

*The
Fundamental
Myths
of the Romanian
People*



*The Legend
of Trajan
and Dochia*

According to the dictionary,

THE MYTH

is a fantastic story telling the beliefs of ancient peoples about the origin of the universe, about the natural phenomena , about the destiny of man on earth, about legendary gods and heroes, etc.

In the Romanian folklore there are four essential myths, considered to lie at the foundation of the Romanian national specificity:

- the myth of ethno-genesis;
- the myth of the transhumance and of the death;
- the myth of the sacrifice for creation/building;
- the myth of the Zburător (a spirit from the Romanian folklore).

*The myth of ethno-genesis, of the formation of the Romanian people as a result of the **Dacian - Roman synthesis**, is included in the *Legend of Trajan and Dochia*.*

The legend is present in different versions both in the Romanian folk literature and in the cult one (in the chronicles of 17th-18th centuries, then taken over by the romantic historians and writers from the 19th century).

The legend says

... that Dochia was the daughter of the King of Dacia, Decebalus. She was an extremely beautiful, proud and fearless girl.



When the Romans invaded Dacia, the first thing they tried to do was to destroy the towering and strong fortresses of the Dacians. For several weeks they even besieged the capital of the Dacian kingdom, Sarmizegetusa Regia.



Dochia, the beautiful daughter of King Decebalus, led an army to Sarmizegetusa to help her father who was besieged in the city.

But it was too late to free the fortress. Decebalus committed suicide in order not to be taken prisoner, and Dochia withdrew to the Dacian mountains.

Emperor Trajan saw Dochia fighting on the walls of the city. He fell in love with the courage and beauty of the Dacian princess, and together with his soldiers, he set out to find Dochia who was hiding in the forests of Ceahlau Mountains.

She changed her royal clothes and jewels with some simple shepherd clothes and she used to walk through the mountains, with a flock of sheep, away from people's eyes, talking only with the animals of the forest.

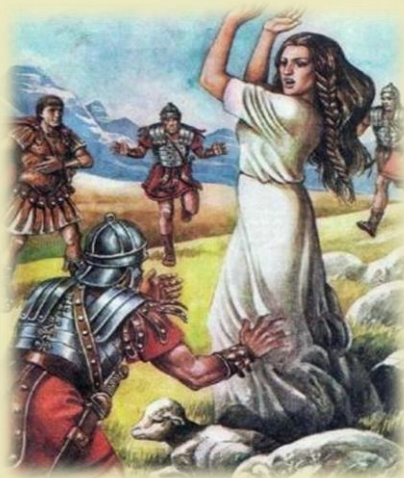
Trajan walked for many days and weeks, over hills and valleys, through the sun, the cold and the rain in order to find her.

He finally found her in a clearing at the top of Ceahlau Mountain taking care of her sheep which were grazing.



He tried to hold Dochia in his royal arms and asked her to come with him to Rome, the capital of the world, to make her his queen.

When the girl refused him, Trajan ordered his soldiers to catch her.



Desperate and terrified that she might have been dragged into the chains of slavery, Dochia looked up to the sky, whispering a prayer to God Zamolxes, the father of life, who cared for everything in heaven and on earth:

- Good, merciful, and mighty god, have mercy on me, and do not let my enemy fall upon me!

Then a flash of lightning split the sky, turning the unfortunate princess into a rock.

In the blink of an eye, beautiful Dochia, together with all her sheep which were spread out on the meadow, turned into cliffs, stuck in the rock of the mountain.



According to legend, Dochia lives in the rock of the mountains even today, there, at the top of Ceahlau Mountain where her tears turn into rain and her sighs turn into thunders.

Her tears gather at the foot of the rock and give birth to the White Spring, which has such clear and crystalline water that one has never seen before.



According to other versions of the legend, Dochia accepted Trajan's marriage proposal and became his wife.

Historical meaning....

Beyond the fantastic elements, the Legend of Trajan and Dochia is based on a real fact: the conquest of Dacia by the Romans, widely reported in the frescoes of Trajan's Column in Rome, but also in the works of ancient historians.



Real historical characters are present in the text: King Decebalus and Trajan, the Roman Emperor .



Reference is also made to the powerful god of the Dacians, Zamolxes.



The legend of Emperor Trajan in love with the princess can have its origins in stage XXX on Trajan's Column ...

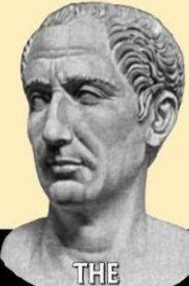


... where Emperor Trajan is depicted while assisting how a young prisoner is boarding a ship on the Danube. The young woman, who appears to be a princess, is holding a baby at her breast and is looking at a group of Dacian women left behind.

The episode is rich in meaning, researchers say, most of them consider that the scene shows how Decebalus's sister was being captured by the Romans.

This hypothesis is confirmed in a passage in the Roman History of Cassius Dio, where he presents the reasons that forced the King to accept the harsh conditions of peace imposed by Trajan in 102:

HALCYON CLASSICS



THE
COLLECTED WORKS
OF
**CASSIUS
DIO**

„Trajan conquered the fortified mountains ... and especially because Maximus had captured Decebalus's sister at the same time, and a strong fortress, the Dacian King was ready to consent to everything he was told, not with the intention to keep his word, but in order to survive“..

**Thank you for your
attention!**

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