

MIRCEA ELIADE ȘI FOLCLORUL ROMÂNESC ARHAIC

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***Abstract:** In this paper we would aim to highlight Mircea Eliade's contribution to the study of Romanian archaic folklore placed in Easter-European, European, and universal context. He had an early interest in folklore since his high school days and this interest was later consolidated through higher education and the time he spent in India. Once he returned to Romania, Eliade published an impressive number of articles in the newspapers of the day, as he was seduced by the perspective of comparing the Romanian folklore to the archaic folklore in the Carpathian's and the Balkans. Although he did not conduct any direct field research, he was strongly influenced by his folklore Professor in Bucharest, Dimitrie Gusti, the founder of the Romanian School of Sociology, whose works he knew closely and through which he got into contact with fundamental writings of significant researchers in the field, such as Densusianu, Caracostea, Mușlea, Caraman etc. In 1935 Eliade hails the establishment of the Archives of Folklore and the publishing of Yearbook which were to put an end to the dilettantism in the field, to bring comparative perspective, scientific methods, and criteria for study. One year later he hails the foundation of the Village Museum and reviews empirical medicine works. In 1937 Eliade publishes the study "Folklore as an Instrument of Knowledge" by which he tried to answer the question whether folkloric and ethnographic documents can serve as instruments of knowledge. Between 1938 and 1942 he publishes the "Zalmoxis" magazine in which he publishes a chronicle of the work by Cartoajan "Folk Books in the Romanian Literature". The ensuing research will be defining for Eliade. These are the crucial studies "Comments to the Legend of Master Manole" (1943) and "From Zalmoxis to Genghis-Han"*

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