



## **II. Magic, Witchcraft and Cultural Frameworks 2: Contemporary Romania**

# Changing Destinies by Fighting Against Bad Luck

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## ABSTRACT

In the traditional Romanian village, misfortune (bad luck) was countered by the use of magic means. Those who took the lead in performing the magico-ritual act were women who possessed special powers that enabled them to identify, isolate and destroy evil and thus restore peace of mind and health to their clients by manipulating chance and changing their destinies. They were country women without special qualifications who healed a wide spectrum of ailments – themselves caused by ritual means – or made love charms. By contrast, the contemporary urban environment in Romania can show us modern witches who are widely advertised in the media, practise aggressive marketing, and are in most cases digitally literate (they make use of the Internet and digital applications to facilitate relations with clients); by employing sophisticated rituals and often also by drawing on black magic, they provide solutions to sickness, curses and being crossed in love, as also happens in traditional villages, but they are equally able to deal with unemployment, impotence, lack of money, hair loss, business failure and above the straying of unfaithful husbands, thus demonstrating that they are in tune with the times in which they live. Everything is possible, because people living in modern communities, despite the categorical appeal to reason, despite digitalisation, globalisation, bureaucratisation and the coming of the computer age, still feel the need to "explain the inexplicable," in exactly the same way as peasants living in traditional villages do, and in addition feel the need for personal experiences, including of magic ritual and witchcraft.

The coronavirus pandemic had the effect of strengthening this impression of a "magic mindset" and even of uninterrupted coexistence between the magic of the traditional village and modern urban life, influencing the relation between magic/religion and science – something seen at its clearest in the attitudes of large numbers of people towards the origin and treatment of the virus and above all the vaccines.

My aim in the present study is to give a succinct diachronic perspective on the subject; I will argue for the view that magico-ritual performances were transposed from the traditional village into the contemporary urban scene and even into the particular case of the coronavirus pandemic. I underline that the field information comes from Sălaj, an area in north-western Romania (part of Transylvania) that is little industrialised and relatively conservative. We are dealing with a largely rural area in which customs, traditions and patterns of behaviour that form part of our country's immaterial heritage can still be identified.

## KEYWORDS

Traditional Romanian village; magic; witchcraft; modern witches; coronavirus pandemic; magic mindset.



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**Manipulating destiny and overcoming bad luck: a constant goal that will never go out of fashion. "Traditional knowledge" in magic, in village and town.**

**I**n the traditional Romanian village, bad luck (one bad thing happening after another, repeated misfortunes, inexplicable coinci-

dences, being under a curse) was countered by magical means that most often found their concrete expression in ritual enchanting/disenchanting.<sup>1</sup> Those who took the lead in this by performing the magico-ritual act were women endowed with special gifts/graces who could identify, isolate and destroy the evil at work and thus restore calm and good health to their clients by manipulating chance and

changing their destinies. They were country women with no special qualifications, but their knowledge of the mechanisms of magic and the way they were proved genuine by resounding successes used to make them into people who were feared, sought out because of their efficacy and, on occasion, raised almost to the rank of institutions. Well aware of their special powers, these enchanters, knowledgeable old women or witches in the villages of Sălăj, would disenchant *from the evil eye, from misfortune, from sunstroke headaches, from small red bumps on the skin, and from earache*,<sup>2</sup> healing by the use of psychotherapeutic methods a wide range of conditions that were also caused by ritual means, or would make charms, bindings in love and releasings from love, as an erotic treatment to aid the coming-together of couples.

By contrast, the contemporary urban environment in Romania can show us modern witches who are widely advertised in the media, practise aggressive marketing, and are in most cases digitally literate (they make use of the Internet and digital applications to facilitate relations with clients and even to create standard ritual scenarios that they suggest to them); by employing sophisticated rituals and often also by drawing on black magic, they provide solutions to sickness, curses and being crossed in love, as also happens in traditional villages, but they are equally able to deal with unemployment, impotence, lack of money, hair loss, business failures and above the straying of unfaithful husbands, thus demonstrating that they are in tune with the times in which they live.

Everything is possible, because people living in modern communities, despite the categorical appeal to reason, despite digitalisation, globalisation, bureaucratisation and the coming of the computer age, still feel the need to explain the “inexplicable,” in exactly the same way as peasants living in traditional villages do, and in addition feel the need for personal experiences, which are often to be found in the wake (as it were) of spiritualities of all kinds, including magic ritual and witchcraft.

The carrying-out of modern urban magic rituals by performers who claim to derive

their skills from renowned witches slots into what is the extremely eclectic landscape of contemporary spirituality, powerfully influenced as it is by mysticism, witchcraft, the paranormal, divination, erotic magic, numerology and so forth; the end product is an over-stimulated religiosity that is indisputably rooted in popular piety (the cult of icons, relics, the saints, and of the extraordinary and the miraculous), and this suggests not a natural attenuation of magic when confronted with the rational people of the twenty-first century with their emphasis on scientific explanations but instead a revival of magic in many and varied forms (not only in witchcraft but also in film, literature, art, advertising and business).

The coronavirus pandemic had the effect of strengthening this impression of a “magic mentality/mindset” and “magical thinking” and even of uninterrupted coexistence between the magic of the traditional village and modern urban life, influencing the relation between magic/religion and science – something seen at its clearest in the attitudes of large numbers of people towards the origin and treatment of the virus and above all the vaccines.

Using synchronic and diachronic methods of analysis, cultural anthropology (Lévi-Strauss 2011, Muchembled 1997) discusses the relationship between reality, social community and magic/witchcraft practices in terms of security/insecurity and risk management. The climate of insecurity in which humans have always lived, ranging from the weather-related insecurity of ancient times to that concerned with road travel, employment, divorce and climate disasters, has always called for crisis solutions, and magic has always been able to provide its initiates with such solutions. Ever since the theoretical work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (2011) and Sir James Frazer (1980), much has been said about the importance of magic in giving security and in humanising the world; the role of magic is to protect man from the aggression and insecurity of a universe that he can neither control nor master, and this protection is brought about by mechanisms of similitude and/or contagion, by symbolic actions that do “something” in

order to receive “something else,” namely protection and security. In a way, this approach is the diametrical opposite of those taken by the Church: whereas religion speaks of divine help coming down to the level of men, that is, of a kind of “deifying” that they undergo, magic, by contrast, humanises the universe by causing man (if he is endowed with special attributes) to generate security by destroying insecurity of whatever kind, from sickness to the danger of choosing the wrong life partner, from losing one’s wealth to impotence, business failure or one’s extra-marital affair being discovered.

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**Unequivocal roles: “women only.”  
The honour-conferring name of “old woman”  
and an institutionalised title: “old woman  
who dis/enchants”**

In the archaic world of the traditional village, age was synonymous with wisdom; the appellation “old,” far from being a source of frustration or offence, was a natural and normal one connected with the purpose of life and with the natural progression through its stages and, following an intrinsic logic, was the age by which wisdom had accumulated. Popular proverbs speak of this state of wise old age (Bernea 1997). In the majority of cases, “the burden of old age” and its images of inevitable sickness and the proximity of death (itself seen metaphorically as merely a passing “beyond”) are thrown into the shade by this aureole of old age as a mark of wisdom.

In the case of elderly women, the state of “old woman” or “old” meant even more, and, rightly exploited, even brought advantages, because it was indisputably related to morality and to the absence of temptations; the best-known term is that of “forgiven women,”<sup>3</sup> that is, forgiven their temptations, forgiven their sins, forgiven the sexuality that can sometimes lead to excesses – which are categorically agreed to be immoral. In the villages of Transylvania, forgiven women were highly valued (even though such an assertion might seem slightly tendentious):

forgiven women were the only ones who could knead Communion bread for the church, which made them a kind of pragmatic intermediaries between the immediate reality of the village, with its sacred purposes and order, and the sacrality of the Church and of heaven; this is attested by field information.

From the viewpoint of field ethnography (as our own research leads us to believe), the terms dis/enchanter, enchanter and healer (RO: *cotătoare*) are not attested in villages in Sălăj; all we find in practice are the generic ones of “old woman who knew how to look” and “old woman who knew how to cast the evil eye.” Thus the appellation of “old woman” (RO: *babă*) is stronger than those of “dis/enchanter,” “witch,” “enchantress” and “healer.” We see the honesty and openness of a woman from Valea Lungă as relevant here:

Well, in each house people knew how to dis/enchant. All the women knew how to cast the dread, or the evil eye, for what were you to do if something bad happened to your children? There was no doctor back then, but the women carried out dis/enchanting more [than now] and knew ever so many dis/enchanting spells and used to cure their children by themselves.<sup>4</sup>

In their works on “domestic” or “household” magic, Martine Segalen (1980), Jeanne Favret Saada (1977) and Dominique Camus (2003) speak about professional female protagonists in psychotherapy, traditional healing and remedies that belong to the realm of magical medicine and folk medicine. The traditional Romanian village too knew great professionals of this kind who were recognised over very wide areas and whose reputation has survived in the collective memory over many generations. They are described as “having high IQs and being characterised by feeling, sensitivity and an uncommon degree of intuition” (Ciubotaru 2005, 61), just as Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert affirmed in their well-known works: “an intelligence that is out of the normal range found in the unimpressive environments in which people believe in magic” (Mauss, Hubert





1996, 35). Discussing these highly intelligent leading figures of a “caste of dis/enchanters,” Silvia Ciubotaru says that “starting out with their inborn qualities, they have amassed an impressive body of knowledge regarding the practice of folk medicine and magic formulae. A certain talent for the dramatic helps them to bring thaumaturgic scenarios to life and to give them credibility in the eyes of people who are suffering” (Ciubotaru 2005, 62). Radu Răutu and Gheorghe Pavelescu too evoke outstanding dis/enchanters in their published field observations (Răutu 1998, XV). We are dealing with women who have a professional profile that is in a class of its own and a reputation that made them into models for others, so that we can even speak of an explicit institutionalisation.

In a substantial anthropological study of couple relations in peasant society, Martine Segalen, taking as her starting-point the twofold status of the mistress of the house, as woman and as mother, is categorical in listing among “activities reserved for the female realm” that of protector (through a great number of magical procedures) of all the members of the family and of the household in general (Segalen 1980, 132). Thus, in the world of the traditional village, those who dis/enchant are overwhelmingly women. Simion Florea Marian (1996), Artur Gorovei (1931), Nicoleta Coatu (1997), Gheorghe Pavelescu (1998),<sup>5</sup> Amalia Pavelescu (1995)<sup>6</sup> and other ethnographers and folklore specialists<sup>7</sup> all adduce ever more illuminating statistics in support of this statement. The reasons invoked are in most cases circumstantial, i.e. predominantly economic, and only in a secondary way connected with natural predisposition:

in general, those who concern themselves with witchcraft and casting spells are certain old women who, as the saying goes, have lived their life and eaten their corn meal and make a profession of this so that they can earn their daily bread. (Marian 1996, 9)<sup>8</sup>

Field research carried out in a number of villages in Sălaj has demonstrated the same categorical predominance of women among

those who dis/enchant and very much the same motives:

I dis/enchant for these little children, for the poor things get so terribly afraid of anything, even of their own shadows<sup>9</sup>; people used to come to me bringing sick animals and I would heal them, I do believe that one time as many as fifty people came to me (...), and they would bring me a quarter litre of palincă, fat bacon, cheese.<sup>10</sup>

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### Millennium III. E-witches, techno-witches and their fascinating life stories. Globalisation, digitalisation and the academic spirit in contemporary magico-ritual praxis.

For a long time the rural world in Romania functioned with an extremely fertile magic mentality/mindset that could provide subjective explanations for inexplicable situations and allowed specialised performers (magicians of various calibres, with a variety of names) to fight bad luck, to attempt to change destinies and to redirect life's events in favour of their client/customer (the person who regarded themselves as having been injured by an evil that had in its turn been induced by magical means). This is attested by the ethnological bibliography (see Pavelescu 1998; Coatu 1997). From here sprang generalised patterns of belief in spirits, supernatural apparitions, fantastic events, superstitions, and highly-coloured and fantasy-filled inventions in the area of magic and witchcraft (in fact, broadly speaking, white magic and black magic). The situation changed at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries when, under both Western and more local influences, the latter drawing its inspiration from the teachings of the Transylvanian School, the rationalist and scientific spirit that was being encouraged in intellectual circles both Orthodox and Greco-Catholic pushed magic and witchcraft somewhere towards the margins of spirituality



by regarding them as cultural manifestations typical of the backward rural world and putting in their place the first medical and pharmacological teachings as an integral part of book-learning and of what was called “the spirit of the Lights” (the Enlightenment spirit).

There followed a complex and lengthy cultural process during which magic and witchcraft became the stock-in-trade of wise old women in villages, while the towns saw the development of a different type of magical performances, in a way the equivalent of the “salon magic” or specialist consulting-rooms found in the West, which focused especially on divination/predicting the future/fortune-telling and was practised by Gypsy women, for a fee, in the most exotic settings.

This led to a reinvigorating and generalising of an image of the Gypsy woman as witch. Over time, this became a stereotype that has endured until the present day – the stereotype of the marginal or minority person (the Gypsy, the Jew) who, finding themselves in a socially inferior position, attempts to make up for this negative circumstance by drawing on magical techniques through which they hope to change the course of events to their own advantage or that of their clients. To this low social status brought about by membership of a minority ethnic/religious group there has to be added a further kind of inferiority, that of being a woman; we know that in archetypal society women lacked visibility, rights and the power to take social initiatives. It was for this very reason that women, assigned a marginal and inferior place in a society and community that were managed to an overwhelming degree by men, resorted, for want of social mechanisms, to magical mechanisms as a way to manipulate destiny, sometimes joining forces with the Devil as a means to attaining their ends; thus “the Jewess-magician or Gypsy-witch represent, for the mindset of peoples who lived in close interdependence with these ethnic groups, major constants of the imaginary, clichés in which historical realities and phantoms, visceral fears and a scorn of whatever is different or alien meld together” (Pop-Curşeu 2013, 184).

Studies in imagology, above all that by Dan Horia Mazilu (2006), speak of Gypsies as socially marginalised people who are not integrated either into the community system (they are always nomadic), or into the system of Christian beliefs (they allowed themselves to be Christianised, but only partly and superficially, and continued to live in accordance with their own beliefs, customs and traditions), or linguistically, since they speak a language that has nothing in common with any European language, or in the area of reasonably settled crafts and trades, since they practise trades that are as marginal as they are or that belong in the area of contact with evil supernatural powers, with Satan, with the Devil, which has made them completely or partially illicit, immoral or illegal (metalworking, working in gold, horse-rearing, bear-training, being travelling musicians, witchcraft).

This led to the “demonisation of the Gypsies” associated with social marginalisation, and to their being labelled with the stigma of associating with the Devil – fertile ground for the later creation of the image of the Gypsy witch, given to chiromancy and fortune-telling from cards, to telling the future by throwing grains and to telling fortunes using a sea shell, but also to drying up the milk of cows or ewes, causing droughts and casting the Evil Eye on enemies. Assigned (in the course of the constructing of a radical otherness) to the category of “workers of evil,” and so to that of the absolutely abnormal and different, of an unintelligible Other, located in the centre of the nocturnal kingdom in which the legitimation of power is effected above all by violent means, the Gypsy is the “possessor” of a whole string of negative attributes, among them a kind of “virtual delinquency,” such as witchcraft, the preserve of nomadic Gypsy women; everything takes place in the context of the medieval mentality, in which offences against the law were generally confused with sins and sanctions were, in accordance with the same mindset, the consequence of a divine intervention that was due to moral otherness, transgression and having dealings with the Devil (Boia 2004; Mazilu 2006).



This association between Gypsy women and witchcraft was soon to generate a stigmatising image as a result of which Gypsy women who were witches were burned at the stake, banished, and excommunicated, along with large numbers of their fellow-ethnics, thus strengthening the stereotype, which persisted into modern times and which people in practice still appeal to today. Historically speaking, when the Enlightenment penetrated ever more deeply into Romanian culture at the end of the eighteenth century, the greater part of the activities associated with magic and illicit witchcraft continued to be carried out only by Gypsies, subsequently called *rromi* [Roma]; this state of affairs was perpetuated in the decades that followed, until, as was believed at the close of the last century, “only Gypsy women still cast spells” (Muşlea and Bârlea 2010, 470).

The urban culture of today, very substantially the product of mass culture (an effect of the perfecting of the means of mass communication), although it originates in a built-up environment shaped by the triumph of reason, by technologisation, computer literacy, digitalisation and, of course, globalisation, not only allows for but sometimes even encourages the existence of examples of magical thinking, which occupy, journalistically speaking, not only multiple column inches of the small-ads but also TV shows and, more recently, podcasts, websites and blogs.

In this context, probably the best-known among the witches of Romania, especially because she was also active (with a somewhat illegal status) during the Communist period, is the famous “mother Omida [caterpillar],” who is said to have numbered Elena Ceauşescu among her fortune-telling clients, and even the dictator himself at the point when their son, Nicu Ceauşescu, was threatening to marry the actress and singer Janina Matei; her spells were extremely effective, with the couple parting after an explosive love affair, and this success brought mother Omida a prestige unmatched in her time (her clients included Doina Badea, Gopo and Nae Zamfir). When she died in February 1995, mother Omida (Maria Motoi, born in 1940)

left a remarkable legacy: the reputation of the most powerful witch in Romania, unbeatable at fortune-telling using a seashell, grains and cards. No wonder then that many of the witches who followed her claimed – falsely, it would appear – to have inherited the professionalism and “grace” of this “mother of the witches.”

We do however have at least two notable successors: Cireşica, mother Omida’s niece, who in 2000 brought out several issues of “Romania’s only magazine for witches,” *The Magic of the Witches*, in whose pages she advertised her skills at length (Cireşica being the repository of some rather special magic techniques using mercury and curing epilepsy and drunkenness, but also a specialist in a kind of economic and financial magic: Cireşica has the power to put companies on their feet again, to bring businessmen financial gain and to increase profits). The other successor is Rodica Gheorghe, mother Omida’s daughter, who took the decisive step towards digitalisation: she has a blog on wordpress that is in great demand (it is among the most frequently accessed in Romania) and even a personal site, [www.vrajitoarea-rodica.ro](http://www.vrajitoarea-rodica.ro), where she posts recipes for cures similar to those given out by Cireşica, with the addition of ones for the healing of impotence, depression, and all kinds of fears.

Someone who carries on her profession in a way closer to us is Maria Câmpina, “the queen of white magic in Romania”; she too foretold the future for Elena Ceauşescu (she was summoned in great secrecy, at midnight), and her fame as a great fortune-teller rests on her own testimony of how she predicted the future for her for the last time in autumn 1989; Elena Ceauşescu drew a black Tarot card that showed blood and horror, thus foretelling the bloody end of the “member of the Academy” and her era. Our most recent information about this fortune-teller shows us a modern, globalised, digital witch who is used to giving TV interviews and no stranger to fame and being a celebrity. On Christmas Eve 2022 she gave a long interview to Bulgarian TV about her impeccable prestige and even told the fortune of the reporter who was interviewing her, live...<sup>11</sup>



As in any guild, so too in that of the witches power becomes concentrated around the most redoubtable possessors of the secrets of the trade; as was to be expected, each of the major witches has set up a personal “school of witchcraft” around her, through which she has passed on to her disciples a “know-how” distilled from her years of praxis and promoted using constantly maintained PR techniques, most recently extended with maximum visibility into the online world. In this way real hubs of power and specialised professional training have taken shape. Maria Câmpina has proceeded in this way, and so too have Brăţara, or Morgana, Melissa, Vanessa, Rodica Gheorghe, Cireşica, Mihaela Mincă, Sofia, Izabela, Lorena, Luminiţa, Ioana Sidonia, Atena, Margareta, Elena Minodora, Venus and Sandra, each of them with powerful ancestors in the most exotic areas of magic, and they have created a huge centre in Bucharest and around the city, basically a radiating zero-level strategy and marketing hub.

We can find information worthy of an anthropological study (with statistical sources) on the dedicated site of the witches of Romania, where there is an analysis of the distribution by geographical/historical areas of performers of magic rituals. Bucharest is closely followed by two other schools: that of Ploieşti (which extends into Valea Călugărească), where Aurelia Ardeleanca, Sicilia, Baba Ekaterina, Elisabeta, Rahela, Sunita, Irina Ioana, Ioana and Elena are achieving exceptional results in their trade of witchcraft, and that of Buzău, where the chief witches are Mama Maria, Denisa Antonia and Ana. Craiova contributes the famous witch Mercedeza, along with Maria and Delia, to this map. We note the absence of any such power hubs in Transylvania; this, we believe, is a consequence of (among other causes) the Roman Catholic and Greco-Catholic religions practised there but also of the Protestant and Reformed presence; these faiths were far more thorough in dealing with aberrations and departures from their members’ official beliefs, even in rural areas.<sup>12</sup>

The magic performances offered by all these witches find their place in traditional white

magic and on occasion also in black magic, but the website shows that specialisations in more exotic branches of magic are also beginning to appear, for example Egyptian magic, voodoo and especially wicca, a branch of magic that is much in vogue in North America. But what struck us as the most significant aspect of this presentation of the professional landscape of full-time workers in magic and witchcraft is the way it criticises the theoretical training of witches, which apparently leaves much to be desired:

Witches belonging to the new wave are only continuing to follow a route already marked out by the great witches and do not allocate much time to amassing theoretical knowledge. They prefer new technologies to the detriment of a fundamental understanding of magic. We believe that there needs to be a greater involvement by experienced witches in the directing and encouraging of these possibilities for witchcraft, in the interests of the phenomenon of magic in general.<sup>13</sup>

After the fall of the communist regime, under which occultism and magic of all kinds were strictly forbidden and those who practised them were hunted down, caught and sent to prison, that is, after 1989, witches began to offer their services on a large scale, making their appeal to a clientele that was rich, diverse, eager for the sensational and desperately seeking possible explanations for the inexplicable things in their personal lives (unhappy coincidences, accidents, precisely targeted envy, financial losses).

The digital revolution was extremely fruitful where those who practised magic were concerned. The appearance of the internet with all its advantages led to a total metamorphosis of magic, which suddenly ceased to be a private rite, as it had been termed by anthropologists even in their basic definition of it, and became a public business: instructions for a series of rituals can be found on specialist sites, in blogs and on social media networks, so that anyone can pronounce a curse in the privacy of their own home, tell their future from their





coffee grounds or, even more tempting, start their own business dealing in fortune-telling or erotic magical scenarios, provided they have a little entrepreneurial spirit, possess a little psychological insight or are quick at remembering practical instructions, have mastered basic public speaking techniques, have ambition and want to become famous.

The year 2000 also saw witches being widely promoted on the most popular television channels. Maria Câmpina, Vanessa, Mihaela from Buftea, Cireșica, and Melissa not only appeared in the small-ads of the newspapers of the time and gave interviews to the tabloids but were invited on to the TV shows of presenters who were well known and had a great hold on the public, such as Mihai Tatulici and Teo Trandafir.

Then, shortly before 2020, magic became a global phenomenon as never before, literally without any borders: Romania's witches were quick to join the EU (see <https://vrajitoarele.dinromania.ro/> or <http://www.vrajitoare-romania.eu/>) and exemplary in the speed at which they went digital: they use videochat sessions to cast spells to bring love, health or money or to pronounce curses for a price, with a tariff in euros, or use the video application of WhatsApp or Facebook; modern witches enjoy top-class PR services, as can be seen in their meetings and sessions of online consulting and their rituals transmitted live on Facebook or Twitter; even more, the younger generation have convinced the older witches of "the power of the selfie," proving that magic has the same effect when virtual as when real; everywhere, e-witches are promoting "the power of the internet" ("Go on, let me tell your fortune with the help of the internet"), so that the business is managed online, the place where recently more and more of it has been taking place. Business marketing generates a guaranteed profit: according to published price lists, a session of tarot starts at 50 euros, but more complex spells that can take days or weeks can cost up to 1000 euros. Spells cast for VIPs have higher charges and commission: for example, the ones designed to unite Oana Zăvoranu and Pepe definitively by magic ritual had a price ticket of 70 000 euros!

A professional opinion that is well-documented and even didactic in tone runs as follows:

A truly powerful witch can resolve problems even at a distance. It is not the telephone or Facebook that work the magic but the words we speak and the rituals we perform; looking one another in the eyes is all that is needed for the ritual to function.

This is the position of Cassandra Buzea, a young witch from Mogoșoaia, cited by Reuters.<sup>14</sup> The reason is that "nothing has changed, the practice is the same, but now it's much easier for us to get in touch with clients in other countries" (idem, Mihaela Mincă, Cassandra's mother).

However, the practising of magic has also become a deliberately cultural act. The biographies of famous witches exploit the specialist bibliography or their membership of an elite guild; for an example, see the web page of the famous Melissa, with its professional CV (posted online), where the list of her educational qualifications includes "University degree: Hogwarts University of Witchcraft and Wizardry, matriculated 1990," where, it is to be supposed, she and Harry Potter were classmates.<sup>14</sup>

Besides its economic and social status, the profession of witch is also a cultural one, and it also has a well-defined professional prestige: "the all-powerful Vanessa, skilled in VIPs' love affairs," "the healer Atena, who facilitates marriages," "the famous Trandafira, the witch who succeeds whatever the problem," "the celebrated Claudia, the possessor of salves recently brought from Mount Athos," and "Mercedeza, the queen of white magic" are only a few examples. In their efforts to give themselves legitimate status as actors in the realm of magic and to provide professional accreditation for their 100% efficacious remedies, all the witches come from places that qualify as possessing magical qualities and have brought with them ancient and never-previously-seen salves from areas steeped in spirituality and consequently



professionally accredited (in fact, their power is founded exclusively on the exotic nature of a journey that is falsely claimed to qualify them for their profession – we have observed a special preference for India, Egypt, Asia, and Mount Athos, in Greece).

Thus, witches in Romania are keeping up with the times in which they live, proving that they are successful entrepreneurs, teachers of or even researchers into the phenomenon of magic who have their own theories and observations, capable of a realistic criticism of the level of professionalism of novices in witchcraft and with an eager appetite for the digital and virtual environments and for social media. They have no difficulty using smartphone applications such as WhatsApp, have at least one and perhaps several accounts on the most widely used social media, are at home with making live transmissions or showcasing their abilities on Zoom or Skype, adapting themselves to new developments more speedily than one could have imagined.

Nor are they immune to the problems generated by the virtual environment. For example, at the end of 2022, “the queen of white magic in Romania,” Maria Cămpina, put out a warning that “she had for some time been facing identity theft carried out by imposters, so-called witches who write in her name in the press of various counties in Romania or create fake Facebook accounts in order to deceive people. Mrs Maria Cămpina has informed the Police of these serious offences, but she wants you too, her clients, to know about what is happening, precisely so that you will not fall into the trap set by those deceivers who want to separate you from your money without doing anything concrete about your problems. Be extremely vigilant! Mrs Cămpina has only one official page on Facebook and one telephone number that she answers: XXX.XXX.XXX [anonymised by us]. Do not speak with other people using different telephone numbers, don’t allow yourselves to be deceived!”<sup>16</sup>

And because the profession of being a witch has not escaped the tendency towards the perfecting of skills and professional training in

narrow niche areas, the witchcraft of the third millennium is not only a cultural business, identity and likewise well paid, but also an academic one. 2019 witnessed the laying of the foundation of the first Witches’ Academy in Romania and thus an unequivocal according of official status to Romanian “scientific” magic. Following on from the entirely successful entry of Romanian witches into the European Union, as seen from the setting-up of the <http://www.vrajitoare-romania.eu/> portal, and after a thorough process of digitalisation of the profession that culminated in the use of smart applications to do away with the distance between client/patient and service provider/magic performer, the witches of Romania finally moved on to the next level by founding the Bucharest Academy of Witchcraft, their highest forum in academic terms. This was the National School of Charms and Divination, which in a way reproduces the legendary Hogwarts School of Magic and Wizardry. The Bucharest academy was founded by Ioana Sidonia, the daughter of Maria Cămpina (as we were saying, one of the best-known witches in Romania). Her decision to do this arose from a worrying finding that was being brought up in discussion with increasing frequency: the low level of professional competence of witches of the younger generation. In order to guarantee that the witches who attended its courses would be given an intensive academic training, this highest forum would function under the competent supervision of the Moscow University of the Paranormal. Cures would be found for older conditions (the evil eye, or the misuse of mercury) and also for other, newer ones: depression and infertility.<sup>17</sup>

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### The re-enchantment of the world: a world of magic in a land of magic

The appetite of modern man for magic and witchcraft, paradoxically in a climate as strongly affected by insecurity as is the contemporary scene, is a proven fact that has been described





in great detail: Michel Maffesoli speaks of the “re-enchantment of the world” (Maffesoli 2008), when “magic makes its presence felt in postmodern forms” (Gavriliuță 1998, 190), and “the nebulous mystical-esoteric” (Champion 1996, 709) of the third millennium opens up the way, spiritually speaking, towards the wide spectrum of New Age thinking (more than a religion, in fact an extremely wide-ranging spirituality, an ideology, “the synthesis between the Western scientific mindset and Eastern wisdom,” a kind of global science of the future and, on the other hand, its religion, according to Bruno Wurtz). Dominique Camus believed that “having recourse to magic (...) proposes answers that are directed particularly at the malaise of today’s society and thus has the role of providing security. (...) Thus practices and rituals connected with magic may be understood as so many individual spaces of freedom to interpret and reinterpret the dogmatic pronouncements of the Church or of the narrow and elitist conformism of science...” (Julliard 1997, 280), and this daily insecurity and eternal need to explain the inexplicable makes us agree wholeheartedly with Robert Muchembled: “no time [in history] has been without magic” (Muchembled 1997, 5).

So, for the sake of adopting a minimal socio-professional position, we should note that a recent American study (“4 in 10 people worldwide believe in witches,” published in *Life Science*, 2022)<sup>18</sup> speaks of more than a billion people in the world still believing in witchcraft. The author of the study believes that the fact that in Russia more than half (56%) of people believe in witchcraft may even explain the attitude of Russians to the war against Ukraine. Let us not forget that according to Reuters there are over 4000 witches practising their profession in Romania.<sup>19</sup>

We do not have recent statistics for belief in witchcraft, magic, the magic-religious miraculous or the paranormal in Romania; the old opinion poll carried out by IRSOP in 2015, which showed that 54.4% of Romanians believed in life after death, 42.4% in miracles, 31.2% in the evil eye, 25.5% in curses, 23.8%

in horoscopes, 15.6% in extra-terrestrials and 15.3% in witchcraft,<sup>20</sup> has been superseded by a recent (January 2022) INSCOP poll that shows that approximately two-thirds (65.7%) of Romanians are of the opinion that the Covid pandemic was caused by global elites so that they could impose their control over the world’s population and that over a quarter (28.5%) of respondents believed in the existence of a plan at global level to implant microchips via vaccination. The poll demonstrates that scientific theories have less of a hold on the population than conspiracy theories or a belief in divine punishment; sociologists link this finding with “possible emotional fragility caused by large amounts of exposure to fake news, a system of rational evaluation that is less well structured for this context, and a greater preponderance of the magical dimension in the collective mentality of native Romanians when compared with that of other nations.”<sup>21</sup>

The Covid pandemic and the associated economic and financial crisis merely strengthened what could be termed the Romanian “magical horizon” or the “magical mentality” of Romanians. The appearance on the TV channels with the largest audiences, especially in prime time, of witches, fortune-tellers, foretellers of the future, numerologists, astrologists and all kinds of specialists in paranormal theories, and in addition of priests who belong from a professional point of view inside the boundary that defines such coordinates of popular religiosity (though not of dogmatic religion) as the miraculous, the extraordinary, mystical ecstasies, anathemas and fatalism, and who recommended to this massive audience anti-Covid remedies such as bells, holy water and relics, had the effect of further strengthening the magico-religious (mental and) spiritual foundations of people who were suffering the heavy blows of Fate/Fortune, to the detriment of their rational behaviour and acceptance of scientific remedies (the vaccine, in the case of the Covid virus).

My own field research conducted in villages in Sălăj during the pandemic uncovered plentiful evidence of people fastening upon magico-

ritual or magico-religious remedies designed to destroy the virus. Many interviewees recommended as a solution the making of a “Covid shirt” modelled on those made against the plague, in line with a ritual approach well known in Romanian traditional culture,<sup>22</sup> or suggested magic salves like those used against *strigoi* [ghosts], such as garlic, or else old wives’ remedies: herbal teas, lemon, or even *țuică* [plum brandy]. Explaining the illness as the effect of a punishment sent by God is a natural consequence of the logic typical of pious country people, for whom the flaws of modernity are a reflection of people’s lack of faith and of the dissolution of the moral values of the traditional village:

These illnesses are sent on us by God, because we’re evil! In the past people helped one another, but since this freedom came... they treat one another worse and worse!<sup>23</sup> (6 March 2020)

It’s a trial, like it says in the Bible that the world will end, with Sodom and Gomorrah, with death and disease. Long ago plague shirts used to be made here, when people and animals were dying like flies, but now I don’t know what people are going to do... but it’s a great disaster!<sup>24</sup> (5 March 2020)

The first of these sentiments is that same medieval fear analysed by Jean Delumeau and perceptively described during the pandemic by Michel Agier in “Vivre avec des épouvantails. Le monde, les corps, la peur”<sup>25</sup> and by Edgar Morin in “Changeons de voie. Les leçons du coronavirus,”<sup>26</sup> sincerely acknowledged, and inflated by a globalisation that is hard for the conservative peasant, who still remembers his habitual endogamy:

I’m so distressed and afraid of this disease, because I don’t know what it is, no one knows what it is, they said on the TV that there’s no treatment for it. The world’s going to end now, with this disease; even these ministers don’t know, they’re asking what it is. Long ago they used to send men to war, but now

people are dying of disease; and if they go to foreign countries, they’ll run away from there too because they’re afraid they’ll die there!<sup>27</sup> (6 March 2020)

It is understandable, then, that the first reaction to fear is resignation in the face of inexorable destiny:

We shouldn’t get scared because it is written there that all things must be fulfilled.<sup>28</sup> (5 March 2020)

Memories of epidemics of plague or of deadly diseases similar to plague live on, and the plague shirt remedy was foreseeable as a kind of universal panacea for any sort of epidemic calamity. The therapeutic ritual is appealed to in a decisive tone by the peasant who still believes in reparatory magic deeds:

We ought to make shirts for this corona that they call a virus, let’s make one and let’s take it to one of those politicians, because they’re leading our country terribly badly! Yes, we can make one for the virus too!<sup>29</sup> (6 March 2020)

After the first wave of the pandemic, almost a year after it broke out, the traditional Sălăj village could be seen to be divided into two camps: one tended to understand that the answer was neither a plague shirt nor old wives’ cures but preventive health measures and to some extent the vaccine, which was to some extent legitimised by the urban, medical, and innovative nature of its origin, but another group in the village would still not let go of their belief in magical medicine and old wives’ treatments:

And the old women know remedies; there were cases [of Covid] here in which people didn’t go to the doctor but treated themselves at home with *palinca* and pollen and garlic, because the old women said that these things are good for any kind of cold and they believed that they would be good against this virus too. People who treated themselves in this way survived and got better and encouraged others to do





the same, because they would survive. Nanny Valeră was ever so clever with remedies, she knew lots, because she lives near Meseş and she used to gather belladonna and hellebore and make all kind of teas. People don't have much faith in the vaccine, though there are some who say it's a good thing.<sup>30</sup> (9 February 2021)

During this period, research carried out by psychologists and experts in cognitive fields reported this kind of pro-magic attitude, activated in our modern days like an archetypal worldview reloaded. The psychologist Daniel David described the phenomenon of defective communication in the mass media, which was dominated by unconventional "experts" (astrologers, witches, singers) who over time succeeded in presenting their message to the Romanian public much more easily [than before], but he also wrote of the Romanian people's magic mentality and of their appetite for various kinds of popular religiosity:

where there is a high level of religiosity, dysfunctional attitudes too are more common than usual (examples would be conspiracy theories about 5G, or excessive hoarding as a security measure). In addition, it is very likely that these relationships will appear where religious feeling lacks sufficient religious content and consists largely of superstition. For example, many Christians see no problem with going to a church service and afterwards to see witches (using white magic), astrologers or people who tell fortunes from the stars, i.e., precisely the area from which conspiracy theories originate, even though this is not good Christian behaviour. Consideration of much relevant research leads me to believe that for religious people, appropriate religious consciousness, properly understood either directly or with the help of a priest, a pastoral and spiritual director, can be very helpful as an adaptive mechanism (it can for example give them a sense of meaning and purpose). But poorly understood religiosity – when used as a substitute for science, psychology, or medicine – has major negative effects.<sup>31</sup>

Now that the pandemic is over, we know that a whole catalogue of reasons for not trusting the vaccine (because it had Satan's number of 666 on it, or it implanted a microchip for tracking people, or it caused deformities and even impotence, or it was a method of letting other diseases into the body), together with widespread belief in various conspiracy theories, many of them also a consequence of lack of trust in a government that was weak and incapable of imposing itself, and also the fact that a considerable stratum of the population was characterised by a folklore-type mental horizon, led to the pandemic being handled much less effectively in Romania than in other countries.

Finally, in order to give as complete a picture as possible of contemporary urban magic, we will make mention of three further areas for anthropological study:

Firstly, the ever-closer link between witchcraft and politics, even EU politics: at the end of 2018, Transparency International listed Romania as one of the most corrupt countries in the European Union. In a democratic way and in the midst of the development of a community consciousness well embedded in political life, the witches were quick to decide to work in the service of the community, even labouring to root out corruption in Romania by posting anti-corruption spells on the internet, according to Reuters (2 May 2019). The witch Mihaela Mincă related that she had contacted nine witches and wizards in Europe and the US online to curse those Romanian politicians that she regarded as corrupt. Naturally, this group performed a mass online ritual directed against "those who are not doing their duty and who have evil intentions, so that they will lose their posts and have health problems," according to the testimony of the famous witch. She also added that she wanted to use the power of the internet again in advance of the 26 May 2019 elections to the European Parliament:

We will continue this ritual on 25 May. We will carry out a powerful ritual against the Romanian government so that on 26 May, when the European Parliament elections take



place, we can cast a spell to ensure the good of the country!<sup>32</sup>

Next, a case of magical malpraxis, that is, a resounding failure on the part of the spells cast on the orders of a Romanian VIP, Oana Zăvoranu, to impact her husband, the singer Pepe, did not have the effect, as might have been expected, of discrediting the wave of Roma magic; the two witches involved, Vanessa and Melissa, were merely sentenced to pay 10 000 euros in damages to Oana Zăvoranu for this act of magical malpraxis. They had not succeeded in making Pepe stay faithful to the actress and the couple had separated, the witches' ritual having somehow – we do not know exactly how – failed to work.

Lastly, we look at an attempt to cancel or at least “sweeten” the stereotype of the Roma witch that has generated “an intergenerational trauma of racism” for Roma communities. The hope is that there is now a chance of redirecting the future in favour of this ethnic group through the use of art. The concept behind this is “Roma Futurism” (a term coined by Mihaela Drăgan, a feminist artist) and the story goes that Roma people resorted to magic and the invocation of supernatural forces because they had and have no other weapon to fight the social oppression to which they have been subjected throughout history. So far, there have been three manifestations of “Roma Futurism”: first a film (made in 2019 and shown online in late 2020) called *Romacene – The Age of the Witch*, in which the *Romacene* is a future geological epoch that is socially managed by Roma techno-witches who are hackers and scientists and who use magical mechanisms to go back in time and change the history of their oppressed people. Next came an exhibition mounted at the Goethe Institute in Bucharest by the artists Mihaela Drăgan and Virginia Lupu, together with “the most powerful witch in Europe,” Mihaela Mincă, and her daughters; it illustrated the power of the witch and of witchcraft “with grace.” Thirdly, the spring of 2022 saw the release of the album *Techno-witches*, Romania’s first feminist trap (and rap) album, by means of which Niko G.

(Nicoleta Ghiță) and Kali (Mihaela Drăgan) set out to bring the Romanian musical scene “a vibe with more substance and more message; the album speaks of female Roma cosmonauts in space and heralds a glorious age directed by techno-witches: the *Romacene*, the epoch in which the Roma invent and control the technology of the future, which they have transformed into a craft skill.”<sup>33</sup> The duo of Niko and Kali („they’re girls, they’re Roma, they sing trap and their aim is to revolutionise Romania’s sexist music industry”) promote a kind of feminism in lyrics modelled on magico-ritual dis/enchanting formulae, spells and curses in which they invoke spirits, carry out dis/enchantments and perform healings, curse enemies and make reference to wicca and voodoo, and anathematise haters (particularly politicians). Thus,

Roma Futurism reclaims the image of the Roma witch, so deeply stereotyped in the collective imaginary, and witchcraft becomes our artistic and political response to social inequalities and to the injustice of the world we live in (Mihaela Drăgan).<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the eclectic spirituality of the scene at the beginning of the third millennium showcases contemporary man’s somewhat paradoxical appetite for magic, in spite of an earlier thorough “disenchantment of the world” (Gauchet 1995) that found concrete expression in the rational, science-and-technology-focused Cartesian spirit that nevertheless remained hungry for magic, for stories and for personal experimentation with all kinds of spirituality. Storytelling sessions in museums, advertisements crafted around mythical-magical scenes (the magic of coffee, romantic kitchen enchantments in which the favoured brand of margarine makes the cake by itself, the elves seen in advertisements for flights), pilgrimages to relics (the Bucharest circuit, which starts at the church of Zlătari with the relics of St Ciprian, the destroyer of spells), the long life of astrology and horoscope programmes (see Neti Sandu’s regular feature on Pro TV, which has been running for twenty





years), the popularity of games of chance of the Pokemon type, where the idea of finding good luck is the main feature, the spate of river-films of the fantasy or dark fantasy or eco-fantasy kind (Avatar, Lord of the Rings, and films drawing directly on enchantments and myths), magical-mythical-fantastic literature of the Harry Potter type and visual art that resembles it, the recrudescence of techniques and installations of magic reloaded (magical eco-feminism, wicca, moon worship) – all these are indications of a truly nebulous and mystical-esoteric climate, as postulated by Françoise Champion.

In a mental and spiritual landscape of this multivalent nature, having recourse to urban witches who can not only undo the effects of the evil eye or spells but can also change destinies by fighting bad luck with the help of digital technology, exploiting “the human readiness to leave room for other ways of understanding and

explaining existence beyond those provided by modern science” (Gavriliuță 1998: 112), should be recognised as a commonplace, something fully explicable and capable of being integrated into the whole. Fabulous profits, amazing life stories, trappings worthy of the stage (James Bond-esque cars, aesthetic plastic surgery, French manicures, dream weddings, opulent villas, and magico-ritual performances carefully staged on dark nights, or the soft version with lighted candles floating delicately on water, depending on the case, all of them posted online as evidence), are turning techno-witches, e-witches and digi-witches into VIPs who are envied, adulated, admired, and regarded either with fear or as models of success. All that is left for the anthropologist to do is to pitch his tent near them, as Malinowski did, and to study them at his leisure.



## NOTES

1. Our starting-point is this theme of the survival of magic in the traditional Romanian village and the resolution of many life circumstances (especially those brought about by magical means) by appeal to a magico-ritual scenario. We are in agreement with the conclusions drawn by a number of Romanian ethnographers and ethnologists (Gheorghe Pavelescu 1998; Amalia Pavelescu 1995; Artur Gorovei 1931; Nicoleta Coatu 1998) and will illustrate their validity for villages in Sălaj.

2. All these ailments are extremely common in the traditional village. They are illnesses produced by someone's wish to do evil or by unclean spirits, that is, magically induced illnesses, and consequently can only be properly cured by a corresponding magico-therapeutic ritual. These illnesses may present as a generalised state of sickness (feeling unwell, headaches and earaches, abdominal pains, nausea), but may also take the form of serious neurological conditions such as paralysis, epilepsy and polio, which are all regarded as being the revenge of mythological beings that have not been properly honoured. Disenchanting from illness is the most widely practised ritual therapy (in fact, psychotherapy) by the use of which old village women who possess special powers (grace) can cure a whole catalogue of illnesses, with God's help, by the threefold repetition of a personalised incantation and of accompanying ritual actions. (These statements are based on personal numerous field studies.)

3. Forgiven women are old, post-menopausal women, that is, they are free from all sexual temptation.

4. Rozalia Mihăilă, b. 1940, Valea Lungă – Sălaj (field information, 2002, collected by CB).

5. The well-known statistics drawn up by Gheorghe Pavelescu (1998, 70) show that in the villages studied the number of women who were involved in traditional magical practices clearly exceeded the number of men.

6. “As in other areas of the country, so in Mărginimea Sibiului too, dis/enchanting was par excellence a branch of folklore practised by women, with the number of men engaged in it making less than a quarter of the total number” (Pavelescu 1995, 70).

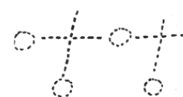
7. All the authors cited have researched the phenomenon of magic in traditional Romanian villages and have published works discussing magico-therapeutic or magico-erotic rituals and those who perform them.

8. The reference is to field research undertaken between 1996 and 2022 in villages in Sălaj county (a large number of villages, over fifty communities). Open interviews were conducted and recorded; these were applied mainly to women aged over sixty, with the participative observation method being followed.

9. Ana Chirilă, b. 1942, Marin – Sălaj (field information, 2000, collected by CB).

10. Floare Țurcaș, b. 1947, Plesca – Sălaj (field information, 1998, collected by CB).

11. <http://vrajitoare-romania.com/regina-magiei-albe-maria-campina-a-dat-interviu-televiziunii-de-stat-din-bulgaria/> (accessed 22 December 2022).
12. I was able to draw these conclusions from my field observations in villages in Sălaj during the 2000-2004 field campaigns, which focused on interethnic and multifunctional communities.
13. <http://vrajitoare-romania.com/repartizarea-teritoriala-a-vrajitoarelor-in-romania/> (accessed 20 January 2023).
14. <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/reuters-vrajitoarele-din-romania-se-folosesc-de-puterea-internetului-si-fac-vraji-impotriva-politicienilor-corupti-2620332> (accessed 15 November 2022).
15. <https://www.cancan.ro/caterinca-maxima-vrajitoarea-melissa-colega-de-facultate-cu-harry-potter-au-jucat-vajhat-impreuna-14919227> (accessed 12 November 2019).
16. <http://vrajitoare-romania.com/regina-maria-campina-vorbind-despre-conturile-de-facebook-false/> (accessed 15 January 2023).
17. <https://www.cancan.ro/se-deschide-la-bucuresti-scoala-nationala-de-farmece-si-ghicit-vrajitoare-cu-experienta-vor-preda-toate-farmecele-cunoscute-inclusiv-tainele-inspaimantatoare-ale-magiei-negre-20373078> (accessed 25 November 2022).
18. <https://ziare.com/vrajitorie/jumatate-populatie-rusia-crede-vrajitorie-1775555> (accessed 11 February 2023).
19. <https://ziare.com/stiri/eveniment/reuters-scrie-despre-vrajitoarele-din-romania-care-folosesc-puterea-internetului-impotriva-guvernului-corupt-1559991> (accessed 1 November 2022).
20. "Barometrul INSCOP — ADEVĂRUL despre România", <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/sondaj-965-dintre-romani-cred-in-dumnezeu-420915> (accessed 15 July 2022).
21. Dan Andronache, Vice-Preșident, True Story Project (TSP), <https://www.biziday.ro/sondaj-inscop-aproape-doua-treimi-dintre-romani-cred-ca-pandemia-de-covid-a-fost-provocata-de-elitele-globale-pentru-a-impune-controlul-asupra-populatiei-lumii-iar-putin-pesto-un-s/> (accessed 5 November 2022).
22. The "plague shirt" was a magic ritual by which the plague was driven out of the village: the plague was given a shirt made during a single night by nine [ritually] clean women (in a magico-ritual performance) and it would put it on and leave the village, thus putting a stop to the disease.
23. Victorie Brie, b. 1931, Dolu – Sălaj (field information, 2020, collected by CB).
24. Aurica Rusu, b. 1938, Răstolțu Deșert – Sălaj (field information, 2020, collected by CB).
25. <http://www.premierparallele.fr/livre/vivre-avec-des-epouvantails> (accessed 15 February 2022).
26. <https://www.babelio.com/livres/Morin-Changeons-de-voie-Les-lecons-du-coronavirus/1233114> (accessed 15 March 2022).
27. Anica Brie, b. 1937, Dolu – Sălaj (field information, 2020, collected by CB).
28. Onița Dumitraș (Onița lui Măgheran), b. 1933, Ugruțiu – Sălaj (field information, 2020, collected by CB).
29. Rozalie Marian, b. 1939, Fântânele – Sălaj.
30. Floare Țurcaș, b. 1947, Meseșenii de Sus – Sălaj (field information, 2021, collected by CB).
31. <https://www.revistasinteza.ro/psihologul-daniel-david-despre-modernitatea-romanilor-la-intalnirea-cu-pandemia> (accessed 16 November 2022).
32. <https://ziare.com/stiri/eveniment/reuters-scrie-despre-vrajitoarele-din-romania-care-folosesc-puterea-internetului-impotriva-guvernului-corupt-1559991> (accessed 25 January 2023).
33. No author, "S-a lansat Tehno-Vrăjitoarele, album de trap feminist" [Techno-Witches, a feminist trap album, has been released], <https://www.electronicbeats.ro/tehnovrajitoarele/> (accessed 6 February 2023).
34. Roma Futurism aims to reexamine Roma history from a perspective that incorporates the healing of pain and of the intergenerational suffering that has been genetically transmitted to Roma people from their ancestors who were victims of slavery and of the Holocaust. Roma Futurism creates performative healing rituals designed to move us on to the next level, in which we become capable of imagining for ourselves a future in which we put a stop to the historical cycle of our being oppressed. Roma Futurism asks questions about the uncertain future of the Roma in a racist Europe – an insecurity that at the same time includes the pressure to constantly remember the unknown and unacknowledged history of the Roma people. Roma Futurism heralds the Romacene epoch, in which Roma witches control technology and are in control of the future of the human race. We are a new movement made up of witches and feminists of every kind. Witchcraft is our political response to the social inequalities and injustice of the world we live in. We call on supernatural forces because this world has left us with no other defence. We are not afraid of using black magic, because it is the only thing that can help us in a society which encourages people to hate us. To those who criticise us for our "radical" position, which is nothing but a reasonable response to the violence we experience, we say that they have no right to give us advice until they too have experienced the aggression to which we are subjected. The Roma witch is an image current in Romania, where, although there have not been witch-hunters, witches have always been demonised. The Roma witch is viewed in a stereotypical way as a woman without education who is trapped in a past that is incompatible with a present dominated by science, a woman who does not know how to use technology and does not even wish to. The label "witch" is one of the main stereotypes about Roma women, but the mission of Roma Futurism is to destigmatise Roma witches and to rehabilitate their image. In Roma Futurism, technology combines with magic and is used by Cyber-Witches whose goal is to create a democratic and egalitarian world. Techno-witchcraft is a modern form of witchcraft that applies technology. It is an umbrella term for a range of practices and beliefs in witchcraft in connection with technology. It focuses on the magical aspect of technology and believes that ultra-advanced technology can be invented and developed using witchcraft and alchemy. It has room for the conviction that technological equipment is populated by spirits. Techno-witchcraft can be seen in the employment of modern appliances in magic rituals and in the replacement of traditional tools of magic by technology – using a telephone camera to cast evil spirits





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