

СВІТ ЧАРІВ У РУМУНСЬКІЙ НАРОДНІЙ МЕДИЦИНІ. ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АСПЕКТ

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THE WORLD OF MAGIC IN ROMANIAN FOLK MEDICINE. A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

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Антоанета Олтяну. Мир волшебства в румынской народной медицине. Сравнительный аспект. Для исследователя традиционных обществ связь между магией и народной, или традиционной медициной, очевиден. **Цель статьи** - выявить существенные черты магических и апотропеических действий в народной медицине румын. Народная медицина в традиционном обществе возникает способом мировосприятия, включая его отношение к природным явлениям и к враждебным действиям других лиц. Магия была составной частью народной медицины, так как заболеваемость объяснялась внешними факторами, а недуги, по мнению древних людей, «привносились» внешними злыми силами. Исследование диалектической связи магических действий, их комплексов и ожидаемого медицинского результата, опираясь на верования и традиционные народные ритуалы становится **новизну работы. Методологическая база** включает описательный и сравнительный методы, опирающиеся на результаты полевых исследований. Существуют активные, агрессивные практики, которые вызывают магическую, вредную силу (заговоры, заклинания, колдовство) или пассивную противодействие практике, предназначенную для обеспечения защиты от заклинаний (защитные заговоры, заговоры-обереги). **Выводы.** В статье предпринята попытка классификации магических действий в народной медицине, согласно сфер влияния, количества участников, атрибутики ритуалов.

Ключевые слова: народная медицина, магический ритуал, мантика, заговоры, апотропеическая магия, реликты магических действий в современной медицинской практике.



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Introduction. Magic actions. The link between the magic and folk medicine is obvious for the researcher of traditional communities. Folk or traditional medicine is, for the traditional people, a way of interpreting the world, including thus its reactions and attitudes towards natural events and towards the harmful actions of other people. Magic had also an important role in the field of medicine, because the disease and the health were explained by external factors – entering the body, they produced the illness. According to the laws of folk medicine, the illness could refer to four aspects:

the patient world – is concerned with illnesses caused by

factors that the patient has some control over, such as diet, smoking, drinking, and other lifestyle behaviors;

- The natural world includes problems related to animate and inanimate factors, including those caused by microorganisms and viruses; animal bites; and environmental factors such as pollution, pollens, poisons, and natural disasters

- The social world covers interpersonal conflicts, including conditions caused by physical injury inflicted by one person on another, the stresses of daily living, and witchcraft and sorcery

The supernatural world includes illnesses caused by spirits, ancestors, or gods who have been offended through

sinful behavior, the breaking of taboos, or other breaches of proper behavior.

Magic is the embodiment of people's knowledge, specialized or not, initiated or not, which enables them in to communicate with the representatives of the sacred world to achieve their purposes. According to the achieved purpose, one can say that there are **active, aggressive practices**, meant to provoke a magic, malefic force (charms, spells, evildoings, etc.), or **passive, countering practices**, meant to offer protection against a spell (incantations, undoings; one can actually mention a relativism of its active or passive nature; some of the countering practices, although deemed as passive, and not based on the idea of aggression, of intentional malefaction, can become active if we are dealing with the return of the evildoings upon the one who sent them – as evil will return to him/her).

If we were to take into account the effective number of participants to the ritual, magic practices can be **individual**, and they can be performed by only one individual (object or subject). This is the case of incantations, spells, charms – when one is dealing with specialization, namely in the case of all apotropaic practices (meant to restrict the malefic aggression), the propitiator (which has to draw the good will of divine helpers) or the oracular (finding out one's destiny, fate), within which every person, who has basic traditional knowledge, may trigger the magic forces which can make him/her the master of the Universe, even for a moment.

Collective practices are less common than the individual ones, due to the secret, mysterious atmosphere needed while performing them (if they were indeed known to everybody, they would no longer have any effect). Furthermore, the entering into the sacred world using magical practices can often have unwanted aftermaths, precisely because of the unusual power discharge, even when traditional precepts were observed. Nonetheless, when evil was largely spread within the community, when individual efforts seemed to have no effect, they resorted to collective practices, meant to gather all the apotropaic actions of all the members of the community (or of those ritually invested with these prerogatives), to increase the countering-offensive effort: rituals for rain invocation (*Paparudele, Caloianul*), for the chasing away of epidemics, epizootics ("The shirt of plague", etc.).

There are also numerous **temporally-conditioned magical practices**. These could be performed either within calendar-related feasts, or within passage rituals, both circumstances illustrating some rupture moments, of discontinuity between the two worlds, the human and the sacred one. The time element was the one conditioning the respective actions, which, if performed within the profane time, could not activate any of the occult energies. **Among calendar-related feasts** one must include especially practices from the category of the "first-day magic" (mainly performed on New Year, Easter, Midsummer Day, etc.), which were meant to forecast and institutionalize the following time interval. Also, in the sacred calendar, other feasts were known to be highly magical ones (Saint Basil, Easter, Saint George, Saint Andrew, Christmas, etc.), marked

by a continuous malefic activation, when the "gates" leading to other worlds were open.

During passage rituals, which are also rupture moments, but ones related to the individual's socialization degree, or, mostly, to his/her initiate statute he/she achieves during life-time, magical practices were performed in extremely various ways. Upon birth, the first statute of liminal being (both of the new-born and of the woman who has just given birth), who had to be forced out from the other world and then integrated into the human world, apotropaic, propitiating, oracular and therapeutic practices were performed. This was followed by the moment of the actual socialization of the individual, within the initiation customs (which, in many societies, was merged with other ceremonies – marriage, for instance), when apotropaic and propitiatory practices were performed. Finally, during funerals, which took the human out of the world he/she lived in and prepared him/her for the other world, apotropaic practices were being performed (including both the living and the dead ones) and also propitiating ones (meant to soften the dead one, not to anger him/her and, therefore, to prevent him/her return as a vampire).

Besides these, there are also **occasional magic practices**, which are necessary in unpredictable rupture moments occurring in the life of an individual, of the entire community and which could fulfill several functions (apotropaic: in the case of epidemics; propitiatory: upon beginning something new, in the case of agricultural magic, of different professions, meteorological magic, etc.).

Irrespective of the above mentioned distinctions, magical practices could be both good and evil, according to the orientation of the performers. Furthermore, we are to present some representative magical practices for the picturing of the traditional principles, for the structuring of reality and for the communication between its levels.

The practices below will discuss mainly the physical injuries, and also injuries and other damages produced by interpersonal conflicts inflicted by common people or by sorcerers. We will discuss in the same time about the evil produced by the pratician/ professional, but also about the ways to protect, to cure, or to send back the illness or the evil charms to the sender.

The magic of the inside out. The most common element, the mark of the passage, of the other world, is wearing of the clothes inside out. Many people believe that in this world, the genies wear their clothes inside out for people living in Oceania, the Siberian peoples, the North-American Indians¹. Another "piece of clothing" worn inside out is the sheepskin coat – an attribute of the world of the dead, common of Hades, Hermes, Thanatos, Wodan. During the Carnival, which is also a moment of rupture, when it is said that spirits from the Otherworld rule this worlds, when everything is done backwards, as a sign of the belonging to the transcendental for people living in France, Spain². Besides the practical inconvenient - "it's a bad omen to wear one's shirt inside out"³, it's also a bad omen to meet someone wearing one's coat inside out⁴. Also, the people say that the shirt should not be worn inside out, as one's luck will

¹ Tokarev S. A. *Mify narodov mira. Enciklopedija [Folk Myths from the whole World. An Encyclopedia]*, 1991-1992, T. I-II, Moscow, P. 453 [in Russian].

² Pokrovskaja L. V. *Narody Francii [The People of France], Kalendarnye obyčaj i obrjady v stranach zarubežnoj Evropy. Vesennie prazdniki [Calendar Customs and Traditions of European Countries. Spring Holidays]*, Moscow, 1977, P. 34 [in Russian]; SEROV S. I. "Narody Pirenejskogo ostrova" [The People of Pyrenees Islands], *Kalendarnye obyčaj i obrjady v stranach zarubežnoj Evropy. Vesennie prazdniki*, Moscow, 1977, P. 57 [in Russian].

³ Gorovei A. *Descântecel românilor [Romanian exorcism], Folclor și folcloristică [Folklore and Folkloristics]*, Hyperion: Chișinău, 1990, P. 36 [in Romanian].

⁴ Mușlea I., Bârlea O. *Tipologia folclorului. Din răspunsurile la chestionarele lui B.P. Hasdeu [Folklore Typology Based on Answers Given to Hasdeu's Questionnaire]*, Minerva: Bucharest, 1970, P. 505.

also turn inside out. To avoid this, “tread upon your coat and nothing bad will happen to you”⁵. The magical act of wearing the cloth inside out can also be applied to the field of folk meteorology – wearing a coat inside out, the weather will get bad⁶. Most of the times, wearing one’s coat inside out is charged with an apotropaic value, meant to protect people against evil – even if this means water, illnesses, forest, spinning spirits, vampires, witches. This practical and magical act is present in various types of belief: “The woman should wear her shirt inside out, if she wants to wean away her child”⁷. For turning away the hails, the generating element was also represented by the wearing of the clothes inside out (which could also be accompanied by a series of magical objects): “The hail fighter drives away the hails, while naked and only wearing a sheepskin coat inside out, holding a carved stick which has grain sanctified during twelve rich harvest masses on it”⁸. The same magical gesture can cause malfunctions in the human world: “Some women were bathing in the forest, during summertime, in a little creek, but when they came out they no longer recognized the place, as “he”/the Devil/ has been bathing there too; around there, there was a man cutting woods, who taught them to turn their clothes inside out to drive him away and to remember which day was Christmas Day – and they came to their senses immediately”⁹. In case of insomnia, the Belorussians did the following: they turned the the child’s shirt inside out and sometimes they would put his/her feet through the sleeve, the window would be covered during daytime, while at night the room where the child slept was brightly lighted, to turn the day into night and the night into day¹⁰. It is believed that if someone suffers from pangs, one must grab a summer hemp tow, must twist it behind one’s back and tie it with nine knots and then also tie it across the chest. Afterwards he/she will no longer suffer from pangs”¹¹. Also, let us not forget the negative connotation of the turning inside out: it is not good to hang the child’s clothes inside out on the rope, because everything would go upside down for that child. Another type of turning is that of the *turning upside down*. It is seen as a powerful apotropaic method, which can be performed by everyone: “When someone casts evil charms upon you, turn everything upside down upon his/her house: water tubs, pots, etc. and then let him/her be!”¹². This practice is used in case of a possible danger: “Upon new

moon, one must turn all his/her pots upside down”; “In a house where a child was recently born, all pots are to be turned upside down, to prevent evil forces from entering”¹³. Another aspect of this type of turning refers to the reversal of the charms, to the “turning” of the malefactions upon those who casted them¹⁴: “If something is missing from your house and you want to know who stole it, take a sieve and strain ashes from your hearth holding your hands behind your back and then draw your house and the houses around you. Circle them and the next day you will see a little road on which a fly traveled from your house to the house of the person who stole from you”¹⁵.

The passing, the crossing. Going from one world to another firstly implies the crossing. This can be performed after changing one’s appearance: in order to gain the appearance of an animal, people jump over fences, pass below the ear of a bucket, pass through a bridle, etc. (like werewolves – Russians, Ukrainians)¹⁶. The return to the initial state is to be performed through the reversal of the action. The mere passing, crossing sometimes has tragic consequences: one should not step over a child, as he/she will cease to grow (Romanians, Macedo-Romanians, Germans, Mexicans)¹⁷. Also, it is believed that a child should not pass below a thread, which is spun on the window, as he/she will cease to grow¹⁸. If a pregnant woman passes over a grave (a sacred open space), her child is to die¹⁹. The contrary is equally dangerous: “If a dead person is to be crossed over running water, one of his/her relatives must throw a coin into that water, as a payment for the bridge”²⁰, because otherwise the water is to run dry. The situation is also dangerous if the agent is an animal: “If a cat happens to step over an unbaptized child, the child shall be soled”²¹. When someone dies, both his/her body, and the dug grave must be guarded so that no dog or cat would step over them (Romanians, Serbians, Bulgarians). Also in order to prevent the dead person from becoming a vampire, one must not “give away a cock over the grave”²². A dead person’s grave is to be guarded so that no dog steps over it; otherwise, other members of the family are prone to die too. Also regular activities can be marked by such tragic signs: Romanians say that: “If the dog leaps over the netting, it means someone is going to die and that cloth is to be his/her burial shroud. In order to avoid this, the dog must be made to leap back over the netting”²³. The Muslim Serbians said that

⁵ Gorovei A. *Descântecele românilor* [Romanian exorcism], op. cit., P. 113.

⁶ *Ibidem*, P. 137.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Niculiță-Voronca E. “*Datinile și credințele poporului român, adunate și așezate în ordine mitologică*” [Romanian Customs and Beliefs in a Mythological Order], I. Personal Publishing House, Cernăuți, 1903, P. 801 [in Romanian].

⁹ *Ibidem*, P. 881.

¹⁰ Tolstoy N. I. *Slavjanskije drevnosti. Etnolingvističeskij slovar’* [Slavic Antiquities], Moscow, 1995, P. 466 [in Russian].

¹¹ Gorovei A. *Descântecele românilor* [Romanian exorcism], *Folclor și folcloristică* [Folklore and Folkloristics], Hyperion: Chișinău, 1990, P. 117 [in Romanian].

¹² Niculiță-Voronca E. “*Datinile și credințele poporului român, adunate și așezate în ordine mitologică*” [Romanian Customs and Beliefs in a Mythological Order], op. cit., P. 162.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ “In order to prevent witches from entering the stable of the cows, one places a chain near the sill or the bread dough is bore and water is poured through it, and this water is used to wash the cow “backwards” from tail to head” (Pavelescu, 1945: 67).

¹⁵ Niculiță-Voronca E. “*Datinile și credințele poporului român, adunate și așezate în ordine mitologică*” [Romanian Customs and Beliefs in a Mythological Order], op. cit., P. 227.

¹⁶ Gnatiuk V. M. ‘Ostanki predchrystyjans’ kogo religijnogo svitogljadu nasych predkiv’ [Echoes of Our Ancestors Prechristian Religious Perspective], *Ukraincy: narodni viruvannja, povir’ja, demonologija* [Ukrainians: Folk Beliefs, Superstitions and Demonology], Kiev, 1991, P. 404 [in Ukrainian].

¹⁷ Ciușanu Gh. Superstițiile poporului român în asemănare cu ale altor popoare vechi și nouă [Romanian Superstitions as compared to those of other Ancient and New Peoples], Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1914, P. 386 [in Romanian].

¹⁸ Gorovei A. *Descântecele românilor* [Romanian exorcism], op. cit., P.60.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, P. 143.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, P. 12.

²¹ *Ibidem*, P. 138.

²² *Ibidem*, P. 221.

²³ Ciușanu Gh. Superstițiile poporului român în asemănare cu ale altor popoare vechi și nouă [Romanian Superstitions as compared to those of other Ancient and New Peoples], op. cit., P. 337.

during a religious procession it was beneficial for all the weak and ill to lie on the ground so that the priest and the entire suite could step over them, and shortly they would get better²⁴. Those who had measles were recommended to leap nine times over a fire. The protection of the animals was also obtained through an apotropaic practice. In Maramures, the sheepmen make in the sheepfold and in their hut a cross of lovage and garlic and then the sheep step over it so that their milk is not taken away by the spirits living in the forest and by witches²⁵. Usually, the same action was ambivalent: thus, if a rope was stretched on the road, it was said that animals can be protected by witches (the Russians, Belorussians, Ukrainians). Also, such a rope stretched across the road was used to cut the way of the wedding suite, upon its return from the church. Witches also could take away the milk of the cattle: they crossed the road on which the herd was supposed to pass with a rope, on Saint George's Day or on Midsummer's Day²⁶, thus casting their charms²⁷. Actually, this ritual is performed as such: «on Saint George's Night, two people take a rope and stretch it over the field they want to render less productive. One of them will hold it from one end, the other from the other end. The rope is carried hanging through the entire wheat or corn field. Upon reaching the end they say: "All the production of this field is to accompany me on a certain field". Afterwards, they go to that other field and do the same thing. Then they return home without being seen»²⁸.

If in the case of Romanians it is not advisable to pass a cock over the grave, so that the dead person may not turn into a vampire, both the Ukrainians and the Romanians believe that the bird meant to participate in the magic act is the hen, which was supposed to clear the dead person's path to the Other-world²⁹. But it is better to try to avoid any crossing of a being or object. A Russian belief says that the bread will not rise if a hen jumps over the kneading trough or if another living being projects his/her shadow over it³⁰. Also, Romanians believe that the milk "gets sour or is reduced if mixed with that of other cows, if it is poured over the ear of the bucket, if the sieve is left unwashed, if a hen drinks from it or if the pots are washed using the water in which eggs were boiled, or if a cat, a bat or a swallow pass below the cow"³¹.

In other cases, the passing under an obstacles had a magic value and it represented the consecration of the beings which

were the subjects of this ritual: "On the morning of Saint George's Day, when people take their cattle to graze for the first time, one boy younger than 10 years must place his feet on both poles of the gate, while the cows are to pass under the boy. Thus, the witches will not be able to come near the cows and steal their milk"³².

In Great Britain, children are sometimes passed through a split ash to protect them from hernia and rachitis. This magic act is performed three times, upon sun rising. Once the ritual is completed, the tree is bound and the splitting is filled with mud or clay³³. The Russians, Germans passed their ill children through the hollow or check of a tree or through other types of cracks³⁴. The epileptic must pass three times through a snake split in half, from head to tail. Another remedy for this situation was the following: the ill person had to be taken to a bramble, which has its stem split all the way, so that that person may pass nine times through it. If the bramble resumes its growth, it is believed that the ill person is to get cured. In the case of the Bulgarians, on John the Baptist's Day, one has to make a big garland through which all the ritual attendees had to pass in order to remain healthy. This chaplet is to be kept throughout the entire year, and in case of illness all ill children passed through it³⁵. The Belorussians used such a garland to pass the milk through it, every day, starting with the Day of the Body of Christ and until John the Baptist's Day in order to protect it from charms³⁶. The garland, as a mythological and sacred space is commonly used during wedding rituals (to the proper act of crossing, one adds that of the magic looking through: the bride looks through her garland to see the groom coming from "another world"³⁷. When the groom comes to the bride's house to take her to the church, she must look outside the window through a necklace, so that they may have beautiful children. Sometimes, in Bohemia, girls look at the ceremonial fire made on summer solstice through a wild-flower garland, and ask the fire to strengthen their eyes and lids³⁸. It is also said that: "The moon is made from the blood of two brothers, who stabbed another with their knives and they can be seen standing and hugging each other, bowing their heads. When it is new moon, only one of them can be seen, but you can see both of them, only when the moon is full. All you have to do is look through a wedding ring or through a silk headkerchief"³⁹.

The semantics of the second birth, of the coming back to

²⁴ Sumcov N. F. "Kul'turnye pereživaniya" [Cultural Reminiscences], Kievskaja starina, XXVII, 1889, P. 74 [In Russian].

²⁵ Pavelescu Gh. Mana în folclorul românesc. Contribuții pentru cunoașterea magicului [Mana in Romanian Folklore. Contributions to the Knowledge of Magic], Krafft & Drotleff, Sibiu, 1944, P. 49.

²⁶ Agapkina T.A. Verevka. Iz slovarja „Slavjanskije drevnosti” [The Rope. From the dictionary „Slavic Antiquities”], *Slavjanovedenie*, T. 4, 1994, P. 11 [in Russian].

²⁷ "The witches from Bucovina bury salt on the road where the cows of the neighbors and those of other people pass, and after the cows step over the buried salt, the witches dig it out and give it to their cows to lick it. Thus, they take the milk of the other cows" (Marian, 1994, II: 260).

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²⁹ Pavelescu Gh. Mana în folclorul românesc. Contribuții pentru cunoașterea magicului [Mana in Romanian Folklore. Contributions to the Knowledge of Magic], Krafft & Drotleff: Sibiu, 1944, P.58-59 [in Romanian].

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Toporkov A. L. "Deža" [The Yeast], *Etnolingvističeskij slovar' slavjanskich drevnostej*. Proekt slovnika, Predvaritel'nye materialy, Moscow, 1984, P. 117-118.

³² Pavelescu Gh. Mana în folclorul românesc. Contribuții pentru cunoașterea magicului [Mana in Romanian Folklore. Contributions to the Knowledge of Magic], op. cit., P. 45.

³³ Marian S. F. Sărbătorile la români [Romanian Holidays], Vol. II. Romanian Cultural Foundation, Bucharest, 1994, P. 264 [in Romanian].

³⁴ Frazer J. G. Creanga de aur [The Golden Bough], T. V, Minerva, Bucharest, 1980, P. 124-125.

³⁵ Baiburin A. K. Ritual v tradicijnoj kul'ture [Ritual in the Traditional Culture], Sankt Petersburg, 1993, P. 54 [in Russian]; Ciușanu Gh. Superstițiile poporului român în asemănare cu ale altor popoare vechi și nouă [Romanian Superstitions as compared to those of other Ancient and New Peoples], op. cit., P. 265.

³⁶ Vinogradova L. N., Tolstaia S. M. Venok, Iz slovarja „Slavjanskije drevnosti” [The Broom. From the dictionary „Slavic Antiquities”], *Slavjanovedenie*, T. 4, 1994, P. 30 [in Russian].

³⁷ Ibidem, P. 31.

³⁸ Gura A.V. Venok svadebnyj. Iz slovarja „Slavjanskije drevnosti” [The Wedding Garland. From the dictionary „Slavic Antiquities”],

³⁹ Frazer J. G. Creanga de aur [The Golden Bough], op. cit., P. 13.

life with new forces can be noticed in the magic Siberian act involving the “baking” of the rachitic child. He/she is placed on the oar used to put the bread into the oven, he/she is brought at the mouth of the stove and he/she is “passed” through a ring bread, especially baked for this occasion⁴⁰. Also, the Hungarians bake a huge ring bread, for nine days, using the flour gathered from nine households. When it is ready, ill children are passed through it⁴¹.

The rolling over, the inversion. The rolling over is often used to prevent an unwanted situation. Romanians say: “When you hear the thunder for the first time that year, roll over and you will turn into a bear”⁴². Or, for instance: “whoever hears the tree frogs singing for the first time, he/she should roll over three times to prevent the year from being droughty”⁴³. It is also said that, when you see for the first time, in spring, an ant hill, you should roll over and through back over your shoulder, three times, a handful of ants, so that you may be happy that year⁴⁴. This action is one of the most common supernatural magical acts (to cast or cancel it). In order to avoid an unwanted contact, besides the verbal expression of the removal of the possible danger (the invoking of those characters, uttered in a ceremonial manner), one also had to perform the magical act of the rolling over (meant to restore the initial balance): «Whoever should happen to see the evil fairies, should roll back three times and say: „You, seven girls who are dancing /And singing/ You should separate/ Over seven countries/ And seven seas!”»⁴⁵. This magical practice results in various aspects. Romanians say that: “when a child looks at another through his/her feet, it is believed that his mother will have other children, too”⁴⁶. Let us not forget the belief according to which the newly-born child is made to look back, in order to gain a double strength of its sight⁴⁷. The Russians believe that if they look through both of their legs, they can see the Devil, and sometimes the spirit of the forest, which is placed in the middle of the whirl. This is also a way through which people protect themselves from evil. When someone gets lost, the Ukrainians recommend the performance of this gesture and the following saying: “This is my way!” The komi population believes that the spirit of the forest can be killed by holding the gun between one’s legs. People from Dalmatia believe that the slipping, falling of the wedding crown from the bride’s head is a sign of the fact that she is a witch⁴⁸. The Czechs and the Moravians believe that in order to have a good night sleep, one must turn all the pots in the house upside down (also see it is of the magical protection practices against the characters punishing the spinning –

a result of the breaking of the taboos). If someone died, the Romanians, those still alive could not look at his/her body and a cruse had to be turned upside down. They believed that after performing this act, they will no longer have such problems, especially if a little water was left at the bottom of the pot, and the water had to be drunk afterwards⁴⁹. Also, if the baby’s trough – cradle is accidentally turned upside down or if it is leaned against the wall, the baby is to die.

Drawing a magic circle. Drawing of a magic circle is another type of magic circle, which more often than not has an apotropaic role, present from the most ancient of times. Mircea Eliade believes that “it is very possible that the fortifications of the inhabited locations and those of the strongholds were, originally, magical fortifications; these fortifications – ditches, labyrinths, defense walls, etc. – were meant to protect the invasions of the demons and of the souls of the dead, rather than those of humans”⁵⁰. On Easter Friday, when people return from the church, carrying lighted candles, they circle their houses three times and marks a cross on the walls with the candle, three times, so that the dwelling is protected from fire, illnesses and lightning strokes. The place where Călușarii danced was marked by a circle, over which the uninitiated person could not pass. Also, this circle was not accessible to evil forces. In order to protect oneself from witches, water spirits, demons, etc. one had to draw such a protective circle on the ground and make the sign of the cross⁵¹. In case of fire, the said house had to be circled holding a candle lighted on the Twelfth Day, thus preventing the spreading of the fire⁵². The Russians protected the newly-wed from charms with the help of a rope (belt, fishing net, etc.) tied beneath the clothes of the young people, before leaving for church.

The Serbians, also, surrounded the bed of the woman who had just given birth and that of her child. In Dîmbovița, Romania, those who worked in the forest, when resting at noon, circle themselves with a rope, believing that the snake shall not be able to pass beyond it, but only crawl around it.

During draughts, a ditch was dug around the village and the dry bed of the river was also braked⁵³. In case of epidemic or epizootic the same ritual was to be performed. The Polish circle the village three times with a brake, after the harvesting of the wheat, so that no charms may affect the households of the villagers. The Belorussians do the same to protect themselves from evil, namely they circle the village carrying a brake on their heads on the evening of John the Baptist's Day (on Saint John’s Day)⁵⁴. Pregnant women were believed to be able

⁴⁰ Brill T. *Legendele românilor* [The Legend of Romanians], Vol. I – Cosmogonia [Cosmogony], Grai și suflet – Fundația Culturală Română, București, 1994, P. 99 [in Romanian].

⁴¹ Strachov A. B. *Kul't chleba u vostočnyh slavjan. Opyt etnolingvističeskogo issledovanija* [Cult of Bread at Eastern Slavs. An Attempt of Ethnolinguistic Approach], München, 1991, P. 29 [in Russian].

⁴² Dömötör T. *Hungarian Folk Beliefs*, Budapest, 1982, P. 195 [In English].

⁴³ Ciușanu Gh. *Superstițiile poporului român în asemănare cu ale altor popoare vechi și nouă* [Romanian Superstitions as compared to those of other Ancient and New Peoples], op.cit., P. 341.

⁴⁴ Gorovei A. *Descântecel românilor* [Romanian exorcism], op.cit., P. 96.

⁴⁵ Olinescu M. *Mitologie românească* [Romanian Mythology], Casa Școalelor, Bucharest, 1944, P. 444 [in Romanian].

⁴⁶ Gorovei A. *Descântecel românilor* [Romanian exorcism], op.cit., P.163.

⁴⁷ Mercier M. *Șamanism și șamani* [Shamanism and Shamans], Moldova, Iassy, 1993, P. 41 [in Romanian].

⁴⁸ Gura A.V. *Venok svadebnyj. Iz slovarja „Slavjanskije drevnosti”* [The Wedding Garland. From the dictionary „Slavic Antiquities”], op. cit., P. 34.

⁴⁹ Gorovei A. *Descântecel românilor* [Romanian exorcism], op. cit., P. 154.

⁵⁰ Eliade M. *Sacru și profanul* [The Sacred and the Profane], Humanitas, Bucharest, 1992, P. 48 [in Romanian].

⁵¹ Zelenin D. K. *Očerki russkoj mifologii. I. Umeršje neestestvennojsmert'ju i rusalki* [Essays on Russian Mythology. The People suffering a Sudden Death and the Rusalki], Petrograd, P. 153 [in Russian].

⁵² Marian S. F. *Sărbătorile la români* [Romanian Holidays], V.I, Romanian Cultural Foundation, Bucharest, 1994, P. 153 [in Romanian].

⁵³ Gura A.V. *Borona. Iz slovarja „Slavjanskije drevnosti”* [The Harrow. From the dictionary „Slavic Antiquities”], *Slavjanovedenie*, Vol. 3, 1994, P. 9 [in Russian].

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, P. 7-8.

to make trees to bear fruit if they circled them on the eve of any important feast day⁵⁵. On the Tuesday from the first week of the feast of Saint Peter's Day, witches circled the field riding a broom, snapping a lash and saying: "I command all animals to choose another field"; they are followed by an old man who swabs the "furrow" ploughed as such⁵⁶. Similar practices were also performed by Romanian witches. «When the witches come to take away the blessing of the cattle, they take a dogwood branch and take it to the field where the cattle graze or even to the stable and making a sign to the milking cows, they say: "Less from here, more from there, all of it from here!" And then they carve on the branch a number of signs equal to the number of cows deprived of their milk. Afterwards, they go home, un-braid their hair and circle nine times the cow to which they want to give the milk stolen from the other ones, saying the following: "With this stick I am not surrounding this cow, but the "blessing" of those cows marked on my stick! May the milk come to this cow, may it run away from the other ones, as sheep run away from the wolf and the hens from the hawk". While saying this, he/she touches the back of the cow with the branch. After performing the spell nine times, the witch surrounds the house and the well in the yard three times holding the dogwood branch»⁵⁷. On Saint John's Day, in the Czech Republic, they circle the village holding birch brooms, in order to protect it from witches; upon the completion of the ritual, the brooms are burnt⁵⁸. In Slovakia, on Easter Eve, the houses were circled with brooms, in order to drive the insects away from them. The Belorussians used to say: if one surrounds his/her house with a broom, rain will come (this practice is also deemed as negative)⁵⁹. The Slovenians believe that if you circle the stable and the outbuildings with a broom three times and then bury the broom next to them, no thief will be able to steal the hens. Such a ritual circling was performed in case of fire by surrounding the house with an old broom⁶⁰. In the case of the Russians, when girls told fortunes, they would go to a crossroad, squatted and drew a circle around them with a knife, saying: "Devils, come and talk / But don't enter my circle!", and afterwards they listened to the direction from where sounds came, believing that this way they could tell the direction from where their predestined husband would come⁶¹. In the case of Romanians, such a ritual circle was performed on Christmas. The carol singers held a chain over which they stepped and surrounded the house and stable. This act was accompanied by the following words: "I circle this house and this stable so that evil spirits may not approach it". Magic circles were meant to protect human or animal newborns.

Upon the birth of a calf, it was "grabbed by its head, stripped naked, and afterwards they circled the stable three times holding it, then they put it back and make three genuflections, or lift it and touch its head against the chimney ..."⁶². In other cases the ritual act was performed by other consecrated people: "a clean girl, no older than 14, circles the cow three times holding the calf in her arms"⁶³.

The ritual, apotropaic circle did not only represent one type of action. The traditional belt was a surrogate of the magical circle, which protected the human body. Also, it was said that "it is good for someone to have a ring on its finger, so that curses may not be cast upon him/her"⁶⁴. The Romanians also say: "don't go to bed wearing a belt, because the angel will not know you and will take you away, mistaking you for a wheat bundle"⁶⁵.

Ploughing a ritual furrow around the village. A very popular way of chasing plague is the ploughing of one or several furrows around the village. In Dolj, "people search within the village for two black oxen, born on a Saturday by the same cow, namely brothers. They are yoked at oars and, on a Saturday; two or three villagers circle the illness-haunted village with them"⁶⁶. A plague incantation mentions this ritual ploughing of a furrow around the village meant to protect its inhabitants against plague: "A black man/ With a black girl/ With unbraided hair/ With a black lash/ With two black oxen;/ A black man/ With a black girl/ With a whip and a yoke/ Saying an incantation/ Ploughing a black furrow./ So that plague may not enter the village"⁶⁷... In Russia, in case of an epidemic, women and girls gathered at night, bare footed, only wearing a white shirt and with unbraided hair. They yoked at the plough and drew a furrow around the village. "Men are not allowed to see this. Holding scythes, pans, fire irons, the women make a deafening noise and sometimes lash their wifes. In some places, men are those doing the ploughing, but they have to be twin. Sometimes, white, twin oxen are yoked and the plough itself has to be made by twins"⁶⁸, according to other beliefs related to the magical powers of twins).

The ritual weaving. Russian Ethnologist D. K. Zelenin mentions in the case of the Belorussians the spinning (weaving) practice of some ritual towels, namely if an epizootic occurred. A ten-corner cross was placed in the cattle barnyard, and afterwards they started to gather (until sunrise) the cloth (as much as possible, without breaking the time rule); and this cloth was used to circle the village with, starting with the place where the cross was, which was adorned with that piece of material⁶⁹. During

⁵⁵ Agapkina T.A. "Južnoslavjanskije pover'ja i obrjady, svjazannye s plodovymi derev'jami v obščeslavjanskoj perspektive" [South-Slavic Beliefs and Traditions Connected to the Fruit Trees in a Large Slavic Perspective], *Slavjanskij i balkanskij fol'klor* [Slavic and Balkan Folklore], Moscow, 1994, P. 17 [in Russian].

⁵⁶ Tolstaya S. M. Magija obmana i čuda v narodnoj kul'ture [The Magic of the Cheat and Miracle in Folk Culture], Manuscript, 1994, P. 33 [In Russian].

⁵⁷ Pavelescu Gh. Cercetări asupra magiei în la români din Munții Apuseni [Researches on Magic among the Romanian Inhabitants of the Apuseni Mountains], collection "Library of Sociology, Ethics and Politics, Romanian Sociology": Bucharest, 1945, P. 67 [in Romanian].

⁵⁸ Vinogradova L. N., Tolstaja S. M. Simboličeskij jazyk veščej: venik (metla) v slavjanskich obrjadach i verovanijach [Symbolic Language of Things: the Broom in Slavic Customs and Beliefs], *Simboličeskij jazyk tradicionnoj kul'tury. Balkanskije čtenija*, Vol, II, Moscow, 1993, P. 27 [In Russian].

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, P. 19, 26.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, P. 15.

⁶¹ Engovatova M.A., Pashina O.A. "Na reke Vaske" [On the River Vaska], *Živaja starina [The lived ancient]*, T. 2, 1994, P. 51 [in Russian].

⁶² Pavelescu Gh. Mana în folclorul românesc. Contribuții pentru cunoașterea magicului [Mana in Romanian Folklore. Contributions to the Knowledge of Magic], op. cit., P. 39.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ Gorovei A. *Descântecel românilor* [Romanian exorcism], op. cit., P. 111.

⁶⁵ Papadima O. O viziune românească asupra lumii [A Romanian Perspective on the World], *Saeculum I. O.*, Bucharest, 1994, P. 36 [in Romanian].

⁶⁶ Candrea I. A. *Folclorul medical român comparat. Privire generală. Medicina magică* [Comparative Romanian Medical Folklore. Overview. Magical Medicine], Casa Școalelor, Bucharest, 1994, P. 139 [In Romanian].

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, P. 365.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, P. 141.

⁶⁹ Zelenin D. K. *Očerki russkoj mifologii. I. Umeršye neestestvennojsmert'ju i rusalki* [Essays on Russian Mythology. The People suffering a Sud

epidemics and epizootics, all Macedonians (men and animals) passed beneath a belt entirely weaved in one night⁷⁰. They also weaved the "plague shirt". It was made by old and virgin women, spun at a crossroad, all silent or whispering. All villagers had to pass beneath this cloth⁷¹. Also to end an epidemic (plague, cholera, etc.), Romanians make a "plague shirt" in a similar way: "Women gather together to make a woman-like rags puppet, and then all of them make a shirt for it in one night, which is also weaved, sewed and worn that very night (...) and take it beyond the borders"⁷². According to popular belief, the ritual shirt had several values. The most explicit one is the offering brought to the illness genie: "Long before time, when cholera was very much present on the earth, this is what they did to get rid of it. One woman gathered some hemp, spun it, warped it, spun and weaved it and made a shirt out of this cloth, which she placed on a pole at the edge of the village. When cholera came to the village, if it found the shirt, it took it and left. You couldn't get rid of it otherwise."⁷³ Other times this shirt revealed its magical powers when used within a complex, apotropaic ritual (acc. *infra*): «Women from a cholera-stroke village gather in a large number in one of the houses. They all start to spin small hemp tows, enough to make a shirt. Then they warp and strip it, using the weaver's reed and the shaft on the strand they have been working on. They place it on the loom and weave the cloth. They take the cloth off the roll and they tailor a shirt. Others tailor that shirt as fast as possible, which they call "the victory shirt". When the shirt is ready, two-three people go to the middle of the road or to a broader place in the middle or at the edge of the village. All people follow them, and while one of them holds the shirt by its collar, all children, men and women pass through it, to get rid of the cholera. The shirt has to be spun, weaved and sewn in one single day"⁷⁴. In the case of Serbians, a similar cloth is spun and weaved in one single night by two twin sisters bearing similar names⁷⁵. The use of such a ritual weaving is largely spread among the Byelorussians: for instance, to prevent hail, such a consecrated towel was torn to pieces, and all threads were removed from it, which would be used to circle the said field, thus insuring protection against hail⁷⁶.

Антоанета Олтяну. Світ чарів у румунській народній медицині. Порівняльний аспект. Для дослідника традиційних суспільств зв'язок між магією та народною, чи традиційною медициною, очевидний. Мета статті – виявити сутнісні риси магічних і апотропеїчних дій у народній медицині румунів. Народна медицина в традиційному суспільстві постає способом світосприйняття, включаючи його ставлення до природних явищ та до ворожих дій інших осіб. Дослідження діалектичного зв'язку магічних дій, їх комплексів та очікуваного медичного результату, спираючись на вірування і традиційні народні ритуали зумовлює **новизну роботи. Методологічна база** включає описовий і порівняльний методи, що спираються на результати польових досліджень. Існують активні, агресивні практики, що викликають магічну, шкідливу силу (замовляння, заклинання, чаклування) або пасивну протидію практиці, призначену для забезпечення захисту від заклинань (захисні заговори, змови-обереги). **Висновки.** У статті здійснено спробу класифікації магічних дій у народній медицині, згідно сфер впливу, кількості учасників, атрибутики ритуалів. У

світлі магічних практик народної медицини, релятивізм активного чи пасивного характеру магічних дій визначається за типом дії і залежить від конкретної мети діяча. З цього погляду всі ритуали можна представити як захисні (пасивні), дієві (активні) та комбіновані. За кількістю учасників магічного ритуалу, вони можуть бути індивідуальними, коли його виконує лише одна особа (об'єкт або предмет). Це стосується вимовляння магічних текстів, заклинань, коли ж мова йде про їх спеціалізацію, а саме у випадку всіх методів апотропеїчної магії (призначеної для обмеження магічної агресії), заступника (який має привернути добру волю божих помічників) або оракулярної / пророчої (передбачення своєї долі, фатуму).

Антоанета Олтяну - професор Бухарестського університету, факультету іноземної мови та літератури, кафедри російської та слов'янської філології. Автор ґрунтовних досліджень присвячених російській культурі та цивілізації ("Міфи класичної Росії", "Царська Росія. Культурна історія XIX ст."), порівняльній етнології ("Іностає зла у магічній медицині", "Метаморфози сакрального. Довідник з фольклорної міфології", "Школа Соломона. Ворожіння та чаклування у порівняльному контексті", "Румунські народні календарі", "Румунські народні вірування", "Довідник з міфології", "Дні і демони. Російський календар та народна міфологія"). Досліджує та викладає курси з російської сучасної літератури ("Російська сучасна проза", "Російський постмодернізм"). Проф. А. Олтяну є членом професійних товариств: "Європейського товариства соціальної антропології", "Міжнародного товариства фольклорних досліджень", "Товариства слов'янського та Західно-Європейського фольклору", "Румунського товариства етнологічних студій"; член Ради директорів "Міжнародного комітету славистів"; президент "Румунського товариства славистів". Член редакційних колегій цілого ряду фахових міжнародних журналів Румунії, України, Польщі, Росії (Ханта-Мансієвск).

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dent Death and the Rusalki], op. cit., P. 195.

⁷⁰ Tolstoy N. I. *Slavjanskije drevnosti. Etnolingvističeskij slovar'* [Slavic Antiquities], op. cit., P. 153.

⁷¹ Ibidem, P. 151.

⁷² Fochi A. *Datini și eresuri populare de la sfârșitul secolului XIX* [Customs and Folk stories from the end of 19th century], Minerva, Bucharest, 1976, P. 83-84 [in Romanian].

⁷³ Candrea I. A. *Folklorul medical român comparat. Privire generală. Medicina magică* [Comparative Romanian Medical Folklore. An Overview. Magical Medicine], op. cit., P. 138.

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Tolstoy N. I. *Slavjanskije drevnosti. Etnolingvističeskij slovar'* [Slavic Antiquities], op. cit., P. 151.

⁷⁶ Zelenin D. K. *Očerki russkoj mifologii. I. Umeršye neestestvennojsmert'ju i rusalki* [Essays on Russian Mythology. The People suffering a Sudden Death and the Rusalki], op. cit., P. 198.