

## Romanian Mythology

### Abstract

Since 1995, after the defence of my Ph.D. thesis at Bucharest University, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature, I have worked on six major interconnected topics: Comparative Ethnology, Romanian Ethnology, Balcanic Ethnology, Cultural Anthropology, Russian Literature and Culture, Totalitarian Studies.

In 1998 I developed, after the publication of my Ph.D. research, *Mitologie comparată* (Comparative Mythology, EUB, 1998) a research project on the various aspects of mythology and magic in Romanian folk culture in a wider comparative perspective. In the same year I published two volumes, *Ipostaze ale maleficului în medicina magică* (*Hypostases of Evil in Magic Medicine*) și *Metamorfozele sacralului. Dicționar de mitologie populară* (*Metamorphose of the Sacred. A Dictionary of Folk Mythology*, both at Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest). Next year appeared a broader research dedicated to divination and witchcraft, *Școala de solomonie. Divinație și vrăjitorie în context comparat* (*School of Solomon. Divination and Witchcraft in Comparative Context*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest), for which I got an important award offered by CNCSIS (Național Board for Scientific Research in University Education) in 2001.

I was also deeply interested in the two other major aspects of sacred and sacralisation of time and space in Romanian beliefs, thus I wrote *Calendarele poporului român* (*Romanian Folk Calendars*, first edition 1999, the second edition, extended, in 2009, Paideia Publishing House, for which I received two important awards), respectively *Reprezentări ale spațiului în credințele românești* (*Space Representations in Romanian Folk Beliefs*).

Other topics of this field to which I have recently devoted some of my research work are dictionaries dedicated to comparative approach of the mythology: *Dicționar de mitologie. Demoni, duhuri, spirite* (*Dictionary of Mythology. Demons, Genies, Spirits*,

Paideia Publishing House, 2004), *Zile și demoni. Calendar și mitologie populară rusă* (*Days and Demons. Russian Folk Calendar and Mythology*, Eikon Publishing House, 2008), *Zile și demoni. Calendar și mitologie populară bulgară* (*Days and Demons. Bulgarian Folk Calendar and Mythology*, Eikon Publishing House)

In the last decades, my research also dealt with the reception of the Russian culture and literature. Concerning Russian literature, I wrote two major studies on contemporary form of Russian literature: *Literatură rusă. Principalele direcții de evoluție a prozei* (*Contemporary Russian Literature. Evolution of Prose*, Paideia Publishing House, 2005 first edition, 2008 second edition), and *Alei bifurcate. Poetica postmodernismului rus* (Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești, 2018).

A permanent field of my research is the Russian culture and mentality. I started since 1998 with a sort of short introduction in Russian civilization: *Civilizația rusă. Perioada veche și modernă* (Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest), to continue in 2004 with an anthropological-semiotic approach of old Russian culture – *Miturile Rusiei clasice* (*The Myths of Classical Russia*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest), and in 2011 with Imperial Russia: *Rusia imperială. O istorie culturală a secolului al XX-lea* (*Imperial Russia. 19th century Cultural History*, All Publishind House, Bucharest). Studies in this field, concerning 20<sup>th</sup> century, made a vigorous switch to another topic. I have been studied the Russian mentality through its political aspects of communist regime in Soviet Russia. A lot of my studies have been partially published in articles, mainly in „Arhivele Totalitarismului” and „Romanoslavica”. The full research I concluded last year, exploring this way various aspects of a totalitarian regime in its core. Under the same title *Sovietland* I discussed four main topics: *Utopia eșuată* (*The Failed Utopia*, about the system, leaders and utopian theory), *Țara Gulagului* (*The Country of Gulag*, about the Gulag institution and its victims, based mainly on their memories), *Patria omului sovietic* (*The Fatherland of the soviet people*, about Soviet way of life, new traditions and followers of the regime), *Triumful vieții private* (*The triumph of privat life*, about reminiscensis of the old Russian way of life and the victory on the system constraints).

My research interest on the Balcanic culture (mainly folk and pop culture) dated since my „mythologic” documentation, when I discovered a lot of similarities in thinking

and behaviour at Balcanic people. Thus appeared, on grant basis, *Homo balcanicus. Câteva trăsături ale mentalității balcanice (Homo balcanicus. Some Features of Balkan Mentality*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2004). This work has been the basis of several articles and for sure this project will be continued as a permanent program at the Institute of Levantine Studies, aiming to identify and study some peculiarities of the traditional Balcanic folklore and traditions.

The thesis I present now it's a summum of my all researches and interests in the field of Romanian and comparative mythology, presenting thus, both for the researchers and common readers, a full image of what we should call Romanian Mythology. In this respect, this research is the first of this kind, a complete approach of Romanian folk beliefs concerning mythology and magic way of life.

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