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RELIGIOUS MINORITIES' WEB RHETORIC: ROMANIAN AND  
HUNGARIAN ETHNO-PAGAN ORGANIZATIONS

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**Abstract:** The comparative study of Romanian and Hungarian Neopagan organizations with an ethnocentric or “Ethno-pagan” ideology is an exploratory research aimed at mapping the similarities and the differences between these religious minorities, with a highlight on their level of institutionalization, their core values and degree of political mobilization. Zalmoxian groups and organizations promote the revival of Romanian spirituality through a process of reconnection to its ancient, supposedly Dacian and Thracian roots; by the same token, Hungarian Shamanist movements are aimed at recovering a supposedly lost spirituality, built-in into the deepest layers of Hungarian language and cultural practices. A web rhetoric analysis of these organizations is carried out in order to assess audience involvement, communication style and the use of multimedia tools to convey their messages.

**Keywords:** Romanian and Hungarian Ethno-pagans, web rhetoric, religious minorities

## Introduction

Religion and spirituality are important dimensions of social life from the earliest stages of its existence. Traditional agrarian society has placed religion at the core of its organizing principles and in the centre of the public sphere for more than two thousand years. Industrialization and the development of modern states have changed the position of religious institutions by separating them from the state and placing them in the private sphere in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Nowadays, globalization has brought about not only the revival of religiosity, but also an intense process of creation and re-creation of spiritual movements and organizations around the world. Information society has reshaped the structure of public sphere and gave increasing space for private groups and institutions, including religious ones. Beyond mainstream, well established and acknowledged religions such as Christianity, Islam or Judaism, a large variety of more or less organized groups have sprung in the last decades of the twentieth century. These entities – generically tagged as “religious minorities” because they represent only a small percentage of a country’s population – have strengthened their voices in the Twenty-first Century through the rise of the internet revolution and have created “a myriad of cybertemples”<sup>1</sup>. Neopaganism is perhaps the fastest growing religious minority and part of the “modern magical revival”<sup>2</sup> both in traditionalist, rural spaces and in urban environments,<sup>3</sup> and therefore worth to explore.

At first glance Neopaganism seems to be an insignificant stream even among religious minorities compared to other contemporary spiritual movements (here in Romania many of the average citizens may not have even ever heard of it). The question might arise, if modern Pagans are so insignificant in numbers why should be they of any concern, public or scientific whatsoever. Still specialists all over the world try to find the reasons and circumstances for the formation and proliferation of its various expressions. Their answers to this question vary just as the explanations they offer for the phenomenon itself. Depending on the affiliation of an author analyzing the issue, some discuss Neopaganism as a threat to the religious status quo<sup>4</sup>, or as a threat to the healthy national-historical consciousness<sup>5</sup>, others treat it as a menace to the social-political order or to given elements of society<sup>6</sup>, while still others see it as delirious phantasmagoria spoiling the mainline historical, linguistical, ideological discourse<sup>7</sup> – either overemphasizing its impact or dismissing it as ridiculous.

The comparative study of Romanian and Hungarian Neopagan organizations with an ethnocentric or “Ethno-pagan” ideology is an exploratory research aimed at mapping the similarities and the differences between these religious minorities, and highlighting their

level of institutionalization (their degree of being “religions”) as well as their ideologies’ and practices’ impact on a personal level (their way of being “spiritualities”). Zalmoxian (or sometimes called “Zamolxian”) groups and organizations promote the revival of Romanian spirituality through a process of reconnection to its ancient, supposedly Dacian and Thracian roots; similarly, Hungarian Shamanist movements are aimed at recovering a supposedly lost spirituality, built-in into the deepest layers of Hungarian language and cultural practices.

We have chosen to conduct an unobtrusive research that gathers data solely from publicly available sources posted on the World Wide Web for two main reasons. Firstly, for topicality purposes: our endeavor is focused on the characteristics of internet-based messages conveyed by Romanian and Hungarian “Ethno-pagan” organizations to their broader audiences. Secondly, we restricted our analysis to the “presentational rhetoric”<sup>8</sup> for methodological reasons: in order to gain access to the “operational rhetoric” or daily communicative practices of minority religious organizations, one has to be fully integrated and socialized within such a group, to participate at its rituals and practices – namely to be an insider. However, when exploring web-based organizational discourses we cannot ignore the “offline” context of these actors, their connections with certain social realities – otherwise we risk a “peripheral vision” on the phenomenon.<sup>9</sup>

Research questions of our exploratory study are manifold:

I. Which are the similarities and the differences between Zalmoxian and Shamanist groups’ web rhetoric?

II. Which are the Zalmoxian and Shamanist groups’ links to political and social movements and organizations?

III. What is the level of institutionalization of these groups and movements? Do they act as registered organizations or they are mainly informal groups?

IV. To what extent do these groups define themselves as *religious*? To what extent do they define themselves as ethno-political?

### ***Conceptual framework***

Neopaganism, in opposition to historical Pagans of ancient cultures, is an umbrella-term covering a whole range of syncretic this-worldly anti-authoritarian nature-oriented modern urban protest religions, originating from European Mysticism as well as 18-19 Centuries’ Romanticism and reconstituted from ancient classical cults, Pre-Christian religions and non-European tribal beliefs. They are generally polytheistic or conditionally monotheistic, privileging the experience of personal ritual over belief, with some relevant common characteristics, such as re-mythologizing, ecologism, or recognition of the female principle.<sup>10</sup>

The wide palette of these neopagan movements ranges from the rather eclectic, syncretic bricolage-cults (like Wicca, Neo-Druidism, /Urban/ Neo-Shamanism) on one extremity to culturally specific traditions, such as the many variants of monotheistic or polytheistic Reconstructionism at the other end.<sup>11</sup> For the present study we are interested in the latter form, the reconstructionist Paganism, which strives to reconstruct meticulously a certain past religious tradition through “a fairly scholarly study of ancient texts, folklore, archaeology, and languages” believed to contain highly authoritative information regarding the creed to be revived,<sup>12</sup> while strictly rejecting eclectic practices and ideas, in order to keep the purity of the ancient religion. At the same time however, Reconstructionists both recognize the need for adapting the old rituals to the contemporary circumstances and respect the individual spiritual inspiration.

The complex phenomenon we intend to analyze – Hungarian and Romanian Neopagan organizations and their rhetoric on the internet – could be described both as “religions” and “spiritualities”. We shall use Lundskow’s approach<sup>13</sup> to define the two frames of reference, because it fits the double-sided, individualistic and communitarian character of the Neopagan worldview.

Table 1: The difference between religion and spirituality

Religion	Spirituality
<i>Common-Good Ethics</i> : the needs of the community override the needs of the few, or the one	<i>Individual Ethics</i> : beliefs and values serve the personal needs of the individual
<i>Common-Good Morality</i> : the institution decides right and wrong	<i>Individual Morality</i> : the individual decides right and wrong
<i>Institutional Autonomy</i> : religion exists trans-generationally and independently of personal control	<i>Personal Autonomy</i> : spirituality exists within and for each individual
<i>Institutional Hegemony</i> : exists externally to and coercive of the individual; responds to historical changes, not personal decisions	<i>Personal Hegemony</i> : personal freedom of choice; responds to personal feelings and choices

Source: Lundskow 2008: 4

Whether realized as spirituality or as religion, Reconstructionism still refers rather to ancient classical religions such as Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Celtic or Norse polytheisms – in scholar and practitioners’ use alike. On the other hand it does not entirely cover modern nations’ religious revivalist movements. These latter are similarly reconstructionist by their form, but are rather concerned with the old (Pre-Christian, Pre-Muslim)

pagan cults of the given modern nation's ethnic ancestors, with a strong stress on ethnicity.

The term "ethnic religion" might also be used for these movements, provided the concept wouldn't have been booked for more classical ideas of ethnos-related religiosity. It refers to either ethnic churches within a main religious denomination (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox) or to contemporary indigenous traditional ethnic religions, that is: living (Asian, African, Pacific, Native American animistic, totemistic, shamanistic, theistic) cults that do not need reconstruction or revitalization due to their unbroken survival to our days. In lack of a concise term it comes at hand to blend the two concepts of reconstructionist Paganism and ethnicity in a special brand: Ethno-paganism. We see it fit for our needs, labeling with more accuracy a wide range of neopagan movements quite typical for Europe, especially the Eastern part of it. Examples will be listed further on in more detail, we now refer only for a hint to different Slavic, Baltic or, as is our concern: Hungarian and Romanian ethnic Neopagan groups.

Ethnicity at the same time, when joint with paganism, means an accentuated ethnocentrism, even ideas of ethnic supremacy or primacy, often finding expression in nationalistic political movements. As Schnirelman<sup>14</sup> observed for the post-Soviet era and area, a fast development of Neopaganism was closely connected with a growth of ethnic nationalism, with activists of the national movements persistently calling for a restoration of the (ethnic, pre-Christian) folk religion. The same applies to the larger Central-Eastern Europe, or the whole continent.

When we look at Romanian and Hungarian Ethno-pagan groups, we are concerned both with their declared missions and values, their level of organization and possible links to politics, and with their impact on a personal level. Given the fact that younger generations are much more "wired", much better connected to the cyberspace than adults and elderly people, and they are subject of political radicalization,<sup>15</sup> the rapid expansion of ethnocentric discourses on the internet might have significant political implications, and therefore meaningful to explore. A young person is more likely to become "technopagan" or a "dynamic, multi-faceted and adaptable agent that can effectively challenge traditional humanist binaries between nature and technology, science and religion, human and nonhuman".<sup>16</sup> At the same time, religious movements have an increased capacity to mobilize young people, both in democratic and undemocratic directions.<sup>17</sup>

With ethno-paganism thus spreading rapidly among a digitally re-wired younger generation, we must have in mind what Dino Cardone calls the subversiveness of internet rhetoric. The web, due to its relative lack of gatekeeping compared to older electronic media, is more susceptible to give room to unusual, fringe discourses, where the individual rhetor communicates relatively freed from institutionally enforced scientific,

theological or other orthodoxies.<sup>18</sup> Social media dominated by youth on the one hand and laden with competing unorthodox religious, political ideas on the other hand offers an excellent hotbed for Ethno-pagan groups both to easily spread their ideas and to organize themselves. But, crucially for our investigation, “while many religious groups use the Internet, only neo-Paganism is able to imagine a community (...) in cyberspace”.<sup>19</sup>

## Background of the study

Neopaganism as an emergent spiritual movement is one of the fastest growing and most misunderstood religions. The term “Neopaganist” is used more by scholars than by practitioners themselves<sup>20</sup> and should be considered rather an umbrella-term, given the variety of ideologies and practices clustered under it. One of the most common prejudices connected to Neopagans is that they are Satanists, the embodiment of evil, and they commit a series of crimes, ranging from drug abuse and rape to ritual human sacrifice. Although police have never documented even one case of ritual rape or murder, the prejudice strongly persists.<sup>21</sup> While these prejudices concerning Neopaganism as evil in general are backed primarily by traditional mainline churches, in the special case of ethno-pagans the picture is even more darkened by their public or scholar perception as Neo-Nazis based on their supposed or real connections with such ideologies.<sup>22</sup>

### *International research on Neopaganism*

According to a survey conducted in the United States (the most documented space of the movement), Neopaganists tend to be white, young, and well educated.<sup>23</sup>

*Table 2: Age breakdown of Neopagans in the USA*

Age	8–9	10–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	70–79	N. r.
%	0.1	3.6	29.1	34.3	24.5	7.9	2.1	0.2	2.7

Source: Berger et al. 2003: 27

*Table 3: Race of Neopagans in the USA*

Race	White	Black	Asian	Native American	Hispanic	Other	No response
%	90.8	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.7	2.4	0.2

Source: Berger et al. 2003: 30

*Table 4: Education of Neopagans in the USA*

Educational	No high-school	High-school	Some college	College	Technical school	Postgraduate	Postgraduate	Other	.r.
%	2.4	5.4	25.4	25.5	11.6	11.4	15.9	1.6	.6

Source: Berger et al. 2003: 32

Because Neopagans tend to be hidden groups, it is impossible to perform random samplings. However, given the intense online activity of these groups and the growth of solitary practitioners,<sup>24</sup> “networked individualism”<sup>25</sup> facilitates research conducted online with large number of respondents. Helen Berger and her research team has expanded the first survey on Neopaganism to international environments in 2007 and found similar data with those gathered in 2003 in the United States, using online questionnaires filled in by almost 8000 respondents.<sup>26</sup> The main difference Berger has found between Neopagans in 2003 and 2007 was the steep growth of solitary practitioners: “the number of Pagans who claim to practice alone has grown from 51% to 79%. The growth of solitary practitioners has been facilitated by books and the Internet. During the 1960s and 70s when the religion was initially spreading, it was passed from person-to-person, most commonly in groups, such as covens.”<sup>27</sup>

Since to our best knowledge there are no such in-depth surveys and statistical analyses concerning the numbers, affiliations, age, gender or orientation of Neopagans in Romania and Hungary, we cannot offer similar results.<sup>28</sup> While in Hungary there are between 150 and 200 registered and not registered churches, the overwhelming majority of which represent minority cults and religions,<sup>29</sup> Szilárdi Réka refers to statistical data,<sup>30</sup> according to which the adherents to new religious movements do not exceed one percent of Hungary’s population, and within it, neopagans represent an infinitesimal number.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, Romania acknowledges only 18 cults and religious denominations of which none is neopagan,<sup>32</sup> while hardly half a percent declared him-/herself of „other religion” at the 2002 national census.<sup>33</sup> In such conditions it is hard to estimate or proceed any comparison, but there are some generalities that presumably apply to ethnic Neopaganists in both Hungarian and Romanian societies.

In order to identify those generalities we have to take an overview of theoretical works in the study of Neopaganism both on international and on regional level. Neopaganism is a well-investigated and thoroughly described phenomenon so we will confine here to the few key ideas indispensable for our research.

Réka Szilárdi states that “Neopagan communities respond to the postmodern condition with a counter-attitude in which they try to

develop a most possibly comprehensive, universally valid self-definition, striving to blend lingual, ethnic, religious and even political identity forms into a plausible unity. (...) In certain respect these movements behave as if they formed ethnically based communities, organized on the principle of ethnicity. This does not mean that they are judged this way by the social majority, on the contrary; these entities react often with a minority attitude to their environment from which they not necessarily differ from ethnic aspect."<sup>34</sup> She adds that the formation of these communities is concomitantly a reaction to secularization but also a turn away from traditional forms of religiosity.<sup>35</sup>

Sarah Pike emphasizes that Neopaganism, meaning for her nature-oriented religiosity, is partially born from a need for community: "spiritual power and commitment to community are absent from most Protestant and Catholic churches", and also from a concern for our human and natural environment: "Neopagans are committed to pursuing religious options that they think will bring about harmony between humans and nature, sacralize the body and sexuality, heal wounds caused by intolerance, and create healthy and peaceful communities."<sup>36</sup> At the same time there is a wide-spread rejection of external religious authority in favor of one's personal spiritual needs.<sup>37</sup>

Turning to closer research, more relevant for our region, we mention first Adrian Ivakhiv,<sup>38</sup> who shows that in European and especially Eastern-European Neopaganist movements nature and ethnicity are more strongly linked than western scholars of religion usually presume.

The kind of human–nature continuum suggested by contemporary East European Pagans may, at first blush, appear a laudable attempt at an ecological reincorporation of humans into the natural world, one consonant with popular North American environmentalism. But it raises thorny issues of ethnic exclusiveness—who belongs, and who does not?—which have troubled interethnic relations in almost every corner of the world, and which are commonly the province of the political right rather than the left. (...) nature as defined by many East European Pagans—a nature in which territorialized ethnicity is a pivotal component—may in fact be a more widespread notion of nature than that favored by North Americans and Western Europeans.<sup>39</sup>

Victor Schnirelman also emphasizes the strong connections between Neopaganism and Nationalism: "turn to Paganism means building an ethno-national cult, a 'national spirit', in order to unite a nation in its aspiration towards freedom".<sup>40</sup> In his view Neopagans of Eastern Europe



rely heavily on ethnocentric discourse, where Paganism means a return to the pure, unspoiled morality of the ancestors, prior to the Christianity, which often is identified with the oppressor majority or an evil foreign intrusion, and not negligibly “Neo-Pagans are deeply and insatiably in love with the pre-Christian past, as if at that time, peoples lived in virgin purity, were not corrupted by external influences, could therefore enjoy the best ideology in the world, wage successful wars, and accomplish great heroic deeds.”<sup>41</sup> Anne Ferlat analyzes New Age and Neopaganist movements in contemporary Russia, taking them under a common roof as new religious waves, pointing as well to their ethnic and anti-Christian character.<sup>42</sup>

Closing in to our region, we refer to Hungarian researcher Szilágyi Tamás in two distinct issues of general relevance. First, he makes a basic difference between Neopaganism and New Age, worth for a longer citation:

...we find so divergent conceptions in crucial points in the case of the two movements, which exclude the possibility to label Neopaganism as a New Age current. These are obviously distinct religious phenomena, which try to offer their adherents answers to problems raised in a given era, but on different grounds. New Age blends Eastern spirituality with the doctrines of modern Western spiritualism and theosophy, respectively, with the elements of certain scientific disciplines (psychology, quantum physics, biology) fitting into its worldview. New Age emphasizes the role of the individual, both in decisions regarding one's own fate and the world's destiny, striving to integrate its conception into the common sense. Neopagan approach is less “scientific”, it is more influenced by the traditionalist view. Neopagan groups follow the teachings of an archaic religious tradition chosen by them, actualizing it to the modern times. These movements are less characterized by an aspiration to universality, since given pagan religions are deeply rooted in ethnicity, and this aspect often limits the composition of their adherents. In some trends the candidate must go through an initiating ritual, which means that the circle of members is more exclusivist than in New Age groups.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, in his study “Sacred Characteristics of the Nation” Szilágyi charts a comparison between political religion and civil religion,

rendering neopagan movements as expressions of “Hungarianism”, closer to as he sees Voegelin (1986) and Gentile (2004) interpret radical right-wing movements as manifestations of a new religiosity.<sup>44</sup> He also calls the attention upon the fact that political religion, be it Christian-oriented or Neopaganist is inseparable from an alternative historicity and *sacral geography* – a concept which is crucial for our investigation.<sup>45</sup>

Concerning Romanian Neopaganism, there is very scarce scholar investigation – as Radu Mureşan complains in his very recent study on this phenomenon, saying that the subject did not receive proper attention after 1989.<sup>46</sup> Being an orthodox priest as well as a university professor, his concern is rather of missionary nature, but nevertheless his analysis is a meticulous review of the new religious phenomenon. Interestingly however, he only mentions one single autochthonous movement: the Gebeleizis Society, which is subject of our rhetorical analysis. Gebeleizis, far from being the only indigenous Neopagan group in Romania, still it is the one shortly mentioned<sup>47</sup> in another Romanian study, dedicated to the alternative historicity labeled ‘Dacomania’, by Cătălin Borangic. He also stresses the strong connection between protochronism – a special form of historicity – radical right, and ethnocentric religiosity.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Background of the phenomenon***

#### *a) Historicist context: protochronism between romantic myth and state-imposed doctrine*

In order to understand the ground from which our Ethno-pagan religious movements have sprung, we must take account of their roots reaching back in less religious historicist ideas. As seen above, when studying Neopagan movements in Central-Eastern Europe we cannot disregard the ethnic element, and even less the historical aspect. As central concept in local nationalisms, a prominent ethnocentrism – together with its links to religion, culture, ideology – has long been investigated, debated, analyzed by a whole row of historians, sociologists, linguists, anthropologists, political scientists and other specialists, both Romanian, Hungarian and international – which we cannot and need not refer here, even with the risk of several terms remaining uncovered by exact definitions for this article.

The idea of ethnocentrism, or more radically, the ethnic supremacy manifests in various forms as a kind of geographical, cultural or historical primacy of an ethnic entity, always directed against other ethnic groups. A special case of this ethnocentrism is the so called protochronism which goes hand in hand with some given continuity theory. Protochronism, an idea of preceding others in time and an idealized heroic past, though labeled under this name rather only in Romanian special literature is nonetheless present in Hungarian variants (as it is also present in the thought of other surrounding nations in this quarter of Europe). Here is

how Cătălin Borangic describes the term: „[protochronism] is a cultural current that appeared in Romania under this name at the mid-seventies of the past century; not a brand new idea, it revives a certain type of nationalism; such a current may be easily identified in the cultures which claim their right to a given identity.”<sup>49</sup>

Several Romanian researchers<sup>50</sup> have investigated this phenomenon in book-length, still others<sup>51</sup> dedicated analytic articles to it, where the origins, early development, disgrace, revival, fade and post-revolution transformations of Romanian protochronism have been followed. We only need to note some key figures in the controversial history of an idea of an idyllic past from the romantic view of Nicolae Densușianu,<sup>52</sup> who advanced the idea of Pelasgianism, through the enforced official National-Communist state ideology of the Ceaușescu-era, with prominent representatives as Edgar Papu, or Iosif Constantin Drăgan (a legionary émigré!) to the contemporary hard ideologists of dacology like Napoleon Săvescu or Octavian Sărbătoare. In brief, protochronism may be presented as a mythic history of Romanians descending from the pre-Indo-European Pelasgians inhabiting the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic-Balkan area, who invented writing (Tărtăria-tablets), conquered and civilized Eurasia, reaching as far as Mongolia or Japan, later as Dacians-Getae, a tribe of Thrakians, gave the world the first monotheistic religion of the god Zalmoxis, forerunner of Christ. These Dacians being partially conquered by Rome in 106 AD lived through almost two centuries of Romanization – and while official history teaches this process of Romanization as the basis of Romanian Continuity Theory, Protochronists, Dacologists declare that Romanization is a false doctrine and Romanians are uninterrupted descendants of Dacians-Getae, the latter being identified also with the Goths, thus ultimately contributing to the Fall of Rome. Naturally, there are countless variations in this plot, according to the personal convictions of each Dacologist author, but the main lines unfold along this constellation of ideas.

It is worth noting that while in Romania Protochronism was a tolerated and later, during the totalitarianism a severely imposed national history, in Hungary protochronist-like doctrines have never managed to enter officially state ideology. In the wake of nineteenth century strives to reconstruct a presumably lost national mythology, and heavy linguistical-historical debates over the origins and affiliation of Hungarian language and people (known as the [academic] Ugrian-Turkish War), official academic doctrines definitely rejected the theory of Scythian-Hun-Turkic-Hungarian continuity; a standpoint that left many adepts of this latter view deeply frustrated. They have never given up. In fact, at the beginning of the twentieth century the Turanic Society was established with a scientific basis and objectives, proclaiming the Central-Eastern Asian provenance and liaisons of the Magyars – having at board such prominent personalities as Teleki Pál, Széchenyi Béla, Károlyi Mihály,

Vámbery Ármin, Cholnoky Jenő, Goldziher Ignác.<sup>53</sup> After the First World War Turanism has somewhat lost from its importance, but turned from scientific to political movement, a smaller group even tried to initiate a Turanic religion, by reconstructing and restoring archaic ways of life, morals and customs.<sup>54</sup> Horthy's regime did not tolerate the Society anyway, and after a short revival during the Second World War it simply faded away, with its key figures retreating in emigration.

Turanism however is not quite the central idea of Hungarian protochronism.<sup>55</sup> Such thoughts emerged with the ideas of the Sumerian ancestry advanced by such scholars as Badiny Jós Ferenc,<sup>56</sup> Bobula Ida.<sup>57</sup> Sumerianism has come today to engulf almost all anti-Finno-Ugrian trends, but most importantly a strong wave of religiousness sprung from Badiny's work on the Parthian provenance of Jesus.<sup>58</sup> Protochronism has found expression in the religious primacy over Abrahamic monotheisms, with Jesus being a Zarathustra-like prophet of Light. Other historical and cultural primacies include a linguistical and civilizing firstness of the Hungarian language and people, the invention of writing, invention of horse-riding and an interesting recent idea of geographical first presence and continuity in the Carpathian-Danubian area, competing and mutually excluding each other with the Romanian protochronist discourse.

For a comparison with Romanian protochronist ideas, we resume in brief in the following lines of variations<sup>59</sup> that converge into a Hungarian protochronist mythology. In regard to origins, as opposed to the official Uralic, Finno-Ugric version, Hungarians descend either from Proto-Asian people(s) and/or Sumerians, Huns, Scythians, Parthians, Sabirs<sup>60</sup> or – according to some newer theories – from primaeval Proto-European (Carpathian-Danubian) populations.<sup>61</sup> Further on, the Hungarian language preserves the most ancient form of the original protolanguage in its perfection,<sup>62</sup> and based upon the clear logical peculiarities of this language the Hungarian runic “rovás” was the first form of writing ever, from which all other alphabets later evolved<sup>63</sup> – consequently this nation is the direct descendant of the prehistoric proto-culture, while other nations diverged and degenerated from it.<sup>64</sup> Following this logic it should be no surprise that also the Hungarians were the originators and only perpetuators of the real (Parthian) “Pre-Christian Christianity”. Jesus himself would have been a Parthian prince bringing the message of Light into the world, which was then spoiled by the “Jewish Bible”.<sup>65</sup> Against all odds, and being “Christianized” by force, Hungarians still have succeeded to save their creed by the mystical program of the Holy Crown and keep a sacral order in the Carpathian-basin through the past millennium.<sup>66</sup> The sacral mission of Hungary – dedicated by its first king Saint Stephen to Mary the Virgin – has always been to serve as guardian of Light and Truth and to assure the spiritual bridge between East and West, at the same time warding off from the crucially central Carpathian area both the eastern intruding people and the western aggressive imperialist powers.<sup>67</sup>

These ideas have never been admitted into Hungarian official discourse, not even after the fall of the Communist Regime – however, recently seem to gain quasi-legitimacy through rightist political parties, first with the Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (Hungarian Justice and Life Party) and now with the rise of the 'Jobbik' Party (word-play: "Righter" = "Better" Party).<sup>68</sup>

*b) Religious context: from global New Age to village shamans and Zalmoxians in exile*

After two centuries dominated by Reason – at least on the level of "grand discourse" irrational is reclaiming its right. Since Enlightenment myths have been mercilessly debunked by science, modern thought has alienated from the ways of cognition through intuition, imagination and psychic experience. In postmodern mind, all stable discourses have wavered, giving way to a plurality of approaches to reality.<sup>69</sup> Already beginning with the second part of nineteenth century Western minds have increasingly fallen under the spell of Eastern spirituality, ancient wisdom, mysterious Gnosticism, occult mystical traditions whether living in present world religions or rediscovered from long forgotten writings. Also, an urging need has grown for the individual to escape from what he/she perceived as a strong grip of the churches emptied of human sense and sensibility. Nature and environment has been discovered as if suddenly unveiled and natural way of life enthusiastically observed at exotic tribes living in the wild. All these processes have cumulated into a major spiritual revolution called counterculture in the sixties of the past century starting from the United States. Hippies and spiritualists alike sensed it as the threshold of a new era for humans: the New Age (of Aquarius). It has brought along a re-mythologizing or re-sacralization of the world, opening the way to a whole range of new religious movements.

It is in this postmodern global context that Neopagan initiatives are to be interpreted. However, as defined above<sup>70</sup> New Age should not be identified with Neo-Pagan movements. Neopaganism on the one hand is a trend of emancipation of the self and integration into an organic community and on the other hand a striving to get closer to nature, to ancestors, to one's own roots. In the case of ethnic Paganism, this strive is to revive the wisdom and moral purity of ancestors in distant times, before the spoil of Christian influence or alien cultural impact. In this logic, alien is something evil, be it a nation, a religion, an economic formation of society, a conquering power or simply globalization. Sometimes, such neopagan ideas spread as undercurrents within a mainline Christian denomination. Hungarian and Romanian Ethno-pagan movements generally fit into this model.<sup>71</sup>

For the needs of the present study we present two basic forms of Hungarian and Romanian Neopagan Reconstructionist trends, giving examples to show certain variations within each type. We will call the

Romanian model Zalmoxianism, though there are rare cases of explicit and pure reconstruction of the very scarcely known cult of the Thracian Zalmoxis, as Eliade described it.<sup>72</sup> We still opted for this label, since almost all Romanian Ethno-pagan movements build onto the Dacologist idea, implicitly involving the religious spirituality of Thraco-Dacian ancestors. Similarly, we name the Hungarian model Shamanist, since it is the most common form of returning to the Asian ancestors' cult whether they call themselves "Táltos"-Shamans, or Tengriists, or Arch-Hungarians. In the following we try to present an inventory of such ethno-pagan movements that are found on the net, regardless of their level of institutionalization or organization.

A brief review of Romanian Ethno-paganists or Protochronist Dacologs on the Internet shows that the majority define themselves as Dacians: *Noi Dacii – Revista pentru Limba și Cultura Dacilor* (Journal for the Language and Culture of Dacians);<sup>73</sup> *Dacii.Info* – a webpage dedicated to Dacians;<sup>74</sup> *Dacia Nemuritoare: Prima Revistă Dedicată Dacilor Liberi* (Immortal Dacia: The First Journal Dedicated to the Free Dacians);<sup>75</sup> *Dacia.org* – webpage maintained by the circle of Napoleon Săvescu;<sup>76</sup> *Enciclopedia Dacica* – a web-encyclopaedia dedicated to the Dacians;<sup>77</sup> *ROMANIA-DACIA: CASA NOASTRA* Blog al Frontului de Eliberare a Daciei (OUR HOME Front for the Liberation of Dacia);<sup>78</sup> *Dacologica* – a blog dedicated to Dacians;<sup>79</sup> *Dacii lui Zamolxe* – a web-forum dedicated to Dacians;<sup>80</sup> *Spiritualitate Daco-Românească: Reabilitarea tradițiilor și spiritualității autohtone autentice* (Daco-Romanian Spirituality – Rehabilitation of authentic indigenous traditions and spirituality – blog).<sup>81</sup> Without exhausting our list of approximately twenty similar Romanian groups and web-spots, we can summarize that generally members and contributors of these pages do not tend to identify themselves as some practicing Neopagans or following any certain cultic rituals. Still the overall image mirrored by these sites, blogs, and forums is a strong commitment to revitalize the ancient Dacian-Zalmoxian spirituality and religion (without such extreme formulations as the émigré Octavian Sărbătoare's proposal to make Zalmoxianism an/the official state religion in Romania). There is, however an organization which assumes overtly its Neo-pagan, Dacian identity: *Gebeleizis*.<sup>82</sup> Further on, a more detailed analysis will follow of this organization named after the other (probable) name of Zalmoxis, as the Thunder-God of Thracians.

A similar inventory of Hungarian Shamanist groups on the Net would contain many word-plays referring to the sacral character of Hungarian language, or reference to Hungarian (Magyar) ancestors, or Hungarians themselves: *Magtár*;<sup>83</sup> *Magyarságtudományi Intézet* (Institute of Hungarian Studies);<sup>84</sup> *Magyar Harcos* (Hungarian Warrior).<sup>85</sup> A range of pages, blogs forums define themselves as churches or religions already in their titles,<sup>86</sup> "Táltos" meaning Shaman<sup>87</sup>; while those bearing in their title

“Yotengrit” and “Arvisura”<sup>88</sup> denote two specially Hungarian religious phenomena – both based on shamanic spirituality, a fantastic mythology of Hungarian protochronism and strong links to New Age mentality. Tamana<sup>89</sup> is a typical protochronist theory, propagating the Hungarians as populating the whole world in prehistoric past, leaving their marks everywhere through toponyms, and there are indeed Tamana-groups as well. In contrast to Romanian counterparts, these groups are rather religious and practicing indeed shamanic rituals, gathering on Neopagan festivals. At the same time most of them are typically Ethno-pagans, with a strong focus on reconstructing the ancient religious traditions brought from the Asian steppe.

*c) Technological context: Social media boom and Web 2.0*

Since the mid 90s, internet started to host and sustain virtual community formation of Neopagan groups and individuals: not as face-to-face, but as “imagined communities”.<sup>90</sup> These more or less cohesive clusters of individuals and groups were glued together by sharing similar values and practices, and individualized by “ritualized imagination”.<sup>91</sup>

Between 1995 and 2002 internet was a medium with fewer interactive features: static web pages, discussion lists, forums and emails. Since 2003, online environments have been reshaped by the spread of web applications such as blogs (Blogspot, Wordpress), wikis, video sharing sites (Youtube), micro-blogs (Twitter) and social networking sites (MySpace, Facebook). These Web 2.0 tools had a strong impact on social communication by facilitating user generated content to an unprecedented scale. The term “Web 2.0” – coined by Darcy deNucci and popularized by Tim O’Reilly<sup>92</sup> – designates the new generation of web-based features that enable interactivity, user centered design and virtual community formation. Not surprisingly, after the spread of Web 2.0 applications, international research on Neopaganism has found a significant rise of solitary practitioners from 51% to 79%, as noted before.<sup>93</sup>

Web Rhetoric Analysis (WRA) – strongly connected with web-site credibility evaluation – becomes an increasingly difficult task to perform because of corporate authorship and coproduced content.<sup>94</sup> However, the interactivity facilitated by Web 2.0 online spaces enables unobtrusive research and a thin slicing of organizational communication.

### **Ethno-pagan web rhetoric: an empirical analysis**

In order to answer the first research question of this study concerning the similarities and the differences between Zalmoxian and Shamanist groups’ web rhetoric, we shall perform two types of analysis: on the one hand, we are going to look at web rhetoric style and compare one Romanian and one Hungarian Ethno-pagan organization along three comprehensive criteria. The purpose of this analysis is to establish

whether they employ Web 2.0<sup>95</sup> or rather traditional tools.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, we shall take a more detailed look at these organizations' web rhetoric performance according to the classical Aristotelian framework applied to organizations.<sup>97</sup> For the purpose of our empirical analysis we have selected two Ethno-pagan organizations that are fairly at the same level of institutionalization in terms of community formation, elaborate value system<sup>98</sup> and membership involvement:<sup>99</sup> the Hungarian shamanist organization *Tengri*,<sup>100</sup> and the Romanian Zalmoxian organization *Gebeleizis*.<sup>101</sup> Although the latter is subject of media scandal<sup>102</sup> and often accused of breaking the law and promoting Neo-Nazi values,<sup>103</sup> it is the main visible Romanian group defining itself as Pagan on the first hand, and as cultural association on the second hand, as compared to Sarmizegetusa Association or Dacia Revival International, for instance.

### ***Web rhetoric style of Romanian and Hungarian Ethno-pagan organizations***

As Hocks put it,<sup>104</sup> visual rhetoric used for persuasion is not a new communication strategy, but its importance has been amplified by the visual and interactive nature of hypertext and multimedia writing. Hocks has developed a comprehensive framework for analyzing rhetorical style in digital environments of the World Wide Web:<sup>105</sup>

I. *Audience Stance*: The ways in which the audience is invited to participate in online documents and the ways in which the author creates an ethos that requires, encourages, or even discourages different kinds of interactivity for that audience.

II. *Transparency*: The ways in which online documents relate to established conventions like those of print, graphic design, film, and Web pages. The more the online document borrows from familiar conventions, the more transparent it is to the audience.

III. *Hybridity*: The ways in which online documents combine and construct visual and verbal designs. Hybridity also encourages both authors and audiences to recognize and construct multifaceted identities.

Hocks' framework of visual rhetoric analysis matches the criteria developed by Marc Deuze<sup>106</sup> related to online journalism as compared to offline journalism: *interactivity* (audience stance), *hipertextuality* (transparency) and *multimediality* (hybridity). We shall apply this framework for comparing and contrasting the types of rhetoric used by Romanian and Hungarian Ethno-pagan organizations in online environments. A visual rhetoric that employs mostly the traditional, text-centered tools of the printed media – let us tag it “Web 1.0 rhetoric” – has a low level of audience involvement (low interactivity), a high level of transparency (a scarce use of hypertexts or links that bring the audience to new cyberspaces) and a low level of hybridity (or scarce use of multimedia, and mainly in a static way, such as displaying photos), with more space given to plain texts than to hypertexts. In contrast, a “Web 2.0



rhetoric” has a high level of audience involvement (it is very interactive), a low level of “transparency” as defined by Hocks<sup>107</sup> (because instead of a plain text we have a cluster of information organized hypertextually) and it is very hybrid, by using a wide range of multimedia tools and channels: images, slideshows, sounds, videos and a set of sharing buttons (for Twitter, Facebook, Delicious and other web applications).

Both Ethno-pagan organizations under study – the *Gebeleizis Association*, a Romanian Zalmoxian group, and the *Tengri Babba Community*, a Hungarian Shamanist group, have well documented websites, with strong visual identities, and rich English language content, suggesting an opening up to global audiences, but also a proof of the spiritual leaders' connections abroad.

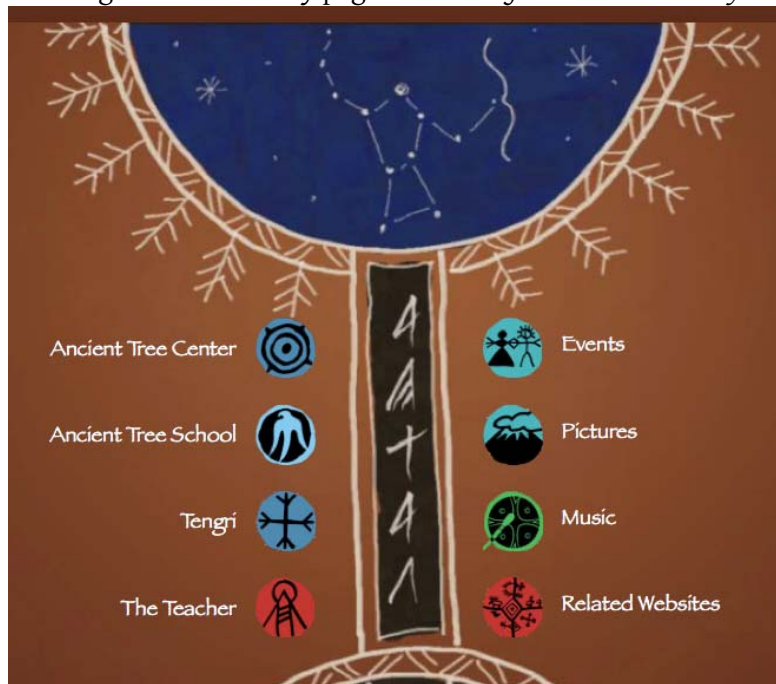
*Gebeleizis Association's* website is dominated by dark colors, ancient Pagan symbols explained in detail, and a series of war symbols overtly related to the Nordic mythology, as well as Romanian section-titles in Norse runes. The title of the website is suggesting far right supremacist values: *One Family, One Nation, One Territory*. The concept of the website design and the organization itself is declared to be the intellectual propriety of Hank Schmidt. We could also find out via search engines that the domain name has been registered in Florida, USA, under the same person's name. However, the most visible member of the organization in Andrei Molnar, one of the three co-founders, given his open confrontation with the police and the lawsuits against Romanian authorities.

Image 1: Excerpt from the *Gebeleizis* website's *Pagan Community* menu



The *Tengri Babba Community* website has a more light color-based design, with rich ancient mythological symbols encapsulated in the navigation buttons: shaman drum, (Hungarian) runes and a life tree in the centre of the page, suggesting the link between the earth and the sky. Natural elements are reiterated through photos, drawings and textual messages. The title of the website – Sólyomfi Nagy Zoltán – is the name of the community's guru. Most of the web-page content is signed by him, even the audio content (folk songs composed and co-interpreted by the leader).

Image 2: Introductory page of the *Tengri Babba Community*



After applying the web rhetoric style assessment framework presented above, we summarized in a comprehensive chart the level of interactivity, hypertextuality and multimediality of the two Ethno-pagan organizations.

Table 6: Web rhetoric style of the Ethno-pagan organizations under study

Criteria of analysis	Gebeleizis Association	Tengri Babba Community
Audience stance (interactivity)	Medium to low: e-mail and mobile phone contact, ordering products via e-mail, Moneybookers and bank transfer (postcards, calendars, books and T-shirts )	Medium to low: e-mail and mobile phone contact, closed forum for registered users, ordering products via e-mail (shaman drums, home-made objects, audio-CDs)
Transparency	Low: broken links at the	Low to medium: intuitive

(hypertextuality)	Publications section, difficult to navigate, lack of search features, very low redundancy: difficult to get back to the starting point	navigation buttons, but a lack of search options, difficult to navigate, very low redundancy: difficult to get back to the starting point
Hybridity (multimediality)	Medium: text-centric design, with some Web 2.0 features: music streaming, link to a news site called "Thracia Identitarian Press Agency (TIPA)". No video, poor sharing features – only a link to Facebook from TIPA	Medium to low: text-centric design, with no Web 2.0 tools and features (sharing, video). Audio streaming for the guru's music available.

To conclude, both organizations' websites are in the Web 1.0 stage, with a minimal audience involvement, a scarce use of hypertext or cross-linking options and a poor use of multimedia features and tools, such as video and sharing options.

**Rhetorical performance of the Ethno-pagan organizations**

In order to perform a more detailed web rhetoric analysis, we applied the Aristotelian framework customized for organizational rhetoric, according to a recent model developed by Mary Hoffman and Debra Ford.<sup>108</sup> For the purposes of our comparative analysis, we have chosen the key Aristotelian rhetorical categories – ethos, logos and pathos – in order to assess organizational web rhetoric performance. Both organizations make visible efforts to build credibility (ethos), to persuade audiences about their values, and to build rational arguments in favor of their cause. Religious organizations not only propose activities or specific cultural services, but also advocate for a distinctive lifestyle. We summarized the key features of these persuasion tools in the table below:

Table 7: Web rhetoric performance of the Ethno-pagan organizations under study

Aristotle's Rhetorical Categories	Forms as Found in Organizational Rhetoric		Gebeleizis Association	Tengri Babba Community
Ethos/Credibility	Organizational social legitimacy: Competence, community		Bylaws published, historical grounds	Guru's CV online; spiritual grounds
Pathos/Emotion	Values advocacy	Explicit appeals	Confrontative tone	Assertive tone
		Shared values	Northern European	Central Asian
		Philanthropic	Rock concerts	Lectures, trips

		activities		
		Praise for individuals	Initiation rites	Initiation rites
	Identifi- cation	Identification	Pagan/ Dacian	Shaman/ Hungarian
		Antithesis	Exclusivist tone	Inclusive discourse
		Common ground	"Blood", ethnicity	Tradition, ethnicity
		Assumed "we"	Pagan/ Dacian	Shaman/ Hungarian
		Unifying symbols	Northern European	Central Asian
	Needs		Refuse authority	Accept authority
Logos	Claims, evidence, reasoning		Deductive reason- ing, protochronism	Inductive reason- ing, charisma

We have chosen two Ethno-pagan organizations in order to assess their web rhetoric performance, according to Aristotelian criteria. Surprisingly, although the two organizations are at comparable levels of institutionalization and value clarification, and both relying on ethnic value legitimating practices, we have found more differences than similarities. Ethos and social legitimation shows a bureaucratic approach on the Romanian organization side, and a traditionalist, charismatic legitimation approach on the Hungarian organization side.

Significant differences were found related to pathos elements as well: while the Romanian Paganist organization seeks arguments and roots in the Northern European warrior mythologies, the Hungarian shamanist group is connected to Central Asian traditions. By the same token, Zalmoxian youngsters under study are more confrontative and politically engaged to the far right ethnic supremacist discourse, while the Tengri Shamanist group seems to be more neutral politically – perhaps due to the middle aged guru. Argumentation strategies, beyond stating different claims, differ in terms of evidence and reasoning: the Tengri community is more concerned with persuasion through examples (a whole series of activities presented, and the guru's CV displayed), while the Zalmoxian group is more concerned with confronting religious and political status quo and deductive arguments rooted in their foundation documents.

Given the narrow scope of such empirical analysis, it has a mere heuristic function: to generate questions and assumptions for future research: is Ethno-pagan political involvement a matter of age, or it depends rather on the leadership style or core values? Are Hungarian Neopagan organizations more keen to use charismatic legitimation, whereas Romanian organizations use more bureaucratic means? In tone with Marcel Proust, perhaps discovery consists not in seeking new territories, but in seeing things with new eyes.

## Conclusions

Our exploratory study was aimed at assessing the main similarities and differences between Romanian and Hungarian Ethno-pagan organizations. In order to achieve this goal, we have performed a comparative theoretical and empirical analysis, based on publicly available data about such organizations.

The first research question concerning the similarities and the differences between Zalmoxian and Shamanist groups' web rhetoric have been answered by using two assessment tools: one related to the degree of interactivity, hypertextuality and multimediality of the Ethno-pagan organizations' websites; the other concerned with the three Aristotelian criteria of persuasion, applied to online contexts: ethos, pathos and logos. We have found more similarities along the web rhetoric style and more differences along the web rhetoric performance: while both the Zalmoxian and the Shamanist organization is still using the Web 1.0 features (low level of interactivity, hipertextuality and multimediality), in terms of ethos we found different legitimation strategies, in terms of pathos different cultural roots, and divergent argumentation techniques.

In regard to the second question that concerned the issue whether Zalmoxian and Shamanist groups are linked or not to political and social movements, from the majority of the investigated websites we have come to the conclusion that protochronist-oriented Zalmoxian groups express sympathy and cross-link to sites of radical right tendency but on average they are not directly linked to such organizations. The case of Gebeleizis is rather an exception, where Neopaganism, ethnocentrism and overt radical right ideology finds prominent expression. The Hungarian palette of Shamanist movements is somewhat more shaded. Where the group is deeper concerned with Pagan religious ideas, there is less political involvement. The page of the Tengri community is exemplary in this regard, although sympathies to protochronist thinking and right ideology do not lack. Pages less interested in practicing religion are more susceptible to link to radical right organizations.

The third research question was related to the level of institutionalization of Ethno-pagan groups and movements, whether they act as registered organizations or they are mainly informal groups. We have found a seizable effort of institutional legitimation by registering these organizations as legal entities<sup>109</sup>, and individual endeavors equally, in line with the international trends shown by pagan census.

Our fourth question asked to what extent do define themselves these Ethno-pagan groups as religious or rather ethno-political. After surfing many websites on both sides we can conclude that for Romanian groups generally the Thracian idea is more important than a not-so-clear structure of religious cult, they are rather centered on what they call Zalmoxian spirituality. In contrast, Hungarian Shamanist groups, where

there is real shamanism involved, do clearly declare themselves as religious, and ethno-political activism is secondary.

### Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Heidi Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 31.

<sup>2</sup> Neville Drury, "The Modern Magical Revival", in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, eds. James R. Lewis and Murphy Pizza, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2009), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Mihaela Frunză, "Feminitate și occultism", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 2 issue 5 (2003): 128.

<sup>4</sup> Radu Petre Mureșan, *Forme ale neopăgânismului în societatea contemporană română*. (București: Facultatea de Teologie, Manuscript, 2010), 18-19; also Békés Márton.

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[http://konzervatorium.blog.hu/2009/09/01/uj\\_magyar\\_konzervativizmus](http://konzervatorium.blog.hu/2009/09/01/uj_magyar_konzervativizmus)

<sup>5</sup> Sorin Olteanu, "Teme Tracomane", <http://soltdm.com/tdman/teme.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Ágoston Vilmos, *Magyar és román szélsőséges honlapok*. Műhelytanulmány 35. (Budapest: Európai Összehasonlító Kisebbségkutatások Közalapítvány, 2008), 8

<sup>7</sup> Czákó Gábor, "Struccok és újpogányok", 2008. 11. 13., n.p.

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<sup>8</sup> John Van Maanen, and Edgar Schein, "Toward a Theory of Organizational Socialization", Massachusetts Institute of Technology, *Working Paper*, 960 (1977), 21.

<sup>9</sup> Norman Fairclough, "Peripheral Vision. Discourse Analysis in Organization Studies: the Case for Critical Realism", *Organization Studies* 26, 6 (2005), 915.

<sup>10</sup> Gregory Price Grieve, "Imagining a Virtual Religious Community: Neo-Pagans and the Internet". *Chicago Anthropology Exchange*, 7, (July 1995), 88; Kis-Halas Judit,

"Újboszorkány-kultuszok a 20. században. A wiccától a cyberboszorkákig",

*RUBICONline*, 14, 7, (July 2005), 56-57,

[http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldal/ujboszorkany\\_kultuszok\\_a\\_20\\_szazadb](http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldal/ujboszorkany_kultuszok_a_20_szazadb)

[an\\_a\\_wiccatol\\_a\\_cyberboszorkakig/](http://www.rubicon.hu/magyar/oldal/ujboszorkany_kultuszok_a_20_szazadb); Szilárdi Réka, "A magyarországi neopogány közösségek", *Debreceni Disputa*, 5, 5, (May 2007), 72

<sup>11</sup> see Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America*, (New York: Viking, 1979) 436-437

<sup>12</sup> Michael F. Strmiska (Ed.), *Modern Paganism in World Cultures. Comparative Perspectives*, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 19

<sup>13</sup> George Lundskow, *The Sociology of Religion. A Substantive and Trans-disciplinary Approach*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008), 4

<sup>14</sup> Victor A. Schnirelman, "'Christians! Go home': A Revival of Neo-Paganism between the Baltic Sea and Transcaucasia (An Overview)". *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 17, 2, 2002, 198

<sup>15</sup> Ágoston Dániel, "A Pogány torony", *Őstörténeti írás gyűjtemény*, 6 March 2009, 45 <http://ostortenetunk.blogspot.com/2009/03/pogany-torony.html>

<sup>16</sup> Susan Gallacher, *Technology, Ecology and Spirituality: Neopaganism and Hybrid Ontologies in Technoculture*, (PhD Dissertation, Murdoch University, 2008), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Bogdan Mihai Radu, "Young Believers or Secular Citizens? An Exploratory Study of the Influence of Religion on Political Attitudes and Participation in Romanian

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<sup>18</sup> Dino Enrico Cardone, *Programming the Apocalypse: Recombinant Narrative in Cyberspace*, (PhD Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School University of Southern California, 2007), 5

<sup>19</sup> Grieve, 103.

<sup>20</sup> Lundskow, 308.

<sup>21</sup> Lundskow, 308-309.

<sup>22</sup> Cătălin Borangic, “Fenomenul dacoman: promotori și aderenți”, *Buletinul Cercurilor Științifice Studențești, Arheologie - Istorie - Muzeologie*, 14, 2008; Schnirelman 2002; Margareta Lupu, “Tineri fără Dumnezeu”, *Monitorul de Sibiu*, 26 June 2007, n.p., [http://www.monitorulsb.ro/cms/site/m\\_sb/news/tineri\\_fara\\_dumnezeu\\_17753.html](http://www.monitorulsb.ro/cms/site/m_sb/news/tineri_fara_dumnezeu_17753.html)

<sup>23</sup> Helen Berger et al., *Voices from the Pagan Census. A National Survey of Witches and Neopagans in the United States*, (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 27-32.

<sup>24</sup> Helen Berger, “Are Solitaries the Future of Paganism?” *Patheos*, 23 August 2010, <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/Solitaries-The-Future-Of-Paganism.html>

<sup>25</sup> Angela Coco, “Pagan religiousness as ‘networked individualism’”, Draft conference paper. *Spirituality in the 21st Century*. 1<sup>st</sup> Global Conference, Prague, 20-22 March, 2011, 4, <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/critical-issues/ethos/spirituality-in-the-21st-century/conference-programme-abstracts-and-papers/session-9a-vibrations-individualism-and-healing/>

<sup>26</sup> Helen Berger, “Are Solitaries the Future of Paganism?”, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Helen Berger, “Are Solitaries the Future of Paganism?”, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Margareta Lupu speaks of 500 members in 15 branches of the Gebeleizis Society. (Lupu, idem., n.p.) The number of active supporters of some Hungarian Ethno-pagan churches rises to only a couple of thousands: 965 members of the *Ósmagyar Egyház* (Arch-Hungarian Church), 431 of *Kelta Wicca Hagymányórzók Egyháza* (Church of Celtic Traditionalist Wiccans), 307 of *Árpád Rendjének Jogalapja Tradicionális Egyház* (Traditional Church of the Ground Arpad's Order), 211 of *Nagyboldogasszony Szeretet Egyház* (Our Lady Church of Love), 55 of *Magyar Vallás Közössége* (Community of Hungarian Faith), 0 (!) of *Ósmagyar Táltos Egyház* (Arch-Hungarian Táltos Church) – based on the contributors offering their 1% of the revenues for non-profit organizations. (Szőnyi Szilárd, “Az ötven legkétesebb magyarországi egyház”, *Boldog Özséb Plébánia Blog*, 20 February 2011, n.p., [http://boldogozseb.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=456&catid=10&Itemid=52](http://boldogozseb.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=456&catid=10&Itemid=52))

<sup>29</sup> according to the cumulative lists closed on 1 March 2010, based on several different institutional statistics published at <http://www.apologia.hu/pdf/churchlist-type.pdf> and <http://www.apologia.hu/pdf/churchlist-abc.pdf> (only six neopagan churches are named)

<sup>30</sup> Török, Péter, *Magyarországi vallási kalauz*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2004), 34

<sup>31</sup> Szilárdi, Réka. “A magyarországi neopogány közösségek” (*Debreceni Disputa*, 5, 5, 2007): 71

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<sup>32</sup> According to Act No. 489/2006 on the Freedom of Religion and the General Status of Denominations

<sup>33</sup> INS 2004, 9.

<sup>34</sup> Szilárdi, 71.

<sup>35</sup> Szilárdi, 71-74.

<sup>36</sup> Sarah M. Pike, *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves. Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community*, (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2001): xiii.

<sup>37</sup> Pike, xx.

<sup>38</sup> Adrian Ivakhiv, „Nature and Ethnicity in East European Paganism: An Environmental Ethic of the Religious Right?”, (*The Pomegranate* 7, 2, 2005), 194-196

<sup>39</sup> Ivakhiv, 196.

<sup>40</sup> Schnirelman, 205.

<sup>41</sup> Schnirelman, 204.

<sup>42</sup> Anne Ferlat, “Neopaganism and New Age in Russia”, *Folklore. An Electronic Journal of Folklore*, 23 (2003), 40-49, <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol23/newage.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Szilágyi Tamás, *Mi az újpogányság?* ([http://kapu.cc/kapu\\_files/file/Olvasni.pdf](http://kapu.cc/kapu_files/file/Olvasni.pdf), 2007), 7.

<http://www.diakoldal.hu/notes/bf596d87087c0b2e1fc5017c2a0b29bdneopog.doc>

<sup>44</sup> Szilágyi Tamás, “Sacred Characteristics of the Nation: ‘Hungarianism’ as Political Religion?” (Contribution to the *REVACERN Young Researchers Exchange Programme*, 2008, 6-7), <http://www.revacern.eu/exchange-programme/EP-paper%20szilagyi.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Szilágyi, 2008: 3-5.

<sup>46</sup> Mureşan, 5, fn. 11 – enumerating only seven articles, none of them scholar researches.

<sup>47</sup> Borangic, 133.

<sup>48</sup> Borangic, 127-128, 134

<sup>49</sup> Borangic, 119-137.

<sup>50</sup> Lucian Boia, *Történelem és mítosz a román köztudatban*, Bukarest-Kolozsvár: Kriterion, 1999. (*Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*, București: Editura Humanitas, 1997), 86-90; Alexandra Tomiță, *O istorie “glorioasă”. Dosarul protocronismului românesc*. București: Editura Cartea Românească, 2007, passim; Katherine Verdery, *Compromis și rezistență. Cultura română sub Ceaușescu*, București, Editura Humanitas, 1994, 152-204

<sup>51</sup> Mircea Babeș, „Renasterea Daciei?”, *Observatorul Cultural*, 185, 2003

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<sup>52</sup> Nicolae Densușianu, *Dacia preistorică*, Bucuresti, Institutul de Arte Grafice „Carol Göbl”, 1913

<sup>53</sup> Kincses Nagy Éva, “A turáni gondolat”, In *Őstörténet és nemzettudat. 1919-1931*, edited by Kincses Nagy Éva. Szeged: JATE Magyar őstörténeti Kutatócsoportja,

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<sup>54</sup> Kincses, 1991.

<sup>55</sup> For the purposes of this study we will use the term “protochronism” for the Hungarian ideas of historical or cultural primacy as well.

<sup>56</sup> Badiny Jós Ferenc, *Jézus király - A pártus herceg*. [Jesus King - The Parthian Prince.] Budapest: Ősi Örökségünk Alapítvány, 1998.

<sup>57</sup> Bobula Ida, A sumér–magyar rokonság kérdése. [The Problem of Sumerian-Hungarian Relation.] Buenos Aires: Editorial Transsylvania, 1961.

<sup>58</sup> Badiny, passim.

<sup>59</sup> Presented as well in an earlier study of Hubbes László, “Signs of Times’ – A Semiotic Content-Analysis of Visual Apocalyptic Rhetoric on Hungarian Conspiracist Websites” (*Acta Universitatis Sapientiae. Philologica*. ISSN: 2067-5151, 2(1), 2010, 176-192, also: [www.acta.sapientia.ro](http://www.acta.sapientia.ro)

<sup>60</sup> See Götz, László. *Keleten kél a Nap*. [The Sun Rises from the East.] Püski Kiadó (1989); Bobula, op. cit.; Kiszely István. *A magyar nép őstörténete*. [The Prehistory of the Magyar People.] Budapest: Magyar Ház Kiadó. 2001; Padányi Viktor. *Dentu-Magyararia*. [Dentu-Magyararia.] Buenos Aires: Editorial Transsylvania, 1963; Pap Gábor. *Hazatalálás*. [Finding Home.] Budapest: Püski Kiadó, 1999

<sup>61</sup> Cser, Ferenc – Darai Lajos, *Magyar folytonosság a Kárpát-medencében*, [Magyar Continuity in the Carpathian-basin.] Fríg Kiadó, 2005

<sup>62</sup> Kiss, Dénes, *Bábel előtt - Isten nyelve avagy képességünk a magyar nyelv*, [Before Babel - God's Language or Our Gift the Magyar Tongue.] Miskolc: Miskolci Bölcsész Egyesület, 1999; Varga Csaba. *A Magyar szókinccs titka*. [The Mystery of the Magyar Thesaurus.] n.p. Fríg Kiadó. 2005

<sup>63</sup> See Varga, passim – for a detailed discussion of Hungarian Runic writing, see: Alexander Maxwell, “Contemporary Hungarian Rune-Writing. Ideological Linguistic Nationalism within a Homogenous Nation”, *Anthropos*, 99, 2004, 161-175

<sup>64</sup> See the Tamana-theory of Vámos-Tóth Bátor, “A név-szerkezetek világfűzére - minden út tamanába vezet” [“The World Wide Chain of Name Structures - All Roads Lead to Tamana.”], 2010

<sup>65</sup> See Badiny Jós, passim

<sup>66</sup> See Pap, passim

<sup>67</sup> See Balogh Sándor, “A Szent Korona, Koronázás és a magyar küldetés”. [“The Holy Crown, the Coronation and the Hungarian Mission.”] n. d. Web. 10 July 2010

<sup>68</sup> Szilágyi, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Szilárdi, 72.

<sup>70</sup> Szilágyi, 7.

<sup>71</sup> For a brief chart comparing the phenomena in Romanian and Hungarian context, see Annex 2.

<sup>72</sup> Mircea Eliade, *De la Zalmoxis la Genghis-Han. Studii comparative despre religiile și folclorul Daciei și Europei Orientale*, trad. de Maria și Cezar Ivănescu, (Humanitas: București 1995) (bazată pe traducerea din *De Zalmoxis à Gengis-Khan*, Paris 1970), passim

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.noidacii.ro/>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.dacii.info/>

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<sup>76</sup> <http://dacia.org/><sup>77</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia-dacica.ro/statele/index.html><sup>78</sup> <http://casanoastra-romania-dacia.blogspot.com/><sup>79</sup> <http://studiidacologice.com/><sup>80</sup> <http://dicii-lui-zamolxe.wikiforum.ro/><sup>81</sup> <http://spiritualitadedacoromaneasca.wordpress.com/><sup>82</sup> <http://www.gebeleizis.org/main.htm><sup>83</sup> <http://magtar.atw.hu/><sup>84</sup> <http://www.magtudin.org/index.htm><sup>85</sup> <http://magyarharcos.hu/><sup>86</sup> <http://www.osmagyaregyhaz.hu/><sup>87</sup> <http://www.taltos7.hu/>; <http://www.taltossaman.hu/>;<http://vhk.saman.org.hu/>;<http://osszefogas.ewk.hu/taltos>;<http://zsaratnok.org/><sup>88</sup> <http://arvisura.freeweb.hu/lib/barasits.htm>; <http://arvisura.lap.hu/>;<http://tengri.hu>; <http://www.yotengrit.com/><sup>89</sup> <http://www.maghar.hu/tamana/>; <http://tamana.gportal.hu/><sup>90</sup> Grieve, 87.<sup>91</sup> Grieve, 95.<sup>92</sup> O'Reilly, Tim, "What Is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software", *Communication & Strategies*, 65, 1 (2007), 17.<sup>93</sup> Helen Berger, "Are Solitaries the Future of Paganism?", 1.<sup>94</sup> Barbara Warnick, *Rhetoric online: Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007), 15.<sup>95</sup> Mark Deuze, "The Web and its Journalisms: Considering the Consequences of Different Types of Newsmedia Online", *New Media and Society*, 5, 2 (2003), 203.<sup>96</sup> Mary Hocks, "Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments", *College Composition and Communication*, 54, 4 (2003), 629.<sup>97</sup> Mary Hoffman and Debra Ford, *Organizational Rhetoric*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010), 49.<sup>98</sup> Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody. The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 143.<sup>99</sup> Mark Irving Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*, (Michigan: The Michigan University Press, 2001), 17.<sup>100</sup> <http://tengri.hu/><sup>101</sup> <http://gebeleizis.org/><sup>102</sup> Lupu, 2007<sup>103</sup> Augustin Stanciu, "Dacii neonaziști", *Gazeta de Cluj*, 21 November 2005, [http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-presa\\_regionala\\_arhiva-1727919-dacii-neo-nazisti.htm](http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-presa_regionala_arhiva-1727919-dacii-neo-nazisti.htm)<sup>104</sup> Hocks, 629.<sup>105</sup> Hocks, 632.<sup>106</sup> Deuze, 206.<sup>107</sup> Hocks, 629.<sup>108</sup> Hoffman and Ford, 49-50<sup>109</sup> The Tengri Babba Community registers two attempts of official institutionalization, the last one on 15 March 2011, see:

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