

TIPARE MAGICE ROMÂNEȘTI ÎN CONTEXTUL ROMANITĂȚII ORIENTALE

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Romanian Magic Patterns in the Context of the Oriental Roman World¹

In the corpus of Romanian magic charms, some functional patterns relate both with the Latin lexical base and with some Oriental incantation themes. The two influences could be studied starting from specific cases of poetic magic that have the narrative part developed as in the Eastern tradition and survivals of Latin language forms. The argumentation is based on a magic pattern used to cure an eye ailment (Rom. *urcior*, Engl. *hordeolum* or *sty*). The materials are drawn from the Romanian magic corpus coming from Moldavia and that of the Aromanians, as well as from the Medieval English magic folklore. In the Medieval Western world, Latin magic is mostly composed of Christian elements (liturgies, hagiographies, litanies, prayers). Unlike the Western handbooks, the Romanian magic didn't prefer the Christian Latin formulas from the late Middle Ages, but the old variants of popular Latin related to ancient incantations. The Romanian charms preserved some narrative elements, but particularly the old linguistic form, *i.e.* the appellation of the eye disease derived from Latin *hordeolum*.

From the standpoint of a primitive community, diseases are caused by supernatural agents like demons and intermediary spirits and even the gods were suspected to induce ailments. Ancient remedy books from Mesopotamia recorded disease names indicating the high divinity which the healers considered the cause, respecting the theistic framework of the Mesopotamian magic. Therefore, the eye ailment discussed here is one of the afflictions generated by the gods' mistakes. Those afflictions could be cured especially with the so-called cosmological incantations issued from the Mesopotamian canonical and mythological literature. The ancient root of this pattern is found in a Babylonian etiological poem from the second millennium B.C. The narrative describes the primordial harvest, *i.e.* the work of the celestial gods gathering the barley. The mythical story reveals the origin of the ocular symptom, but not the full epic development is retaken in European magic. Remains of that textual evidence are recognized in European Modern magic, but the most important thing is the survival of the ancient analogy between the eye swelling and the barley seed attested in European ethnomedicine.

Cosmogonic projection of the human affliction, described as the final sequence of the chaining agricultural works is related with Latin remedies from the fifth century and with the transformation of the disease cause in its apotropaic main threat. Both magic ideas are restored in Romanian contemporary imagery. The conclusion is that the

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