

## Book Review

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**Adrian Poruciuc, *Prehistoric Roots of Romanian and Southeast European Traditions*, Sebastopol (USA): Institute of Archaeomythology, 2010, XIV+173 p.**

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Adrian Poruciuc is a Professor at the Faculty of Letters in the University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” of Iași, Romania. His training and wide experience as an ethno-linguist and archaeomythologist allows him to carry out in this essay the study of the cultural substrate of Southeastern Europe from a holistic and enriching perspective.

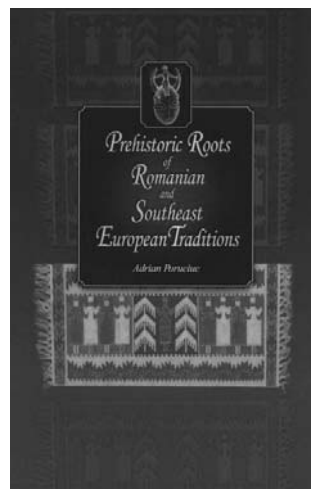
Poruciuc investigates mythological structures present in one of the most emblematic genres of traditional Romanian literature, the *colinde*. Because of their ritualistic specificity and their important role in contexts of community and social interactions, these musical-poetical works have preserved a structure and a thematic content whose narrative sense reflects the logic and worldviews of archaic societies dating back to the Neolithic.

Through verified evidences of archaeological, folkloric and linguistic kind, Poruciuc proposes a plausible theory which demonstrates the antiquity of this Romanian poetry, and its link with worldviews and beliefs of pre-Indo-European societies in the Southeastern European area.

In a scientific and meticulous way, Poruciuc exposes and argues each one of the evidences which demonstrates the origin of some mythological motifs in the narrative of these Romanian compositions and their relationship to other works in traditional repertoires of neighbouring regions. Thus, for instance, the references to the *dolf* (sea monster), the *leu* (lion) and the *zimbru* (the aurochs), or the allusions to motifs like ‘the maiden riding the bull’, the ‘great sea flood’ or ‘the fight of the hero against the lion’, appear as mythological structures which have been transferred since ancient Mesopotamia until nowadays, through Greek and Roman re-meanings. These motifs reveal us the fact that the genre *colinde* contains in its literary structures vestiges of archaic pre-Indo-European civilizations which have been dodging several re-adjustments and religious syncretism through history.

Beyond the specific interest in investigating the roots of Romanian folklore through the analysis of the *colinde*, Poruciuc proposes a methodology which is, surely, one of his book’s most substantial contributions to the academic field: the comparativist and transcultural perspective, which lead us to consider the geographical European context as a possible cultural *continuum* scenario.

The invasions of Indo-European peoples, which brought their model fundamentally androcentric to the religious mythology of the area, were the trigger of long and embroiled processes of reconversion, transformation and adaptation of the preexisting deities in Balkanic and Central European peasant societies. The divine entities represented through forms existing in the natural environment, always related to the femininity and fertility ideas, became anthropomorphic images



primordially masculine. This process, as Poruciuc explains in detail, is part of the European cultural substrate, which leaves its mark in the basic mythical units transmitted through orality.

The study of Professor Poruciuc is, undoubtedly, a valuable contribution to the field of Linguistics and Archaeomythology but, at the same time, it is also a work that lays the foundation for transdisciplinary investigations in the wide European context. The scientific rigour with which Poruciuc exposes his proposals, through the elaboration of hypothesis and the exhaustive confrontation of archaeological, ethnological and linguistic evidences, makes this book a solid starting point for studies of various kinds, in the field of Social and Humanistic Sciences.