produced by Erlik. Not only this, but the idea of being on God's side or on Erlik's side, which is dominant in terms of belief, is also clearly revealed. For example, the transformation of the snake into an evil animal is due to the fact that it disobeys God and helps Erlik, while the fertility of the woman is given as a punishment for the same reason.

“Hearing this, God once said to the snake:/ O serpent, from now on be the Devil himself/ Let a human enemy kill you and take your life/ “Be the symbol of evil and let your name remain so.”

“From now on, it will always be women who give birth/ The pains and agonies of childbirth will suffocate you.”⁵¹

As a result of this answer to the question of why the snake is a feared and evil creature and why the woman gives birth, a certain stereotype has been derived in the minds of the society. In today's Turkish folk beliefs, the snake is still seen as an evil, dirty and feared creature, and there are many narratives about demons disguised as snakes. Likewise, in determining the place of woman in society, her being coded as a being who attracts humanity to sin and who defies God by committing the first sin is one of the inferences from this narrative to the present day. The information given about the universe, the world, the creation of human beings, and the creation of various animals after the creation of human beings is of a kind that will be effective in controlling social memory. After giving Erlik the power to create, the beings created by Erlik are as follows: snake, bear, pig, albis, shulmus, camel, kordoy, yalban.^{52,53} As can be seen, the animals created here are, in general terms, creatures that either have a bad appearance in terms of appearance or have become feared in a way that harms human beings with their actions. At the same time, the fact that different spirits that bring evil and harm to people are also mentioned here emphasizes that Erlik has a share in the evils of not only the earthly but also the transphysical structure. For this reason, people are afraid of these beings and when they encounter them, they engage in a struggle as if they were fighting Erlik. It is clear that the effect of the group that produces and uses information is to control the masses through various manipulations in the form of propaganda and to create friends or enemies.⁵⁴ This section, which describes the creation of the animals that human beings see around them, also explains the causes of the problems that plague individuals and societies, such as poverty, disease and death. By indicating the place to be close to if one moves away from God, people are prevented from objecting in such situations. For this reason, when people encounter such situations, they demand to get rid of it somehow by doing different practices according to the collective consciousness in order to achieve

⁵¹ Ögel, 2010, p. 456-457.

⁵² Ögel, 2010, p. 462.

⁵³ Albis, Shulmus, Kordoy and Yalban are evil spirits and animals created by the devil.

⁵⁴ Oğuzcan, 2023, p. 55.

social relief. From this point of view, the formation of social norms such as various practices, rituals and traditions are used to ensure that the group structure becomes deep-rooted and permanent. In general terms, the formation and transmission of norms is realized through unconscious influence and the power of narratives rather than a conscious structure. This transmission is passed down from generation to generation through oral communication rather than one-to-one experience.⁵⁵

Knowledge is a power in itself in every period. While knowing knowledge is useful for solving problems, in the case of knowledge learned through verbal transmission, power is shared between the transmitter and the knowledge. If the narrator is an entity recognized as an authority by the society, the accuracy of the narrated information is less questioned, while the identity of the narrator is given more importance by the society. This is one of the important points of oral culture. After a while, the transmitted information is questioned as to whether it comes from a strong source or a weak source. In this case, the power of information shifts to the transmitter and it is no longer important what is said but who says it. This accelerates the dissemination of information, makes it easier to accept and harder to reject. As a result, the person who transmits the information can manage and direct the society in the way they want. Although this situation seems to have been broken during the Renaissance period, when philosophy or reason came to the fore in modern societies, it would not be wrong to say that it continues today.

“Living myths”, as Eliade calls them, are exemplary, meaningful and valuable mediums because they are recognized as true stories in their own time.⁵⁶ Since these myths are accepted as real, they rank high as a source of information for primitive people. As a result, the validity of the answers to the questions asked is at a high level, making them easy to accept. Myths, which also have an effective structure in terms of belief, have consequently become a symbol of unconditional acceptance by taking on a structure that is not accepted to be questioned. For primitive humans, accepting what is described here, whether in terms of belief or knowledge, is a convenience because they do not have to think about these things and can continue their daily lives in a more relaxed way and know what to do and what not to do by creating ready-made assumptions. Authorities who want to shape society can use these texts by using social engineering as a guiding force. By evaluating, interpreting or changing the content of the texts according to their own needs, they gain the power to direct societies in the desired direction. It is important to remember that these pieces, which are available in written form today, existed orally at the time they were produced and consumed, and were open to changes. Basically, the main axis of many instruments used to shape society is to minimize disruptions in society, facilitate administration, and eliminate or prevent abnormalities.⁵⁷ As a result, myths have been used as useful instruments in times and groups where the oral culture environment is active in order to create the system deemed necessary.

⁵⁵ Özcan, 1998, p. 49.

⁵⁶ Eliade, 2001, p. 11.

⁵⁷ Ün, 2022, p. 3.

CONCLUSION

The oral culture period of human history is still ongoing. Even though new cultural environments develop, the power of the word maintains its dominance in certain societies and is included in life. When considered on the basis of the analyzed text, it will be seen that myth texts are structures that can be used with different functional codes due to their layered structures. In the control of authorities who produce, transmit and recreate myths through the sacred power of the oral word, narratives can turn into regulatory, controlling, enforcing and restrictive instruments. In the specific case of the Altai creation myth, it can be said that this is the beginning of one of the steps in the cultural development of the Turkish community. While the journey of the universe, the world and human beings is conveyed, the rules about the dynamics around which the order should be shaped are also internally processed as cultural codes.

Social engineering was theoretically established in the 19th century, but it is possible to understand through myths that different instruments have been used in practice to form societies since the primitive period. The main purpose of social engineering is to create a structure that is more easily managed around certain patterns by directing society in the desired way. Today, while these directions are made through mediums such as television and the internet, it is quite natural that in the past this was done through oral culture products. The important thing is to ensure communication, to transfer information and thus to create a uniform public coming out of one place. As a result of the text analysis, it is possible to say that myth texts, which are considered sacred and have enforcement power, are used as a solution to the difficulties experienced in the governance of nomadic communities such as the Turks. Communities, although they create certain systems around their own cultural codes, the power of impact of myths is similar, fulfilling the needs of primitive people and gathering them around certain commonalities. The Altai Turks have been under the influence of many different beliefs in the historical process and have had to live under the pressure of other nations. As a result, it can be observed that there are periodic updates in their oral narratives. The Altai creation myth realizes this by revealing the God-Erlik conflict and the choice it offers to the members of the community. When different variants of the text are examined around this myth, it is also possible to see that different directions are realized by adding and removing the desired structures as a result of changing times and conditions. This creation myth compiled by Radloff also proves how this community was guided by the authorities through the information it provides on the direction of the lifestyle of the Altai Turks in the early periods. As a result, it is possible to see and examine a similar situation in the myths of different nations. For this reason, myths are among the first practical examples of social engineering.

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TYPE AND CHARACTER IN ORAL AND WRITTEN GENRES: THE EXAMPLE OF FAIRY TALES

MEHTAP MÜÇÜK KOTAN, SEYFULLAH YILDIRIM

ABSTRACT

Fairy tales, which are among the cultural treasures of societies, have continued their existence from the earliest ages of mankind until today and have addressed people of all ages. Each society has maintained its own trace in the fairy tales created with the awareness of social sensitivity. It has sensed its essence by adding something from itself and passed it on to the next generations. Thus, fairy tales have taken on a social characteristic based on the universal reality of humanity. This type of oral narrative, which blends reality and imagination, has opened the doors of each society's unique common value judgements, social and cultural messages. They tried to give these messages through the types representing the good in fairy tales. Through the types representing the bad, attention has been drawn to various events and situations that should not be and cannot be accepted. In this study, the concepts of type and character in oral and written literature genres were analysed. Especially in the fairy tale genre, how the type and character are named and according to what they are characterised as type or character are discussed.

Keywords: Oral genres, fairy tale, type, character, culture.

INTRODUCTION

Each of the works written in one of the literary genres and having artistic value is called a literary work. Literary works include all oral and written works such as novels, stories, tales, legends, theatre and jokes. These works arise from the combination of different elements and reveal the social and cultural values of the societies in which they live. Literary works carry many characteristics of the period in which they live and draw attention to many factors that change and develop around people. The central position in all literary works is the human being and these works are based on a system of persons. There is an aesthetic, mythical and universal projection on this system of persons. In order to make sense of the background of the text, it is necessary to analyse the deeper system and at the same time to explain the qualities of human and human history in the work. The word type, which is the moulding of a social value and the humanisation of a value intensity, is one of the most essential elements of narrative literary works. The general character of the type is determined by the intensifying quality and measure. Types, which are considered as the key and distinctive qualities of literary

works, provide a great opportunity for both the enrichment and development of the work (Eliuz, 2000: 139). What enables the formation of a type in a literary work is the intensity it gains in the process and its ability to become a mould over time.

Mental artefacts that enable people to be divided into certain types and stereotypes that lead to the collection of certain characteristics in certain people are called 'stereotypes' in social psychology. However, these characteristics do not always have to be positive and based on reality (Tezcan, 1973: 8). Stereotypes consist of the traditions and customs of the society (Türkmen, 2005: 237). All events and thoughts in the process from birth to death can be in stereotypical structures (Abdurrezzak, 2014: 86). In literary works, many types are typified through stereotypes. Stereotypes consist of stereotype values and their continuity. Continuity in the process and conditions is important in the formation of the type. Because continuity can be seen through different individuals, as well as through some elements given to a single person who emerges with certain behaviours and attitudes (Kara Düzgün, 2014: 4). The type, which has a social responsibility, brings along some changes as a result of differences in life. This change can sometimes be positive and sometimes negative. In literary works, one of the biggest problems encountered while clarifying the concept of type is to decide whether the heroes in the work are types or characters. In this study, based on this problem, the concepts of type and character in written and oral literature are explained and various evaluations are made under two separate headings. However, the aim of our study is to discuss the concepts of type and character in the fairy tale genre in various aspects based on oral literature genres. In oral literature, the concept of type and character is mostly used in the form of 'fairy tale type' in fairy tales. Especially in oral genres, a discourse such as the concept of type is used and there is no character has been put forward by many researchers. In this study, since it has been concluded that character is also used in oral literature and that the concept of character in oral literature is different from the written literature, the concept of type and character, which are clearly defined in written literature, is given first in the study, and then the title of written literature is given first with a reverse chronology in order to explain that there is character in oral literature and that it is different from written literature.

1. Type and Character in Written Literature

The concepts of type and character have been interpreted by many researchers with different views. However, the similarities or differences between these two concepts are generally discussed in the written literature genre. The concepts of type and character are defined and the differences between them are clarified. The original of the word type is 'typus' in Latin. Type is defined in different ways in works such as fairy tales, epics, novels and theatre. Type, in the *Turkish Dictionary* of the Turkish Language Institution, is defined as:

1. An example that collects the main qualities of all beings or objects of the same kind to a great extent, 2. Interesting, different (person), 3. Type, variety, 4. A person in a play who does not have a unique personality and usually shows people in known patterns, 5. A person who is included in the cast of people in literary works based on long narrative such as literature, story, novel, theatre and who represents the mentality and ideology of a certain thought, community and ideology.

In literary works such as masnavi, novel, epic, story and theatre, there is a main hero who realises the case and this hero constitutes the main element of the novel. All cases are connected to the hero throughout the work and this hero is called a type (Kaplan, 2007: 5). Murat Belge (2020: 22-23) gives the following information about type:

The qualities of the individual, some of his/her habits, behaviours, feelings and thoughts, his/her inner development and changes are not mentioned much. Rather, it is handled with its external appearance and presented in an objective manner. He is the representative of his peers, equipped with general characteristics, whose priority is social realism and reflects an interruption of this realism, but who allegedly does not have much opportunity to live his own life.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar explains the type *as a person who resembles us with the general qualities of life but differs from us with the special lines of his individuality*. In works such as stories, novels, theatre and epics, the type is one of the main elements that determine the quality of the work and ground the work (Karataş, 2007: 485). The type, which represents a caste, group and class, reflects the civilisation, culture, world view of the social group in which it is located and the common problems, characteristics and dramas of many people (Çetin, 2019: 149, 153-154). In definitional and terminological terms, it can be said that creating a type is the work of symbolising the person in the person and placing it in its totality. With symbolisation and integration, qualities and characteristics such as glorification or humiliation of humanity are emphasised (Özdemir, 1990: 278). In the cultural process, types have continuity in being kept alive. As they will adapt to the period they live in, they come to life in a new form by being changed and transformed again to respond to the needs of the society and the period in which they live (Tek, 2019: 156). The type created by society is formed within the framework of social qualities. Thus, it symbolises the social values to which it belongs.

Although there are some similarities between type and character, these two concepts are actually different from each other. Every individual is a character but not a type and character has local and national characteristics. Because the way of feeling, thinking, behaviour, life and attitudes towards events are national. But this situation is different for the type. Because the type is put forward in a universal sense, apart from personal characteristics and locality (Özdemir, 1990: 278). The individual aspects of the characters in fictional works predominate and these characters are defined as characters. In literary works, the inner world of the type is not included and he does not carry any consciousness other than a social duty. The inner world is dealt with for the characters and this is not the case for the type. Because the type does not have individual qualities. In fictional works, on the other hand, the individual aspects of the characters predominate. In literary works, the inner world of the characters is not included and they do not have any consciousness other than a social duty (Kaplan, 2007: 7). In the *Turkish Dictionary* of the Turkish Language Institution, character is defined as:

1. The unique structure of an object or an individual, the main qualities that distinguish it from others and the main issue that determines the behavioural patterns of the individual, self structure, prose, 2. The attitude of any person or a group of

people; the way they feel and behave, 3. Superior and spiritual aspects, 4. Type of letter in printing, 5. All the qualities that enable the individual to be self-sovereign and in harmony with himself, to be consistent in his thoughts and actions and to remain solid, 6. Anyone who is dealt with in terms of his feelings, thoughts and passions in a work.

Character is a person who has an individual attitude towards many factors such as events, time, life and the world, and the character's attitudes are not related to the social group he/she is in. The character has a unique attitude individually. It has speech, attitude and behaviours that are not similar to each other from facial lines to fingerprints (Çetin, 2019: 161). Characters are multidimensional and for this reason, each character appears in the narratives with different characteristics. Individual struggle is seen in characters who are generally far from social concerns. Characters with weak social aspects display an individualistic attitude and behaviour. Generally, the distinction between type and character is clear and distinct in written narrative genres. In written literature, various criteria explain that these two concepts are different from each other.

2. Type and Character in Oral Literature

The concepts of type and character in oral literature have not been discussed much and it has generally been argued that oral literature consists entirely of 'types'. For this reason, not much has been said about the concept of character in oral literature. Although it is generally accepted that 'type' is used in oral literature, we thought that there are also characters in this literature and that this distinction should also be emphasised. First of all, the biggest distinction between type and character in written literature can be expressed as follows: In character, there are more psychological analyses and individual characteristics come to the fore; on the other hand, there are 'types' in oral literature born from the people and these 'types' act with the common consciousness of the society. One of the best definitions that can be made for the type is the view that the type is one of us (Yıldırım, 2016: 319). Those who have the same qualities and have fixed characteristics seen in many works are called a type and they symbolise the basic values that society believes in (Yardımcı, 2007: 50), a type is called a character or characters that appear in many works with similar elements and have some absolute characteristics (Ekici, 2000: 124). In general terms, the type carries the unchanging characteristics of the people we may encounter in our daily lives. In narratives, it is defined as people who are seen with the same qualities. They reflect the sociological acceptance of the societies they belong to. They appear in different narratives with similar characteristics and these characteristics express the society they are in. Society characterises the type it creates in the way it wants to see it. That is why the type put forward has qualities that can be seen in almost all of the society (Balkaya, 2015: 15-16). As a result, the type is moulded by the society with social tendencies and reflects the class he/she is in. For this reason, he lives the life of the society, not his own life. In Turkish oral and written literature, elements that gain the ability to represent a certain social class, environment or group and a way of

thinking and behaviour are called types. Unlike written literature, typification takes place in oral literature depending on a process. In this process, all features of oral literature (being anonymous, being traditional, being stereotyped etc.) are effective (Aça, 2010: 639). While the type is seen in similar forms in oral and written literature since it serves the same purpose, typification is shaped by a different process in oral literature.

The concept of type was first used as a term of criticism in literary works, and what is meant to be described with this concept is people who are national heroes or national models, such as Don Quixote, Faust and Oğuz Kağan. In the following process, psychoanalytic, sociological, mythical, etc. effects on the formation of these types were examined and the concept of archetype was reached. This concept is the first image, 'archetype', which becomes universal in literature and creates continuity (Temur, 2012: 15-16). The concept of archetype emerged from the first examples. These people, who are national models, carry the influence of more than one element. In the primary oral culture and the first written cultures, the competition of heroes for superiority is related to the mental process of oral tradition. Important and impressive actions recognised by everyone are not easily erased from memory. In fact, this situation is not only due to the effect of romance or the fact that it serves instructive purposes, but also due to the unique mental functioning of the oral tradition in order not to forget the events experienced and to protect them in memory, superior-sized people and heroes emerge. Since pale personalities cannot be remembered in the oral memory, almost all heroes are types in order for the memory of the heroes to take place better. The same functioning of memory and mind is also seen today in cases where oral culture continues within written culture, such as in fairy tale narration. *Little Red Riding Hood* is always extraordinarily innocent, the wolf is always extraordinarily evil, the bean branch is always as tall as a poplar. In addition to exaggerations, different qualifiers also strengthen memory. It is easier to remember the Cyclops than the two-eyed giant. However, these qualifiers are not only to be remembered, but there are also other factors that cause the personalities of the heroes and their categorisation (Ong, 2020: 88-89). In literature created with words, the concept of type was emphasised in order for the mind not to forget and easily remember what was told, and these types were prioritised with some qualifiers.

In oral and written literature, each genre creates its own type and character. Myths, fairy tales, epics, legends, legends, folk tales, traditional Turkish theatre and other genres created and developed through oral literature create their own types. Myths, one of the first genres of oral literature, are not narratives rich in personalities. These mythic narratives are built around sacred beings. The persons to be shown as types are gods and supernatural beings who are seen in similar cultures in the same form. Myths, which tell the sacred story, tell how something comes to life, how behaviour, institutions and ways of working are created. For this reason, they reveal exemplary types of meaningful actions belonging to human beings (Eliade, 2001: 16, 28). In myths that tell the story of creation, the type is handled with its psychological and sociological aspects and this is described by researchers as archetype.

Myths have symbolic forms because they are the first examples. The first examples are seen as symbols in epics, fairy tales, folk songs, folk stories and legends. In these works, since the hero is burdened with social functions such as achieving extraordinary deeds, saving his society and nation, they exist in the form of historical heroism myth symbols such as being loved, admired and appreciated by the society he lives in (Çetin, 2019: 149, 153-154). Fairy tale heroes have microcosmic victories limited to their own regions, while the heroes of myth have macrocosmic victories in world history. While the first one struggles against limited tyrannies like the heroes of fairy tales and other genres, which we can characterise as local heroes, the second one, the hero of myth, emerges with the means of renewal of society based on his adventure (Campbell, 2020: 42). There is a social struggle in the myths that constitute the first examples and in the oral literature genres that follow them. Many of them are created around these qualities and thus each society creates its own type.

As in myths, social benefit comes to the fore as a social purpose is pursued in epic heroes. With the social benefit, model types are created in Turkish epics and alp, sage, veteran, veli types constitute exemplary model types. Like the novel heroes of the written culture, epic heroes are not subject to change transformations in the form of characters who mature and take on a different personality as a result of internal conflicts and psychological depressions (Çobanoğlu, 2015: 104). Characters with a certain form serve the society in epics. That is why they exist not in individual conflicts but in social conflicts. There are various differences between the novel and epic hero. The epic hero represents a community in his conflicts and trials, but the novel hero is lonely, individual and subjective (Lukács, 2002: 13). The two main elements of the typological structure are the central hero and the types formed by the people of the epic. The central hero in the typological structure is not a type but a character. Because the hero undergoes a process of change throughout the epic, but the types are not included in this evolution process. For example, the wise type in the epic does not experience a maturation process and a traitor type is a traitor until the end of the epic (Temur, 2012: 15). In epics, the ideal human type is far from his/her personal ambitions and desires and is devoted to the society, is at the forefront with his/her courage and ability, and although personal identity is at the forefront in the administration, this personal identity does not rise above the interests of the society. Because the identity presented is under the roof of the society (Ekici, 2000: 124). As a characteristic of tradition, epic tellers make use of types. Because the epic is given in a mould with a tradition. For this reason, the characters within a mould are also obliged to be types (Aksoy, 2019: 32). Those who stand out with a single quality and show a fixed existence are 'types'. The point that distinguishes it from others is seen at this point. Because the type is also the carrier of a social identity.

The alp in epics has moved away from the type in folk tales; the alp type has been replaced by the minstrel type. The minstrel type is different from the hero type in the epic tradition. The minstrel type in folk tales is in a completely different civilisation. Although the Turks, who had an epic tradition, preserved this tradition in various respects by adopting a settled life after adopting Islam (representational

feature, singing with instrumental accompaniment...), the subject was no longer heroism but love, especially with the influence of Persian literature. The alpine type seen in epics was replaced by the minstrel type in folk tales.

Another genre that emerged in oral literature due to the needs of people is legend. Legends also carry the cultural codes of the society. It is an effective genre in the formation of continuity, social value transfer and cultural beliefs (Arioğlu, 2011: 35). In legends, real or imaginary persons/entities and events are filtered through the filter of extraordinary, reality and sacredness, making it possible to present them to the listener in a way that must be believed. In legend texts, there are extraordinary beings, religious, historical persons or ordinary people of daily life. The heroes who come to the fore in society with their religious or historical roles later evolve into legend types by moving away from their real functions. Ahmet Yesevi, Mimar Sinan, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Yunus Emre, Hacı Bayram Veli, Yavuz Sultan Selim and Yunus Emre are examples of these legend types (Atnur, 2019: 55).

In jokes, there is a main type. There are sub-types outside this main type. The characteristics of type and subtypes are as follows:

We call the main type in jokes 'joke type'. The people who tend to be typified in the joke genre and the second-order types we encounter in various scenes of daily life can be called 'sub-types'. Joke types can be people who have lived, as well as the common characteristics of the cultures of various groups, minorities, regions and regions, the cultures of regions and regions, the physical and spiritual portrait that occurs in a certain personality, the common structure characteristics, in a certain personality, and the personality traits may also be types that have emerged. In fact, all joke types are created among the people whose personalities have been forgotten or who have been freed from this. To the extent that it represents the common aspects of the society in which it was born and lived, the type has expanded its area of spread, recognition and acceptance. The personality represented by the characters is given to them by the public. The public has accepted them in the moulds they want to see and for this reason, they have earned the right to be the eyes, ears, feelings, intellect, judgement, intelligence and voice of the public. No joke type can be expressed as an individual personality. Since the personality of the type is shaped by the common tendencies of the society and the people living in this society, this type can never be explained as an individual type, but as a 'joke type' representing the common personality. Even if the society adds some new elements to the personalities of the joke types in parallel with its own development and change, this process cannot change the place of the joke types in the division of labour, each type retains its common personality, distinctive characteristics and functions (Yıldırım, 2016: 55-56).

Although the joke type is connected to a single name, this does not make it an individual type. Because the joke type is the representative of the society, belief or the people of the region. For example, Fadime, Temel and Dursun are not only three people. They are the representatives of all Black Sea people, and Nasrettin Hodja is the representative of all Anatolian people (Şimşek, 2006: 257). The entity that occurs in an event, thought and situation is called joke type or joke hero. The original personalities of the joke types have either been forgotten or they were born among people by moving away from their original identity. They have spread

by accumulating the common aspects of the society they live in (Yardımcı, 2013: 328). Societies that exist in the social environment have conveyed their words and messages through types. In this way, by linking the messages they wanted to give on issues such as heavy criticism, sarcasm, and insult to a type, a confusion and conflict that would arise was also prevented (Dursun, 2022: 136). Social norms are given through a type representing the society and thus the chaos that may occur is tried to be prevented.

The most important characteristic of people in puppet, Karagöz and Middle Play is that they are seen as a type. These people, who have static and unchanging qualities, do not have the freedom to do what they want and therefore constantly renew themselves. Since they show certain behaviours in certain situations, there is an immutability in their relationships. Their personality is erased and they have no past or future. Since events do not contribute to them, they have no effect on them and this ensures that they do not change their behaviour. The cumulative effect of time, such as growth and ageing, has no effect on them. Some defects and qualities are accumulated in a single person (And, 1985: 457). All this reveals that the qualities and behaviours of the types are given within certain patterns and therefore the change and transformation experienced in the process do not have any effect on them.

In the Middle Play, characters appear in a moulded form. They are known by their clothes, behaviour and speech patterns. They have their own unique music and thus are immediately recognised. Each of these types reflects the society they live in. For example, the laz is chatty and hasty. Jew; cowardly and money-loving, while Persian; exaggerator. They have certain attitudes towards certain behaviours. The subjects of the plays do not make any difference and the same characters exhibit the same behaviours. They do not have their own behaviours as human beings. They are shaped according to their environment and are not concrete but abstract (Kudret, 2007: 65-66). These types, who carry common values and judgements of the society, gain recognition with certain behaviours and attitudes. In traditional Turkish theatre; Meddah, Karagöz-Hacivat and Middle Play, there are also characters and the tasks undertaken by the characters in these plays are fixed. Although there are changes in the subjects according to the social and political conditions and the period, the heroes continue to show the same attitudes and behaviours. The tasks undertaken by the heroes are predicted by the audience watching them and there is no change. Because these characters act as spokespersons of the people. For example, they reflected the feelings and thoughts of the society during the reign of Abdülaziz or Abdülhamit (And, 1985: 289, 311). The common characteristics of Meddah stories are based on the social irregularities of the period such as daily life in Istanbul, money and its power to make people bad, poverty and hunger. Meddah deals with these social problems (Arioğlu, 2011: 79). The characters of the Meddah story are made to speak with the language and dialect of the environment they live in. Types such as Kastamonulu, Jew, Kayserili, Albanian, Armenian, Greek, Circassian speak in their own language (Özdemir, 1997: 137). With all these aspects, Meddah is one of the important main types of Turkish folk theatre.

In traditional Turkish theatre and folk theatre, people do not have character traits. They are predetermined, moulded types. The biggest characteristics of the people in Puppet, Karagöz and Middle Play are that they are types. They are fixed and do not behave the way they want. They exhibit a certain behaviour in the face of certain events, their personalities are obscure. Since the events do not contribute to them, the experiences do not leave a mark on them. Types are abstracted and generalised. People's attitudes and behaviours in the face of events are pre-conditioned and stereotyped because they are types. For example, many types, such as the zennes' sincere bargaining, the Jew's wanting to run away immediately in the face of an event or making a big bargain in shopping, and the Tiryaki's passing out in the middle of his speech, are predetermined by the society due to their stereotyping (And, 2014: 12, 62, 64). In oral literature genres, types are the product of a common denominator that is stereotyped. Events and behaviours and attitudes towards these events are also described through characters. They are the spokespersons of the society and represent their feelings and thoughts. The characters presented in a mould also succeed in addressing every age.

2.1. Type and Character in Fairy Tale

Studies on the concept of 'type' in fairy tales have been left incomplete. Generally, 'fairy tale type' has been discussed. Although many studies have been carried out on 'fairy tale type' until today, not enough information has been given about 'type' (Alptekin, 2002: 51). Those who have worked on fairy tales to date generally pass to sampling without giving information about 'type'. Studies conducted without explaining what 'type' is and what it is not are incomplete in this respect (Gümüş, 2018: 42). There are many different definitions of the word 'type' in dictionaries, but the definition of type used for fairy tales is outside of these. Each tale is a type in itself (Şimşek, 2001: 70). Stith Thompson (1946: 415), in his work *The Folktale*, says the following about type:

Type is a traditional tale that can exist on its own. It is not dependent on another tale in terms of meaning, it can be said to be a narrative genre with integrity. In reality, it can be seen that it is told together with another tale. However, the fact that it can occur alone gives it independence. It may consist of only one motif or more than one motif. Most animal tales, jokes, jokes are single-motif types. Ordinary tales (Cinderella, Snow White) are examples of types with multiple motifs.

Thompson draws attention to important information about type in his Dictionary of Mythology. According to Thompson (1972: 1137), a type is used by students of folk literature to denote narratives that can maintain an independent existence in the tradition. Any tale, no matter how complex, is recognised as a type when it is told as an independent narrative. Ali Berat Alptekin (2002: 53) makes some inferences about type based on the definition of type in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*. A type can be a traditional tale that can exist independently, or it can be seen as a complete tale. However, the tale can be seen with the emergence of more than one type, or it can also result from the storyteller's telling by combining it with more than one tale. Hans-Jörg Uther (2009: 18) gives the following information about 'tale type':

It should be understood that the concept of 'fairy tale type' is flexible. It is not a fixed unit of measurement or a way of expressing lifeless material from the past. Instead, it can be adapted as part of a larger dynamic and integrated into new thematic compositions and media. The background to this model of narrative change and innovation is evident in a paradigm shift in historical-comparative folk tale research that has occurred in recent years. Previous research was hampered by the lack of information on historical and recent narrative material from Europe in all genres. In such a system it was impossible to document all oral and literary forms worldwide. The genre-based structure of AaTh's catalogue and its implied thematic understanding made this impossible. History has shown that folk narratives from outside Europe only partially and often with difficulty fit into their thematically orientated sections. This is especially true for myths, epics, legends and aetiological accounts, as well as for lesser genres such as anecdotes, rumours and genres such as biographies, family histories and the more recently studied refugee experiences. For these genres another system is needed.

As can be understood from the definitions given above, information is generally given about fairy tale types, but fairy tale types are a separate situation from the hero types in the fairy tale texts discussed in our study.

The heroes who take place in different fairy tale texts with different names but who can react similarly to various events and situations and have the same character traits are types (Sever, 1995: 35). The society shapes the characters in the fairy tales with its own values over time and reveals the characters that are mixed in reality with strong contrasts in an indescribable and ineffable way (Harmancı, 2010: 38). In fairy tales, characters are the representatives of people or groups of people with their own character traits. They appear as certain types that do not change in narratives and some of them are the representatives of some characteristic features in fairy tales. These also occur in narratives such as epic and legend (Yardımcı, 2013: 138). While telling the tale, the storyteller takes the people of the tale out of a schematic feeling and thought and revives the types of people who are not the people of a certain place and time, but who have a unity of culture, who have accumulated the experiences of long years in themselves and represent a certain world view, and allows the listeners to meet these people. When fairy tale subjects move from one country to another, the storyteller of that society replaces the hero of the tale with his own national type while telling the tale (Günay, 1992: 325). Even if the characters in the fairy tale represent common universal values, each society gives that universal value through the type created by itself. Thus, each nation enables the creation of its own national type.

The types, which symbolise the world of mentality in which common features unite, are important representatives in conveying the messages desired to be conveyed in fairy tale texts. The category of fairy tales shows the main/central type and the persons or entities that emerge around this type. The cast of persons or persons gain the characteristic of type according to the function they assume in the fairy tale. Afterwards, they become a mould and become the representative of the common values and judgements of the society. The common heroic pattern of the society, which has not entered the path of individualisation, is effective in

the evaluation of the people or personal staff of the fairy tale as a type (Alsaç, 2020: 89). Since fairy tales are carriers of social qualities, they emerge as a type-orientated narrative type. In the early periods, when national culture and national consciousness were not yet formed, societies showed similar reactions to similar events they experienced. The fairy tale is a genre whose protagonist is a type in the culture of every society in which it emerged, and all the conditions necessary for the protagonist to exist as a type have spontaneously formed, the same process is also seen in epics and myths. The characters in fairy tales try to explain the expectations, thoughts and values of the society (Malkoç, 2016: 38). Therefore, in other oral genres, the type is generally prioritised.

The use of type is inevitable in almost all types of oral literature. Collective values of the society are presented in oral literature genres. These values are presented through the heroes representing that society (Kara Düzgün, 2014: 49). The sum of common values necessitates the existence of a 'type'. Referring to Kara Düzgün's explanation above, Duman (2020: 81), while agreeing with the view that the use of type in folk narratives is inevitable, states that the view that every character is also a type is very sharp and states that it is not possible to determine the characters in folk narratives and that in some folk narratives there are characters that do not represent a type.

Are fairy tale heroes a type, how can fairy tale heroes be determined as a type, what is a type in fairy tale heroes, what is not a type, can various criteria be set when determining fairy tale heroes as a type? Based on the above type definitions, we can make the following explanation about the type of hero in fairy tales: The characters in the fairy tales are representatives of their society and they appear with similar characteristics, they are called by the same names and have similar functions. They do not have individual psychological analyses, they are the subject of psychological analyses of the society. For this reason, they generally reflect social reality. These characters sometimes appear with positive and sometimes negative qualities. In fairy tales, heroes are either rewarded or punished according to their good or bad actions. Since the heroes in this genre take place in a line according to their characteristics of being good or bad, it is possible to say that there is usually a 'type' in the fairy tale. Because social values are at the forefront in fairy tales and there are types carrying these values. In addition, since the fairy tale presents the imaginary and the real together, fairy tale heroes consist of ordinary beings such as father, mother, siblings, as well as extraordinary types such as giants, fairies, witches and animals such as wolves, foxes and rabbits. However, the number of heroes in fairy tales is not as large as in an epic or some other oral genres. For this reason, heroes are included in the plot for certain functions and details about them are not included. In this respect, most of the fairy tale heroes also portray a type.

According to Propp, the names, physical characteristics, age, gender and qualities of the heroes may vary. These qualities give the tale a loveliness or charm. However, the functions or actions of the heroes do not change and these functions are shown under thirty-one functions. Not all of these functions are encountered in all tales, but the functions of the hero in the tale remain constant (2020: 88).

Basically, the functions of the hero in fairy tales remain the same. The thirty-one functions determined by Propp in the fairy tale are fixed and unchangeable, these functions also enable the emergence of the type and the type cannot act freely in the literary work. The type fulfils whatever is required of it and is shaped by the perspective of the people who form it. Kara Düzgün, (2014: 50), Looking at this method of V. Propp, he argues that the heroes in the fairy tale are all types. Because the heroes do not go out of these movements and exist as a product of the cultural and social lifestyles of the people. Fairy tales, which are the product of oral literature, also present a structure created by the people with unchangeable types and rules. With Propp's method, heroes other than the main hero are also types, and the fact that the movements of other types, like the main hero, are in a certain order and purpose shows this.

As Propp and Kara Düzgün put forward, the type comes into existence with the functions it performs. The actions of the type in the tale are effective in the evaluation of the type as positive-negative. For example, a traitor type is called a traitor type because of his/her actions. But who or what is the perpetrator of this treachery? It is possible to answer this question as follows: It could be a gentleman or a friend, mate, etc. However, in another tale, the bey, friend, mate may represent a self-sacrificing type. If the hero who fulfils the function represents good in some tales and evil in others, it is possible to say that this hero is a character. Characterisers such as traitor, altruist are types. Therefore, we can say that there are not only types but also characters in fairy tales. But it cannot be said that the presence of characters is as much as a type.

According to Max Lüthi (1997: 73), heroes in European fairy tales do not appear as a person and the names given to European fairy tale heroes such as Hans, Jean, Ivan represent a type, not an individual. The name Hans characterises Germans and Ivan characterises Russians and these names are given to types, not individuals. Moreover, the adjectives used for these names also show this. Big, small, weak Hans, and many people have no names. Such names as king, younger brother, stepmother, soldier, blacksmith, gardener, etc. actually reveal a characteristic of them. Vladimir Propp (1998: 46-47) explains that there are many types of fairy tales and heroes, but they are not individual characters. Ivan is the name of a type, not a person, and a type reflects a social position. Examples such as tsar, tsarevich, merchant, prince, soldier, priest, nobleman, son of a peasant can be given. In literature, each personality belongs to a subject and one work cannot be transferred to another. In folklore Ivan is always the same person in different narrative subjects, and in folk tales the priest is the same person, but different tales and different subjects about priests reflect different aspects of the same type.

Since the influence of Western literature is high in written literature genres, a typological study on the cast of characters in a novel will be different from a study on folk narratives in terms of both the terminology and the type of characters. While there are flat and variable characters together in the novel, there are only flat characters in the casts of folk narratives created by professional narrators such as myths, epics and folk tales. Variable characters are mostly found in western-style literary works and the author deals with the variable characters in the work and

tells the reader about their psychological state in the face of events. This psychological analysis is due to the fact that it reveals the value of the literary work in written literary texts. However, generally in myths, epics and folk tales, psychological analyses of the character are not included, and although professional narrators briefly mention the thoughts of the character, they do not attempt to make psychological analyses. Even if there is such an attempt, the psychological analyses here are typical and the questioning of the hero in one narrative in his inner world can also be done by another epic hero. For this reason, the personal cast of Turkish folk narratives consists of flat characters and background characters of some roles in the events. The term ‘character’ is used to describe any literary character in the cast of characters, the term ‘flat character’ or ‘type’, which is a flat character, is used for characters who represent a certain typical feature, and the term ‘variable character’ is used for characters who have no representation feature and have a variable mood (Duman, 2020: 71-72, 79).

There is a great distinction between oral literature and written literature in the analysis of character. This distinction is especially evident in the novel. After Cervantes, with Don Quixote, textual analyses have become a much more prominent and detailed field of study, and the textual analyses of written literature have been given much thought. However, the psychological analysis of oral literature, which is practical, based on demonstration and not suitable for transmission from ear to ear, has not been sufficiently detailed and elaborated. In this sense, both the fictional structure of oral literature genres and the fact that previous researchers did not mention this bet, as well as the lack of a definite comment on it, led to questions such as whether there is a character in oral literature or whether only types are used in oral literature?

The biggest difference between type and character in written literature is that the character has psychological analyses and exists with individual qualities. In oral literature, on the other hand, there is not individuality but the existence of a social world of common consciousness. When describing the stingy type in the novel, which is one of the types of written literature, the actions of the protagonist are given through certain stages and we infer that the protagonist is a stingy type based on those stages. However, in fairy tales, expressions such as stingy man/woman are usually included and the type represented by the hero is conveyed to us in a mould without allowing us to create it in our minds. In fairy tale texts, as in novels, analyses are made and then the reader is not allowed to infer from these analyses that the hero is a stingy type. Because this type is presented in moulds in accordance with the nature of oral literature.

Since social issues are more at the forefront in oral literature, it would be inevitable to give more place to ‘type’ in the transfer of values in society. The use of characters in fairy tales, which is a type of oral literature, is seen in a different way from written literature. We can explain this through an example: When a question such as ‘Who is the one who takes taxes unfairly in fairy tales?’ is asked, the answers will probably be ‘sultan, khan, ruler, bey’. We answer this question with more than one name. What they have in common is the values they represent.

Therefore, the function remains the same. But the one who fulfils this function changes. For this reason, we can define this hero as a character. If we can count many names to this question and their common points are the function they perform and the one who does the job changes, it can be said that they are also characters. For this reason, we can say that sultan, khan, ruler, etc. are characters. Although sultans, khans and rulers represent a type, they are not types themselves. Because these characters appear with both good and bad characteristics. However, a type has some fixed and unchangeable elements. But characters do not have the same qualities. The sultan, who represents a negative stingy type in one tale, may represent a positive benevolent type in another tale. In order to say that these characters are types, we think that they should have the same qualities.

In oral narratives, the cast of characters is small and there are no individual analyses of the characters in these narratives since they want to tell a lot with little. Everything the society thinks is given in a collective way. We think that a discourse such as there is no character in oral literature, even though the type is in the majority, is too sharp. In that case, we can make the following definition for character in oral literature: In oral literature genres, heroes who differ in each narrative without giving place to individual psychological and physical analyses of heroes are characters. Because in one tale this hero represents good and in another tale he represents evil. Especially in fairy tales, the line between good and evil is very clear. Heroes represent either good or evil, and those who represent this are good in some tales and evil in others. For this reason, it is possible to say that there are also characters in fairy tales.

CONCLUSION

While the concept of type in written and oral literature is generally used for heroes representing stereotypes and common values, the concept of character is seen in different forms in written and oral literature. In particular, we have determined that the character is used in the fairy tale, which is one of the oral literature genres, and we have determined that the character in this genre is different from the concept of character in written literature as follows: First of all, in written literature, character is a hero who has an inner journey and whose physical and individual psychological analyses are given in detail. In fairy tales, characters are heroes who represent a different function in each fairy tale without physical and individual psychological analyses. In the studies conducted so far, it has been stated that type is generally used in oral literature genres. In particular, the concept of type has been emphasised in many studies and studies on the concept of character have remained incomplete. In this study, we have determined that the type is generally used in oral genres, but there is also a character other than the type and that the use of character in oral literature and written literature texts is different, especially as a result of the findings we have obtained based on the fairy tale genre. Based on the concepts of type and character in the fairy tale, which is one of the oral literature genres, we have revealed what the character is in the fairy tale. We clarified the concept of

character in the fairy tale by mentioning the difference of the concept of character in oral and written literature.¹

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ORIGINE ET SEMANTIQUE DU VOCABULAIRE ROUMAIN DE LA MAGIE

DANA SHISHMANIAN

RESUME

On explore ici l'origine étymologique, la diffusion sur les territoires linguistiques du roumain, et les interrelations sémantiques de trois termes qui, malgré leur relative confusion dans le langage courant et même dans les dictionnaires, illustrent chacun une réalité bien différente: *descântec*, *farmec*, *vrajă*, avec leurs noms d'agent corrélatifs désignant les praticiens: *descântători*, *farmecători*, *vrajitori*. Le premier fait partie d'un binôme sémantique spécifique au latin populaire Nord- et Sud-danubien, créé à partir de *canticum* au sens d'incantation magique: **incanticum* / **descanticum*, termes opposés comme magie «noire» / magie «blanche». Les deux autres, empruntés au grec (φάρμακον) et au slave (*vraža*, de *wróžq*, sort), sont venus surpasser et occulter, dans le roumain nord-danubien, le terme «offensif» *încântec*, alors qu'ils sont inconnus comme tels dans les parlers roumains sud-danubiens: seul le terme «défensif» du binôme initial, *descântec*, est resté communément actif chez toutes les communautés de langue roumaine. Nous évoquons aussi les *solomonari* (réputés dans la magie météorologique), dont le nom prouve une tradition populaire enrichie d'éléments livresques de provenance parabiblique.

Mots-clés: Codex Bandinus, vocabulaire de la magie, *incantatores*, *descântători*, *vrajitori*, *farmecători*, *solomonari*.

Origin and semantics of the Romanian vocabulary of magic

SUMMARY

We explore here the etymological origin, the diffusion on the linguistic territories of Romanian, and the semantic interrelations of three terms which, despite their relative confusion in everyday language and even in dictionaries, each illustrate a very different reality: *descântec*, *farmec*, *vrajă*, with their correlative names designating the practitioners: *descântători*, *farmecători*, *vrajitori*. The first is part of a semantic binomial specific to the popular North- and South-Danubian Latin, created from *canticum* in the sense of magical incantation: **incanticum* / **descanticum*, opposite terms such as «black» magic / «white» magic. The other two, borrowed from Greek (φάρμακον) and Slavic (*vraža*, from *wróžq*, spell), have come to surpass, in North Danubian Romanian, the «offensive» term *încântec*, whereas they are unknown as such in South Danubian Romanian dialects: only the «defensive» term of the initial binomial, *descântec*, has remained commonly active among all Romanian-speaking communities. We also mention the *solomonari*

(renowned in «meteorological» magic), a name proving a popular tradition enriched with bookish elements of parabiblical origin.

Keywords: Codex Bandinus, vocabulary of magic, *incantatores*, *descântători*, *vrăjitori*, *fermecători*, *solomonari*.

PREAMBULE

Nous avons analysé ailleurs¹ le témoignage exceptionnel de Marcus Bandinus, missionnaire d'origine bosniaque (1595-1650, sur son vrai nom Marko Bandulovič), qui dans son rapport sur l'inspection effectuée en 1646-1648 en Moldavie² nous livre une description prise sur le vif de la pratique d'une magie divinatoire et thérapeutique par des *incantatores et incantatrices* moldaves, impliquant le phénomène de transe cataleptique³.

Dans une étude de 1962, Mircea Eliade avait fait le choix de traiter le témoignage de Bandinus comme s'il concernait un fait isolé, excentrique, non attesté chez les Roumains, en l'assimilant ainsi à un phénomène «étranger»: le chamanisme hongrois, pratiqué par des *táltos* appartenant à la population minoritaire des Csángós établie en Moldavie⁴ – alors que rien dans le rapport de Bandinus ne permet d'avancer cette thèse⁵. Par choix également, l'illustre historien des religions, en contradiction avec ses préoccupations, constantes et remarquables, pour la revalorisation du folklore roumain du point de vue herméneutique et historico-religieux, n'a pas souhaité reconnaître ici, dans les termes mêmes utilisés par Bandinus, *incantationes* et *incantatores*, les mots roumains sous-jacents, *descântece* et *descântători*, pourtant bien compris tels quels par les éditeurs du codex⁶. Termes qui évoquent une véritable institution populaire, présente sur tous les territoires habités par des Roumains, de Dobroudja jusqu'au Nord de la Transylvanie, et du Banat jusqu'aux confins de la Bucovine et de la Bessarabie, ainsi que parmi les communautés roumaines du Sud du Danube (ancienne Mésie

¹ SHISHMANIAN 2025-1, 2025-2.

² Le manuscrit latin de la *Visitatio generalis omnium ecclesiarum catholicarum romani ritus in Provincia Moldaviae*, rapporté des archives vénitiennes à Bucarest par Constantin Esarcu vers la fin du XIX^{ème} siècle et entré dans les fonds de l'Académie roumaine (ms. lat. 80), a été aussitôt édité et commenté (URECHIA 1895 ; il paraît que des copies manuscrites du codex aient été véhiculées sur le territoire moldave et transylvain par des moines franciscains (*op. cit.* pp. VI-VII).

³ Il s'agit du chapitre *De incantationibus*, dans Codex Bandinus, représentant le rapport de ses périples à travers la Moldavie en tant que missionnaire papal, pp. 193-194 du ms., pp. 416-419 de l'édition DIACONESCU 2006.

⁴ «Chamanisme" chez les Roumains?», étude datant de 1962, incluse dans ELIADE 1970 (pp. 186-197), et faisant référence d'autorité, sur ce point, à DIÓSZEGY 1958.

⁵ Certains auteurs l'ont mise en doute (déjà LÜKÖ 1961, aussi SHISHMANIAN 2011, OIȘTEANU 2013, POP-CURȘEU 2013), alors qu'elle était d'emblée adoptée par certains autres (JUNG 1988, JUNG 2006, POZSONY 2006, VOIGT 2006). Il est d'usage, surtout chez les auteurs hongrois, d'appeler «Csángós» les Hongrois de Moldavie ; or Bandinus parle explicitement de Valaques dans toute cette partie du codex.

⁶ Significativement Eliade ne traduit pas *incantations* et *incantatores* en roumain, utilisant tels quels les termes latins, alors que dans l'édition URECHIA 1895, qu'il utilise et cite explicitement, ces termes sont bien traduits par *descântece* et *descântători* (idem éd. DIACONESCU 2006), ce qui rend encore plus étonnante sa réticence.

romaine): institution vivante dont se sont occupés des générations de folkloristes, ethnographes, sociologues⁷.

En partant de l'usage des termes latins dans le *Codex Bandinus*, nous examinerons dans la présente étude l'origine et la sémantique des vocables roumains correspondants, dans leur corrélation avec d'autres termes typiques du vocabulaire roumain de la magie.

LES CATEGORIES DE MARCUS BANDINUS: *INCANTATORES* VERSUS *MALEFICI*

Tout en condamnant en bloc les pratiquants des actes de magie – que l'Église assimilait sans distinction à de la sorcellerie, en condamnant tous les pratiquants (*incantatores, divinatores, malefici, nigromantes, calculatorii, tempestarii, sortilegi, magi, druidi, ...*), et ce, un peu partout en Europe⁸ – le missionnaire du pape sait, d'une part, garder sa patience de témoin, ce qui rend particulièrement fiable sa relation, d'autre part, distinguer l'usage propre à chacune des opérations qu'il évoque, ainsi que les techniques utilisées par les opérateurs respectifs, qu'il identifie selon leurs appellations, sans les confondre.

Ainsi, en décrivant la technique de la transe (les mouvements désarticulés du corps, l'état cataleptique où les pratiquants tombent et gisent à terre «comme morts», la délivrance des visions «comme en songe»⁹), le rapporteur se réfère

⁷ La littérature du sujet est vaste et il n'est pas question de l'évoquer ici. Mentionnons seulement quelques repères, à commencer par B.P. Hajdeu et en passant par A. M. Marienescu, Nicolae Densușianu, Simeon Florea Marian, Gr. G. Tocilescu, Teodor Burada, Artur Gorovei, Elena Niculița-Voronca, Tudor Pamfile, Ion-Aurel Candrea, Constantin Brăiloiu, Gheorghe Pavelescu, Al. Rosetti, Adrian Fochi, Ovidiu Bârlea, etc. Pour un corpus numérisé de nos jours voir GOLOPENȚIA 2005. Pour les communautés roumaines vivant hors territoire roumain actuel, voir BĂIEȘU 2009 (Est de Dniepr, Bug, Nord du Caucase), ARAPU-GRĂDINARU 2023 (République de Moldavie, ex-Bessarabie), ȚIRCOMNICU 2010 (Roumains du Timoc bulgare), ŠOLKOTOVIĆ 2010 (Roumains du Timoc serbe, dont un chapitre dédié aux *descântece*: pp. 77-79).

⁸ Quelques exemples glanés presque au hasard, et se limitant à l'époque chrétienne (sans rappeler les sources antiques), tant le sujet est vaste: le canon 36 au Concile de Laodicée (en 364), le canon 68 au Concile d'Arles (506), le canon 12 au Concile de Rome (721), le canon 65 de l'*Admonitio Generalis* de Charlemagne (789), les Capitulaires des rois de France (§40, 62, 63, 374, ...), le Concile de Tours (813), le canon *Episcopi* (X^e s.), le canon 15 au Concile de Londres (1125), le IV^e concile de Latran (1215), le chapitre VIII du *Decretum Gratiani* (1240-1250), le V^e concile de Latran (1516), le Concile de Mayence (1549), le Concile de Tours (1583) ; rappelons enfin le fameux manuel de l'inquisition pour sorcellerie *Malleus maleficarum*, des dominicains allemands Heinrich Kramer et Jakob Sprenger, qui a connu 34 éditions latines entre 1486 et 1669 et de nombreuses versions vernaculaires. À noter que les pays roumains n'ont pas connu le phénomène des «procès en sorcellerie», contrairement à la Hongrie voisine, avec aussi quelques exemples en Transylvanie de Nord-Ouest (cf. BECHTEL 1997, pp. 707-710). Sur le terrain orthodoxe, les canons condamnaient les *vrăjitori* à des peines d'exclusion des sacrements, sans que cela ne fût suivi par une action juridique institutionnalisée.

⁹ «Dum enim futura praesagire Incantatores volunt, certo sibi sumpto loci spatio, mussitationibus, capitis intorsione, oculorum revolutione, oris obliquitate, frontis ac genarum corrugatione, vultus mutatione, manuum ac pedum agitatione, totiusque corporis trepidatione aliquantis per pedibus sistunt, deinde terrae se allidunt, expansis manibus pedibusque divaricatis, mortuis similiores, spatio unius horae, non nunquam trium aut quatuor, quasi exanimés manent. Tandem ad se redeuntés horrendum videntibus faciunt spectaculum, nam in primis tremulis artubus paulatim se erigunt, deinde quasi furiis infernalibus exagitati, sic omnia membra et articulos membrorum exerunt, ut nullum ossiculum in suo articulo ac junctura manere credatur. Postremo velut è somno evigilantes, sua somnia, tanquam oracula pandunt»: CB p. 194 du ms., p. 154 de l'édition.

explicitement aux *incantatores*, en indiquant trois fonctions pour lesquels ils sont recherchés par le peuple: prédiction de l'avenir, guérison d'un mal, recherche de personnes ou choses disparues:

Lorsque les enchanteurs (*incantatores*) veulent prédire l'avenir, ils se choisissent un endroit... [suit la description des étapes de la transe]. Si une personne tombe malade ou perd quelque chose, on a recours aux enchanteurs.

Il parle ensuite d'autres opérateurs magiques: ceux qui font des sortilèges (*maleficia*), étant donc des sorciers (*malefici*), dont la fonction est toute différente puisqu'on fait appel à eux pour contrecarrer un «esprit hostile» (*aversus animus*, assimilable au mauvais sort, *jettatura*, *evil eye*, *deochi* en roumain) ou pour se venger d'une personne qui vous a nuit:

Si quelqu'un est éprouvé par le mauvais sort [jeté par] un ami ou un familier, il s'efforce d'amadouer ce mauvais sort [en le tournant] en sa faveur, par des sortilèges (*maleficiis*).

S'il y a quelqu'un qui lui a fait du mal, il croit que le meilleur moyen de se venger contre lui et de le punir est par des sortilèges (*maleficiis*).

Pour conclure son exposé, Bandinus nomme quatre catégories d'opérateurs magiques: «des enchanteurs, sorciers, devins, ensorceleurs» (*Incantatorum, Maleficorum, Divinatorum, Praestigatorum actiones*)¹⁰.

L'énumération va par paires d'opposés: d'un côté les «enchanteurs» (*incantatores*), de l'autre, les «sorciers» (*malefici*), et en strict parallélisme, d'un côté les «devins» (*divinatores*¹¹), de l'autre les «ensorceleurs» (*praestigiati*¹²); la faille nous semble assez nettement tracée. Elle est structurante, par la finalité et l'intentionnalité de l'acte magique.

¹⁰ «Si quis in morbum incidat, aut rem aliquam amittat, recursus ad Incantatores. Si quis amici aut benevoli aversum animum experitur, maleficiis aversum animum sibi conciliare nititur. Si quem vero offensum sibi habet, maleficiis se vindicare et ulcisci optinum medium putat. In his autem et similibus omnibus, diversissimi [sic] Incantatorum, Maleficorum, Divinatorum, Praestigatorum actiones, vix uno comprehendere volumine possint»: CB p. 194 du ms., pp. 416-417 de l'édition (notre traduction).

¹¹ Comme on l'a vu, la divination peut faire partie des fonctions des *incantatores*, ce qui justifie le rapprochement de ces deux catégories.

¹² Si *malefici* pousse naturellement à la traduction par «sorciers» (vu la valeur négative du terme, évoquant la «magie noire»), *praestigiati* est un terme polyvalent, dont le sens péjoratif *șarlatan* sélectionné dans les éditions (URECHIA 1895, DIACONESCU 2006) – traduction correspondant d'ailleurs à celle de certains dictionnaires, qui, comme s'il y avait contamination avec 'prestidigitateur', donnent 'jongleur, tricheur, escamoteur, illusionniste, charlatan, imposteur', ou en anglais, *deceiver*, *trickster* – camoufle le sens générique, qui est ici celui de 'magicien ensorceleur', 'enchanteur, faiseur de charmes', tel qu'attesté dans le latin médiéval (DU CANGE, *apud Vita B[eati] Torelli* tom. 2, Mart. pag. 502: *PRÆSTIGIARE*, Incantare. «Mulieris praestigiatae miraculum huic subnectere non erit incongruum. Nam cum quidam juvenis amore mulieris cujuspiam teneretur, nec eam ullatenus posset habere, istam praestigiari fecit ab homine artis magicæ perito, etc.»). Plus révélateur, dans un témoignage de la fin du XVI^e s. le mot semble désigner le chaman des tribus nord-américaines (HARRIOT 1590: «Vulgo etiam Magos sive Praestigiatos habent, miros gestus & saepenumero naturae adversos in suis incantationibus facientes: cum daemonibus enim, familiariter versantur, a quibus quid hostes rerum gerant, aut eiusmodi alta sciscitantur. (...) Magnam verofidem adhibent incola horum sermonibus, quos veros esse saepe experiuntur»; et en français d'époque (*ibid.*): «Communément ils ont des Enchanteurs, lesquels font en leurs conjurations des grimasses merveilleuses & bien souvent contraires à nature: car ils ont grande frequentation avec les Diables, pour scavoir de luy ce que leurs ennemis font ou autres choses semblables qu'ils désirent entendre. (...) Les habitants donnent grande foy à leur dire, à cause que le plus souvent ils le trouvent véritable»).

À LA DÉCOUVERTE DES MOTS: DESCANTATORI VERSUS VRAJITORI,
FERMECATORI

En effet, dès que l'on traduit les termes de Bandinus en roumain, on se retrouve instantanément sur un terrain sémantique extraordinairement familier. Il est pourtant essentiel de noter, pour *incantatores*, que par rapport au mot latin ainsi qu'au français «enchanteurs», le mot roumain correspondant recouvre une fonction bien différente, notamment plus spécialisée. Les *descântători* sont littéralement «désenchanteurs», au sens de désenvoûteurs voire d'exorcistes: ils délient les victimes des sortilèges, défont les liens magiques (*faptul, legătura*) et les charmes malveillants (*datul, făcătura*) jetés contre quelqu'un, délivrent d'une possession par des esprits tourmenteurs, guérissent des maladies et des mauvais sorts jetés à l'encontre d'une personne, ramènent les égarés, hommes ou animaux, ou enfin vous trouvent le jeune homme destiné à partager votre vie (*ursitul*). Ces fonctions sont en nette divergence voire en opposition avec celles des «sorciers» et des «ensorceleurs» ou «enchanteurs» – en roumain, *vrăjitori* et *fermecători* – que Bandinus désignait, comme nous l'avons vu en marquant bien la distinction, par les termes *malefici* et *praestigiati*¹³. Autrement dit, les *incantatores* moldaves sont en fait non ceux qui «enchangent», ceux-là étant assimilés aux ensorceleurs, mais ceux qui «désenchangent». Traduire, comme c'est le cas même dans des études de spécialistes de la langue et du folklore roumains, *descântători* par «enchanteurs» (*charmés* ou *cunning men* en anglais) et *descântec* par «enchantement», «incantation» ou «charme» (*charm* ou *spell* en anglais) – termes dont on se sert pour traduire aussi les vocables *vrăji* et *farmece* et les noms d'agent correspondants – fausse la compréhension de la sémantique fonctionnelle des mots et des *realia* qu'elle couvre. Nous devrions traduire *descântători* par *désenchanteurs* et *descântec* par *désenchantement*, sans céder au nivellement opéré par le langage courant, qui gomme ces distinctions¹⁴.

Or, pour saisir ce clivage sémantique il nous faut creuser un peu l'histoire des mots.

Un binôme d'opposés créé sur le terrain du protoroumain: încântec / descântec. Remarquons que du point de vue étymologique le descântător, tout en

¹³ La variété terminologique utilisée pour désigner les différents pratiquants témoigne d'elle-même du fait qu'il y avait des «camps» nettement différenciés parmi eux.

¹⁴ Les dictionnaires usuels du roumain, suivant l'acception du langage courant actuel, traitent *descântător / descântec* comme des synonymes de *vrăjitor / vrajă*, et a *descânta*, comme synonyme de a *fermece*, a *vrăji* (DEX 1975), ce qui est une erreur, par rapport à l'histoire de la langue et de la culture populaire, comme nous le verrons. En échange, dans le dictionnaire académique réalisé par l'Institut de linguistique le sens primaire de la famille *descântec*, indiquant une fonctionnalité thérapeutique et exorcisante, est bien distinctivement défini: «*descânta / descântare*: 1. A *rosti / Rostire de formulă considerate magice însoțite sau nu de gesturi rituale, cu scopul de a vindeca o boală sau a îndepărta un rău, un farmec*» (MDA2-2002, pp. 84-85); en toute cohérence, la sémantique portée par *farmec*, *vrajă* est définie par les fonctionnalités opposées: «*farmec*. 1 (în basme și superstiții) Transformare miraculoasă a lucrurilor (în urma unei vrăji). 2 (Pop[ulaire]. Practică ocultă prin care se influențează soarta cuiva, prin invocarea unor forțe supranaturale malefice Si[nonime]: *fapt, făcătură, făcut, vrajă*» (ibid. p. 382).

descendant du latin, non seulement représente le parfait opposé lexical de *incantator* (suffixe de *versus in*), mais se situe par rapport à celui-ci en opposition sémantique forte, inexistante telle quelle dans la langue source. En latin, la famille du verbe *incanto* au sens de chanter des formules magiques, enchanter, avec ses noms d'action, *incantatio* ou *incantamentum* (attestations chez les auteurs classiques, Pline, Horace, Apulée¹⁵) évoque toute action magique, les noms d'agent correspondants, *incantator* et *incantatrix* (attestés chez les auteurs chrétiens, Tertullien, Pseudo-Cyprien¹⁶) désignant globalement des pratiquants de la magie, sans spécialisation formelle, au point que dans le latin médiéval ils ne se distinguent pas des *maleficium* et *malefici*¹⁷. D'ailleurs, le sens d'action magique était déjà rattaché au verbe d'origine, *canto*, chez des auteurs classiques (Virgile, Ovide¹⁸). Le dérivé *decanto* / *decantare* a l'acception courante de réciter, répéter ou chanter en continu¹⁹, étant même occasionnellement pris comme synonyme de *incanto* / *incantare* au sens de chanter des formules magiques²⁰, mais ne fonctionne pas en binôme adversatif.

L'évolution vers le roumain de la famille *incantator* / *incanto* / *incantatio* (ou *incantamentum*) semble avoir été brisée, car son sens d'opération magique ne s'est pas transmis à tous ses héritiers morpho-phonétiques roumains: ainsi *încântător* ne veut pas dire «enchanteur», n'étant d'ailleurs jamais un nom d'agent, mais un adjectif qualificatif au sens de plaisant, charmant; quant à *încantație* au sens d'incantation magique, c'est un néologisme emprunté au français au XIXe s. Seuls ont conservé la sémantique d'origine – de manière significative – le vocable *încântec*, correspondant sémantiquement à *incantamentum*, avec la valeur d'action magique, et le verbe *a încânta*, au sens d'opérer une action magique (nous y reviendrons). En revanche, on a en roumain la famille, inexistante comme telle en latin, que forment le nom d'agent *descântător*, le verbe *a descânta*, le nom d'objet *descântec* et le nom verbal *descântat*: une famille sémantiquement opposée à *incantator* / *incanto* / *incantatio* ou *incantamentum*.

À la différence des familles plus ou moins similaires sémantiquement qui se sont formées par dérivation interne sur le terrain d'autres langues romanes, comme en français ('désenchanter', dérivé de 'enchanter') ou en occitan²¹ (*desencantar*, *desencantament*, *desencantaire* dérivés de *encantar*, *encantament*, *encantaire*), la famille roumaine *a descânta*, *descântec*, *descântător* semble provenir directement d'étymons latins. Ainsi, il faut supposer, pour *descântec*, un non attesté **discanticum*²², qui, par rapport au classique *incantatio* et

¹⁵ Cf. GAFFIOT-1.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷ Cf. DU CANGE, INCANTARE: Præstigiis magicis illudere; INCANTATORES: Malefici, immissores tempestatum.

¹⁸ Cf. GAFFIOT-2.

¹⁹ *Apud* GAFFIOT-1.

²⁰ *Apud* GAFFIOT-1: APULÉE MÉT., V.XIII.6 (nous y rajoutons III. XVIII.1 et XXII.1).

²¹ Cf. ALIBERT 1966.

²² Il existe des attestations de *discantus* / *discantare*, dans un contexte liturgique (au sens d'antiphonique), chez des auteurs chrétiens (Cassiodore, St Jérôme) et dans le latin médiéval

incantamentum au sens de charme, envoûtement, a pu recouvrir, dès l'époque de formation de la langue roumaine sur le terrain du latin populaire, la fonction distincte consistant à délier d'un sortilège (le défaire et non pas le faire). Une telle hypothèse nous semble préférable à l'étymologie couramment adoptée, qui fait de *descântec* un dérivé interne, sur le seul terrain du roumain, à partir de *cântec*²³ – alors que ce vocable, couvrant différentes espèces du folklore roumain, ne revêt pas le sens de formule magique dont aurait pu dériver *descântec*, avec le suffixe adversatif *des* (< *de* + *ex* lat.). En revanche, son étymon, *canticum*, est attesté, bien qu'exceptionnellement, dans le latin classique avec le sens de chant magique, envoûtement²⁴, à l'instar de *cantatio* et *carmen*²⁵. Cette valence magique de *canticum* devait avoir été bien active dans le latin populaire parlé au Sud-Est de l'Europe²⁶; elle a pu même générer une paire de dérivés adversatifs tels qu'un supposé **incanticum*, avec une valeur «magique» renforcée, et son opposé **discanticum*, en se splittant ainsi pour donner naissance à un binôme structurant.

Un argument dans cette direction nous vient, par voie indirecte, de l'aroumain (appelé aussi macédo-roumain, l'un des trois dialectes sud-danubiens du roumain, considérés par certains comme des langues à part entière, même si proches du roumain nord-danubien qu'on appelle daco-roumain). En effet, le binôme adversatif que constituent en aroumain les familles *cântec-cânta-cântare*, avec la variante parallèle *ncântec-ncânta-ncântare* (de **incanticum-incanto-incantare*), versus *discântec-discânta-discântare*, est bien attesté²⁷.

C'est bien moins le cas dans le roumain parlé et écrit au Nord du Danube, où le sens d'opération magique des familles *a cânta / cântat / cântec*, et *a încânta / încântat / încântec* (enchanter / enchanté / enchantement) a dû s'estomper au point qu'elle est presque passée inaperçue. Quelques rares ouvrages et dictionnaires anciens enregistrent la valeur magique de *a încânta*, avec le nom

(cf. DU CANGE): rien à voir avec le sens que nous supposons pour le vocable reconstitué **discanticum* dans le latin populaire.

²³ Cf. DEX 1975.

²⁴ Cf. GAFFIOT-1 – mais l'unique référence donnée ici (APULÉE MÉT., IV.XXII.1) ne correspond point, dans le contexte, à cette acception ; dans GAFFIOT-2, elle a été remplacée par APULÉE APOL. XLII.3-5, où *canticum* a le même sens que le bien plus réputé *carmen* (il s'agit du jeune garçon qu'Apulée aurait ensorcelé par charme, *cantatum carmine*, ou par incantations, *canticis*, s'attirant ainsi l'accusation de magie dont il a dû se défendre).

²⁵ Ce vocable a un spectre «magique» bien établi (cf. GAFFIOT-2: incantation, envoûtement, mauvais sort, charme – son descendant français), remontant à la loi fondatrice de Rome, qui condamne celui *qui malum carmen incantassit* (tab. VII des *Leges Duodecim Tabularum*) ; on le retrouve chez Virgile (*Bucoliques* 4.3, 9.69).

²⁶ Voir VĂTĂȘESCU 2007, p. 427: le roum. *cântec* et l'albanais *këngë*, hérités du lat. *canticum*, «font partie du vocabulaire de la magie», en parallèle de *descântec* au sens opposé («détourner des enchantements») : «L'examen de la paire *cântec / descântec*, par rapport aux termes albanais *këngë* et *këndoj*, nous fait avancer l'hypothèse qu'à l'origine, *canticum* a conservé dans le latin balkanique le sens "incantation", caractéristique pour le vocabulaire de la magie.»

²⁷ Cf. CUNIA 2010, pp. 255-256 ; *încântec* n'est donc pas absent des dialectes sud-danubiens, comme il est affirmé dans VĂTĂȘESCU 2007, p. 429: il connaît en fait le même usage «magique» constaté pour *cântec*.

d'action *încântătură*²⁸, alors que des linguistes des plus réputés l'ont ignorée, allant jusqu'à considérer la famille de ce verbe comme créée au XIXe s., soit par dérivation lexicale interne, soit par emprunt du français²⁹ (comme, nous l'avons vu, c'est bien le cas pour *incantație*). Or, le sens magique de certains vocables provenant de *canticum* et du verbe *incanto*, voire de *canto*, est bien présent chez des écrivains majeurs du XVIIe au XIXe s., tout comme dans le folklore: il ne s'agit ni de dérivés récents, ni encore moins de néologismes.

Tout d'abord, dans sa monumentale *Vie des saints* (1682-1686), le métropolitain Dosoftei (Dosithée) de Moldavie utilise, comme adversatif de *a descânta*, le verbe *a cânta*, en évoquant les rituels païens à Éphèse combattus par Thimothee, le disciple de saint Paul:

...les idolâtres, pour leur ancestrale fête qui s'appelait KATAGOGHION [καταγωγήον³⁰], pleine d'actes impies et répugnants, portant dans leurs mains les idoles ornés d'une sorte de masques grotesques, chantant et désenchantant dessus (*cântând*, *descântând*), s'encourraient tels des bandits en guettant hommes et femmes, tout comme font chez nous les joueurs maqués et ceux qui attirent vers la rivière...³¹

Dans la version A: *Trei viteji* (Trois braves) de son épopée héroï-comique *Țiganiada* (La Tsiganiade), écrite vers 1795, Ion Budai-Deleanu nous dit à deux reprises:

Toute sorte de bêtes elle enchante (*încântă*). / Puis les désenchante (*descântă*), comme en claquant des doigts.³² La sorcière (...) commence à les maudire et à les battre / Avec un bâton de cornouiller enchanté (*încântat*).³³

²⁸ CANDREA-DENSUȘIANU 1907, v. II, p. 54 ; Grigoriu-Rigo (*Medicina poporului*, 1907, v. I p. 100), Șăineanu (1929), Scriban (1939) (apud DEXONLINE) ; *Dicționarul limbii române*, AR, 1913-1949 (apud BĂLTEANU 2003, pp. 152, 303).

²⁹ Pour une discussion de ces théories voir VĂTĂȘESCU 2007, p. 429.

³⁰ Cette fête est évoquée par Photius, dans son résumé des Actes de Thimothee, un apocryphe perdu du IIe s. (BIBLIO-PHOTIUS 254). Dosithée connaissait donc l'œuvre du patriarche constantinopolitain du Xe s., dont il ne traduit pas tel quel le passage en question mais le réécrit à sa manière, en introduisant l'usage des formules magiques, inexistant chez Photius (*cântând*, *descântând*, qui remplace *τινα ἄδοντες ἄσματα*), et en rapprochant cette fête païenne du retour du Printemps, de deux rituels populaires roumains, les joueurs masqués (*cucii*) et l'ablution à la rivière à Pâques (*trasul în vale*). Voilà le texte de Photius: Ὅτι ἡ παρὰ τοῖς Ἐφεσίοις δαμονιώδης καὶ βδελυκτὴ εἰσορτή, ἢ λεγομένη καταγωγήον, τόνδε τὸν τρόπον ἐτελεῖτο: προσχήματα μὲν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπρεπῆ περιετίθεσαν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ μὴ ἐπιγινώσκεισθαι προσωπεῖοις κατακαλύπτοντες τὰ ἑαυτῶν πρόσωπα, πολλὰ τε καὶ εἰδῶλα ἐπιφερόμενοι καὶ τινα ἄδοντες ἄσματα, ἐπήεσάν τε ἀνδράσι καὶ σεμναῖς γυναῖξι κατὰ ληστρικὴν ἔφοδον, καὶ φόνους εἰργάζοντο κατὰ τοὺς ἐπισήμους τόπους τῆς πόλεως, καὶ ἐπραττον προθύμως τὰ ἄθεσμα, ὡς ἐνθέσμοις ἔργοις τοῖς ἀθεμίτοις καλλωπιζόμενοι.

³¹ «... idoloslușaii, pentr-a lor den moș sărbătore, carea să chema KATAGOGHION plină de pozne reale și spurcate, purtând a mână idolii și podobiț cu un fealiu de obraze ghidușești, cântând, descântând dintr-inscle, alerga țilhăreaște de țânea calea a bărbaț și a femei, săvai cum fac la noi cucii și ceia ce trag în vale»: éd. FRENȚIU 2002, p. 236 (f. 273r de l'original). Ceci évoque des syntagmes connus en aroumain: «u cântă ș-apoi u discântă», «cântare ș'discântare», «cântat și discântat» (apud VĂTĂȘESCU 2007, p. 430).

³² «Tot felul-incântă ea de jivină (...) Apoi descântă, cât bați din mână» (chant IV.25).

³³ «Vrăjitoarea (...) începe-a-i blăstăma și-ai bate / Cu nuiea de sânger încântată» (chant IV.31): apud FUGARIU 1974-1975, vol. 2, pp. 83, 84.

Enfin, dans son fameux poème *Zburătorul* (L'incube³⁴), daté de 1844, Ion Heliade-Rădulescu utilise à son tour la paire d'opposés *încântec / descântec*, le sort de la jeune fille ensorcelée par le dragon (*zmeu*) ne pouvant être défait par quelque *descântătură*³⁵:

Silence est tout et plein d'engourdissement:
 Charme ou décharme sur le monde s'est laissé;
 Ni feuille ne bouge, ni soupire du vent,
 Les eaux dorment lourd, les meules sont arrêtées.

Cet usage de la famille *a încânta* versus *a descânta* est également attesté par des folkloristes: *a-l încânta, să-l încânte, să-l descânte* (l'enchanter, le désenchanter)³⁶.

De tels témoignages précieux révèlent les traces bien vivantes du binôme sémantique adversatif «enchanter/désenchanter» (*a încânta/a descânta*), structurant dans la culture populaire, même si en partie camouflé sous d'autres vocables, comme nous le verrons.

Un spectre sémantique enrichi par des emprunts concurrents: farmec et vrajă. La rarissime similitude, bien que partielle puisque ne concernant que le verbe (*a cânta – încânta*), avec la double famille aroumaine *cântec-cânta-cântare* et *ncântec-ncânta-ncântare* prouve qu'il s'agit d'un développement sémantique spécifique, commun au latin parlé sur les territoires Nord et Sud-danubiens (Dacie et Mésie), attestant ainsi que la situation encore actuelle dans l'aroumain était générale à l'époque du protoroumain. Elle a pu se maintenir telle quelle au Sud du Danube du fait de l'absence d'une influence lexicale étrangère qui serait venue absorber, pour les vocables *cântec / încântec*, la valence sémantique de sortilège, charme, comme cela s'est produit dans le daco-roumain – où les termes couramment consacrés pour sortilège et charme sont *vrajă* et *farmec*, d'origine respectivement slave et grecque (comme nous le verrons plus loin), alors que les occurrences, pour l'action magique correspondante, du verbe hérité du latin *a încânta* sont, comme on l'a vu, extrêmement rares, indiquant un sens archaïque, résiduel.

³⁴ La traduction que nous nous résignons de donner ici est réductrice sans doute face à la polysémie de ce mot qui renvoie au thème universel du rapt de la vierge / de la mariée, ici en rapport avec la figure mythologique roumaine du dragon ailé (*zmeu, zburător*) – qui deviendra Luceafăr (Lucifer) dans le poème presque parallèle, du moins en sa partie narrative, de Mihai Eminescu ; le rapt est magique, s'opérant par un ensorcellement érotique presque vampirique exercé sur la jeune fille, il nous a donc semblé opportun de choisir le terme «incube», en symétrie avec l'agissement similaire de la «succube» sur les jeunes gens.

³⁵ «Tăcere este totul și nemișcare plină:/ Încântec sau descântec pe lume s-a lăsat [pour des raisons de rythme, nous avons traduit par charme / décharme] ;/ Nici frunza nu se mișcă, nici vântul nu suspină,/ Și apele dorm duse, și morile au stat. (...) Că-ncepe de visează, și visu-n lipitură/ Începe-a se preface, și lipitura-n zmeu,/ Și ce-i mai faci pe urmă? că nici descântătură,/ Nici rugii nu te mai scapă, ferească Dumnezeu!».

³⁶ MARIENESCU 1870 ; PAMFILE 1916, p. 56 (à l'instar des syntagmes similaires en aroumain: *supra* note 30).

En revanche, en aroumain le mot *vrajă* n'existe tout simplement pas, et *fărmec* a uniquement le sens de remède, poison, drogue (tout comme le lat. *pharmacum* dont il descend), jamais celui de charme, ensorcellement, comme en roumain (où il est emprunté au grec). Ces dernières valeurs sémantiques sont en aroumain couvertes par *cântec* / *ncântec*, qui s'associe à une autre famille, développée à partir du grec *μαγεία* plutôt que du latin *magia*: *măyie* ou *măghiie* / *măypsi* ou *maghipsi* / *mag* ou *măyistru* ou *măghistru*³⁷ – dont seul le dernier terme est présent en roumain nord-danubien (*măiestru-măiastră*³⁸).

Essayons de reconstituer le mouvement. Dans un premier temps, le sens semble donc avoir évolué, sur le terrain du latin parlé en Dacie et Mésie romanisées, pour se différencier entre *incanto* et *decanto*³⁹. Le premier terme, qui réunissait communément, en latin classique, les valeurs d'opération magique bénéfique ou maléfique (*bona // mala carmina*⁴⁰), avec un sens déterminé par le contexte, a dû se spécialiser, dans le latin populaire daco-mésien générateur du protoroumain, dans le sens univoque d'incantation maléfique (**incanticum*). Le second par contre, qui à l'origine, sur le terrain du latin classique, était un simple synonyme du premier, a dû être investi d'une valeur sémantique propre, tout à fait opposée, pour recouvrir le sens univoque d'incantation bénéfique, comme dés-incantation (**discanticum*), passant par un supposé **de(ex)canto* = **discanto*⁴¹: c'est ce dernier qui a pu générer la famille lexicale roumaine *descânta* / *descântec* / *descântător*, largement connue aussi bien au Nord qu'au Sud du Danube.

Dans un deuxième temps, sur le terrain du roumain Nord-danubien, à la différence de l'aroumain, la valeur «magique» (charme, sortilège) de la famille *încânta* / *încântec* / *încântător* héritée de *incanto* / **incanticum* / *incantator* s'est peu à peu érodée, en raison de son affaiblissement et effacement progressif devant des termes empruntés à d'autres langues, qui se sont fortement imposés: l'occurrence exceptionnelle du sens magique de quelques mots de cette famille originaire, chez les auteurs susmentionnés et dans l'usage populaire – véritables «fossiles» sémantiques – est l'indice qui confirme ce processus.

³⁷ Cf. CUNIA 2010, pp. 636-637. Ce dernier vocable a pu s'imposer en lieu et place du nom d'agent attendu **discântător* qui, paradoxalement, manque dans la famille aroumaine *discântec-discânta-discântare*. De même, le mégéno-roumain connaît *discânt* et *discântări*, avec le nom d'agent *măghesnic-măghesniță* dérivé de *măghija*, ou *magista*, de source grecque (μάγισσα) (CAPIDAN 1934 pense à un intermédiaire bulgare).

³⁸ L'étymologie adoptée (lat. *magister*, DEX 1975) pose un problème d'incompatibilité phonétique (*ge/gi* lat. se conserve tel quel en roum., comme remarqué dans TIKTIN-MIRON 1986-1989, v. II p.617, qui suggère l'influence du moyen-gr. μάγιστρος, que G. Meyer rapprochait de l'alb. *mjeshër*) ; en tout cas aucun de ces étymons ne comporte le sens magique du mot en roumain. Nous lui dédions une prochaine étude.

³⁹ Dans d'autres langues romanes *decanto* donne des mots (fr. déchanter) sans connotation magique.

⁴⁰ Voir cette distinction chez Apulée, qui dans son *Apologie* se défend de pratiquer des *mala carmina* tout en jouant sur les mots, notamment sur la valeur commune de *carmen* en tant que poème: «An ideo magus, quia poeta ?» (APULÉE APOL. IX.3 ; voir VALLETTE 1908, pp. 35, 48, 71).

⁴¹ «*Discantare* et *Excantare*, id est, *Descantare*» (DU CANGE) ; *rappelons pourtant que discantare (var. descantare) n'a toujours qu'un sens quasi-synonyme de cantare dans le latin médiéval.*

Ainsi, pour le nom d'agent *incantator* le roumain a adopté *vrăjitor*, qui vient du monde slave (dérivé de *vraĵă*, emprunt de *vraža*, charme, sortilège, malédiction)⁴² et *fermecător*, qui vient du grec (dérivé de *farmec*, emprunt de φάρμακον, remède ou poison, filtre magique, d'où au sens figuré de charme, sortilège)⁴³. Voyons un peu cette distinction.

Le latin connaît *pharmacus*, attesté très peu et tardivement (Pétrone), pour désigner le magicien ou l'empoisonneur⁴⁴, à partir du grec φάρμακος/φαρμακός, dont le latin ne reprend pas aussi le sens de victime expiatoire⁴⁵. Quant au nom d'objet correspondant, *pharmacum*, il semble attesté encore plus tardivement, chez saint Jérôme et Paul de Nôle au Ve s., au double sens de remède et poison⁴⁶, mais complètement dépourvu de la valeur sémantique correspondant à charme, sortilège, qu'avait en plus le grec φάρμακον, comme sens figuré⁴⁷. Au Sud du Danube c'est l'étymon latin qui domine puisqu'on a l'aroumain *fărmec*, au seul sens de remède et poison.⁴⁸ En revanche, au Nord du Danube, force est de constater que le roumain ne pouvait recevoir le vocable *farmec* du *pharmacum* latin, mais uniquement et directement du grec φάρμακον, dont de surcroît, il ne sélectionne que la valeur d'action magique (charme, sortilège, ensorcellement), ne retenant aucune des valeurs matérielles (remède/poison, potion ou filtre, fût-il magique). Notre hypothèse diverge là aussi de l'étymologie couramment admise, qui fait dériver *farmec* du lat. *pharmacum*⁴⁹ (ce qui, phonétiquement légitime, serait un contre-sens sémantique).

⁴² L'étymologie de *vraža* slave est controversée. La solution la plus convaincante nous semble celle de VAILLANT 1958, que rejoint en partie, le lexicographe croate SKOK 1973. Il s'agirait à l'origine de *wrózq* (sort) qui donne le verbe *vorozit' / vražiti* (jeter un sort, charmer, ensorceler) avec le dérivé nominal *wróg* (charme), qui a pu se contaminer du sens de son quasi-homonyme *vrag* (l'ennemi, le diable), tout en évoquant aussi, à l'opposé, le *vrač* (guérisseur): un halo connotatif sans lien de dérivation entre ces mots.

⁴³ Le mot grec lui-même a une étymologie controversée ; d'après certains auteurs il serait un vieil emprunt à l'égyptien pharaonique («Jonckheere (1955) (...) cite Jernstedt qui tient *pharmakon* pour une combinaison du copte *phahri* (de l'égyptien *phrt*, médicament) et de l'égyptien *haki* (magie), le prototype égyptien étant *phmkaw*»: *apud* GHALIOUNGUI 1984, p. 182).

⁴⁴ Cf. GAFFIOT-1, BAILLY.

⁴⁵ *Apud* LIDDELL-SCOTT, il résulte que φάρμακος comme magicien serait surtout une invention de la Septante (Ex. 7.8-13: l'épisode du bâton de Moïse et Aaron transformé en serpent face aux «sages [σοφισταί] et magiciens [φάρμακους] et enchanteurs [ἐπαοιδοί] d'Égypte», auquel il faut rajouter Deut. 18.10-11 où l'on vitupère tous les pratiquants de la magie, dont le φάρμακος, alors que chez les auteurs grecs classiques on n'aurait que φαρμακός, victime expiatoire. Mais comment oublier que la magicienne Circé est appelée πολυφάρμακος (Hom. Odyssée X.276), épithète qui inclut forcément la valeur magique (d'ailleurs LIDDELL-SCOTT traduit par «knowing many drugs or charms», alors que BAILLY réduit à: «habile à connaître ou à employer les remèdes ou les poisons»).

⁴⁶ Cf. GAFFIOT-2 (absent de GAFFIOT-1).

⁴⁷ Cf. LIDDELL-SCOTT, avec d'abondantes références classiques.

⁴⁸ De même, l'albanais emprunte *farmëk* au latin *pharmacum*, au sens de poison (VĂTĂȘESCU 2012, n. 2).

⁴⁹ Cf. DEX 1975. La provenance grecque était déjà affirmée par MARIENESCU 1870, et par H. Tiktin en 1911 (TIKTIN-MIRON 1986-1989, v. II p. 137), étant suggérée aussi dans CANDREA-DENSUȘIANU 1907, II, p. 91 ; elle semble avoir été adoptée plus récemment: «dans le cas du roumain, comme le remarque Brâncuș (2008), le domaine lexical de la "sorcellerie" est partagé entre trois termes génériques appartenant à trois couches étymologiques différentes, latine, grecque et slave (*descântec*,

En tout cas, la famille *farmec* / *a fermece* / *fermecător* comporte, pour sa dimension magique, une valeur ambivalente: les *farmece* peuvent être utilisés en bonne ou en mauvaise part, comme le relèvent les folkloristes⁵⁰.

Par ailleurs, il nous semble, en examinant ces vocables, que la sélection de certaines valeurs sémantiques au détriment d'autres non seulement indique la source linguistique la plus probable en tant qu'étymon, mais aussi définit le référentiel et la praxis couverts par chacun des vocables en question, concernant, en l'occurrence, la méthode et la finalité de l'exercice magique, par rejet d'autres méthodes et finalités, couvertes éventuellement par des termes d'une autre langue. Ainsi, la résistance de *a descânta*, avec une connotation magique positive, face aux remplaçants de l'autochtone *a încânta* que sont les mots d'emprunt *a fermece* et *a vrăji*, avec une connotation magique négative, est significative.

La distinction est nette et confirmée par un témoignage historique de taille, celui du prince Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723). Dans sa *Descriptio Moldaviae*, écrite en 1711 à la sollicitation de l'Académie de Berlin, au chapitre sur la religion des Moldaves, en listant une série de figures et pratiques de la religiosité populaire – qu'il estime être des vestiges des idoles anciennes des Daces, que le peuple célèbre encore (*ignota quaedam et antiquum Daciae cultum redolentia nomina carminibus canticisque celebret*) – le grand polymathe fait lui aussi la nette distinction entre *descântec*, désenchantement, et *farmec*, charme ou sortilège, en spécifiant l'usage propre à chacun. Cantemir introduit ici, sans les traduire tels quels en latin mais en les expliquant, les mots roumains *Farmek* et *Deskyntek*, qu'il met en parallèle avec le binôme antinomique *Legatura* et *Dislegatura* respectivement⁵¹:

LEGATURA [*la ligature, sortilège d'empêchement, n.n.*] est une sorte d'envoûtement (*fascinum*) par lequel ils disent que le marié est empêché d'avoir des rapports avec la mariée. Ils croient également que les loups et autres animaux féroces peuvent être ainsi vaincus pour qu'ils ne nuisent pas aux troupeaux de moutons et de bovins.

DISLEGATURA [*le déliement, au sens de désensorcellement ou désenvoûtement, n.n.*] est la solution à cet envoûtement conjugal de la ligature, qui, pensent-ils, peut être obtenue par d'autres artifices magiques plus puissants.

FARMEK [*sortilège, charme, n.n.*] est une sorte d'incantation utilisée chez les paysans, par laquelle les femmes croient pouvoir enchaîner à elles leurs amoureux, ou égarer la pensée de ceux qu'elles poursuivent de leur haine.

DESKYNTEK [*charme de guérison ou désenvoûtement, n.n.*] est une autre sorte d'incantation, par laquelle ils déclarent pouvoir guérir toutes maladies qui ne sont pas léthifères (n.s.)⁵².

farmec, vrăjă)» (cf. VĂTĂȘESCU 2012, n. 23); de même BĂLTEANU 2003, pp. 123, 302, apud CANDREA-DENSUȘIANU 1907 («provine din cuvântul grecesc *pharmacōn*, care în greaca veche însemna și "preparation magique, toute opération de magie"»).

⁵⁰ Dans une étude en préparation (*Vocabulaire roumain de la magie dans des textes*), nous analysons les définitions des folkloristes, ainsi que les occurrences de ces termes dans des écrits du XVIe au XXe s.

⁵¹ L'opération de «lier le mariage» (*a lega nunta*, à savoir en empêcher la consommation) figurait dans *Șapte taine* (*A cincea taină, Glava 16*), comme étant imputable aux *vrăjitori* (MAZILU 2012, p. 223).

⁵² «*Legatura, est genus fascini, quo sponsum impediri ferunt, ne cum sponsa rem habere possit. Eadem etiam lupos aliaque animalia ferocia vinciri posse credunt, no ovium boumque gregibus*

On remarque bien l'usage opposé du *descântec*, défini comme «une autre sorte d'incantation», par rapport à *farmec*. À titre de *DESKYNTEK* le prince nous offre son témoignage personnel concernant une vieille «enchanteresse» (*vetula incantatrix*); nous n'avons hélas pas la description du comportement physique de la praticienne mais uniquement le récit des effets presque instantanés produits par ses incantations (il s'agissait de guérir un cheval par la magie analogique opérée sur son maître).

À la recherche des origines antiques. Il serait hasardeux d'avancer ici des hypothèses sur l'époque de ces emprunts, respectivement les noms d'agent *vrăjitor* (du verbe a *vrăji*, avec l'objet *vrajă*) et *fermecător* (du verbe a *fermeca*, avec l'objet *farmec*). Théoriquement le mot grec *φάρμακον* aurait pu entrer en circulation sur le terrain du daco-roumain avant l'arrivée et l'installation des Slaves aux VI-VIIIe s., qui fissurent le pont linguistique latino-grec établi entre les deux rives du Danube à l'époque romaine tardive et byzantine naissante, alors que le mot slave *vraža* doit s'être implanté au cours de la période suivante.⁵³ En tout cas les termes *fermecător* et *vrăjitor* sont des quasi-synonymes, avec une légère gradation, alors que *descântător* garde par rapport à eux une opposition sémantique et fonctionnelle déterminante; créé sur le terrain latin local, il est le plus ancien de la triade.

Nous pensons que l'adoption des deux termes d'origine grecque et slave respectivement pourrait être une preuve indirecte du fait que l'institution plus ancienne des *descântători*, forgée sur le terrain linguistique du protoroumain, a eu à régler un conflit magico-religieux, ressenti comme axiologique, avec des *fermecători* et *vrăjitori*, venus d'ailleurs, et l'a fait en sa faveur, reléguant complètement le côté maléfique aux autres, pour se réserver, par réaction, la valeur bénéfique. Une hypothèse qui semble guidée par la langue elle-même.⁵⁴

Les *descântători* apparaissent alors non seulement comme une institution religieuse populaire nationale, dans le sens où elle est attestée partout sur les

damnum inferant. Dislegatura est solutio hujus legaturae fascini conjugalis, quam aliis fortioribus magicis artibus obtineri posse credunt. Farmek, incantamenti genus est inter rusticos usitatum, quo mulieres amasios suos sibi devincire, aut quos odio prosequuntur, in furorem agere posse existimant. Deskyntek, aliud incantamenti genus, quo cunctos morbos, qui non sint lethiferi, sanari posse autumant»: *apud* SLUȘANSKI 1973, pp. 344-345 (notre traduction).

⁵³ Il est significatif qu'au Sud du Danube il manque tout emprunt à partir de *vraža* slave, inconnu en aroumain (CUNIA 2010), mégléno-roumain (CAPIDAN 1934), et albanais (VĂTĂȘESCU 2012, n. 23); ces langues partagent les sens d'enchantement, charme, envoûtement, ensorcellement, sortilège (répartis, en roumain, entre *farmec* et *vrajă*), entre la famille créée à partir du latin *canticum*, et une famille créée par l'emprunt au grec *μαγεία*, probablement avant l'arrivée des Slaves dans les Balkans.

⁵⁴ L'hypothèse (OIȘTEANU 2013, p. 261-262) selon laquelle les trois termes auraient à l'origine été synonymes et leurs sens se seraient différenciés et spécialisés au cours du temps, jusqu'à la distinction axiologique *descântători* versus *vrăjitori* et *fermecători*, va à l'encontre de la logique historique de la langue. C'est plutôt l'inverse qui s'est produit: une structure sémantique sur plusieurs étages construite dans la diachronie s'est progressivement tassée dans la synchronie quasi-synonymique du langage courant actuel, au fur et à mesure que les fonctions elles-mêmes désignées par ces termes ont commencé à dépérir face à la société moderne.

territoires roumains historiques, mais aussi comme une institution ancienne, remontant à l'époque de la constitution de la langue roumaine sur le terrain du latin populaire parlé au temps de la colonisation de la Dacie, en étroit lien, à cette époque-là, avec la Mésie déjà romanisée.

Cela permet aussi de supposer que la fonction magique des *descântători* était héritée des Géo-Daces – rappelons-nous les «médecins» de Zalmoxis (ιατροί), maîtres dans l'art de l'incantation thérapeutique de l'âme (ἐπιφθῆ), évoqués par Platon dans *Charmides*⁵⁵ – tout en revêtant une terminologie latinisée qui évolue de manière spécifique, pour s'adapter de toute vraisemblance à une réalité locale. Le manque de documents écrits du protoroumain et même de la langue roumaine constituée, avant une époque bien tardive (XVe-XVIe siècles), ne nous permet pas d'apporter des preuves matérielles, mais le caractère archaïque du contenu imaginal véhiculé par les *descânțete* écrits (XVIe-XVIIIe s.) ou cueillis de sources orales tout au long des XIXe et XXe siècles, qui constituent chez les Roumains un héritage archaïque, préservé et transmis de génération en génération au sein des communautés rurales, nous autorise au moins à constater la remarquable persistance d'une pratique «incantatoire» préchrétienne.⁵⁶

UN AUTRE MODÈLE: LES SOLOMONARI

Nous ne pouvons quitter cette démarche synthétique sur les termes de la pratique magico-religieuse populaire des Roumains – *descântători* versus *fermecători*, *vrăjitori* – sans évoquer sommairement un autre terme majeur: le *solomonar* ou *șolomonar*.

Le mot et sa sémantique. Ce nom d'agent est de toute évidence construit à partir du nom propre du roi Salomon (qui en roumain se prononce Solomon)⁵⁷. Sa première attestation écrite se situe vers la fin du XVIIIe siècle, dans un dictionnaire resté en manuscrit⁵⁸. La présence du mot chez les auteurs de l'École Transylvaine,

⁵⁵ *Charmides* 156 b-e à 157 a-c ; à ce sujet voir HAZEBROUCQ 2000, pp. 123-150.

⁵⁶ Voir par ex. CEPRAGA 2017, qui rappelle dans ce sens (pp. 209-300) la correspondance presque mot pour mot découverte par I. A. Candrea entre un *descânțec* de Moldavie et un *incantamentum* latin inclus dans *De medicamentis* de Marcellus Empiricus, compendium de remèdes de médecine populaire de la fin du IVe s. De même les lamentations au mort (*bocete*, correspondant aux θρήνοι et *neniae*: BURADA 1882, pp. 76-83, où l'invocation *nenō !* est mise en rapport avec la déesse Nenia), et à d'autres pratiques funéraires aux racines antiques attestées chez les auteurs latins (*ibid.* pp. 55-71 ; un ex.: *Sit tibi terra levis / Să-ti fie țărâna ușoară*).

⁵⁷ D'autres explications étymologiques tentées par certains savants ne s'avèrent pas convaincantes (OIȘTEANU 2013, p. 213, cite S.F. Marian qui a proposé une dérivation de Salmonée, Salmones, fils d'Éole et roi d'Élide, foudroyé par Zeus pour avoir tenté de l'imiter en construisant un char volant). Il est même fort probable – comme il est suggéré dans BĂLTEANU 2003 (pp. 240, 243-244) – que ce soit le nom propre Salomon, entré en circulation comme nom commun (*solomon*), qui ait fait dériver toute la famille lexicale (nom d'agent *solomonar*, vb. *a solomoni*, nom d'action *solomonie*).

⁵⁸ Cf. TIKTIN-MIRON 1986-1989 (vol. III, p. 465 et I, p. 66) le mot apparaît dans *Dictionarium trium linguarum germano-latina et daco-romana* d'Aurelius Antonin Praedeticis ou Predetici Nasody (Năsăud), daté de 1793 ; découvert par Nicolae Densușianu en 1880, le manuscrit, en trois volumes monumentaux, se trouve depuis à la BAR, Filiale Cluj (cote 457-459), étant toujours inédit à ce jour.

à commencer par Ion Budai-Deleanu, est abondante et indique un praticien de la magie météorologique⁵⁹. Voici la définition qu'en donne l'auteur de la *Tsiganiade* dans la 1^{ère} version de son épopée héroï-comique (*Trei viteji*, VI.86)⁶⁰:

Șolomnariu ou *solomonariu*, un mot par lequel l'on désigne en Transylvanie ceux qui chevauchent sur des dragons et portent la grêle (...) ils appellent leur enseignement *solomonie*.

Dans le *Lexicon* de Buda (1825), basé en partie sur le dictionnaire de Samuel Klein (env. 1801), les équivalents en trois langues de *șolomnariu* sont: lat. *imbricit*⁶¹, magh. *garabantzás deák*, all. *Wettermacher, Wettertreiber, Lumpenmann*⁶².

On a pu penser que le compendium législatif publié à Târgoviște en 1652, *Îndreptarea legii* (Le redressement de la loi), condamnant les «chasseurs des nuages» (*gonitori de nori*), faisait référence aux *solomonari*, cette mention constituant ainsi une première attestation écrite⁶³; mais il s'agissait en fait là d'une pure reproduction du canon 61 du concile in *Trullo*⁶⁴, mention prouvant seulement qu'à la fin du VII^e s. les magiciens pourchasseurs des nuages (*νεφροδιώχτας / nubium persecutores*) étaient connus à Constantinople, étant d'ailleurs étroitement liés aux *tempestarii*, mentionnés dans de nombreux témoignages directs tout au long de l'histoire médiévale et moderne en Europe, et condamnés dans toute la législation civile et ecclésiastique sur les faits de magie.

Ceci étant dit, l'attestation tardive du nom de *solomonari* en Transylvanie ne veut pas dire qu'ils soient apparus là, à la fin du XVIII^e s. Une remarque extrêmement judicieuse est à prendre en compte en voulant situer dans le temps un phénomène religieux, ethnologique, sociétal:

Suivre, dans le temps et dans l'espace, la «circulation» des motifs, des types ou des héros, c'est seulement tenter d'établir le chemin inverse des attestations, consignées par écrit, des plus récentes aux plus anciennes. C'est pourquoi on peut parler de

⁵⁹ Cf. OIȘTEANU 2013, p.203 et suiv., p. 248 et suiv.

⁶⁰ «*Șolomnariu* sau *solomonariu*, iarăși un cuvânt cu care să chiamă în Ardeal ceia ce călăresc pe balauri și poartă grindina (bazne țărănești), și învățătura lor o zic solomonie»: FUGARIU 1974-1975, vol. 2, p. 140.

⁶¹ Litt. faiseur de pluie (de *imber, -bris*); rare, on le trouve chez Macrobe (*Saturnalia*, I, 17.49) comme attribut d'Appolon, synonyme du grec *Θυμβραῖος*, expliqué comme «celui qui provoque les pluies»: *Θυμβραῖος Ἀπόλλων ὁ τοὺς ὄμβρους θεῖς, quod est deus imbricator* (ce qui révèle la parenté étymologique, remontant à l'indo-européen, entre *imber* et *ὄμβρος*). À noter que dans son exposé sur Apollon, Macrobe développe amplement aussi son attribut de tueur du dragon (Python comme *draco*), en en déduisant le sens de régulateur du chaos (I, 17.50-66; 62: «ideo in alterutro signorum peracto annuo spatio draconem Apollo, id est flexuosum iter suum, ibi confecisse memoratur»): un trait «chamanique» que partagent avec ce dieu, probablement assimilé dans les croyances populaires d'époque chrétienne au prophète Élie, nos *solomonari*, réputés dans l'art de maîtriser les dragons-nuages (*balauri*); en filigrane on perçoit l'ancienne opposition mythologique entre Dieu de l'orage et de la foudre, céleste-lumineux-igné et monstre ténébreux-ophidien-aquatique (Indra / Vritra).

⁶² Apud *Lexicon* numérisé accessible en ligne: <https://lexiconuldelabuda.bcucuj.ro//site/login.php>.

⁶³ C'était l'opinion de I.-A. Candrea, reprise dans TALOȘ 1976, p. 40.

⁶⁴ PR. MB p.510. Cela est fait remarquer dans OIȘTEANU 2013, pp. 264-265, où sont mentionnés aussi d'autres exemples de canons et décrets condamnant les magiciens des intempéries (*tempestarii*).

l'attestation ou de l'absence d'attestation d'un fait folklorique, dans une culture donnée, et non de son existence ou de sa non-existence au sein de cette culture.⁶⁵

L'institution des *solomonari* doit être archaïque, comme l'indique les fonctions qui lui sont attribuées, quitte à penser que le nom ait pu s'y coller a posteriori. Intraduisible tel quel, sauf à le désigner sous l'appellatif générique de «magicien», on peut assimiler le *solomonar* à l'astrologue et au devin, au maître des animaux, dont il connaît le langage, des plantes, des eaux et des intempéries (vents, pluie, grêle, tempête): il maîtrise voire chevauche le dragon des nuages (roum. *balaur* ou *zmeu*⁶⁶), ce qui est en soi une représentation chamanique. Ce trait nous rappelle les thaumaturges antiques voyageurs dans l'air (ἄεροβάτες)⁶⁷ et peut-être aussi les *kapnobatai* mésiens et/ou gètes évoqués par Strabon⁶⁸, dont on a rapproché les *solomonari*, comme de possibles lointains héritiers⁶⁹. Leur nom en revanche, comme nous l'avons déjà vu, ainsi que certaines des attributions qui leur sont associées, nous orientent vers des sources bibliques et parabibliques.

⁶⁵ «A urmări, în timp și spațiu, „circulația” motivelor, tipurilor sau eroilor înseamnă numai a încerca să stabilești drumul invers al atestărilor, consemnate în scris, de la cea mai recentă spre cea mai veche. De aceea putem vorbi de atestarea sau lipsa de atestare a unui fapt folcloric, într-o cultură dată, iar nu de existența sau neexistența acestuia în cadrul culturii respective»: ISPAS 1992, pp. 212-213.

⁶⁶ Des hypothèses pour *balaur* (apud DEXONLINE), la plus convaincante nous semble celle de Al. I. Philippide: lat. *bel(l)ua aura* (on a déjà *belua* > *bală*), celle de Al. Ciorănescu étant aussi intéressante: trac. **bell-* ou *ber-*, les deux avec le sens de bête monstrueuse. Pour *zmeu* (apud *ibid.*): cf. sl. *Zmij* „șarpe, balaur”, possible cf. *zamol*, trac. „terre”, d'où Zamolxis „dieu de la terre” (v. ELIADE 1970, p. 54): la même sémantique archaïque.

⁶⁷ Cf. Porphyre, *Vie de Pythagore*, §29, et Jamblique, *Vie de Pythagore*, §135. Le verbe ἀεροβάτεω est utilisé par Aristophane à propos de Socrate sur un mode parodique (*Les nuées*, 225-233, 1503). Pour le topos des voyages extatiques des iatromantes et thaumaturges antiques, voir COULIANO 1984, pp. 32-43, et aussi pp. 105-117 (concernant les récits de Plutarque: *Incubation et catalepsie*).

⁶⁸ STRABON: *La Germanie méridionale*, VII.3.3 (se revendiquant d'un ouvrage, perdu depuis, de Posidonios). Il s'agit d'ascètes géto-mésiens qui sont dits craignant-Dieu (θεοσεβείς), et aussi κτίστας (pères fondateurs) et ἄβιονς (abstinents, litt. sans vie, terme homérique, comme le remarque Strabon); ces épithètes accompagnateurs éclairent d'un autre sens le composé *καπνοβάται* (litt. ceux qui vont dans la fumée ou comme la fumée): il nous semble renvoyer à la métaphore consacrée par Homère de l'âme du mort comme fumée chtonienne (Il. XXIII, 100, à propos de Patrocle: ψυχή δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἥϊτε καπνός); il s'agirait donc de renonçants qui vivent comme s'ils étaient morts (ἄβιοι), dont l'âme peut se détacher du corps telle la fumée lors de l'expérience chamanique.

⁶⁹ OIȘTEANU 2013, ch. IV: *Balaurul și solomonarul* (alias «le chaos et l'ordre»), pp. 200-207, 225, 263-265, 405: recensant les hypothèses émises sur la signification du mot *καπνοβάται* (dont: «qui utilisaient la fumée de chanvre pour provoquer les transes extatiques », cf. ELIADE 1970 p. 49), le chercheur adopte l'hypothèse d'une continuité entre ces ascètes géto-mésiens et les *solomonari* roumains, eux aussi pratiquant une vie de célibat et d'abstinence (notamment de tout aliment carné). L'auteur évoque également, dans le contexte mythique archaïque du binôme oppositif dieu du ciel/démon ophidien des eaux (pp. 220-223), des personnages «volants» de la mythologie et la littérature gréco-latine (Médée, Persée, Artémis et Cérès, Orphée, Abaris, la sorcière Pamphile dans l'*Âne d'Or* d'Apulée: *ibid.* pp. 210-217), ainsi que les légendes sur les voyages aériens ou sous-marins du roi Salomon dans les traditions hébraïques et musulmanes (pp. 209-210).

La tradition orale: solomonari et contra-solomonari. L'origine de l'appellation de *solomonari* est surtout établie par la tradition orale, qui fait du roi Salomon un personnage hors pair. Il est très présent dans les contes de fées ou de sagesse, où il apparaît tantôt comme un roi-juge exemplaire tantôt comme un grand sage magicien (première Solomon⁷⁰). Composant un véritable cycle salomonien dans le folklore roumain, ces légendes semblent agglutiner autour du roi Salomon les motifs mythologiques du «héros civilisateur», au-delà des origines bibliques du personnage⁷¹.

Par ailleurs, le lien entre le roi Salomon et les *solomonari* est explicitement établi dans la croyance populaire, comme l'atteste deux légendes cueillies à distance d'un siècle, l'une dans la région de Sighișoara (publiée par Fr. Müller à Brașov en 1857), l'autre en Bucovine en 1932, où l'on vente la «sagesse» de Salomon, qui «était un grand sorcier, pouvant ouvrir et fermer le ciel, faire glacer les eaux, apporter la pluie ou la grêle», et «maîtrisait tous les mystères de ce monde», et dont les héritiers, dépositaires de son savoir, sont expressément désignés comme étant les *solomonari*⁷². Mais il faut remarquer qu'on a affaire à un rejaillissement rétroactif des attributions des *solomonari* sur le roi biblique Salomon plutôt qu'à une filiation d'attributions de celui-ci vers les *solomonari*...

Il faut supposer aussi que dans le folklore, la figure du roi Salomon a pu converger avec celle du prophète Élie, élevé au ciel dans un char de feu (2R2.11), devenu saint Élie (Sânt Ilie), le maître des tempêtes, du tonnerre et de l'éclair dans la mythologie populaire roumaine⁷³: encore une figure synchrétique où des éléments de chamanisme géto-dace, des réminiscences bibliques, et des remaniements chrétiens fusionnent inextricablement⁷⁴.

Le fait que des pratiquants de la magie météorologique, désignés comme tels (*zgrăbunțaș*, *grimințieș*, *grindinar*, *ghețar* ou *pietrar*: porteur ou chasseur de la grêle, faiseur du gel et du dégel), soient, à la différence de leurs collègues proches (*planetink* polonais, *grabancijaš* serbo-croate, *garabantzás deák* hongrois, *Wettermacher* allemand, *gradivnik* ukr.), placés sous la coupe explicite d'un des plus illustres personnages de l'Ancien Testament, est hautement significatif: ce n'est que chez les Roumains que, doublant voire surpassant des termes correspondants à ceux connus chez des peuples voisins⁷⁵, est apparue cette

⁷⁰ Le mot est un calque du vsl. *priemondrŭ*, également été repris tel (*preamândru*), au sens de très sage.

⁷¹ C'est ce qui est montré dans ISPAS 1992. Mentionnons, pour le roi Salomon dans les croyances populaires roumaines, et, en parallèle, pour les attributions des *solomonari*: MARIAN 1870, 1878; GASTER 1883, pp. 324-339; PAMFILE 1916, pp. 315-316; CANDREA 1947; FOCHI 1976, pp. 3-7, 329; TALOȘ 1976; OLTEANU 1999, pp. 13-16, 435-449; OIȘTEANU, *op.cit.*

⁷² Apud OIȘTEANU 2013, pp. 251-252.

⁷³ L'étude de référence reste le chapitre *Sf. Ilie* dans PAMFILE 1911-1914 (éd. 2018), pp. 112-134. Une représentation poétique de cette figure populaire, avec une notice explicative, se trouve dans *Trei viteji* de Budai-Deleanu, où le saint lance des tonnerres depuis son nuage (chant IV.47, *apud* FUGARIU 1974-1975, vol. 2, p. 88).

⁷⁴ Pour des références aux avatars chrétiens du prophète Élie voir BERTRAND 2006, pp. 427-434.

⁷⁵ Voir l'analyse du parallélisme entre ces termes et ceux du serbo-croate et du hongrois dans OIȘTEANU 2013, pp. 269-270. Pour le domaine ukrainien, voir TYKHOVSKA 2019. Pour l'étude

appellation globale de *solomonari*, avec toute une famille sémantique (*solomonie*, *a solomoni*, *solomonit*, *solomonărie*), qui non seulement dépasse les fonctions d'un «maître du temps» mais évoque la figure légendaire, parabiblique, d'un roi Salomon magicien.

C'est que, partant d'écrits post-bibliques⁷⁶, le Moyen-Âge en a fait le prototype du magicien, universel et polyvalent, maîtrisant toutes les magies⁷⁷. Et sans doute, les légendes circulant à son sujet partout en Europe et Moyen-Orient, y compris dans le monde musulman, ont pénétré aussi sur les territoires roumains⁷⁸.

Néanmoins, le champ d'action magique des *solomonari*, bien que mis sous le signe salomonien, n'a presque rien de commun avec les attributions du roi Salomon dans sa version biblique, et très peu aussi, avec ses anamorphoses résultant des légendes ayant circulé sur son compte, pas plus que ne se superposent avec les aventures salomonniennes desdites légendes, les faits et gestes attribués aux *solomonari* dans les récits populaires roumains les concernant. Ces divers sous-ensembles ne se recoupent que partiellement, et nous verrons qu'il y en a de même pour le croisement avec les sources livresques.

Quant aux notions-fonctions précédemment discutées, les *solomonari* s'apparentent le plus aux *vrăjitori*, qui assument eux aussi la maîtrise de la magie météorologique (*tempestarii*), tout comme l'astrologie divinatoire (*mathematici* ou *astrologi* – roum. *ghicitori în stele*), moins aux *fermecători*, bien que pratiquant aussi l'art des sortilèges, et encore moins aux *descântători*, n'ayant pas forcément la vocation de guérison ou de désenvoûtement, tout en maîtrisant les exorcismes contre les démons⁷⁹.

Intéressant est aussi le fait que les témoignages populaires font des *solomonari* une catégorie reconnaissable d'après certains signes d'élection (ils sont

comparée des magiciens du temps dans toute la zone centre-sud-est européenne, dans une approche émique (visant à reconstituer les fonctions de l'intérieur, selon les témoignages disponibles), voir Pócs 2024 (communiqué par l'autrice).

⁷⁶ Pour l'évolution de la figure de Salomon, progressivement bonifiée et augmentée, depuis le Deutéronome hébraïque et les autres livres de l'AT à Flavius Josèphe, en passant par la Septante et aussi par les écrits de Qumran, voir PETERCĂ 1999 (roum.), KOULAGNA 2009 (fr.).

⁷⁷ De nombreux livres d'astrologie et divination se revendiquent du roi Salomon, mais aussi le grimoire réputé contenir l'art de convoquer les 72 démons enfermés (*Clavis Salomonis*, avec une version grecque au XVe s. mais dont les origines remonteraient à des écrits kabbalistiques juifs des XIe-XIIe siècles).

⁷⁸ Pour les traditions médiévales, en particulier arabo-musulmanes, sur Salomon magicien, voir LECOUEUX 2020 (ce qui ne remplace point un ouvrage classique comme A. N. Veselovsky, *Slavianskiye skazaniia o Solomone i Kitovrase i zapadnye legendy o Morolfe i Merline / Slavic legends of Solomon and Kitovras and Western legends of Merlin and Morolfe*. St. Petresburg 1872, qui ne nous a hélas pas été accessible). À noter, sur le terrain roumain, que les objets magiques de Salomon incluent le tapis volant (CANDREA 1947, p. 95).

⁷⁹ Pour Salomon exorciste, la source est Flavius Josèphe (*Antiquités juives*, VIII.II.5: 45-49). L'assimilation au sorcier peut de déduire de *Șapte taine*, celui-ci (*vrăjitor*) étant principalement défini comme astrologue (*caută în steale*: MAZILU 2012, p. 223), ce qui correspond à l'une des attributions du *solomonar*.

nés coiffés, *născuți cu căiță*, ou avec d'autres signes, comme une queue, ou prouvent leur destinée par certains exploits) ainsi que d'après leur comportement (ils vivent en ermites, sont d'apparence hirsute, portent des ustensiles magiques⁸⁰, descendent aux villages tels des sauvageons, mendient et punissent ceux qui les reçoivent mal, et risquent de devenir vampires, *strigoi*, après leur mort) tout en se cachant, parfois, devenant comme des gens ordinaires...⁸¹.

Surtout, il est fait mention d'un apprentissage dans une «école»: *școala solomonarilor*... Secrète, mais bien existante quelque part, assurent les informateurs, peut-être sous terre – ce qui évoque le topos de l'initiation catabatique⁸²: elle reçoit 10 élèves et n'en fait ressortir que 9, et dure un nombre «magique» d'années (3, 7 ou 9)⁸³. Cela rappelle que d'après Marcus Bandinus l'art des incantations et sortilèges s'enseigne⁸⁴.

Enfin, on ne peut ignorer l'ambivalence des *solomonari*, qui agissent en bonne comme en mauvaise part, pour libérer ou lier les dragons de la pluie, de la grêle et des pluies, geler ou dégeler les eaux, détruire ou sauver des récoltes et des troupeaux, tout comme le roi-mage Salomon, dans les légendes post-bibliques, était réputé faire ou défaire des sortilèges, faire venir ou faire enfermer les démons, envoûter ou exorciser⁸⁵. La même logique fonctionne que pour la faille que nous avons identifiée entre désenchanteurs (*descântători*), d'un côté, et enchanteurs et

⁸⁰ Avant tout la *toaca*, morceau de bois à frapper avec un bâtonnet, d'usage fréquent dans les églises et monastères pour appeler à l'office ; pour le *solomonar*, elle sert à déclencher ou arrêter la pluie, la grêle, l'orage (instrument chamannique remontant peut-être à l'usage géto-dace du tambour, ayant un rôle cosmologique dans les légendes liées à Noé qui l'utilise pour faire tenir son arche, que Satan tentait de détruire: voir OIȘTEANU 2013, pp. 90,104-106, 139-140, 200-201), associée à la besace (*traistă*), à une rêne en écorce de bouleau avec une bride d'or, pour lier et chevaucher les dragons (*balauri*), à une hache en fer, un bâton, et un livre de formules magiques (talismans ou amulettes: voir *ibid.*). La hache sert aussi à briser la glace pour libérer un dragon (OLTEANU 1999, p. 436).

⁸¹ Un «portrait-robot» d'après ses collectes, dans MARIAN 1878 ; un plus récent, d'après des matériaux inédits des archives des Instituts d'ethnographie et folklore et de linguistique de Cluj, dans TALOȘ 1976, pp. 40-42.

⁸² Cf. ELIADE 1970, ch. II: *Zalmoxis/ La «demeure souterraine»*). DIÓSZEGY 1958 (p. 99) relevait, d'après des sources roumaines, la localisation de l'«école des solomonars» dans une grotte ou «en enfer».

⁸³ Voir MARIAN 1878, CANDREA 1947 (pp. 91-106), FOCHI 1976 (p. 329), TALOȘ 1976 (pp. 40-41), CHIȚIMIA 1994, OLTEANU 1999 (pp. 182-196). On a supposé (GASTER 1884) un lien étymologique entre l'école des *solomonari*, appelée Șalomanța, et le nom de l'ancienne ville ibérique de Salamanque (gr. Σαλμάντικα, Ptol. 2.5.9, lat. Hermandica ou Helmantica, Tit.Liv. 21.5, *apud* PERSEUS DIGITAL LIBRARY), réputée avoir abrité au Moyen Âge une école de magie noire dans une grotte ; réfutée à juste titre du point de vue linguistique (OIȘTEANU 2001, p. 207, OIȘTEANU 2013, p. 247), l'hypothèse d'un lien entre les deux, établi peut-être par l'étymologie populaire, est séduisante et même convaincante du point de vue de l'histoire des idées, puisque l'on retrouve, à propos de l'école magique de Salamanque (cf. DELPECH 1991), la même légende que celle recueillie à propos de l'école des *salomonari*: 10 étudiants entrèrent, 9 sortirent, l'un étant retenu par le Diable (cf. DELPECH 1991).

⁸⁴ «Exercere et discere incantationis et maleficiorum artem»: CB, f. 193 du ms., pp. 416-417 de l'édition DIACONESCU 2006.

⁸⁵ L'outillage des *solomonari* suggère la double fonction de chaque instrument: appeler/chasser le dragon (*toaca*), le chevaucher/le lier (la bride), le libérer/l'abattre (la hache, le bâton), libérer/enfermer les vents (la besace).

sorciers (*fermecători* et *vrăjitori*), de l'autre, se faisant face tout comme la magie «positive», «défensive», ou «blanche» s'oppose à la magie «négative», «offensive», ou «noire». Les deux versants sont clairement réunis chez les *solomonari*, qui se présentent avec une sorte de double personnalité, d'où la perception d'être soit des personnages démoniaques soit des saints, les deux caractérisations étant également attestées. Alors, le système axiologique qui gouverne ces représentations a créé aussi les personnages opposés, pour désambiguïser le concept et équilibrer l'arbre sémantique: la croyance dans les *contra-solomonari* (appelés eux aussi *ghetari* ou *pietrari*) est de même largement attestée, ceux-ci jouant face aux *solomonari* le rôle des désenchanteurs face aux enchanteurs (d'ailleurs ils utilisent toujours des *descântece* pour contrer l'action des *solomonari* et ses effets, notamment faire cesser la pluie ou éloigner la grêle, faire tomber le *balaur*, voire aussi son maître avec lui)⁸⁶.

Les influences livresques. Pourquoi *solomonari*? Aurions-nous affaire à un syncrétisme religieux reliant des mages-ermes autochtones (remontant peut-être aux kapnobatai de Strabon et autres aerobates, sinon aux Gètes chassant les nuages avec des flèches enchantées évoqués par Hérodote), à quelque source de sagesse hébraïque entourant la figure du roi Salomon, ou s'agit-il d'une étiquette provenant des «livres populaires», apposée a posteriori sur la tradition locale du maître des intempéries, en usant du prestige du personnage biblique⁸⁷?

En effet, la figure du roi Salomon est présente dans les chronographes byzantins – genre d'histoire encyclopédique depuis la création du monde, imprégnée d'apocryphes et de légendes, dont la traduction roumaine dite «type Danovici» a circulé en des dizaines de copies manuscrites, depuis la 2nde moitié du XVII^e s. jusqu'au milieu du XIX^e s.⁸⁸

Et il a découvert toute la nature de tout ce qui est dans le monde, et des hommes et des oiseaux et des animaux et des fauves et des poissons et des bestioles et des herbes, et de tout ce qu'on sait être sous le ciel et sur la terre, et dans l'eau, il a tout découvert avec sa sagesse, que lui avait donnée Dieu. De même les planètes et le firmament, et tout l'ordre sous le ciel, il le connaissait, et comment aller lier les démons et comment les appeler chacun par son nom, et tous les sortilèges. Ainsi que tous les remèdes et les médecines et les herbes, chacune de quel remède elle est. Toutes ces choses il les a découvertes, Salomon, avec sa sagesse.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Références dans MARIAN 1870, 1878, reprises et enrichies dans des études ultérieures, ex. TALOȘ 1976.

⁸⁷ Le but étant, pour les diverses catégories de sorciers (*vrăjitori*) locaux, de se protéger des persécutions anti-sorcellerie, notamment en Transylvanie: c'est la thèse avancée dans OIȘTEANU 2013, pp. 254-263.

⁸⁸ Voir CARTOJAN 1974, vol. II, pp. 62-65.

⁸⁹ «Ș-au găsat toată firia a tot ce iaste în lume și a oamenilor și a pasărilor și a dobitoace și a gadini și a pești și a jigani și a erbi și a câte știi că sint pre supt ceriu și sint pre pământ și-ntr-apă, toate le-au aflat cu înțalepciunea sa care-i dedeașă Dumnădzău. Așjiderea și planitile și crângul și toată tocmala ceriului și de subt ceriu știiia, și precum va lega diavoli și cumu-i va chema și toți, cineș pre numele său și toate vrăjile. Așjiderea toate leaurile și toate dofortiile și toate erbile, care de ce leac iaste. Toate acestia le-au scornit preamândru Solomon cu înțalepciunea sa» (passage signalé et cité dans Gaster 1883, pp. 336-337, probablement d'après le ms. BAR 2599 datable de 1707-1710 ; nous avons

Le chronographe rapporte la tradition talmudique selon laquelle Salomon, médecin par excellence et inventeur de tous les remèdes, aurait laissé des livres avec ses recettes de guérison par les plantes, qu'aurait détruit le roi de Judée Ézéchiass (VIII^e s. av. J.C.):

Et c'est de Salomon qu'ont appris les philosophes hellénistiques la médecine, et c'était avec ces herbes et remèdes qu'avait montrés Salomon que se soignaient tous les gens de toutes les maladies. Car si quelque maladie frappait quelqu'un, l'homme aussitôt guérissait avec ces herbes que Salomon avait laissées par écrit. Or depuis un certain temps les gens avaient oublié de prier Dieu en cas de maladie, jusqu'à ce qu'il fût un empereur qu'on appelait Ézéchiass. Et, voyant cet empereur que les gens avaient abandonné de prier Dieu lors des maladies, mais guérissaient toujours grâce aux herbes de Salomon, il a détruit tous ces livres, et les a fait brûler au feu. Et c'est encore de ces enseignements-là que nous viennent les médecines, jusqu'à aujourd'hui.⁹⁰

Remarquons néanmoins que l'étendue de la science divine, en particulier thérapeutique, attribuée au sage Salomon dans les chronographes ne se retrouve pas tout à fait dans le champ d'action des *solomonari* selon la tradition orale, et vice-versa, celui dernier dépasse à son tour le portrait salomonique des chronographes, ne se recoupant pas non plus avec les récits sur Salomon d'autres «livres populaires»⁹¹. Le fait que les contenus de ces deux filières portant sur la transmission de la figure salomonienne ne se recoupent que partiellement entre eux, et encore moins, avec les contenus des récits sur les *solomonari*, tout en affichant tous un «chapeau» commun, suggère qu'on a affaire à une contamination entre différents thèmes et motifs qui ont pu se rencontrer, en échangeant des contenus, plutôt qu'à une filiation des sources littéraires, ou à une synthèse de traditions magico-rituelles constituée en tant que syncrétisme culturel effectif⁹².

En tout cas, le nom et la renommée de la fonction témoignent intrinsèquement du prestige acquis par les traditions de sagesse et de magie hébraïques dans l'imaginaire culturel roumain, en parallèle avec celles héritées des Géo-Daces et du monde gréco-romain.

préféré ms. BAR 86 datable de 1682, édité dans ŞTREMPEL 1998, I, p. 88, qui comporte des traits du dialecte d'origine, nord-bucovinien).

⁹⁰ «Şi de la Solomon au fost apucat filosofii elineşti doftorii şi cu aciale erbi şi liacuri ce arătasă Solomon să vrăciuiii toţi oamenii de toate boalele. Că dacă lovia pe vr'un om vreo boală, el să şi lecuia cu aceale erbi ce le dedeasă scrisoare Solomon. Şi de o vreme mai uitasă oamenii a să mai ruga lui Dumnădzău pentru boale, până când au stătur un împărat ce-l chema Ezechia. Şi vădzând acel împărat c-au părăsît oamenii la boale a să mai ruga lui Dumnădzău, ce să tot vindeca cu leacurile lui Solomon, au străcat acele cărţi toate şi li-au ars în foc. Şi încă dentr-acelea învătăuri sint doftoriiile şi până până astădzi» (*ibid.*)

⁹¹ Pour un inventaire sommaire de ces abondantes sources écrites, complémentaires des traditions orales, elles aussi extrêmement riches, cueillies et en partie éditées depuis la fin du XIX^e s. mais aussi, pour beaucoup, restées dans les archives d'instituts académiques spécialisés, voir ISPAS 1992, p. 213 (et n. 4).

⁹² Certaines croyances locales supposent une distinction ethnico-religieuse, en assimilant les *solomonari* aux Juifs (OIŞTEANU 2001, p. 288 et suiv.).

EN GUISE DE CONCLUSIONS

Quelques schémas mnémotechniques.

Pour illustrer graphiquement nos propos nous proposons les schémas suivants:

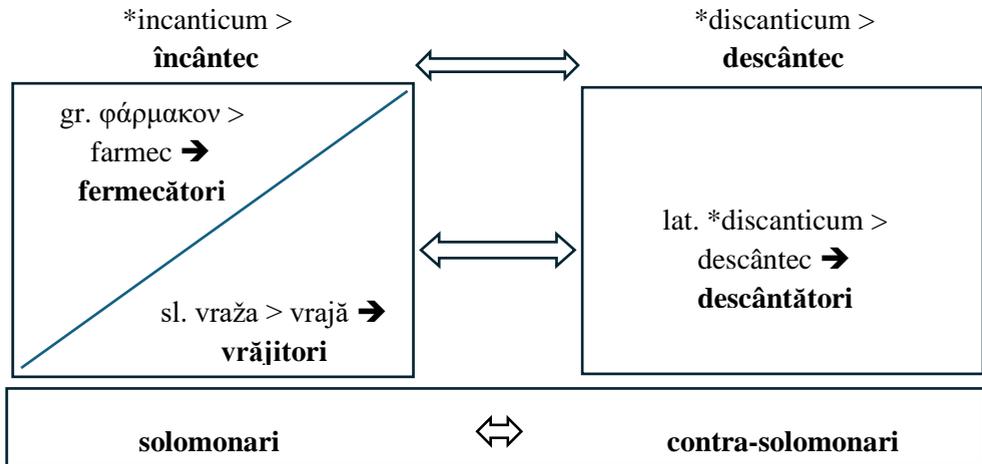


Fig. 1. Les champs sémantiques des 4 termes analysés

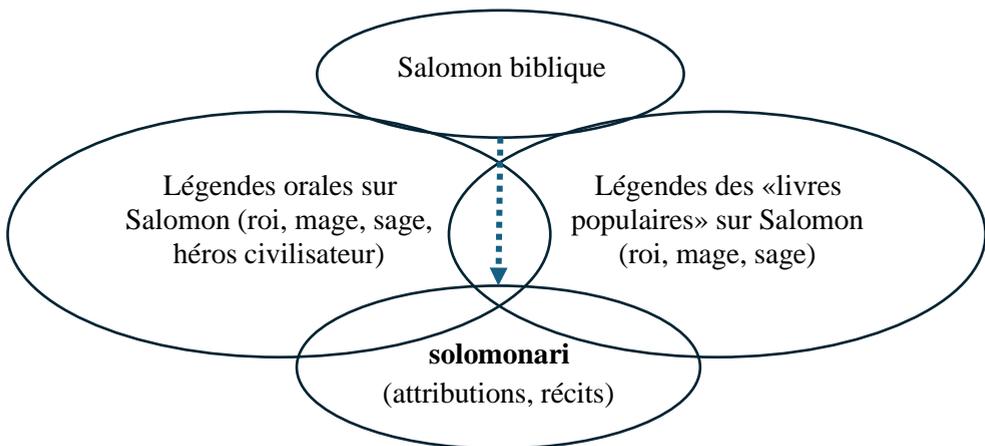


Fig. 2. Les recouvrements des ensembles thématiques sur Salomon et les *solomonari*

Conclusions provisoires pour un «magisme» roumain. Les vocables clés que nous avons analysés, en partant du témoignage sur les incantatores du Codex Bandinus, nous semblent indiquer, par leur usage sémantique et fonctionnel, un faisceau d'influences à l'origine du magisme populaire roumain, dont le croisement peut facilement s'expliquer quand on se rappelle que Rome a colonisé la Dacie et la Mésie avec des légions multi-ethniques et des colons venus de toutes les provinces de l'Empire, et que le Danube n'a jamais constitué une frontière séparatrice pour ces terres de colonisations et migrations successives.

Sur le terrain de la religiosité géto-dace, dont des traditions magico-mystiques de type chamanique (les iatromantes⁹³, médecins-devins à l'origine des descântători, et les kapnobatai, dont ont pu hériter les solomonari⁹⁴), un syncrétisme culturel fécond a pu se constituer à l'époque de la romanisation, dont le «folklore», qui n'est peut-être que la preuve vivante d'une extraordinaire persistance de ce multiculturalisme antique, a pu tirer sa matière bouillonnante, alluvionnaire, alimentée par la suite de manière incessante à travers les siècles jusqu'à nos jours, par des croisements avec d'autres traditions «populaires», du voisinage voire même partageant le même territoire géoculturel (magyares, slaves, turciques), ainsi que par des éléments livresques, y compris bibliques et parabibliques, de provenance «savante».

Quelques réflexions méthodologiques: pour une sémantique étiologique. Il nous semble vital, pour la juste compréhension et catégorisation étiologique des pratiques culturelles – ici, ayant trait au magisme et à la religiosité populaire, mais aussi à une certaine organisation sociale des communautés dites traditionnelles – de relever la fonctionnalité étiologique cachée dans les appellations qui leur sont données au sein même desdites communautés, ainsi que dans les écrits et témoignages étiologiques fiables: la linguistique, et en particulier, l'étymologie et la sémantique, jouent un rôle indispensable. Ainsi, nous avons montré qu'une réelle distinctivité des fonctions – dictée par l'intentionnalité et l'efficacité qui leur sont associées – sépare les catégories discutées dans cette étude: les vrăjitori (sorciers) jettent des sorts, les fermecători (enchanteurs, envoûteurs, ensorceleurs) charment et enchantent, les descântători (désenchanteurs, et non enchanteurs comme on le traduit à tort), eux, désenchangent... Quant aux solomonari, ils font des solomonii, à savoir, toutes sortes d'actions magiques, couvrant presque tout le spectre des trois autres fonctions, et en plus, commandent aux éléments en pratiquant la magie météorologique, qui est leur principal fonds de commerce et probablement, leur fonction première, originelle.

Les mots, leur histoire, leur usage, nous guident dans la saisie intime des fonctions vécues par leurs pratiquants et reconnues par leurs bénéficiaires, à condition de repérer et éliminer de l'équation, tels des intrus, les amalgames qu'un usage courant, inattentif, déconnecté de l'univers sémantique véritable, comme dépaycé, a pu introduire dans des ouvrages et des dictionnaires, se faisant passer pour une démarche scientifique «étiologique».

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⁹³ Sans évoquer la vaste littérature dédiée aux prophètes et iatromantes antiques, nous renvoyons surtout à COULIANO 1984, pp. 19-20, 25-43.

⁹⁴ Cf. ci-dessus note 70.

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MYTHOLOGICAL REFERENCES IN COMIC-BOOKS

GELU TEAMPĂU-LUCA

ABSTRACT

This paper falls into the line of other published studies which dealt with comic-books as a phenomenon of popular culture, focusing on the relation they entertain with myth and mythology. Sharing the same theoretical framework, founded on Asa Berger's view of culture as an onion with successive layers covering a central mythical core, this article delves deeper into the presence of myth and mythical structures into the graphic medium comic-books provide. The purpose is to exemplify how this revisiting and reinterpretation of ancient and modern myths and disseminating them using contemporary technologies influence narrative strategies and favor their penetrating power into individual and collective conscience. Some mythical elements prove to be so enduring that they have gained global acknowledgement and have become integral and ineluctable parts of the human mind. In search of public relevance, comic-book creators use such well-known and established characters, events, places, images, symbols, and tropes, which help them convey stories, messages, and values to a wide audience. Comic-books are not existing in a vacuum and for the most part they share the narrative substance with other media (films, cartoons, radio programs, music, video games etc.), but they prove to be an ideal medium for mythical expression. This is emphatically confirmed by the fact that they have generated myths which have been absorbed by all other media and have obtained a certain mythical status themselves. By bringing into discussion illustrative examples and putting them in the larger cultural context, this paper identifies some of the most efficient mechanisms comic-books make use of the mythical elements present in various cultures and even globally.

Keywords: Comic-Books, Myth, Popular Culture, Media, Narration

INTRODUCTION: COMIC-BOOKS AS MODERN MYTHOLOGY

As an art form, comic-books have appeared by the second half of the 19th century, in an American context, although there are some authors who trace their “prehistory” much further back in time: the serial creations of artists such as Hogarth, or the output of other media, such as the Bayeux tapestry or Trajan's column, sometimes not shying away from considering the cave paintings as forms of proto-comic-books.¹ Moreover, another conceptual confusion became common place: to

¹ An author who favors this approach is McCloud (1993), the one who offered the unmatched technical interpretation of the comic-book field up to now. A stance I favor belongs to Wright (2001), who argues that the definition of comic-books must also include their mode of distribution; therefore,

consider any form of storytelling which uses images as comic-books. For example, although animation functions through series of drawn images, it is a separate field, with its own inner mechanisms and dynamics, with its own semantics and ways of consumption. A cartoon which builds up the joke in two or more frames cannot be taken for a comic-book, just as a limerick cannot be taken for an epic poem. However, there are also authors who suggest regarding some texts as “written comics”, referencing, for example, Céline’s work.² Beyond the unusual perspectives and the interesting intellectual speculations, this lack of consistency proves that comic-books have not yet benefited from persistent academic attention and consideration, being disregarded as a minor form of artistic expression, and defined as a method rather than as a domain. But we may encounter rigorous analyses which prove that comic-books constitute a stand-alone artistic and semantic field, although they borrowed techniques and narrative content from other domains (also having transmitted, in their turn, techniques, codes and tropes into others).³ We may even talk about a proper language pertaining to comic-books.⁴ The importance of comic-books as an art form, as a communication medium, as a source of cultural models and patterns or, simply, as an industry, cannot be denied if we take into account their area of distribution, their penetrating power into individual and collective minds (common formulas and expressions), and the revenue they bring.⁵

There are many perspectives from which comic-books can be evaluated: historical, anthropological, social, economic, artistic etc. Although they are a relatively young form of artistic expression, the global production is so rich that one cannot issue the claim of a single totalizing, exhaustive and final interpretation. That is why it is necessary for studies from various disciplines, each with their own instruments and assets (but also with their own “blind spots”), to be integrated in the study of comic-books, a very complex artistic field. Their technical, historical, or economic implications can be investigated in separate studies, but in this paper, I am focusing on their narrative aspects, outlining the mythological vein which irrigates the whole field. I have already published an extensive study on the relation between myth and comic-books⁶, in which I have placed, from a narrative point of view, the serial creations of comics on the canvas of mythology, following the interpretation key Arthur Asa Berger provided, to which I shall later return. In another paper I have offered a reply to some comments regarding the first one and I brought more arguments in favor of considering comic-books an ideal medium for disseminating

comics being a field which was created and developed via newspapers, we cannot talk about it prior to their existence. For a complete history of the first period of comic-books, see the two volumes of Steranko (1970 and 1972). For an overview of the various approaches in defining and analyzing comics, see Teampău (2012).

² See, for example, Liéber (1984).

³ See Blanchard (1969) and Boltanski (1975).

⁴ See Gillon’s arguments (1977).

⁵ For more details, see Teampău (2012). Many expressions which are taken from American comic-books make sense only in English and cannot be translated: “my spider senses are tingling”, “don’t hulk up over it” etc.

⁶ Teampău (2012).

classic or modern mythical loads, which I shall not reiterate here.⁷ Some points I shall bring again into discussion, though, since they are relevant to this topic. In the following I shall present ways in which the epic mythic (and mythologizing!) substance is present in comic-books, backing the arguments with revealing images.

It also must be said that simply identifying characters, events or mythical narrative frames in comic-books does not provide a rigorous argumentation. The presence of Hercules, let us say, in a story does not automatically bestow it with mythical dimension. Beyond the narrative tropes which are used in the story, we need to investigate the inner dynamic of the comic-book field, focusing on how it is outlined, transmitted, perceived, and constructed as an imaginary and disciplinary domain. Comic-books are worth analyzing through mythological lenses, since they convey mythological themes and patterns, and also generate particles of meaning which sometimes coagulate into genuine imaginary spaces with structures, functioning and interdependence mechanisms, reflexes and usages which are taken as such into the consumer's (and not only) concepts, language and everyday gestures, or influence them via derived products, such as films, video games, music, cartoons, toys, clothing, groceries and so on. In other words, not everyone who consumes a chocolate wrapped in Superman's image or wears a T-Shirt with his image must keep up with all the mythos' subtleties or with its most recent inflexions, in order to get the references and placing them into the cultural landscape.

As I have already pointed out, there are a certain mechanisms myth imbues comic-book narrations and is, in its turn, processed and disseminated by this medium.⁸ Mythological references in comic-books are to be encountered at the level of characters (after all, the most influential and durable creations in this field), but also at the level of events and narrative structures. These references may be explicit, when they involve characters or events which are already present in the known mythological lore, but also implicit, when they are indirect, veiled (for example, when certain characters borrow their abilities, looks or ways of acting from their mythological counterparts, or when events or sceneries have mythological correspondents). Of course, not only classical Antiquity provides such references, but they are abundant, and we may say that the overwhelming part of main American comic-book characters (and, by extension, of comic-books in general) were inspired by them. Superman's creators, Schuster and Siegel, confessed that they imagined him as a symbiosis between Hercules and Samson, to which they added their own cultural diet, comprised of bodybuilding magazines, western and science-fiction novels and stories; some scholars even identified in the construct of the most known super-hero the sexual frustrations of his creators, young Americans of Jewish origin, living in the context of the Great Depression suburbs.⁹ By the way, Superman's creation and public appearance in comic-books may be considered to be the reason this medium gained such cultural, social and economic relevance, shortly becoming

⁷ Teampău (2015).

⁸ Teampău (2015). In that paper I have argued for these points in detail, but they need to be mentioned here as a framework for the present topic.

⁹ Shapiro (2006: 363-366).

one of the most profitable industries during the Second World War. Comic-books existed before Superman's first appearance and they surely exist in his absence, but once the super-hero type entered the scene, they became a privileged channel for disseminating stories tailored on mythological patterns. The public's appetite for such narrative schemes, which is confirmed by the impressive turnover editors have, is not just obvious, but a historical constant which grew in turbulent periods of crisis, conflict, and calamity. The psychological need for savior entities, albeit exclusively imaginary, is an anthropological permanence, certified by classical myths of origins, as well as modern myths which are manifest in politics, society, art and even science, paradoxically much less immune to myth's "invasion" than commonly believed.¹⁰

In addition to this original classical fund of mythological narrative structures, comic-books also borrow successful literary myths, taking advantage of their public relevance, by revisiting or by continuing the initial stories. Dracula's image, imposed in the global conscience by Bram Stoker's novel (which in its turn made use of a preexisting mythological folk and academic lore), got new features and perspectives in the comic-book medium, in connection with the representations conveyed in other media such as literature, film, cartoons, video games and so on, becoming a source of inspiration for further exploitations of this myth.¹¹ In the immense comic-book production we may find almost all of the literary myths which could be converted into a graphic medium, although not all reached a large area of dissemination or a relevant penetrating power in public conscience. Even though there are comic-books aimed at an adult public, which use intellectually demanding themes and pretentious techniques, it must be acknowledged that the field has been mainly adjusted to the level of a young audience, via clear messages, rather simple and unequivocal symbolism, easy storylines and, of course, a lot of action.

Also, in comic-books we often encounter the process of "mythologizing" historical and cultural events, periods, and personalities, although the process is not a feature of this medium exclusively. But here too we find (pseudo)hagiographies, romanticized biographies, or simply phantasmagories with elements taken from reality. Caesar, Napoleon, Churchill, but also Shakespeare, Mozart, Darwin, or James Dean become legendary characters in oversized, yet easily recognizable iconographies. Certain periods or historical events are exploited so much that they become imaginary constellations which open many other interpretative or speculative directions. The Second World War or the Vietnam War are perfect examples. The series dealing with them are so abundant, that every single soldier involved in such wars seems to have got a comic-book cameo. The mythical dimension of these conflicts is also granted by the fact that the graphic stories in which they are the subject, the background, or the pretext, have started being produced concurrently, the historical events having occurred simultaneously with and alongside the "mythologizing" process. As soon as 1940, Superman forcefully took Hitler and Stalin to the International Court of Justice in Geneva, and Captain America made his debut in the graphic super-heroic universe during 1941, by strongly punching Hitler

¹⁰ For a detailing of this idea, see, for example, Popper (1998).

¹¹ For a detailed discussion on the usage of vampiric imagery in comic-books, see Teampău (2011).

in the face (which was not just a figure of speech, but the channeling of the American public's sentiments and will).

Comic-books are also a source of various mythologies, some characters and layers of mythical nature having been firstly issued in this medium. This idea is perfectly supported if we take the super-hero profiles into account. Even if they borrowed pre-existing elements in a proper symbiosis, the way this concept was created and disseminated was defined by the comic-book medium. Certain narrative techniques and dynamics, character and plot building strategies, various visual and textual figures of speech, as well as symbolic connections, also firstly appeared in this medium. Manifesting themselves exclusively visually, but allowing the consumers to establish the reading and deciphering rhythm, in opposition to films or cartoons which impose their own, comic-books prove to be an ideal medium for mythical patterns, granting the opportunity of creating powerful, symbolically loaded and imaginatively fertile images, which can become privileged carriers of culturally shared and socially bounding meanings (as it happened during the Second World War or other crises mentioned above). Moreover, comic-books themselves, as a field, gain mythological features and become a topic of analysis, debate, or even conflict, and sometimes they get imbued with a will of their own, used to positively, or negatively, influence morality.¹²

It must also be said that these myths are belonging exclusively to the literary and artistic fields, since they have lost all religious and ritualistic value and are not the objects of public belief any longer.¹³

THE CULTURAL ONION

Arthur Asa Berger proposes a vision of culture using the metaphor of the onion.¹⁴ Thus, he identifies in each culture a mythical nucleus as a source of irradiating ideas, covered in successive strata by the various layers of that culture. This nucleus is covered by a first stratum of historical events which are being interpreted through the lens of the original mythical narrative and in connection with it. Next comes the layer of intellectual creations which are inspired by the mythical nucleus, and which are produced by renowned authors and artists, in polished artistic forms which hold great exemplary power. These are covered by the layer of popular culture, of entertainment, which represent the cultural diet of most people, and which produces generally intelligible tropes, with great penetrating power into the public conscience. Eventually, all these layers are covered by people's everyday habits, social and cultural reflexes, which represent reverberations of the forementioned nucleus' impulses.¹⁵

¹² See, in this aspect, the indictment Wertham enunciated (1953) and which climaxed with the hearings in the American Senate, on the topic of comic-book influence on juvenile delinquency.

¹³ The historian Lucian Boia, in a Facebook post from 2016, made the claim that any strong belief may be considered a myth. I reject this vision, since not all strong beliefs reach mythical status and not all myths require such a belief.

¹⁴ Arthur Asa Berger (2002: 378-386).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* The detailing of the examples the author provides can also be found in Teampău (2012) and Teampău (2015).

Comic-books are to be found on the fourth layer, of entertainment, or “popular culture”. They are a medium which traditionally addresses a young public, of a certain intellectual and aesthetic profile (urban, dynamic, with a medium level of education, with an appetite for quick-paced storylines and accustomed to at least some elements of comic-book production and of the culture they are created in). Consequently, comic-books borrow elements from the underlying levels, from the mythical core, from historical events reinterpreted through mythologizing lenses and from the “high” culture that contain, carry over and transform them into their own idiom, eventually imposing them in public conscience, where they generate linguistic, mental, and behavioral reflexes, as well as concepts and life attitudes. There are many ways in which comic-books influence public’s preferences, habits and attitudes, from economic and cultural shopping habits to social interactions (linguistic formulae, gestures, clothing and so on), and even to political and philosophical stances.¹⁶ Sometimes, these influences are intentional and explicit (as in the war propaganda during the Second World War¹⁷), and sometimes they are subliminal or even unconscious, influencing fashion, linguistic and gestural automatisms, and even intimate beliefs (see, for example, the influence Japanese comics (*manga*) have on the public’s taste and on other media, by imposing a certain recipe for creating stories, characters, expressions and situations, as well as ethical and moral expectations).

EXPLICIT MYTHOLOGICAL REFERENCES

An obvious way comic-books take and disseminate mythological elements and structures is by borrowing characters which inhabit mythical stories, mainly those coming from classical Greek-Roman Antiquity, but also from other cultural traditions, such as Celtic, Germanic, Slavic, or non-European, such as Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Pre-Columbian or African. Characters originating in classical myths, be them gods, demigods, titans, heroes, or fantastic beings (satyrs, dryads, angels, demons, fairies, elves etc.) are taken as such, with names, attributes, and their whole referential context, or are conceptually reevaluated, being given different aspects, features, abilities, psychological profiles, or habitats. This is hardly a new procedure, since it has been long functioning and is still operational in other academic fields (cultural reinterpretations of mythical stories or references to such narrations – *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, the Arthurian cycle etc.) or in entertainment industries (popular novels, films, cartoons, video games etc).

Some of the most important mythological characters, such as gods and heroes, have become members of the roster which populates (mainly American) comic-book serial stories. The two publishing behemoths, DC and Marvel, got into a race of borrowing such characters and integrating them into their own imaginary universes. Thor, Odin, Zeus, Hercules, Mercury, Artemis, Ares, Perun, and others have become

¹⁶ For more information on the way comic-books influence public’s everyday life, see Teampău (2012).

¹⁷ An overview of the subject in Wright (2001).

characters with full rights in the graphic worlds created by great publishing houses specialized in comic-book production, either as protagonists of their own series, as members of certain teams, or as secondary characters. There are stories which closely follow their mythological premise, by integrating the character in narrative structures which retell these myths in a graphic medium, or by further developing the initial data (characters' profile, their relationship with other characters and with themselves, events, denouement etc.) in other directions. Thor, for example, is portrayed in the Marvel universe as a young, handsome, generous, and reasoned god, the unconditioned defender of humanity, although it is known that in the Norse mythology the thunder god was irritable, fickle and a warmonger.

For that matter, the whole Asgardian epos is reinterpreted in the Marvel universe and gets a modern technologized aura, which places it in the science-fiction paradigm.¹⁸ Despite formal variations, the inner functioning mechanism of mythical templates follows the original principles. Even though we today know who the authors of the graphic stories are (but we also assume that his contemporaries knew Homer), these characters have surpassed their creators in fame and relevance, gaining their own "reality". We know who the creators of Superman were, but he doesn't belong to them anymore, just as Achilles does not belong exclusively to Homer. The undeniable proof of "independence" characters who reach a mythical status enjoy is that the writers and the artists who get involved in producing content which maintains and continues these literary myths must adhere to their guidelines, which in comic-book field are known as "serial continuity" (for example, even though Superman loves Lois Lane, they never get married). Occasional stories which contradict these tacit rules are not accepted as part of the canon. *Marvel* had started such a series, titled *What if...*, which deals with alternative storylines explicitly breaching the continuity, but this has not influenced the canon; on the contrary, it once again confirmed the agreed-upon continuity, by exposing the negative effects of disturbing the order.

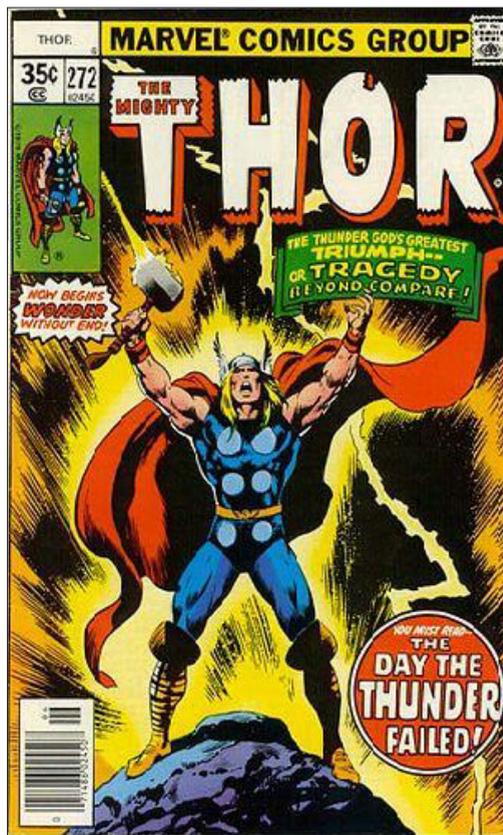


Fig. 1: Thor in his dramatic signature pose

¹⁸ For a detailed discussion on the way mythology and science are intertwined in comic-books and generate new narrative and aesthetic patterns, see Reynolds (1992).

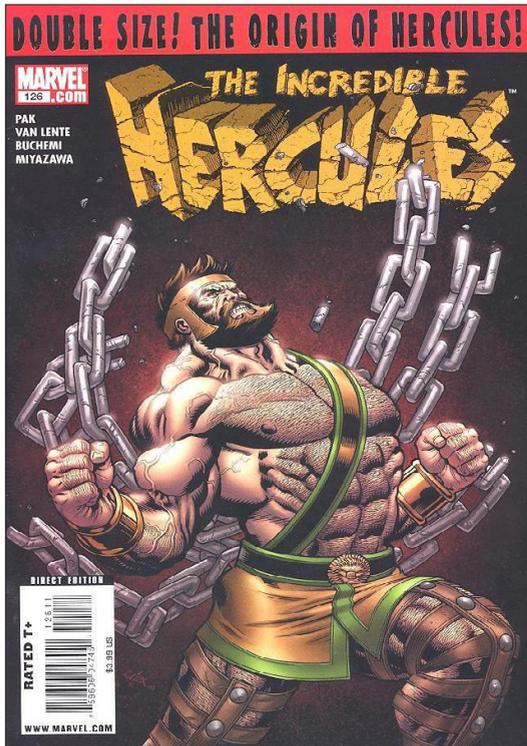


Fig. 2: The untamed Hercules, fighter and *bon-viveur*



Fig. 3: Jay Garrick becomes Flash and wears Hermes' winged helmet

Another way classical myths are being exploited in comic-books is by the presence of certain elements usually associated with mythical gods and heroes, which become metonymical expressions of their attributes, even in their physical absence. The Flash wears Hermes' helmet, Mjolnir, Thor's hammer, becomes the object which transforms any wielder into a god, just as extracting Excalibur from the stone reiterates King Arthur's legend every single time. Thus, the mythical god or hero becomes the alter-ego or more precisely the supra-ego of different characters who take that specific identity.

CHARACTERS ENDOWED WITH MYTHICAL ATTRIBUTES

Jean Bruno Renard identified four common features all American comic-book heroes shared, and which defined the blueprint for the countless characters created on this pattern, in all media channels. These are superstrength, double identity, Manichaeism and the eulogy of the body and technology.¹⁹ They are operating in various degrees and combinations (some heroes hide their identity under costumes, masks, or transformations, as Batman or the Hulk do, while others are only using the context to disguise their alter-ego, in the case of Superman, Flash or Wonder Woman). Renard states that double identity is not just a figure of speech turned into a comic-book cliché, but also a passage from a "real" world into fantasy. The

¹⁹ Renard (in Brunel, 2003, vol. 2:285-287).

former gives the latter a realist veneer and at the same time provides the reader with a mechanism of character identification, by conveying the idea that any seemingly regular person, who lacks any special abilities, holds within an immense potential, which sometimes may be the only resource needed for saving his/her life, family, community or even the world.²⁰

The body, as it is depicted in comic-books, also conforms to the classical Greek canon, motivating and educating the public in a cult of health as material support for great virtue. By being presented as avatars of ancient gods and heroes, with their specialized superhuman powers, nowadays superheroes may be considered the secularized “expression of a polytheistic thinking inherent to the human mind”.²¹ The set of attributes which define these characters exhibits a limited number of variants, which are to be found in mythical lore, and have been used in fantasy stories all around the globe (strength, speed, agility, intelligence, invisibility, heightened senses, the ability to fly, sophisticated weapons, various mutations etc.).

Besides many characters who are strongly individualized in their original mythical environment, who are borrowed into different branches of popular culture, and whose identity is fully recognizable due to specific well-known attributes (name, abilities, behavior, aspect etc.), comic-books are populated by a plethora of imaginary characters and entities which have also been taken from various traditions. Many fantastic beings have become a familiar presence in drawn pages, either in consonance with the classical canon, or in modern reinterpretations: angels, demons, spirits, satyrs, centaurs, gnomes, giants, vampires, dryads, harpies, minotaurs, sirens, cyclops, gorgons, Valkyries, and many others. These may play main, secondary, or supporting roles in narrations and can be placed on any spot of the moral spectrum, from positive to negative or, lately, more ambiguously (although we conclude that some are favored, as being usually portrayed as good, such as angels, while others, on the contrary, are given almost exclusively negative value, such as demons, vampires or ogres).

An interesting character who sometimes appears in action comic-books is Death, mostly personified in

accordance with Western imagination, as a skeleton or a corpse, wearing a black, blue or cherry-red hooded cape, wielding a scythe which is allegedly used in ending lives. Sometimes, it is depicted following the pattern of a specific mythological



Fig. 4: Death personified,
a representational cliché in Western culture

²⁰ Renard (in Brunel, 2003, vol. 2:286).

²¹ Renard (in Brunel, 2003, vol. 2:289).

tradition, as a young and beautiful (and, obviously, scantily clad) warrior maiden wielding a spear, as an unforgiving, yet fair and proud Valkyrie, as an



Fig. 5: Angels, almost exclusively positive factors, usually flagging divine intervention

unconquered warrior, as a wise old man or in zoomorphic forms, which remind of ancient Egyptian mythology. Regarding the explicit presence of this mythological background in particular, we only have to mention Dr. Fate, a cryptic character with diffuse powers, directly pointing to Egyptian esoterism.

CHARACTERS REMINDING OF THERIOMORPHIC GODS

Through the type of theriomorphic gods, Egyptian mythology provides the template for characters who transgress realms, mostly from human to animal, but also to vegetal or mineral. This is done either by transformation or by obtaining abilities alluding to the zoologic catalogue. The characters who borrow animalistic features also try to get their aspect closer to the source-image. Some characters transform themselves temporarily or for good in the animals or the plants which grant them superhuman powers (Werewolf, Timber Wolf, Changeling, Beast, Snowbird, Swamp Thing), others keep their human form, but dress in costumes which suggest the origin of their abilities (Batman, Spider-Man, Wasp, Hawkman, Poison Ivy), while others keep their human form without the need to visually connote the nature of their abilities (Animal Man).



Fig. 6: Although he does not have spider guise, Spider-Man is recognizable any time, any place

suggest the origin of their abilities (Batman, Spider-Man, Wasp, Hawkman, Poison Ivy), while others keep their human form without the need to visually connote the nature of their abilities (Animal Man).

Nota bene: features from other realms only point to abilities which surpass their human equivalents. Cases in which characters make use of less flattering abilities are extremely rare, and when this happens, it almost exclusively involves humorous stories or parodies (heroes do not seem eager to use the powers of a snail or a skunk, for example²²). Besides, it is clear

²² The Marvel company introduced such a character, Squirrel Girl, a hectic girl resembling a squirrel, who defeated some of the strongest heroes and villains in the Marvel catalogue. For the fans, though, this move remained only a joke and was not introduced into the official canon. Even though the comic-

that characters who borrow features from certain animals have the tendency to also mold their character and behavior, based on the stereotypes associated to that particular animal: those who morph into a wolf are fearless, good fighters, explosive and loyal, those who resemble a lion are strong, proud and natural born leaders, those who take an owl persona are wise and patient, while those with insect abilities are extremely agile and perceptive.

There are characters who combine zoomorphic attributes, simultaneously showing the properties of several animals (elephant's strength, monkey's agility, serpent's cunning, eagle's clairvoyance etc.), and even characters who resort to the attributes of invented animals, as Chameleon Boy does.²³



Fig. 7: Human Torch, living flame and extremely popular super-hero

CHARACTERS WITH ELEMENTAL PROPERTIES

Another way of absorbing ancient mental structures in the entertainment industry, including comic-books, is keeping the world's elements in the four classical categories defined during Greek Antiquity: fire, water, air, and soil, with occasional variants – energy, lightning, wind, metal, ice. Without holding any scientific value, they are, nevertheless, mindset markers and hints for the way Western man perceived nature and continues to do so at a vulgar level, if we are to consider the influence astrology still has over a relevant part of the public.

The way characters use their elemental abilities differs from case to case, but generally some leanings in exercising them are accepted. For instance, characters who possess earthly abilities rely on brute strength and endurance, fire elementals develop their destructive powers, while watery ones are subtler and specialize in healing. There where one of these elements is present, it is expected for the others to also get involved, either on the part of the protagonist, or against him/her. There are teams of specialized elemental heroes, such as The Fantastic Four, but also heroes who simultaneously possess all elements and can transmute them, such as Element Lad, who is able to manipulate Mendeleev's table. For that matter, these aspects are

book paradigm operates based on the suspension of disbelief, as in the case of science-fiction literature, for example, there are certain constraints within the medium, involving the forementioned serial continuity, which preserves the internal coherence of storylines and hierarchies. Thus, if it was agreed upon a specific character being immune or vulnerable to a certain substance, or maintaining certain ties with other characters, with the society or with him/herself, these must be factored in any future scenario (apart for alterations which are accepted into the canon).

²³ He is a member of the Legion of Super-Heroes, a team of heroes belonging to the DC company and who are supposed to be active a millennium into the future, when many inhabitable planets, with their own fauna and flora, are integrated into the story.

a constant of American (and not only) comic-books, as well as of other entertainment media (film, cartoons, video games etc.), proving once more that the human mind still operates using ancient some categories.

In some cases, it is acceptable for these four elemental categories to be considered incommensurable and complementary, outside of any hierarchy. But there are also cases in which a certain circular hierarchy between them is tacitly accepted, in a sort of natural democracy without any absolute superiority: water > fire > earth > air > water (with variants).

MYTHICAL POPULATIONS

Some characters have an origin which can be traced back to classical mythology, without entering the sphere of supernatural projections. They do not necessarily have divine origin and only seldom do they exhibit inhuman, angelical, or monstrous features. It is true that their profile is customized with attributes conforming to the original concept, or are literary modified and reinterpreted, so that they satisfy the taste of a contemporary audience, which is in its turn influenced by new narrative patterns, techniques, and strategies. One of the most important super-heroes, Wonder Woman, is an amazon princess who, in the modern world, proves to have superhuman, almost divine powers. The initial data of the myth are kept (her society of origin is exclusively female, strictly hierarchical and warmongering), but the development of this narrative matter incorporate science-fiction, detective, and even psychoanalytical accents (her creator, William Moulton Marston, being the inventor of the polygraph).



Fig. 8: Wonder Woman, a strong, independent and, not least, very sexy woman

A constant presence in comic-books is the alleged lost continent of Atlantis, the homeland of a mythical population which became the subject of countless narrative reinterpretations. It was either considered to have forever been lost, drowned after the cataclysm, it's very few survivors becoming permanent exiles in our world, or having remained undiscovered, yet alive and placed in the most unexpected places on our planet (from the Atlantic rift to Antarctica²⁴). It was also considered to have been located at the bottom of the ocean, homeland to characters who were a mixture of humans and various marine species. Atlantis is almost a common place in the imaginary spaces of comic-books. The Atlanteans are often depicted as positive, and rarely as negative beings, as passive victims, or as active actors in forging their own destiny, as collective characters, or on the contrary, strongly individualized. Super-heroes

²⁴ The many possibilities are rigorously exposed in Carnac (2003).

such as Aquaman or Namor have become unmistakable markers of the comic-book medium, also being extensively harnessed in film, cartoon, and gaming industries, as another confirmation of the attraction the mysterious Atlantean myth exerts on the public. As expected, many times the world and the characters of Atlantis are linked to Poseidon, their enlightened ruler, in a modern symbiosis of two antique mythical backgrounds.

EXTRATERRESTRIALS

The possibility of other worlds in outer space, which could be inhabited by beings resembling or not to humans, was a constant and at times obsessive presence in the collective and individual imagination. Once the technological development granted successive successes in space probing, the hypotheses and the speculations regarding extraterrestrial worlds exponentially multiplied and amplified. The endless and mostly incomprehensible space offered the ideal premise for the most daring science-fiction stories, in which the invention of strange worlds and beings is the most exciting feature.

As a modern artistic medium, comic-books have euphorically embarked on this endeavor, once Superman was created. He was the factor which asserted comics as a strong, relevant, and influential medium, and he is the reason they have almost immediately delineated an artistic and paraliterary field. Superman is supposed to be the only survivor of an advanced civilization from his planet of origin, Krypton, which disappeared in a huge cataclysm, reminding of the Atlantis myth. As a little child, his parents, during their last moments, sent him on a spatial probe to our planet, where he could survive. But our yellow sun, unlike the red sun of his own world, granted him godlike powers. The child was found by a motorcycle rider at the landing area and put him up for adoption into a family in Smallville, Kansas, a typical American quiet suburban place, where the essential values of the American spirit were religiously kept. This scenario, which reminisces the biblical story of Moses's birth²⁵, is combined with other mythological sources and manages to fulfill a basic need the American public felt in the context of overlapping crises during the interwar context (economic, social, identitarian etc.). If the mythical sources of Superman, as a pattern for the super-hero type, are easily discernible, the research regarding



Fig. 9: Superman, the extraterrestrial keeper of human values

²⁵ Even the real names of Superman and his father (Kal-El and Jor-El) remind us of biblical stories, revolving around the particle "El" and underlining once more the intention of attaching exceptional traits to the character. This is also articulated through the obvious contrast with his alter-ego, Clark Kent, a shy and clumsy reporter, a stereotypical urban middle class American.

the ways in which Superman himself becomes a myth requires accrued attention and a vast cultural coverage. He became a constant and conspicuous presence in the American and even global imagination and identity, via media channels and cultural products which refer to him. Although he was considered a mere juvenile phantasm lacking any depth, it is certain that few other characters, real or imaginary, have reached such a high degree of acknowledgement. If his simplicity is only a mark of the unsophisticated American spirit, it must be pointed out that his global success and the enormous sympathy he garners all around the globe cannot be explained just by the American economic power or by the persuasive abilities of the advertisement industry. Superman fulfills a general human need. He is a modern Hercules, and maybe even more, a sort of “commodified” Messiah, and the Americans have provided his ideal form in line with nowadays sensibilities, by making him easily intelligible. He is the ordinary man, the immigrant, the quiet and prosaic individual, who holds the inner resources to become, at any given moment, the savior of his community or even the whole humanity.

The premise of extraterrestrial origin grants the perfect pretext for inventing the most eccentric characters. After all, nobody can factually counter such speculations, since nobody can tell, at least for now, how physics or chemistry laws apply all over the cosmos. Superman is just the seed of an endless constellation of characters endowed with extraordinary capabilities which populate the graphic stories, although not all have reached the iconic status of their “dean”. Silver Surfer, Hyperion, Gladiator, and others are just a few examples of extraterrestrials who got their own graphic series, some artistically and narratively even better than Superman’s, without overthrowing him from the public’s preferences, though.

CHARACTERS AT THE BORDER OF WORLDS, DIMENSIONS, AND REALMS

Another category of characters who get their narrative substance from various mythological backgrounds comprises those with unclear status, placed at the crossroads of different tiers of reality and existence, filling the role of communicator between these strata. Whether they dwell in one dimension in particular but are able to travel into the other (or others), like Ulysses, or they constantly swing between them, like Charon, or they do not belong to any, these characters enable speculations regarding the possibility of such dimensions, the connections they share, and the place humans have in these settings. Of course, death is the hottest subject, and mankind’s eternal obsession of imaginatively investigating this realm profoundly influences comic-book production. Almost every hero has experienced death, even Superman, but usually they have also been revived; we must not forget that profit fuels the entertainment industry (and this led to the saying that in comic-books not even death is final).

There are characters who raise and manipulate the dead, who speak to them or even to death personified, but the most interesting ones are those who subjectively experience the state of being dead. The dread humans feel when death is involved (either for themselves or for others) is graphically depicted and we may find products

of high artistic quality and conspicuously profound ideas. Deadman is the ghostly super-hero on whom the Hindu god Rama Kushna has bestowed the power of possessing any living creature, so that he can find his own assassin (during his lifetime he was a renowned acrobat named Boston Brand and got killed by Hook during one of his trapeze performances). Not one of the most important DC characters, Deadman is, nonetheless, an element which stimulates inquiries regarding the afterlife and ventures into less investigated aspects of the relations between characters and between planes of existence.

Another DC character, much stronger and with a greater career in the comic-book industry, Spectre, is maybe an even better example for how the interaction between the realms of life and death may graphically illustrated. One of the most problematic characters in the entire comic-book universe, having an ever-changing, fluctuating and morally unclear status and destiny, Spectre got such great powers that even Superman faded by comparison. Such a powerful character, truly comparable to a god, proved to be difficult to manage from a narrative point of view, although his series were artistically fulfilled. Paradoxically, one of the most powerful and mysterious characters in American comic-books has not reached the fame of other, explicitly weaker, characters such as Batman (proving once more that in super-hero mythology, the shrewd exploitation of weakness is at least as important as the premise of absolute power).



Fig. 10: Deadman, the subject of the question “can a dead man die again?”

THE PRAISING OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays a paramount role in the comic-book paradigm. It is difficult to imagine a science-fiction scenario in which technology does not play an important part, be it positive (in which man uses it as a tool for progress and development) or pessimist (in a cyberpunk approach, unchecked technology becoming the major threat humanity faces). Its presence becomes manifest through various gadgets, weapons, vehicles, devices, and others, some with a certain degree of credibility (fire weapons, spaceships, robots etc.), while others are purely whimsical (time travel machines, absurd nanotechnologies, artificial planets etc.). However, not the shape and the specific incidences technology is portrayed in comic-books is important, but the general conception towards it, as narrative background, as pretext and even as substance. The insertion of a (vaguely) scientific and technical idiom, the public familiarity with some themes and concerns in the field, the espousal of ethical and moral stances regarding the importance of technology, all comprise a particular



Fig. 11: Iron Man and War Machine, single-man armies

aspect of today's entertainment industry. We may say that technology is the hot topic in contemporary imagination, the best hope mankind has for redemption and, at the same time, carrying the threat of intentional or accidental annihilation. This anguish is not only felt by the modern man, but it reminds us of the metallurgical myths centered on the image of Hephaestus. Today, we just feel more acutely the capacity of achieving their own demise humans have.

An aspect which holds huge narrative potential is the symbiosis between man and machine, in which technology is not only a tool, but a component of man's identity, its vital support (Iron Man's costume not only grants him super-powers, but also keeps him alive). Not fully human, but not yet robots, these examples of symbiosis between the biological and the artificial

(Cyborg, War Machine, Robot Man etc.) raise new questions regarding the role of technology and man's responsibility towards it.

TRANSFORMATIONS

Metamorphosis is a constant transcultural theme which is always present in various forms. Humans have "transformed" in animals, in objects, in other humans or in fantastic creatures either voluntarily, with the intention to kill or escape a difficult situation, to complete certain objectives, to gather secret information, to steal etc., or involuntarily, due to accidents or by the will of gods, of witches, of destiny or of other humans. From Ulysses to Jacob, Mr. Hyde or Fantomas, mythology and literature abound in examples of transformation, masking, cloaking, and travesty. The theme of the double, of the shadow, of the alter-ego are, in fact, the fundamental premise of super-hero paradigm in comic-books. It may be said that, for super-heroes, dissimulation is an even greater advantage than their own powers.

The possibility and even the necessity of transformation is almost always the key to the whole story and the narrative mechanism through which the story reaches climax. Some transformations are definitive, as in the case of Swamp Thing, who has become a sensible and virtuous monster in the lineage of Quasimodo, but most are temporary and reversible. If Superman or Batman, for example, only change the costume, announcing that they are acting in their super-heroic identity, others also change their aspect, becoming different creatures (Chameleon Boy, Beast Boy etc.) or getting distinctive features (Billy Bateson becomes Captain Marvel once he utters the magical formula "SHAZAM", an acronym which explicitly refers to mythological characters – Samson, Hercule, Achilles, Zeus, Atlas, Mercury – and Bruce Banner, having been exposed to gamma ray radiation, becomes the invincible,

lonely and paranoid behemoth Hulk, each time he gets angry). Some characters keep their identity and their personality in all adopted forms, the transformation thus being a personal strategy of managing crises, while others change their personality and simply become someone else, the transformation being the very crisis, as it is the case of doctor Jeekyll. In such cases the story becomes more complex, the conflict covering many layers: externally, between the hero and the adverse context he/she faces, and internally, against himself/herself and his/her unflattering urges, or with his/her super-human abilities which he/she cannot always keep under control. The psychological depth grants a larger analytical landscape, and some writers exploit these openings and insert relevant philosophical ideas into the comic-book medium. Spider-Man, one of the most popular characters ever created and the banner bearer of the counter-cultural tendencies of the 60's²⁶, is mostly known for his "great powers come with great responsibility" dictum.



Fig. 12: Hulk: unstoppable and explosive, just as the bomb which created him

SINGLE TALENT CHARACTERS

There are characters endowed with great penetrating power into public conscience, who are able to sustain an industry and even a cultural scaffolding and who, in the comic-book medium (but not confined to it), play a godlike part, regardless of their alleged capabilities (again, Batman does not have super-powers, but he is one of the most influential characters in history). Beside them, though, there is a constellation of characters with a less outlined and prominent profile, who usually work in teams. They can be compared to demigods or to various lesser entities which populate all mythologies, and which are gravitating around strong characters and images. If Superman is the prototype of the super-hero and has almost absolute powers, these lesser heroes orbit around him and are specialized in only one feature (strength, speed, agility, precision, intelligence, foresight etc.).

Many times, though, this relativization of abilities makes certain characters more interesting, and when they are placed in complex relation with others of the same kind or in the larger context, they offer virtually unlimited narrative possibilities. Although they are not influential enough to be the protagonists of their own graphic series, they manage to garner public sympathy as members of teams which become collective characters. The Young Titans, The Legion of Super-Heroes, Infinity Inc., or X-Men are examples of such (minor) super-hero teams which act as a more or

²⁶ See Wright (2001:207-210).

CYCLOPS



Fig. 13: Cyclops, the one with destructive vision, member and leader of the X-Men

the original corpus, be it in reinterpretations or continuations loyal to the canon or departing from it. Dracula, Captain Nemo, Alan Quatermain, Robin Hood, Dr. Jeckyll, Doctor Frankenstein, The Knights of the Round Table, Zorro and many more, have become full time characters in the comics medium, sometimes even surpassing in popularity their initial avatar. It is true that these myths have developed in several media simultaneously, being borrowed into comic-books from other channels in an already processed and reinterpreted stage. Even when it does not involve specific mythical elements whose sources may be easily identified and whose trail may be accurately traced, comic-books sometimes borrow paradigms and tropes from other media. Narrative schemes and typologies may be extracted from popular creations (novels, films, music etc.) which deal with western, SF, crime, swashbuckling or romance themes. The characters, the situations, the



Fig. 14: King Arthur and his knights for the year 3000

less connected whole. For example, in the case of the X-Men, the narrative frame is extremely generous: this is a team of mutant super-heroes, placed in the hostile context of an American (by extension, generally human) society which rejects the idea of coexistence with biologically different individuals. Social commentary is abundant in this series, which has integrated *ab initium* (1963) social, political, and economic themes, alongside worries and dilemmas of their time.

LITERARY MYTHS

Besides obvious sources belonging to classical, mostly Greek, mythology, comic-books also take their narrative substance from the limitless supply of literary mythologies. Some of the most popular literary myths have been present in the graphic medium, be it in visual retellings of

the original corpus, be it in reinterpretations or continuations loyal to the canon or departing from it. Dracula, Captain Nemo, Alan Quatermain, Robin Hood, Dr. Jeckyll, Doctor Frankenstein, The Knights of the Round Table, Zorro and many more, have become full time characters in the comics medium, sometimes even surpassing in popularity their initial avatar. It is true that these myths have developed in several media simultaneously, being borrowed into comic-books from other channels in an already processed and reinterpreted stage. Even when it does not involve specific mythical elements whose sources may be easily identified and whose trail may be accurately traced, comic-books sometimes borrow paradigms and tropes from other media. Narrative schemes and typologies may be extracted from popular creations (novels, films, music etc.) which deal with western, SF, crime, swashbuckling or romance themes. The characters, the situations, the frames and the events replicate deeply rooted narrative trends, which become mandatory for satisfying the taste of keen consumers. The best example is provided by Conan the Barbarian, who has been created by Robert E. Howard in 1918, in 18 pulp fiction volumes.

Taken over by the Marvel company in 1970, Conan became a global phenomenon, which imposed the “heroic fantasy” (para)literary paradigm, also known as “sword and sorcery” or “might and magic”. Thousands of successfully products have been created within this paradigm, from cartoon series to films, music, video games, but also derived products, such as toys, T-shirts, posters, stickers etc.

It must be said that comic-books have, in their turn, created such myths, which have turned into pints of reference in other media. It suffices to point here to the *Rahan* French series, which revolved around a young warrior and explorer placed in prehistoric times, who played the part of the civilizing hero for many communities which had fallen into superstition and obscurantism. The character earned the unconditional sympathy of a large part of comic-books aficionados, and not only them (an animated series was dedicated to him), even though the ideological load was visible and flaring at times²⁷, which must not come as a surprise, since Rahan’s first adventures were published in *Pif* magazine, the well-known platform of the French communist party. Beyond the ideological load, an inevitable occurrence in the entertainment industry, the high quality of scenarios and drawings imposed this series and this character as an example of comic-book artistry. The theme, the atmosphere and, to a certain degree, the language (Rahan talks about himself using the third person and his name is the battle cry he yells each time his life is in danger), have cooperated in creating an imaginary space prone to mythologizing interpretations and projections.

HISTORICAL EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES TURNED INTO MYTH

Another way myth is present in comic-books, as well as in other media, is represented by the borrowing and the processing of real historical events and personalities and their investing with mythical value by various processes (repetition, hyperbolizing, symbolization, equivocation, associating exemplarity, etc.). Of course, not any historical event or personality which are present in comic-books, or in any other medium, obtains mythical dimension. There are graphic biographies and histories which only intend to make a historical period, personality or event, known to the public. But when these biographies get hagiographic accents and the personalities become effigies of general and atemporal values and principles, if not outright archetypes, they get projected into mythical spheres. Same, when a historical event or period leave the strict recounting of events and is retrospectively

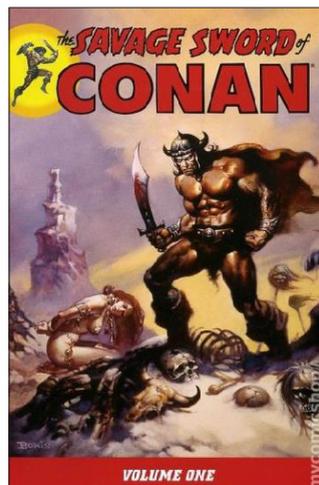


Fig. 15: Conan and his successful recipe – muscles, swords, and beautiful women

²⁷ Almost without exception, Rahan, grounded only in his reason and sense of (material) reality, and only trusting his physical and intellectual abilities (and a knife as unique weapon and tool), unmasks shamans who are always portrayed as charlatans or tyrants.

loaded with, let's say, founding values, they appear in a different, mythologizing, light. Moreover, for these processes to be complete, it is necessary for the public to receive, accept and interpret them as such, and this is not possible if their form, aspect, and content are less attractive and convincing. In other words, products which are visibly lacking artistically or narratively, have less chances of being stuck in the public's conscience, even though it is sometimes possible that due to their sheer absurdity they might become cult-products, as it has happened, for example, with Ed Wood's movies.

Most historical personalities who have reached a mythical status in comic-books have been taken in an already processed state from other media or from the general cultural background. Many have been political, scientific, or artistic personalities, who already held this status, to the creation of which they had sometimes intentionally participated. Roosevelt, de Gaulle, Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, but also Einstein, Marilyn Monroe, Elvis or James Dean have surpassed their strict biography and have become symbols. Their names are not only historical references, having the purpose of granting a semblance of reality, much needed in the case of implausible scenarios, but enter the comic-book field as characters, although seldom as protagonists. But it does not surprise anybody that Roosevelt or Churchill used



Fig. 16: President Roosevelt chats with the strongest super-heroes

to conceive war strategies alongside the super-heroic members of the Justice Society of America. We may wonder whether these editorial moves aim at getting the fictional characters (Superman, Batman, and the others) closer to reality, or to project the real personalities into the imaginary spheres (we need to underline, though, that these appear in fiction works as characters, meaning fictitious, and not as real personalities).

The same goes for historical events which are introduced in fiction works. The authors bet on their general degree of recognition, in order to frame the action and to stimulate public's intimate mapping with the story. There are events which have already penetrated the accustomed toolbox of those involved in producing popular culture items, out of which The Second World War is the most visible. It is the founding moment of the present global order, as a major event, but also as a sum of several moments in particular, which have gained mythical status and which can provide, in their turn, the background or the guise of the story (the attack on Pearl Harbor, the battles of Stalingrad and Moscow, the campaigns in North Africa, the nuking of Hiroshima and Nagasaki etc.). Anyone recognizes and intellectually and emotionally reacts to references such as the Thermopylae battle (masterfully exploited by Frank Miller in the *300* comics, which inspired the successful namesake movie in which the handsome Gerald Butler played the part of Leonidas), the fall of Constantinople, the discovery of America, the American war

of independence and civil war, the French revolution, the Vietnam war, or the terrorist attacks of 9/11 2001.

NEW FORMS OF VALHALLA AND OLYMPUS

In time, around the great figures of these imaginary universes, whole constellations of fantastic characters have coagulated, all having their own personalities and their own diverse or even divergent personal histories, and all maintaining complex rapports with each other, giving coherence to the narrative construction. Of course, some have remained just for a short time in the public eye, being closely dependent on certain social and cultural contexts, not getting updated (for example, the hero Johnny Thunder remained loyal to the '50s fashion and even though he occasionally still made his appearance in DC comic-books, he did not garner much reader sympathy any longer). Other characters were simply unfavored by the public and were short lived (Thunderbird, the irascible Apache mutant, a member of the X-Men team within Marvel universe for a very short time, was quickly disposed of, without even letting the fans get accustomed to his profile). The most important characters, though, are relentlessly updated, so as to satisfy the public's everchanging requirements, without being fundamentally at odds with the initial data and risk losing direct touch with the original mythical elements and alienating devoted readers; when such a move is tried, though, the fan's reaction may become vehement, as in the case of Superman's "death", which occurred in 1993 and was followed by symbolic funeral processions in the American streets, organized by those who loved this imaginary being and who marched crying alongside an empty casket draped in the American flag. Sometimes the hero outlives the alter-ego, the costume and the function being taken by other characters (Thor, Firestorm, Green Lantern etc.), and sometimes the latter uses different identities, filling out the heroic function in more instances (Hal Jordan, Steve Rogers, Dick Grayson etc.).

The connection to the hot topics of the day is not accomplished just in terms of formal preferences, involving the characters' aspect or *modus operandi*, but also ideologically. If during the Second World War Superman, Batman or Captain America urged the public to participate in the war effort and incentivized patriotic sentiments, during the protests of the '60s they started raising certain social and political issues, questioning previous certainties (during the Watergate scandal, Steve Rogers gives up on his Captain America identity and continues his pursuits as Nomad, "the man without a country"). Sometimes, though, the ideological imperatives forcefully inserted in comic-books become tawdry, harming the narrative and aesthetic aspects: lately, the strict commandments of political correctness, mostly present in Marvel productions, alienated an important segment of their traditional fanbase.



Fig. 17: The attack on Pearl Harbor, a catastrophe, but also a catalytic and mobilizing factor

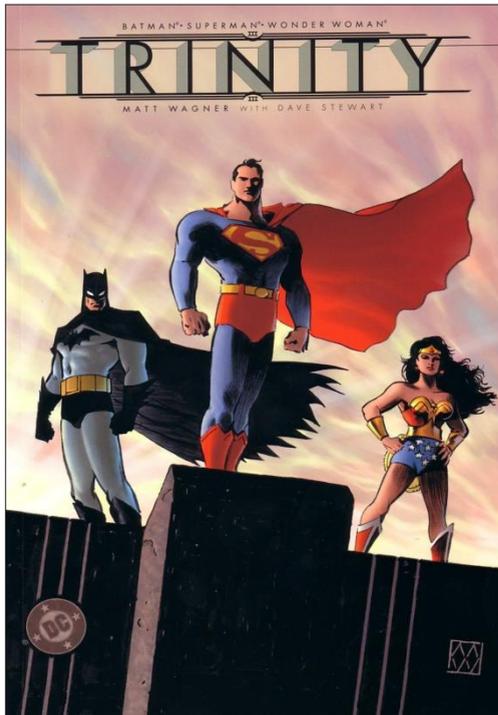


Fig. 18: No comment

Anyhow, the constellation of fantastic characters, which sometimes become widely known and more influential than real historical personalities (more people have heard of Superman than of general Bradley, for example), finds itself in a process of permanent expansion, rearranging and reshaping. All great publishing houses or studios own their casting, which they present and promote as a distinct, coherent, and integrated universe, in which the public is also invited. The plethora of characters offers a multitude of ways to interact and to identify with the imaginary world.

We may justifiably ask ourselves what need is there for lesser or secondary characters, since the main ones are allegedly so powerful that no catastrophe seems too big for them. As in the case of classical mythologies, the functions, the roles, and the profiles of

paragon characters are diversified and specialized, so that there is no single individual solution to a given problem. Genuine “pantheons” are compiled and are functioning in contemporary contexts, even if they are not invested with religious value (although certain ritualistic tendencies may be observed, as it relates to consuming patterns, to interactions with other consumers, to the forming of communities centered upon shared interests or to the organizing of events for the “insiders” etc.). Some readers prefer solar, serene, virtuous, and sober entities, such as Superman, others favor the lunar, dark, troubled, and complex ones, such as Batman, while others are more attracted to clumsy, troublesome, discontent, or angry anti-heroes. If there is a power scale in the comic-book universe, it does not hermetically overlay the moral hierarchy, which is, in the end, the most important one.

CONCLUSION

Comic-books are an art form and a media channel mainly dedicated to entertainment and recreation. At the same time, they are a channel through which information, messages and ideological stances may be disseminated, trends, tastes, and attitudes may be created and influenced, certain moral, ethical or political issues may be brought into the public attention but in which, firstly, stories may be told in a specific way. When writers and artists involved in this medium intelligently exploit its specificity, using what only it can offer, the resulting products are of an undeniable

quality. The saliency of comic-books is artistically conspicuous, but they also have an unmistakable narrative profile. The way a story may be unfolded, transmitted, and interpreted in comic-books, the rhythm, the tropes, the relation with the consumer and the reading codes, but also the narrative substance, which is optimal for the graphic underlay they provide, grants their advantages (and, of course, limits!) when compared to other media. They imposed themselves as a distinct artistic and narrative field not only due to their technical specifics, but also due to the way they have borrowed, revamped, and conveyed a preexisting mythological background which deeply connected with the expectations of the American (and later, Western and global) public, in a certain context of economic crisis and social and cultural anxiety. Through comic-books, myth once again participated in filtering social anguishes and hopes, in coagulating interests, and in inspiring action. Their cultural, social, economic, and even historical relevance is also confirmed by the fact that after circulating various pre-existing mythical elements, they managed to forge and impose into public cultural diet some new ones, which have firstly manifested in this medium, and which later gained superior disseminating power in other media.

It may be argued that, lately, comic-books have lost influence while competing against other entertainment channels, which exploit the unprecedented technological trumps of visual media, mainly video games. Statistics may confirm it, but the relevance of this artistic and communicational medium does not only depend on quantitative aspects. If the great creative resources have oriented towards other, newer, more dynamic, and, it has to be said, more profitable media, it does not mean that comic-books have burnt out their creative potential and the possibility of further offering aesthetic and narrative delights. Humans feel the need to tell and listen to stories, be it for entertainment, for motivation, for therapy, or for social agglutination, and as long as comic-books provide a special medium for that, they will not lose relevance.

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THE CROSS-SHAPED TATTOO – SURVIVING CULTURAL SYMBOL AMONG VLACH COMMUNITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

IULIA WISOSENSCHI, MIHAELA NUBERT-CHEȚAN

ABSTRACT

Since ancient times, through tattoos, people have used their bodies to transform them into a source of effective magical force to master, control, and annihilate what was unknown to them. Tattooing gave a supernatural quality to the individual and the human body became stronger, in a ritualistic way, through painful techniques and procedures of pricking, piercing, stabbing, etc. The tattooing of the Aromanians is part of the Balkan tradition of Christian communities under Muslim rule, who tattooed their girls at a young age – according to formalized oral texts – in order not to be stolen and taken to the harems of the Turks. The result of direct field research in the Vlach community¹ in the Republic of Macedonia² (summer of 2006), the present study proposes, by the use of rigorous scientific methodologies and tools, a valorization of the ethnological field document on traditional tattoo, valuable in terms of identity and culture for certain groups of Aromanians/Vlachs.

Keywords: tattoo, body markings, field research, Christian communities, testimony, ritual practices.

The tattooing tradition among the Aromanians, sparsely documented in the specialized literature has so far remained outside the scientific interest of ethnologists concerned with historical Romanian communities in the Balkan region. Consequently, our attempt at both a descriptive and interpretative analysis has faced an initial lack of essential archival or published sources needed to formulate a comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon. In this regard, we could consider that the present study opens the way for a future commitment – both professional and moral – toward a thorough examination employing precise scientific methodologies. This would contribute to a better understanding of a visual symbol that carries deep identity and cultural significance for specific Aromanian micro-communities in the Balkans, who shaped and expressed their identity from within, using it as both a communication tool and a cultural code.

¹ In the Balkans, the Aromanians are known under the name of Vlachs.

² At the time the data was collected (and up until 2019) the official name was the Republic of Macedonia.

A manifestation of the visible, of what is intended for the eye and must be seen, tattooing functions in traditional communities as both a cultural practice and a visual strategy. In archaic societies, people used their own bodies to communicate through signs, drawings, and inscriptions marked on the skin – an encrypted alphabet, a kind of meta-language within a complex system of thought, relationships, and understanding of the universe they inhabited and sought to master.

The ethnological approach to traditional tattooing – particularly among specific Aromanian groups – reveals new interpretative angles, emphasizing how explicit bodily expressions reflect the intrinsic connection between underlying symbolic structures and the broader cognitive and practical dimensions of the communities being analysed.

The study of body tattooing as a practice, with the aim of defining its structural-functional components, origins, and evolution/dynamics, remains a challenging endeavour for researchers. Throughout human cultural development, tattooing has continuously absorbed diverse conceptual meanings, enriched with new cultural significances across various historical contexts. Covered with lines, circles and dots arranged in various figurative fields, often marked by chromatic excesses, the tattooed body acquired a new epidermis – a protective shell revealing to others a transformed materiality/corporeality. This alteration redirected the gaze, in an apotropaic sense, away from the essence of human nature and toward the appearance of its external forms (Stoichiță 2024: 124).

In modern hermeneutics research conducted by renowned anthropologists (Charles Gatewood, Alfred Gell, Didier Anzieu), who have comprehensively examined the practice of (female) tattooing in tribally organized societies across all continents, a key idea emerges: the subcutaneous marking of symbols falls within the realm of spirituality. This practice encompasses multiple aspects, such as ensuring a connection with ancestors, serving a prophylactic role (preventing the evil eye or interactions with malevolent spirits), having a curative effect (in cases of illness and bodily injuries), or being associated with puberty rites. These functions (at least the last two) still persist in various regions, such as among the highland women of Dagestan (Chencier, Ismailov, Magomedkhanov 2006: 31-32). From Japan, South America, North Africa, Taiwan, Borneo, Papua New Guinea, all the way to Iraq and the Balkans, the same motifs appear. Zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures, dots, lines, circles, triangles, and crosses are used as protection against the evil eye long before Christianity. These tattoos were traditionally applied by specialized women – hereditary artisans, shamans, or healers – either within ritualistic and ceremonial contexts or as part of everyday life (Krutak 2007: 167).

As part of a broader system of cultural symbols and shared understandings – often only partially consciously acknowledged by individuals – tattoos served as markers of identity, reinforcing unity and cohesion within certain groups. These groups recognized one another and shared common mental structures, behaviour, attitudes, and socio-cultural perceptions. By constructing a symbolic mechanism of

reinforcement, individuals conferred a supernatural dimension upon their identity while fortifying the human body through painful methods such as puncturing, piercing, and stabbing. The placement of tattooed signs directly on the bare skin – over visibly exposed and vulnerable areas like the face, chest, and hands (as observed in traditional tattooing in Southeastern Europe) – held profound apotropaic value in certain communities, functioning as a form of “prophylactic misdirection” (Stoichiță 2024: 124).

THE ETYMOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OF THE WORD

Regarded by ethnologists as a later development of primitive body painting, tattooing consists of embedding various inscriptions, figures, or patterns onto or under the skin, employing puncturing/stabbing techniques with indelible colouring materials. Reflecting on the shifting semantics of the term – significantly older³ and occurring in semantic relation to the reference word – the term derived from the Greek root *stigma* (*stigmata*) originally denoted a bodily mark, created by branding with a hot iron to establish ownership over animals or humans. This was a common practice in antiquity, applied to livestock, slaves in the East, and fugitive slaves in Greece and Rome (Jones 1987: 139). In ancient Greek terminology, there was a perfect semantic overlap between two acts: branding with a heated iron and tattooing, both designated by the same word, through the verb *στίζω*. This overlap sustained a long-standing semantic confusion between the primitive technical procedure and bodily ornamentation, the latter often carrying a pejorative connotation (Caraman 1988: 191). Moreover, within the Roman Empire, the Greek term *stigmata* was gradually replaced by Latin terms such as *inscribo* (to inscribe, to engrave), *imprimo* (to imprint, to stamp), and *inuro* (to brand with a heated iron).

In Romanian, the word *stigmat* originally referred to the marks left by branding with a hot iron on slaves⁴ and criminals. However, through its reinterpretation within the Christian religious tradition, *stigma* came to denote the marks corresponding to the wounds of the crucified Jesus, appearing on the believer’s skin as a sign of divine communication following a mystical ecstasy.

ANCIENT BODY MARKINGS IN EUROPEAN AREA

Regarding the origin and lineage of the phenomenon in the European space, researchers interested⁵ in the practice of body tattooing have outlined several

³ Etymologically, the Romanian language adopted the word from the French *tatouer*, which traces its roots to *tatahu*, a term introduced from Tahiti by the explorer James Cook. August Scriban’s *Dicționarul limbii românești* details the procedural nature of tattooing: “to paint the body with a dye inserted under the epidermis through punctures” (Scriban 1939: 1300). Prior to this, Lazăr Șăineanu, in his *Dicționarul universal al limbii române*, described tattooing as *marking one’s body with variously coloured figures* and illustrated its cultural application with the example: *the Negritos tattoo their bodies* (Șăineanu 1922: 646).

⁴ “By the 3rd century BC, the branding of slaves with a hot iron had already been replaced by tattooing” (Caraman 1988, p. 183).

⁵ After early research on tattoos among the Catholic population of Bosnia and Herzegovina was published – thanks to 19th-century scholars such as archaeologist and art historian Ćiro Truhelka,

possible theories, based on testimonies and archaeological sources discovered across an extensive cultural area. One theory proposes that tattooing is an indigenous phenomenon within the European cultural space, emphasizing the robust tradition of female tattooing in the Balkans. This theory is supported by ancient documentary sources (Herodotus, Strabo, Martial, Caesar, Tertullian, Solinus, etc.) and diverse iconographic evidence. Many Greek vases from the 5th and 4th centuries BC illustrate Thracian women marked with tattooed dots and interconnected lines on their legs, arms, neck, chin etc.

According to the French researcher Luc Renaut, this tradition persisted until the early 21st century in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, and northern Greece (Renaut 2017: 259). Likewise, Croatian scholars, such as Ćiro Truhelka and Mario Petrić, advocate for the theory, asserting that the practice of combining small crosses, celestial motifs, and other natural symbols predates Christianity. Archaeologist and ethnologist Ćiro Truhelka puts forth the theory that the spread of this custom in the Balkan Peninsula resulted from the Scythians introducing arm tattooing along the Danube. In his argument, he cites the geographer Pomponius Mela, incorporating his accounts of tattooing practices among both the Agathyrsi (a Sarmatian branch, possibly of Scythian origin, fully assimilated into Thracian culture), and other Indo-European populations settled in the northwestern part of the continent (Truhelka 1896: 256). Ancient sources describe the nomadic Scythians and their neighbours (the Mossynians or Mossynoeci, inhabiting the southeastern shores of the Pontus Euxinus) as practicing tattooing from an early age, particularly among members of the local aristocratic elite.

Tattooing also functioned as a visual indicator of prestige and social rank among the Thracian tribes, as noted by the Greek historian Herodotus, who recorded that “to be tattooed was regarded as a mark of nobility, while remaining unmarked was a sign of plebeian descent”. The widespread nature of this phenomenon in Thracian society is further emphasized by the specialization of certain individuals as tattoo artists, who were in great demand in Greek-inhabited regions (Caraman 1988: 181). Regarding tattooed Thracian women, the French mythologist Perdrizet, analysing an epigraphic monument discovered near the ancient city of Philippi, sought to demonstrate that these women held a special status as priestesses dedicated to the cult of Bacchus. Their tattoos were not mere ornaments, but rather “mystical signs” integrated into a religious ritual (*Ibidem*: 182). In Thracian culture, as well as among the Illyrians – particularly the Iapodes tribe – tattooing was a well-established practice by the 3rd century BC, requiring considerable technical expertise. Some ancient sources indicate that tattooing was not exclusively a female tradition, but was also commonly practiced by men

ethnographer Vid Vuletić-Vukasović, Austrian physician Leopold Glück, and French academic Guillaume Capus – the interest in the subject continued sporadically throughout the 20th century, with input from Vejsil Ćurčić and Mario Petrić. In the second decade of the 21st century, however, a remarkable revival took place. Monika Jukić, Toni Herceg, Tímea Barabas, and Nataša Ilinčić revisited traditional tattooing from a range of perspectives, while Lars Krutak, in his chapter *Balkan Ink: Europe's Oldest Living Tattoo Tradition*, brings together earlier findings in the most up-to-date synthesis on body markings.

(*Ibidem*). Ancient sources indicate that the tattooing tradition was intensely practiced by Western European tribes of Celtic (Britons and Silures), Germanic (Harii), and Iberian origin. These designs, created through subcutaneous injection of pigments (featuring floral and animal motifs), were possibly combined with specific body-painting techniques, often employed to intimidate and terrify their enemies. Mapping the area where tattooing was practiced offers scholars valuable insights into a wider historical and cultural landscape, encompassing not only the Britons and the Picts (a Scottish people known for decorating their bodies with paint or tattoos), but also the Scots, the Pontic peoples, and various East Asian and North African civilizations.

Furthermore, the cross motif appears in Hallstatt-era paintings in Glasinac⁶ and is documented in the tattoos of tribes inhabiting Bosnia long before the spread of Christianity in this region. Taking into account archaeological discoveries from the Butmir archaeological complex and the Nebo site, as well as Neolithic figurines, researcher Mario Petrić does not rule out the prehistoric origins (and continuity) of tattooing traditions (Herceg 2017: 355). Skin marking was also used in the military sphere, functioning similarly to soldiers “identification tags”, serving as a form of punitive stigmatization. According to ancient historians, this practice was characteristic of the Greco-Roman world, where “inscription” on the foreheads of prisoners of war (*estizon eis to metopon*) became common practice during the 4th and 5th centuries” (Jones 2000: 34-36).

Facial stigmatization of convicts was practiced by the Romans until 316 AD, when it was abolished by the Christian emperor Constantine I. The growing reliance of the Byzantines on a large and permanent army led to the implementation of sustained and effective troop control measures. The military writer Vegetius described how recruits were marked with their unit names or numbers using permanent dots on their skin, facilitating identification in cases of desertion. Furthermore, an imperial decree from 398 extended this practice to weapon manufacturers, effectively treating both soldiers and arms producers as enlisted servants of the state (*Ibidem*: 41).

FOLK TRADITION IN THE BALKANS

Deeply rooted in the historical strata of humanity, tattoos and body markings represent expressions of individual psyche, through which people of ancient times used their own bodies to transform them into sources of effective magical power and an extraordinary ability to dominate, control, and neutralize – by their own means – the unpredictable and unknown manifestations of both the outer and inner world. The oral tradition of the Balkan Peninsula in recent centuries connects religious tattooing to the Ottoman world, through formalized narrative convergences (folk creations) that emerged within Christian communities living under Muslim rule. The Ottoman domination of the Balkan Peninsula over five centuries accelerated the emergence of unfavourable socio-political conditions – such as the blood tribute (*devşirma*) and

⁶ A karst plateau situated in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, on Mount Romanija, nestled within the Dinaric Alps.

aggressive Islamization – which threatened the ethnic and Christian identity of the inhabitants of these vast and heterogeneous territories. Throughout this lengthy period of occupation, Christians – especially the Catholic communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina – adopted the custom of tattooing crosses and other symbols on the hands, arms, and chests of their children, in order to protect the female



population from being forcibly seized by the Turks and placed into harems. The cross became a protective shield against the common Muslim threat, embodied by local figures of authority (beys, pashas, viziers) who targeted young Christian women. Often, through acts of abduction, these officials would take them into their harems, imposing upon them a non-Christian identity. Such occurrences often led to tragic outcomes with harmful consequences at the community level. This narrative structure, artistically represented through a wide array of oral variations infused with distinct ethnic nuances, covers almost the entire area inhabited by Christian communities in the Balkan Peninsula.

Figure 1: Croatian woman with tattoos (source: Ćiro Truhelka, 1896: 243)

Considering the aspects discussed previously, the distribution area of traditional tattooing includes northern Albania (within Catholic communities), as well as regions of Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Greece, surviving up to the present day within the Vlach community in the Balkan Peninsula. Additionally, field surveys have revealed tattooing practices among both Catholic Christians (such as Bosnian Croats and Albanians) and Orthodox Christians (specifically the Vlachs), as well as among Muslims (Albanian populations).

A significant common element highlighted by this research, relevant to the current investigation, is that these groups predominantly participate in economic activities, notably sheepherding (Petrić 1973: 176-177, apud Jukić 2013: 207).

FIELDWORK CHALLENGES. „CRUȚEA TU FRĂMTI” – RITUAL PRACTICES, MEANINGS AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL TATTOOING AMONG VLACH WOMEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The present study on traditional tattoos, based on direct fieldwork conducted among Aromanians in the Republic of North Macedonia, highlights the need to

overcome and extend the current research framework concerning a complex cultural phenomenon that so far has been treated superficially and inadequately in specialized literature. Spread across the regions north of the Danube during the 19th century as a an occasional, foreign influenced “fashion”, the peculiar inclusion of the term in dictionaries and lexicographic analyses supports the notion that tattooing was absent from traditional Romanian cultural practices.

Unique in Romanian cultural history is the doctoral dissertation *Tatuajurile în România* by forensic scientist and criminologist, Nicolae S. Minovici. Having a monographic approach and published under the auspices of the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Bucharest, the study is divided into two sections, examining tattoos from both an ethnic standpoint and a forensic–medical perspective. The opening chapter presents a concise ethnographic account of the historical development and geographical distribution of the phenomenon, along with its etymology, techniques, and application methods among various cultures. It concludes with a structured classification of tattoos according to their functional purpose, distinguishing them as aesthetic/ornamental, therapeutic, religious, war-related, professional, tribal (ethnic), secret society-related (esoteric/initiation), and familial (identity-based). Employing classical tattooing techniques by inserting mineral and vegetal pigments under the skin at different depths, Aromanian tattoos belong to the category of familial bodily markings, serving a distinct identity-related purpose. With paternal Aromanian roots tracing back to the Serbian region of Macedonia, Nicolae S. Minovici recounts a practice he was likely familiar with from his own family background – parents tattooing their children’s upper limbs (children who were often killed by the Turks) with their names and a cross, both as a means of identification and as a protective symbol of their Christian faith.

At the end of the 19th century, the German philologist Gustav Weigand travelled south of the Danube to study the Romanian dialects of the Balkan Peninsula, an endeavour that later led to the publication of several monographic works with an ethno-linguistic and historical focus – highly valuable contributions to (a)Romanian ethnology. Concerning the tattooing practices of the Farsharot groups, the author reports that, alongside women, men were also occasionally tattooed, albeit less frequently, with a cross or a “small blue star”. His account includes details about the traditional tattooing technique – piercing the skin with a needle during childhood. This custom appears to have been specific to the Farsharot groups, being “very rare among other Aromanians” and sharing similarities with Albanian and Greek traditions (Weigand 2014: 264).

A few years later, Constantin N. Burileanu, a graduate of the School of Colonial Diplomacy at the Royal University of Rome, conducted investigations into Romanian communities in Albania at the beginning of the 20th century, focusing primarily on rural settlements, particularly “the small centres, especially those of the Farsharots, [which] no Romanian has ever set foot in, and no one even knows of their existence” (Burileanu 1906: pref. VIII). A keen observer of the Balkan realities he studied, during his two consecutive journeys among the

Romanian population “between the Adriatic and the Morava-Galichica Mountains”, the author provides a unique documentary account regarding the graphic motif of tattoos, noting that Farsharot women and girls tattooed a “small five-pointed star” on their foreheads, “so that it would never fade” (*Ibidem*: 184).



Figure 2: Farsherat women with tattoos, 19th century (source: Gustav Weigand 1894)

Dating back to the early 19th century, a compelling account of body marking practices and techniques has come down to us through the article *Tatuajul la femeile din Belcamen*, in “Lumina. Revista românilor din dreapta Dunării”. This quarterly publication was issued by the teaching and clerical body of the Ottoman Empire, and the article was signed – probably under a pseudonym – by an individual named Grezdu. The author brings to the readers’ attention the widespread custom among young girls in the village of Belcamen, aged between seven and ten, of tattooing a cross in the middle of their foreheads after first outlining the chosen spot with a pencil. “After that, the entire area of the cross is pricked with a needle until blood appears. Gunpowder is sprinkled over the punctured area and then ignited, leaving a deep blue-black mark that remains until the person’s death” (*Lumina*, Year VI, no. 6, 7, 8, 1908: 50). Regarding its geographical spread, this custom extends over a wider territory, particularly in the Epirus region, and is practiced not only by women but also by men. The repertoire of graphic motifs covering larger body areas – such as the chest, arms, and hands – expands with a variety of enigmatic “designs”. Some are gender-specific, depicting battle weapons (swords, rifles, yataghans, pistols) and armed men in *fustanella*, while others are more universal: crosses, esoteric symbols, words and names of the tattooed individuals, monasteries, and more. A supplementary detail reinforcing the

idea that Christian men – most likely armed men, the *haiducs* – were tattooed with a cross is mentioned at the end of the text: “Brave Christians [authors’ note, bear a cross] on their right arm or above the thumb of the same hand” (*Ibidem*: 51). The protective, apotropaic function of the tattoo, emphasized in the text, seems to dominate other symbolic meanings of the cross, as it is deemed “absolutely essential for the well-being of the tattooed individuals and their household” (*Ibidem*). Regarding the origins of the custom, the author traces the emergence of body tattooing back to the early Christian period, when followers marked their allegiance to the new faith by engraving the symbol of salvation on their skin. Alongside the fish symbol, this served as a means of identification among believers. Later, when Christianity became the state religion, tattoos took on an ornamental role, adorning women’s foreheads (*Ibidem*).

Seeing tattoos as having a purely decorative role, Theodor Capidan – a well-informed expert on the Balkan region – writes in his book *Românii nomazi. Studiu din viața românilor din sudul Peninsulei Balcanice* that Farsharot women, “especially the younger ones, get tattoos”. He describes these body markings as ornamental accessories, decorative elements that enhance and complete their elaborate clothing. Without offering additional details, the ethnographic information – valuable in itself – reveals that, in addition to the cross-shaped tattoo, women had a wider repertoire of graphic symbols, as “they make all kinds of marks on their foreheads” (Capidan 1926: 86). As for the presence of this practice among the Farsharot group, the author suggests that tattooing likely originated in regions of contact with Muslim Albanians, serving as a marker of identity, and was also known among Christian Albanians. In *Macedoromânii, Etnografie. Istorie. Limbă*, the same author – of Aromanian descent – further enriches the ethnographic record on traditional tattooing. He notes that tattoos were applied to broader areas of the body, including the upper limbs (the arms), and that the cross placed on the forehead was “blue, to distinguish [the women] from Muslim Albanian women”. Regarding the origin of this custom, the author oscillates between considering it an indigenous phenomenon, inherited from the Thracians, or a borrowed practice adopted from the Albanians (Idem 2006: 32).

Important ethnographic data regarding the tattooing traditions of Romanians living south of the Danube has been preserved in the manuscript of professor and military writer N.P. Vaidomir. With the author’s permission, ethnographer Petre Caraman incorporated this material into his own study on tattooing among the Daco-Romanians. Having taught for several years at the Romanian school in Grebena, N.V. Vaidomir had direct contact with the Aromanian communities in the Pindus Mountains, from whom he gathered valuable ethnographic material up until the end of the Second World War, when he was compelled to return to Romania due to the closure of Romanian schools in the Balkans. While tattooing had once been widespread across all Aromanian groups, the author observes that, by the time of his fieldwork, the practice had largely persisted among nomadic shepherd groups – particularly the Farsharot and Sărăcăceani – and especially among women and some elderly men, being less common among the youth. In rarer cases, elderly

individuals with tattoos could also be found in villages across the Pindus Mountain region – such as Avdela, Perivole, Smixi, Laca Pași Băiasa, Breaza, and others. However, the custom was better preserved in the Veria area, particularly in the Farsharot villages of Gramaticova (notably Paticina and Fetița), as well as among the Megleno-Romanians in Oșani, Lumnița, and nearby settlements (Caraman 1988: 197).

In emic terminology, the Aromanians do not use the term *tattoo*, but instead refer to the phenomenon based on what is visible and what results from the act of marking the body – namely, the cross (*cruțe* or *căruți*⁷ in Aromanian). This term enters into semantic association with the word *semnu* (from Latin *signum*, meaning *mark* or *sign*) – as in *a face semnu* (*to make the sign*). This contrasts with other Balkan communities, such as the Catholics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who refer more directly to the act of tattooing itself, using the term *bocce*⁸.

Another word situated at the intersection of tattoo and stigma is *damcă* – a dot drawn between the eyebrows during childhood, particularly on children with remarkable physical traits (such as beauty), meant to protect them from the evil eye. Of Turkish origin and derived from the word *damgha*, *damcă* entered the spoken register of the two South–Danube dialects – Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian – through the Bulgarian linguistic channel. It is recorded in Tache Papahagi’s dictionary with the meaning of *seal*, preserving the memory of a common Ottoman practice in which imperial subjects were marked with a hot iron on the right hand by administrative representatives (*janissaries*). The basic meaning survives in contemporary usage in the Romanian expression *a-i pune dangaua* (*to brand*), referring to the act of marking an animal’s ear or body with a hot iron.



Direct field research among the Aromanians (Vlachs) in the Republic of Macedonia⁹ was carried out in July 2006, as part of an inter-academic exchange at the “Marko Cepenkov” Institute of Folklore. The program took place under the framework of a bilateral agreement signed between the Romanian Academy and its partner institution, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU) in Skopje. As part of a vast system of cultural meanings and symbols – one whose code we are still striving to decipher – cross-shaped tattoos, as well as those adorning the hands and arms of Aromanian women like protective bracelets, arranged side by side up to the elbow, were not mere decorative motifs. These

⁷ Alongside the word *semn* (*sign*), Aromanians also use *nișane* (from Turkish *nichân*), carrying the same core meaning of a distinguishing mark. The term has deep etymological roots in the Turco–Persian world of southwestern Asia, where high-ranking dignitaries were tattooed as a symbol of status and authority.

⁸ Traditional tattooing – once widespread across much of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially among the Croatian (Catholic) population – was known under various names, including *pocanje*, *pokkanje*, *čančenje*, and *sičanje* (commonly used in western Herzegovina). In some regions, other local terms were also used, such as *drojane*, *šaranje*, nd *krisma*. See: Monica Jukić, 2013: 197–218, 205.

⁹ The official name until 2019, later changed to the Republic of North Macedonia.

tattoos, observed during my fieldwork in the village of Tri Češmi (near the city of Štip) two years prior¹⁰, were not *nyrăpsite* (inscribed) for aesthetic reasons alone, despite the fact that this was the explanation invariably offered to me. The wealth of kinship names (father, mother, uncle, brother, sister), along with images of snakes, trees, birds, flowers, branches, circles, broken lines, dots, and so on, pierced the shielded gaze of the contemporary observer, compelling them to search for meaning and message within the spirals of time and the tumultuous history of the Balkan lands. Thus, the growing desire to capture in vivid lines and colours the pictorial image of these mysterious body markings led us, in the summer of 2006¹¹, to include within the broader framework of our academic project¹² the documentation and scientific investigation of ritual-traditional tattooing practices among Aromanian (Vlach) communities in the Republic of Macedonia.

In keeping with the academic tradition of institutionalized research¹³, the 2006 fieldwork began in the city of Skopje, between July 15 and July 17. During this period, we had the opportunity to meet with Anastasia Kostova – known within the community as Sia Pušuticu – an elderly woman from the Gramostean group, affectionately called *maia Sia*, whose insights have been incorporated into the present study. The second part of the fieldwork, conducted between July 18 and July 21, 2006, took place in the city of Bitola (Aromanian: Monastir) and its surroundings, where we recorded testimonies from Sofia Pulevska, a Farsharot woman from the village of Nižopole, and from the married couple Slave and Anastasia Sterjovska, Gramosteni from Târnova – localities that once had significant Vlach populations. Alongside the Pindenii, Farsharot, M(i)uzăcheari, and Moscopoleni groups, the Gramostean Aromanians originate from Mount Gramoste in Greece – a mountain ridge that forms part of the Pindus range and stretches from the southern and southeastern regions of Albania to the northern part of the Peloponnese Peninsula.

¹⁰ In 2004, while conducting a prospective folklore investigation, I met several tattooed women belonging to the Gramostean branch of the Aromanian community.

¹¹ In 2004, I was accompanied by ethnomusicologist Marian Lupașcu, a colleague from our institute, on a trip to Skopje to complete the documentation for the bilateral scientific cooperation agreement between the Romanian Academy and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU).

¹² The academic project was broadly centred on researching Vlach communities in Macedonia, known for preserving elements of Eastern Romance culture, with the intention of studying them over an extended period of two years.

¹³ Archival research has highlighted the consistent interest shown by the institute's specialists in Romanian communities throughout the Balkans, beginning with their settlement in New Dobruja – in villages located in the former Durostor and Caliacra counties. The earliest field recordings from New Dobruja came from the village of Aidimir (Durostor) in 1935, followed shortly by those in Regina Maria and Bazaurtul de Mijloc (1937). These were captured using the recording technology of the time – phonograph cylinders – by folklorist-musicologists Harry Brauner, Constantin Brăiloiu, and Ilarion Cocișiu, all participants in the Gusti School's monographic research campaigns. In 1972, research conducted by ethnomusicologist Ghizela Sulițeanu among the Gramostean Aromanians in the Kruševo area of Macedonia significantly enriched the archives with a wide array of musical genres, including wedding songs, pastoral laments, and epic narratives. More recently, in 2018, ethnographers Emil Țircomnicu and Cătălin Alexa conducted further research among the Gramostean Aromanian communities in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Gramostean group in Serbian Macedonia, predominantly located in the Ovče Pole¹⁴ region, practiced a form of semi-nomadic¹⁵ pastoralism, following traditionally established routes across the mountainous areas of the Balkans. Some would settle with their flocks of sheep in the Mocra Mountains (Aleaghița, Cadana–Reca toward Skopje), while others led their herds toward the cool heights of the Cital and Lișnița mountains (near Vinița), on the slopes of Punicva, Lopeani, and Curmina. Still others moved southward to the Caimaccealan and Muza mountains, near the city of Bitola (Aromanian: Monastir) (Cuvata 1998: 13).

Under Ottoman rule, during the wintering season (*arniu* in Aromanian), the flocks (*tutiputa*) were taken to the milder climates of the Thessaloniki region and, in many cases, much farther south. After the borders were redrawn following the Balkan Wars, the pastoral area became restricted, limited to the fertile plains along the Vardar River (the ancient Axios), the Strumica (*Strumița* in Aromanian), the Bregalnica (*Brigalnița* in Aromanian), and others.

At the time of the field research, the cross-shaped tattoo – a spiritual cultural element on the verge of extinction – was found predominantly among elderly women. This circumstance required an applied and “urgent” study of the phenomenon’s complexity within its living context, specifically within the community of origin. The aim was to identify its connections and internal resources in relation to the broader cultural and social framework to which it belonged. Within the constraints imposed by the limited duration of the fieldwork, data was collected using a thematic questionnaire in order to gather relevant information on the origin and lineage of the practice, the cultural meanings and functions attributed by insiders, the techniques employed, the repertoire of graphic motifs, and, not least, the processual factors that have contributed to the symbolic disintegration of the tattooing system.

The actual data collection took place in the Aromanian dialect, at the home of the elderly woman in Skopje, who was living with the family of her son, Pusho (Aromanian *Pușa*) Kostov. The household included her daughter-in-law, Očka (Aromanian *Ocea*), and her two grandsons, Goran and Dejan (Aromanian *Deian*). The research was conducted in a favourable and relaxed working atmosphere, free from psychological factors of discomfort or adjustment. The insider status of one of the research team members, combined with a personal friendship with the grandson, Goran, contributed to a higher degree of trust and empathy, adding significant value to the fieldwork process. To ensure the effective conduct of the folkloric investigation, attention was paid to the behavioural patterns and emotional or fatigue fluctuations of the elderly woman. The conversational dynamic was subtly guided to stimulate and explore her emotional memory, which revealed

¹⁴ In the area known as Serbian Macedonia, transhumant shepherds were mostly settled in the Tikveš and Ovče Pole regions.

¹⁵ Historian Nicolae Iorga argued that the type of pastoralism practiced by Aromanian shepherds should not be classified as true nomadism, since their movements were seasonal – shifting between two climatically distinct regions – yet remained within a consistent territorial framework. See Theodor Capidan, 1926: 11.

valuable insights – rich in specific and essential details – regarding the complexity of the ritual and tattooing practices of the Grămostean Aromanians¹⁶.

Anastasia Kostova¹⁷, known as Maia Sia, was born on March 3, 1932, into the family of Saltir Nikolov (Aromanian Sutir) and Hajda Nikolova (Aromanian Haida, née Tsigar [Aromanian Țigar]), in the village of Teranci/Terantsi, located near the town of Kočani (Aromanian Coceani). She was part of a community of Aromanian shepherds who, during the summer, would lead their flocks to the highlands of the Kalin Kamen Mountains (Aromanian Calinl'i), near Kriva Palanka (Aromanian Palanga) – a meeting place for Aromanians from Štip, Veles, Kočani, and Kumanovo.



Figure 3: *Anastasia Kostova* (screenshot from field video, July 15, 2006)

As they used to say: *on the mountains, only Aromanians would gather; on Calinl'i Mountain, there were one hundred and fifty houses [...]*¹⁸. The use of storytelling to explain the origin of tattooing, as recalled during the interview with the elderly Anastasia Kostova, reflects the traditional way of folkloric communication. Typical of oral cultures, this approach gives meaning to exceptional elements or phenomena – rooted in daily life – through a framework shaped by expressive language and artistic imagination:

*It's a long story [...] A Christian man and a Turk were friends. The Turk fell in love with the Aromanian's daughter and wanted to marry her. The Aromanian agreed, saying: "If that's how it is, fine – we'll become in-laws, but I want an Aromanian-style wedding. You must come with your family to take her". And what did he come up with?! What could he do?! He tattooed a cross on the girl's forehead [...]. He placed the veil over her. And when the Turks arrived to take her and lifted the veil, they saw the cross – and turned back. Who knows when this happened... long ago! And from then on, they began marking us (authors' note, with the cross), since the Aromanians lived in the mountains [...] and the Turks feared the cross [...]*¹⁹.

¹⁶ To avoid distorting the meaning of the collected information and to ensure the scientific reliability of the field documentation, audio and video recording tools – such as a voice recorder, video camera, and photo camera – were used during the interview. This made it possible to capture the elements of folk culture being studied with both technical precision and acoustic clarity (Ispas, Coatu 2007: 135).

¹⁷ We were informed by her grandson Goran that Maia Sia passed away peacefully, in the presence of her family, on April 24, 2021.

¹⁸ Pi munti s-aduna maș armăń; tu munti aco, Calinl'i iu earam, avea ună sută ńdzăń di casi, AIEF, file no. 5973 I a; informant Anastasia Kostova; collectors Iulia Wisosenschi, Mihaela Nubert-Cheńan; Skopje, Republic of Macedonia; July 15, 2006.

¹⁹ Easti pńrmit mari [...] crińtinlu cu turcu eara oaspiń. Ő-turcu i-avea hari multu feata ca s-u ia a armńnlu. Ő-armńnlu dzăsi: da, ghini, maca ahtari, aidi, va nń-nucscrńm, ma io voi s-fac numńa

The story belongs to the Balkan oral tradition of explaining such phenomena. Its narrative structure, consistent in its core elements, is shaped by the traditional cultural model embedded within the Aromanian value system. It includes specific ethnic colourings (which may vary), evident in the actantial roles (Christian host/leader versus Muslim guest/authority), in the contextual framework (in this case, a matrimonial setting), and in the functionality of conflict resolution – non-confrontational, as illustrated by the Turks’ retreat and the annulment of the marriage arrangement. One detail in the narrative offers a meaningful clue: this tattooing custom was specific to “nomadic” shepherd groups who *alăga tu munț* (moved around the mountains) – dynamic, quasi-hermetic microsocieties that lived in direct communion with nature, with the mountain world, and inevitably, with unpredictability, which often revealed itself through hostile and dangerous events or circumstances.

According to anthropologist Lars Krutak, especially in the Pindus Mountains, tattooing – generally a simple Greek cross placed at the centre of the forehead, between the eyebrows – served as protection against the evil eye and illnesses caused by spirits that could be encountered while herding sheep. Thus, this traditional tattoo’s protective function was later complemented, under Ottoman rule, by an identity-related and religious role, linked to the Orthodox Christian faith of the inhabitants (Ilinčić 2004: 44).

Following the same approach while remaining within the realm of working hypotheses and speculative elaboration – we suggest that this expressive visual means of asserting Christian identity represents a relatively recent addition. It appears as a form of renewed reinterpretation, characteristic of the process by which traditional cultural phenomena are updated and functionally adapted to a new social context. This reinterpretation draws upon a solid foundation of magical and religious practices (apotropaic, protective, prophylactic/therapeutic, identity-based, etc.) that once governed the life of pastoral communities in the Balkans. In this way, the valorisation of a powerful Christian symbol – by inscribing a cross between the eyebrows²⁰ – became a highly effective ritual weapon for neutralizing the perceived threat of a Muslim (Turkish) outsider, understood as the latest and most tangible embodiment of Evil.

A concrete detail outside the strictly formal framework of the narrative refers to the practice of tattooing boys with a cross at a young age – a vestige of an

armănească, s-yiñ cu cuscri'l'i s-u iai. Ş-ţi îi tâcâni d-apoea aţâlui?! Ți s-adară?! Îi adară a featil'ei căruți tu frămți [...]. Îi băgară zăvon. Ş-cându viniră turțli s-u ia ş-u dizviliră, ş-vidzură cruțea și s-turnară turțli. Ațea caști ți etă eara...că eara di multu... Ş-di atumțea, d-apoea, ahurhiră ca s-nă bagă (n.n. cruce) [...], că armân'l'i a noci alăga tu munț [...] ş-turțil'i fudzea di cruți [...]. AIEF, file no. 5973 I a; informant Anastasia Kostova; collectors Iulia Wisosenschi, Mihaela Nubert-Chețan; Skopje, Republic of Macedonia; July 15, 2006.

²⁰ In her early 20th-century research, British anthropologist Mary Edith Durham documented the presence of cross tattoos – framed by other motifs – on both men and women of the Catholic faith, typically located on the back of the hand and/or the forearm. She also noted that among Muslims, tattoos often featured elements inscribed in the shape of a triangle, sometimes accompanied by Arabic signs. Cf. Durham 1908: 129.

ancient archaic substratum deeply rooted in local beliefs and folk representations. This allows us to broaden the scope of interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon: *my father was a man, and he too had a cross*²¹.

Following tradition, Maia Sia was tattooed with a cross on her forehead and on her right hand at around the age of five or six, by an older girl from the community named Lena. As for the technique used to inscribe the design onto bare skin²², the traditional tattoo was created by pricking the skin with a needle dipped in a mixture of soot or charcoal powder (and sometimes even gunpowder), blended with liquid solvents – such as water, milk, brandy (serving a disinfectant role), honey, oil, or even saliva. The needle was inserted repeatedly along a previously traced pattern on the hand, causing bleeding. The tattooed area was kept covered for several days without being washed, until the scab fell off. The bluish hue resulted from the mixture of blood and pigment seeping into the skin through the punctures. In some instances, the powder was not mixed with any liquid but used solely to draw the design onto the skin.

*We would pour in a little țuică (a type of local plum brandy) and stir it with a small stick; afterward, we prepared the paste, dipped the needle tip into it, and began tattooing by pricking the skin*²³.

In the Aromanian community, tattooing – understood as a complex phenomenon involving elements of a rite of passage – was performed on girls at puberty, between the ages of 5 and 10-15, by adult women²⁴ from the family or neighbourhood. These women were custodians of tradition and well-versed in the techniques and procedures of body inscription and healing. Later, in adulthood, women would have additional tattoos applied to broader areas of the body, featuring new visual elements (designs) that enhanced visibility to the observer: the hands, forehead, forearm, between the fingers, finger joints, the bridge of the nose, wrist, chest, and even the upper arm.

Thus, the physical body and the graphic markings became components of a subtle mechanism of symbolic defence, “capable of withstanding any assault device” (Stoichiță 2024: 157). Linked to the nubile age of the girls who received them, numerous scholars who have examined the phenomenon of Balkan tattooing – among them Mary Edith Durham, whose informants unanimously cited the tattooing age as between 13 and 16 – have put forward the hypothesis that it represents the survival of an ancient pubertal rite (*op. cit.*: 104).

As for the particularities of the custom among the Aromanians, the tattooing of the cross (between the eyebrows) remained the central element, conforming to

²¹ Tată-ñiu bărbat eara și iel avea căruți. AIEF, file no. 5973 I a; informant Anastasia Kostova; collectors Iulia Wisosenschi, Mihaela Nubert-Chețan; Skopje, Republic of Macedonia; July 15, 2006.

²² In central Bosnia, tattooing is referred to as *bocanje*, while in western Herzegovina, the term *sicanje* is used, both referring to the technique of tattooing through punctures (cross-piercing). See: Jukić, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

²³ Adunam fum dit cireap [...] ș-băgam niheam arăchii ș-u minteam cu un lemn; d-apoea u adăram cisea (?), u muiam, u adram ș-cu acu. AIEF, file no. 5973 I a; informant: Anastasia Kostova; collectors: Iulia Wisosenschi, Mihaela Nubert-Chețan; location: Skopje, Republic of Macedonia; date: July 15, 2006.

²⁴ While there are documented cases of tattooing preschool-aged children, the practice was most common among those aged 13-16 years (Truhelka) or 10-15 years old (Petrić). See: Ilinčić 2004: 25.

the requirements of what may be interpreted as a pubertal or initiation ritual. It observed spatial and temporal constraints, age restrictions (nubile age), the involvement of specialized agents, and so on. In contrast, other additional tattooed elements – of vegetal origin (branches, trees, flowers), personal names (of the father, siblings, uncles, mother, etc.), or featuring animal motifs (snake, bird), as well as the year of birth – served distinct functions: social identification, aesthetic or decorative purposes, or signifiers of recognition and belonging. These could, therefore, fall outside the ritual framework and be carried out in ordinary, non-ritual circumstances.

The cruciform tattoo was always performed in accordance with the ritual's spatial and temporal rules. It took place on major feast days²⁵ (like St. Peter's, Midsummer, or the Assumption), *when no work was allowed*, and always in sacred or symbolically meaningful locations – quiet, hidden places, such as behind trees or in secluded parts of the home: *you hide the place so that no one see you*²⁶ – especially family – can find you and interfere. It was often done at twilight to avoid being seen or drawing unwanted attention that could cause harm, or as they put it: *so they don't stare and ruin it*²⁷.

As previously described, the tattoo's protective function was directly linked to the gaze – particularly the malevolent eye – which intruded upon the intimate and sensitive space of the individual body at a liminal moment of heightened vulnerability: the initiation of a young (nubile) girl within the ritual framework marking the transition to puberty. Moreover, as both a survival strategy and a means of individual (and collective) self-protection, in the dual confrontation with supernatural forces (the evil eye) and/or with threats from mundane reality (such as the Turks), the cruciform tattoo among the Aromanians functioned as a complex cultural marker. It simultaneously unified and differentiated, drawing on a dual referentiality – of sacred verticality and human horizontality – to express a specific *modus vivendi* characteristic of mountain/pastoral civilizations.

The collection of graphic motifs found on Maia Sia's tattooed body is arranged as follows: *on the forehead* – a simple cross (barely visible), tattooed around the age of five; *on the right hand* – a cross in the centre of the hand and the name of a brother, Geogea, inscribed on the forearm; *on the left hand* – at the wrist, the name of another brother, Nasi, alongside a small branch (Aromanian *lumachi*);

²⁵ In Catholic Croat communities, the practice of tattooing was strictly tied to the calendar and was only performed in the spring, around major Christian holidays like the Annunciation and Easter (Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday). One feast that stood out was Saint Joseph's Day (March 19), just before the spring equinox – a time rich in fertility beliefs. In Croatian folklore, Saint Joseph is closely linked to nature: vegetation, forests, flowers, and farming. In the Senj region, for instance, people believed that as Joseph walked through the woods, he struck the trees, causing the sap to surge – captured in the saying *Josip kuc, drvo puc* (Joseph knocks, the tree bursts). Because of this, people were warned not to enter the forest then, as trees might fall. However, this timing was not always attributed solely to sacredness, but also to medical reasoning, as wounds were believed to heal more easily in spring. Cf. Jukic, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²⁶ Tu acumtu locu, ca s-nu yinã vãr ca s-ti mutreascã. AIEF, file no. 5973 I a; informant: Anastasia Kostova; collectors: Iulia Wisosenschi, Mihaela Nubert-Chețan; location: Skopje, Republic of Macedonia; date: July 15, 2006.

²⁷ S-nu s-aurã, di nu s-fați bun. AIEF, file no. 5973 I a; *ibidem*.

further up, her mother's name, Haida – barely legible – tattooed at the base of the fingers; *on the fingers* (middle phalanges): her own name, Sia²⁸. These tattoos were added gradually, over time, and thus at different stages of her life. According to the elderly woman, tattooing graphic symbols on both hands – always under the watchful guidance of female elders – did not follow rigid rules such as left versus right or top versus bottom. Each woman chose the placement freely, with no specific order (*nu avea aradă*), and the process was often a mutual exchange of help. Tattoos on the left hand were usually self-applied, while those on the right hand required assistance from close companions (*soațe*), cousins, neighbours, or ritual specialists – women seen as guardians of deeper, life-giving knowledge. Over time, at unspecified ages, many girls would tattoo the names of their brothers, sisters, parents, and uncles, in order to express, at a deeper level of understanding, their integration into and belonging to a vast and protective kinship system. As a complement to the names, the date of birth was also frequently tattooed.

While some scholars view the tattooing of names and birth dates as a relatively recent development – linked to the wave of literacy introduced to traditional Balkan communities after World War II – this bodily practice of inscribing “mnemonic markers”, which became widespread within communities, served as a means of strategic cultural communication, encoded through traditional symbols and meanings (Ilinčić 2004: 122).

Maia Sia's testimony, in which she recalls tattooing her brothers' names during a significant life transition – specifically the month she got married, at age 17 – offers strong support for the idea that this act held deep cultural meaning. She explained that she did it out of pride (Aromanian *di hari*), emphasising its symbolic value, though that meaning may now be blurred by the passage of time.



Figure 4: Detail – the name of Anastasia's brother, Nasi, tattooed on her left wrist; (video still; July 15, 2006)

²⁸ The graphic motifs identified in Bosnian communities have been extensively studied and classified into five categories by researcher Mario Petrić: a) the simple Greek cross, tattooed on the finger, forehead, or arm, separate from other motifs (sometimes adorned with a dot at each end, straight or slightly slanted lines, gently descending, or curved sickle-like lines, with combinations of these three variants); b) circle and grid (the circle typically contains a cross in the centre); c) bracelet (simple forms, a line decorated with small dashes, or richly ornamented with decorative elements covering up to 10 cm in width); d) a branch or twig, applied to the lower arm, below the elbow; e) various other forms such as stars, moons, or suns. To summarize, Bosnian tattoo designs primarily consist of circles, semicircles, and crosses decorated with branches and lines. Tracing the lineage of these designs in Albania, Mary Edith Durham describes the cross motifs as resembling the “sun wheel”, the cross interspersed with crescents, and one whose arms end in small circles, similar to those on Byzantine coins. See: Durham 1910: 121.

In some cases, the tattooed hands of women in the family – especially mothers and sisters, where blood ties were central – carried the names of deceased loved ones, often a son. These tattoos embodied a powerful link between memory and forgetting: *the name was not to be lost* (s-nu-s chiară numa) – a deeply symbolic act of remembrance.

For the Aromanians, the tattooed cross was simple in form, resembling the Greek cross, and typically placed between the eyebrows – or, in some cases, higher on the forehead to ensure visibility. It also appeared on hands, fingers, and forearms. Some women, according to elders, even chose to tattoo two crosses on their foreheads for aesthetic reasons.

The tattooed body, shaped by ritual and rich in symbolic meaning, was decorated with images like hearts, the *mandra* (a traditional female figure), life scenes, skeletons, snakes (*nâpărtică* in Aromanian), etc. – often extending along the entire arm. Among the Megleno-Romanians, the forehead cross was placed centrally, in the middle of the forehead, unlike among the Aromanians, who more commonly placed it between the eyebrows. Aromanian men also tattooed their chests, in addition to their hands and foreheads (Papahagi 1902: 116, apud Caraman 1988: 199).

CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary stage of our research on the traditional tattooing of the Aromanians, limited by scarce documentary material and a lack of specialized information, currently commits us to a cautious hermeneutic approach, avoiding the formulation of axiomatic conclusions or hypotheses.

Based on our analysis and interpretation of field records, traditional tattoos – driven by a kind of “psychic force” – once played a meaningful role, mainly as a form of protection, carried out in ritual contexts (possibly related to puberty or initiation), especially within pastoral communities. Though this complex cultural practice was already vanishing at the time of its recording, the layout of tattoo designs reflected a range of cultural meanings and functions – some forgotten, others still relevant – that continued to preserve their original coherence and symbolism.

As an integral part of everyday life, traditional tattoos served multiple functions that changed and became prioritized over time. Most prominent were their protective, apotropaic roles—meant to guard individual integrity and, by extension, that of the whole community and its livestock. These were complemented by functions of belonging (to a family or clan), remembrance, ethnic and religious identity, and also by aesthetic purposes or personal adornment.

Although some meanings – such as apotropaic, belonging, or commemorative – could no longer be recognized by the bearers of these bodily markings during interviews, with identity and aesthetic functions prevailing, the fieldwork analysis revealed, with notable recurrence, a deep-rooted fear of the “evil eye.” This destructive visual force, imbued with the energy and spirit (pneuma) of the onlooker, was believed to have the power to harm people’s health

and diminish the vitality (mana) of the sheep herds. To reiterate the points made above, and considering we are at the beginning of our interpretative process based on field data, we currently lack enough information to fully identify the local stylistic traits of the tattoo motifs – such as group-specific (among Aromanians) or gender-based patterns (male/female), their area of distribution, or the complexity of their functional roles. The decline and eventual abandonment of traditional tattooing coincided with the major social and political shifts of communist-era Yugoslavia – changes that deeply affected the Vlach pastoral communities in Macedonia. In the new social context, removed from the way of life that had once given it purpose and cultural meaning, the tattoo took on – or regained – a role associated with stigma and social exclusion. When confronted with a collective mentality shaped by a different cultural frame of reference, the tattoo came to be viewed in a disparaging light and became a subject of mockery. As a result, many women removed their crosses or marks (*cruțile/ seamnili*) using lye, in some cases causing deep wounds and lasting scars.

The changes brought about by shifting social dynamics, along with the Yugoslav assimilationist policies during the communist period, contributed to the disappearance of traditional ritual tattooing practices. While the display of ethnic and religious identity was not explicitly forbidden, it was certainly not encouraged. Beginning in the 1960s, the Vlach shepherds from the mentioned region were compelled to establish settlements in the lowlands and adopt a sedentary lifestyle, thus coming into direct contact with the Slavic population (*văryară* in Aromanian).

As livestock was confiscated and the pastoral way of life was replaced by employment in collective farms and state enterprises, the symbolic and functional meanings of tattooing lost their relevance in society. Its practical role disappeared, and even its traditional cultural significance gradually faded, leading to its abandonment. Yet Maia Sia never wished to erase the cross from her forehead, nor any of the tattoos on her hands – even when urged to do so by those around her. She took pride in this ancestral tradition of her people, believing that, now more than ever, it could still be expressed and honoured through the most powerful and uplifting symbol of Christianity: the cross.

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MORTUARY CULT AND KÖR CEMETERY IN TURKISH CULTURE

TURGAY KABAK, İSMAİL ABALI

ABSTRACT

In Türkiye, the Yoruks, who have a nomadic lifestyle, migrate to a different region every season as part of their animal husbandry activities and bury their deceased relatives randomly anywhere during their migrations. This study focuses on the rare and interesting burial traditions of the Yoruks, as well as these cemeteries, which are called “blind”. In the article, the locations of these cemeteries were determined by field research method, the oral culture of the local people concerning these cemeteries was recorded and examined in the light of the mortuary cult that the Turks brought from the pre-Islamic period. With this examination, it has been observed that the Turks believe that the souls of dead people do not disappear and that the soul’s connection with this world is not interrupted, and that they created an ancestor cult around this belief.

Keywords: Mortuary cult, kör cemetery, ancestor cult, Yoruks, death.

THE MORTUARY CULT IN TURKISH CULTURE

Death is one of the phenomena that human beings have been questioning, and researching about since the beginning of their history. Questions such as “What is death, what will happen after death, is there a life after death, if so, how should we prepare for this, can death be avoided?” have always occupied the minds of human beings. It is actually natural for a person be constantly preoccupied with this issue, for the moment of death and its aftermath are processes that people cannot explain, and they have always been an enigma to those left behind. People have put forward many beliefs, rituals, practices, descriptions and narratives according to the geography and culture they live in, in order to make the abstract realm, that is, death and its aftermath, more understandable. Though human beings felt a little relieved through their endeavors to make it understandable, they always had to take into consideration the uncanny and mysterious side of death that they can’t concretize.

When viewed from today’s perspective (in the light of available data), it can be seen that almost every society has its own understanding of death and, in parallel, a belief in the other world. It is seen that the Turks, who lived a nomadic

steppe life and believed in the Göktenrı¹ (Sky God), had visions and various practices regarding death and its aftermath since the earliest detectable periods. Nomadic Turkish culture that develops around death manifests itself within a wide scope of concepts and practices such as death, burial, grave, the soul reaching its place where it belongs, and taking the necessary actions if it fails to do so. Hence, in order to understand the mortuary cult in Turkish culture, it is necessary to go back to the period of the Sky God religion and start the examination by looking at their beliefs and rituals concerning soul and death.

Like many nations, Turks, in the early ages of history, thought that humans consisted of two separate parts: soul and body. While the body disappears with death, the soul continues its existence after death. In this process, where and how the soul that leaves the body lives and what relationship it should have with this world are all interpreted and made understandable through various beliefs and rituals.

The soul, which is met with the words “spirit”, “kut” and “sur” by the ancient Turks, leaves the body after death and goes to heaven (sky), which is also called *uçmak*, or to the underground, which is the place of Erlik, the patron of evil spirits; depending on the deceased’s status being good or evil (İnan 2006: 178-179). However, this is a journey that needs to be supported by some rituals. Otherwise, it is believed that the soul will remain in this world and harm the relatives left behind. This belief, emanating from the idea that the relationship between the dead body and the soul continues, led to the emergence of ancestors’ cult and mortuary cult among the Turks, manifesting itself through various rituals.

Traces of the cult of ancestors are clearly seen in the religious ceremonies, rituals and some daily practices performed by the Turks from the ancient Turkish religion to the present day (Kabak & Köksal 2023: 109). Ancient Turks, who believed that the soul of the deceased person continues to live after the moment of death, held great ceremonies in which they sacrificed horses to show their respect for this soul, and buried the dead in high-topped, wide graves called kurgans. Again, based on the belief that the soul lives on after death, they buried the deceased person’s horse, valuable belongings and weapons next to him; They erected stones called “balbal” on their grave (İnan 2006: 178-179).

According to ancient Turkish beliefs, people cannot establish a direct connection with the highest heavenly beings. An intermediary is needed to establish this connection, and this intermediary is the spirits of their deceased ancestors. Thanks to these ancestral spirits living in heaven, people can express their wishes to the celestial spirits and ask for their help when necessary. For this reason, depictions representing nine ancestors who protect people were kept in every yurt (Radloff 1976: 221).

While the Sky God religion, which is the state religion, commands to respect the ancestors and do various tributes to them, there is a kind of rapture or trance technique, in Eliade’s terms, (Eliade, 2006: 30-31), especially effective among the

¹ Sky God is one of the ancient belief systems of the Turks and is the name of the religious structure in the Gokturk period.

people in periods when the central authority is weakened and is also practiced in shamanistic belief, through which some kind of bond between people and their dead ancestors is established. Belief in the strength of this bond made it necessary to constantly respect the ancestral spirits and perform various rituals for them (Radloff 1976: 232).

It is known that, under the influence of the Sky God religion and Shamanism, the Turkish people in the pre-Islamic period, Asian Huns, Tabgachs and Gokturks practiced sacrifices to the souls of their ancestors in front of sacred caves at certain times of the year (Kafesoğlu 1995: 291). In ancient Turks, various animals were sacrificed to both the Sky God and the ancestral spirits. The sacrificed animals were not ordinary animals, having a variety of specific qualities. Among the animals sacrificed, the most acceptable were horses, specifically the male ones. Hence, the biggest sacrifice ceremony of the Altai Turks was the *horse sacrifice ceremony*. During this ceremony, shamans performed a very serious ritual by beating their drums, accompanying various prayers. During these rituals, the spirit of each tribe's greatest ancestor was summoned and hymns were recited to him. As a remnant of this custom, many horse skeletons were found in kurgans belonging to Asian Hun emperors and in Hun and Avar tombs in Central Asia (İnan 1976: 48-51; Kafesoğlu 1995: 294). Apart from this, the tradition of cutting off the tail of the dead person's horse and planting it at the head of the grave is also very common among the ancient Turks (Ögel 1984: 199).

Altai Turks give various names to the spirit or soul such as *sune*, *yula*, *aldaçı*. After a person dies, his soul leaves the body and goes to another world. Erlik's messenger – the angel of death, that is, the *aldacı*, meets him there. The *aldacı* is the spirit of one of the deceased's long-dead relatives. *Sune* and the *aldacı* wander around the tent of *sune* and his relatives for a given period. There are various taboos concerning the yurt or the tent of the deceased during this period. For example, shamans do not enter the yurt of the deceased during this period; because they are afraid of their body being contaminated by the *aldacı* (İnan 1976: 94-95).

Within the scope of the death cult, there are various fetishes called *tös* among the Altai Turks, *tangara* among the Yakuts, *eren* among the Tuva-Uranhas, and *ongon* among the Mongolian-Burets. These fetishes are shaped like today's dolls, made of felt, beech bark or rags. Some of them consist only of the skins of animals such as foxes and rabbits. Some families would scatter dust on these *tösses*, which they kept in bags, and go hunting after praying. They would even start having their meals after smearing oil on the mouth of the *tös*. The name *tös* they gave to these items is important; because this word means root or origin in some Turkish dialects, the old Uyghur and Hakaniye dialects. It is clear that the Altai Turks call these doll-like items *tös* due to their ancestors' cult (İnan 1976: 59). There are other data that support this view of Abdülkadir İnan. According to old beliefs, every shaman has four protective *tösses*. These are called *aru töş*. The third of these *aru töş* is *kam-tös* which represents the spirits of their maternal or paternal ancestors who were *kam* (shamans) (Dilek 2014: 180).

In the old Turkish family system, the ancestors of the family are highly respected and revered. Ancient Turks believed that both the god of their father and goddess of their mother dwell in the hearth of the house. While the former was called *Od Ata*, the latter was called *Od Ana* (Fire Father and Fire Mother, respectively). For this reason – as Grenard stated – the ancient Turks believed that this fire in the hearth should never put out. The tradition of keeping the fire in houses asleep with ashes every evening and reviving it with the sacred juniper tree in the morning arose from the necessity of keeping this fire alive all the time (Ziya Gökalp 1976: 294).

Another reflection of the Altai Turks' beliefs about the soul and its state after death is the belief in *kormös*. According to the information given by İbrahim Dilek, *kormöses*, the good and bad spirits, are the spirits of deceased ancestors of the mother and father. According to the beliefs of the Altai Turks, every person has a *kormös* on their left shoulder and it accompanies the person throughout his life and writes down all the evil he has done. When a person dies, if the bad things he has done are more than his good deeds, the *kormös* will take him to the bottom floor of hell. Apart from this, each tribe has its own special spirits. The *Kormös* communicates their desires through the diseases and disasters they send to the people and people offer sacrifices to them to get rid of these diseases and disasters. The *kormöses*, apart from sending diseases and disasters to people, also act as protectors who help fight other evil spirits. When two clans establish relation to each other, their *kormös* also become relatives. Therefore, tribes respect other tribes' *kormöses* as well as their own. In addition, their belief has it that the souls of all deceased shamans turn into *kormös* with the ability to wander on earth. Just like when the tribes come together through the marriage of a girl to a boy, the *kormöses* of both families are considered to have moved to the newly established house and various practices are carried out to show that they are respected (2014: 115-116).

As can be seen, ancient Turks have a belief that the soul does not disappear after death and that it should be respected. This belief has pushed the Turks to constantly commemorate their deceased ancestors and to perform various rituals such as libation and offering sacrifices and reciting prayers to comfort their souls. These rituals in general revealed the cult of ancestors in the Turkish communities. The ancestor cult led to the emergence of the mortuary cult for similar reasons. It is necessary to respect the spirit of the deceased ancestor, be it a *tös* or a *kormös*; But this is not enough for the Turks, for showing full respect to the deceased ancestor, it is necessary to respect his body and grave, too.

When Jean-Paul Roux's book *Death in Altai Turks* (1999) is examined, it is seen that the ancient Turks had various burial techniques such as burning the dead, leaving them on a tree and burying them. Although the former methods were abandoned over time, the custom of burial became generally accepted (in parallel with the formation of the idea of the underworld) and became practiced in all Turkish tribes over time. With the general acceptance of the burial custom, places called cemeteries have emerged. Although it is believed that the soul and body are

separated from each other after death, the idea that the relationship between the soul and the body is not interrupted in the background has become dominant for the Turks. Hence, in Turkish belief, graves were seen as the temporary residence of the souls of the dead in this world. Some current practices support this point of view. For example, although Islam, the current Anatolian religion, supports the idea that the soul cannot return to this world, when we look at today's Turkish society, people keep visiting cemeteries on special days such as holidays and the anniversary of death and pray for and commemorate the deceased as if they were there with their soul. In connection with this, visits to the graves or tombs continue to be widespread. This is because when we look at ancient times, it can be seen that Turks gave importance to graves, for the connection between body and soul, according to them, was not interrupted after death and the place where the body was buried was considered as a kind of residence of the soul. The general use of the word "sın" instead of "grave" in Old Turkish and today's Anatolian dialects is related to this idea.

sın Friedhof, Grab, Grabmal || cemetery, grave, tomb

sın k(a)bra (c) Grabmal2, Grab2 || grave2, tomb2

sın oron Grabstätte || cemetery, burial place

sın supurgan Friedhof2 || cemetery2

sın supurgan oron Begräbnis2platz, Friedhof2 || burial2 place, cemetery2

sın supurgan yer Begräbnis2platz || burial2 place (Wilkins 2021: 609).

Apart from the word Sın, the words *kereksür* (Kyrgyz shelter), *Kür, ükeger, kegür* and the words *kür, kör, and gör*, which survived until the Ottoman Turkish period, were also used in place of grave and cemetery (Roux 1999: 294). Later, the word "mezar" (the place where the dead are buried) entered Turkish from Arabic and this word became generally accepted (URL: 1), and places where graves were built together began to be called "mezarlık". Just as the words used by the ancient Turks for burial places are known, there are also documents about the grave shapes they made. As a matter of fact, it is clear that the Ancient Turks knew about the flat stone tombs in Transbaikalia and Mongolia. Russian scientists divided these graves into three main groups. These groups are as follows (Tryjarski 2012: 21):

1. Graves lined with right-angled stone plaques. These stones clearly emerge from the soil and indicate stone blocks of a certain size and height in terms of their edge angles.

2. Graves surrounded by a lower quadrangular and flat pile of stones (also called right-angled graves).

3. Graves made of flat stone piles and surrounded by disproportionate, low-rise plaques, with large stone blocks at the corners (also called Figural graves).

It is extremely common for Turks to know about these graves and to perform peculiar burial practices in their own funerals. Although it is accepted that the Turks generally adopted cell-type tomb architecture after Islam, it should not be overlooked that niche tombs have been known in Asia since ancient times. This type of tombs can be found in the Zaman Baba necropolis in the Kızıl Kum deserts

west of Bukhara. Graves with cells or chambers were found in Turkmenistan, northwest of Ashgabat, north-east of Uzbekistan and some regions of Kyrgyzstan (Tryjarski 2012: 21-22).

Kurgan must also be taken into consideration as another type of grave in Turks. This is because the largest and most detailed tomb architecture of the Turks is kurgan. Kurgan is a Turkish word; However, it was Russian researchers who initially introduced the word to scientific literature. For this reason, the word passed into Russian and other Western languages – except German – as *kurgan*. This word means hill, mound, tumulus in Russian (Çoruhlu 2017: 77). In the Turkish Language Association Dictionary, the word is given two meanings. These are as follows (URL: 1):

1. *A small hill built by piling soil on a grave in the Antiquity*
2. *Hill-shaped grave*

Obviously, the meaning of the word in Turkish and Russian dictionaries is almost the same. However, the relevance of the word kurgan is not only related to the graves. In some dialects such as Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Uyghur ones, it also means castle, fortified place, settlement. This also shows that the word is related to city, settlement and home (Çoruhlu 2017: 79).

Kurgans can be divided into three groups in terms of size: small, medium and large. Small kurgans in the Pazırık region have dimensions of up to 13-15 m, medium-sized ones are around 20-24 m, and larger ones are around 30-46 m. There are burial chambers made of tree logs in the small kurgans in Pazırık, and they do not contain much furniture. Two or three horses are buried outside the room. Many horses were buried in medium-sized kurgans, and the corpses are in a coffin carved from wood in a separate room. Large kurgans have two floors. It has been designed with a pole system to carry the upper part. Kurgans with many more floors have also been unearthed in excavations carried out elsewhere. The actual burial chamber located under the mound can sometimes be a single room or pit. Sometimes much more complex structures can be seen. The section probably built above the main room or the room where the body is located is called kurgan, because this part hides and protects the actual burial chamber located on the lower floor. Sometimes the room where the body is found can be reached through a secret corridor, or it can be seen that the body is placed in a corner of the burial room and covered with stones and soil. Most of the time, especially in the Central Asian regions, the rooms, whether the part where the corpse is located or the upper part, are built from larch logs specific to the region. These logs are mostly constructed by interlocking them at the joints without nails, using the method called *çanti* (joinery) today (Çoruhlu 2017: 86).

Some kurgans can even be larger. For example, Ibn Fadlan says that the Khazars dug a place large enough to build twenty rooms for the king. The information provided by Ibn Batuta in terms of interior equipment is also remarkable. Ibn Battuta compares Turkish graves to beautiful houses furnished with carpets. Archaeological excavations confirm this information (Roux 1999: 297-298). After the grave is completely closed, gravediggers generally perform

the following 2 acts. The first is to build a kurgan, that is, to raise the hill; The second is to make the grave unknown by completely flattening the ground. In fact, even if a kurgan is built, Turks, out of their taboos, do it with the idea of hiding who the grave belongs to. The second method is to achieve this physically. In fact, according to Plan Carpini, after the burial, the Turks secretly go to the steppes, pull out the grass with its roots and plant them on the grave. Thus, it becomes impossible to find the location of this grave later. However, this method is not applied to everyone, it is generally applied to khans (Roux 1999: 298-299).

The mound made of stone or soil constitutes the beginning or the simplest form of the temple of the dead. The things found on the grave are naturally thought to belong to the grave. Mahmud of Kashgar says that the grave was covered with a silk fabric called ashuk, and the fabric was later cut into pieces and distributed to the poor. Often a tent is set up over the grave. The aim here is to ensure that the resting place outside the grave is the same as the inside of the grave. Chinese annals provide detailed information on this subject. Accordingly, the Turks build a house on the grave, paint a picture of the deceased inside this house, and depict on the walls the wars he participated in when he was alive. Chinese chronicles state that among the decrees issued by Emperor Hiuan-Tsong, there was an order to build a temple after his death. The same situation is mentioned about Kül Tegin and it is stated that a grave temple was established and a stone statue was erected there, and the battles in which he participated were depicted on the walls of the temple. This information shows that Chinese tomb masters worked on tomb monuments; However, since there are no other findings, it shows that they built these graves according to Turkish culture, not Chinese art (Roux 1999: 301-302). This situation reveals that a grave architecture and rituals were formed in the Turks in earlier periods.

When we look at the gravestone architecture of the Turks, we see that there is a tradition of erecting a stone right next to the grave. It can be said that some of these tombstones were erected by others after the person died, and some were prepared by the person while he was still alive. The most obvious example of the second group is the Tonyukuk inscription. In this inscription, Tonyukuk constantly used the phrase "bitittim" (I had it written). On the other hand, the Bilge Kağan inscription was not designed by himself, but was written by his nephew Yolug Tegin. Regardless, it is known that these stones were inscribed while they were horizontal and erected thereafter (Roux 1999: 303-304).

Apart from these stones with inscriptions, there are also stones with pictures on them that are erected at the head-end of the graves. For example, on a hunter's headstone it is written that he is a hunter and a hunting scene is depicted. It is also necessary to mention here the stones called *balbal*. These stones represent the enemies the deceased killed while he was alive. In fact, all of these stones have the same purpose. It is to tell those who are left behind about the person lying in the grave. In later times, the tradition of planting trees at the grave was also formed. While the stone symbolizes eternal static life, the tree symbolizes eternal dynamic life (Roux 1999: 305-306).

After looking at the main types of graves seen in the Turkish world in the pre-Islamic period and their architectural features, it would be appropriate to look at their burial rituals as well. As a matter of fact, the disposal of the dead body in one way or the other is an essential need. Many factors, especially health, make this necessary; However, the fact that the Turks build their graves not in an ordinary way but with care, having different sections both inside and outside the tomb, and turning the tomb into an architectural work is a reflection of the mortuary cult of the Turks. This cult is a combination of pre-death and post-death practices along with burial ceremony and tomb architecture.

Funeral ceremonies in ancient Turks did not always adhere to unchanging rules. There were changes in the ceremonies depending on the period, the status of the tribes and even the status of the deceased. While excavations from the third millennium BC show that the bodies were buried, there is evidence that they were burned during the Andronova period of the second millennium BC. While it was seen in the Karasuk and Tagar excavations that the corpses were burned (in fact, the practice of burying the ashes after cremation was carried out), there are findings to the effect that there was a tradition of burying as well as burning in the following Tashlik period². It is said in both Herodotus and Chinese sources that Turks have the custom of both burning and burying. In some Turkish tribes, there is also a tradition of leaving the body on a tree, which is the most suitable place for the great souls to rest or to keep the body waiting until the funeral ceremony. The significance of this practice related to cleaning the bones of the corpse from the flesh and, in a sense, purify it (Roux 2002: 274-276).

Although it is obvious that the burial place is specially chosen among the Turks, these places are not always similar in character. There is no uniformist approach in selecting the place. Sometimes even a riverside or river bed can be chosen as the burial place. However, usually a high hill or a very high mountain was chosen as the burial place. Care was taken to ensure that these places were generally very far from main roads. For this reason, sometimes very long distances were traveled to transport the corpses. Funeral ceremonies are generally held in spring or autumn. These periods are thought to be periods when the doors between this world and the other world are open for the soul's coming and going. After a person dies, he first goes through a preliminary preparation period in the tent where he died or in a newly built tent. After this, the corpse is shrouded in a shroud called *eshiik* and placed in a coffin. It is known that during the period when the funeral is awaited, horse races are held and people who participate cry and scar their faces with a knife. When it is time for burial, the body is placed on a car and taken to the grave, and this car is often accompanied by a funeral procession. When the grave site is reached, the main ceremony begins. This practice, which Turks call *yog*, maintains the basic rituals, such as crying, stamping, scarring the body parts and horse races are also held at the graveside. In the horse races held here, horses circle

² Regions such as Andronova, Karasuk and Tashlik in the west of Central Asia contain the cultural accumulations of the Turks in the pre-Islamic period and elements of material culture through archaeological excavations.

around the grave hundred times or so and this race continues until the horses are exhausted. It is known that professional mourners are also kept present in these ceremonies, especially in the funeral ceremonies of great statesmen (Roux 2002: 280-283).

The climax of the funeral ceremony in the ancient Turks was the feast called *yog*. It is seen that the feast, which has been detected in every period, attracted the attention of all observers and therefore entered both travel books and state documents such as Chinese chronicles. It is clear that the feast ceremony has a distinct social value and sometimes turns into an exuberant ceremony with musical accompaniment. According to some observations of archaeologists, this ceremony ends at the graveside just before the covering the grave; However, Kaşgarlı Mahmud states that this feast was also performed on the third and seventh days after the burial (Roux 2002: 283; Kaşgarlı 2018: 979).

Turning them into a part of cult over time, the Turks gave so much importance to the graves that they considered attacking ancestral graves a reason to wage a war. For example, one of the reasons for Atilla's First Balkan expedition was the plunder of his family cemetery by the Byzantine bishop of Margos. A similar act of plunder was carried out by the Mongols and this triggered the Turkish ruler Tanhu to campaign against the Mongols in 79 BC (Kafesoğlu 1995: 291).

The Turks created the mortuary cult in question in thousands of years and did not abandon it after accepting Islam. While the Muslim world, especially in the early periods of Islam, chose not to do anything on the graves, caring not about losing them, allowing no rituals around them, and not building ornate ones, for they considered such things as dangerous through associating them with paganism. On the contrary, the Turks continued to keep various rituals, beliefs and practices around the graves by adapting them to Islamic motifs. In other words, among the Turks, the mortuary cult continued to be kept alive under an Islamic image.

During the Islamic period, Turks built their cemeteries in the center of the settlement, close to the mosque in the center, in order to remember death every time they saw the graves. The cemeteries were surrounded by walls high from the ground, trees such as cypress, beech and poplar were planted inside them, and charity fountains were built for passers-by to drink water. These cemeteries were visited on religious holidays and death anniversaries. In addition, many practices such as gathering in cemeteries to read the Quran, especially during holidays, distributing food to children, leaving water at the graves for animals, and pouring feed have become widely practiced (Artun 2005: 170-180).

Some of the practices that can be considered within the mortuary cult of the Islamic period are related to the soul of the dead remaining in the cemetery. Turks, under the influence of their beliefs in the pre-Islamic period, believed that contact between the dead and the living should be cut off. For this reason, it is forbidden to cut trees from the cemetery and bring them home or use them in a job, to bring stones from the cemetery to their houses, to bring tools such as pickaxes and shovels from the cemetery, and to bring the coffin home. In some regions, there are

customs such as returning home by a different route after burying the dead in the cemetery, and changing clothes and washing hands and face as soon as they arrive home after the burial (Artun 2005: 170-180).

In this context, the tradition of balbal in old graves was continued by the custom of erecting gravestones among Muslim Turks. Since the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, Turks have not neglected to erect inscribed and decorated tombstones, large and small, on the graves of their deceased ancestors or statesmen. Tombstones with prayers and meaningful words written in Arabic letters are found almost everywhere in Anatolia, some with pictures of tree, bird etc. These tombstones are generally rectangular in shape. Apart from these, there are also tombstones made in various shapes such as a ram's head and a turbaned human head. More recent tombstones contain prayers, various pictures, meaningful words written in Latin letters (Erikoğlu 2024: 247-254; Gündoğdu & Şeyban 2020: 444). Apart from these, there are also poems of literary value on some tombstones. These poems are poems that deal with many subjects such as the troubles, longings, happiness, things the deceased longed for during life, one's expectations from the afterlife, and one's will to those left behind. There are even poems, some of which contain humorous subjects and make the reader smile (Abalı 2019: 114-123).

There are many forms of cemeteries in today's Turkey, from small cemeteries such as family cemeteries, neighborhood cemeteries and village cemeteries to large and famous cemeteries such as Karacaahmet cemetery. These cemeteries are usually in residential areas. Apart from these, there are also cemeteries located on migration routes in Turkey. These cemeteries belong to the nomadic Yoruk Turkmens who migrated with large herds of animals between summer pastures and winter quarters, especially in Anatolia during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. Yoruk Turkmens are Turkmens whose main source of income is animal husbandry. They migrate with their large animal herds to the high regions of Central Anatolia in the summer, which they called *yaylak*³, and in the winter they migrated to the coastal areas close to the sea, which they called *kışlak*⁴, thus constantly moving their herds according to seasonal and pasture conditions. These migration routes are quite long and last for weeks as they move on foot with large herds. For example, Bayburt-Elâzığ-Diyarbakır-Kirkuk, Mersin-Karaman-Konya, Antalya-Isparta-Denizli-Aydın are some of these migration routes (Oğuz 2016; Beşirli & Erdal 2007).

METHOD

Two methods were used in this study. The first of these is the interview method, which is one of the methods of compiling folklore products in the field. In this context, before going out into the field, information about the field was

³ Yaylak: Summer-abode; a high altitude plateau where nomads go in the summer to feed their animals on fertile pastures.

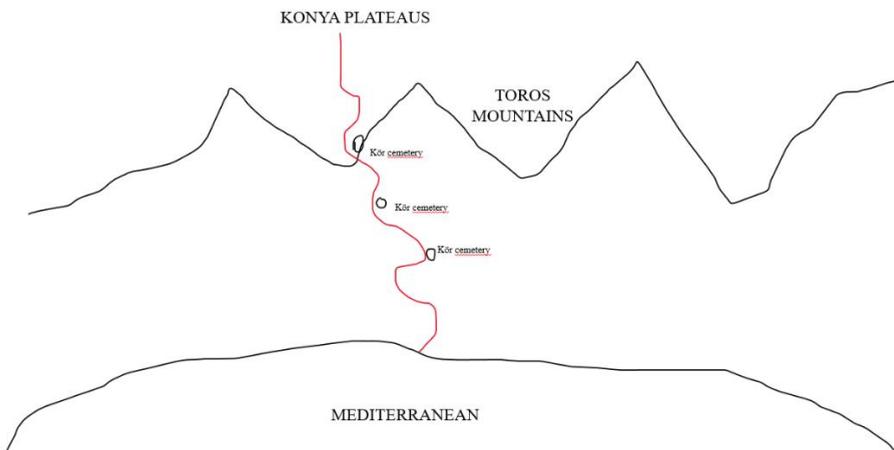
⁴ Kışlak: Winter-abode; seaside or low altitude areas where nomads migrate during the winter months to protect their animals from the cold.

collected and people who could be resource persons were identified. Then, interviews were made with the resource people, and the data they had about the kör cemeteries⁵ was compiled and recorded. During the field research, visuals of the kör cemeteries that could be identified were also taken. The data obtained was then deciphered and made usable (Goldstein 1964).

The second method used in the study is the document analysis method. In this context, works on Yoruks relating to Turks' spirit belief, death customs, ancestor and mortuary cult were consulted and the data required for the study were identified and made available by scanning the literature on this subject (Miles & Huberman 1994). Then, the data obtained from the field research and the data obtained from the document analysis were combined and analyzed to obtain the results of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: KÖR CEMETERY AMONG THE YORUK TURKMENS OF TURKIYE

Yoruk Turkmens, who are the subject of this study, spend the winter in the seaside regions of Silifke, which is within the borders of Mersin province located at the foothills of the Taurus Mountains, and migrate in the summer to the high plateaus of Karaman and Konya. This migration route is about 250 km as the crow flies. However, since this journey is made through deep valleys winding through the Taurus Mountains, it approximately doubles through the land. In addition, the journey includes small cattle such as sheep and goats; Since it is done on foot with cattle such as horses, donkeys and camels, it takes days or even weeks for the Yoruks to reach their destination. These difficult roads passing through deep valleys in the Taurus Mountains have been used for migration for thousands of years. The migration route is outlined as follows:



Visual 1: Migration Route with Kör Cemeteries

⁵ Although the word “kör” is used in Turkish in its first meaning as “blind”, it also includes the meanings of “ownerless”, “unkempt” and “no road”, as will be seen in the analysis section of the article.

As we mentioned above, since this migration route passed through the mountainous region, journeys lasted days and sometimes weeks. During this difficult journey, some Yoruk Turkmens would die due to reasons such as illness, old age, falling (falling from animals or falling from rocks). Deaths during migration were a common occurrence. The person who died during migration had to be buried as soon as possible, there are various reasons for this. First of all, carrying the dead is very difficult during this difficult migration. Since there are no cars, it is almost impossible to transport a corpse for a long time. There is also the possibility that the corpse will smell and rot and cause disease. Therefore, the body should be buried as soon as possible. Another reason is religious. As Dastur said, a corpse is a being stuck between this world and the afterlife. He must be buried as soon as possible so that his soul journey from this world to the other world can begin as soon as possible and those left behind can fulfill their mystical duties towards him (such as praying) (2019: 13). The Islamic faith also has a parallel thought. According to Islamic belief, the deceased should be buried as soon as possible. For this reason, Muslims try to bury their dead as soon as possible, following the funeral prayer to be performed right after the nearest daily prayer. Due to those reasons, burying the person who died during migration in the nearest suitable place has become a tradition among the Yoruks over time. This situation was even reflected in a joke. The anecdote called “This is How Yoruks die” is as follows (Kılınç 2010: 99):

Two Yoruk brothers begin the migration to return from the plateau in November. Meanwhile, their old and sick father falls ill. The two brothers take turns carrying their father and set out to the nearest village to refer to a hodja for prayers. After a while, they get tired and take a break under the shade of a tree for a short rest. At that moment, they see that their father is having difficulty breathing. One of the Yoruk brothers, tired of the situation, says, “Brother, my father is dead, there is no need to carry it any further. I think we should bury it here.” The older brother, who is already ready for this, says “Okay” and they start burying their poor father. Realizing the situation, the old man turns to his children and furiously says, “My child, I’m not dead yet, what are you doing? Stop!” Since the migration was ready on the way, the Yoruk boys who were in a hurry to set off with the convoy, turned to their fathers hastily and said, “Father, you aren’t to decide on your own. The legend has it that “this is how Yoruks die in the autumn months” and they bury their father alive to catch up with the migration convoy.

As can be seen from the anecdote, Yoruks do not have the opportunity to carry the corpse, take care of it, and hold large funeral ceremonies, especially during times of migration. This is because migration is a vital event that requires constant movement, does not allow being late, and cannot be postponed. For this reason, Yoruks, whose family member died during migration, tried to bury the deceased person as soon as possible. The situation is the same for the Yoruks, who live in the research region of this article. The region covers the Mediterranean coast, lies across the Taurus Mountains and reaches the Karaman and Konya plateaus. The migration routes of these Yoruks are not random. There is a main migration route that has formed over time through the most suitable areas of the

mountains and valleys. All Yoruk tribes follow the same path and go back and forth between the summer pasture and winter quarters. Over time, small cemeteries were created along the road to bury the people who died while traveling on this road, and these were called *kör* cemeteries (this expression was compiled from source people) by the local people. *Kör* cemeteries have features that distinguish them from ordinary cemeteries in residential areas. While ordinary cemeteries are located in the center of the settlement or somewhere around the center, *kör* cemetery is usually located right next to secluded roads. Ordinary cemeteries are surrounded by walls and planted with trees, flowers, etc. This is not the case in *kör* cemeteries. They have no protective walls, trees etc. inside them. While town cemeteries are well-maintained and their interiors are clean, these cemeteries are generally neglected. While visitors come to town cemeteries to recite prayers on holidays and other times, no one calls on *kör* cemeteries. Sometimes sensitive citizens driving by can be seen reciting prayers. The most important difference is that in ordinary cemeteries, the name and surname, birth and death dates of the person buried in the grave are written on each grave stone. These stones are marble or fancy stones. Most graves in *kör* cemeteries do not have headstones. The tombstones of the roadside are unprocessed, flat, sometimes square and sometimes rectangular stones that the local people call *tamtır*. Some of them have stones shaped like normal gravestones. There are no names written on most of these stones, so it is not known who the person lying in a specific grave is and when he was buried there. So, in a sense, these cemeteries and the graves in them are abandoned. There is no one coming or visiting. In addition, most of the places where these graves are located are uninhabited, deserted and rarely used roadsides today. While these roads were used extensively by nomads in the past, these roads have become almost unusable today, as there is no longer any migration on foot as in the past, and the busy highways that provide intercity transportation pass through other locations.

It is also necessary to examine the origin of the name of the *kör* cemeteries, which are like guardians of lonely roads. When we focus on the word “*kör*” as it modifies roadside cemeteries, there may be two reasons for the name given to these cemeteries. First of all, the word “*kör*” have figurative meanings in addition to its literal meaning – blind – in the dictionary. Those meanings are as follows: (for a road, street, etc.) not frequented, out of the way (URL: 2). Abandoned for dwellings. There are some words in the local dialect where the word *kör*/blind is used in this sense. For example, a sentence that reads “the house has become blind” can refer to an abandoned house, and “the beautiful garden has become blind” to an uncultivated vineyard and garden. All of these words have the meaning of being abandoned or neglected. Similarly, in Turkish, wells that have begun to collapse and that cannot hold water because they are no longer used are called “blind wells”.

As we mentioned above, considering that *kör* cemeteries are located on lonely roadsides, neglected, and abandoned, it can be thought that the term *kör*/blind is given due to dereliction and abandonment. So, from this perspective, a *kör* cemetery means a derelict, abandoned, dilapidated cemetery.

Another possibility is related to the Persian word *gūr*. The word *Gūr* means “grave, grave” (URL: 3). This word has changed into *gor-gör-kör* in Turkish over

time. Even though the word has changed in terms of form, it has managed to preserve its meaning. There are many examples in Old Anatolian Turkish texts that the word was used with the sense grave in Turkish. Some researchers even claim that the name of the famous Turkish epic hero *Köroğlu*⁶ comes from *Gor-oğlu*, meaning the son of the grave. If this meaning is considered, we encounter a weird reduplication between Persian and Arabic, both of which have the same meaning, ie grave cemetery. There are reduplications consisting of Arabic-Persian words in Turkish, although they are few in number. For example, *pey-ender-pey* (*peyderpey*) is one of them, meaning step by step (URL: 3; Ekici 2004: 63-100).

There is a possibility that the explanation for the name of the cemetery could go either way. However, in our opinion, the first possibility is more likely to be valid. This is because the state of the graves in deserted areas today, being abandoned, neglected and many of them destroyed, strengthens this possibility. During our field research, we were able to identify at least seven kör cemeteries between Uzuncaburç village, which is 30 km away from the center of Silifke and at an altitude of 1200 m, and the Mersin-Karaman-Konya border. These are: Uğra area (1), Abdurrahman's creek (This is a deep valley and there are 2 at both the entrance and exit of the valley), Armutözü (two on a wide plain) and on the Mersin-Konya-Karaman border (2). Only four of these have survived to the present day and were photographed by our research team. The existence of others is known to local people. However, these three cemeteries have disappeared for various reasons. Today, they survive only as a location name. The owners of the graves in the surviving cemeteries are unknown and they are called nomad graves.



Visual 2: The kör cemetery in boundary of Mersin, Konya, Karaman

⁶ Köroğlu is known as an epic hero born in a grave, especially in the stories of the Central Asian Turks.



Visual 3: The another kör cemetery in the same region



Visual 4: Old migration route and kör cemetery, which is now a highway



Visual 5: The kör cemetery in Bozağaç region, Silifke



Visual 6: Another view of kör cemetery in Bozağaç region



Visual 7: A Yoruk grave in kör cemetery



Visual 8: A standard cemetery in today's Türkiye (Silifke)

These Yoruk graves are not only found in Silifke and its surroundings. It is possible to see them in all regions of Anatolia where Yoruk Turkmen tribes lived for many years and used them as migration routes. For example, the graves in the Beşkaza region, one of the settlements in the Taurus Mountains of Burdur province are, in fact, very similar to kurgan and obo type graves, which are pre-islamic Turkish grave types (Erođlu 2017).



Visual 9: A kör cemetery including square graves in Beşkaza (Eroğlu 2017: 64)

There are Yoruk cemeteries in the style of kör cemeteries also in the Aydın region of Anatolia, where Yoruk Turkmens live densely. Some of these were even reflected in the visual media and were requested to be protected (URL: 4). Because the graves are neglected, they disappear over time under the influence of natural conditions. It is possible to increase these examples. However, even these examples show that kör cemeteries belonging to nomadic Yoruks can be found in many regions of Anatolia.



Visual 10: A kör cemetery in Kuşadası, Aydın province (URL: 4)

CONCLUSION

Turks lived in a wide geography from Central Asia to Anatolia. Turkish tribes living in this wide geography have adopted different belief systems depending on time and geography, mainly having the belief in the Sky God. Thus, the idea of the spirit, death and the belief system developed around these concepts by the Turks who have managed to have a very deep-rooted and rich cultural accumulation that includes differences, are really worth examining.

As can be seen from this study, the thoughts and beliefs of the Turks regarding the soul and death have formed an ancestors' cult specific to themselves over time, and this cult has led to the emergence of a mortuary cult over time. The mortuary cult, whose roots go back to the early periods of history, shows that the Turks used different grave architectures, built their graves as a place for the continuation of life after death, protected them carefully, and visited the graves from time to time and performed various rituals. This situation did not change after the Turks accepted Islam. Turks, who are Muslims, unlike other Muslim nations, have always given importance to their graves and have never neglected to visit them on important days, especially religious holidays, read prayers and make various ceremonies. Hence, Turkish cemeteries are tidy and well-kept places surrounded by walls, where various trees and flowers are planted, and charities such as fountains are built. The main reason why so much importance was given to graves in the Islamic period and why the grave cult continued to exist is that Turks believe that the relationship between the soul and body of the deceased is not completely severed. Since the relationship between the body and the soul continues, the grave, which is the place where the body is buried, has become, in a sense, the temporary residence of the soul in this world. Although people know that there is only a corpse in the grave, and Islamic belief dictates that the soul of the deceased cannot return to this world, under the influence their ancestors' cult in the collective consciousness, Turks continue to think of graves as places where the soul-body duo coexists, just like in a person's life. Hence, their cemeteries are important and sacred places. However, the situation is slightly different in the case of *kör* cemeteries, which are the subject of this study.

Since *kör* cemeteries are on migration routes that were busy in the past but are not used much today, and the names of the deceased were not written on the tombstones due to the majority of the Yoruks being illiterate in the past, and because the Yoruks who used these roads gradually settled down and no longer used those roads, it is now impossible to know who the people lying in the graves are. Their existence has been forgotten and these cemeteries have become neglected, and abandoned. Some of these cemeteries have been destroyed and their places turned into agricultural land. Although *kör* cemeteries are about to disappear due to both human and natural reasons, these cemeteries continue to live in the oral culture and narratives of the people.

This study recorded folk knowledge about *kör* cemeteries in the region between Silifke and the Konya-Karaman Plateaus. In addition, it has been revealed that these cemeteries, which have been known by general names such as

cemetery/Yoruk cemetery until today, have their own names and that the local people call these cemeteries kör cemeteries and distinguish them from the regular cemeteries built in their residential areas.

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FROM CENTRAL ASIA TO ANATOLIA: SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF DWELLINGS WITH WOODEN SWALLOW-DOME ROOF

GÜLSÜN NAVRUZ BERK, MEHMET UYSAL

ABSTRACT

People need shelter to sustain their lives within natural and artificial environments. The spatial formation and arrangement of rural dwellings, which serve as the answer to the housing need, are indicative of the way of life. The aim of this study is to introduce rural dwellings with wooden swallow-dome roofs, which have not received the deserved attention in terms of local housing typology and possess cultural heritage qualities, and exhibit variations in spatial organization and formation in Anatolia. The swallow-dome roof is a unique roof covering that is constructed using the overlay technique and is characterized by its distinctive and picturesque image, with an opening called ‘tüteklik’ at the end. It is assumed that the archetype of this roof covering emerged in dwellings. A literature review was conducted on dwellings with swallow-dome roofs, and the basis and distribution area of the roof system were explained based on existing literature research. In addition to the literature review, on-site research was conducted in sample areas in rural Sivas province, and the spatial characteristics of these dwellings were analyzed. Fieldwork, observation, and interview methods were employed during the research process. In this study, nine dwellings were selected as samples in rural Sivas province, focusing on dwellings characterized by the original roof covering of Central Asian origin. Dwellings with swallow-dome roofs have emerged under the influence of geographical, social, and cultural factors, as a result of the biological needs and available construction materials and techniques of people living at the minimum standard of living. These living spaces, produced by the local community to meet their basic needs, are covered with swallow-dome roofs. Dwellings with swallow-dome roofs are indicators of the geography, socio-cultural structure, and economic level. In conclusion, the cultural and spatial components of dwellings with swallow-dome roofs were examined to contribute to cultural and local continuity and to provide a place for this subject in architectural literature.

Keywords: dwelling with swallow-dome roof, rural architecture, spatial analysis, Sivas.

INTRODUCTION

The social and economic revolution known as the Industrial Revolution brought about social and spatial changes. With the phenomenon of industrialization,

lifestyles underwent transformation, and the process of building production began to society's patterns of production and consumption, and constructed through diversify. The migration from rural to urban areas altered the relationship between architecture and way of life, and this transformative movement also had an impact on housing as a living space. Studies on housing from the pre-industrial era, shaped by society's patterns of production and consumption, and constructed through experiential knowledge, have gained significance in this context. Researchers have shown interest in the concept of housing throughout history and have approached its analysis and interpretation from various perspectives. The spatial perspective of housing is shaped by the organizational scheme, geometry, functional characteristics, typology, sustainability, fragmentation, and integration of space. Within this framework, the subject of this study is the "spatial analysis" of dwelling.

The origin of the dwelling with a swallow-dome roof dating back to around 3700 BC, is attributed to the geography of Central Asia, and archaeological evidence suggests that the Botai dwellings in Kazakhstan are the archetype of dwellings with a swallow-dome roof (Kutlu 2020: 2459). It is indicated that dwellings with swallow-dome roofs have been identified in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Anatolia (Akin 1985: 112), and they have spread to the regions of Caucasus, Siberia, Turkestan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan (Kutlu 2020: 2455). The dwelling with a swallow-dome roof takes its name from the roof system that ends with an opening called 'tüteklik'. The 'tüteklik' at the end of the dome-like roof system is a single opening that serves as a chimney, vent, skylight, lantern, or rooftop window, providing a connection between the interior space and the external environment. The necessity of removing the smoke emanating from the hearth, which serves as an essential spatial element for heat and light in sustaining human life, highlights the important of the roof system that ends with an opening called 'tüteklik'. Oğuz (2001) emphasizes the importance of removing the smoke from the space and states that the smoke is expelled through the opening in the ceiling, which serves as a chimney. Furthermore, Oğuz (2001) mentions that apart from the smokestack located at the center and highest point of the dome-shaped ceiling, there is no other chimney, and that's why the roof system is named after this opening. The roof system with a swallow-dome (roof system with 'tüteklik') opening is formed by placing wooden beams on top of each other and rotating them at a forty-five-degree angle to enclose square or nearly square-shaped spaces (Akin 1985: 24, Akin 1991:323). The roof system with a swallow-dome is created by overlapping and rotating elements, and it includes the opening called 'tüteklik', which serves as both a smoke vent and the sole source of light in the space. This roof system is constructed using the overlapping technique (Choi 2017: 200).

The swallow-dome roof, in addition to its formal qualities, has become traditional through its spread in various geographies and its enduring form over centuries. The swallow-dome roof, created using the overlapping technique, is an

impressive, visual, symbolic, and unique architectural product in terms of its form. Dwellings with swallow-dome roofs, are the harmonized form of needs and possibilities in a traditionalized manner. It is an indicator of society's way of life and a tangible example of both the society's struggle against nature and its harmony with nature. Dwellings with swallow-dome roofs, shaped by the influence of natural environmental factors as well as cultural and socio-economic factors, are unique cultural and architectural products that require spatial analysis in terms of their original floor plans, housing components, functional characteristics of housing components, and spatial context.

ANALYSIS OF DWELLING WITH SWALLOW-DOME ROOF

Studies on the original roof covering, the swallow-dome roof, have a limited place in the field of architectural literature. Akın (1991) examines the swallow-dome roof in mosque and religious buildings and states in his article that the swallow-dome roof stands out in monumental structures and has spread across a wide geography. In his thesis titled *Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'daki Ev Tiplerindeki Anlam* (The Meaning in House Types in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia), Akın (1985) also mentioned dwellings with swallow-dome roofs and provided data on the spatial formation of dwellings with swallow-dome roofs in the villages of Muş-Hasköy, Şarkışla-Ortaköy, Şarkışla-Hüyük, and Şarkışla-Sivrialan. Kutlu (2020), who investigated the origin and development stages of the swallow-dome roof in Central Asia, brought a new perspective to dwellings with swallow-dome roofs in an archaeological context. Kutlu (2020) conducted research on the origin and developmental stages of the swallow-dome roof in Central Asia, providing an archaeological perspective on dwellings with swallow-dome roofs. He has provided data on the development, change, and transformation of dwellings with swallow-dome roofs throughout the centuries. In their study examining the 'tandır' house architecture in traditional Erzurum houses, Köşklü and Tali (2010) have mentioned that 'tandır' houses have wooden roofs with swallow-dome design and discussed their architectural formation. The studies conducted by Akın (1985), Kademoğlu (1977), and Kutlu (2020) have revealed the existence of dwellings with swallow-dome roofs. It has been emphasized that the archetype of the swallow-dome roof, which stands out in monumental structures, coexists with dwellings (Akın, 1991), and the foundation of spatial formation should be sought in dwellings.

The dwelling with a swallow-dome roof carries the picturesque image feature with its swallow-dome roof system, and it draws attention with its fluid solution, functionality, impressiveness, visual appeal, and economical approach (Uysal, Berk 2021: 253). It is necessary to analyze its historical significance, its roots, its original formation, its structural characteristics, and its interpretations in a holistic context (Berk N. 2022: 81). In this context, factors related to origin, spatiality, influencing factors in formation, structural and semantic contexts form the proposed approach for analysis (Berk N. 2022: 82).

It is known that the formation of a dwellings with wooden ‘swallow’ roof starts with a functional single space that has a circular plan and ends with an opening opening vent on the roof (Kutlu 2020: 2459). The hearth (‘ocak’) located in the center of the circular space is a source of heat, light, a cooking tool, and a symbol of the continuity of life. The vertical projection of the hearth, the hole, is the final point of the roof, chimney, serving as the sole source of light in the space and enabling the expulsion of smoke to the outside. In housing described by Akın and Kademoğlu, it is observed that circular formations transform into square and rectangular formations according to the structural and physical requirements. The single and functional space covered with the original roof is called ‘evlik’ in the dwelling with wooden swallow roof referring to the functionality, protectiveness and reliability of the word ‘house’ (Kademoğlu 1977: 173).

Within the scope of this study, the findings regarding the spatial analysis of dwelling with wooden swallow roof in rural areas have been presented through the example of rural areas in Sivas.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF RURAL DWELLING WITH WOODEN ‘SWALLOW’ ROOFS THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF SİVAS COUNTRYSIDE

Data obtained from cultural and literature studies indicate that dwellings with swallow-dome roof can be found in the rural areas of Sivas province, located in the Upper Kızılırmak Section of Central Anatolia in Turkey which has been mentioned as a settlement area since ancient times (Ökse 1994: 244). This assumption has been supported by interviews with village headmen in rural areas of Sivas province and further validated through on-site inspections. The study area was determined to include Hafik, Şarkışla, Ulaş, Kangal districts, and the Elbeyli region in Sivas (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The study area, Sivas, Turkey

Spatial analyzes were made on nine (9) sampled dwellings with wooden swallow roof (Figure 2), which were identified within the borders of Sivas province and selected within the scope of the study.

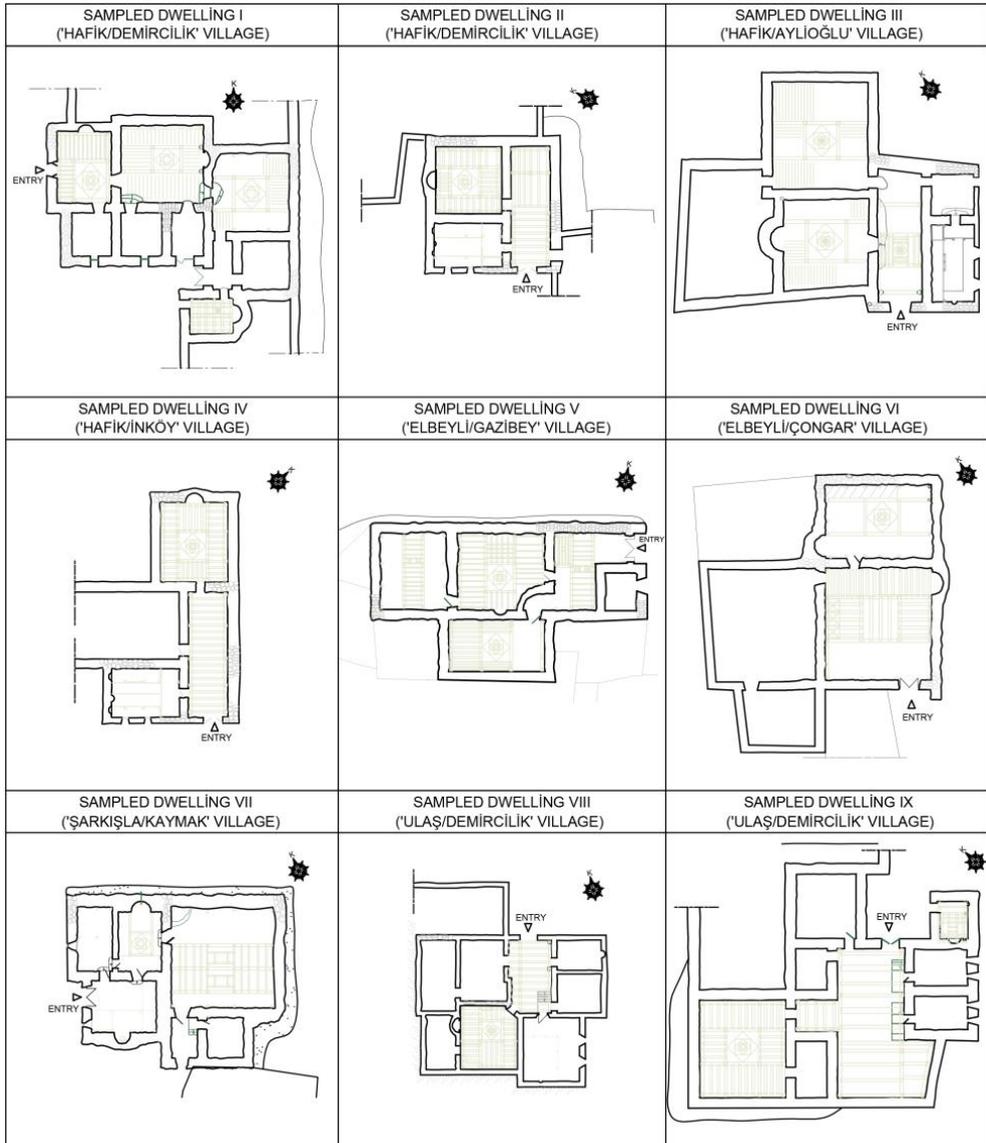


Figure 2: Sampled plans of dwellings with swallow roof

The sampled dwellings with swallow-dome are either attached or detached. Among the dwellings sampled, I, II, V, VI, VII, IX are part of the adjacent building group, while III, IV and VIII are located as detached buildings (Figure 3). Environmental factors (climate, topography), social, cultural and economic factors have been effective in the process of contiguous construction. Contiguous construction brings ease in the building production process through common walls, cheap cost, suitable settlement for topography, protection of heat in the space, and the sense of trust that comes from being together. In the transition to a discrete building scale, economic factors come into play. The improvement in economic

conditions has allowed for the transition from contiguous construction to detached construction.

ATTACHED/DETACHED FORMATION OF THE SAMPLED DWELLINGS

	Attached Formation	Detached Formation
The Sampled Dwelling I ('Hafik/Demircilik')		—
The Sampled Dwelling II ('Hafik/Demircilik')		—
The Sampled Dwelling V ('Elbeyli/Gazibey')		—
The Sampled Dwelling VI ('Elbeyli/Çongar')		—
The Sampled Dwelling VII ('Şarkışla/Kaymak')		—
The Sampled Dwelling IX ('Kangal/Yarhisar')		—
The Sampled Dwelling III ('Hafik/Aylioğlu')	—	
The Sampled Dwelling IV ('Hafik/İnköy')	—	
The Sampled Dwelling VIII ('Ulaş/Demircilik')	—	

Figure 3: The attached-detached formation of sampled rural dwellings with wooden swallow roofs

The sampled dwellings with wooden swallow roofs exhibit a settlement context in relation to topography, showing both embedded in the slope and above-ground formations. Sampled dwelling I, II, V, VIII, VII, IX are embedded in the slope, while III, IV, VI are located above ground (Figure 4). In the form embedded in the slope, it is seen that the called 'evlik' (dwelling, house) and barn spaces are completely buried and the relationship of these spaces with the outside space is provided by a vertical hole which is called 'tüteklik' in at the end of swallow-dome. In the above-ground formation, the relationship between the 'evlik' and the barn with the outside space is established through the 'tüteklik' (hole, cavity) at the end of the swallow roof.

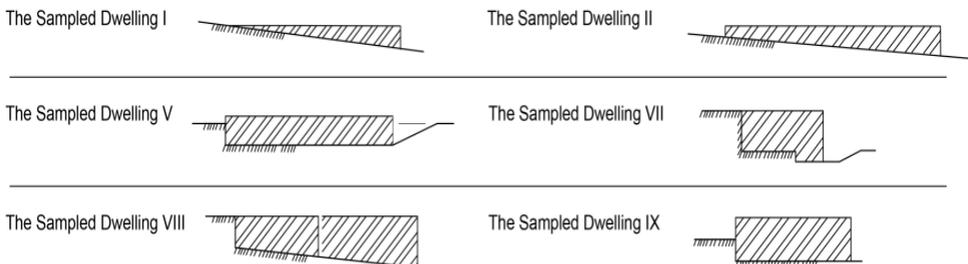


Figure 4: The embedded formation of sampled rural dwellings with wooden swallow roofs

All of the sampled dwellings have a connection with the public space (street) through a semi-public space, and the connection between the semi-public space and the interior space is established through a courtyard (Figure 5). In the form embedded in the slope, the connection with the semi-public space is provided through the open facade of the dwellings to the exterior. The relationship between the dwelling with swallow-dome and the semi-public space is established on the horizontal plane through the courtyard door and the windows of the rooms overlooking the courtyard and the namely ‘seki’ room (raised platform room).

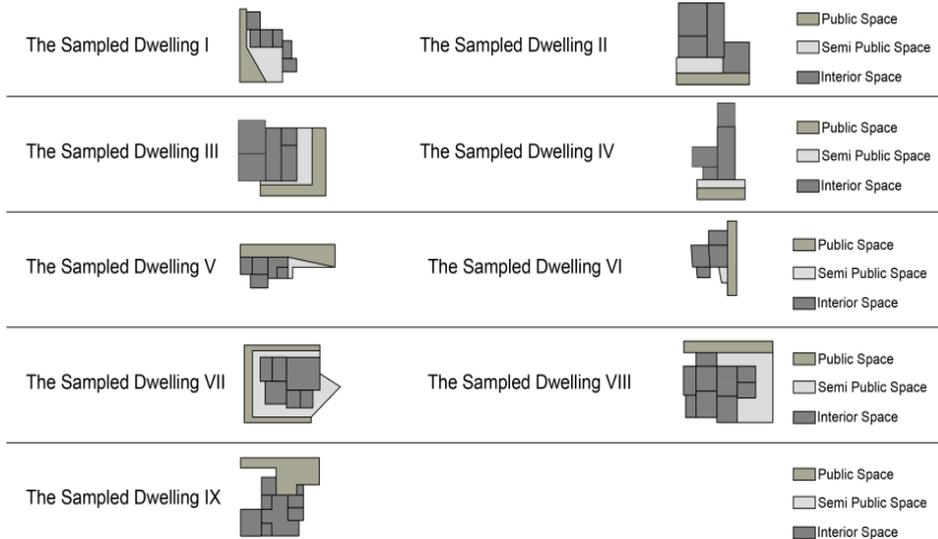


Figure 5: Public/Semi-public space-interior space relationship in sampled dwellings

From the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) which is the entrance and passage space, access is provided to the ‘evlik’ (main living area) (sampled dwellings I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII), rooms and ‘seki’ rooms (I, II, IV, V, VIII, IX), barn (II, III, IV, V, VI, VIII), hayloft (II), ‘aralık’ (corridor) (III), cellar (VII) and ‘aşkana’ (kitchen and storage room) (IX) (Figure 6). In this context, the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) acts as a communal space that connects with the semi-public area in the sampled dwellings with a ‘hayat’ (courtyard), and the distribution to other spaces is realized through the ‘hayat’ (courtyard).

In the sampled dwelling with a wooden swallow roof, the entrance-distribution space provides access from the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) to the ‘evlik’ (house) area, and from the ‘evlik’ area, there is access to the pantry, barn, and room. The ‘evlik’ (house) is also referred to as the ‘ev damı’ (house roof) as a reference to its usability by the household. The living space for animals, the barn, is located within the dwelling, and access to the barn is provided through the ‘evlik’ (house). Access to the barn is also provided through the other door of the dwelling, which opens to the outside and is called ‘aralık’ (corridor). Despite this door, the homeowners have indicated that the animals use the courtyard and the ‘evlik’ (house) space to access the barn. In addition to the barn, the relationship between the hayloft and the barn, as

well as the semi-public area, is established through the corridor called ‘aralık’. The guest/guest house/room is partially detached from the living space of the household, its relationship with the outside space is provided independently, and the planning is made to meet the needs of the guest (Figure 7).

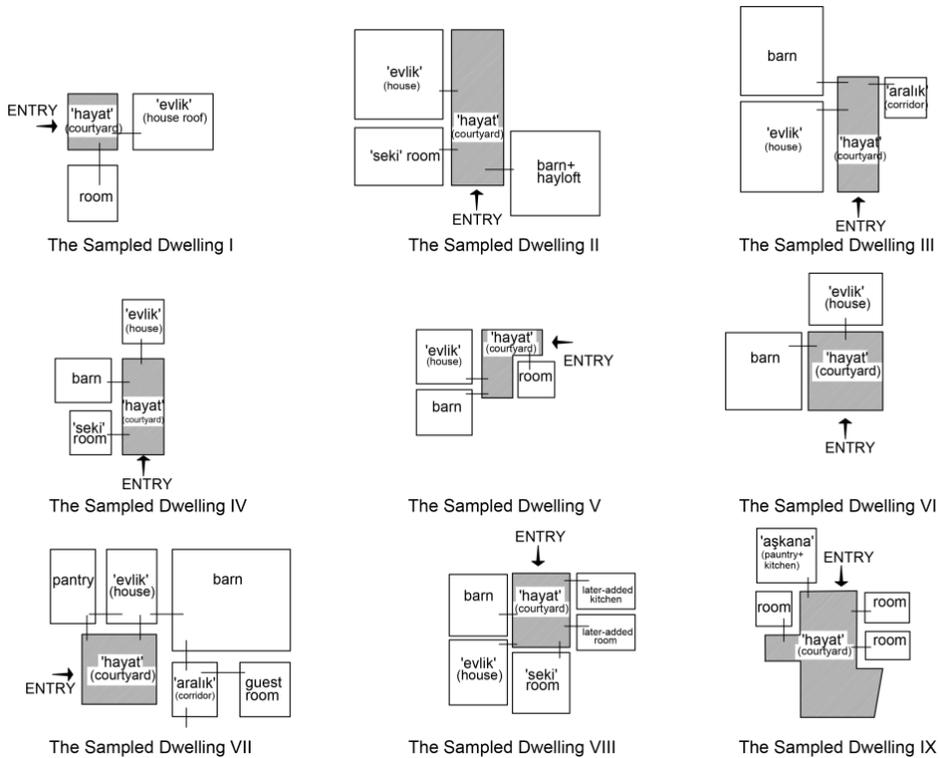


Figure 6: ‘Hayat’ (courtyard) and connected spaces in sampled rural dwellings with wooden swallow roofs

In the sampled dwelling II with a swallow-dome, access is provided from the rectangular courtyard to the ‘evlik’ (house), barn, hayloft, and rectangular ‘seki’ room. ‘Evlik’ (house), was planned as a functionally closed living space, while the seki room was planned as a space close to the entrance and specialized for sitting (Figure 7). In the sampled dwelling III, access to the living area ‘evlik’ (house), barn, and ‘aralık’ (corridor) space is provided through the rectangular courtyard. The barn and the hayloft are related in a way to complement each other’s function. ‘Aralık’ (corridor) is the transition space to the semi-public space and at the same time allows the seki room to be privatized. The seki room, which is separated through ‘aralık’ (corridor) and planned to meet the needs of the hosted guest, also provides opportunities for organizing collective activities (Figure 7).

In the sampled dwelling IV, which provides access to the living area, ‘evlik’ (house), barn, and ‘seki’ room through the ‘hayat’ (courtyard), it is observed that the ‘seki’ room is located near the entrance, while ‘evlik’ and the barn are positioned away from the entrance (Figure 7). Entry to the room designated for

guests in the sampled dwelling V with a swallow-dome roof is also provided through the courtyard. Following the courtyard (hayat), there is a corridor named 'aralik' that provides access to the barn and the 'evlik' (main living area), while the 'evlik' leads to the storage space, the hayloft (Figure 7). The proximity of the hayloft to the road, its connection with the exterior through the swallow-dome, and the homeowner's mention of using the hayloft from the roof explain the location of the hayloft and the relationship between the hayloft and 'evlik' (main living area).

In the sampled dwelling VI, access is provided from the courtyard to the 'evlik' and the barn, while access to the hayloft is achieved through the barn, establishing a relationship between the hayloft and the barn (Figure 7). In the sampled dwelling VII, direct access is provided from the courtyard to the 'evlik' and pantry. 'Evlik' is directly connected to the barn. Access to the guest room is provided through the 'aralik' (corridor) attached to the barn. The direct connection between the 'aralik' and the public space allows guests to communicate with the outdoor area without using the spaces designated for family life (Figure 7). In the sampled dwelling VIII, access is provided from the 'hayat' (courtyard) to the rectangular 'evlik' space, the barn space, and the hayloft. Access to the pantry is obtained from the 'evlik', while access to the hayloft is obtained from the barn. In the sampled dwelling IX, the 'hayat' (courtyard) is centrally located, allowing access from the 'hayat' (courtyard) to the barn, the rooms, and the 'aşkana' (the living quarters, kitchen). There is also a connection between the barn and the hayloft (Figure 7).

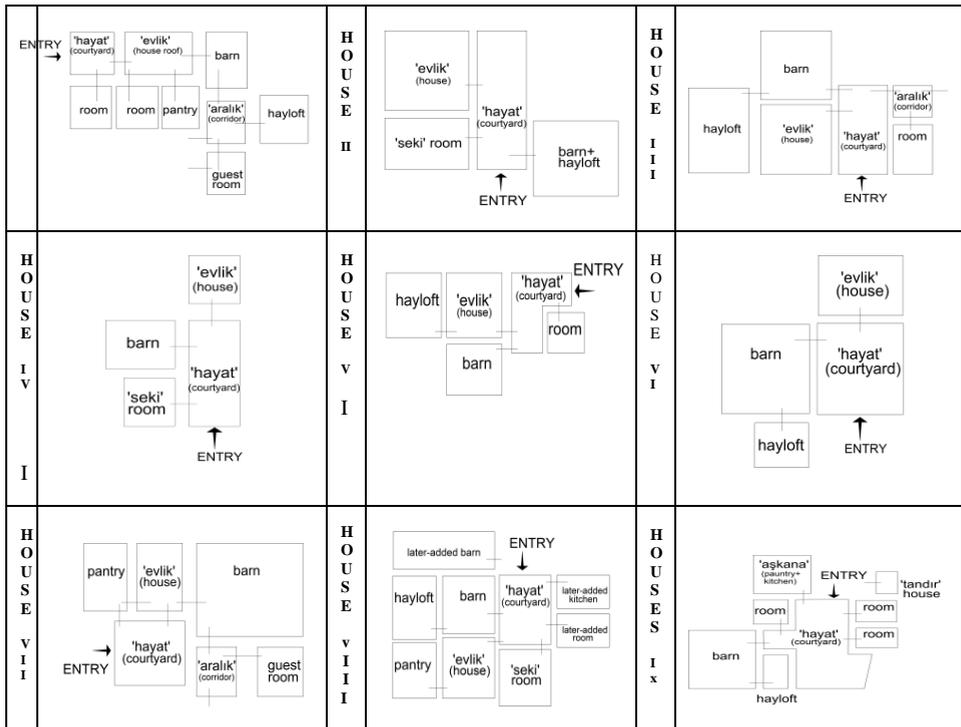


Figure 7: Plans of sampled dwellings with swallow-dome

The components of the sampled swallow-dome houses are listed as follows: ‘evlik’ (main living area), ‘hayat’ (courtyard), barn, hayloft, rooms, pantry, and ‘aralık’ (corridor) (Figure 8). The specified components of the houses are classified as follows: ‘evlik’ (main living area), barn, and ‘hayat’ (courtyard) as living spaces; pantry and hayloft as storage spaces; room, ‘seki’ room, guest room, and guest house as specialized spaces; ‘aralık’ (corridor), ‘hayat’ (courtyard), and ‘evlik’ as transitional spaces.

I	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE)-‘HAYAT’ (COURTYARD)-PANTRY-HAYLOFT-‘ARALIK’(CORRIDOR)-ROOMS-GUEST ROOM
II	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE)- ‘HAYAT’ (COURTYARD))-BARN-HAYLOFT-‘SEKİ’ ROOM
III	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE(- ‘HAYAT’ (COURTYARD)-BARN-HAYLOFT-‘SEKİ’ ROOM- ‘ARALIK’(CORRIDOR)
IV	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE) - AVLU(HAYAT)-AHIR-SEKİ ODASI
V	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE) – ‘HAYAT’(COURTYARD)-BARN-HAYLOFT-ROOM
VI	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE) – ‘HAYAT’ (COURTYARD)-BARN-HAYLOFT
VII	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE) – ‘HAYAT’ (COURTYARD)-BARN-PANTRY-GUEST ROOM
VIII	‘EVLİK’(HOUSE)- ‘HAYAT’(COUNTRY)-BARN-PANTRY-‘SEKİ’ ROOM-
IX	‘HAYAT’ (COURTYARD)- BARN-‘TANDIR’ HOUSE-HAYLOFT- ROOM-‘AŞKANA’(PANTRY AND KITCHEN)

Figure 8: Housing components in the sampled dwelling with swallow-dome roof

‘Evlik’ (main living area): The main living area where daily life takes place in the sampled swallow-dome dwellings is referred to as ‘evlik’. ‘Evlik’, derived from the word ‘ev’ (home), carries the meaning of household or house. In swallow-dome dwellings where the earth-covered roof is also a part of daily life, ‘evlik’ is also referred to as ‘house roof’. The final stage of the swallow-dome construction technique where the area outside the swallow is covered with soil. A soil-covered roof is a space in swallow-dome houses where daily activities are carried out, similar to the enclosed ‘evlik’ space. Therefore, ‘evlik’ and ‘ev damı’ are used interchangeably as equivalents to each other. The living space, ‘evlik’, in all sampled swallow-dome dwellings is covered with a swallow-shaped roof (Figure 9). In this context, the relationship between living and the swallow-dome construction is established through the ‘evlik’ (living space) and the swallow-shaped roof.

‘Evlik’ is the space where daily life needs are met, and it is equipped to fulfill these requirements. The equivalent of heating and cooking activity is the hearth, which is an active spatial element in the ‘evlik’. The hearth is generally placed across from the entrance and at the center of the wall, and its presence is emphasized by the direction of the load-bearing legs of the swallow-dome, highlighting the effectiveness of the hearth (‘ocak’) in the space. The hearth (‘ocak’) is an indicator of vital existence in swallow-dome dwellings. The smoking of the hearth is associated with the presence of life. The hearth area (‘ocaklık’), which includes the ‘tandır’, is planned to be elevated from the living floor level in some examples of swallow-dome roof dwellings (II, III, VIII). The raised platform not only allows for the planning of the ash pit, which enables ventilation for the ‘tandır’ but also creates a functional area for sitting, resting, and working around

the ‘tandır’ (tandoor). The elevated platform, in the sampled dwelling III, serves as both sleeping and sitting area, while in dwelling II, this area includes shelving units for placing kitchen utensils.

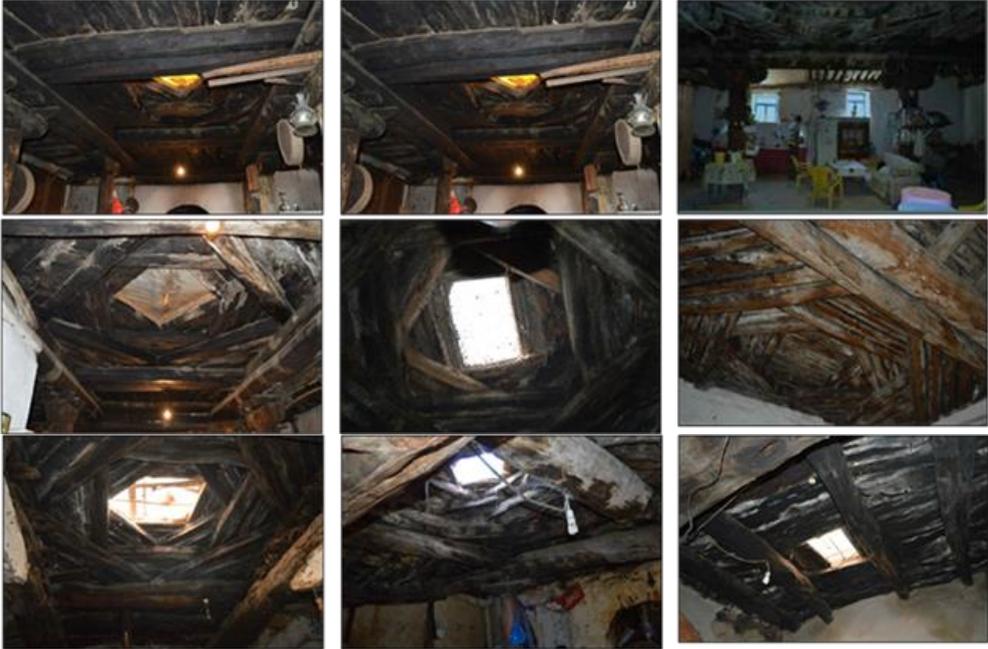


Figure 9: Formation of the ‘evlik’ (house) covering in sampled swallow-dome houses

‘Hayat’ (courtyard): The courtyard, which serves as the main entrance of the dwelling, is referred to as ‘hayat’ or ‘havlu’ in the sampled dwellings with swallow-dome roof. ‘Hayat’ (courtyard), which serves as a connection between the indoor and outdoor spaces and opens into a semi-public area, is an extension of the outdoor space in the house. The fact that the soil floor continues from the outside towards the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) and there is no elevation difference between the street and the ‘hayat’ (in dwellings numbered I, II, III, IV, VI, VIII) explains the relationship between the street and the ‘hayat’ (courtyard). ‘Hayat’ (courtyard) which serves as a transitional space distributing components such as ‘evlik’ (main living area), stable, rooms, etc., is also a living space where vital activities are sustained during the summer season. With the influence of the summer season, everyday life activities shift from the enclosed space, which is connected to the outdoor with the hole at the end of the swallow-dome roof, namely ‘evlik’, towards the open ‘hayat’ (courtyard). The ‘hayat’ (courtyard) corresponds to activities such as sitting, dining, cooking, and sleeping in all of the sampled dwellings, and it also includes the hearth like in ‘evlik’. In the dwellings numbered I, III, V, VI with the unique swallow-dome roof (Figure 10), it is covered with the original swallow-dome roof, indicating the seasonal transition of life from ‘evlik’ to the ‘hayat’ (courtyard).



Figure 10: In the sampled dwellings (I, III, V), a swallow-dome roof in the ‘hayat’ (courtyard)

Barn-Hayloft: Agriculture and animal husbandry are the main sources of livelihood in the settlements where the identified dwellings are located in rural areas of Sivas province. Due to factors such as the insufficient yield from agriculture caused by climate effects, the necessity of fallowing, etc., animal husbandry has gained importance. The cold climate has also brought about the necessity of benefiting from animal heat. In this context, the necessity of the continuity of life relying on the coexistence of humans and animals is reflected in the design of the sampled swallow-dome dwellings, where the stable is planned within the residential space. The stable is located in a separate area dedicated to the household’s life, concealed from the outside, and planned in direct relation to the ‘evlik’ or the ‘hayat’ (courtyard). The interaction between the ‘hayat’ (courtyard), ‘evlik’ (main living area), and stable is observed in the sampled dwellings I and VIII, while the interaction between the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) and stable is seen in the sampled dwellings II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, and XI. The double-winged doors of the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) represent the shared use of the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) by humans and animals.

The stable is covered with a swallow-dome roof, similar to the ‘evlik’, in the sampled dwellings numbered I, III, V, VII, and IX. It is noted that in the sampled dwellings numbered II, IV, VI, and VIII, the original swallow-dome roof existed but deteriorated over time. It is mentioned that the hole is called ‘tüteklik’ at the end of the swallow-dome in the stable provides lighting for the space and is also used for feeding when there is no hayloft. It is noteworthy that a similar relationship between ‘evlik’ (main living area), life, and the swallow-dome roof is observed in the sampled dwellings, as well as in the case of the stable, life, and the swallow-dome roof. In this context, it is assumed that the formation of the swallow-dome dwelling begins with the interaction between the ‘evlik’ (main living area) and the stable. In the sampled swallow-dome dwellings numbered III, VI, VIII, and IX, the storage space is directly connected to the stable through a door. In the house numbered I, the relationship between the hayloft and the stable is achieved through the ‘aralık’. In some dwellings, the hayloft also has a shed roof, and it is reported that the single opening of the earth-covered roof is used for lighting and feeding purposes through the shed roof.

Room-’Seki’ Room-Guest House/Room: It is assumed that the formation of the ‘evlik’ (main living area), stable, and ‘hayat’ (courtyard) is the initial stage of the formation in swallow-dome dwellings. As a result of the improvement of economic conditions and the relative overcoming of the challenging conditions imposed by the

climate, specialized spaces dedicated to the act of sitting have been added to the components of the house. Despite the necessity of fulfilling the requirements of the courtyard, 'evlik', and stable spaces, rooms are designed as spaces for sitting and hosting guests. The rooms are located at the entrance and open facade of the dwelling, and access is provided from the courtyard. The rooms designed for hosting guests are surrounded by seating platforms called 'sedir' on two or three sides. Separate from the room, the space called 'seki room' is where the village people gather for celebrations, farewell ceremonies for soldiers, socializing, and during holidays. It is mentioned that these rooms, which meet the needs of arriving travelers, are built by wealthy individuals. The 'seki' that give the rooms their name are planned elevated from the floor level of the rooms and they are separated from the rooms with different seating arrangements and distinct formations. The 'seki' rooms are located on the entrance facade of the dwelling, providing a connection from the 'hayat' (courtyard) (II, IV, VIII) or establishing a connection with the outdoor space through a designated corridor called 'aralik' (III) (Figure 11).

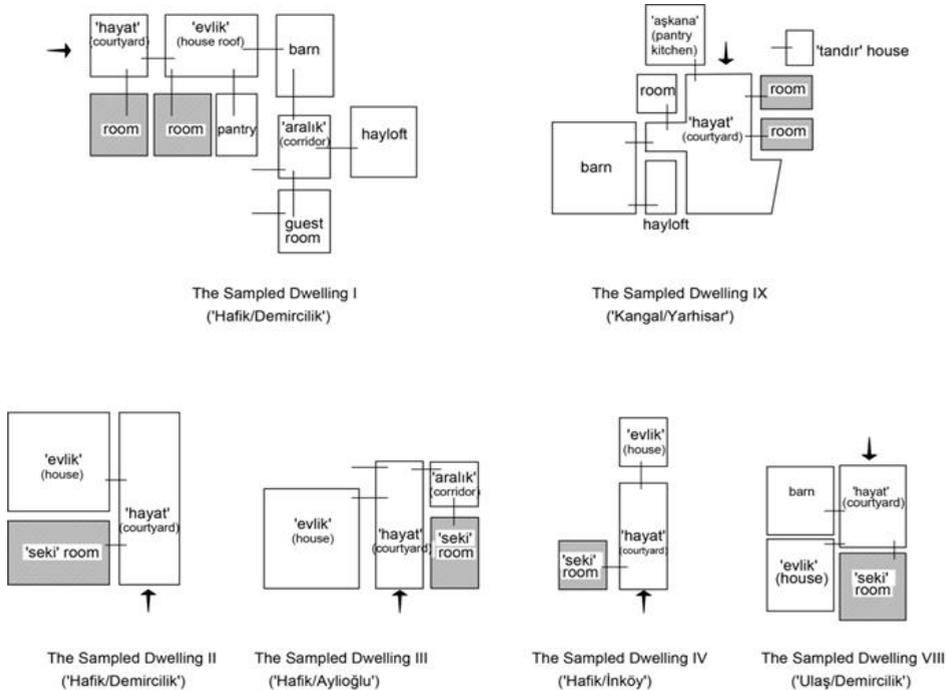


Figure 11: In the sampled swallow-dome dwellings, the room-'seki' room

The guest house is specifically designed to accommodate guests staying overnight and meet their needs, distinct from the regular rooms and 'seki' room. The guest house in the sampled dwelling I is located in a secluded area away from the entrance and 'hayat' (courtyard), and it establishes an independent connection with the outdoor space through its door opening to the semi-public area. The guest house is partially separated from the family members' living space and designed in a manner similar to the 'evlik' (main living area), allowing guests to fulfill all their

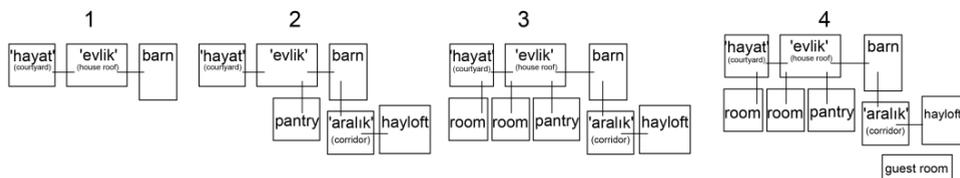
needs. Within the space, sitting and sleeping areas are created with ‘sedir’, a hearth is positioned on the opposite wall of the outward-facing door, and the space is covered with a swallow-dome roof. The guest house is referred to by the homeowner as a ‘single-eyed house roof’. This statement also supports the notion that the guest house carries the characteristics of a ‘home’. The guest house in the sampled dwelling VII, on the other hand, provides a connection between the indoor living areas and the outdoor space through an ‘aralık’ (corridor) and is elevated with a level difference from the ‘aralık’ (corridor).

Roof Terrace: In the sampled swallow-dome dwellings, the roof terrace is the area where the swallow-dome opens and is covered with earth. It is defined as an open working area where one can walk, sit, and dry cow dung, located on the top of the dwelling. The ‘evlik’ being referred to as the ‘home roof’ and the guest house being referred to as the ‘single-eye home roof’ (in the sampled dwelling I), and the similar functions of the ‘evlik’ and the roof terrace, make this naming understandable.

‘Aşkana’, ‘Tandır’ House: In the sampled swallow-dome houses, the space known as ‘aşkana’ serves as a kitchen and pantry, while also accommodating sitting activities. ‘Aşkana’ fulfills the functions of sitting and storage in the sampled house IX, while the ‘tandır’ house takes on the specialized role of cooking activities. In this context, it is assumed that in the sampled dwelling IX, where there is no ‘evlik’, the cooking and eating activities take place in the ‘tandır’ house, while the preparation and storage activities are carried out in the kitchen space known as ‘aşkana’. It is hypothesized that the ‘evlik’ space transfers its entire functions to other specialized spaces, assuming a collective role.

Pantry: The pantry, found in the sampled dwellings VII and VIII, is used as a storage space. The pantry, accessed from the ‘evlik’ (main living area) in sampled house VIII, is completely underground and used as a cold storage room. In sampled dwelling VII, the pantry is located a few steps below the level of the ‘hayat’ (courtyard) and the ‘evlik’ (main living area) and it is ventilated through windows opening to the outdoor area.

Based on the conducted analyses, it can be observed in the analyzed examples of swallow-dome dwellings (Figure 12) that the initial stage of formation in terms of housing growth and articulation is the entrance-distribution space ‘hayat’ (courtyard), the living space ‘evlik’, and the animal living space is barn (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII). It is assumed that storage spaces and specialized areas are added to the formation of ‘evlik’ (main living area), barn, and ‘hayat’ (courtyard).



Sampled dwelling I

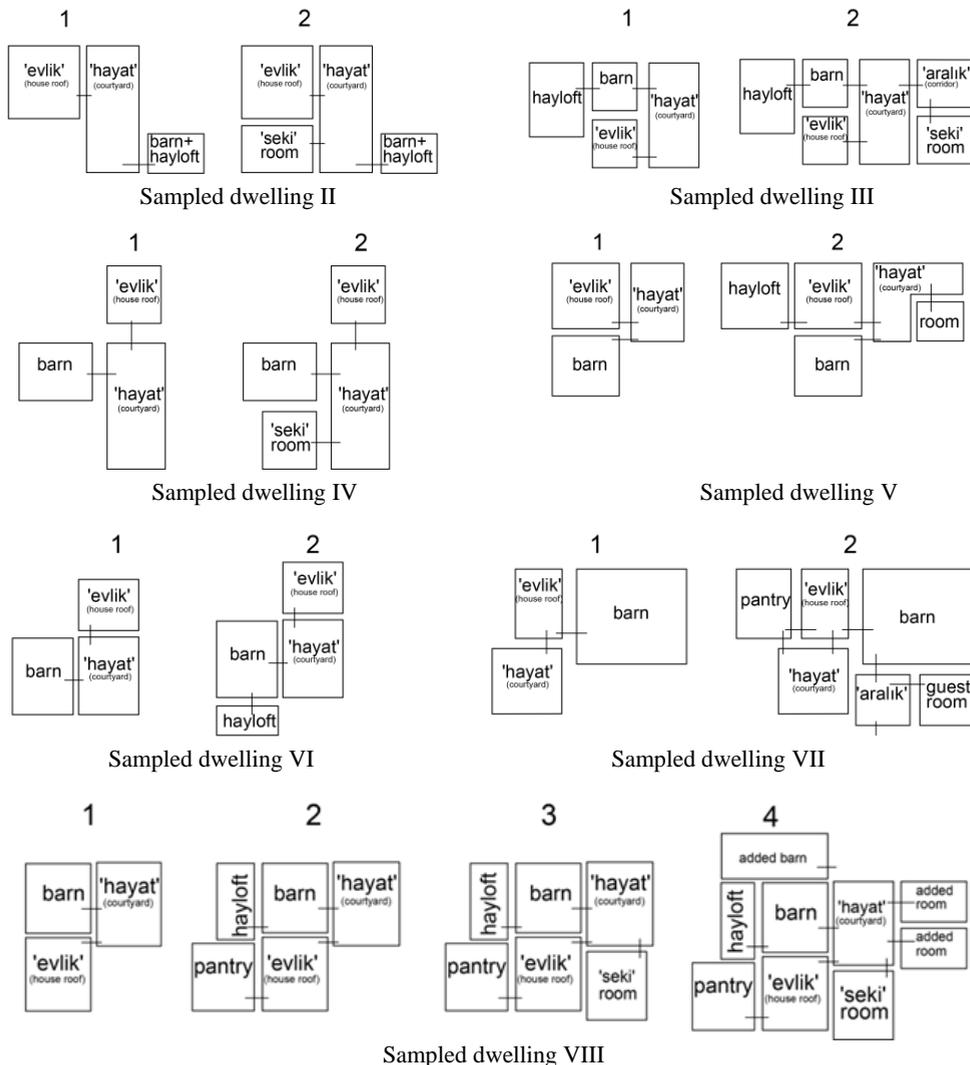


Figure 12: Housing growth-Annexation scheme in sampled swallow-dome dwellings

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Within the scope of this study, examples of buildings built with wooden building materials dating back to Central Asia and covered with a roof in the form of an overlapping dome are discussed. The swallow-dome roof, beyond being a mere covering element that facilitates the removal of smoke from the space and defines the boundary between the interior and exterior, is a remarkable, visually striking, and unique spatial element that possesses picturesque imagery. The swallow-dome roof, with its unchanged formation throughout the process from Central Asia to the present day, has endured. Examples of swallow-dome roofed dwellings, which should be preserved due to their traditional formation, have become endangered and are on the verge of extinction today. The identification of surviving examples and the spatial

analysis of swallow-dome dwellings hold significance in the context of cultural and symbolic meanings associated with them.

The swallow-dome dwelling is shaped by natural environmental factors, socio-cultural influences, and economic factors. Cold climate factors have played a significant role in the spatial formation of swallow-dome dwellings, while topographic data and lifestyle have also complexly influenced their shaping. Climatic data has brought about the necessity of enclosed, buried, and swallow-dome roofed formations due to the dependence of human life on animal presence, which in turn ensures heat preservation. In the swallow-dome dwelling, the main living spaces, namely 'evlik' and barn, are positioned in a buried manner and covered with a unique swallow-dome roof. The formation of 'evlik' and barn with swallow-dome roofs is a vital necessity, essential for the continuity of life.

The construction of the dwellings in the form of adjoining housing groups allows for addition. The new dwellings annexed to the existing housing group through the shared use of walls. In this context, dwelling with the swallow-dome roof, with its ability to adapt to the expanding family structure, the desire for communal living, improving economic indicators, and changing functionality, responds to these factors by its inherent feature of being able to be annexed, in other words, by its sustainable structure.

The main living spaces, storage areas, and specialized spaces are classified as housing components in the sampled swallow-dome dwellings. 'Evlik', 'hayat' (courtyard), and barn comprise the main living spaces; pantry and hayloft serve as storage areas; 'seki' rooms, regular rooms, and guest houses form the specialized spaces. It is assumed that the formation in the sampled swallow-dome dwellings starts with 'evlik' (main living area), 'hayat' (courtyard), and barn, and over time, storage areas such as hayloft and pantry, as well as functionally specialized spaces like room, 'seki' room, and guest house, are articulated within this formation. Unlike the other examples, the 'tandır' house and the 'aşkana' (kitchen) replaced the main living area in the 9th sample dwelling, and a space called the shepherd's room for the person responsible for the care of the animals was added to the dwelling. The transfer of functionality from the 'evlik' (main living area) to specialized spaces is associated with socio-cultural and economic changes.

The 'evlik' (main living area), barn, and 'hayat' (courtyard) spaces in the sampled dwellings are covered with a swallow-dome roof. The relationship between the swallow-dome roof and the 'evlik' (main living area) and the swallow-dome roof and the barn, as well as the enclosed and buried formation of the spaces, are essential for the continuity of life. The enclosure of the main living spaces with a swallow-dome roof, without making a distinction between humans and animals, demonstrates the relationship between the life and the swallow-dome roof. The 'hayat' (courtyard), defined as a summer room, is also covered with a swallow-dome roof in some examples, indicating that the enclosed formation is reflected in the 'hayat' (courtyard) as well. In the sampled swallow-dome dwellings, rooms and spaces referred to as 'seki' room do not have a swallow-dome roof. In this context, the vital necessity of human beings who lead a borderline life in biological terms is associated with the triple formation of 'evlik' (main living area), barn, and 'hayat' (courtyard), which become

synonymous with the swallow-dome roof, and this necessity diminishes in the spaces that are articulated with the improvement of economic conditions.

This study examines the spatial analysis of swallow-dome dwellings constructed by blending with the living patterns, cultural factors, memory teachings, and natural environmental factors by the local people, which have been ongoing since Central Asia. An approach has been developed in the context of regional housing typology for the spatial analysis of swallow-dome dwellings, which are on the verge of extinction in contemporary times and can only be identified in limited numbers. Spatial evaluations specific to swallow-dome dwellings have been transferred, contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage.¹

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¹ This study is prepared based on the doctoral dissertation conducted under the supervision of the second advisor in the Department of Architecture at Necmettin Erbakan University, Graduate School of Science.

FROM DISAPPEARING TRANSPORT TO REVIVED MOVEMENT: MOBILITIES AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

ALEŠ SMRČKA, KATARÍNA SLOBODOVÁ NOVÁKOVÁ

ABSTRACT

This article challenges the conventional notion of mobility and transport as merely the act of relocation, extending its implications to the realm of cultural heritage. In global professional discourses, heritage tourism and the transportation of monuments are frequently discussed under the themes of ‘mobility of heritage’ or ‘heritage on the move’. However, we contend that transport itself can be conceptualized as heritage within the framework of ‘mobilities as cultural heritage’. To substantiate this claim, we trace the heritization process at the semantic and practical levels. The importance of perceiving transport and mobilities as cultural heritage lies in its reinterpretation within different cultural contexts, transforming it from simple transportation into a symbol of rescue, nostalgia, entertainment, and a business concept. We illustrate it using examples of traditional transport forms from the field of vernacular culture that have been preserved in Central Europe, specifically in the territory of the Czechia and Slovakia. At the same time, we will ask whether in the process of heritization of transport we can observe a certain similarity between traditional forms of vernacular culture and contemporary public transport. Unlike other predominantly static heritage phenomena, the concept of cultural heritage in the context of transport and mobilities encompasses unique specifics and diverse social dimensions and impacts.

Keywords: transport; mobilities; cultural heritage; heritization; revitalisation; Central Europe.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mobility and transport are an inherent part of many discourses in the field of humanities and social sciences. It can be attributed to a large extent to the need to view the researched things as a non-static and changing entity (Sheller and Urry 2006: 208) and this is also applied in the field of ethnology, museology and cultural heritage studies. At the global level, within the framework of cultural heritage, the issue of heritage tourism is primarily addressed - e.g. tourist mobility and its economic, social, ecological or cultural impacts (e.g., Dávid 2011; Richards 2018; Telfer and Hashimoto 2024; Wang and Wong 2020) or mobility in the sense of visiting monuments and creating heritage (e.g., Jelincic and Senkić 2017; Smith 2022). Alternatively, the authors focus on transporting and making museum

exhibits and monuments more accessible (e.g., Gwozdziwicz-Matan and Jakubowski 2019; Tutková 2021). Not only from these examples, it is obvious that transport and mobility represent an integral and inseparable part of cultural heritage.

However, we do not have to deal with transport only at the level of ‘mobility of heritage’ or ‘heritage on the move’ (see Colomer 2017). Mobility can also be viewed as an independent valuable research subject (Toivanen 2020: 1). This is approached in the scientific community when the artifacts from the field of transport and mobility in the form of heritage are examined (e.g., Perez-Alvaro 2022). It shows that mobility and transport itself can represent heritage.

In this article, we challenge the conventional notion of mobility as mere displacement and consider mobility and transport in the form of cultural heritage. Specifically, the aim of this study is to show the process, when transport and mobilities become heritage. This will be done on two levels – semantic and practical.

In the semantic part, we want to trace the heritization process through the terms ‘folklore and tradition’, ‘heritage’, and ‘mobilities’ and point out a different semantic understanding of transport in individual terminological levels. In doing so, we are based on European and global discourses and examples.

On the contrary, in the practical part we want to point out the reasons that lead in practice to the heritization of transport and mobilities by the actors themselves. We will demonstrate heritization on a practical level using examples of traditional transport from the field of vernacular culture that has been preserved in Central Europe, specifically in the territory of the Czechia and Slovakia. At the same time, we will ask whether in the process of heritization of transport we can observe a certain similarity between traditional forms of vernacular culture and contemporary public transport.

Our findings and results will be based on already resolved professional discourses and examples at the global level as well as on our long-term ethnographic research of traditional forms of transport from the field of vernacular culture conducted in selected regions of Central Europe.

II. TRANSPORT AND MOBILITIES HERITIZATION AT THE SEMANTIC LEVEL

2.1 Transport as an archaic entity

About more intense professional interest in transport in the cultural field, e.g. from the point of view of anthropology, we can speak already in the 19th century. As a representative example, the world-famous publication of Otis Tufton Mason - ‘Primitive Travel and Transportation’ (Mason 1896) can be cited, but it does not explicitly consider transport as heritage. However, this is the first major undertaking on a global level to document forms of transport that are classified as archaic or, according to O. T. Mason, primitive. This effort could partly be based on the fear of the extinction of the phenomenon, which also touches on the beginning of the heritization process (see DeSilvey and Harrison 2020).

In the second half of the 20th century, the extinction of many archaic forms of transport that had been used until now began to occur worldwide. Interest

in the study of transport in connection with it thus gained considerable intensity. Specifically in Europe, numerous questionnaires and field researches were carried out for the needs of ethnographic atlases (see Gajek 1960; Kłodnicki 2021; Paládi-Kovács 1987; Woitsch 2012), which primarily had a rescue and documentation function. From the 60s of the 20th century, intensive international scientific cooperation developed within the study of transport, which manifested itself, for example, in the establishment of the Ethnological Commission for the History and Development of European Agriculture at the Société Internationale d’Ethnologie et de Folklore (SIEF). A comprehensive collective synthesis of Land Transport in Europe dedicated to the disappearing transport on the European and Asian continents was also published (Fenton, Podolák and Rasmussen 1973).

2.2 Folk and traditional transport

There was a semantic shift in the view of the transport problematics. The adjective ‘folk’ began to be used for disappearing forms of transport (see Bednárik 1950; Gunda 1955), which were becoming an independent and valuable subject of research, and in our opinion were already viewed as something that is now called heritage. However, the problem arose in the semantic ambiguity at the global level. While especially in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the term ‘folklore’ was and still is associated with verbal expressions, on the American continent and in Western European countries, this term is also commonly used in connection with material culture (Wilson 2006: 85). In some countries, for example in France, this term also has a pejorative connotation (Bronner 2007: 171). Nevertheless, the concept of ‘folk’ in transport is still used globally – see Ulster Folk and Transport Museum etc.

In connection with transport, parallel work began with the adjective ‘traditional’. The concept of tradition in connection with transport has been preserved at the global level to the present day. Specifically, on the UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, there are phenomena from transport that have a tradition in the name itself, even though the list is based primarily on the concept of ‘cultural heritage’. Specifically, these are ‘Nordic clinker boat traditions’ (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden), ‘Oselvar boat – reframing a traditional learning process of building and use to a modern context’ (Norway) and ‘Oxherding and oxcart traditions’ (Costa Rica). Other phenomena, e.g. ‘Timber Rafting’ (Austria, Czechia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Spain), avoid the term. They continue to work on local protection lists with the epithet ‘tradition’.¹

However, in many discourses of the humanities and social sciences, attention is drawn to the vagueness of this term without a clear definition. It also bothers the inappropriate implicit use by many researchers with the assumption of its general intelligibility (e.g., Boyer 1990; Oring 2021: 1; Uhrin 2019: 96-97). We do not consider it wrong to work with the term of ‘traditional transport’. Although

¹ UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of good Safeguarding practices – Transport, accessed 02.07.2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?text=transport&multinational=3#tabs>

tradition can be the subject of political abuse (Kuligowski 2014), in transport, this terminological concept is important not only in the professional environment. A decisive feature, valid in general even for ‘tradition’ connected with phenomena other than transport, is generational transmission and preservation of continuity (e.g., Oring 2021: 2-3). The different treatment of tradition in transport and its understanding in the way of passing on knowledge may appear more problematic. Some authorities refer to transport as ‘traditional’ if its knowledge is passed down only orally, in an informal way. These are mostly archaic forms, such as animal-drawn transport, rafting, carrying loads, etc. (e.g., Bockhorn 1988; Fenton, Podolák and Rasmussen 1973; Novakova 2020; Smrčka 2021; Bužrul 2022). On the contrary, other researchers include railways (e.g., Erdosi 2009) or biking (e.g., Ceccato and Diana 2021) under ‘traditional transport’.

2.3 Transport heritage

The semantic inconsistency in the understanding of ‘traditional transport’ gradually opened the way to using the term ‘heritage’.² Its official use by international organisations began at the end of the 1950s (Vecco 2010: 321-322). For a long time, the term was mainly associated with protecting material cultural and natural monuments.³ On the definition of intangible cultural heritage, more intensive discussions began in the 1980s and 1990s and resulted in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 (see Harvey 2007: 25; Vecco 2010: 323-324).

The concept has introduced a novel perspective on transport. Notably, it alleviates the necessity of determining whether the knowledge of traffic conservation is transmitted informally, such as through oral traditions. Instead, the focus is placed on the actors’ self-identification with heritage (see Donders 2008). The protection and interest in transport had the potential to expand globally, applying the concept of ‘heritage’ or ‘cultural heritage’ alongside traditional forms of transportation from the realm of vernacular culture to public transport. This application is evident through initiatives by state and non-profit private organizations dedicated to the restoration and preservation of decommissioned railway and bus vehicles. Prominent examples include Transport Heritage NSW in Australia, which hosts the international exhibition event Transport Heritage Expo, and Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre in the United Kingdom.⁴

However, this loosening and emphasis on the identification of actors with transport as heritage does not represent terminological salvation. The view of

² In addition to this term, there is a close term ‘cultural property’. Its importance is discussed, for example, by Lixinski, Lucas. 2019. “Definitions: From Cultural Property to Cultural Heritage (and Back?).” In *International Heritage Law for Communities: Exclusion and Reimagination*, edited by Lucas Lixinski, 27-65, Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198843306.003.0002>; in transport, we will encounter it more in technical disciplines: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/transport-property>, accessed 10. 07.2024

³ See UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972).

⁴ Transport Heritage Expo, accessed 03.09.2024, <https://www.transportheritageexpo.com>.

heritage has always been largely influenced by the foul in the form of an subjective authoritarian, official or political approach (Harrison 2013: 14; Lowenthal 1985; Smith 2006: 300; Smith and Waterton 2012).

On the other hand, it can be seen that ‘heritage’ in connection with transport is used completely without connection to the protection or history of vehicles and transport companies. Examples include companies operating regular truck transport whose name include ‘heritage’; we can cite examples from the United States of America and Canada – e.g. Heritage Transportation (California), Heritage Logistics (Alabama) or Heritage Truck Lines Inc. (Ontario).⁵

2.4 Mobilities heritage

When examining transport as heritage, it is essential to consider its comprehensive components. Traditionally, the focus has been predominantly on means of transport, as these receive the most protection and social attention. However, this approach reveals limitations in the scope of research. Transport heritage encompasses more than just means of transport. For instance, the Transport Heritage Expo in Sydney, Australia, exemplifies a broader understanding of transport heritage. As evident from the promotional video, transport heritage includes not only vehicles but also clothing, period music, entertainment, and general nostalgia.⁵ Using the example of traditional timber rafting in Europe, we may note various expressions of verbal folklore related to transport.

Personal observations further substantiate this broader perspective; many individuals engaged in the preservation of historic and scrapped forms of transport also exhibit an interest in other period artefacts and their interconnectedness. This includes dynamic objects, non-static phenomena, ideas, and the interactions, atmosphere, and relationships among passengers, which are worthy of investigation (Bissell 2010). Thus, there is a shift from the concept of ‘transport heritage’ to ‘mobilities heritage’.

Some researchers place the beginnings of mobility research at the very beginning of the 20th century, and one of the first pioneers is the German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel and his essay *Bridge and Door* (Simmel 1994). The mobility turn and increased interest in researching subjects on a non-static level can be noticed in the nineties of the 20th century (Cresswell 2011: 550-551). The French anthropologist Marc Augé already outlined the need to deal with an exploration of the concept of ‘non-places’ – airports, shopping centres, motorways, college campuses etc. (Augé 1995; see Namhata and Prayer Elmo Raj 2024). This turn deepened in full at the beginning of the millennium, especially under the influence of British researchers devoted to the topic until the present day (e.g., Adey 2023; Bissell 2010; Büscher, Sheller and Tyfield 2016; Salazar 2023; Urry 2007; etc.).

The ‘heritage of mobilities’ concept has not been much discussed yet, on the contrary, ‘mobilities of heritage’ has been. For example, John Urry (Urry 2007)

⁵ Heritage Transportation (California), Heritage Logistics (Alabama) or Heritage Truck Lines Inc. (Ontario), accessed 29.07.2024, <https://www.heritage-transportation.com>; <https://www.myheritage-logistics.com>; <https://www.jbtgroup.com/>.

mentions tourist travelling (p. 11), and materials on the move (p. 34). The concept of ‘heritage of mobilities’ is partly touched by, for example, Rodney Harrison, when he writes about ‘movable cultural heritage’, under which he includes paintings, stone tools, but also means of transport – specifically tractors (Harrison 2013: 5). In the last two decades, we tend to talk about ‘transport heritage’, but the concept of ‘mobilities heritage’ is increasingly being used, for example, in connection with migration (e.g., Blanchard and Lamarche 2023), travel mobility in the form of historical routes (see Sigley 2020) or historical air mobility – e.g. Air Mobility Command Museum.⁶

III. TRANSPORT AND MOBILITIES HERITIZATION AT A PRACTICAL SENSE (VERNACULAR TRANSPORT IN CENTRAL EUROPE)

So far, we have shown the paths to the concept of ‘mobilities as heritage’ on a semantic level. However, it is one thing to name phenomena and work with the concept on a theoretical level, the second essential part is the process of transforming transport, mobility or means of transport into heritage in practice by the actors themselves.

We will demonstrate the reasons for the actors to heritize transport and mobility using forms of traditional transport from the area of agrarian vernacular culture, which have been preserved in various forms in Central Europe, specifically in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, to the present day. These include wood floating, mountain portering, hauling wood by horse and competitive sled races.

3.1 Preservation

One of the reasons that lead to heritization is often the expectation of loss and disappearance of the phenomenon (DeSilvey and Harrison 2020). This concern about the disappearance of the phenomenon may appear to be completely unnecessary because if something loses its function, it will logically disappear through selection. However, we should not neglect two levels.

First, there is an interest of the affected actors and the external environment to save the means of transport themselves – old road and rail vehicles, transport equipment, etc. despite the loss of their original function. Alternatively, the preservation of knowledge related to transport and the production of means of transport to preserve reminiscences, and memory for the next generation, but also from the point of view of the subjective or collective perception of the beauty of the given form of transport. This preservation can thus serve museum and educational purposes (Burman and Stratton 2014).

The next reason for the perception of transport or mobility as cultural heritage is that the given form of relocation still has its original function and is difficult to replace, but due to environmental influences, it is in danger of disappearing. An example can be the use of a horse draft when hauling wood in a mountain environment (Figure 1). Based on our ethnographic research in the

⁶ Air Mobility Command Museum, accessed 13.03.2024, <https://amcmuseum.org>.

mountains of Central Europe, where the hauling of wood by horse is still used, we have come to the knowledge that this mode of transport has retained its unchanged function. As some authors also note, its importance in terms of nature protection and the effectiveness of work in poorly accessible terrain is irreplaceable (Kadlec and Matysová 2015: 87-89, see Malatinszky, Ficsor and Erdélyi 2024). Nevertheless, due to the demanding nature of the profession, the necessary knowledge of working with horses and, above all, the fundamental influence on personal and family life, only a few young people are willing to do this work (Ficsor and Malatinszky 2014: 135). The coachmen also confirmed the same information to us.⁷

Many coachmen thus pursue their profession not because of finances, but above all because of their relationship with horses and nature. What is important, we noted in many respondents the awareness that they are continuing the work of their fathers and grandfathers who made a living from this profession. At the same time, they pass on the knowledge and heritage of their ancestors to the younger generation, and they look at their work as a cultural heritage that needs to be passed on.⁸

A similar example within Europe is represented by the profession of mountain porters (Tatra Sherpas) in Slovakia (Figure 2). The continuity of this profession has been preserved to the present day thanks to the year-round need to supply high-mountain huts with goods (Novakova and Turinicova 2014: 193). The profession of porter represents a unique cultural phenomenon existing in its unchanged form within Central Europe only in Slovakia, specifically in the mountainous areas of the High and Low Tatras and the Velká Fatra Mountains. The carrying of goods by human power on the backs in the wooden carrying frames has been preserved here thanks to the efforts of the sherpas themselves, for some of whom this profession is the main way of their livelihood. The maintenance of this phenomenon at the present time, despite the possibility of transporting goods using helicopters, is thus caused, in addition to the difficult-to-access mountainous terrain, by a strong identification with the heritage by the porters themselves. This is partly helped by the annual Sherpa Rallye sports events, which gives us nostalgia and fun (Nováková 2008: 90–95). The popularisation of this profession was also helped by the fact that in 2018 the mountain porters (Tatra Sherpas) profession was included in the list of intangible cultural heritage of Slovakia.⁹

3.2 Fun and nostalgia

The fun and nostalgia, which we have already partially outlined in the profession of professional mountain porters in Slovakia, can be considered another important aspect that represents a reason for heritization. It is used in many social sectors. For example, a thought-provoking article by Thomas David DuBois on using the heritage approach of revitalizing old brands and creative retro nostalgia

⁷ Interview with J. G. (b. 1957), coachman, November 5, 2019.

⁸ Interview with J. G. (b. 1957), coachman, November 5, 2019.

⁹ List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovakia, accessed 07.09.2024, <https://www.ludovakultura.sk/zoznam-nkd/vysokohorske-nosicstvo/>.

shows their significant role in the food industry (DuBois 2021). Both approaches are also encountered in the case of preserved traditional forms of transport in the area of Central Europe that we are monitoring.

In the case of the heritage revitalization approach, we can mention a phenomenon that is also on the UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, namely rafting on wooden rafts (timber rafting) taking place annually with the direct participation of tourists in selected European countries (Figure 3).¹⁰ In 1991, The International Timber Raftsmen Association was officially founded in Austria, and with some promotion and interest from the wider public, this phenomenon began to show a desire and longing for the past – nostalgia. At the same time, after the collapse of the communist regime in post-Soviet countries and greater freedom in publishing by amateur historians and ethnographers, popular books began to be published. The topic was widely noticed by the media, museum exhibitions were created, association activities related to timber rafting developed to a large extent, and replicas of wooden rafts were built. The situation was vividly described by the then-last surviving respondent, who made a living by floating wooden rafts on the Vltava River in Czechoslovakia at the time. He said that for thirty, forty years, no one was interested in it. He literally said that not even the dog barked after that. In the 1990s and especially after 2000, lots of people from TV and radio often visited him and asked him about timber rafting.¹¹

The phenomenon of traditional rafting has been inscribed on the UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices since 2022, thanks to, among other things, international cooperation between European countries within the International Rafting Association and local associations. To a large extent, in the effort to preserve its originality, we encounter this phenomenon as a revitalization of nostalgia rather than retro creative nostalgia.

On the contrary, retro creative nostalgia, not only monument revitalization, can be observed in very archaic forms of transport in the form of sleigh races – e.g., dog sledding (see Vitale, Rasmussen et al. 2023). We noticed this in the Krkonoše Mountains on the Czech-Polish border, where international sledge races are held every year. The then-living respondent and founder of the races recalled that he wanted to take his grandfather's old sledge just for fun and invite friends. They liked it and it has become international sledge races (Figure 4).¹²

Similarly in Slovakia, races on traditional wooden sledges, originally used for weighing wood, called “krňačky”, are organized every year in several villages. These races have outgrown the local dimension and today they are known as an important and popular regional, even county-wide event. This race is known for its danger due to the steep mountain terrain, difficult winter conditions and the difficulty of controlling this simple means of transport.

¹⁰ UNESCO Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices – Timber Rafting (Austria, Czechia, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Spain).

¹¹ Interview with V. H. (b. 1930), a rafter on wooden rafts, October 2012.

¹² J. T. (b. 1936), forester, January 2011.

Retro creative nostalgia can also be observed in mountain porters in the highest mountain range of the Czech Republic – the Krkonoše. However, unlike in Slovakia, this profession has not been preserved here in its commonly used and unchanged form. The end of this profession occurred in 1961, and since then goods have been transported on backpacks to the highest mountain Sněžka, only occasionally. However, the craft is commemorated in the form of sports competitions known as the Sněžka Sherpa Cup.¹³

3.3 Business

Another reason why transport and mobility become heritage is the effort of actors to use the concept of ‘transport and mobilities heritage’ in business. There are different ways to do this. It can be seen that ‘heritage’ in connection with transport is used completely without connection to the protection or history of vehicles and transport companies. We have already demonstrated this as part of the heritization of transport and mobilities on a semantic level, when we drew attention to companies operating regular truck transport whose name includes ‘heritage’.

The second way of using the concept of ‘transport and mobilities heritage’ in business is directly related to disappearing, but recently still commonly used transport (e.g. nostalgic rides on decommissioned public road and rail vehicles), or newly restored and revitalized forms (e.g. sleigh races, floating tourists on wooden rafts).

In the case of traditional transport in the Central Europe, these are revitalized forms. However, we do not mean directly those that have preserved their function and still represent an unchanged tool used for the original livelihood in the form of ordinary transport of material and people – e.g. hauling wood by horse or mountain portering in Slovakia (except sport races).¹⁴ We are talking about transport and mobility, where the actors base their business directly on the concept of ‘cultural heritage’.

Tourism connected with transport forms a complex made up of different mobilities and is currently an inseparable common part of transport and mobility (Sheller 2021). We identify with authors, according to whom this connection is largely overlooked and narrowed down to tourism in the destination to which the passenger is transported or to the technical and economic aspects of transport (Hopkins 2020; Mertena and Kaaristo 2024). At the same time, we point out that we still move in the field of tourism ‘using transport’ - the passenger is transported to the place where the heritage is located and the business is run. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the goal for tourists can be transport itself – ‘tourism for transport’. These are all sorts of fans and enthusiasts who seek to travel by nostalgic means of transport. For example, in the railway environment, the term

¹³ Cesta horských nosičů, accessed 07.10.2024, <https://www.cestahorskychnosicu.cz/index.html>.

¹⁴ Even in the world, we can mention traditional forms that are continuously used for their original purpose – e. g., hauling wood by horse-drawn carriage, sherpa profession in the Himalayas (see Sherpa 2022) or timber rafting in Siberia (see Hellmann, Kirilyanov and Büntgen 2016).

'railfans' is used for them (Peira, Lo Giudice and Miraglia 2022; Stefanovic and Koster 2014). We also find similar fans and tourists in the traditional transport environment in the Central Europe, where tourists participate in wood floating, carrying goods on backpacks, or sled races.

However, it is difficult to determine the exact boundary of when specific transport and mobility becomes a heritage for reasons of preservation, the desire for entertainment and nostalgia, or simply striving for financial gain. Often the reasons for heritization complement each other. At the same time, the process of using 'cultural heritage' in business cannot be viewed only in a negative way. Ethnotourism is an integral and important part of the viability of cultural heritage fulfilling its economic function (e.g., Ghosh, Kisku and Chakrabarty 2024; Lenovský and Kurajda 2022; Lenovský and Slobodová Nováková 2021). We see this also in the case of transport in the form of heritization. Thanks to the acquisition of a new function of business based on the concept of heritage, the given form of transport and mobility is kept alive and at the same time the given region is promoted. From the transport research carried out by us in Central Europe, we can cite examples of tourists floating on wooden rafts in Austria, Czechia, Germany, Poland and Slovakia, tourism promotion using TV spots and museum exhibitions focused on the sherpa profession in Slovakia (Křišková 2021: 67) or nostalgic retro-rides on sledges.

At the same time, it is possible to notice the abuse of business based on 'transport and mobilities heritage'. In the case of timber rafting, some entrepreneurs on their websites refer to the registration of European rafting on the UNESCO World Heritage List and offer tourists romantic rafting cruises with refreshments. However, these vessels visually have nothing in common with the original wooden rafts (e.g. Český Krumlov, Czech Republic).¹⁵ Another global example, also common in the studied region, is the questionable carriage of tourists in horse-drawn carriages in the historical centres of metropolises, which is considered by some to be heritage, and by others to be an inappropriate business with the oppression of animals (Gursoy 2020).

3.4 Similarity of heritization between the transport of vernacular culture and public transportation

We have shown the process of heritization of transport by the actors themselves, using the example of traditional forms of transport in Central Europe, mainly focusing on the Czech Republic and Slovakia. We can therefore ask whether the process of transport becoming heritage also occurs even in public transport and not only in the area of vernacular culture. Global examples show that this is the case. We can cite, for example, the restoration of the Riotinto Mining Railway in Spain for a tourist attraction (Boente, Romero-Macías, Delgado-Domínguez and Sierra 2024) or the state and non-profit private organizations dedicated to the restoration and preservation of decommissioned railway and bus vehicles already mentioned in the

¹⁵ Timber rafting – Sightseeing cruises on timber rafts (Rafting on the Vltava River through the center of Český Krumlov), accessed 5.10.2024, <https://www.voroplavba.cz/en/about-us>.

article – Transport Heritage NSW in Australia or Nottingham Transport Heritage Centre in the United Kingdom etc.

Even in Central Europe heritization in practice also affects public transport. Based on the personal experience of one of the authors of this study, who has experience as a bus driver in Prague (see Smrčka 2022), we have noted in the public transport that organizations often make decisions instead of actors who maintain or bring new life and function to disappearing transport. What a few years ago was considered ‘a scrap’ by institutions and saved by individual fans, became a ‘desired heritage’ a few years later. We can see that the perception of heritage in transport is highly individual and influenced by local institutions.¹⁶

In addition to rescue, in public transport we will also encounter nostalgia and business tied to the concept of heritage. For example, in post-Soviet European countries, it is possible to notice an interesting phenomenon, when people nostalgically recall the way of travelling under socialism. Specifically, in the Czech Republic during the tourist season, express trains made up of locomotives retired from regular passenger traffic and wagons manufactured in the then-German Democratic Republic are dispatched (Figure 5). The rides also include period-dressed staff. At the same time, this is not a politically oriented adoration of the political establishment of that time. As stated by one of the respondents, who is interested in transportation during the times of socialism and is himself the owner of buses from that period told us, that he does not care politics and he just likes to remember the past way of life.¹⁷ In addition, the main impetus for restoring lost travel mobility may not be pure nostalgia, but also a simple reason to meet friends. Indeed, the respondent regularly organises non-commercial trips on New Year’s Eve and summer vacations on a decommissioned city bus, to which he invites his colleagues, friends and acquaintances.

However, even in these forms of public transport used for nostalgia, the efforts of some actors to make an interesting profit while abusing historicity and the concept of heritage can be evident. For example, some media points out that some carriers operating nostalgic journeys with decommissioned retro trains demand significantly higher fees from the transport organiser and the municipality than carriers providing connections with modern train sets with a high purchase price.

IV. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to show the process of transport and mobilities heritization at the semantic and practical level, and thus to show that even transport and mobility itself can represent cultural heritage.

In the semantic part, we have pointed out a different semantic understanding of transport in individual terminological levels based on European and global

¹⁶ Discarded Karosa 700 series buses intended for scrapping at the time were bought and saved by enthusiasts who use the vehicles for entertainment events. The transport company providing most of the traffic in Prague on the operated retro line later lacked these vehicles.

¹⁷ Interview with L.Š. (b. 1984), bus operator and collector of historic buses, August 2023.

discourses. The beginning of an insight into transport and mobility as cultural heritage on a schematic level can already be seen in the interest in disappearing forms of transport. The dark side is the semantic ambiguity of ‘tradition’ in connection with transport. The looser concept of ‘heritage’ or ‘cultural heritage’, which at the official level is primarily based on the identification of actors with the given phenomenon as heritage (see Donders 2008), thus found application next to vernacular forms in public transport as well. However, this concept is to a large extent negatively influenced by an authoritarian approach (Smith and Waterton 2012), but also by its completely free use without any deeper meaning, as was pointed out in the article on global examples of selected transport companies.

We have also demonstrated that transport heritage is not only about means of transport but also about other objects and ideas in movement, clothing, period music, eating on the road and generally about entertainment and nostalgia. Therefore, it is possible to talk about ‘mobilities’ in many respects (e.g., Adey 2023; Bissell 2010; Büscher, Sheller and Tyfield 2016; Salazar 2023; Urry 2007; etc.).

On a practical level of heritization we have used examples of traditional transport forms from the field of vernacular culture that have been preserved in Central Europe, specifically in the territory of the Czechia and Slovakia. This has partly shown us the significance of the view of transport and mobilities as cultural heritage. It is mainly an awareness of the possibility of the existence of transport and entities related to mobility in a revived form and in a different cultural context, where it is no longer primarily about the simple transportation of people and material, but about ‘preservation and restoration’, new use of transport and phenomena associated with mobility for ‘nostalgia and entertainment’ or ‘business’. However, it is difficult to determine the exact boundary for what reason specific transport become cultural heritage. Often the reasons for heritization complement each other. Initially, it may be about saving, then fans’ interest in nostalgia, which will be transformed into an interesting business opportunity in the tourist season, e.g. in the case of the already mentioned European timber rafting, it gradually turned into a business, where tourists who yearn to experience the past sail on wooden rafts for a fee every year.

Heritization does not only concern traditional transport from the field of intangible cultural heritage, but also recently decommissioned public transport vehicles for the purpose of their preservation, as well as the desire for nostalgia and efforts to recall the recent history of travel, for example from the era of socialism. We can thus see the similarity of the second life of public transport vehicles with transport from the field of vernacular culture.

We can undoubtedly encounter the concept of heritage and cultural heritage in other phenomena as well. However, we believe that transport and mobilities have their own specifics and, in many respects, different social and cultural dimensions. The difference from other phenomena connected with the concept of heritage is related to the issue of protection of specific mobilities and abuse of the concept itself. Unlike static monuments, where their social function may be

redefined during their existence, it is much more complicated for mobilities linked to a large extent with means of transport. Most of the archaic forms of transport have perished. Intangible knowledge of their exact production and use, mainly due to oral tradition, has largely disappeared with the death of witnesses. We can remember the words of the witness – the rower on wooden rafts on the Vltava River in the Czech Republic paraphrased in this article above. The absence of witnesses and the means of transport has a direct impact on the fact that many entrepreneurs rely on the ignorance of tourists. They pass specific forms of transport as contemporary. They even do not notice it, because for them it can only be a normal means of transport in the historical centre of a heritage zone or in a place of beautiful nature.

Another problem is that until recently commonly used, but currently discarded means of transport are often considered as unnecessary ‘mobile scrap’ and in the search for interest, protection and their new use, mainly thanks to many enthusiastic individuals and voluntary groups. In this way, we follow the idea pointing out the impossibility of equating the past and heritage (see Lowenthal 1985).¹⁸

FIGURES



Figure 1. Arrival in the forest and preparation for hauling wood by horse, Czech Republic (Valachia), 2022. Photo by the first author of the article

¹⁸ This work was supported by European Commission resources: Slovakia’s recovery and resilience plan under Grant 09I01-03-V04-00003: Soil in the mirror of science: presenting interdisciplinary results for expanding awareness; with support of VEGA n. 1/0280/23: The final phase of ethno-language assimilation. On the example of the German ethnic group in the municipality of Krahule and surrounding area; and the subsidy for the development of the research institution of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic.



Figure 2a. Viktor Beranek, porter and chatter, is resting during the load up to Chata pod Rysmi. Photo by P. Barabáš, (with the permission); Figure 2b. Porter Ondrej Hudáček with his wife, also a porter, during the removal of loads (50's of the 20th century). Photo: archive of the second author



Figure 3. Timber Rafting on the Vltava River. 2020. Photo by the first author of the article



Figure 4. Sleigh races, Czechia (Krkonoše Mountains), 2017. Photo by the first author of the article



Figure 5. Departure of the retro train from Prague. 2024. Photo by the first author of the article

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Marius Porumb, *Pictura românească din Transilvania. Secolele XIII-XVIII. Dicționar* [Romanian Painting in Transylvania. The 13th-18th Centuries. Dictionary], București, Editura Academiei Române, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2023, 768 p., ISBN 978-973-27-3797-2

Exactly a quarter of a century after Marius Porumb published the volume *Dictionary of Ancient Romanian Painting from Transylvania, 13th-18th Centuries* (Bucharest, 1998, in Romanian), a new version of the work was republished, having the above presented title. The purpose of this recently reedited volume is, as the author emphasizes in the beginning of the work, to enrich and develop the text of the old dictionary and to offer a new vision of the artistic phenomenon. At the same time, the year of the publication of the work, 2023, marks the venerable 80th birthday of academician Marius Porumb, the author having been a full member of the Romanian Academy since 2009.

The volume geographically covers Romanian painting from the intra-Carpathian space, and includes minute infos regarding mural and icon painters, artistic centers, monasteries, settlements – most of which have stone and wooden churches decorated with murals or icons, iconostases, painted objects, inscriptions, *pisanii* – museums, private collections, terms specific to iconography and fine arts technical terms.

The volume's radiography offers a vast overview, presenting 813 settlements and monasteries, 366 painters (only the main voices, with secondary variants also recorded), 34 specialized terms, 433 color images, 32 black-and-white images, 71 sketches, drawings, legends and blueprints. The volume's high editorial quality is remarkable both through the quality of the images, some framed in the text, others grouped on a color background, and through the special graphic design. It opens with *Acknowledgements*, addressed to a number of 41 people. Then the text is followed by a brief presentation of the *Six Centuries of Romanian Painting in Transylvania. The 13th-18th Centuries*, emphasizing the permanent artistic ties between Transylvania and the two other Romanian countries, as well as the artistic phenomenon that was amplified in the 18th century in Transylvania by the attestation of over 350 painters. The work preserves the initial configuration of the volume edited by the author in 1998, being structured alphabetically. Letters begin with a decorated initial, each entry is in bold, the text is written under the title and arranged in two columns, and the volume ends with *Abbreviations* and *Bibliography*.

The author's working method is resumed, in the case of localities, by indicating the administrative-territorial affiliation, in some cases by a very brief, general presentation, which is attached either to a specific craft or related to specific areas of influence. The actual dictionary corpus opens with the locality of Abrud (town

in the Alba county), and after a very brief presentation of the settlement two of the painters attached to this locality are mentioned: Tobiăș Gheorghe from Abrud, active in the mid-18th century, who added his name to inscriptions and paintings of this locality, and Simion Silaghi-Sălăjanu, an artist who settled here in the last decades of the 18th century, laying the foundations of a painting school. The author refers in the text to the main voice of each painter, and the settlement presentation continues with the three walled churches, identified by their patron saint and inventoried by the movable heritage they own. In what the painters are concerned, their main name was included in the title and followed by the variants with which they signed or was documented, being placed in the text after the family name, when known. In the absence of a family name, or when the painter indicated his area of origin in his signatures (e.g. Vasilia Moldoveanul, attested with the signature *Popa Vasilia Moldoveanul* and *Zugraf*), it was placed after the letter V, after the baptismal name. Also, some of the painters who signed their paintings with their baptismal name, were accompanied by certain qualifications, the most common being those of *popa*, *erai*, *hieromonah*, *hierodeacon*, *deacon*, *diac*, and in some cases their names were accompanied by the original settlement or the one in which they settled (e.g. Ivan from Rășinari, David from Curtea de Argeș, Nistor from Feleac).

In the exposition of each painter, the technique in which he worked is also indicated, whether he was an icon painter or a muralist, or an iconographer and a muralist, or only a muralist, being placed in the era based on signed and dated works or on a documentary basis. Each artist is juxtaposed to the artistic and historical context in which he worked and was attached, in most cases, to a painting mentor or a painting center, and discussed from the perspective of the manner, evolution and stylistic influences captured in his works. The work of each painter is exhibited chronologically, with some of the inscriptions read from the paintings being mentioned, in very rare cases the iconographic program of the mural paintings is also recorded (e.g. Iacov from Rășinari, who painted the fresco in the dome of the Greek-Catholic cathedral in Blaj). The moving paths of the painters within the intra-Carpathian arch is also indicated, as well as that of itinerant painters arriving from other Romanian lands, or of painters from outside the Romanian space who either settled in the area or worked here for a while.

As already mentioned, this republished volume “represents the current stage our research has reached”, and the aim of its updating is to enrich and develop the 1998 *Dictionary* with unpublished data as well as with a new vision on the specific artistic phenomenon (p. 12). As soon as from the first entry, Abrud, it is noticeable that the text and the initial bibliography have been supplemented with some data published in the specialized literature, but then, the immediately following entry, Agârbiciu (Cluj County), retains the initial text from 1998, without mentioning the recently published bibliography (Firea C., Pop S., *Pictorii Transilvaniei medievale, cca 1300-1600. Un dicționar*, Cluj-Napoca, 2021, p. 229-231). Certain bibliographical titles that appeared in the two and a half decades since the publication of the first edition are taken into account, while other bibliographical titles are omitted. In certain cases, although some bibliographical titles are recorded, the information provided is not

taken into account, although that was not analysis either interpretation. One of these examples is the location of an inscription from the wooden church in Someșu Rece (Cluj County), mentioned by the author on the northern wall of the nave, although it is located on the northern wall of the altar (Pop S., *Pictura bisericii de lemn din Someșu Rece, Cluj County*, in “Ars Transsilvaniae” XXIX, 2019, p. 122).

In the case of some painters such as Petru from Topârcea, in the recently reissued volume having the text and variants identical to the original printing, Petru from Topârcea and Petru the Painter appear as identifying two separate persons, in the first variant being exposed his activity as an icon painter and muralist, in the second as a painter of icons on glass. Although Ioana Cristache-Panait dedicated a small monograph to this artist (*Zugravul Petru de la Topârcea, județul Sibiu*, in the group volume *Artă, istorie, cultură. Studii în onoarea lui Marius Porumb*, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, p. 287-301) in which the one and only identity of Petru from Topârcea was clarified (the painter also painted on glass), the study was only mentioned in the bibliographic list at the end of the volume.

Whether the volume printed in 1998 or the newly reissued volume on Romanian painting from Transylvania launched in 2023 is under discussion, the author's undeniable pertinent analysis of ancient Romanian art must be emphasized, either of the two volumes constituting the indispensable tool from which one starts any research on Romanian painters or monuments from the intra-Carpathian space.

SAVETA POP

Elena Rodica Colta, *Vâlve, vârcolaci, strigoi. Imaginar popular central-european* [Faeries, Werewolves, Undead. Central European Folk Imagination], București, Editura Etnologică, 2023, 299 p., ISBN 978-606-067-045-2

What are the Romanian *vâlve*? In how many kinds of evil spirits do the Romanians believe in? What is the connection between these imaginary representations and those in other European cultures? What do the narratives with these supernatural beings tell us about the way these populations, in the past, viewed and related to the world? These are just some of the questions that Elena Rodica Colta tries to answer in this book. She is an ethnologist with a rich field experience from the Arad County Cultural Center and also a specialist in museography regarding old books and icons on glass from the Arad Museum Complex.

The study deals with the imaginary of traditional societies in Arad. It refers to several accounts from this region, but also placing them in a broader context, by relating to the images, beliefs, practices, similarities and differences with other Romanian communities, for which it also presents testimonies starting from the end of the 19th century, as well as to neighboring and distant populations from various

historical periods. Elena Rodica Colta argues in favor of a European imaginary, which expanded and evolved starting from the 16th-17th centuries, but which was actually part of a larger archaic Indo-European background. Currently, people are in a continuous process of abandoning the old way of understanding the world: “the Romanian or other ethnic peasant, contaminated by modernity, no longer knows, no longer recognizes and no longer believes in the existence of the old imaginary beings, and this detachment, distancing and even oblivion determines changes in the system of symbols and, implicitly, in the old system of values” (p. 9). However, rural societies still conserve traces of archaic behavior in the form of superstitions, beliefs and taboos, of magical-religious structure and origin, as well as degraded ritualisms, which have often lost their previous sacred meaning. Thus, Elena Rodica Colta aims to identify “fragments of mythology hidden in the narrative, knowing that these are structuring old cultural forms, assumed by different populations, as parts of their own cultural model” (p. 18).

The author took as reference the better-preserved variants of the national imaginary, through which the zonal representations were analyzed. The latter were taken over, diluted and interpreted as we observe the situation towards the Western part of the country. After a first chapter of theoretical specifications, the material, which thematically is very rich, is structured into five major categories. The Supernatural includes Archaic Divinities Camouflaged in Animals (the mythical snake, the bear, the wolf etc.), Archaic Inferior Divinities (luck – misfortune, good market – bad market), Other Divinities and Semi-Divinities of Nature (such as *Paparuda*, an ancient rain deity from Romanian mythology, or *Ielele*, the Romanian equivalent of the wind fairies or nymphs, or the werewolf, a dog-like animal, an unbaptized child born of unwed parents or a mutant who transforms into a wolf in the night, that resembles the archaic monsters which people believed that ate the sun and the moon) and Semi-Divinities and Aquatic Spirits (like *Știma apei*, a kind of sweetwater mermaid, which falls into the category of female aquatic demons). Here we also learn about *vâlve*: “it is also a faerie. The name is found especially in the Apuseni Mountains [...], where it was believed that they were phantasmal women, without a precise identity, wandering the hills at night” (p. 91). They are divided into “white faeries”, which are good, and “black faeries”, which are bad. But the classification extends even further: there is the Water Fairy, the Forest Fairy, the Plague Fairy, the Wolves Fairy, the Wind Fairy, the Treasure Fairy, the Fortress Fairy, the Food Fairy and the Mine Fairy. According to the monography of Tisa village in Arad County, in Hălmațiu Land, which is an ethnographic region in this county, there was a belief that if treasures were buried in the ground for too long, they would get faeries. These faeries guarded the money from thieves. It is only on Easter Night that these creatures sleep for an hour and then the treasures light up and throw out flames of fire (Ioan Arpaș, Ioan Cotoc, 2020, *apud*. Elena Rodica Colta, *op. cit.*, p. 91-92). The subcategory Beings from the Otherworld includes, among other creatures, the dead *strigoi*, which are undead, the deceased who come out of the grave at night and the *moroi*, which are the souls of children who died either through abortion or unbaptized and who have transformed into smaller *strigoi*. In the Romanian imaginary, the undead are represented in the same way in all regions of

the country and are recognized from the moment they die. In a research on *strigoi* in the Wineyard of Arad, we learn of one such case: “old woman Ghiula had died [...] but the redness on her face did not disappear, not even the next day following her death. On the second evening, the neighbors held a council [...] Then one of them said: «The old woman is not dead, you see that she is still warm, so she is definitely a *strigoi*!» The frightened women put a brick on her chest and then pierced her heart with a nail” (Corina Șeran, 2011, *apud.* Elena Rodica Colta, *op. cit.*, p. 143-144).

Although, at the end of the study, the author observes a general blending regarding the characteristics and functions of these imaginary beings, we noticed some disorders regarding the material organization. It is not clear to us why the author did not include in the subcategory dedicated to Divinities, Semi-Divinities and Spirits of Nature or did not separate into a distinct subcategory the creatures associated with the forest, such as, for example, *Muma Pădurii* [The Mother of the Woods], who, in Romanian culture, is a demon or an evil female spirit of the forest that eats people. In Gurahonț area, on August the 6th, when it is also a great Christian holiday, the Transfiguration of Christ, it is said that she mourns her daughters and on this day people are not allowed to eat hazelnuts, to break branches from trees, women are not allowed to comb their hair and men are not allowed to go to the forest. Those who dared to go were punished by her. The stories about these encounters are numerous. Two of them are from the village of Crocna and appear in a monography of Gurahonț and its surroundings. One is about a man named Ginga, who went to the forest on this day and all the hair on his head fell off, including the one from his eyebrows. Another story is about Ion, a local who went up the hill, to Fântânele, and *Muma Pădurii* carried him like a ghost, until he came home at night with an empty cart and a broken wheel (Nicușor Paul, 2001, *apud.* Elena Rodica Colta, *op. cit.*, p. 86). Regarding the structure of the study, we also wonder why the Devil is not included in the category Beings from the Otherworld and, instead, all these creatures that we mentioned above remain in the subcategory of Semi-Divinities and Aquatic Spirits.

The next category is dedicated to the Christian imaginary repertoire, where we find the Mother of God, which encompasses the ancient cult of the Great Mother, and other saints important to the Romanians. There is Saint Peter, who, like Saint Andrew, is seen as a lord of animals, the one who decides the animals' food for the rest of the year, Saint Elijah, who is said to hunt devils, etc. We do not agree with the affirmation about Saint Ignatius, whom the author despite indicating that is celebrated on December the 20th, she says is a false saint, who does not appear in the church calendar, being originally an archaic divinity. The cutting of a pig for Christmas, which is a custom practiced on this day, is indeed a substitute for an ancient rite performed for an agrarian spirit. The custom is in the sphere of sacrificial offerings addressed by humans to the divinity as a sign of gratitude for the harvest obtained and to obtain help for the future crop. However, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, also known as Ignatius Theophorus, does appear in the Christian Orthodox calendar, on this date, being celebrated together with the Forefeast of the Nativity, an important moment in the church services before the great winter holiday. He was a Christian writer and the third bishop of Antioch (in Syria). He died in Rome, in 107, during the persecution of Christians by Emperor Trajan, killed by lions in the Colosseum

of Rome. He was called Theophorus, which means “the one carried by God”, but also “bearer of God”. The first meaning is related to the fact that in church tradition it is believed that he was carried by Jesus Christ when he told the apostles, “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 18: 3), after which he also said to them: “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me” (Mark 9: 35-37). The second meaning is that there is a story that the beasts left the saint’s heart untouched, and the soldiers, taking it and splitting it in two, found inside, on both sides, written in gold letters: “Jesus Christ”, thus showing that he was indeed a bearer of God (*Great Synaxarion of December*, 2014, p. 731-740).

Next, adhering to the mythologists’ classifications, the author analyzes the Fairy Tale World or the Other Land, that is, some of the creatures from the Romanian fairy tales and of other countries from Central Europe, such as the ogre, who was believed to be half man, half dog, or *zmeul*, which is the last form of the snake (Ovidiu Bîrlea, 1976, p. 458), a being similar to a strong, ugly and not very smart man, both creatures being cannibals. After this, comes the Human category, divided into Beings Endowed with Powers since Birth, such as *solomonarul*, which Romanians believed to be a kind of sorcerer with meteorological functions. Then there is People with Magical Powers, where the author includes, among others, the priest, the shepherd and the hunter. In the Group of Knowledgeable Women, we find the witch, the enchantress, but also the old woman, who in Romanian folklore was a forgiven woman, a widow, who was considered to be the holder of certain knowledge and powers, intervening, for example, through prayers, in the case of the sick men who could not die. The last subcategory is dedicated to the Abnormal – Mutants and the Damned, where there is the living *strigoi* or the living undead, the most popular mutant in the European tradition. Romanians from Arad County and from villages that were previously predominantly Romanian, in Eastern Hungary, call them *bosorcă/bosorcoi*, a word borrowed from their neighbors. The people of Gurahonț, like the Romanians from other lands, recognize these mutants by their birthmarks. These children are born with a hump on their head or with their spine extended in the shape of a small tail (Nicușor Paul, 2001, *apud*. Elena Rodica Colta, *op. cit.*, p. 250). *Pricolici*, who is often confused with the living undead, has the power to transform into any animal. In the Winery of Arad, in Covăsânț village, there was a belief that *pricolici* steals lambs or puppies and eats them (Rodica Colta, Doru Sinaci, Natalia Tomi, 2012, *apud*. Elena Rodica Colta, *op. cit.*, p. 262). *Tricolici* is the child resulted from a wolf and a man and also in this category the werewolf appears again, in the wolf-man version. Although the present study has a diverse and complex theme and these productions of human imagination often intertwine as the result of common, human desires or fears, we still do not find it justified to have the same creature in two distinct categories.

Last but not least, the overall picture of the Romanian imaginary is completed by the author in an inspired way with a minimal botanical mythology, which includes important plants from a medicinal, therapeutic, but also magical, ritual point of view, along with the beliefs, names, narratives and practices associated with them.

Among these, we mention the hazelnut, a magical plant associated in Romanian folklore with the snake, the witch and the *solomonar*. Wheat is one of the plants that symbolizes Jesus Christ due to its grinding in the bread production. Also, it is a plant with sacred values that is present in all rites of passage. And garlic, which, in the author's opinion, is the plant with the most numerous protective values, is used all over the world. In Romania it is considered to be good for various diseases, but also against bad spirits, *strigoi*, and all sorts of evil.

At the end of her study, Elena Rodica Colta shows that, as we come closer to the present, the testimonies lose their certainty, the informants start to doubt their beliefs. On one hand, it is noted that there is a process of information blending related to these imaginary beings and, on the other hand, a process of simplification, the loss of meaning and even the oblivion of an important part of Romanian mythology. This last process unfolds differently from one region to another, in the West of the country certain creatures being forgotten, while in the East and North-East they existed until the end of the last century. The collective mind preserves only those beings that are considered still active. Therefore, certain fears and certain desires, as we said, are responsible for the creation of these imaginary beings. The creatures are preserved to this day in the memory of the villages, with the entire set of emotions they generate, becoming a subject of memories and discussions on every occasion in which the subject of fear appears, such as, for example, an encounter of man with a snake. In such a moment, the author states, the entire mythology related to the certain theme is reactivated, even if the narrative takes on new forms. "The modern man is used to make mythology and cannot completely give up on tradition. He constantly recovers everything that is significant and useful from these narratives, reinterpreting and reintegrating them into his world. However we look at things, there is a dark side to our modernity, with deep roots in a common past to all European people, a past that generates anxieties and fears, activating the imagination of each generation and producing new monsters according to the old patterns" (p. 286).

ANCA-MARIA VRĂJITORIU

Mircea Păduraru, *Fondul interzis: incursiune în antropologia folclorului licențios* [The Prohibited Fund: Journey into the Anthropology of Erotic Folklore], vol. I, Iași, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2023, 301 p., ISBN 978-606-714-812-1

There are bad books, average books, important books, and then, there are landmark books. Sometimes, the difference between the last two categories is not easy to trace, because, of course, every landmark book is important, but not every important book is also a landmark. Thus said, I will affirm since the very beginning that the book written by Mircea Păduraru (professor of ethnology at the Iași

University, Romania) about the reception of the Romanian erotic/sexual folklore is a landmark in its own right for the Romanian ethnology. And this for two reasons: one is linked to the subject of the book, while the other lies in the approach of the author. (As a parenthesis, I should remark that the polemic stance seems – fortunately for our discipline – embedded in Mircea Păduraru, who finds delight in approaching sensitive subjects, thus opening new paths in thinking the Romanian ethnology).

Fondul interzis... (The Prohibited Fund) comes to fill a void which (still) reigns in the Romanian ethnology. It is the void left by the almost non-existent collections and studies about erotic and forbidden (because “dirty”) folklore. This kind of omission is by no means something specific only to the Romanian ethnology. In many other countries the studies of erotic folklore took a bit long to develop. For instance, as the author of this book mentions, in 1962, during the first Symposium on Obscenity in Folklore that took place in USA, the American folklorist Gershon Legman was deploring the Anglo-American retard in developing of such studies, in opposition with what was happening in other European countries, such as France or even Russia, where the first large collections of erotic folklore had been published since the end of the 19th century. In his study, *Misconceptions in Erotic Folklore*, G. Legman suggested that one of the causes of this retard lied in the “famously antisexual Anglo-Saxon morality”¹, which prevented scholars to collect and/or interpret this sensitive part of the general folklore, unless they wanted to jeopardize their academic career. Nevertheless, since the ’60s the situation changed dramatically in the United States, studies in erotic folklore being now published regularly there.

In Romania, not only the studies on the erotic/obscene folklore are almost totally absent, but, in a country which did never lack interest for collecting folklore, considered to be a key factor in the forging of the national identity, there are only four collections of erotic folklore published until the present days. This figure results from Mircea Păduraru’s exhaustive survey of the Romanian publications containing erotic folklore and it speaks volumes, especially when we take a close look at the apparition dates of these collections: 1900 (Tocilescu collection, also known as Țapu fund), 1930 (Novacovicu collection), 1967 (Béla Bartók collection, which, *nota bene*, was published in Holland and remained largely unknown in Romania), and 2008 (Patză collection). Apart from Tocilescu–Țapu folklore collection, which was largely used by folklorists, but *not* for its erotic samples, the three others passed largely unnoticed and did not leave many traces in the interpreting of the Romanian folklore, as the Iași-based researcher demonstrates in his book.

The situation is somehow better, Mircea Păduraru remarks, for the studies analysing the erotic folklore, especially in the last two decades, when the scholars have begun to fill the gap. But this does not mean that the resistances disappeared. In fact, the book opens with an “autoethnographic prologue”, in which the author relates a personal experience: in 2013, during a conference, he gave a presentation about the erotic folklore, providing the audience with some papers which contained the “juicy” samples he was referring to, in order to avoid to utter the “incendiary”

¹ Gershon Legman, “Misconceptions in Erotic Folklore”, in *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 75, No. 297, Symposium on Obscenity in Folklore (Jul.-Sep. 1962), p. 200.

words. Nevertheless, a member of the audience, who also happened to belong to the political/cultural local establishment, reacted vigorously, reprimanding him for presenting such “foul porn stuff” [pornoșaguri] in an academic context. Although not all participants to that conference were of the same opinion, they did not stand for it in public, but expressed it in *post factum* private discussions with the author. Proof enough that, in Romania, the subject is still very sensitive and difficult to approach. And this makes the discussed text even more important.

The book, elaborated in two volumes (the second still to be printed), contains both a history and a hermeneutic of the erotic folklore reception. The fact should be stressed, because in this first volume the author *does not proceed* to an analysis of the erotic folklore. Instead, as I already mentioned, he analyses the way this category of folklore was received/rejected by the Romanian scholars, since the 19th century to the present days. The first part is dedicated on one hand to the defence of the domain, the author replying extensively to his opponent from 2013, this way affirming both the right to existence of the “prohibited fund” and the legitimacy of all the informants, especially those rejected by the “traditional” folk collectors as being nothing more than “drunkards” [bețivi] or “rascals” [potlogari].

On the other hand, the author makes a short, but poignant analysis of the verbal obscenity, considered in its multiple facets, as a form of verbal, political, and social violence. Walking in the footsteps of researchers such as Mary Douglas, Pierre Bourdieu or Lucienne Frappier-Mazur, he sees the obscenity as a threat to purity and order, as a quasi-material thing (because the obscene words have an enormous ability to evoke the very thing – anatomic parts, or acts – they are naming), or as something having the power to bring chaos in the social structure, by the way it breaks the linguistic taboos. His conclusion, after presenting these different approaches of the matter, is that obscene representations “evoke in our minds *not that which is shameful into another person*, but what (we learned that) is shameful in ourselves, and thus they are an unpleasant revelation about ourselves, although we condemn it in others” (p. 72).

The last chapter of the first part of the book presents thoroughly the ideas of the American folklorist Gershon Legman, whose approach on the erotic folklore is embraced by Mircea Păduraru, who starts nowadays his own “quixotic crusade for filth”² in order to free the domain from the chains of (auto)censorship.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the analysis of the four collections which constitute the Romanian published fund of erotic folklore. It is necessary to stress that the author limited his research to published works, although the folklore archives of the Romanian folklore institutes contain a great number of erotic texts, because his interest was to shed light on the darkness which reigned over this area of the folklore research. (And from this point of view, no matter how rich an archive may be, as long as it is not brought to light, this richness is of no use for the students of folklore.) Mircea Păduraru analyses thoroughly the content and organizing principles of these collections (I mentioned them above), in order to shed light on the different approaches that were put at work in different times. Most interesting is the first of

² Legman, *Misconceptions*, p. 204.

these collections, the so-called Tocilescu-Țapu fund. The Romanian ethnologists know well that this fund, which was meant to be a general and exhaustive folklore collection, was not made by the first of the authors, Gr. Tocilescu, an historian and politician, who actually asked his collaborator, Christea Țapu, to do the collecting and then just put his name on the resulting book. The erotic/obscene folklore samples contained in it seem to be a totally unknown (to Tocilescu) by-product of the researches of Christea Țapu. At that time, the official author was confronted with a storm of criticism for publishing these pieces of 'dirty' folklore, but the collection, whose value, otherwise, had been instantly recognized, is the only one of the four who was reprinted in the '80s.

Of the three other collections, only two were published in Romania, but, as Mircea Păduraru notices, none of them exerted any real influence on the folklorists. The Novacovicu collection, despite its name – *Folclor pornografic bănățean* (Pornographic Folklore from Banat Region) – is too shy, even lame. The Bartók collection, although containing better texts, was practically unknown to the Romanian public and researchers, while the Patza collection did not reach a large audience, although it was published after the Romanian Revolution of 1989, at a time where writing taboos had become a thing from the past. Thus, it is even more important to give credit to the author for bringing these scarce collections into the limelight in order to be the object of further analyses, for which purpose he quote them at length and programmatically.

In the last part of the book, Mircea Păduraru proceeds to a critic of critics, seasoning his analysis with poignant remarks about the retards and idiosyncrasies of the Romanian ethnology. Under his scalpel, not a single idol remains unshackled. He starts with Vasile Alecsandri, one of the most important Romanian poets of the 19th century and, in the same time, an unfamous forger of the pieces of folklore he collected. His methods of "correcting" folklore are exposed time and again in this book, and so are his attempts at producing fakelore. Mircea Păduraru quotes a letter of Alecsandri where the poet acknowledges, even proudly, that he is willing to write (read: to forge) a certain "folk" ballad, in order to make up for its absence from the province of Moldova (p. 204). But, even though the forgery of Alecsandri is evident, and it was so even for many contemporary scholars (such as Titu Maiorescu or the folklorist Moses Schwarzfeld, who did not fail to nail the lies present in the writings of the poet), his overall image does not have to suffer too much. In a fair approach, Mircea Păduraru stresses the fact that for Alecsandri and many other scholars of that time the concept of authenticity had a different meaning. For them, authenticity in folk literature was meant to be a supposed state of purity and elevation, lost during the course of time because of the oral transmission of knowledge and the decadence of people. So, in their (including Alecsandri) opinion, it was necessary to repair the corrupted songs, tales, ballads or other folk production in order for them to regain their long-lost pure form. But, as everybody knows, the road to hell is paved with good intentions and, obviously, Alecsandri's method created monsters, by managing to irremediably falsify many folk creations. More than that, it imposed a biased way of regarding the folklore as an aesthetic product of the people, which persists even today. And, in what concerns the subject of the erotic folklore, Alecsandri had

an important contribution (of course, this is an ironic way of speaking) to the long-lasting prohibition of its publishing and studying.

The author does not limit his study to the opponents to the erotic folklore. He also dissects the writings of three important Romanian scholars who, apparently, spoke in favour of the “obscenity”: Ion Diaconu, Ovidiu Bîrlea and Petru Caraman. Ion Diaconu has the merit of being not only the first Romanian scholar who analyses the concept of obscenity, but also the first who uses the Freudian theories in his writings. In short, he recommends – and this is a huge step forward – to write down the whole obscene words, not to replace them by dots or other euphemistic subterfuges. But, and this is something which needs to be stressed, he also recommends not to publish everything, “because in man some of the animal lubricity will always be lingering”³. In other words, obscenity is safe as long as it remains confined to swearing (because this is what Diaconu means by it), but has to be totally forbidden when it enters the realm of the eros (that is, its own domain). This could be a naïve approach, had not it been a harmful way of thinking, in Alecsandri line of thought. And this is even sadder, since Ion Diaconu really struggles to keep the pace with the newest (psychoanalytic) researches of his time. But, according to Mircea Păduraru, his approach is all wrong, his prejudices keeping him away from the real understanding of the essence of vernacular culture, and, thus, he harms the folklore studies. As Mircea Păduraru puts it, “the lubricity condemned by Diaconu, rhetorically and unjustly called *animalic*, is in fact essentially human, cultural in a complex way, and has many folkloric variants [...] by taking this principial stance, the folklorist [Ion Diaconu] (...) shows the same sovereign contempt for the psycho-mental reality of the Romanians (p. 229). Thus, it is no wonder that Mircea Păduraru concludes, sharply as a guillotine: “In fact, basically, the folklore scholar positions himself rather against the psychoanalytic perspective. Moreover, by reading and applying it in a truncated way, and inside a culture which knows it rather indirectly, through minimizing stereotypes and labels, Diaconu also compromises it from the folklore point of view” (p. 240).

After having exposed the fails and errors of Ion Diaconu, Mircea Păduraru starts to dissect the writings of Ovidiu Bîrlea, a “sacred monster” of the Romanian folklore studies, allegedly the most important Romanian folklore scholar from the communist period. Mircea Păduraru credits him for taking a huge step farther from Ion Diaconu, as he recognizes the folkloric value of the obscenities and even quotes some moderate ones in his seminal work *Folclorul românesc* (The Romanian Folklore) (1982, 1983), under the chapter destined to the analysis of dance chants [strigături]. His approach seems thus very innovative and open, especially since, as our author remarks, he does not separate between the erotic folklore and other forms of folklore, and also, because he carefully chooses to put in brackets terms like “obscenity” or “pornography”, in order not to show biases toward a moral meaning. But, even so, as Mircea Păduraru puts it, Ovidiu Bîrlea does not dare to push the analysis farther. This self-imposed limit becomes glaringly apparent in a volume dedicated to the tales of Ion Creangă, an important 19th century Romanian

³ Ion Diaconu, *Folclor din Rîmnicul-Sărat* (Folklore from Rîmnicul-Sărat), XLIII, Focșani, Tipografie Cultura, 1934, quoted in Mircea Păduraru, *Fondul interzis...*, p. 228.

writer, whose creations demonstrate a strong inspiration from the folk literature. Among others, Ion Creangă is known for having written two erotic tales, longtime kept unpublished because of their subject and language. Ovidiu Bîrlea declares that these tales should be kept unpublished, because only some refined intellectuals could really appreciate their beauty and meaning, which is linked to “archaic fertility rites” and is a proof for an “archaic rural mentality”. Mircea Păduraru sheds light on this interpretation, which he considers to be biased, exposing the exaggerations behind these and other similar formulas who are defining the scientific approach of the great folklorist. The accusation of Mircea Păduraru is that through this kind of analysis, which actually rejects the functionalism, the study of folklore falls into a speculating pit, not very far from Alecsandri school of thought, that ends by perverting it and could even lead to fakelore (or should I say *fakethought?*). The Iași-based scholar clearly signals this danger, present not only in the volume mentioned above, but also, and more importantly, in the last book of Ovidiu Bîrlea, *Eseu despre dansul popular românesc* (Essay on the Romanian Folk Dance).

This volume, especially, is relevant for the subject of the *Fondul interzis...* in a subtle, but even more important way. Dance is its subject, not the erotic texts, be they banned or accepted. O. Bîrlea gets the credit for presenting a history of Romanian folk and folk-inspired dances. It is an important book for those who are researching the Romanian dance techniques and structures. But the method used to describe and analyse the dances is the one which catches the eye of Mircea Păduraru. He observes the volutes and the subterfuges Ovidiu Bîrlea does in order to interpret the dances as an expression of an archaic mentality, bringing in discussion the fertility rites, the sacred orgies that could have had no other reason to exist than to ensure the order of the universe. Like with Ion Creangă tales, he goes on overinterpreting all dances in this key, thus stripping them of any suggestion of eroticism. But, and credit is to be given to Mircea Păduraru for bringing forth this frame of mind of the eminent folklorist, while doing this, Ovidiu Bîrlea falls in his own trap, because the words and descriptions he is choosing for the description of the dances reveal a hidden sexual hint, unknown to himself, but even more pregnant. It is as if the sexuality repressed from the interpretation of dance had found a way to go in the sunlight, despite the conscient intentions of the author.

After an analysis conducted in such a sharp manner, far from mincing his words, Mircea Păduraru affirms: “To archaize the sexual folklore, so full of strength and violence, seeing in it fertility rites, apotropaic functions, etc., is to diminish it, almost to falsify it” (p. 270). The accusation is so serious, that the author seems to feel the need to tame it, since he immediately continues by asking rhetorically if Ovidiu Bîrlea’s text does not contain a double meaning, that is, an interpretation in an archaic key and an allusion to the reader, in order to reveal his own ideas, opposed to the communist doctrine. This interpretation is refuted instantly, but what remains is the idea of protecting the erotic folklore. For Mircea Păduraru, Ovidiu Bîrlea’s approach has two sides: it reveals the clichés and the idiosyncrasies of the communist regime and, in the same time, it is trying to safeguard the erotic folklore (present both at Creangă and in folklore texts) from the communists ban: “by the

fact that in these texts he finds arguments for reconstituting an archaic mentality (accepted, even conjured by the communist establishment), the ethnologist is scoring both disciplinary and politically” (p. 271). And the consequence does not fail to come, again, empathically expressed: “Although the width and versatility of Bîrlea’s interests are recommending him as probably the most important ethnologist from the communist era, in this matter, his opinions are by no means out of the box” (p. 273).

The volume closes with a short discussion of the approach of another important folklorist, Petru Caraman. The author of a monumental comparatist ethnology volume, *Descolindatul în Orientul și Sud-Estul Europei* (“Curse-Caroling” Formulas and Rituals in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe), printed posthumously, where he thoroughly analyses the rites of cursing people who refuse to receive the carollers during the Christmas feast, could have not avoid to deal with cursing and other “pornological” texts which populate the mentioned rituals and formulas. Mircea Păduraru remarks that Petru Caraman’s position in this matter seems to be somewhere between Ion Diaconu’s and Ovidiu Bîrlea’s: although he acknowledges the magical role detained by the cursing and violent/vulgar sexual expressions in the rituals he analyses (which is also Diaconu’s stand), he seems to be closer to Ovidiu Bîrlea when “he produces an evolutionary scheme of the magical dimension erosion that starts in sacred archaicity and ends up in ‘pure poetry’, freed from magic” (p. 278). Mircea Păduraru considers that “without a shadow of a doubt, Caraman could have had the ability to analyse the folkloric forms related to pleasure and the erotic and lusty playfulness” (p. 279), and this, I think, is the most benevolent appreciation in the entire book. But, although his appreciation for Petru Caraman is apparent, the Iași-based ethnologist does not forget that the limits imposed by the pudic communist regime and the project of the great folklorists of the era, including Caraman, that is, “the elaboration of an honourable and dignified micronarrative about the Romanian nation” (p. 280), did not allow anyone to err and research a subject so vile as the erotic/obscene folklore was considered to be.

At the end of this presentation, the affirmation with which I started this review, that *Fondul interzis. Incursiune în antropologia folclorului licențios* represents a landmark for the Romanian ethnology, finds its entire value. Mircea Păduraru succeeded a *tour de force*, both by stressing the few published collections containing erotic/sexual folklore and dissecting the fewer works which are analysing it. It is, thus, a book that could be read as a radiography of the Romanian society of yesterday and of yore, a pudic society, in the same time admiring a (fake) poetic image of the Romanians and oblivious of the hidden but vigorous dimension of sexuality of the same Romanians. Mircea Păduraru puts a mirror in front of this society, in front of us, forcing us to see the hypocrisy and the want of professionalism of those who choose not to take in consideration this part of the folklore. And after mirroring ourselves in it, we could acknowledge the new way of thinking this landmark book opens for us. Some researchers already took this path. Some others will follow, but nobody will ignore this book. And the author did not say his last word, because the second volume of *Fondul interzis*... is on its way. Let us hope it will be at least as good as the first one.

Angela Hondru, *888 Proverbe și vorbe înțelepte din bătrâni. Dicționar japonez-român și roman-japonez* [888 Proverbs and Wise Elders' Sayings. Japanese-Romanian and Romanian-Japanese Dictionary], Constanța, Editura Yume, 2024, 362 p., ISBN 978-606-92755-4-2

In the circle of Japanese language-related experts in Romania the name of professor Angela Hondru has a special significance. First of all own to her quality as a brilliant translator of Japanese language literature into Romanian, translations that have brought her a series of international awards, the literature translated by her constituting a vast library of old writings, historical novels with great difficulties in the process of transposing them into Romanian (see e.g. Murasaki Shikibu, *The Story of Genji*, Polirom, 2017, translation, notes, glossary and captions by Angela Hondru), a historical novel written by a she-writer at the beginning of the eleventh century and transposed into Romanian with the appropriate adaptations to the sensibility of the reader of the twenty-first century.

The same quality has the other translations of Angela Hondru, who brings to the attention of Romanian readers Haruki Murakami, one of the most well-known Japanese contemporary writers, awarded of many prestigious prizes, whose novels have been translated in over twenty languages. “The Haruki Murakami author series” comprises novels *Chronicle of the archery-bird*, Polirom, 2004, *At the end of the world and in the harsh country of marvels*, 2005, and *Listen the Singing Wind, Pinbull*, 1973, Polirom, 2015. These two ultimate novels encapsulate some of the predilect themes of his works, writes Angela Hondru, “the loneliness of the individual, the need for togetherness, or the ephemerality of existing”.

At the same level of quality has the other works of Professor Angela Hondru who brings into the attention of Romanian readers, the ethnology of the two peoples, in spite, or perhaps more because of the differences between the two cultures, settled in two different cultural areas of the world, with a different historic background, with, apparently, a few cultural accents.

Parallel to his intense concern for translating Japanese literature into Romanian, perhaps equally captivating is the passion for popular culture, folklore, ethnography of the two peoples, despite, or perhaps precisely because of this, the concern to introduce us to the world of Japanese popular culture through intense field research such as *Ema prayers and gratitude*, photographs Silvia Cercheaza, f. a., or *Kagura from myth to reality through dance*, 2014, another field research into the fabulous world of Japanese traditions.

Among the most recent initiatives taken by Angela Hondru is the volume titled *888 Proverbs and Wise Elders' Words* (in which 8 signifies “boundless prosperity”, 888 being a triple “boundless prosperity”). Also in relation to the meaning of the title it should be noted that next to proverbs themselves the author adds “wise words from the elders” that are not proverbs in the proper sense of the word, unlike the Romanian material that includes mostly proverbs, i.e. verbal structures that support certain

truths with universal value. Neither the great collection of Iuliu Zanne comprizes in totality proverbs, in the subtitle being registered kin “species” as *zicători* (sayings), *povățuiri* (advices), truth words, similarities, “idiotisms”, and riddles, everyone of these “species” deserving a special description, a taxonomic re-evaluation.

Angela Hondru opens her book by signing on its first page a very a generous dedication: “To the distinguished professor Nicolae Constantinescu, PhD, with special concerns in the field of paremiology”; and, holographically, “With boundless gratitude, Angela”. The author must have taken into account my own writings on proverbs, especially the introductory studies to some of the ten volumes of the anastatic edition of Iuliu A. Zanne, *Romanian Proverbs from Romania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Ungaria, Istria and Makedonia*, one of the most valuable achievements of the Romanian Folkloristics from the end of the 19th Century to the beginnings of the 20th. In just two pages and a half study of the 10th volume I mentioned “the mission accomplished” by reprinting, in an anastatic edition, the great *corpus* of the *Romanian Proverbs*.

To realize the enormous amount of work done by Angela Hondru in the achievement of this volume it is enough to enter the author’s “creative laboratory”, revealing an evolved technique of investigating the paremiological repertoires of the two peoples, searching “with a candle”, so to speak, for proverbs with similar content in the two national repertoires. The result is an extraordinary selection, out of thousands or tens of thousands paremic structures, of those that somehow corresponded to each other in the two national paradigms.

The selection and interpretation of Romanian and Japanese proverbs belong exclusively to Angela Hondru, who put at work all her knowledge in the field, offering us a luminous, original, new essay. The 888 *Romanian proverbs* are inventoried in a dictionary of Romanian-Japanese proverbs, in fact a repertoire of proverbs, commented as such like in a concentrated comparative study.

A large-scale cultural and scientific project, which Sensei Hondru carried out, with a lot of work and effort, alone, helped only by the books that were at her disposal, recorded in an essential bibliography: nine titles from which some essential writings could not be missing (such as Iordache Golescu, *Commented Proverbs*, 1973, I.C. Hîrșescu, *The Proverbs of the Romanians*, 1985, Iuliu A. Zanne, *Romanian Proverbs*, vol. I-X, Scara Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003 (all brought up to date in critical or anastatic editions).

Beautiful book, honor to the one who wrote you! Not only beautiful, but also long-lasting. Congratulations *Sensei* Hondru!

NICOLAE CONSTANTINESCU

NICOLAE CONSTANTINESCU
(10.05.1941 – 07.18.2025)

The eminent Romanian ethnologist Nicolae Constantinescu was born in Fierbinți (commune in Ialomița County, close to the capital Bucharest). Both his parents, Florica and Alexandru Constantinescu, were primary school teachers and later in his life, professor Constantinescu often evoked them with gratitude and affection. He obtained his BA in Romanian Language and Literature from the Faculty of Philology, University of Bucharest. He defended his Ph D thesis coordinated by Professor Docent Mihai Pop in 1971.

Immediately after University graduation he was employed in the Faculty of Philology (named Faculty of Letters after 1989), an institution he served as junior assistant (1964-1967), assistant (1967-1973), lecturer (1973-1990), associate professor (1990-1995), and professor (since 1995). His area of expertise comprised “Romanian Literary Folklore”, “Ethnology”, and “Cultural Anthropology”.

He worked as a Romanian language lecturer at Portland State University, Oregon, U.S.A., as a Fulbright grantee (September 1976 - July 1978) and as Romanian language lecturer at the University of Turku, (Turun Yliopisto), Finland (November 1978 - May 1979 and January 1992 - December 1995). He delivered special courses on “Romanian Folk Culture”, “History of Romania” and “History of Romanian Culture” in the International Programme at the University of Turku.

Professor Constantinescu was Director of the Chair of Ethnology and Folklore at the faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest in the period 1996-2007 and together with his department colleagues, he created and coordinated a BA programme on Ethnology and an MA programme on Ethnology, Cultural Anthropology and Folklore. These two programmes are managed at present by the professors in the Collective of Ethnology and Folklore – Department of Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Letters.

Since 1997, he was a Ph D coordinator in Philology, with an area of expertise on Folklore Studies, Cultural Studies, Ethnology and Anthropology. In 2010, he was granted the title of Professor Emeritus, member of the Doctoral School of the Faculty of Letters.

Professor Nicolae Constantinescu delivered several special courses for the students of the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, among which: “Introduction to Romanian Folk Culture”, “Ethnology”, “Ethnology of Kinship”, “Contemporary Folklore”, “Romanian Folk Culture in European Context”, “Anthropology of Literature”.



He is author of 12 books on ethnology and folklore, 11 volumes of commented texts, more than 200 studies and articles issued in volumes and periodicals in Romania and abroad. His reference works are: *Rima în poezia populară românească* [Rhyme in Romanian Folk Poetry] (volume based on the doctoral thesis, Minerva Printing House, Bucharest, 1973); *Lectura textului folcloric* [Reading the Folklore Text] (Minerva Printing House, Bucharest, 1986); *Etnologia și folclorul relațiilor de rudenie* [Ethnology and Folklore of Kinship] (edition by Rodica Zane, Univers Printing House, Bucharest, 2000 – revised edition of the volume *Relațiile de rudenie în societățile tradiționale: reflexe în folclorul românesc* [Kinship in Traditional Societies: Reflection in Romanian Folklore], Romanian Academy Printing House, Bucharest, 1987); *Romanian Folk Culture. An Introduction* (“Scripta Ethnologica Aboensia” 42, Turku, 1996; second edition in 1999, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, București; two further editions issued at Paideia Printing House, Bucharest, 2011 and 2012); *Citite de mine... Folclor, Etnologie, Antropologie. Repere ale cercetării* [Books I Read... Folklore, Ethnology, Anthropology. Hallmarks of Research] (2 volumes issued by the National Centre for the Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture, 2 volume, ed. Oana Gabriela Petrică, Collection Cultural Seasons, Bucharest, 2008, 2011); *Folclorul, cum poate fi înțeles: studii și articole de etnologie românească (1968-2008)* [Folklore: How It Could Be Understood. Articles and Studies on Romanian Ethnology (1968-2008)] (edition, English abstracts and Afterword by Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată, University of Bucharest Printing House, 2011); *Cultura antropologică: studii, cronici,*

comentarii apărute în revista "Cultura" editată de Fundația Culturală Română (2010-2015) [Anthropological Culture: Studies, Chronicles, Comments published in "Cultura/ Culture", a review of the Romanian Cultural Foundation (2010-2015) (edition, Foreword and notes by Cătălin D. Constantin, Etnologică Printing House, Bucharest, 2016), *Repertoriul patrimoniului cultural imaterial din România* [Repertoire of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Romania] (co-author of vol. 1, CIMEC, Bucharest, 2009; coordinator and co-author of vol. 2 A, Etnologică Printing House, Bucharest, 2014).

Also, Nicolae Constantinescu edited the studies of Professor Mihai Pop in three volumes: Mihai Pop, *Folclor românesc* [Romanian Folklore], vol. 1: Theory and Method, vol. 2: Texts and Interpretations (edition by Nicolae Constantinescu and Alexandru Dobre, "Grai și Suflet - Cultura Națională" Printing House, Bucharest, 1998), and *Folclor românesc* [Romanian Folklore], vol. 3 (edition by Nicolae Constantinescu, Adrian Stoicescu and Rodica Zane, Foreword by Nicolae Constantinescu, University of Bucharest Printing House, 2007). He restituted a part of the folklore collections and editions authored by the ethnomusicologist Constantin Brăiloiu in the series *Constantin Brăiloiu: culegător și editor de folclor* [Constantin Brăiloiu: Folklore Collector and Editor] (edition, foreword and notes by Nicolae Constantinescu and Adrian Mihail Șerban, Etnologică Printing House, Bucharest, 2017 - vol. 1, 2018 - vol. 2, 2019 - vol. 3).

Colleagues and disciples paid homage to the Professor in the volumes *Exigențele și utilitatea lecturii etnologice: in onorem Nicolae Constantinescu* [Exigencies and Utility of Ethnological Reading] (edition by Narcisa Alexandra Știucă and Adrian Stoicescu, University of Bucharest Printing House, 2012); *Profesorul Nicolae Constantinescu - prestigios donator de carte* [Professor Nicolae Constantinescu – Prestigious Book Donor] (edition by Gheorghe Deaconu, Ioan St. Lazăr and Elena Stoica, „Antim Ivireanul” Library – ”Mihai Pop” Ethnology Section, Vâlcea County Center for the Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture - Fântâna lui Manole Printing House, Patrimoniul Printing House, Golești, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 2023), and *Termeni și teme actuale în științele etnologice: un repertoriu comentat. In onorem prof. univ. (e) dr. Nicolae Constantinescu* [Current Terms and Themes in Ethnological Sciences: a Commented Repertoire. In onorem Emeritus Professor Nicolae Constantinescu] (coord. Ioana-Ruxandra Fruntelată, Mihaela Bucin, Florența Popescu-Simion, Muzeul Literaturii Române Printing House, Etnologică Printing House, Bucharest, 2024).

Colleagues and disciples paid homage to the Professor in the volumes *Exigențele și utilitatea lecturii etnologice: in onorem Nicolae Constantinescu* [Exigencies and Utility of Ethnological Reading] (edition by Narcisa Alexandra Știucă and Adrian Stoicescu, University of Bucharest Printing House, 2012); *Profesorul Nicolae Constantinescu - prestigios donator de carte* [Professor Nicolae Constantinescu – Prestigious Book Donor] (edition by Gheorghe Deaconu, Ioan St. Lazăr and Elena Stoica, „Antim Ivireanul” Library – ”Mihai Pop” Ethnology Section, Vâlcea County Center for the Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture – Fântâna

lui Manole Printing House, Patrimoniul Printing House, Golești, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 2023), and *Termeni și teme actuale în științele etnologice: un repertoriu comentat*. In honorem *prof. univ. (e) dr. Nicolae Constantinescu* [Current Terms and Themes in Ethnological Sciences: a Commented Repertoire. In honorem Emeritus Professor Nicolae Constantinescu] (coord. Ioana-Ruxandra Frunteletă, Mihaela Bucin, Florența Popescu-Simion, Muzeul Literaturii Române Printing House, Etnologică Printing House, Bucharest, 2024).

Constantinescu's academic excellence gained recognition by awards such as "Sim. Fl. Marian" Award of the Romanian Academy for the volume *Relațiile de rudenie în societățile tradiționale: reflexe în folclorul românesc* [Kinship in Traditional Societies: Reflection in Romanian Folklore] (1987), the "Ethnos" Cultural Foundation Award in 1999 for the contribution to the promotion of Romanian folk culture in national and international University and academic milieu, and "Perpessicius" Award of the National Museum of Romanian Literature for critical editions in 2010 (for the Anthology *Basme populare românești* [Romanian Folktales], 2 volumes edited by Nicolae Constantinescu, Iordan Datcu and A. Gh. Olteanu, Romanian Academy, National Foundation for Science and Arts, Bucharest, 2008). He collaborated to the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens (Encyclopedia of the Folktale)*, a most prestigious academic instrument meant to enhance research of folk narratives. Kurt Ranke initiated the *Encyclopedia of Folktale* and an international scholar team affiliated to the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen worked to complete it. Nicolae Constantinescu is author of the article on Professor Mihai Pop in the tenth volume (*Band 10 Nibelungenlied – Prozeßmotive*, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110908305>).

Professor Nicolae Constantinescu organized the 30th edition of the International Ballad Conference at the University of Bucharest in 2010, under the auspices of the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore. He was a member of the International Society of Folk Narrative Research, of the International Association of South-Eastern European Anthropology, of the Association of Ethnological Sciences in Romania (Asociația de Științe Etnologice din Romania), among other prestigious memberships.

Nicolae Constantinescu brought an essential contribution to the professionalization of Romanian ethnology. He played a decisive role with respect to the building up of Ethnology BA and MA programmes in Romanian Universities. In addition, he reshaped the ethnological language and concepts achieving to avoid the "narrow territory of facile conformism" (as he asserts in one of his studies) and to integrate into the international academic trends of thought. By taking a close look at his "inner own folklore", the Professor created a mode and model of "reading" folk poetic creation and the traditional kinship networks. Not least, he engaged his work and academic prestige to promote a "school" on contemporary folklore and set up standards for the next generation of Romanian ethnologists who entered the profession at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century.

GEORGETA STOICA
(24th of January, 1932 – 31st of July, 2025)

In each of our lives there are moments and personalities that shape our professional path, leaving an indelible mark on our souls. Today we pay a solemn tribute to the one who had a profound impact on our community of specialists. In the following lines I aim to recall not only her achievements, but also the values that inspired us, and the deeds that will forever endure in our hearts. On this journey of remembrance, we turn our gaze to a life lived with passion and dedication, thus honouring the legacy left behind by Dr. Georgeta Stoica.

I first learned about her during my first year at the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, Romanian–Ethnology section, where, over the course of four years, I studied the works of the most important specialists in the field. The name of Mrs. Georgeta Stoica was inextricably linked to folk art. The fact that a few years later I met her in person and had the chance to work together I consider, quite rightly, the defining encounter of my professional activity. Beyond the emotion of meeting such an eminent figure – one who was always spoken of with admiration and respect – I discovered from the very beginning a generosity that flowed naturally from within her. Thus, our first conversation about my museum interests began under the sign of encouragement and trust, and continued until recently, materializing in on-going ethnographic and broader dialogues. She had the gift and grace to find the right advice for each situation, so that in difficult moments her words come to mind. Her professional advices to me – yet valid for all of us – remain a golden set of rules for our profession, a niche field where only the passionate and deeply dedicated endure: to work with pleasure and a sense of responsibility; to be disciplined, consistent; to always support others. And many other such teachings from which all of us who came into contact with Mrs. Georgeta Stoica have benefited.

After the full publication of the Rugs collection (a field of folk art that she confided was “very close to her heart”), a project she had been involved in for five years, it was the turn of the largest collection – that of Traditional Costume – to be studied and published. Since 2012, together with Mrs. Georgeta Stoica, the coordinator and driving spirit of these catalogues, we began analysing, by ethnographic area, the category types that make up the clothing ensembles. It was then that I saw and understood – more than I had known about the Lady (as we used to call her) – what defines a true museum professional, someone with a genuine calling for the field: extremely serious, hard-working, tactful and gifted with pedagogical talent. Each piece was meticulously examined and compared with the others. And beyond that, I saw how, in front of the objects, time seemed to stretch. Every single item was studied in detail, with the same rigor and expertise, whether it was a shirt, a traditional overskirt, a sheepskin coat, or a headscarf. A large part of the objects in the collections had been selected and brought into the museum by herself, so along

with each item we also found the story of the object – of a corner of the country, of a peasant man or woman, of sorrows or moments of joy. By carrying out field research in all regions of the country, and on return visits to the field, she learned how to “talk” to the people of the village – and they, in turn, taught her, as she says, “Romanian for a second time”.

For me, Mrs. Georgeta Stoica will always be a distinguished personality and a truly special companion – balanced, strong, with an innate elegance. In a single word: incomparable!

With a career spanning more than six decades, Mrs. Georgeta Stoica has demonstrated significant contributions to the study and approach of folk art. Her works are thorough, foundational documents in the field of traditional culture. Topics such as vernacular architecture, interior organization, adornments and traditional costume, rugs, ceramics, or traditional occupations are just a few of the themes of her specialty books and articles. Her exhaustive handling of ethnographic areas (the Muntenia Plain, Gorj, Olt, Vâlcea, Slatina, Bran, the Boian Plain, Suceava, Vrancea, etc.) stands proof of her mastery in interpreting and organizing scientific information from a vast region.

Dr. Georgeta Stoica graduated from the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest in 1954. Although she initially intended to pursue a career in archaeology – having taken part as a student in archaeological fieldwork under the guidance of renowned archaeologists such as Vladimir Dumitrescu – she was hired in 1955 as a museologist at the Village Museum in Bucharest. She worked at the museum until 1971, participating in field research teams alongside prominent figures in the field (including Paul Petrescu, Tancred Bănăţeanu, Elena Secoşan, Olga Horşia, Marcela Focşa, Maria Văgâi, Rada Ilie, among others), the first of these projects being carried out under the direct supervision of Professor Gheorghe Focşa, the museum’s director at the time. Throughout this period, she published substantial articles and studies, attended national and international conferences and scientific sessions, and quickly established herself as a respected researcher. Under the supervision of the eminent academician George Oprescu, director of the Institute of Art History of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, she defended her doctoral thesis in 1970, entitled *The Architecture of the Interior of the Peasant Household*, which became one of the most important works in the field’s bibliography. For 11 years (1971-1982), she served as Inspector for Museums of Ethnography and Folk Art at the Ministry of Culture, a period during which she contributed to the organization and development of museums specializing in this area. The testimonies of those who knew her in this capacity – many of whom later became notable figures themselves – are highly laudatory. Thus, Mrs. Stoica became directly involved in selecting the most valuable folk art objects, in organizing and displaying them in the permanent exhibitions of museums, as well as in training specialists throughout the country. Everyone found in her an unwavering source of support – a consummate specialist and an impeccable teacher, paired with a gentle and friendly demeanour. Thanks to her teaching abilities, she also excelled in the academic environment, serving as an associate

professor at the “Nicolae Grigorescu” Institute of Fine Arts for 19 years (1971-1990). Her contribution as an editor at Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică (the Scientific and Encyclopaedic Publishing House) in Bucharest, where she worked for a considerable period, should also not be forgotten.

Above all, the place that remained forever in her heart until the very end was the Village Museum. It was here that she began her career, here that she made significant scientific contributions, here that she was involved in or coordinated major campaigns to identify and relocate monuments, and here that she trained generations of specialists with a rare professional dedication and generosity. It was also here that she served as Deputy Director (1990–1996) and General Director (2002–2004).

Her analysis dedicated to heritage collections is a benchmark in the field, Dr. Georgeta Stoica constantly emphasizing the importance of scientific documentation as the foundation of museum work. With patience and meticulousness, she gave new life over a period of five years to the museum’s rug collection – one of the most important in the country – published in catalogues organized by region. This was followed by the traditional costume series, the most comprehensive of all, much of which she managed to coordinate. For the quality and value of her scientific content, Dr. Georgeta Stoica’s works have been noted and appreciated both in Romania and abroad. The volume *Romanian Folk Art*, published by Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981, created in collaboration with Paul Petrescu, was awarded the “Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” Prize of the Romanian Academy. Also worth mentioning as an invaluable work for specialists is the celebrated *Dictionary of Folk Art*, published by Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1985 (in collaboration with Paul Petrescu and Maria Bocșe), republished in a revised and expanded edition by Editura Enciclopedică in 1997.

Scientific rigor, integrity, and consistency established Mrs. Georgeta Stoica as a respected presence within the professional bodies of which she was a member, among them the National Commission of Museums and Collections, the Commission for Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites, the National Commission of Historical Monuments, and the International Committee on Vernacular Architecture. She was also one of the founding members of the Balkan Vernacular Architecture Committee.

Over the years, Mrs. Georgeta Stoica’s professional activity was crowned with a series of valuable awards. Among these we mention the Order of Cultural Merit, Officer Rank, Category H – *Scientific Research*, conferred upon her by Decree No. 40 of February 7, 2004, in her capacity as ethnographer and General Director of the National Museum of the Village “Dimitrie Gusti” in Bucharest. Yet perhaps the greatest recognition of her merits in the service of Romanian ethnography came in 2016, when the country’s highest scientific forum included her among its members, making her an Honorary Member of the Romanian Academy.

Recently, she departed for the world “without longing,” leaving a great void in our hearts, yet I am convinced that, from above, she watches over us with the bright smile that so characterized her...

Farewell, esteemed Lady! Eternal remembrance!



1. Browsing the catalogue *The Folk Costume in Mehedinți and Dolj in the Village Museum's Collections*, December 2018.

2. Field research in Răcari, 1963.

3. In the yard of a Drăguș household (Brașov county), together the family of furrier-craftsman Dumitru Sofonea.



4. Easter Day, 5th of May, 2024.



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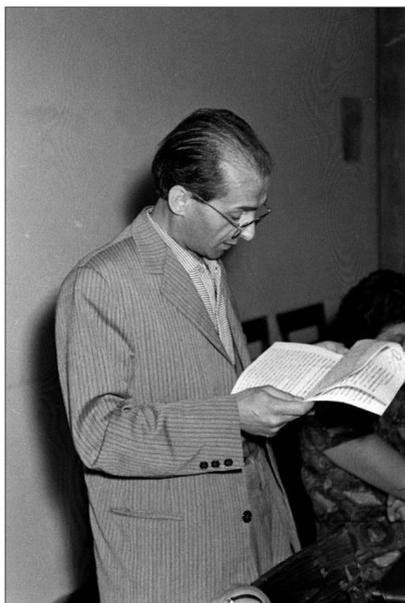
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- Portul popular din județul Gorj (The Traditional Folk Costume of Gorj County)**, Editura Comitetul Județean pentru Cultură Gorj, Bucharest, 1978, (Georgeta Stoica, Virgil Vasilescu).
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- Arta populară românească (Romanian Folk Art)**, Ed. Meridiane, Bucharest, 1981, book awarded the “Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” Prize of the Romanian Academy (Georgeta Stoica, Paul Petrescu),
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GEORGIANA ONOIU

**BUCHAREST, 1969: THE 5TH CONGRESS OF THE
“INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR FOLK NARRATIVE
RESEARCH” (FACSIMILE PAPERS, PART XI)**



1: Giuseppe
Profeta:
Teramo, M.
Bošković-
Stulli*
(FL 1919/15/
44551)



2: Charles
Joisten:
Grenoble
(FL 1916/31/
44418)



3 & 4: Ion C. Chițimia**, Petar Dinekov***: Sofija, ? (FL 1918/30/44474, 1918/32/44475)

* paper & pics in REF/JEF 1-2/2024: 219-231, 175, 176. ** paper & pics in REF/JEF 1-2/2023: 258-264, 200, 1-2/2016: 195, 1-2/2021: 223. *** also seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2017: 238, 1-2/2021: 225, 285, 1-2/2024: 174, 177.



5: Charles Joisten (FL 1913/37/44419)



6: Gisela Burde-Schneidewind*: Berlin (FL 1919/31/44563)



7: József Faragó**: Cluj (FL 1920/2/44573)



8: Mariana Juster***: Haifa, G. Burde-Schneidewind (FL 1919/10/44547)

9: Mariana Juster: Haifa, G. Burde-Schneidewind, Germina Comanici: Bucharest (FL 1919/9/44546)

* seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2025: 194.

** seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2021: 285, 1-2/2022: 277.

*** text & pics in REF/JEF 1-2/ 2019: 219-227, 1-2/2017: 229, 1-2/2021: 285.





10: Mariana Juster (FL 19.../.../44...)

11: M. Juster, ?, ?, ? (FL 1914/37/44568)

12: M. Juster, ?, Emilia Comișel*, Val Cordon** (FL 1920/3/44569)



* also seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2021: 285, 1-2/2022: 277.
 ** seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2023: 201.
 *** noticeable in the photos of REF/JEF 1-2/2017: 229, 279, 1-2/2021: 285, 1-2/2022: 277; his paper, announced in the Program as *The Formation-Process of Jewish Folk-tale Oikotype*, was not found.

13 & 14: Dov Noy***: Haifa (FL 1914/32/44426, 1915/27/44427)



15: Donald Knight Wilgus*, M. Juster, Helga Stein**
(FL 1915/17/44521)

16: D.K. Wilgus, H. Stein (FL 1915/18/44522)



17: Richard M. Dorson***, Tom-Yov Lewinski***†: Haifa (FL 1920/4/44574)

18: Tom-Yov Lewinski (FL 1920/5/44575)

19: Alan Dundes***†† (FL 1917/29/44444)

* seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2022: 195 (background). ** seen in REF/JEF 1-2/2021: 223, 224, 1-2/2022: 219. *** text and pics in REF/JEF 1-2/2018: 319-326, 318, 1-2/2019: 183, 1-2/2020: 243, 300, 1-2/2022: 195. ***† text in REF/JEF 1-2/2017: 280-285. ***†† text & pics in REF/JEF 1-2/2016: 233-245, 1-2/2021: 224, 1-2/2025: 193.

G. Profeta

- 1 -

Légendes sur la fondation des sanctuaires

A l'origine de tous les sanctuaires il y a presque toujours une légende ~~qui se trouve dans les légendes populaires de toutes les régions de l'Europe~~. On trouve des légendes ~~parallèles~~ semblables dans toutes les ~~autres~~ religions. Il faut remarquer que jusqu'à présent les amateurs de littérature populaire se sont généralement intéressés à d'autres genres plus complexes et apparemment plus importants concernant le récit folklorique. Ces légendes n'apparaissent presque pas dans "The types of the Folktale" de Aarne et Thompson et, même dans le "Motif-index of Folk-literature" de Thompson, les éléments qui les composent ne sont pas toujours convenablement traités. En Italie il n'existe pas encore un recueil ni une étude de ces légendes, d'ailleurs elles n'apparaissent pas même dans les recueils et dans les répertoires. Dans les Abruzzes, la région italienne qui a été l'objet de notre première enquête, ces légendes n'apparaissent presque pas dans les recueils de Finamore et de De Nino, et il n'y a que Berlengia qui montre quelque intérêt à ce sujet. C'est ainsi que la plupart de ces légendes de fondation se perdent dans les monographies des sanctuaires et dans les livres de prière, tandis qu'un petit nombre reste dans la tradition orale qui lentement va disparaître. C'est pour cela que nous avons décidé de faire une étude à ce sujet, en nous bornant pour le moment à la région des Abruzzes. Nous avons réuni ainsi plus de cent légendes. Le nombre en est remarquable si l'on pense qu'il s'agit d'une région de dix mille kilomètres carrés seulement et que l'enquête n'est pas encore complètement achevée. Ce nombre témoigne de toute façon que presque tous les sanctuaires des Abruzzes, qu'ils soient petits ou grands, ont une légende de fondation. Sur la base du grand nombre de notices réunies et des rares informations concernant d'autres lieux, il nous a été possible de faire des observations sur la structure de ces légendes et sur l'origine littéraire et historique de quelques motifs, sous réserve de variation éventuelles et d'intégrations nécessaires.

Sur l'origine des sanctuaires il existe des légendes religieuses

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locales, liées à une église que limite sa zone d'influence, contrairement à d'autres légendes religieuses qui, n'ayant aucun rapport avec le lieu et le culte, jouissent d'une possibilité extraordinaire de diffusion. Cela se réfère à la leçon d'un sanctuaire déterminé parce que, quant au genre, les légendes de fondation sont répandues dans une zone œcuménique.

Beaucoup de ces légendes dérivant non seulement d'une tradition orale et populaire mais aussi d'une tradition écrite et savante, car elles nous sont parvenues soit à travers la tradition orale, soit à travers les livres de prière, rédigés par des prêtres et des moines et souvent résultant de documents notariaux ou de preuves fournies en témoignage du miracle.

D'après un premier examen la tradition savante semble l'emporter sur la tradition populaire et l'avoir inspirée, mais à l'origine du récit il devrait généralement exister une source populaire; de toute façon il serait opportun d'approfondir l'étude de ces rapports.

Un grand nombre de ces légendes se mêlent et se confondent évidemment avec les légendes des saintes images et des reliques des saints vénérés dans les sanctuaires. On peut même affirmer que souvent l'épisode de la fondation de l'église n'est qu'une conséquence de la légende sur l'origine de l'image qu'on vénère, ce qui contribue à multiplier le nombre des légendes de fondation.

Selon le système de classification de Aarne et Thompson on pourrait diviser ces légendes en trois types par rapport au sujet:

1) Un être surnaturel (souvent la Sainte Vierge) apparaît à une petite bergère et lui dit d'informer le curé de son désir de faire bâtir une église dans un lieu déterminé. Une seconde apparition et d'autres événements miraculeux finissent par l'emporter sur l'incrédulité du prêtre. Enfin on bâtit l'église qui devient un centre de culte populaire.

2) Une sainte image est miraculeusement trouvée sur un arbre, dans une grotte, parmi des décombres, sous terre etc. Cela provoque des querelles et des doutes concernant l'endroit où il faudrait la placer.

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On transporte l'image dans une église. Toutefois la nuit elle disparaît miraculeusement et revient à la place où on l'avait trouvée. On le considère un signe de la volonté divine, on bâtit le sanctuaire dans le même lieu et voilà qu'un culte nouveau y prend son origine.

3) L'image ou les reliques d'un saint arrivent de l'Orient, de la mer, des contrées lointaines etc. Deux villes ou deux personnes en réclament la possession. Le choix est déterminé par des signes d'oracle spontanés ou provoqués. Dans le lieu où le signe s'est vérifié ou que l'oracle a indiqué on bâtit le sanctuaire et le culte commence.

Il est facile de remarquer que dans ces légendes il y a des thèmes constants très évidents: apparitions, objets miraculeusement trouvés, signes qui tiennent du prodige, querelles pour la possession de la sainte image se répètent très fréquemment. Mais à côté de ces détails évidents et constants il y a des variations qui, à une observation attentive, ne résultent qu'apparemment. En effet l'apparition d'un être surnaturel, l'image qui devient vivante, des reliques miraculeusement trouvées, une statue qui tombe du ciel ou qui arrive de la mer, ne sont pas des choses différentes quant à l'analyse structurale, puisqu'il s'agit dans tous les cas de manifestations religieuses, c'est à dire que toutes sont des hiérophanies.

La demande de l'être surnaturel d'avoir une église et un culte représente dans tout le récit la manifestation d'un désir, qu'elle soit faite directement, ou qu'elle soit indiquée par des faits miraculeux ou par des signes divinatoires spontanés ou provoqués.

L'incrédulité ou la repression de l'autorité ecclésiastique vis à vis de l'apparition, la querelle entre deux villes ou deux personnes, la fuite de l'image de l'endroit où elle avait été placée etc.. ce sont des thèmes qui ont à peu près la même signification. L'incrédulité et l'opposition initiale de l'autorité ecclésiastique mettent en évidence le désarroi que l'événement surnaturel provoque toujours et aussi la querelle pour mériter la faveur divine qui, en général, est du côté de la petite bergère et non du côté de l'autorité ecclésiastique.

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De même que dans la fuite miraculeuse (où peut se cacher, comme on va le voir, le vol d'un des querelleurs) se cache l'alternative entre le choix humain et la volonté divine.

La seconde apparition pour convaincre les autorités et les sceptiques, les signes d'oracle spontanés ou provoqués (l'animal ou la barque qui s'arrêtent, le bâton verdoyant, la cloche qui tinte spontanément, la source qui jaillit etc.), ce sont toutes des manifestations du désir divin qui en constituent la preuve. Et même l'érection d'un autel, d'une colonne, d'une chapelle, d'une église ou l'origine d'un culte nouveau ne sont que des variations apparentes car, en effet, elles ne sont que la réalisation de la volonté divine. Par conséquent ces légendes, même si elles présentent des caractères différents et des thèmes divers, ont toutefois une structure uniforme dans la narration, qui est divisée en général en cinq temps fondamentaux, qui ne sont pas nécessairement présents et qui apparaissent toujours dans le même ordre:

- 1) hiérophanie (apparition, animation, invention, chute du ciel, arrivée de lein);
- 2) demande orale, par des symboles ou bien sous-entendue;
- 3) querelle (entre les autorités et les croyants, entre deux personnes ou deux villes, fuite prodigieuse);
- 4) Preuve (deuxième apparition, signes divinatoires divers);
- 5) réalisation (chapelle, autel, reposeir, petite colonne, restaurations, célébrations, cultes);

La querelle et la preuve ne se retrouvent pas nécessairement dans toutes les légendes.

Le récit se déroule parfois sur trois thèmes fondamentaux (hiérophanie, demande, réalisation), ou même sur deux (hiérophanie-demande, réalisation), étant donné, selon la croyance populaire, que l'être surnaturel qui se révèle à quelqu'un, désire être honoré surtout par la construction d'une église qui doit être un centre du culte. Voilà

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que, quant à l'examen morphologique, les éléments constants des légendes de fondation suivent un schéma obligé: hiérophanie, demande, réalisation.

Mais au delà du schéma narratif, la série des ^{motifs} ~~thèmes~~ qu'il serait utile d'examiner, même dans les limites consenties par l'espace, est très riche.

× Parmi les thèmes les plus intéressants et pittoresques il y a ceux qui se réfèrent à la manière par laquelle les êtres surnaturels se manifestent et ceux qui se réfèrent aux signes par lesquels le dieu exprime sa volonté. Quant à la série des théophanies on vient de citer les vraies apparitions, les images qui s'animent en pleurant, en suant, en meuvant les yeux ou même en laissant entendre une voix provenant de l'image. Il faut ajouter un détail qui devrait être approfondi, c'est à dire que les apparitions ont lieu surtout sur les arbres. Quelquefois l'apparition est remplacée par le fait, plus ou moins miraculeux, qu'on découvre une sainte image ou qu'elle arrive providentiellement d'une contrée souvent non précisée. Une image est miraculeusement sauvée d'un incendie, d'une inondation, d'un tremblement de terre, ou bien elle est ensevelie en pleine campagne et on la retrouve parce que les chevaux ou les bœufs s'arrêtent tout à coup ou se mettent à piaffer. Une autre image descend du ciel, transportée par des êtres divins ou ^{bien} elle arrive aventureusement de la mer, de l'Orient, d'une ville lointaine etc., ou bien un saint ou un ange la dessinent et la laissent à protection de la ville. Quant aux signes de la volonté divine, on vient de citer l'animal, le char et le navire qui se dirigent spontanément et s'arrêtent dans le lieu choisi par le dieu; la source qui jaillit tout à coup, le bâton qui verdoie et met des fleurs et des feuilles; la cloche qui sonne spontanément. Mais il y a encore de nombreux signes divins. Parfois c'est l'animal qui transporte l'image qui tombe à genoux et arrive jusqu'à mourir,

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Ou bien il laisse une empreinte ineffaçable sur la pierre pour indiquer que c'est là qu'il faut bâtir le sanctuaire. Parfois c'est la statue transportée par des hommes ou des animaux qui devient de plus en plus lourde jusqu'à obliger les hommes à s'arrêter dans le lieu préféré par le saint. Ou bien un arbre s'élève miraculeusement vers le ciel et puis il revient à l'état naturel, ou enfin ce sont les anges eux mêmes qui transportent le sanctuaire ou le bâtissent dans le lieu voulu par le dieu. Très riche est donc la gamme de la sémiotique divine, dont la tradition est très ancienne. X

En effet on ne peut se passer de remarquer que ces thèmes légendaires nous sont souvent parvenus à travers une longue et vénérable tradition littéraire illustre et populaire et que souvent ils ont non seulement une explication psychologique mais aussi une justification historique. Ils sont l'écho de croyances et d'usages anciens qui pourraient être l'objet d'une étude très intéressante.

Beaucoup de ces thèmes ont leur source dans des civilisations religieuses préchrétiennes et nous sont parvenus à travers la tradition populaire et savante, en s'adaptant aux théologies nouvelles parfois intégralement, parfois avec des variations opportunes. On trouve d'ailleurs, même dans la littérature classique des exemples, tel que l'épisode de la querelle, dont parle Pausania, entre Eritrea et Chio pour la possession de la statue d'Hercules, transportée par un radeau devant Cap Mesate à égale distance des deux villes, et le stratagème des cordes faites avec les cheveux des femmes pour attirer le radeau, selon le rêve d'un pêcheur d'Eritrea qui devait révéler quelle était la ville choisie par la volonté divine. Plutarque parle de la découverte des os de Thésée, cachés jalousement à Sciro par les habitants de cette île. Ce fut Camone, fils de Milziade, qui retrouva le corps du héros aidé par un aigle qui commença à le déterrer avec son bec et ses griffes. Ce récit de Plutarque trouve beaucoup d'analogies avec la légende de la translation des reliques de Saint Thomas apôtre

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de l'Orient à la ville de Ortona dans les Abruzzes. Aussi bien le héros grec que le saint chrétien avaient, d'après la légende, un squelette de grande dimension et portaient une épée au côté. Le vol furtif, le transport solennel sur la mer, la sépulture du premier dans l'Ereos d'Athènes et du deuxième dans la cathédrale de la ville d'Ortona, la vénération des croyants, les miracles accomplis etc. sont des éléments étrangement semblables dans les deux légendes bien qu'appartenant à des traditions religieuses très différentes. Quant au thème de la construction d'un temple dans le lieu d'une apparition sacrée, il convient de rappeler que le temple de Castor et Pollux fut bâti dans le Forum à Rome, sur le lieu où apparurent les Dioscures pour annoncer la victoire du lac Regille; que le Sanctuaire de la Fortune première de Preneste fut bâti dans le lieu où il y avait un olivier d'où jaillissait du miel; que le temple de Zeus à Dodona fut bâti dans le lieu où une colombe sauvage, qui s'était enfuie de Thèbes en Egypte, s'était posée sur un chêne et, d'une voix humaine, elle avait ordonné qu'en fondât un oracle dans ce lieu; que le temple de Mars sur la "Via Appia" près de Porta Capena fut bâti là où le dieu avait laissé tomber du ciel un bouclier et que l'Erettee, situé sur l'Acropole d'Athènes, fut bâti par Cecrope, fils de Erettee, dans le lieu où Athéna et Poséidon en compétition pour la suprématie sur la ville, firent, l'un pousser un olivier en enfonçant sa lance dans le sol, et l'autre, jaillir une source d'eau salée en frappant le sol de son trident.

✱ Dans l'antiquité païenne aussi c'étaient les dieux qui choisissaient le lieu de leur temple. Le sanctuaire d'Esculape dans l'île Tiberina à Rome fut bâti au IIIe siècle avant J.C. dans un lieu où, selon la légende, le dieu, qui s'était transformé en serpent et était venu de Epidaure sur un navire romain, s'était fixé pour délivrer la ville de la peste. Le thème beaucoup plus simple de la construction du sanctuaire dans le lieu de la naissance du dieu ou du héros est également fréquent dans la littérature classique. Il faut rappeler le temple d'Apelle à Delos, qui fut bâti dans le lieu où, selon la lé-

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gende, Latona avait mis au monde le dieu; et le sanctuaire d'Epidaure en Argolide qui fut bâti dans le lieu où Cronide avait mis au monde Asclépie. *

Au niveau d'autres civilisations religieuses il faut rappeler la Caaba, bâtie pour garder la pierre noire, une météorite portée par un ange. Il faut aussi citer la légende arabe du Marabut qui fonda El Hemel à la fin du XVII^e siècle à l'endroit même où son bâton avait mis des racines et des feuilles, signes de la volonté de Dieu.

On trouve aussi de nombreux exemples dans les religions de caractère ethnologique. Il y a une plus grande tendance à enrichir les thèmes: les légendes de fondation des sanctuaires deviennent des légendes de fondation tout court. En effet l'ainsi-dit homme primitif donne un caractère sacré aux lieux destinés à n'importe quelle fondation, soit une maison, un village, une église. C'est M. Sarteri qui a réuni dans ses œuvres une riche documentation sur le choix du lieu destiné à l'installation humaine par des signes animaux.

Mais quelles sont les origines historiques de ces légendes? Il semble que le folkloriste s'intéresse moins à la recherche des origines des sanctuaires et de leurs légendes qu'à celle des sources historiques de chaque thème.

On peut faire des hypothèses sur l'origine des sanctuaires: le thème des animaux intelligents, dont l'activité est considérée comme un signe de la volonté divine, ça pourrait être interprété comme une conséquence du culte des animaux et des capacités d'oracle qu'en leur attribuait (par exemple l'abolement des chiens pendant la nuit, le vol bas des hirondelles, la direction de vol des oiseaux etc.).

Le navire qui s'arrête, la statue qui s'appesantit, la cloche qui sonne spontanément, le bâton qui verdoie, la fontaine qui jaillit, l'empreinte laissée sur la pierre, tout est, à le considérer, comme un écho lointain des conceptions dynamiques des forces de la nature, des forces qui seraient capables de participer à la vie des hommes.

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Les images qu'on retrouve sur des arbres ou à l'intérieur de certaines cavernes, ou sous des ponts, ou bien murées dans les maisons ou les sanctuaires, pourraient être liées à des luttes religieuses et particulièrement aux persécutions religieuses, dans la plupart des cas concernant l'iconoclasme qui eut lieu, en Italie aussi, pendant la domination grecque. Les images trouvées dans les cavernes furent peut-être des objets des cultes des ermites qui étaient très nombreux soit dans les Abruzzes, soit dans d'autres régions.

D'autres éléments peuvent être à l'origine du thème si fréquent des découvertes: par exemple le vol des images sacrées par des brigands sacrilèges qui étaient nombreux autrefois dans les Abruzzes et dans l'Italie méridionale. Les brigands cachaient souvent et abandonnaient leur butin. Quand on le retrouvait plus tard, cela causait chez les fidèles de l'étonnement et une édification dévote. D'autres images ont été retrouvées après la destruction de quelques églises par un cataclysme naturel, ce qui nous rappelle le thème de l'image flottant sur l'eau des inondations, ou bien par des événements de la guerre, dont la conséquence a été la découverte d'images sacrées intactes parmi les décombres.

Le thème de la provenance d'images ou de reliques de l'Orient ou de la Slavonie (de la "Schiavonia" comme on dit d'une façon populaire), ce thème-ci peut avoir une connexion avec le fait que, à cause des persécutions iconoclastes ou des Sarrasins dans les régions orientales, les images étaient envoyées en Italie. En fait l'Italie fut dans cette période-là le refuge de beaucoup d'icônes byzantines.

La présence en Italie de ces icônes pourrait être aussi une conséquence des Croisades ou des pèlerinages en Terre Sainte.

Le cycle légendaire des Vierges peintes par Saint Luc se mêle à celui des Vierges noires et des images venues de la mer. Il arrivait entre deux villes des hostilités pour la possession des reliques ou de l'image d'un héros, d'un martyr, ou d'un Saint. Ces querelles se terminaient seulement quand la divinité donnait par des signes la réponse de paix. Ces hostilités se vérifiaient dans les périodes de

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plus grande autonomie politique et administrative (que l'on pense à la polis grecque et à la Commune du Moyen Age). Elles étaient favorisées par le chauvinisme qui, à cette époque, envahissait même la religion. Pendant les hostilités les reliques ou l'image sacrée étaient volées par les plus audacieux. Le vol était souvent présenté comme un événement miraculeux par la fantaisie populaire.

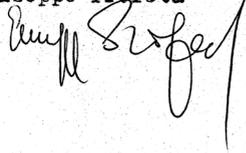
× D'après cette brève analyse sur les sources historiques des thèmes les plus fréquents, il résulte évidemment qu'ils reflètent non seulement les époques obscures ou glorieuses de l'histoire humaine mais aussi, et surtout, les croyances et les coutumes religieuses des peuples chez lesquels les légendes sont nées. Par conséquent ces motifs ne constituent pas seulement une création de la fantaisie mais ils sont aussi un miroir de la vie et de l'histoire. Un miroir de la vie et de l'histoire en sens général car il ne faut pas considérer une légende comme une source absolument vraie sur l'origine du sanctuaire. Vis à vis de cette limite s'arrête non seulement la tradition orale mais aussi la tradition picturale qui illustre l'événement miraculeux pour l'édification des croyants dans les gravures populaires et dans les fresques du sanctuaire, et enfin les documents rédigés à témoignage du miracle.

La vaste diffusion des légendes sur la fondation des sanctuaires, qui ont un caractère oecuménique, et leur nombre considérable (d'après une première enquête on en a catalogué à peu près cent dans les Abruzzes seulement), l'existence de thèmes fondamentalement identiques auprès de cultures et de civilisations religieuses d'époques et de niveaux différents, la structure uniforme de la composition, tout cela oblige le critique à un examen historique-comparatif des thèmes légendaires de la tradition, et surtout à une recherche d'éléments constants de l'âme humaine. L'homme religieux appartenant à n'importe quelle latitude ou époque (pas certainement l'homme sans religion des modernes ~~à~~ sociétés laïques) sent le besoin profond de vivre à côté de ses divinités, à côté de ses héros. De même qu'il rend actuel le temps

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sacré dans les fêtes traditionnelles pour redevenir contemporain aux dieux, de la même façon il bâtit la maison du dieu dans l'endroit consacré par une hiérophanie et il s'y rend pour vivre à côté de lui. D'après la conception de l'homme religieux archaïque, survécue dans les civilisations agricoles européennes et du peuple, le lieu sacré pour la construction du temple n'est pas choisi par l'homme mais par la divinité à travers des épiphanies ou des signes d'oracle. Tous ou presque tous les sanctuaires sont par conséquent consacrés par une hiérophanie, ceux qui sont représentés par ~~un~~^{des} bois, des grottes ou des fontaines, comme ceux qui sont bâtis par l'homme. Puisque le sanctuaire est bâti dans le lieu voulu par la divinité, l'homme pieux croit qu'il est habité par l'être surnaturel et qu'il y produit des miracles. Peut-être les légendes et les croyances sur l'origine des sanctuaires sont-elles influencées par cette logique que les psychologues appellent "logique affective", selon laquelle l'homme tend à croire vrai ce qu'il désire: c'est à dire qu'il croit que le lieu où il a bâti le sanctuaire a été choisi par le dieu et qu'il y demeure, justement parce que c'est lui, le croyant, qui le désire.

Giuseppe Profeta



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- 1) Il y a quelques thèmes intéressants chez P.TOSCHI "La Vergine nei grandi santuari" tirés du livre Mater Christi, p.361-430, et chez A.VECCHI, Il culto delle immagini nelle stampe popolari, Firenze 1968.
Voir aussi H.DELEHAYE; Le leggende agiografiche, Firenze 1910, passim; D'ARONCO, Indice delle fiabe toscane, Firenze 1963, pag.141 et suivantes.
- 2) F.VERLENGIA, Tradizioni e leggende sacre abruzzesi, Pescara 1958.
- 3) Voilà des correspondances avec le Motif-Index de Thompson: Animaux désignant le lieu sacré: B 155; V 111; V 140.3. Floraisons merveilleuses F 94; F 971. Etres surnaturels désignant le lieu sacré: V 111.3.2; V 140; V 246.1. Translations miraculeuses: D 1620; V 143.
Le thème du bâton verdoyant a été traité amplement par Saintives dans ^{la} "Rev. d'histoire et de littérature religieuses" Paris III (1912), 3, p.330.
- 4) PAUSANIA, VII, 5.
- 5) PLUTARQUE, Thésée, 36; Cimone, 8.
- 6) G.PANSA, Miti, leggende e superstizioni dell'Abruzzo, Sulmona 1924-27; II, 153 et suivantes.
- 7) CICERONE, De Divinazione, II, 85.
- 8) R.BASSET, dans la "Revue des traditions populaires, Vol.XXIII (1907), 287.
- 9) SARTORI, Ueber das Bauopfer, dans "Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie" XX (1898) pp. 1-54.
- 10) G.VAN DER LEEUW, Fenomenologia della religione, Torino 1960, p. 308; et M.ILIADÉ, Il sacro e il profano, Torino 1967, p.25 et suivantes.
- 11) F.BACONE, "Novum Organum" I, aphorisme 49.

Ve Congrès de la Société internationale
pour l'investigation des contes populaires.

Charles JOISTEN
Conservateur au Musée Dauphinois
Grenoble (France).

LES ATTESTATIONS DE THEMES LEGENDAIRES
ANTERIEURES AU XVIIIe SIECLE
DANS LES ALPES FRANCAISES.

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L'on est encore loin d'avoir systématiquement dépouillé les sources documentaires anciennes en vue d'en extraire les renseignements qu'elles peuvent apporter dans les différents domaines de l'ethnographie. En France, après des folkloristes qui s'intéressèrent épisodiquement aux sources historiques, quelques historiens, rares il est vrai, portèrent à leur tour un intérêt réel au folklore ; nous en citerons deux : Roger Vaultier, trop tôt enlevé à la science (1), et M. le Professeur Jacques Le Goff qui, actuellement, dirige à la VI^e section de l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes un séminaire sur le sujet "Histoire et folklore". Il serait urgent, dans une perspective de recherches multi-disciplinaires, que s'instaure enfin une collaboration étroite entre historiens et ethnologues, pour le plus grand bien des deux sciences concernées.

Les croyances populaires, ainsi que les légendes qui généralement en découlent, occupent une large place dans les sources documentaires anciennes depuis le Moyen+Age jusqu'à la fin de l'Ancien Régime. Elles y sont relatées d'une manière concise, fort éloignée du verbiage qui caractérisera les récits légendaires des époques romantique et post-romantique

Or, il est frappant de constater que les versions recueillies oralement au XX^e siècle diffèrent peu, dans le fond comme dans la forme, de leurs soeurs aînées du Moyen+Age ou de la Renaissance. Cette constatation tendrait à confirmer que maintes légendes du folklore contemporain remontent au moins

(1) Avec sa thèse de l'Ecole des Chartes, Le folklore pendant la guerre de Cent Ans d'après les Lettres de Rémission, il a montré quelle pouvait être la richesse d'une seule source d'archives.

à l'époque médiévale. Il faut néanmoins observer que les notations anciennes s'inscrivent dans des contextes particuliers qui résultent d'une orientation tendancieuse de l'auteur, de l'oeuvre ou du genre littéraire, ce qui a pour effet : 1°) d'opérer des sélections de thèmes ; 2°) de présenter ceux-ci sous un jour particulier. La littérature religieuse, par exemple, n'a guère retenu, comme grands thèmes légendaires, en dehors des récits de miracles, que ceux de la Puniton de l'Impiété ou de l'Immoralité et ceux de l'Opposition entre forces du Bien et forces du Mal.

En nous limitant à la région des Alpes françaises (Savoie et Dauphiné), que nous connaissons bien pour y avoir entrepris depuis longtemps des recherches sur des légendes fantastiques (1), nous tenterons à partir de quelques exemples caractéristiques, choisis dans les textes imprimés et manuscrits antérieurs au XVIIIe siècle et brièvement comparés aux données de la littérature orale, d'illustrer deux faits importants :

- Continuité thématique dans l'espace et dans le temps,
- Diversité des milieux sociaux qui adhéraient aux croyances dites "populaires" ou "superstitieuses" : gens du peuple, mais aussi nobles, bourgeois, magistrats, gens d'église...

Les différents genres littéraires et documentaires qui nous ont fourni des données folkloriques sont les suivants :

1) La littérature religieuse, au sens large du terme, dans laquelle on peut distinguer : les vies de saints et les biographies de personnages religieux, les recueils de sermons, les constitutions synodales, les procès-verbaux de visites pastorales, les registres paroissiaux parfois annotés par les curés. Toutes ces sources sont marquées par un caractère édifiant et apologétique ; elles sont précieuses également par ce qu'elles nous apprennent des condamnations et interdictions de l'Eglise qui sont elles-mêmes à l'origine de légendes.

(1) L'auteur de cette communication prépare un ouvrage sur "Le Monde fantastique dans le folklore des Alpes françaises (Savoie et Dauphiné)".

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2) La littérature démonologique et les procédures de sorcellerie. - Malgré le caractère stéréotypé des questions posées par les inquisiteurs et les juges, qui conditionnait les réponses des accusés, on est forcé de constater une étonnante similitude entre les thèmes que nous livrent les procédures de sorcellerie et les légendes actuelles axées sur les sorciers et le diable. Là encore une perpétuation des thèmes s'opère à travers les siècles et les milieux, milieu "savant" d'un côté, milieu "inculte" de l'autre. Autant, sinon davantage, que pour la littérature religieuse, les thèmes véhiculés par la littérature démonologique sont particularisés et sélectionnés.

3) Les chroniques historiques. - Elles constituent le pendant profane des apologes religieuses.

4) Les relations de voyages. - Paradoxalement, malgré les descriptions peu fidèles des anciens voyageurs, leurs notations de légendes sont souvent proches de la tradition orale.

5) Autres sources. - Les mystères, ces pièces de théâtre semi-populaires, contiennent parfois des éléments folkloriques intéressants dus à un copiste local, comme c'est le cas pour l'Histoire du glorieux Saint Martin jouée en 1565 à Saint Martin la Porte (Savoie). Les canards imprimés à l'occasion de faits divers, que l'on connaît bien grâce aux études de J.P. Seguin, fournissent également des matériaux utilisables, malgré la tendance du genre à donner des informations stéréotypées. Pour être complet, il faudrait joindre à ces sources documentaires anciennes la littérature proprement dite et la poésie.

Les thèmes que l'on va maintenant examiner témoignent - il est important de le souligner - de la vive influence des idées religieuses : la proportion élevée des histoires à caractère diabolique le prouve.

Les démons chassés par l'érection d'une croix. -

Selon le dominicain Etienne de Bourbon (né entre 1190 et 1195, mort vers 1261), des démons qui allumaient des feux et lançaient des flammes sur une montagne de Tarentaise (Savoie), en furent définitivement chassés lorsqu'on planta en son sommet une croix de bois (1).

Ce procédé apotropaïque simple, et ses variantes (érection d'un oratoire, etc.) apparaît dans une foule de récits qui lui attribuent une efficacité absolue pour faire disparaître des lieux hantés les mauvais esprits.

L'éboulement provoqué par des démons, arrêté par une force sacrée. -

Nous avons recueilli en Savoie un grand nombre de versions de cette légende que l'on peut résumer ainsi : des démons dirigent un éboulement ou un torrent de boue sur un village, mais leur entreprise est stoppée par l'intervention d'une force sacrée (Vierge, sonnerie de cloche...) tandis que les habitants surprennent un dialogue entre les mauvais esprits. Parmi les descriptions qui relatent l'éboulement, en 1248, du Mont Granier (Savoie) (2), celle de Jacques Fodéré, au début du XVIIe siècle, est l'une des plus vivantes et des plus proches de la tradition populaire : "... la dicte montagne Grenier tomba en de prodigieux cartiers" engloutissant la "ville" de Saint-André, mais "ledit abisme s'arresta tout court" devant la chapelle

(1) Lecoy de la Marche, Anecdotes historiques d'Etienne de Bourbon, p. 87-88, n° 96.

(2) On les trouvera reproduites et commentées dans l'ouvrage de l'abbé Trépiér, Le Décanat de Saint-André.

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de Notre-Dame de Myans où se trouvait l'image d'une Vierge noire. On entendit "les derniers Demons, qui crioient aux premiers, passons outre, passons outre, ausquels ceux-cy respondoient, Nous ne pouvons, car la brune, c'est-à-dire, la noire, nous empesche". (1).

Le terrain donné au diable. -

Dans une légende recueillie en 1960 à Château-Bernard (Isère), un fouleton, sorte de diabolotin ou d'esprit domestique, importunait les habitants d'une maison, qui pour s'en débarrasser lui firent don d'un petit bois. Il s'agit là sans doute, sous une forme atténuée, du thème du Terrain donné au diable attesté en Dauphiné au XVII^e siècle par trois versions différentes (2) qui ont une conclusion identique : bouleversements et ravages du terrain dès son appartenance au diable.

Conjuration des orages produits par les démons. -

L'une des croyances les plus profondément enracinées dans l'esprit des populations alpestres est que les orages, les tempêtes et la grêle sont produits par des démons. Il est logique, en conséquence, que les prêtres aient un pouvoir sur les éléments naturels par leurs conjurations et leurs

(1) Fodéré, Narration historique, p. 794.

(2) Anonyme, Histoire admirable, et très prodigieuse, d'un terrible abisme... (région de Voiron, Isère) ; visite pastorale de Mgr, Le Camus à la Ruchère, Isère, en 1677 ; Juvénis, Histoire du Dauphiné, p. 24-25 et Gautier, Précis de l'histoire de la ville de Gap, p. 282-284 (La Bâtie-Neuve, Hautes-Alpes).

exorcismes. L'Eglise semble tantôt accepter (1) tantôt rejeter (2) cette conception. Quoi qu'il en soit, le peuple l'a faite sienne et l'a traduite dans maintes légendes.

Nous voudrions seulement attirer l'attention sur deux textes du XVII^e siècle, tous deux inspirés par une critique de la religion catholique, l'un du réformateur Guillaume Farel (1489-1565), qui parle d'une croix des environs de Gap (Hautes-Alpes), dont le crucifix se mettait à bouger par temps d'orage "comme voulant courir contre le diable" (3), l'autre de l'écrivain rallié à la Réforme, Henri Estienne, qui dans son Apologie pour Hérodote (1566), ironise sur le curé ou vicaire de Fillinges (Haute-Savoie) qui en conjurant un orage menaçait de jeter le Saint Sacrement dans la fange s'il n'était plus fort que le diable (4).

(1) Cf. Rituale romanum, Pauli V (Annecy, 1747), p. 366-368 (Preces ad repellendam tempestatem), et Manuale Dioecesis Genevensis, p. 110-116 (Benedictio cum exorcismo contra imminentem tempestatem).

(2) Cf. notamment : Trépier, Le Décanat de Saint-André, Mém. de l'Acad. de Savoie, 3^e série, t. VI, p. 709-710 (procès-verbal de visite pastorale à Saint-Cassien, Savoie, en 1494), et p. 630 (procès-verbal de visite pastorale à Vimines, Savoie, en 1678) ; Constitutions synodales de Genevois, 1678, p. 280 : "Deffendons à tous Prestres de ce Diocèse sous peine d'excommunication de se servir du Saint Sacrement pour conjurer le temps et de le jeter dans le feu pour arrester quelque incendie".

(3) G. Farel, Du vray usage de la croix, p. 145-152.

(4) H. Estienne, Apologie pour Hérodote, t. II~~7~~, p. 310-311 et 389-390.

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Le don d'un animal au diable. -

En 1437, deux femmes d'Arvieux (Hautes-Alpes), accusées de sorcellerie, avouèrent entre autres qu'elles offraient un coq au diable toutes les années, l'une à l'octave du samedi saint, l'autre le jour de la fête de la Sainte Croix (1). A cinq siècles d'intervalle, en 1962, dans un autre village du Briançonnais, Freissinières, on nous affirma qu'une famille de sorciers, les S..., faisaient brûler un coq le soir de la saint Jean en guise de don au diable pour "tenir leur métier".

La tour déplacée par le diable en une nuit. -

En 1503, l'Archiduc d'Autriche Philippe le Beau visite Vienne en Dauphiné. Antoine de Lalaing, seigneur de Montigny, qui relate le voyage, note à cette occasion une amusante légende. A quatorze lieues de Vienne se dressait une tour au pied de laquelle une femme pauvre habitait. Le seigneur de la tour faisait jeter sur elle ses immondices. Alors le fils de la pauvre femme, qui était magicien, pour venger sa mère, contraignit le diable à transporter en une nuit la tour à Vienne (2).

On a relevé dans plusieurs localités de la Savoie et du Dauphiné un thème qui sans être identique n'en est pas moins comparable, celui de la Construction réalisée en une nuit par le diable : château, mur d'enceinte, aqueduc, etc...

(1) Tivollier et Isnel, Le Queyras, t. II, p. 156-157 (Archives de l'Isère : B. 4356, f^o 180 à 199 v^o).

(2) U. Chevalier, Mystère des Trois Doms joué à Romans en 1509, Documents relatifs aux représentations théâtrales en Dauphiné de 1400 à 1535, p. 64* et 67*. Cf. p. 64*, note 1, références et renseignements sur A. de Lalaing.

La synagogue. -

Les mots synagogue, gogue, et leurs variantes, désignent dans le folklore actuel de la Savoie et de la Haute-Savoie, soit l'assemblée des sorciers, soit le groupe qu'ils forment, soit encore les sorciers eux-mêmes ou des êtres fantastiques plus ou moins affiliés au diable.

A partir du XVe siècle on trouve ce mot, avec le sens de sabbat, dans les procédures de sorcellerie notamment (1). Dans un poème intitulé Le Champion des Dames, composé en 1440 par Martin le Franc, prévôt de l'église de Lausanne, il est fait allusion à la synagogue à au moins deux reprises. Ainsi une sorcière...

... "Certaines nuis de la Valpute
Sur un bastonnet s'en aloit
Veoir la sinagogue pute".

Quelques vers plus loin on lit ceci :

... "J'ai Gohier et Quotin
Veue danser et mener la gogue
Et sachiez que grec et latin
Viennent a notre sinagogue". (2).

Au siècle suivant, on trouve de la synagogue une description intéressante dans l'Histoyre de la vie du glorieux Saint Martin, evesque de Tours, mystère joué en 1565 à Saint Martin la Porte (Savoie) à la suite d'un voeu fait par les habitants pour être préservés de la peste. L'un des soixante-treize personnages de ce mystère, le Fol, récite en patois local des vers dont voici la traduction :

"Je vois là-(haut) sur les Encombres (3)
Des courges, melons et concombres,
Je vois là-(haut) une grande fête,
De ceux de la synagogue.

(1) Cf. J. Chevalier, Mémoire sur les hérésies en Dauphiné, p. 136 (1438, Isère) ; ibid., p. 69 (1487 et 1488, Vaudois des vallées briançonnaises) ; Gauduel, Le Saint-Office au château de Quinsonnas, p. 14 (1438, Isère) ; P. Saint-Olive, Etude sur le merveilleux au XVe siècle, p. 12 (1449, Isère) ; Marx, L'Inquisition en Dauphiné, passim ; Lavanchy, Sabbats ou synagogues, p. 433, 437 (Haute-Savoie, 1477).

(2) Martin le Franc, Le Champion des Dames, fragment publié dans la Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, 2e série, t. III (1846), p. 85-87, d'après un ms. de la Bibliothèque Nationale suppl. franç. 632. Cité par J. Chevalier, Mémoire sur les hérésies en Dauphiné, p. 138.

(3) Nom d'un col.

"Les uns (métamorphosés) en ours, les autres en loups..."(1).

En 1619, Jacques Fodéré parle des "assemblées et sinagogues" d'une secte d'hérétiques, composée de Vaudois et de sorciers, qui existait en Faucigny (Haute-Savoie) à la fin du XVe siècle. L'hérésie motiva une mission des cordeliers de Myans et, en 1471, la fondation d'un couvent de cet ordre à Cluses (2).

Des documents analogues existent pour des périodes plus récentes : ainsi, l'expression "synagogue de Satan" se retrouve souvent dans la littérature religieuse anti-maçonnique.

L'homme emmené au sabbat. -

Etienne de Bourbon raconte que dans le diocèse de Genève - qui, au XIIIe siècle englobait la majeure partie du département actuel de la Haute-Savoie - un homme allait au sabbat en compagnie de sorcières que l'on nomme "bonnes choses" (bone res). Son prêtre, sceptique, lui demanda de l'emmener avec lui. L'homme vint le chercher un soir, le fit sortir tout nu de chez lui et enfourcher une poutre qui les attendait devant la porte, en lui enjoignant de ne jamais se signer. Ils furent transportés dans un grand cellier où des dames chantaient en tenant des torches et des lampes. Des tables étaient dressées et couvertes de mets. Lorsqu'on s'apprêta à manger, le prêtre, selon son habitude leva la main pour bénir la table. Aussitôt tout s'évanouit, et les démons s'enfuirent en laissant le prêtre tout nu en Lombardie, sur un tonneau où le propriétaire du cellier le découvrit le lendemain (3).

Tous les éléments du thème du sabbat tel qu'on le décrit encore, se retrouvent ici : le transport sur une poutre (ou un bâton), l'interdiction de faire un geste ou de prononcer une parole sacrés, les chants, les lumières, le repas, la disparition de l'ensemble quand l'invité enfreint l'interdiction qui lui a été faite.

(1) Histoire de la vie du glorieux Saint-Martin, publiée et commentée par F. Truchet, p. 229.

(2) Fodéré, Narration historique, p. 832.

(3) Lecoy de la Marche, Anecdotes historiques d'Etienne de Bourbon, p. 88-89, n° 97.

La chasse sauvage. -

C'est encore Etienne de Bourbon qui relate, à propos de la chasse dite familia Allequini [...] vel Arturi, l'aventure survenue à un paysan aux environs du Mont du Chat, en Savoie : alors qu'il transportait un fagot un soir de lune, il vit une multitude de chiens de chasse qui semblaient aboyer derrière une proie, puis, à leur suite, une multitude de cavaliers et d'hommes à pied. A sa demande, l'un d'eux lui dit qu'ils étaient de la maison du roi Arthur (familia regis Arturi) et l'invita à venir avec eux. Le paysan les suivit jusque dans un palais où des chevaliers et des dames jouaient, dansaient, buvaient et mangeaient. On le conduisit pour dormir dans une chambre somptueuse où une dame d'une grande beauté était étendue dans un lit. Mais il se retrouva, le matin au réveil, honteusement couché sur son fagot et mystifié (1).

Cette description de la chasse sauvage correspond dans ses généralités aux documents modernes ; seule change la dénomination : en effet, la suite du roi Arthur n'est pas connue actuellement dans les Alpes françaises, où chasseur et chasse sauvages portent les noms de Reicheran, Rassasséran, roi Hérode, Haute Chasse, Chiens Minette, Chiens du Mauvais temps, etc.... Par contre, certaines traditions "littéraires" mettent en relation le Mont du Chat avec "Arturus ou Artus, Roy de Bretagne" (2).

(1) Lecoy de la Marche, Anecdotes historiques d'Etienne de Bourbon, p. 321-322, n° 365.

(2) Cf. Fodéré, Narration historique, 1619, p. 926-927.

Les loups-garous. -

La plus ancienne mention de la croyance aux loups-garous dans les Alpes françaises remonte au premier quart du XIII^e siècle : elle figure dans les Otia imperialia de Gervais de Tilbury, ouvrage dédié à l'empereur Othon, achevé vers 1214, et qui contient de précieux renseignements sur les croyances et les légendes du Moyen-Age. Dans la troisième partie de cet ouvrage, les Mirabilia, se trouve un texte intitulé De hominibus qui fuerunt lupi (Des hommes devenus loups) ; après avoir conté l'histoire d'un soldat auvergnat changé en loup qui reprit sa forme humaine à la suite d'un coup reçu, Gervais de Tilbury cite le cas d'un habitant de Mantale (probablement Mantaille, dans la Drôme) qui, aux changements de lune, se transformait en loup (1).

A partir du XVI^e siècle, les textes concernant la croyance aux loups-garous deviennent relativement nombreux et subissent l'influence du concept de sorcellerie (2). Aux XVIII^e, XIX^e et XX^e siècles, les documents continuent d'abonder, mais aucun d'eux ne situera aux changements de lune la transformation en loup.

(1) G. de Tilbury, Otia imperialia, Tertia decisio, CXX.

(2) Cf. notamment : Essais d'Antoine Froment, p. 271-274 et p. 343 (note d'A. Albert citant François Marc, auteur d'un ouvrage intitulé Decisiones aureoe, Lyon, 1584, Quaestio 258, pars secunda, De secta Valdensium) ; Paradin, Cronique de Savoie, p. 146 ; Histoire de la vie du glorieux Saint-Martin, publiée par F. Truchet, p. 229 ; J. Bodin, De la démonomanie des sorciers, p. 211 ; Blet, "Brûleurs de loups", B.V. de la Soc. dauph. d'Ethnol. et d'Arch., n° 173 ; Ch. Jaillet, Pour susciter une étude sur le loup en Dauphiné (citant un registre paroissial de 1673) ; E. de Ville, Questions notables sur le sortilège, p. 19 ; L. Ménabréa, Jugements rendus contre les animaux, p. 467-468 (citant une procédure de sorcellerie) ; procédure de sorcellerie datée de 1682 (Archives de Savoie, B. 07096).

Les lutins chassés d'une maison par exorcisme. -

Trois documents du début du XVIIe siècle attestent ce thème. En 1615, dans la maison d'un seigneur du Dauphiné, aux environs de Valence (Drôme), un lutin jouait mille tours aux occupants. L'évêque de Valence accompagné de six ou sept prêtres vint bénir la maison et y prononcer les exorcismes de l'Eglise (1). Dans le premier quart du XVIIe siècle, un "esprit follet de ceux qu'on appelle lutins" hantait la maison de Pierre Critan, plébain de Thônes (Haute-Savoie). Saint François de Sales en personne l'exorcise (2). Enfin, quand les premières bernardines réformées s'installèrent en 1622 dans une maison de Rumilly (Haute-Savoie), mise à leur disposition par le sénateur de Montfalcon, elles y trouvèrent une "foule de lutins" qui en furent chassés par les exorcismes du R.P. Billet, oratorien ; on ajoute que les lutins reprirent possession des lieux après le départ des religieuses (3).

Les interventions épiscopales dans les cas de maisons hantées étaient jusqu'au XVIIIe siècle très officiellement admises. Un exorcisme spécial, intitulé "Exorcismus domus a daemonio vexatae", figure en effet dans le Manuel du Diocèse de Genève de 1747 (4), qui demeura en vigueur tant que subsista l'ancien diocèse de Genève, mais qui en fait fut même en usage dans le diocèse de ~~Genève~~, Annecy jusque vers 1869 (5).

C'est dire qu'il ne faut pas s'étonner si, dans les légendes, on rencontre encore tant d'histoires de maisons hantées, toutes basées sur le même schéma traditionnel : un esprit frappeur ou un esprit domestique (sarvan, follet, etc.) tourmente les habitants d'une maison en provoquant des phénomènes sonores, en déplaçant les meubles et les objets, en s'attaquant parfois aux personnes elles-mêmes, ceci jusqu'au jour où l'on fait appel à un prêtre pour chasser l'esprit.

(1) B. Jacquinet, Adresse chrestienne. Cité par C. Perrossier, Diableries en Dauphiné, p. 267-269.

(2) Procès de canonisation de Saint François de Sales, 1er procès, t. III, déposition n° 32, et Ch. Aug. de Sales, Vie du bien-heureux François de Sales, p. 375-376.

(3) J. Grossi, La Vie de la mère de Ballon, p. 223-225.

(4) Manuale diocesi genevensis, p. 99-105. Publié en appendice au Rituel romain imprimé à Annecy en 1747, qui est la reproduction exacte du Rituel précédent publié en 1674 par Jean d'Arenthon d'Alex, évêque de Genève.

(5) Cf. P.-M. Lafrasse, Etude sur la liturgie dans l'ancien diocèse de Genève, Mém. et doc. publiés par l'Acad. Salésienne t. 26, p. 51-52, t. 27, p. 154.

Les esprits qui enrichissent leurs propriétaires. -

A Genève, aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles, le Consistoire eut l'occasion à plusieurs reprises de faire comparaître devant lui des gens qui se procuraient en cachette des mandragores et les conservaient chez eux comme "diabes familiares". En 1682, deux habitants de Magland (Haute-Savoie) sont accusés d'avoir voulu acheter à un orfèvre genevois des bêtes qu'ils nomment "sprints rares", et qui, par l'entremise du diable, devaient faire fructifier l'argent placé auprès d'elles (1).

La croyance à des esprits zoomorphes, d'origine diabolique, qui procurent de l'argent à leurs propriétaires, est encore très répandue dans certaines régions du Dauphiné (Hautes-Alpes, Drôme) où elle se confond avec la croyance aux esprits domestiques. On leur donne les noms de mandragoule (qui n'est autre que mandragore) et de matagot (mot formé par attraction paronymique entre magot et mandragore), et l'on cite encore des familles qui se sont enrichies grâce à eux.

Le serpent porteur d'une pierre précieuse. -

Très nombreux sont les témoignages qui attestent dans les Alpes françaises la croyance à un serpent porteur d'une pierre précieuse, dénommé vuivre, coulobre, serpent volant ou dragon. Un intéressant document apporte la preuve que cette croyance n'était pas, dans le dernier quart du XVII^e siècle, l'apanage des classes populaires et qu'un simple fermier pouvait, en s'appuyant sur elle, mystifier et escroquer des personnages haut placés : il s'agit des "remarques de l'an 1680" notées en marge d'un registre paroissial par Pierre de Rosarges, curé d'Aoste (Isère) (2). On y peut lire qu'un fermier de Faverges (Isère) "a tué un serpent prodigieux à une ou deux heures de nuit, qu'on nomme couleuvre et qu'on dit porter un escarboucle, lequel l'enterrat sans faire bruit". Ayant appris que le fermier avait l'escarboucle chez lui, plusieurs personnes, dont un baron et l'évêque de Bellay, lui offrirent d'importantes sommes d'argent pour l'acheter. Dans l'impossibilité de produire le bijou, l'escroc fut emprisonné à La Tour du Pin.

(1) Registre du Conseil, vol. 182. Cité par le Dr Ladame, Les Mandragores ou diables familiares à Genève, p. 274-277.

(2) Doncieux, En feuilletant les registres paroissiaux, p. 128.

Le contact avec un personnage sacré, qui permet de voir le monde surnaturel. -

Ce thème extrêmement curieux figure, pour la première fois semble-t-il, dans la vie de Saint Hugues de Bonnevaux, abbé cistercien qui vivait en Dauphiné au XIIe siècle (le manuscrit est de l'écriture du XIIIe). Le saint abbé venu prier devant l'église du village de Paris, au diocèse de Vienne, demanda aux personnes qui l'entouraient si l'une d'elles avait connu François de Roias. Un homme âgé répondit qu'il avait été son courrier. Le saint abbé lui dit alors de regarder vers la porte de l'église et il lui demanda ce qu'il voyait. Comme le vieillard ne voyait rien de plus que les autres personnes, saint Hugues lui dit : "Pose ton pied sur le mien". (Pone pedem tuum super pedem meu) A peine l'eut-il fait que l'homme s'écria : "Seigneur, je vois le seigneur François devant la porte de l'église". Ce chevalier, tué d'un coup de lance, aimait venir prier dans cette église (1).

Le motif du Contact magique appartient à plusieurs thèmes légendaires du folklore dauphinois et savoyard ; voici les deux principaux :

- L'homme qui voit le diable ou des revenants en posant son pied sur celui d'un curé.

- L'homme qui est transporté par magie d'un lieu à un autre en posant son pied sur celui d'un sorcier.

Dans les deux cas l'idée générale est la même : le contact physique avec un personnage investi d'un pouvoir surnaturel ou magique (curé ou sorcier), permet à un simple humain de participer au monde surnaturel qui jusque là lui était inaccessible.

(1) Saint Hugues de Bonnevaux par un Moine de Tamié, p. 306-307 ; l'auteur reproduit le texte de la Vita Beati Hugonis tirée en 1755 d'un recueil de vies de saints écrit au XIIIe siècle. Cf. G. de Manteyer, Les dieux des Alpes de Ligurie, p. 83.

La Procession des morts. -

Dans les Histoires prodigieuses extraites de plusieurs fameux auteurs, de Boaistuau, etc., (1), on apprend qu'en 1567, durant six jours de suite, on vit sortir d'une "isle" de la plaine d'Aiton, sous Miolans (Savoie), trois hommes vêtus de noir, qui marchaient en ordre de procession, suivis d'une dame en noir qui se lamentait et d'une foule de gens vêtus de blanc qui manifestaient leur joie. En arrivant à une autre île *la* ~~ma~~ procession s'évanouissait ; il en était de même si l'on tentait de s'en approcher de trop près. Bien que cela ne soit pas précisé, on peut penser qu'il s'agit d'une procession de revenants.

Benôte Rencurel, la bergère qui au XVII^e siècle est à l'origine du sanctuaire de Notre-Dame du Laus (Hautes-Alpes), dont la vie est tissée de miracles et de faits merveilleux, rencontra par deux fois, en 1666 et 1702, la procession des âmes du purgatoire "revêtues de formes humaines", qui, le soir de la Toussaint, passait près d'une croix où elle priait (2).

Le folklore alpestre, savoyard et haut-alpin notamment, a conservé de nombreuses versions de la Procession des morts qui, souvent, se manifeste à la Toussaint en empruntant un itinéraire déterminé. Cette croyance était si vive que, dans certaines localités dauphinoises au début du siècle, on laissait dans les maisons, la veille de la Toussaint, un peu de nourriture pour les défunts (3).

(1) Sur les différentes éditions de cet ouvrage collectif, cf. Brunet, Manuel du Libraire, et Caillet, Dictionnaire bibliographique des sciences psychiques et occultes. Nous citons ce document d'après le bibliophile Jacob, Curiosités infernales, p. 331-332, qui se réfère à une édition de 1571.

(2) Anonyme, N^oD. du Laus et la vénérable soeur Benôte d'après les manuscrits authentiques conservés au pieux sanctuaire, p. 329-330. On désigne par "manuscrits du Laus" plusieurs mémoires de la fin du XVII^e siècle et du début du XVIII^e.

(3) On trouvera d'autres histoires de revenants dans : Pierre le Vénérable, Des Miracles, chapitre 23 (XII^e siècle), cité par Lacroix, Etude sur le canton du Grand Serre, p. 244-245 ; Froment, Essais, p. 288-289, 296 ; Jacquinet, Adresse Chrestienne, cité par C. Perrossier, Diableries en Dauphiné, p. 265-267 ; Anonyme, Vie de la Mère de Ponçonas, p. 134, 269-270, 272, 273-274, 336, 338 ; Anonyme, Histoire admirable advenue en La Rochette ; Grossi, Vie de la mère de Ballon, p. 373-374.

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Après avoir énuméré, pour une région donnée, des versions anciennes et contemporaines de mêmes thèmes légendaires, il nous resterait à recenser les thèmes conservés par la littérature orale dont on n'a pas retrouvé trace dans les documents anciens. Nous nous bornerons à signaler que ces thèmes sont extrêmement nombreux. Deux faits peuvent en donner l'explication :

1°) Le caractère tendancieux et, par là, sélectif de la littérature ancienne ;

2°) L'inexistence, avant la période scientifique, d'enquêtes objectives et systématiques.

Charles JOISTEN
Conservateur au Musée Daupinois
Grenoble.



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LES LEGENDES POPULAIRES DANS LA LITTÉRATURE ANCIENNE BULGARE

Le problème le plus difficile posé devant les folkloristes bulgares, c'est la création d'une histoire du folklore poétique bulgare. Dans une pareille histoire doivent être résolue toute une série de questions, comme le problème de la division en périodes, le problème du développement des genres, les influences entre les peuples balkaniques etc. Mais l'obstacle principal, c'est l'absence d'^{écrits} ~~enregistrements~~ folkloriques avant le XIX-ème siècle et l'absence de textes authentiques du folklore de l'ancienne époque. A cet égard les folkloristes bulgares se trouvent dans une situation peu avantageuse: dès les plus anciennes époques ne sont connus que quelques enregistrements des chants populaires - dans un dictionnaire ~~grec~~ ^{-grec} bulgare de XVI-ème siècle, ~~publié~~ ^{publié} par C.Gianneli et A.Vaillant; dans un recueil de XVIII-ème siècle, conservé ~~à~~ ^à la Bibliothèque Universitaire ~~en~~ ^à Erlangen et ~~publié~~ ^{publié} par T.Tesemann; dans des recueils ^{manuscrits} bulgares ~~conservés~~ ^{conservés} ~~de~~ ^{de} XVIII-ème siècle. Faute d'anciens ^{écrits} ~~enregistrements~~, il faut juger de l'état du folklore bulgare dans le passé, soit des recueils folkloriques édités à partir de XIX-ème siècle, ou d'une manière indirecte ^{des} /données historiques, notes de voyage ~~des~~ ^{des} etc.) ~~explorées par les savants à l'époque des Balkans.~~

En cherchant des sources pour l'histoire du folklore bulgare, il faut arrêter notre attention sur l'ancienne littérature bulgare, où se sont infiltrées ^{très tôt} ~~de très tôt~~ les oeuvres et les motifs folkloriques. Sous ce rapport il y a déjà des études très intéressantes faites par M.Dragomanov, Ior.Ivanov, A.P.Stoilov, Zv.Romanska, D.Petkanova etc. On a examiné surtout les relations mutuelles entre le folklore et la littérature au Moyen Age,

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cependant on n'a pas encore posé le problème pour la "restauration" des oeuvres du folklore bulgare sur la base des anciens monuments ~~littéraires~~ de la littérature ^{Bulgare}. Et une "restauration" de ce genre est bien possible surtout dans le domaine des légendes populaires /avec ce terme je vais comprendre ce ~~qui~~ que nous appelons en bulgare "predania" et "leguendi"). ~~Il s'agit d'une partie de la littérature bulgare et de son rôle dans la formation des légendes populaires.~~

On peut chercher des reflets des légendes populaires, principalement dans trois domaines de l'ancienne littérature bulgare: dans les hagiographies /les biographies des saints/, dans les apocryphes et dans les chroniques et les récits historiques. ^{A part} Avec cela on n'exclut ^{pas} ~~non plus~~ ^{les} d'autres genres, par exemple les éloges et les sermons, mais les genres ~~hagiographiques et narratifs~~ ont donné les plus grandes possibilités d'une utilisation textuelle des légendes populaires. Dans ~~les hagiographies et les biographies des saints~~ et les apocryphes cela a été défini aussi ^{par le} de caractère du genre - dans les deux cas le fantastique et le légendaire joue un grand rôle dans la composition, dans les relations des événements, dans la création des personnages littéraires et dans le style.

Les hagiographies ^{constituent} font une domaine, qui est largement répandue dans l'ancienne littérature bulgare. Elles existent encore dans la période initiale de son histoire, ^{aux} "IX-X ème siècles, et leurs premiers héros sont les créateurs de l'alphabet slave Cyrille et Methode et leurs disciples. Pour certains entre eux, comme par exemple l'évêque Kliment et Naoum, on a gardé longtemps des légendes populaires. Ici sont possibles deux variantes: la première - les légendes populaires peut-être proviennent des monuments littéraires - et la seconde - certains épisodes dans les monuments littéraires sont créés sur les légendes populaires.

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Je voudrais m'arrêter sur un exemple plus significatif - les légendes populaires pour le célèbre saint bulgare Ivan Rilski, qui a vécu ^{aux} pendant IX-X^e siècles. Pour la grande vénération dont il a joui au cours des siècles témoigne non seulement le monastère, qui porte son nom, mais aussi les nombreuses oeuvres littéraires dédiées à lui au cours de Moyen Age. A partir de XII^e siècle jusqu'^{à nos} jours ^{il existe nous connaissons} nous sont arrivées 8 biographies de Ivan Rilski en nombreuses copies. L'analyse de ces biographies prouve qu'elles sont aussi basées ^{tant} sur des faits que sur des légendes. C'est évident, comme cela est propre à la littérature religieuse, l'image du saint est idéalisée; pour cette idéalisation contribuent particulièrement beaucoup les moments légendaires. Mais il faut souligner, que parallèlement avec la biographie littéraire de Ivan Rilski ^{il} existe aussi une biographie légendaire du folklore populaire. Il y a toute une série de légendes populaires pour Ivan Rilski, largement répandues sur tout le territoire de la Bulgarie. En comparant la biographie littéraire et la biographie folklorique, on remarque tout de suite une proximité et une analogie. Les biographies littéraires composées dans les milieux du peuple et écrites par des simples moines sont naturellement plus proches de la légende populaire. Tel est le cas avec la plus ancienne biographie de Ivan Rilski, conservée de XII^e siècle. Mais l'élément légendaire est présent aussi dans la biographie de Ivan Rilski, écrite pendant le XIV^e siècle par le célèbre écrivain bulgare Evtimij, patriarche de Tirnovo. La comparaison soigneuse des différentes biographies littéraires de Ivan Rilski avec les légendes populaires recueillies pour lui donne une matière très intéressante: d'un^e côté elle nous aide de restituer le contenu et le texte d'une série de légendes populaires, créées au Moyen Age, et de cette façon de suivre l'histoire d'un cycle

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des oeuvres folkloriques, et d'autre côté + de découvrir les rapports entre le folklore et la littérature dans les temps les plus anciens. Les légendes populaires sont localisées ordinairement par la géographie; leur inclusion dans les oeuvres littéraires leur accorde un caractère national.

Cela qui est mentionné ici pour les légendes de la vie de Ivan Rilski, concerne aussi les hagiographies /biographies littéraires/ qui existent pour les autres saints bulgares. Mais dans l'ancienne littérature bulgare on a créé aussi des oeuvres littéraires entièrement légendaires, liées ^{a)} des personnages historiques, telle ^{que} qu'elle était la légende de Salonique - une brève biographie légendaire pour Constantin-Cyrille, écrite probablement au XII^{ème} siècle.

L'analyse des ~~hagiographies~~ biographies des saints bulgares nous désigne encore un moment: la manière de laquelle est née la légende populaire. Cela est montré par un phénomène intéressant - "le manque du côté légendaire". Dans la ~~hagiographie~~ ^{vie} du martyr de Sofia Gueorgui Novi / écrite par le pape Pejo au début de XVI^{ème} siècle, on raconte comment a été organisé l'enlèvement du corps de martyr brûlé: pour tromper les autorités turques, l'enlèvement a été présenté comme un miracle - les dépouilles mortelles du saint s'étaient trouvées pendant la nuit d'une manière miraculeuse dans une église de Sofia. Le pape Pejo écrit au XVI^{ème} siècle une biographie relativement réaliste et réduit l'élément miraculeux. Il montre à la fois de quelle façon ont été créées aux milieux du peuple les légendes pour les saints, comment est apparu et développé le genre de la légende populaire.

Le second large domaine dans l'ancienne littérature bulgare dans laquelle prend place la légende, ce sont les apocryphes. Les

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apocryphes par leur propre caractère sont des oeuvres légendaires typiques. Dans leur composition font partie sans doute, aussi certains éléments populaires légendaires, particulièrement dans les apocryphes des bogomiles bulgares. Cependant, il faut souligner ici une autre circonstance de toute importance: le passage des légendes apocryphes dans le folklore. Dans sa remarquable oeuvre "Livres et légendes des Bogomiles" /1925/ Jordan Ivanov a publié 16 légendes populaires avec un caractère dualiste de bogomile. Voilà quelques titres: "Dieu et le Diable créent ensemble le monde, ensuite leur lutte éternelle", "Le partage du monde entre Dieu et le Diable", "Adam donne un écrit au Diable, pour lui permettre de labourer la terre" etc. Ce sont des légendes populaires, dont la source nous pouvons trouver dans les apocryphes. En comparant soigneusement les légendes dualistes populaires aux apocryphes littéraires correspondants, nous pouvons expliquer un tas de questions de l'origine des légendes populaires, le temps de leur création et les changements ^{structuraux} (qu'elles subissent. De cette façon nous pénétrons dans l'histoire des légendes populaires, qui ^{c'est} ~~va~~ dire - dans l'histoire du folklore. Le problème devient beaucoup plus intéressant, car il s'agit des motifs littéraires et folkloriques avec une large diffusion internationale. Donc, on jette la lumière sur un moment, très important de l'histoire du folklore bulgare - ce sont ses relations avec le folklore des autres peuples balkaniques et slaves.

Le troisième groupe des oeuvres, qui peuvent nous servir de source pour l'histoire des légendes populaires bulgares, ~~se~~ sont les chroniques et les récits historiques. L'ancienne littérature bulgare est pauvre en général ^{en ce} d'un genre pareil des oeuvres originales; un petit nombre de chroniques historiques sont arrivées jusqu'à ~~nos~~ ^{nos}. Pourtant nous sommes en possession de quelques

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oeuvres capitales: les inscriptions proto-bulgares sur pierre en grecque, qui datent de VIII-IX^{ème} siècles, la liste des noms des khans proto-bulgares, les Annales apocryphes bulgares, la Chronique bulgare de XV^{ème} siècle, certains récits et notes d'annales etc. Partout dans ces oeuvres on peut trouver des motifs légendaires avec une base folklorique supposée. Sans doute le plus intéressant monument à cet égard, ^{ce sont} c'est les Annales apocryphes bulgares de XI^{ème} siècle. Dans ~~la~~ première partie elles présentent une variante d'apocryphe pour le prophète Isaïe; la deuxième partie est un récit légendaire historique, qui commence avec le roi Slav /d'après les annales, le premier roi bulgare/ et finit aussi avec des souverains légendaires bulgares. Les annales apocryphes bulgares présentent un grand intérêt comme ~~une~~ oeuvre littéraire; au point de vue de la composition, elles sont combinées avec un apocryphe. La matière historique est utilisée librement, l'oeuvre entière est créée sur la légende; on a fait adopter par l'usage une conception de messie - le peuple bulgare est élu de dieu, le dieu choisit le lieu de son établissement et envoie son prophète Isaïe pour le conduire dans son pays destiné. Il est difficile de séparer ici la légende littéraire de la légende populaire, mais cette oeuvre désigne à quel point la légende a été répandue ^{pendant la)} ~~en~~ période du Moyen Age bulgare et quel grand rôle ^{jeu} ~~tr~~ elle dans la littérature. Sur ce plan, dans cette atmosphère, il faut chercher la place de la légende populaire dans la vie spirituelle ^b du Bulgare dans une époque si loin ^{le} - XI^{ème} siècle.

Ici je décris seulement les contours ^u de problème du reflet de la légende populaire dans les monuments de l'ancienne littérature bulgare; le temps que j'ai à ma disposition ne me permet pas de faire un analyse concret. C'était très important pour moi de

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donner seulement une idée générale pour les perspectives de l'étude, qui nous propose l'ancienne littérature bulgare comme source pour l'histoire de la légende populaire et le folklore d'une façon générale. Mais le problème n'est pas lié seulement avec l'histoire du folklore bulgare, il n'est pas uniquement bulgare au sens concret, il est aussi théorique. L'examen de cette question nous donne la possibilité d'un côté de caractériser certaines particularités principales des anciennes littératures du Moyen Age et d'autre côté + de pénétrer plus profondément dans le développement historique de la légende populaire.

Petar Dinekov

MMB Editorial Note

Obviously, the last page of G. Profeta's paper (10, bibliography, after the 11th page of the narrative text) belongs to a different text redaction and typing, suggesting that it completed (now incompletely) a version which also had the endnote figures properly inserted inside the text. In the printed Program of the Congress (only there), Ch. Joisten also had inside the title the term *écrites* [written]. He might have thought that *attestations* would be obvious, especially from the content of his presentation, that it included and focused on written documents (from that particular century), and thus that emphasizing the obvious was unnecessary, redundant. Respecting/reproducing his own words choice, in the present table of contents his own title takes precedence. In all printed material (Program and List of Participants) Dinekov's first name is transliterated as Petr, which is much more in the line with his original (Slavonic and phonetical) transliteration. The name Petar, in this volume table of contents and next to pictures, is in accord with his own signature spelling, as typewritten by himself at the end of his text. The title of G. Burde-Schneidewind's paper also differs in the Program, where it appears as *Sage und Wirklichkeit-Beziehungen zwischen historischem Ereignis und Sagengestaltung*. Featured here by his text and not by any pictures, Leopold Kretzenbacher could be noticeable in the photos of the REF/JEF 1-2/2021: 285 and 1-2/2022: 277. His identification, however, wouldn't have been possible without the existence of Klaus Beitzl's folkloristic online expo (ISFNR & SIEF photos from late 1960s and early 1970s) at https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/beitzl_expo/browser.php?pag=1.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Leopold Kretzenbacher
D.8000 MÜNCHEN 13, Adalbertstr.94, BRD

Referat (Druckfassung) für den V. Kongress der
International Society of Folk-Narrative Research, Bukarest 1969 :

KULTURBEDINGUNGEN UND FUNKTIONEN DER MITTELALTERLICHEN LEGENDE

Unverkennbar steht unter den Gattungen der mittelalterlichen "Volks-"Erzählung die Legende mit den ihr eng verwandten anderen Formungen einer religiösen sogenannten "Volkspoesie"¹ (wie Legendenlied, Hymnus, "Leich") an erster Stelle nach Anzahl, Funktionsfülle, Wirkbreite und -dauer. Ihre volle Bedeutung innerhalb des geistigen Lebens ist in Ost und West freilich nur vor dem geschichtlichen Prägungs- und Wirkungsbilde von Staat und Kirche mittelalterlich-theokratischer Ordnung mit Priester- und Mönchtum, mit volknaher Klosterkultur und äußerer wie innerer Mission sichtbar zu machen. Freilich war die Legende des Mittelalters, ohne die es überhaupt kaum ein Verstehen der Bildaussagen etwa der Hochkunst gäbe, von Seiten der Volkskunde wie der in ihr integrierten "Religiösen Volkskunde" (Wallfahrtswesen, Ikonographie, Liedsang, Volksschauspiel usw.) allzulang als Stiefkind minder beachtet worden. Zu sehr war hier die Verurteilung durch Martin Luther 1537 wirksam, der zufolge die "Legende" recht eigentlich eine "Lügende" sei.² So hat denn auch insbesondere im Gefolge der Glaubensspaltung ~~im 19. Jh.~~ noch nahezu das ganze 19. Jh. in der Legende weniger die geistliche Schwester der Sage oder des Märchens (es gibt ja auch "Legendenmärchen"³) als vielmehr eine Art verwilderter Religions- und Kirchengeschichte gesehen.

Also bedurfte es eines völlig neuen Verständnisses für das "Mittelalter" in Ost und West, um auch die Lebensbedingungen der Legende nicht nur im Rahmen religiöser Devotion, sondern eben im Gefüge der Gesamtstruktur mittelalterlichen Seins zu erkennen. Hier aber ist es grundlegend wichtig, unter "Mittelalter" nicht nur seine frühe und seine hohe Zeit zu verstehen. Auch der in der Erzählform "Legende" samt ihren Sonderformen "Legendenballade" und "Legendenspiel" breit ausschwingende, in Motivenreichtum und Formenfülle sich üppig auslebende "Herbst des Mittelalters" ist mit einzubeziehen. Gerade hier zeigen sich nämlich auch im Erzählerischen erstaunliche Kontinuitäten. Entgegen manchen Anschauungen auch noch von heute blieben nämlich die bereits frühmittelalterlichen und mithin lange vor den großen, z.T. systematischen Legendensammlungen (Legenda aurea; Dialogus miraculorum; Speculum historiale; ~~Minerva~~ Promptuarium; Magnum Legendarium Austriacum; Passional usw.) bestehenden Gegebenheiten des

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kirchlich-offiziellen, d.h. im Westen des römisch-dogmatisch bestimmten Glaubenslebens wie jene der vielgestaltigen sogenannten "Volksfrömmigkeit" mindestens bis zur protestantischen Reformation in Gesamteuropa gültig. Dies gilt trotz des Schismas von 1054 und seiner zunächst doch offenkundig nur kirchenrechtlich-hierarchischen Folgeerscheinungen. Weiters, trotz der zunehmenden, historisch bedingten, machtpolitisch ~~bedingten~~ ^{bedingten} Entfremdung zwischen Byzanz und Rom in beiden Bereichen des mittelalterlichen, d.h. des gesamten vorreformatorischen Christentums im Abendlande. Das bedeutet aber zumal für die Legende als einer so kennzeichnenden Ausdrucksform des Geistig-Religiösen im Erzählerischen, daß ihre Vorbedingungen als Gattung des Mittelalters seit dem Frühchristentum über das Medium Aevum bis zur westlichen Glaubensspaltung in Orthodoxie und Katholizismus die gleichen oder einander weitestgehend ähnlich bleiben. Das erweist die Erkenntnis vielfältiger Motivengleichheit aus breiter Stoffentlehnung aus jenem unerschöpflichen Born gemeinsamen Erbes an Erzählerischem, den wir unter dem Sammelnamen "Apokryphen"⁴ begreifen. Vor allem diese Apokryphen bieten und vererben Einzelmotive und gebündelte Formungen des religiös tendierten "Erzählerischen" in Fülle. Ihre Spuren lassen sich über das Mittelalter hinaus ebenso in der spätbyzantinischen wie in der nachreformatorischen, d.h. zumal der barockkatholischen Legendengeneration und-tradition funktional verwendet und dichtest gestreut erkennen. Das gilt auch noch im 17. und in noch späteren orthodoxen Legendensammlungen etwa des Athon (Agapio Landes), in den neugriechischen, den rumänischen, den südslawischen (Samuil Bakadžić, Vićentije Rakić) Übersetzern und Neuformern. Noch im Gegenwartserbe, wie es sich in überlieferten Handschriften, in gedruckten Sammlungen, in der Verwendung zu Bildauslegung und Verkündigung⁵ zumal in den Bereichen von Katholizismus und Orthodoxie, freilich nur selten im Erzählgut protestantischer Geistigkeit erfassen läßt, tritt das Erbe der Legendenprägung des Mittelalters deutlich hervor, läßt sich sein Kulturumgrund von einst zusamt seinen primären und sekundären Funktionen erfassen. Dazu mögen einige ausgewählte, freilich notgedrungen nur knapp skizzierte Legenden als Beispiele dienen.

In allen christlichen Konfessionen gibt es Legenden vom "Verletzten Kultbild".⁶ Ein Kult-Gegenstand (die Hostie; der Crucifixus; die Ikone; das Standbild Christi, Mariens, einer Heiligengestalt) wird durch freventlichen Insult "verletzt" (durch Steinwurf, Schuß, Hieb, Stich oder Schmähung u.ä.). Nach den von der Religionsphänomenologie als weltweit gültig erkannten Gesetzen von der Kultbild-Beseelung (Ensomatose, Empsychose) muß sich das im Bilde dargestellte Numen auch gegen den Insult wehren, sein numinosum tremendum zu erweisen: es blutet,

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erbleicht, bewegt sich, schlägt zurück, läßt den Frevler vom Blitz aus heiterem Himmel erschlagen werden; seine Hand wird gelähmt, er erblindet usw. Diese allgemein menschliche Grundvorstellung wird unter besonderen geschichtlichen, konfessionspolemischen und anderen Kulturbedingungen zur zeit- und lokalbezogen verschiedenen Aussage: in den "Hostienschändungen" und Kreuz-Verunehrungen durch Juden zu Byzanz oder auch noch im mittleren und westlichen Abendlande, zumal in den stark religiös-gefärbt antisemitisch eingestellten Perioden des 13. und des 14. Jhs. spiegelt sich hier die nicht nur theologische Auseinandersetzung zwischen Judentum und Christentum. Zu den "Juden" als angeblichen Hostien- und Kreuzbildschändern, im christozentrischen Byzanz seit dem 6. Jh., gesellen sich im westlichen Abendlande gerade im Hochmittelalter die Sektierer, die Haeretiker, in denen die Transsubstantiations-Zweifel an der wirklichen Gegenwart Christi im Altarssakrament laut werden. Die Kirche wehrt sich außertheologisch auch noch durch funktional eingesetzte Legenden (Bluthostien; Wunder von Bolsena; Gregoriusmesse u. dgl.). Dazu durch die wiederum in Legenden "begründete" Einsetzung des Sonder-Festes Fronleichnam (Corperis Christi). Visionslegenden sollen den per miraculum jenseitig bekundeten Willen zur Verfestigung des Eucharistie-Dogmas (Jubiläum von Lüttich; Orviet-Corporale) bekräftigen. Spätmittelalterlich werden aus den ehemals als Juden angefeindeten Hostien- und Kultbildschändern andere "Frevler". Nunmehr sind es die "Ketzer", d. h. die Andersgläubigen. Der Reihe nach sind es, besonders nach der stark marianisch sich ausrichtenden Devotion, die nun "geschändete Marienbilder" im Vordergrund der Legenden stehen läßt, die Hussiten, die "Türken", die Lutheraner, die kalviner. Alle jedenfalls, die den Überschwang der Marienverehrung in Spätmittelalter und Barock nicht mitmachten. Erst vom späteren 17. Jh. an treten mit dem allmählichen Aufhören der Konfessionspolemiken allgemein die "Spieler, Säufer, Hurer" als die lusoires schlechthin in den motivlich ansonsten gleichbleibenden Legenden auf.

Wiederum auf Apokryphen (Visio Petri, Visio Pauli, früh verschriftlichte Katabasis-Berichte der Jenseitsschau, Visio Tyndali u. ä.) beruhen die im Hochmittelalter jäh ansteigenden, zur Navigatio Brandani und zur Divina Commedia führenden Legenden um Höllenstrafen mit geradezu pervers anmutenden Vorstellungen der Gräßlichkeit des Jenseitsschicksals der Verdammten in ausgesuchten Sondermotiven (Höllensstuhl, Höllentrunk), die sich in der Tympanonplastik, in der Freskomalerei, in der hagiographischen Literatur und in den Legenden von Jenseitssühne für Diesseitsschuld ebenso spiegeln wie in der römisch-katholischen Fegefeuer-(Purgatorium-)Lehre. Auch hier wieder sind es aus Apokryphen und Legendenformungen des Mittelalters bis zur Gegenwart

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die schon früh in Ost und West begegnenden marianischen Neuprägungen von der Macht der Panagia Theotokos, als Mediatrix gratiarum sogar noch die Seelen der zur Hölle Verdammt (trotz Christi Richterspruch, aber mit seiner nachträglichen Billigung!) aus dem Feuersumpf retten zu können. ("Mariens Gang zu den Qualen", *Ἀποκάλυψις τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου περὶ τῶν κόλασεων*; in *Russisch*; Slovo presvjatyja Bogorodica o pokoj vsego mira; kroat.: Ctenie svete Marie o mukach).⁸ Es sind wiederum kulturhistorisch sehr bedeutsame Legendenmotive, wenn von dieser Rettungsmöglichkeit gewisse Verdammte Seelen (z. B. slowen. Tri pogubljene duše)⁹ absolut wegen der von ihnen im Leben begangenen crimina capitalia wie Elternmord, Kindesmord, Inzest, Verweigerung der Patenschaft, "Verzagen" an Gottes Barmherzigkeit¹⁰ ausgeschlossen bleiben, wie sie auch nach der mittelalterlichen Poenentialpraxis der Romkirche nur durch lebenslange Buße hatten gesühnt werden können.¹¹ Nahezu alle seit der frühmittelalterlichen Ausformung bei den Einzelvölkern nachlebenden "Teufelsbündner"-Legenden um das besonders scharf von den Kirchen geahndete crimen der latria, idolatria gehören mit besonders reichem Anteil der Südostvölker hierher.¹² Ein Sonderbeispiel daraus, der Pakt, den die Ureltern Adam und Eva nach ihrer Vertreibung aus dem Paradiese in äußerster existenzieller Not, das nackte eigene Leben und das der Kinder zu retten, mit dem Teufel als dem Herrn alles dessen, was "außerhalb Gottes und seines Reiches" liegt, zu schließen, kommt aus Apokryphen des slawischen (und bisher nur im Kirchenslawischen auf so früher Stufe nachgewiesenen) "Lebens Adams und Evas" ("Slovo o Adamě i o Evzě").¹³ Die entsprechenden Stellen sind südeuropäische Zugaben zur apokryphen Moses-Apokalypse. Sie spiegeln sich ebenso in einem Freskobilde zu Veronet in dem rumänischen Moldaukloster (1547)¹⁴ wie in neugriechischen Legenden der Peloponnes (191929)¹⁵ und auch noch, nach kennzeichnenden, ins Märchenhafte gehenden Umformungen auf Mallorca¹⁶ und ins Schwankhafte gewendet bei den Siebenbürger Rumänen.¹⁷

Des weiteren lassen sich hier Legenden als Erbe der Apokryphen und in der Funktion verschiedener kirchlicher Verurteilungen im Gewande der Warnung vor Hybris und Schuld mit dem sichtbaren Erweis der Gerechtigkeit Gottes in seinen Wundern anführen. Aus frühbyzantinischen Apokryphen formt der Mund der Erzähler, fixiert im Schriftzeugnis der belehrenden und rühmenden Hagio-graphen das diesseitig sich noch erfüllende Schicksal der Freveltänzerin Salome, der Tochter der Herodias, ~~die~~ ^{die} zum "Lohn" des kirchlicherseits auch so als unanständig verurteilten Tanzes der Königstochter das Haupt des Wüstenrufers Johannes des Täufers gefordert und abgeschlagen erhalten hatte. So muß nach Legendenprägungen eines Sondermofives, die bei Dorotheos von Tyros

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(6./7.Jh.) schon begegnen, Salome nach dem "contrapasso-Prinzip" der Sühne an dem, wodurch man gesündigt, einmal über Eis gehen, einbrechen und in Todesnot entsetzt "tanzen", bis das Eis auch ihr, der Sünderin am Haupte des Täufers, den Kopf abschneidet, daß er "davontanzte". Vom 11. bis zum 14. Jah. erzählt man sich diese Tanz- und Warnlegende zu Byzanz bei Georgios Kedrenos, bei Eurippos, bei Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (+um 1335). Nach Kümmerformen der gleichen Legende in der Legenda aurea des Jacobus de Voragine (+1298) und Widerspiegelungen im Alt-Niederdeutschen, Alt-Dänischen, Alt-Schwedischen greift die Barockhagiographie die Legende von Salomes Tanz in den Tod unter unmittelbarem Bezug auf Nikephoros der Volksprediger Abraham a Santa Clara (+1709), der Erbauungsschriftsteller und Legendenerzähler Martin von Cochem (+1712), sein slowenischer Mitbruder Michael Kramer=Roger Ljubljanski (+1728) auf. Noch die slowenische Hochdichtung des späten 19. Jhs. (Fran Detela) kennt die aus den Apokryphen über 13 Jahrhunderte fortlebende Legende.¹⁸

Mittelalterliche Theologie, Dogmatik wie Pastoral tendenz bestimmen den Gehalt vieler weiterer Legenden. Das im Westen nur schwer durchgesetzte Gebot der Sabbat-Sonntags-Heiligung gipfelt in Bildern vom mystischen Leib Christi, der durch die sonntags verwendeten Arbeitsgeräte verletzt, geschändet wird (Sancta Dominica, Feiertags-Christus,¹⁹ Sveta Medelja) oder aber im Sichelwunder der Nottburga, die nach Feierabend nicht mehr Garben schneiden darf und ihre Sichel in die Luft wirft, wo sie per miraculum hängen bleibt, dem strengen, unter Sündenschuld angeordneten Kirchengebot der Feierabendruhe sichtbaren Nachdruck zu verleihen.

Wo aber das sittliche Gebot christlicher Formung des Lebens durch die brutale Macht einer Tyrannis außer acht gelassen wird, dort setzt die Legende zumal im Bereiche des frühmittelalterlichen Ostens zu Byzanz, unverkennbar von da her auch bestimmt in der Begegnung der Zaren-Willkür des alten Rußland die im Äußeren absonderlichen, aber in geistig-religiöser und sozial begründeter Funktion höchst bedeutsamen Gestalten der "Narren in Christo" ein; jener zerlumpte Mönche, die als Gaukler den Narren mimen, gott-trunken das Irdische verhöhnen und den mitleidvergessenen, in Hybris überheblichen Machthabern in der Maske des Narren, des *Γαλῶς*²⁰, des stultus und im alten Rußland als die juredivje die heilsnotwendige und auch diesseitig Gerechtigkeit fordernde Wahrheit zu sagen wagen. Auch ein Franziscus von Assisi (+1226) weiß es inmitten einer in Weltlichkeit, Prunkliebe und Machtgier beinahe erstarrten mittelalterlichen Kirche, daß sein "Protest in Liebe" nicht sozialrevolutionäres Aufbegehren und Aufreizen der Massen gegen die (wie man heute so gerne sagt) "etablierte" Macht-Ecclesia sein soll, sondern ein freiwilliger Verzicht in Armut um der Liebe willen, ein

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Spielen des "poverello" inmitten seiner als "ioculatores Dei" ²¹ zielbewußt um sich versammelten Mit-Brüder, die laetitia spiritualis zu erwecken und in ihr das Gesetz der Liebe auch im Sozialen durchzusetzen. Nicht anders als die frühmittelalterlichen ²² *62106* von Byzanz und in gleicher Funktion und Tendenz der Legenden um die "Weise Torheit", wie sie noch das pastoral bedingte Erzähl-Wissen lateinischer wie nachmals deutscher Barock-Hagiographie des 18. Jhs kennt.

Hier halten wir ein, so viel sich noch an Beispielen zur Vertiefung der Problemschau auf einem Kongress für Erzähl-Forschung beibringen ließe. Gerade aus den Erfahrungen und Einsichten einer mediävistisch determinierten Historie-, Kunst- und Literaturforschung muß auch das vergleichende Studium der Erzähl-Überlieferung, wie es sich die Volkskunde angelegen sein läßt, mehr als bisher zur Kenntnis nehmen, daß sich aus den mittelalterlich gegebenen Bedingungen des gesamten geistigen Lebens die Funktionen der Legende auf keinen Fall ganz oder auch nur in der überwiegenden Tendenz aus dem "Erzählbedürfnis", aus der "Unterhaltung zur Erbauung", aus der bloßen Bild- oder Predigt-illustration bestimmen lassen. Heute steht uns in der Mediävistik die die spät erkannte Struktur des "typologischen Denkens" ²³ als ein Wesentliches geistigen Schaffens für die "Erklärung" von Bild- und Sprachdenkmälern klarer als je vor Augen. Genau so aber gilt es in Zukunft anzuerkennen, daß auch die Legende als Gattung in ihrer Funktion tiefer im Geistig-Religiösen begründet ist als es nach dem äußeren Formen- und Motivenreichtum den Anschein hat. Primärfunktion der Legende, der homiletisch tendierten wie der liturgisch integrierten, ist im gesamten Mittelalter das Gotteslob. Die Legende dient der revelatio der opera Dei in Seinen Werken des Diesseits. Dementsprechend ist aber auch Legende als historia ²⁴ nicht aus dem "Historischen" in dem uns geläufigen Sinne zu verstehen. Sie ist wesentlich in ihrer Funktion in der Heilsgeschichte und Heilserwartung zu erfassen. Die Legende, und nicht nur die mittelalterliche, dient als sacra narratio der revelatio und der confessio Dei. Sie verlangt vom gläubigen Hörer demgemäß auch eine höhere als die bloß "historische" veritas. Erst sekundär nämlich stehen in der mittelalterlichen Legende als einer so wesenhaften Ausdrucksform mittelalterlichen Geisteslebens die immer zahlreicher sich anschließenden Tendenzen zur caritas, ²⁵ zur Sozialhilfe oder notfalls auch zur Sozialanklage als weitere "Funktion".

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2. "...wer der Heiligen Lügenden...mit jren Wundern aufbracht...". M. Luther, Deutsche Schriften, Teil VIII, p. 36; zur wechselnden Beurteilung der Legende durch Luther zwischen 1530 und 1537 vgl. H. Rosenfeld, Legende. Stuttgart, 2. Aufl. 1964, p. 21 und 66 f.
3. Vgl. die wertvolle, Gesamt-Europa berücksichtigende Sammlung: F. Karlinger - B. Mykytiuk, Legendenmärchen aus Europa. Düsseldorf-Köln 1967.
4. Als Ausgaben vgl.:
A. de Santos Otero, Los Evangelios Apokrifos. Madrid 1956; 2. Aufl. 1963;
E. Hennecke - W. Schneemelcher, Neutestamentliche Apokryphen. 3. Aufl., bisher 2 Bände, Tübingen 1959 und 1964.
Zum Stand der Forschung einführend:
F. B. Bauer, Die neutestamentlichen Apokryphen. Düsseldorf 1968.
5. Vgl. als Einzelbeispiel:
D. Medaković, Bogorođica "Živonosni istočnik" u srpskoj umetnosti. (Zbornik radova Srpske akademije nauka LIX, Vizantološki institut, knj. 5, Beograd 1958, p. 203 ff.).
6. Vgl. als ein Beispiel für viele dieser besonders reichen Gattung:
L. Kretzenbacher, Maria Steinwurf. Ikonographie, Legende und Ver=ehrung eines "verletzten Kultbildes". (Aus Archiv und Chronik. Blätter für Seckauer Diözesangeschichte, IV. Jgg., Graz 1952, p. 66 ff.).
7. L. Kretzenbacher, Eschatologisches Erzählgut in Bildkunst und Dichtung. Erscheinungsformen und exemplum-Funktion eines apokryphen Höllenstrafe-Motives. Sammelwerk: Volksüberlieferung. FS f. Kurt Ranke. Göttingen 1968, p. 133 ff. und Abbildungen.
8. L. Kretzenbacher, Richterengel am Feuerstrom. Östliche Apokryphen und Gegenwartslegenden um Jenseitsgeleite und Höllenstrafen. (Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 59. Jgg./II. Stuttgart 1963, p. 205 ff. und Bilder.
9. K. Štrekelj, Slovenske narodne pesmi. Band I, Ljubljana 1895-98, Nr. 397 ff.
10. L. Kretzenbacher, Slowenisch (s)cagati = "verzagen" als deutsches Lehnwort theologischen Gegantes. (Die Welt der Slaven IX/4, Wiesbaden 1964, p. 337 ff.).
11. Über die engen Zusammenhänge zwischen Legenden(-liedern) und Pastoralmethoden, insbesondere die Poenitential-Gesetze der Kirche vgl. I. Grafenauer, Spokorjeni ~~gnamniku~~ grešnik. (Slovenska Akademija znanosti in umetnosti. II. Kl., Band 19 (=Institut za slovensko narodno pisje, Band 8), Ljubljana 1965.
12. L. Kretzenbacher, Teufelsbündner und Faustgestalten im Abendlande. Klagenfurt 1968.

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13. V. Jagić, Slavische Beiträge zu den biblischen Apokryphen. I: Die altkirchensprachlichen Texte des Adambuches. (Denkschriften der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, phil.-hist. Kl., Band XLII), Wien 1893, bes. p. 4 ff.
14. P. Cormanescu, Rumänische Kunstschatze. Voronet. Fresken aus dem 15. und 16. Jh. Bukarest 1959. Bes. Teilbilder 91 ff., 97-99.
15. N. Laskaris, *Τὸ ἑμόλογο τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ τῆς Ἐύας* (Laographia XX, Athen 1962, p. 569 f.).
16. F. Karlinger - U. Ehergott, Märchen aus Mallorca. Düsseldorf-Köln 1968, Nr. 26, p. 229 ff. u. Anm. p. 303 f..
17. J. Pop Reteganul, Povesti di popor. Sibiu 1895, p. 194;
A. Dima, Rumänische Märchen. Leipzig 1944, Nr. 42, p. 253 ff.
18. L. Kretzenbacher, Salomes Tanz zum Tode. Zum Kontinuitätsproblem bei Apokryphen und Legenden. (Alpes Orientales, Band V), Ljubljana 1969 (im Satz).
19. R. Wildhaber, Der "Feiertagschristus" als ikonographischer Ausdruck der Sonntagsheiligung. (Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte. XVI, 1956, p. 1 ff., 12 Bildtafeln).
20. Zum Typus und den frühen Legendengestaltungen vgl.
H. G. Beck, Kirche und theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich. München 1959, p. 140 et passim.
21. Vgl. aus dem Speculum perfectionis" eines Franziscus-Jüngers: ".quid enim sunt servi Dei nisi quidam ioculatores eius, qui corda hominum erigere debent et movere ad laetitiam spirituum?" Zum Zusammenhang mit dem byzantinischen, aber auch dem syrisch-christlichen wie dem islamischen "Salos-stultus"-Typus vgl. G. Widengren, Harlekinstracht und Mönchskutte, Clownhut und Derwischmütze. (Orientalia Suecana II/2-4, Uppsala 1953, p. 41 ff.).
22. So z. B. J. Schmid, S. J., "Die weiße Thorheit, Erweisen In unterschiedlichen Heiligen, Welche umb Christi Willen sich von der Welt als Thoren und Narren haben ansehen lassen...", Augsburg-Regensburg 1739.
23. Vgl. dazu in unserem Zusammenhang die aus der Schule von Friedrich Ohly, damals kiel, dzt. Münster i. W. hervorgegangene Arbeit: E. Dorn, Der Sündige Heilige in der Legende des Mittelalters. (Medium Aevum, Band 10), München 1967.
24. F. Ohly, Wolframs Gebet an den Heiligen Geist am Eingang des Willehalm. (Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur, Bd. 91, Wiesbaden 1961, p. 16. (Legende als "ein Stück Weiteroffenbarung Gottes in der Zeit nach Christus").
E. Dorn, p. 152 ff.
25. F. Zoepfl, Mittelalterliche Caritas im Spiegel der Legende. Freiburg i. B. 1929.

Sage und Wirklichkeit
Beziehungen zwischen historischem Ereignis
und Gestaltung in der Volkssage

GISELA BURDE-SCHNEIDEWIND

"Im Gegensatz zum Märchen, zur Märchenforschung, ist die Sage durchaus von keinem abschreckenden Wall erklärender Literatur umgeben." - Trotz dieser treffenden Feststellung Leopold Schmidts¹ oder eigentlich als ihre Bestätigung gibt es eine Reihe von umfangreichen und überzeugenden Untersuchungen zur Entstehung von Sagen, zu ihrem Wesen, zur Abgrenzung der Sage gegen andere Erzählgenres, zur Sagendeutung, zu ihrer Glaubwürdigkeit und zu anderen Problemen, ich denke an Arbeiten von F. Ranke, W.-E. Peuckert, F.v.d.Leyen, H. Hoffmann, M.Lüthi, L. Röhrich, H.Bausinger, H.Weißer, R. Dorson, um nur einige zu nennen. Zweifellos gehören die in diesen Untersuchungen behandelten Probleme zu einem Gesamtkomplex "Sage und Wirklichkeit". Ich möchte mich im folgenden nur auf einen Aspekt dieses Komplexes beschränken, der meines Wissens noch wenig von der Forschung beachtet, in letzter Zeit jedoch besonders in Arbeiten über strukturelle Fragen innerhalb der Folkloristik mehrfach als untersuchenswert bezeichnet und gefordert wurde, und zwar auf die Frage: Wie wird ein historisch belegtes Ereignis oder Geschehen, das von mehreren, von einer Gemeinschaft im engsten und weitesten Sinne, erlebt wurde, in der Sage gestaltet?

Bei dieser Fragestellung muß uns zunächst interessieren, w a s denn von den Sagenerzählern als ein historisches Ereignis angesehen wurde und wird. Oder anders gefragt: Welche historischen Ereignisse werden in der Sage überliefert - welche werden n i c h t überliefert?

¹ Die Volkserzählung, Berlin 1963, S.107.

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Seit der Veröffentlichung der "Deutschen Sagen" durch die Brüder Grimm scheint der Begriff "Historische Sage" - auch z.T. noch in der heutigen Forschung - so gut wie festgelegt. Jedoch von den 283 Erzählungen des 2. Bandes der Grimm-Ausgabe, der "historischen" Abteilung also, stammen nur etwa 30 aus direkter (mündlicher) Überlieferung oder aus einer Sammlung mit wirklich e r z ä h l t e n Sagen im Sinne von authentischen V o l k s s a g e n. Der Rest besteht aus Nacherzählungen von Sagenstoffen, geschöpft aus mittelalterlichen Schriftstellern und Chroniken oder aus Gedichten, Volksbüchern, Balladen usw.² Beim Erscheinen der "Deutschen Sagen", zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts also, wurden solche Erzählungen wie die von der Ankunft der Langebarden in Italien, der Ankunft der Pikten, vom Grafen von Eberstein, Schreckenwalds Rosengarten, von Friedrich mit dem $\frac{1}{2}$ gebissenen Backen und andere mehr kaum noch im Volk tradiert, den Erzählern des 19. Jahrhunderts mußte hierzu jeglicher historischer Bezug fehlen. Die von den Grimms aufgenommenen Überlieferungen aus der Völkerwanderung, von Stammvätern und mittelalterlichen Herrschern gehören wohl ursprünglich zu den Traditionen der feudalen Herrensichten in einer Zeit, als zu ihrer Niederschrift nur wenige, wie z.B. der Klerus, fähig waren und die historischen Ereignisse und Familiengeschichten durch den Feudaladel selbst noch vorwiegend mündlich tradiert wurden. Als Überlieferungsträger der V o l k s s a g e n dagegen sind diejenigen sozialen Schichten anzusehen, bei denen infolge ihrer gesellschaftlichen Situation Buch und Lesestoffe keine oder nur eine geringe Rolle spielen konnten und können und bei denen daher zum Teil bis ins 20. Jahrhundert hinein die Erzählüberlieferung ein wichtiges soziales und künstlerisches Kommunikationsmittel bildet. In den nachgrimmischen Sammlungen, die sich

² Vgl. G. Burde-Schneidewind, Zur folkloristischen und literarischen Sagentradierung. In: Lëtopis C, Nr. 11/12, 1968/69, S. 27 ff. und I.-M. Greverus, Die Chronikerzählung. In: Volksüberlieferung, Festschrift für Kurt Ranke, Göttingen 1968, S. 37 ff.

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dann doch mit der lebendigen Volksüberlieferung befassen (wie Müllenhoff, Schulenburg, Hoffmann, Henßen, Peuckert, Wossidlo), finden sich allmählich immer weniger Sagen von überregionalen historischen Persönlichkeiten und deren p e r s ö n l i c h e m Schicksal; es sei denn, diese werden in das unmittelbare lokale und soziale Milieu der jeweiligen Erzähler einbezogen.

Mit der Feststellung der lokalen und sozialen Aktualisierung wird nun meines Erachtens ein wesentliches Merkmal der historischen Volkssage berührt. Einige grundlegende und überzeugende Arbeiten aus jüngster Zeit beschäftigen sich mit diesem Problem, z.B. H. Prütting "Zur geschichtlichen Volkssage", O. Sirovátka "Das Memorat als Gattung der Volksprosa", ~~Karl Haiding "Kaiser Josef II. in der Volkszählung"~~ K. Čistov "Legenden über den Befreier und das Problem der Wiederholbarkeit folklorstischer Stoffe", ~~J. Röhrich "Sage"~~ zu vergleichen ist auch der Tagungsbeitrag von D. Klímová über die "Sagen von den Hundsköpfigen". Übereinstimmend kommen die Verfasser unter anderem zu einem Ergebnis, welches von der Forschung an der gegenwärtigen Erzählüberlieferung immer wieder bestätigt wird; daß nämlich der Umfang der historischen Erzählstoffe - von der lebendigen Sagenüberlieferung aus gesehen - in den verschiedenen historischen Epochen weitaus größer und differenzierter ist, als die vom Chronikschreiber, vom späteren Sammler und vom Geschichtswissenschaftler für den betreffenden Zeitabschnitt als "historisch" angesehenen Ereignisse.

Seit dem Ausgang des deutschen Mittelalters liegt das Interesse am Sagenerzählen vorwiegend bei Bauern und Landarbeitern sowie den plebejischen Schichten der Städte. Mittels der Sage wird - außerhalb des irrationalen Erlebnisbereiches - alles das an besonderem und realem Geschehen festgehalten, was die engere Landschaft, das Dorf, den Arbeits- und Lebenskreis der Erzähler unmittelbar trifft und betrifft. Diese Erzähler interessieren sich

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jedoch kaum für die Überlieferung allgemeiner Geschichtsfakten und -daten: Kriege und Katastrophen werden **n i c h t** in ihrem faktischen Ablauf erzählt (für Deutschland also nicht Siege und Niederlagen Friedrichs II., nicht der Feldzug Napoleons in seinen historischen Zusammenhängen); aber die Menschen, die diese Kriege erlebten und erlitten, erzählten von ihren unmittelbaren Auswirkungen, z.B. von der Erlebnissen bei der Einquartierung fremder Soldaten, von den Versuchen der Nachbarn oder Vorfahren, sich dem Kriegsdienst zu entziehen, Tatsachen also, die vom Standpunkt der Geschichtsschreibung größtenteils als unwichtig angesehen wurden, die das historische Geschehen aber in seiner **A u s w i r k u n g** auf das Volk beispielhaft erfassen. In Unkenntnis der historischen Zusammenhänge suchen die Traditionsträger allerdings Erklärung und ausgleichende Gerechtigkeit für soziale Gegebenheiten und **G e s c h i c h t l i c h e** Ereignisse vorwiegend **i n**-außerhistorischen Ursachen: Eine Bergwerkskatastrophe wird nicht in ihren natürlichen Voraussetzungen, sondern durch die Verletzung eines religiösen, numinosen oder gesellschaftlichen Tabus erklärt; Seuche und Feuersbrunst treffen das Dorf oder einzelne Menschen zur Bestrafung eines Frevels; die Ritterburg wurde nicht durch Belagerung oder vom Zahn der Zeit zerstört, sie versinkt zur Strafe für das wilde Leben, die gegen das Volk gerichteten Raubüberfälle und Schändtaten ihrer Bewohner; die gleiche Erklärung finden häufig verfallene Schlösser und Gutshöfe. Voraussetzung und Ausgangspunkt dieser Sagen sind jedoch in jedem Falle historische Gegebenheiten. Dabei ist es dem Erzähler und Hörer gleichgültig, ob sich das erzählte Ereignis um Jahrhunderte verschoben hat, entscheidend ist das Verstehen, was er aus der Kenntnis seiner sozialen Umwelt der Erzählung entgegenbringen kann, vor allem aber muß die historische Sage in das durch

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die verschiedensten Faktoren bedingte Geschichtsbild des Erzählers passen. Dies ist auch die wichtigste Voraussetzung für die lokal-bezogenen ätiologischen Sagen, die Erklärung von Bildnissen, Gebäuden, Landschaften usw., eine Sagenkategorie, auf die hier nicht näher eingegangen werden kann, die aber größtenteils wohl auch unter die historischen Sagen zu zählen ist.

Zur Geschichtsüberlieferung im beschriebenen Sinne gehört, wie gesagt, auch die Lokalisierung von Ereignissen durch die Sage, welche sich in der betroffenen Landschaft oder noch engeren Gemeinschaft niemals zugetragen haben. H. Prütting ^{im allgemeinen} und K. Cistov im speziellen weisen zum Beispiel die Lokalisierung und immer erneute Aktualisierung der Sagen vom "Befreier" (Barbarossa) in sehr vielen Orten und Landschaften Europas nach. Die Erzählung von dem Befreier aus sozialer und politischer Not entspringt einem Wunsch und Bedürfnis der Erzähler und bleibt so lange aktuell, solange Hoffnung und Bedürfnis durch die Wirklichkeit bedingt werden. Röhrich spricht in diesem und anderem Zusammenhang von Klischee-Vorstellungen, welche die Ansiedlung einer solchen Sage in bestimmten Gemeinschaften bewirken. Ich möchte mich eher der Meinung Cistovs anschließen, der mit Veselovskij in dieser Aktualisierung eine "volkstümlich-politische Glaubensvorstellung und Funktion" sieht, welche nicht unbedingt auf Klischeebildern beruhen muß.

Unzweifelhaft gibt es, wie für die mythische, numinose oder Glaubenssage auch Modelle (Röhrichs Klischees) für die historische Überlieferung. Der Modellcharakter kommt meines Erachtens zum Ausdruck im irrationalen Erzählelement, dem eigentlichen und traditionellen Sagenmotiv bzw. und besser ausgedrückt, in der Verbindung des historischen Faktums mit diesen Motiven. Die Verbindung kann relativ stabil sein oder völlig variabel, je nach dem Interesse, der Absicht des Erzählers, der Interessendominanz der Erzählung.

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Dafür aus der großen Zahl der - im dargelegten Sinne - historischen Sagenkomplexe zwei Beispiele:

1. Raubrittersagen, Sagen von versunkenen Burgen: In der Mehrzahl der von mir untersuchten Texte der deutschen Sagenüberlieferung knüpft die Erzählung an die Gegebenheit einer Ruine, einer Wüstung, auf der sich eine Burg oder ein Schloss befanden, oder an Reste von Pfahlbauten in seichten Gewässern an. Der Verfall des Gebäudes soll erklärt werden: Eine latente Überlieferung vom Raubritterwesen des späten Mittelalters ist gleichfalls vorhanden. Untergang und Wüstung aber werden - ausserhalb der gelehrten Sprache - häufig als Folgen und Strafen übermütigen, zumeist gegenüber den besitzlosen und unterdrückten Teilen der Gesellschaft frevelnden Handelns gedeutet. Diese Verbindung von irrationalen und historisch belegbaren Erzählelementen ist bei jener Gruppe der Raubrittersagen anscheinend überall dort vorhanden, wo die Überlieferung nicht durch aktives Handeln der Betroffenen, der Bauern oder Bürger des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts historisch gestützt wird. Ist das aber der Fall gewesen, so fehlt das Moment der irrationalen Strafe, die wirkliche Erhebung der Untertanen gegen den Ritter wird real geschildert oder wenigstens erwähnt und führt zur Vernichtung der Burg und seiner Bewohner. Allerdings wird in der Erzählung der Siegeletzten Endes durch eine List errungen, die wiederum als traditionelles Sagenelement angesehen werden kann (der Wald kommt - ein vom Ritter gefangenes Bauernmädchen hält die Fallbrücke, bis alle Aufständischen hinübergelangen sind, mit ihrem eigenen Körpergewicht - Die Bauern lassen sich in Säcken eingnäht auf den Burghof fahren - sie führen Volkstänze mit versteckten Waffen auf-usw.). Das Interesse der Erzählung liegt ^(in dieser Gruppe) hier stets auf der Schilderung der Vernichtung des Ritters durch die Untertanen, auf dem historischen Geschehen also, nicht auf der Erklärung eines historischen rudimentären Phänomens oder survivals.

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2. Beispiel: Eine Sage, die ihre Varianten bis in die Gegenwart entwickelt hat, ist die Erzählung über Bauernsöhne oder Tagelöhner oder überhaupt junge Männer aus den werktätigen Schichten, die dem Kriegs- und Soldatendienst zu entgehen suchen. Ältere Überlieferungen aus dem 17. und 18. Jahrhundert erzählen von starken Burschen, die sich infolge ihrer übernatürlichen Körperkräfte gegen die Werber wehren, vor allem gegen die Wilhelms I. von Preußen, des sogenannten Soldatenkönigs. Ein Jahrhundert später, während der Napoleonischen Kriege, der sogenannten Franzosenzeit, ist das Versteck auf dem Gebälk über der Diele des Bauernhauses die Möglichkeit Nummer eins, um dem Wehrzwang zu entgehen,³ ein durchaus realistisches Motiv. Wird der Versteckte aber dennoch entdeckt, so hilft ihm letzten Endes Möglichkeit und Motiv Nummer zwei, nämlich wiederum seine übermenschliche Kraft: Er überspringt Gräben und Flüsse, um den Häschern, natürlich mit Erfolg, zu entgehen, oder er tötet, von Soldaten umzingelt, durch einen kraftvollen Sprung in ihre Mitte mehrere von ihnen, so daß die anderen in der Verwirrung die Flucht ergreifen. Solche Sagen von starken Männern, Bauern, Knechten, Landarbeitern usw. sind übrigens ~~im Nordwesten~~ *(vor allem im Norden und Nordwesten)* Deutschlands bis in die zwanziger Jahre unseres Jahrhunderts in zahlreichen Varianten überliefert. Fast jedes Dorf besitzt Erzählungen über eine derartige "historische" Persönlichkeit. Der Starke hilft sich und seinen Standesgenossen aus jeder Notlage, in der ihm in Wirklichkeit kein Recht und Gesetz beistand. Er ist ein echter und positiver Held, an dessen Taten die Volkserzähler außergewöhnliches Interesse besaßen.⁴ Vor kurzem wurde mir von einer alten Frau -

³ Vgl. G. Burde-Schneidewind, Historische Volkssagen zwischen Elbe und Niederrhein, Berlin 1969, Nr. 323 bis 327.

⁴ ebda, Nr. 192 bis 223.

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im Nordwesten der DDR - über den Tod ihres Sohnes im Zweiten Weltkrieg berichtet: In Riga wurde er von lettischen Bürgern auf dem Hängeboden versteckt, er wollte Schluß machen mit dem Krieg. Von anderen verraten und von der SS umzingelt, sprang er auf die Untenstehenden und entkam zum Hafen. Hier versuchte er auf ein Boot zu springen, fehlte aber und kam im eisigen Wasser ums Leben. So wurde der Mutter jedenfalls von den aus der Gefangenschaft Heimkehrenden berichtet. Ob die Sage vom starken Mann, der dem Kriegsdienst durch seine übermenschlichen Kräfte entgeht, den Bericht der Heimkehrer oder die Handlungsweise des Betreffenden beeinflußt hat, möge dahingestellt bleiben. Auf jeden Fall ist das Geschehene als Erzählung in der Umgebung der Mutter bekannt und verbreitet und kann von uns mühelos der geschilderten Tradition angereicht werden. Lediglich das irrationale, unhistorische Sagenmotiv der übermenschlichen Kraftleistung fehlt heute; zur Glaubhaftmachung des Ereignisses, das bereits zu einem Bestandteil der Erzählüberlieferung in der Dorfgemeinschaft wurde, ist es nicht mehr notwendig, es entspricht dem Bildungsniveau und dem Geschichtsbild d i e s e r Erzähler nicht mehr.

*

Bei der Frage nach der Gestaltung von historischen Ereignissen in der Sage habe ich nur auf zwei Komponente hinweisen können: Auf die Auswahl historischer Stoffe durch die Sagenerzähler und auf die Wahl der Erzählmotive, mit denen der historische Bericht verbunden und tradiert wird. - Die Funktion der historischen Sagen innerhalb der gesamten Erzählüberlieferung sowie innerhalb der historisch-sozialen Gruppe, in der sie lebt, habe ich nur kurz berührt. Und ein weiteres, gravierendes Problem kann ich zum Schluß ebenfalls nur streifen. Wenn wir nämlich einen bestimmten Motivaufbau, eine von der Interessendominanz der Sage und ihrer

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Erzähler, also letztlich von der Funktion abhängige Motivverbindung feststellen, wie zum Beispiel ⁱⁿ bei den Raubrittersagen, so handelt es sich bei dem zugrundeliegenden Forschungsmaterial fast ausschließlich um gut und ausführlich erzählte Sagen, die der jeweilige Sammler vielleicht aus einer Fülle von weniger "guten" Aufzeichnungen auswählte oder die er stilistisch bearbeitet und aus der Kenntnis anderer Varianten gar ergänzt hat. Wer sich mit dem Leben und der Aufzeichnung von Sagen beschäftigt, weiß jedoch, daß die erzählerische Vollkommenheit bei dieser Gattung - im Gegensatz zur Märchen-, Schwank- und Liedüberlieferung - nur sehr selten anzutreffen ist und daß sie auch vom Überlieferungsträger nur in den seltensten Fällen geboten und erwartet wird. Mit Leopold Schmidt bin ich der Meinung, daß der Sagenkenner und -erzähler nicht unbedingt eine größere Erzählgemeinschaft benötigt. Er gibt sein Wissen, hier die "Geschichte", das "Geschehene", bei sehr unterschiedlichem Bedarf und bei den verschiedensten Gelegenheiten weiter; es kann zum Beispiel für den zu Informierenden genügen, wenn ihm bei einem Spaziergang berichtet wird, daß die Ruinen dort von einer Raubburg stammen, die von ~~von~~ den Bauern der Umgebung vor langer Zeit vernichtet wurde, oder daß ein Vorfahr der Familie vor dreihundert Jahren den preußischen Werbern durch seine übergroßen Kräfte entkommen konnte. Die Erzählelemente sind dann auf äußerste reduziert, im ersten Fall auf die bloße Erwähnung von Vergehen und Strafe, im zweiten eines sozialen Konfliktes und seiner individuellen Lösung. Dennoch handelt es sich in beiden Beispielen um die Wiedergabe tradiertter Sagen, die im Geschichtsbild und Geschichtsbewußtsein ihrer Träger eine ganz bestimmte Funktion einnehmen, in unseren Fällen: die demokratischen Traditionen einer sozialen Gruppe und Gemeinschaft zu bewahren und weiterzugeben.

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Diese Funktion sowie der Standort, den die Sagenüberlieferung im Geschichtsbewußtsein der Erzähler einnimmt, und das daraus zu schließende Geschichtsbild und Weltverständnis der Sagenträger müssen die Forschung in erster Linie interessieren; denn über lange Zeitstrecken, in denen es längst eine Geschichtsschreibung durch die herrschenden Klassen gibt, sind diese "historischen Volkssagen" ^{u.a.} keine sehr wichtige Quelle, um die Wirkung der politischen Geschichte auf das Volk und sein Bewußtwerden zu erkennen und abzulesen, ob diese Sagen nun als vollkommene Fabulate oder nur als Wissensreminiszenzen überliefert werden. - Um die geistige Leistung, die zweifellos in der gestalteten Geschichte und der so geformten Tradition liegt, zu würdigen, ist es notwendig und wichtig, die Sage auch in ihrer von der jeweiligen Funktion und der Fähigkeit des Überliefernden abhängigen Erzählstruktur, den Kompositionselementen, zu analysieren. Vollen Erkenntniswert für Geschichte, Kulturgeschichte und Erzählforschung werden diese Untersuchungen jedoch erst gewinnen und besitzen durch eine "gründliche Analyse des Funktions- und Traditionszusammenhanges" in dem die Erzählung steht, "der sozialen Stellung und Lage der tradierenden Gemeinschaft",⁴⁴⁵ aus der die jeweilige erzählerische Leistung hervorgegangen ist.

⁵ H. Strobach, Sozialkritik und soziale Wirklichkeit als methodische Probleme der Volksliedforschung. In: Act. Ethnogr. 16, 1967, S. 339 ff.

József Faragó, Cluj

Auf Missverstehen fremder Wörter beruhende Volksschwänke

(AaTh 1699, 1322)

Im Volksmärchenkatalog von Aarne-Thompson finden wir unter Nummer 1699 folgenden Schwank: "Missverständnis wegen Nichtverstehen einer fremden Sprache." Ein Querverweis führt zu Typ 1322: "In einer fremden Sprache gesprochene Wörter werden als Beleidigung aufgefasst." ¹

Da die vorausgesetzte Beleidigung eines der möglichen Missverständnisse ist - und tatsächlich endet in solchen Schwänken eine Reihe von Missverständnissen mit einer Beleidigung - könnten diese zwei Typen im internationalen Katalog vielleicht zusammengefasst werden.

Beide Typen erscheinen nur in der letzten Ausgabe des Katalogs (1961). Es werden Varianten aus den drei Kontinenten Europa, Amerika und Afrika angeführt, allerdings in geringer Zahl und aus geografisch weit entlegenen Punkten. Die einzige ungarische Variante ist unter der Nummer 1699 anzutreffen, und zwar aus dem Katalog von János Berze Nagy. Berze gab seinerseits dieser Variante des Typus Nr. 1333^x den Titel Schwerhörige Menschen.² Thompson hat jedoch richtig erfasst, dass nicht die Schwerhörigkeit der Ausgangspunkt des Schwanks ist, sondern das Nichtverstehen einer fremden Sprache. So fand diese Variante von den Moldauer Tschangos im internationalen Katalog ihren richtigen Platz unter Nummer 1699 und nicht unter Nummer 1698 Taube Personen und ihre verkehrten Antworten. Im neuen ungarischen Rätótiaden-Katalog von Kovács-Maróti fehlt der Typ 1322 ebenfalls.³

So haben die zwei Typen in den ungarischen Katalogen bisher noch keinen Platz erhalten, obwohl eine Wiederdurchsicht der Quellen, besonders der Anekdoten- und Schwanksammlungen wahr-

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scheinlich noch eine bedeutende Variantenanzahl zutage gefördert hätte.⁴

Unter solchen Umständen sind die Varianten der beiden Typen, die im Archiv der Sektion für Folkloristik Cluj an der Akademie der Sozialistischen Republik Rumänien aufbewahrt werden, unbedingt bemerkenswert.⁵ In Ermangelung einer Systematisierung, die sich auf ein umfangreicheres Material stützt, gruppiere ich die Varianten nach Spracherscheinungen bzw. falsch^hverstandenen Sprachen:

A) Die Schwankhelden verstehen (deutsche) Fremdwörter als Personennamen:

1. Drei Szekler interessieren sich in Wien, wer soeben zu Grabe geleitet wird. Man antwortet ihnen ik vajsz nix ("Ich weiss nicht"). In der Überzeugung, den Namen des Verstorbenen erfahren zu haben, treten sie in eine Gaststätte ein, um am vermeintlichen Totenmahl teilzunehmen. Schliesslich werden sie hinausgewiesen.⁶

2. Ein Bauer fragt in Pest nach dem jeweiligen Besitzer zweier schöner Häuser und ein drittes Mal nach dem Namen eines Verstorbenen. Er trifft zufällig jedesmal Deutsche und erhält die Antwort ih vajsz nit ("ich weiss nicht"). Er meint, das sei der Name des Reichen, der aber inzwischen schon gestorben ist.⁷

3. Ein Ungar sitzt in einer Gaststätte in Deutschland immer mit einem Deutschen bei Tisch. Nach jedem Essen sagt der Deutsche Mahlzeit. Da er es als Vorstellung auffasst, stellt der Ungar sich seinerseits Udvardi vor. Ein Freund klärt ihn auf, und er kommt bei der nächsten Gelegenheit demselben Tischnachbarn mit Mahlzeit zuvor. Der Deutsche antwortet Udvardi.⁸

B) Die Schwankhelden missverstehen die auf dem Lande noch nicht eingebürgerten, in den Städten jedoch geläufigen Wörter bzw. Internationalismen:

4. ~~Ein~~ ^{Ein} Szekler und ~~ein~~ ^{ein} Deutsche ⁺ begegnen einander auf einer engen Brücke, und der Szekler fällt ins Wasser. Der Deutsche sagt

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dabei pardon, worauf der Szekler voller Ärger erwidert, er sei im Wasser und nicht am parton ("am Ufer").⁹

5. Ein Soldat fragt das Mädchen, dem er den Hof mach, mehrere Male, ob es ein ideál ("Verehrer") habe. Das Mädchen versteht ide állj ("stell dich her") und tritt bei jeder Frage einen Schritt abseits. Sie kränkt sich schliesslich wegen so viel hin und her, worauf der Soldat ihr den Sinn des Wortes erklärt. Ebenso versteht sie statt udvarló ("Hoffierer") udvar ("Hof"), und während sie das Wort peru ("Duzen") überhaupt nicht versteht.¹⁰

6. Ein Landmann erfährt vom Arúz, dass er szarkóma ("Sarkom") habe. Er versteht den Krankheitsnamen als die beiden Wörter sz.. koma ("Schwager, Mist") und wundert sich, wieso der Arúz seinen Schwager so gut kennt.¹¹

C) Schwankhelden verwechseln den mundartlichen Sinn mit dem der Umgangssprache:

7. Ungarn, die in einem rumänischen Dorf Unterkunft suchen, hören wiederholte Male das Wort război /de țesut/ ("Webstuhl") fallen; d.h. sie können der aufgestellten Webstühle wegen nicht in die Häuser aufgenommen werden. Die Ungarn verstehen dem gewohnten Sinn des Wortes entsprechend "Krieg" und meinen erschreckt, es sei ein Krieg ausgebrochen; sie werden von einem Ungarisch sprechenden Rumänen aufgeklärt und beruhigt.¹²

8. Ein Siebenbürger Sachse aus Dedrad will in Reghin mit einer nur Deutsch redenden Frau etwas besprechen und verwendet das mundartliche Kuisen ("sprechen") in der vermeintlich hochdeutschen Form. Die gnädige Frau greift bei der Aufforderung, mit dem Bauern zu kosen, empört zum Besenstiel.¹³

D) Ungarische Schwankhelden missverstehen die Rumänen:

9. Eine rumänische Käuferin fragt den ungarischen Verkäufer, ob die Birnen "reif" - coapte - sind. Dieser antwortet empört, er habe sie nicht "bekommen" - kapta - sondern aus dem eigenen Garten.¹⁴

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10. Die in einem rumänischen Dorf eingetroffenen Ungarn werden immer wieder nach lup ("Wolf") gefragt, d.h. ob sie unterwegs keine Wölfe gesehen hätten. Diese verstehen lop (~~lup~~ "stiehlt") und glauben, man klage sie des Diebstahls an, bis ein Ungarisch sprechender Rumäne sie begütigt.¹⁵

11. Einer Ungarin, die mit Samen handelt, verlangt eine Rumänin in einem Haus ai ("Knoblauch"). Erstere versteht dabei állj állat ("steh, stell dich"), zieht sich ständig zurück und will schließlich beleidigt das Haus verlassen. Da zeigt ihr die Hausfrau einen Knoblauch.¹⁶

E) Rumänische Schwankhelden missverstehen Ungarn:

12. Die Rumänen verstehen statt dem ungarischen Gruss jó napot ("guten Tag"), eu nu pot (~~pot~~ "ich kann nicht"); statt jó estét ("guten Abend"), verstehen sie eu aștept (~~est~~ "ich warte"); statt jóccakát ("gute Nacht"), eu ți-o caut (~~caut~~ "ich such sie dir"), usw.¹⁷

13. Auf dem Jahrmarkt spricht ein Ungar búzát ("Korn"), der Rumäne versteht buzat (~~buzat~~ "mit dicken Lippen"); statt ingyen ("umsonst, gratis"), împinge (~~împinge~~ "stösst"); statt szamár ("Esel"), Sátmar ("Szatmár"), usw.¹⁸

F) Ungarische Schwankhelden missverstehen Deutsche:

14. Der deutsche Kellner fordert einen ungarischen Bauern auf pacel ("bezahl!"). Der Ungar versteht pacal ("Rindsmagen" - ein minderwertiges Gericht) und ist über die Zumutung empört.¹⁹

G) Ungarische Schwankhelden verstehen Franzosen falsch:

15. Ein Ungar fragt in Paris einen Franzosen, wie es ihm gehe. Die Antwort ça roule versteht er szarul, d.h. "dreckig".²⁰

H) Amerikanische Schwankhelden missverstehen Ungarn:

16. Ein ungarischer Auswanderer wird von seinen Freunden in Amerika um Sauerkraut geschickt. Da er nicht Englisch kann, wiederholt er unterwegs immer szaukrád. Er trifft aber einen Landsmann und vergisst in der grossen Begeisterung das englische Wort; al-

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le seine Bemühungen, sich im Geschäft durch Zeichen verständlich zu machen, bleiben erfolglos. De entfährt ihm ein (ob^Szöner) Fluch, der dem englischen Wort für Sauerkraut ähnlich klingt, und er wird gleich bedient.²¹

Die Kenntnis des vollständigen Textes der erwähnten Schwänke wie auch die entsprechende Dokumentation²², berechtigt folgende Schlussfolgerungen:

a) Ein Teil der Schwänke werden von den Gewährsleuten als selbsterlebte oder aber auf alle Fälle wahre Begebenheiten erzählt. Tatsächlich können diesen Schwänken auch reale Begebenheiten zu Grunde liegen - folglich weisen einige Varianten der zwei Typen eine gewisse Verwandtschaft mit "wahren Begebenheiten" auf. Andererseits werden einige Varianten sicherlich bewusst gebildet - u. zw. auf Grund der Ähnlichkeit von Wörtern der eigenen und der Fremdsprache - die sich dann später als Wanderanekdoten lokalisieren und aktualisieren, als ob wahre Begebenheiten ihnen zu Grunde lägen.

b) Aus den sechzehn angeführten Varianten sind vierzehn ungarisch, eine rumänisch und eine siebenbürgisch-sächsisch, inhaltlich beziehen sie sich jedoch auf Internationalismen, oder aber auf die ungarische, rumänische, deutsche, französische und englische Sprache. Die obigen Varianten sind mit einigen Ausnahmen nicht das Resultat einer systematischen Sammlung, sondern wurden im Zuge allgemeiner Sammlungen aufgenommen. Das bedeutet, dass^S sie besonders in Sprachgrenzgebieten und Orten mit gemischter Bevölkerung häufig anzutreffen sind. Wenn sie auf einem verhältnismässig kleinen Raum auch unerfragt in so grosser Anzahl erscheinen, bedeutet dies, dass eine systematische Befragung in allen Teilen Europas tausende Varianten zu Tage fördern würde.

c) Obwohl die Varianten der beiden Typen auf dem Missverstehen von Fremdwörtern beruhen - setzen sie im Grunde die Kenntnis der andern Sprache voraus, denn der Schwank kann nur von dem richtig

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verstanden werden, der die notwendigen Sprachkenntnisse mitbringt, um das Wesen des Missverständnisses zu erfassen. Auf diese Weise kann die mündliche Überlieferung dieser Erzähltypen dem zweisprachigen Erzählen zugeordnet werden.²²

d) Wenn also sowohl für das Wiedergeben als auch für das Verstehen eines solchen Stückes neben der Muttersprache auch die Kenntnis einer anderen Sprache unerlässlich ist, so ist praktisch die Zahl der auf einem bestimmten Territorium (Land oder Gebiet) in Frage kommenden Sprachen begrenzt. Es ist kein Zufall, dass die Mehrzahl der angeführten Varianten gemäss den demographischen und sprachlichen Gegebenheiten des erforschten Gebietes (Siebenbürgen) auf Missverständnisse im ungarisch-rumänischen bzw. ungarisch-deutschen Sprachgebrauch beruhen; Englisch und Französisch sind nur mit je einem Beispiel vertreten. Es ist unvorstellbar, dass in der Folklore eines bestimmten Gebietes Schwänke auf Grund solcher Sprachen vorhanden sind, mit denen die Bevölkerung der betreffenden Gebiete nie in Berührung gekommen ist.

e) Sie gehören zweifellos zu denjenigen Schwanktypen, die jedesmal eng und konkret an zwei Sprachen gebunden ~~ist~~ sind. Sie können also die Sprachgrenzen nicht beliebig überschreiten, wie es bei internationalen, an Sprachformen nicht gebundenen Wandertemen der Fall ist. In jeder Sprache müssen sich immer neue Kombinationen bilden, und sie ergeben in aller Welt ein äusserst abwechslungsreiches Bild, wobei sie für die vergleichende Forschung wertvolles Material bieten.

f) Obzwar in Zeichen des Humors, sind sie dennoch direkter Ausdruck der unmittelbaren zwischenvölkischen Kontakte. Durch ihre Sammlung und Erforschung gewinnen wir neue folkloristische Dokumente über die kulturellen Bindungen zwischen den Völkern.

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1 Antti Aarne-Stith Thompson, The Types of the Folktale, A Classification and Bibliography, Second Revision, FFC 184, Helsinki 1961. 484, 394. Zum Problem siehe noch Jaromír Jech, Fremdsprachige Wendungen in der Volksdichtung, Zur Erforschung interethnischer Beziehungen, Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde 11 (1968), Teil II, 275-99.

2 Berze Nagy János, Magyar népmesetípusok [Ungarische Volksmärchentypen], Pécs 1957, II. 491-2. Der Schwank werde von Rokonföldi [János Petrás Incze] gesammelt: Párbeszéddek [Dialoge], Claja, Kreis Bacău, Magyar Nyelvőr 14 (1885), 42.

3 Kovács Ágnes-Maróti Lajosné, A rátótiádák típusmutatója, A magyar falucsúfolók típusai AaTh 1200-1349, Register der ungarischen Schildbürgeschwanktypen (Rátótiaden) AaTh 1200-1349 Mt. A Magyar Népmesekatalógus Füzetei, 3. Bp. 1966.

4 Zur Probe habe ich die sechs Bände der Sammlung Magyar anekdotakincs [Ungarischer Anekdotenschatz, Bp. o. J.] von Béla Tóth durchgesehen und über 10 Stücke gefunden, die zu den besprochenen Typen gehören. So verstehen Deutsche die ungarische Formel Áldás Hazánkra ("Gesegnet sei unser Vaterland"), die als Kopf auf dem Briefpapier erscheint, als Personennamen (III. 369). Der Schwankheld versteht das Wort Psychologie als Personennamen (IV. 225-6). Die Deutschen verstehen ungarische Namen falsch: statt Ihász, ich heisse; statt Herepei, Herr Epei; statt Fónagy, von Nagy (III. 295-6). Ungarische Schwankhelden verstehen lateinische Wörter falsch: statt vere valet, vérré válott ("wurde zu Blut", I. 113-4); statt turpis, turpis ("schlau", II. 1); statt coriandrum, kalendárium ("Kalendar") und statt stomachus, Domonkos (II. 2). Ein fremder Pfarrer versteht das ungarische Kiwischenlied falsch: statt Krisztus feltámadt e napon ("Christ ist heut erstanden"), Christus fuit dalmata (I. 316). Ungarische Schwankhelden verstehen deutsche Wörter

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falsch: statt hier, hír ("Nachricht", V.14); statt Heu, háj ("Fett", V.38). Ungarische Schwankhelden verstehen die Französer falsch: statt mon Dieu, mondja ("sagt"); statt sacré Dieu, szekér dió ("ein Wagen Nüsse", V.38). Ein polnischer Schwankheld versteht die ungarischen Wörter falsch: statt hova mégy oda pokolba? ("wohin in die Hölle gehst du?"), jeno po kola voda ("das Wasser reicht nur bis zur Achse", II.6).

5 M.E. nicht in diesen Rahmen gehören Ursprungsagen, die sich auf Volksetymologie gründen und die Herkunft von Orts-, Familien-, Sachnamen auf Grund von Fremdwörtern erklären. Die sind kristallisierte und eingebürgerte Sprachformen und nicht gelegentliche Missverständnisse mit komischem Charakter, wie es bei den beiden behandelten Typen der Fall ist. - Analogien gibt es in der ungarischen Folklore im Dreikönigs^Spiel, wo die Hilt^{ren} die lateinische Botschaft der Engel ungarisch verstehen. Ähnlich werden lateinische liturgische Texte ungarisch gedeutet. Es sind dies aber nicht umfreiwillige, gelegentliche Verwechslungen, sondern bewusste Umdenkungen; ihr Charakter ist eher satirisch als komisch, und sie sind nicht in eine epische Handlung eingebettet.

6 Hogy jártak Bécsbe a székelyek [Wie es den Szeklern in Wien ergangen ist]. Sic, Kreis Cluj, Nr. 03986. Inf.: András Szász, 75. Samml.: Olga Nagy, 30. III. 1960.

7 A falusi Pesten [Der Dörfiler in Pest]. Cluj, Nr. 07494. Inf.: Miklósné Sturzán geb. Hermina Krindzielszka, 80. Samml.: Gabriella Vöő, 29. IV. 1969.

8 Mahlzeit. Cluj, Nr. 07754. Aufgezeichnet von Károly Engel, 14. IX. 1969.

9 Pardon. Grîinari, Kreis Brasov, Mg 1453. Ip. Inf.: Ferenc Béres (Fábi), 60. Samml.: József Faragó, 30. I. 1967. Tran^Skr.: Faragó, 15. III. 1967.

10 A pertu [Das Duzen]. Cristurul Seculesc, Kreis Harghita, Nr.

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Leningrad,
Petar Dinekov
(FL 1920/11/44580)



LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

İsmail ABALI – completed undergraduate education at Giresun University and postgraduate education at Adnan Menderes University. In 2015: doctorate in Turkish folklore at Ege University, with a thesis on Kyrgyz Turkish epics. Since 2017: associate professor at Iğdır University's Turkish Folklore department. Research areas: psychoanalytic folklore, death psychology, occupational folklore, humor, Kyrgyz folk literature, Turkish folklore, Turkish folk culture, traditional theatrical games, bard literature, mystic literature. Three books and approximately 50 published works in these fields. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2361-039X.

Nicolae CONSTANTINESCU (1941-2025) – held the chair of Folklore Studies (later on Ethnological Studies) with the University of Bucharest since the 1970s, published numberless academic papers, books and articles, and remained a constant supporter of the early REF and present-day REF/JEF. At the time his book review was written and submitted for publication he still was Professor Emeritus working for the Doctoral School of Letters in the same Romanian major university.

Uğur DURMAZ – Associate Professor, Kocaeli University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Department of Turkish Language and Literature, Turkey. Born on 18.06.1988, has completed his undergraduate and master's degree at Balıkesir University, Department of Turkish Language and Literature. After completing the PhD in Hacettepe University, Department of Turkish Folklore, he started working at Kocaeli University in 2017. Email: ugur.durmaz@kocaeli.edu.tr.

Ioana-Ruxandra FRUNTELATĂ – Associate Professor with the Department of Cultural Studies, Division of Ethnology and Folklore, Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest and also a Senior researcher at the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore „Constantin Brăiloiu”, Romanian Academy. She has obtained her Ph.D. degree with a thesis on *Personal Narratives – from Experience to Narrative*, Scientific advisor: Professor Nicolae Constantinescu, University of Bucharest. An M.A. degree in Modern and Contemporary Romanian Literature, University of Bucharest, a B.A. degree in Romanian and English Philology and a second BA degree in Classical Philology, University of Bucharest contour her academic and professional profile as a philologist. After completing her University education, Ioana Fruntelată has oriented towards the fundamental and field research of Romanian folklore, which has led her to approach a larger theoretical frame including studies on ritual, myth, and intangible heritage. Recent Publications: *Despre interpretarea etnologică* (On Ethnological Interpretation), Editura Etnologică, Bucharest, 2020; “The Folk Poetic Repertoire in Commune Bătrâni, Prahova County: An Ethnological Updating”/, Repertoriul poetic folcloric din

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Elene GOGIASHVILI – Associate Professor in the Faculty of Humanities at “Ivane Javakhishvili” Tbilisi State University, Georgia, in the Department of Folkloristics. She was a research fellow at the Universities of Mainz and Erfurt, and the Research Libraries in Gotha and Wolfenbüttel, all in Germany. She is a member of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR). Her research interests mainly focus on international folktales, and the relationship between literary and oral traditions. Email: elene.gogiasvili@tsu.ge.

Turgay KABAK – graduated from Karadeniz Technical University Institute of Social Sciences in 2015 by defending the doctoral thesis titled Rize Province Folklore Monograph. In 2016 he started working at Bayburt University. He continued his duty in Bayburt University Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, Turkish Language and Literature, Turkish Folk Literature department until 2024. Since 2024, he has been working as an Associate Professor at Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, Department of Turkish Language and Literature, Department of Turkish Folk Literature. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0823-3074.

Henrieta KRUPA – graduated from the Department of English Philology at Istanbul University. She has her postgraduate teaching license from Cambridge University, where she also earned her postgraduate diploma in English language teaching to adults (DELTA). She has her master’s degree from the Department of English Language and Literature at Yeditepe University in Istanbul and her teacher-trainer license from Sabanci University in Istanbul. She has completed her doctorate in English Linguistics and Literature at Ege University in Izmir, where she is currently working on her master’s degree in Gender Studies. She has previously taught English, research methods, academic writing, and English philology at a university level for a decade, is a founding member of the Writing Centre in Yeditepe University where she worked as an academic writing consultant, and has actively participated in various professional development units in Türkiye and abroad. ORCID: 0000-0003-3066-8813, email: elizabethhenrietakrupa@gmail.com.

Mehtap MÜÇÜK KOTAN – lives in Kars. She is an Assistant Professor at Kafkas University, where she works in both the Department of Folklore and the Center for Turkish Language Teaching (TÖMER). She received her PhD in 2023 with a dissertation titled *Negative Types in Turkish World Tales*. Her areas of specialisation include Turkish folklore in and outside of Turkey. Her research interests focus on mythology, folk beliefs, oral culture, and cultural memory. ORCID: 0000-0002-7315-2588. Email: mehtapmucuk@kafkas.edu.tr.

Gülsün NAVRUZ BERK – dr. (1984), architect. She earned her MA degree at Selcuk University, and the PhD degree at the Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences at Necmettin Erbakan University. Her master's thesis was about the spatial analysis of the Seydişehir Etibank aluminum plant settlement, and her doctoral thesis analysis of the houses with lantern roof. She works at Karatay Municipality in Konya, Turkey. Her field of study is zoning law and zoning Regulations. Email: archgulsunberk@gmail.com; ORCID: 0000-0002-1890-7693.

Mihaela NUBERT-CHEȚAN – senior researcher with the “Constantin Brăiloiu” Institute of Ethnography and Folklore, Bucharest. She graduated from the Musicology Department of the “Ciprian Porumbescu” Music Conservatory (Bucharest), and defended her doctoral dissertation at the National University of Music (Bucharest), with the topic *Music in the Romanian Folk Theatre*. In 2005-2006 she was the coordinator of the project *Istroromânii. Repere identitare în contemporaneitate* (The Istro-Romanians: Contemporary Identity Highlights). Main domains of interest: Romanian minorities, fieldwork, archiving techniques.

Georgiana ONOIU – attended the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters, where she also completed a Master's degree in Anthropology and Folklore. Employee of the National Village Museum since 2005, she currently holds the position of Director of the Department of Museology. Development of Movable Cultural Heritage Collections. Since 2011 she has been a PhD of the “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, specializing in History. Since 2016 she has been a collaborator of the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters, where she teaches the courses “Management of the Ethnographic Heritage” and “Space, Dwelling, Culture.” She is the author of the volume *History and Modernity in the Folk Costume of Moldavia and Wallachia* (her doctoral thesis) and co-author of eight collection catalogues together with Dr. Georgeta Stoica. In 2021, together with Dr. Paula Popoiu, she edited the volume *In Honorem. Georgeta Stoica – 90*, published by Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca. For the work *The Folk Costume of the Muntenia Plain* (in collaboration with Georgeta Stoica and Paula Popoiu), in 2022 she received the “Simion Florea Marian” Award of the Romanian Academy. She is Vice-President of the National Commission of Museums and Collections and a certified expert of the Ministry of Culture in the field of folk costume and interior textiles.

Saveta POP – academic researcher with the Institute for Archeology and Art History (the Cluj-Napoca branch of the Romanian Academy). Among main fields of interest: Romanian mural and iconic painting in Transylvania (mainly 18th Century), scientific investigations upon painting and art works. Since 2012 she is member of the Experts Registry for the Movable Cultural National Patrimony (area of Goods of Artistic Signification / Old Romanian Arts (16th-19th Centuries).

Florența POPESCU-SIMION – senior researcher at the “Constantin Brăiloiu” Institute of Ethnography and Folklore in Bucharest, and associate professor with the Faculty of Letters from the University of Bucharest, where she teaches ethnology and history of representations. Her main domains of interest are urban folklore and rituals, calendric contemporary customs, dynamics of funerary rites. She published the book *The City and the Other World* (2015), edited a volume of studies from an interwar journal “*Boabe de grâu [Wheat Grains]*”. *Ethnological landmarks* (2023), and published a number of studies on the contemporary aspects of rituals in the cities.

- Dana SHISHMANIAN – Diplômée en lettres modernes, spécialité littérature comparée, de l'Université de Bucarest (1972), chercheuse à l'Institut d'Histoire et Théorie Littéraire «G. Călinescu», ensuite au Musée de la Littérature Roumaine, Dana Shishmanian a dû quitter la Roumanie en 1983 par suite de persécutions politiques. Établie en France avec son mari, elle a poursuivi un parcours doctoral en langues anciennes et en histoire des religions, à l'EPHE, IV^e et V^e section, et à l'Institut Catholique de Paris. Parmi ses récentes publications figure le livre *Vision de Varnava. Înjăleptului Varnava minunată arătare a vederii lui cu pildă tututor*, Alba Iulia, 2023 (édition et étude d'un poème roumain inédit qu'elle attribue à Ioan de Vintz, représentant la traduction adaptée du *Dialogue de l'âme et du corps* du poète baroque hongrois Nyéki Vörös Mátyas). Email: dshishma@gmail.com.
- Katarína SLOBODOVÁ NOVÁKOVÁ – ethnologist and professor at the Department of Ethnology and World Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia. For a long time, she has devoted herself to the research of material culture, especially in the areas of traditional transport, clothing, decoration, culinary culture, and also factors influencing the transformation and demise of traditional forms of the way of life. She completed several research stays, publishes regularly at home and abroad, and presents her research at international scientific events. She is the author of dozens of scientific monographs, including three in the field of traditional transport, and more than a hundred scientific studies. She currently works as a rector of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8331-7040>. Email: katarina.slobodova.novakova@ucm.sk.
- Aleš SMRČKA – PhD, worked from January 2021 to December 2022 as a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in the Department of Critical Heritage Studies. Subsequently, until now, he works externally at the Institute of European Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. He is the author of two monographs and several domestic and foreign scientific articles. His area of professional interest primarily includes research into the issue of cultural heritage in transport, traditional crafts, as well as the everyday life of contemporary professional groups and autoethnography. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7279-8053>. Email: alessmrcka@centrum.cz.
- Gelu TEAMPĂU-LUCA – doctor in the field of philology since 2010, with the paper *Comic-Books as a Popular Culture Phenomenon*, published in 2012 under the title *Myth and Comic-books* (Iași: Institutul European). He has published articles on the topics of comic-books, popular culture, entertainment, cultural history, art critique and fieldwork methodology. In the present he is working at the David Prodan Memorial Museum, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Email: gerulanu@outlook.com.
- Mehmet UYSAL – prof. dr. (1973), architect. He earned his BA degree at Selcuk University, and the MA and PhD degree at the Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences at Selcuk University. His master's thesis was about traditional dwellings, and his doctoral thesis on spatial and morphological analysis of commercial buildings. His research areas include culture and space, vernacular architecture, architectural design and architectural education. He Works at Necmettin Erbakan University. ORCID: 0000-0002-9170-0189.

Anca-Maria VRĂJITORIU – researcher at the “Constantin Brăiloiu” Institute of Ethnography and Folklore, the Romanian Academy, with a PhD thesis in Ethnology at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters, entitled *Food, beyond the Cotidian*. She graduated from the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and of Social Work. Main domain of interests: ethnopsychology, fairy tales, myths, anecdotes, food studies, calendar.

Iulia WISOSENSCHI – scientific researcher at the “Constantin Brăiloiu” Institute of Ethnography and Folklore is currently working within the Multimedia Archives of Folklore and Ethnography Collective. Doctor in philology, specialized in literary folklore, with a doctoral thesis regarding the reflection of kinship relations in Aromanian folklore. Her main academic interests are: studies on kinship, ethics and deontology of field research, folk narratology, collective memory etc. She conducted numerous field research among Vlach communities in the Balkans and published articles, papers and books on intangible cultural heritage, oral history-folklore relationship, deportation of the Aromanian groups etc. Email: chirafra@yahoo.com.

Seyfullah YILDIRIM – lives in Ankara. He works as a professor in the Department of Turkish Language and Literature Education at Ankara Gazi University. His research interests are folklore, folk literature, cultural studies of the Turkish world. ORCID: 0000-0002-4345-6524. Email: syildirim@gazi.edu.tr.

Maxim Anatol'evich YUYUKIN – independent researcher, PhD in Philology (thesis defended at the Voronezh State University in 2002). Presidential Grant holder at the Faculty of Education, the Charles University (Prague), in 1997-1998. The author of 76 published works (incl. 3 books) in the field of (Old) Russian and Slavic onomastics, etymology, mythology, and folklore, many of which have been released in prominent scientific journals indexed in WoS, Scopus and ERIH Plus. He also has published a historical novel *Ivan Kalita* (Moscow: Yauza; Eksmo, 2009). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2092-2112>.

