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Book Review

Sorin Nemeti, *Mitografii. Inventar al ezoterismelor românești*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2019, 157 pag.

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Sorin Nemeti, *Mitografii. Inventar al ezoterismelor românești*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2019, 157 pag.

Ancient history specialist and archeologist, Sorin Nemeti is the author of a great number of books concerning the history and archaeology of the Roman province of Dacia. This time he wrote about a different ancient (and early medieval history): *Mythographies. Partial inventory of Romanian esotericisms* is actually a collection of articles relating to the “twilight zone” of the Romanian ancient history. The book is organized in seven chapters arranged in a chronological order.

The first chapter: “Introduction. Pseudo-history and approximated comparators” starts with a rather ironic assertion: “I do not think it is possible to write a systematic history of the Romanian esotericisms. The literary productions of the mythography’s define a vast phenomenon, with a lot of ramifications situated at the periphery of the historical writing”. The reference to those books which combine the wrong interpretation of the sources, with the “clairvoyance” of the authors is clear: Densusianu, I. C. Dragan, N. Savescu, are just a few examples who, unfortunately even today have their own share of followers. The cause is clear, and if we could read between the lines the fault is at a certain level of the academic society: many historians believe that these works are not worthy of being contradicted. On the

other hand, the audience encourages such pseudo-scientific manifestations, not to mention the ideological causes of them. The author finds out that only in the later year a reaction of the scientific authorities can be observed. To mark the fact that the author offers as alternative, the approach of Mihai Barbulescu, in his book "Archeology today in Romania". The second chapter: "In the search of the primordial tradition" Mr. Nemeti presents a few interesting cases: Eliade "the perennial" and Vasile Lovinescu. The first was a subject of a Ph.D. thesis by Vasile Tolcea, "*Literature and esoterism. Eliade and Rene Gurenon*" in which the hidden face of Elade was presented as an aspect of his search for a primordial tradition. Vasile Lovinescu's case is somewhat the same. He is also searching for the "primordial tradition" in his books by inventing legendary kings. From this to the creation of the "Hiperborean Dacia" a mystical arrian kingdom is only one step: alchemy, freemasonry, everything is mixed only to avoid the Greek-Roman influence. "The prehistoric Empire. From the pelasgi to Sumerians and arrians" is the title of the third chapter, which is also divided in four sub-chapters. The most important seems to be the first: "Sumerian Transylvania", has as main subject the "Holy Grail" of every fake historian: the petroglyphs from Tartaria, and hallucinating ideas of P.L Tonciulescu who build an entire "Empire" from misinterpreted ideas and. In the same manner, Teohari Antonescu and later N. Miulescu tried to present ancient Dacia as land of the primitive Aryan tribes. Finally, a more influential character is presented: Napoleon Savescu and his book *We are not the offspring of Rome*. As if the author was keeping his irony for the later author, Savescu's book is presented in grim colors. And rightfully....it is a "parallel pseudo-history written by imagination". Unfortunately, even today the book has many followers and not only between the so called "dilettantes".

The presentation of this dangerous fake-history continues in the fourth chapter: "Journey through the land of the ancestors. The occulted history of Thracians and Dacians". In this case the Roman component in the ethno-genesis is denied: this time I.C. Dragan is the one who through his "historical" books: "We the Thracians", "The Roman-Thracian Empire" put the basis of what we today define as "Dacomania". "His books have nothing non-scientific aside the author's supposition that the history of the Roman and Byzantine Empires are actually the history of the Thracians, due to the Balcanic-Danubian origins of some emperors". Keeping the *sine ira et studio* system, Mr. Nemeti approaches in the 5th chapter another "interesting" aspect of the ancient history. Entitled: "Journey through the land of ancestors. Goths and Danes or the western myth of the Getae and Dacians", the theories of two authors are presented: Virginia Cartianu and Alexandru Badin. Both are rather novel in their

research: the first considered the actually Dacians were Celt and the later announced the Germanic origin of the Dacians. Worthy to remark the: “originality and the courage to contradict the classical theories”. Actually, the two managed to create a balance between dacomaniacs and Celt-maniacs. “Ezoteric Middle Age” is the title of the sixth chapter. As usually another “historian” is targeted: Laurentiu Nistorescu and his *The states of DacoRomania*, a book “which seems a history book, the author learning through reading the historian’s language (...) under this superficial makeup we find a book which has nothing to do with a scientifically written history”. The book creates a mythology of perpetual existence of political formations after the Roman retreat and to the 13th century. To mark the fact that for the second time, in the book, Mr. Nemeti offers an alternative: the approach of Ovidiu Pecican “who is one of the militant historians”.

Written in a clear manner, with an intelligent irony Nemeti Sorin’s book is just not about what is wrong in the perception of some historical aspects, is a critical review of how historians should take attitude in face of the stream of fake ideas. It is a mirror for everyone considers *historia magistre vitae*.