

## The Serpent as a Pan-Mediterranean Myth<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*In this article it is introduced the connections between the archetype of the snake (in its pure or hybrids forms, as the serpent-woman) and other myths related to the Mediterranean sea, from Preclassics, Christians and Postmodern lectures. It is also introduced the transpersonification mechanisms, which allow the exchange of this legends between snakes and other mythological personifications (enchanted ones, moors, etc.). It is analyzed cases and examples of this archetype in the myths of the Mediterranean narrative, including tales, legends, toponymy, etc. It is also analyzed the projection and modern lectures of this topic, specially its relation with the cultural and tourist patrimony.*

**Keywords:** snake, dragon, imaginary, transpersonification.

### 1. Investigational Hypothesis: The Snake as a Legendize Ecotype in the Mediterranean Folklore

The snake and its related symbols, like the dragon, constitute a fascinating myth in every culture. It is without a doubt a transcultural myth, but if it's observed the tradition in concrete areas and periods of time, we can talk about special forms of certain areas or ecotypes (Von Sydow 1934), like the case of the snake in the Mediterranean countries. As a fact, from near orient to Morocco or the Iberian peninsula, the Snake is an outstanding topic, and beyond the Mediterranean streams, it can be said that the dragon is a Pan-European symbol, so it is present in different countries and European culture areas, and even UNESCO has recognized the importance of the representation of dragons in France and the Netherlands as a singular part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Given the fact that the Mediterranean basin includes countries, cultures, and heterogeneous periods of time, we are going to formulate the hypothesis that the lateral or peripheral areas (as what it would be the Iberian peninsula and what M. Gimbutas names as the Old Europe) would be archaic, this means that they would be the most conservatives vestiges of a matriarchal vision where the snake is benevolent.

In the other hand, in the patriarchal society that is extended all over the Mediterranean sea and particularly in the Semitic areas, the snake is a source of evilness, even turning into a symbol of de devil in the Jewish-Christian culture, and against the representations of the Mother Goddess, which one of its avatars is the snake, appears a representation where the idea of the offering and benefit obtained from this "lord of the water" results opaque, and the "kidnapper" becomes into the aggressor that must be killed. Actually, as Propp illustrates, the figure of the snake/dragon is a symbol of polyvalent because is Cosmogonal, which means that represents the nature in all its cosmic sources, that's why it is linked both to the water and fire, to the mount and to the cave (the earth).

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In the mythical narrative it is always linked to actions like swallowing, kidnapping or keeping treasures and thresholds (borders), meaning that it suits into the role of *predator* but also *guardian*. Meaning this, the snake prevents the path across the bridge which is over the burning river that leads into the Underworld, it also claims tributes or feeds from the preys. The snake represents the cyclic flow of nature, as it can be appreciated in the figure of the *Ouroboros*. The way of gobbling up is the most archaic, and derives from a maieutic myth: the *predator snake* transfers its wisdom to the gobbled one (legend of Saint Margarita), who is vomited after the process. A reminiscence of this archaic pattern is the archetype of the allied snake, which is fed and in return it is obtained benefits or favors.

As the myth gets opaque, it is extinguished the notion of benefit and the gobbler is seen just as an enemy or an aggressor, the hero does not obtain any kind of gift or magical virtue from the inside of the snake, and the hero ends up killing it. We also have the archetype or pattern of the *duel with the snake*. According to Propp, the ritualized duel - summoned by the king, for example, in the legend of Saint George- is characteristic from the old Mediterranean world - with French, German and Anglo-Saxon Versions also- where there was states (polis) already. In this legends new cultural changes are introduced: a young lady is sacrificed annually to the snake, the gobbler is killed from the outside by the hero (Matzke, 1902).

The students of the symbolism have recognized the survival of *myths of fights* between solar and lunar beginnings, as J. Esclava Galán demonstrated (1991) according to the Jiennense legend *The Lizard of La Malena*, which is, on the other side, applicable to the Valencian legend of *The Dragon of the Patriarch*. According to Propp (1928), the international form is always an indication of the archaism according to the local and national forms.

Synthesizing, we can say that the fight for the hegemony between gods, the comparison between, for example, the heavenly god of thunder and the snakes or dragons, it is a recurrent element in the ancient cosmogonies and represents in many cases the antinomy between Olympic gods and old gods of the Ancient Europe. It is, as an example, Thor fighting the Midgard Serpent, and in the Greek myths it would be the fight of Apollo against Python, Heracles against the Hydra of Lerna; in the Hittite mythology, the god Teshub and the dragon serpent Illuyanka, and in the Hindu mythology the fight of the god Indra against the dragon Vritra. It should not be inferred that there is just a conflict of gods and worships searching the destruction of the opponent, in fact, in the myth of Thor, the god ends up dying when he breathes the poison of the moribund snake, as a hint that one of the powers can not defeat the other, both powers must coexist (*coincidentia oppositorum*, Otto 1958).

There is a third pattern, related to the others, which is *the enchanted ones*, where it often appears the figure of the serpent-woman, which, as the dragon, represent according to Propp an anthropomorphic form that starts from the totem animal, and by its definitions it is more modern and it is associated to local oracle cults, people went to the oracles to ask and throw offerings. That's why the enchanted ones appear as local divinities, linked to a singular place, to a holly place inhabited by a "genius loci": the function of it is to keep the place where the power was hold, as a place to cross to the other world (a cave, a well...) and which sometimes holds a treasure (Norberg 1995). Although the modernized legends offer these elements as "loose parts", we know that they all are connected and linked (Calasso 2008).

In the case of the Ancient History in the Iberian Peninsula, we find a primitive state, this land was known by the name of *Ofiusa*, land of snakes (Morais 2007). That is the origin of the amount of legends about serpents, dragons, and *mouras* along Spain and Portugal. The hybrid forms (serpent woman) appear as moras queens or *mouras*, and they are always connected with water (fountains, caves, etc), because water, which is the environment of the snake, is like the blood and fluids of the body of the Great Goddess. In every case, the serpent behaves as a *benevolent creature* (Gimbutas 1989), sometimes giver of goods. In every case, this figures act following the first or third pattern (predator or enchanted serpent). The ritual form of duel, in fact, would be more common to impose some kind of cultural heroes who destroy those residual focuses of cult to the Mother Goddess.

In Italy, the *ofita cult* appears attested in manifestations like the Cocullo festival or in myths like the *aguane* ones, who keep the woods of the northern Italy, and in Crete according to the minoan goddess of serpents, so there are several legends of serpents in every stream of the Mediterranean sea (Giancristofaro, 2010). The Greek culture used to place in the end of the known earth, which is the Western World, monstrous figures as the Geryon, and in this case, representations close to the witchcraft, mermaids, basilisks, dragons... this means figures half beast and half woman. Love between humans and serpent were part of several legends, that in the Middle Ages would create the myth of Melusine, but it has an archaic base, between the hunt, the abduction or kidnapping and the amorousness and fecundation.

All of this must be put in the context of a matriarchal religion, prior to the imposition of the patriarchal that was produced because of the Indo-European invasion. Only in that way the change of polarity can be understood: the divinities that emanate from the Great Goddess appear with a monstrous appearance, like the Hydra or Medusa, who must be defeated by solar heroes, like Hercules or Perseus. In the European folklore the tale of *the murderer Dragon* (T.

300) perpetuate this model of dragon-predator, which is developed later in other pattern, the one where the dragon must be defeated or killed by the hero. It is true that this bipolarity between *solar/lunar*, *patriarchal/matriarchal* or *dragon vs hero dragon killer*, must be nuanced, because the hypothesis of the matriarchal religion, despite the Bachofen, Graves (2011) and Gimbutas (1989) formulations or the modern followers of the Goddess Movement, is an object of controversy.

In tales and legends there are cases where these oppositions are not so clear: in the tale *John the Bear*, the power of the hero comes precisely from the kidnapping of his mother by a bear. In the case of the legends, we certainly have the prototype imported from Saint George and other where there is annihilation and bloodshed, but it is more common the benevolent figure, like in Santa Marta, where the woman is the one who masters or chains the wild beast without killing it (here it is fulfilled the principle of coalescence of Calasso, actually the serpent and the woman are the same, like the Cretan version). Another group of stories reveal even more ancient stadiums, like the legend of Santa Margarita, who is vomited from the inside of the serpent, which means, it is a maieutic myth, of delivery, with clear shamanic and mystical reminiscences. As we said, it is clearly related with the ouroboros (serpent that bites its own tale) as a cosmogony myth, it is the nature which regenerate continuously.

Therefore, it seems clear that the *demonization* of women, the dragon and nature go in the same direction, according to Gimbutas (1989) it is because of the triumphant ideology of the Olympic Gods, and that the power to command, contain and dominate the powerful forces is assigned to the heroes, for example, the stories associated to floods, storms -Ulises facing Escylla and Charybdis- etc. The great variety of European or Mediterranean mythologies it is due to what Cardigos (1996) calls "local costume of the legends": in some places the name *mouras* is used, in others, names like *xanas* or *nymphs* are used.

We do not know how exactly this theory of the two historical periods -a lunar and matriarchal period, with the cult of the serpent as a base, and the solar and patriarchal period- can be. But we can accept the generational factor and the regenerative capacity of the serpent (always associated to cosmogony and primordial myths) and its link to water, without a doubt.

The fight between, for example, Olympians and Titans is more than a fight between the forces of order and chaos that are alternated in nature, they do not have the negative connotations that previously were given to serpents, the Semite vision of the snake as a genius of evilness took an influence on it. Also, the bull is exclusively a solar symbol, it must be remembered that in this way a river god used to be represented, which means the natural energy in its maximum degree.

The theories of Graves (2011) about the distortions that a religion suffers, and the concept of Montanari (1988) about the "risplamazione coerente", warns us about the inherited stereotypes: the sea dragon and princess Andromeda, or the kidnapped princess and the dragon of the spring, can be interpreted as a unity, separated in two aspects (that in other cases merge, as in Melusine or the serpent-woman). Something similar can be said about the myth of Medusa (Hoys, 2004), maid turned into a monster that holds a magical power -used in the *gorgoneion*- that justified that in the classic world she was represented as lady of water.

## 2. Exchangeable Archetypes and Prosopographies of the Serpent in the European Mythology

If the general overview created is correct, what remains to do is to describe an alpha matrix which is not recognized as an avatar of the Great Goddess but as a construction of variabilities, that can be represented in this scales:

- a) *wet*.....*dry*
- b) *animal*.....*human*
- c) *clawed*.....*clawless*
- d) *female*.....*male*
- e) *to cure (life/health/medicine)*.....*killing/disease/poison*
- f) *wise*.....*ignorant*
- g) *power*.....*powerless*
- h) *hunter*.....*prey*
- i) *sly,cunning*.....*innocent, accomplice*
- j) *fertile*.....*esterile*
- k) *invisible*.....*visible*
- l) *with power in the eyes*..... *without power in the eyes*
- m) *lunar*.....*solar*
- n) *(under,inside, into) the earth*.....*sky*
- o) *singing, music*.....*silence*

Many of the Mediterranean aquatic genies are characterized by the features of the left side of this table, but many others have intermediate features. What happens is that many of these features are used to create a counterpoint to the hero and serve the basic law of dualism (epic law of two scenes).

Hybrid prosopography is used all over Europe in order to build different kinds of myths that are no longer a reflection of the Mother Goddess and neither is it of the Christian interpretation of the devil, it is a cultural hero, a joker or player, a trickster, with a grotesque appearance. It clearly appears in the most archaic mythologies, as the Slavic: Veles is the god of the earth, water and the underworld, associated to magic and mischief (Jakobson 1969). It makes a counterpoint to Perun, god of thunder, therefore, it reproduces an ancient Indo-European myth, the battle between the thunder god, who represents the sky and fire, and the Veles dragon, who represents the earth and water. So here we see a battle between good and evil, like it happens in other mythologies (Ivanov & Toporov 1970).

Another feature of Veles, which makes it close to the perception of the serpent in the Mediterranean mythology, is its relation with cattle and wealth, in fact, Veles is a knitter god, like the spinners of the Mediterranean tradition, Veles is the protector of farmers and harvest. So, Veles gives wealth and sometimes acts like a joker/cheater, which means, a trickster. The complexity of this Slavic god is similar to the Celtic god Cernunnos, god of nature and magic, he was represented with an anthropomorphic appearance and as a snake with ram's horns.

This basic concept is also seen in the Nordic mythology, with the battle between Jord, the sea serpent... and Thor, the thunder god, or in the Greek one, with the battle between Apollo and Python, but in this case, features that can be seen in Veles become part of different gods: Pan (music and cattle), Hermes (magic and mischief), Hades (death and underworld) and Typhon (enemy in serpent form of the thunder Greek god, Zeus).

In any case, European serpent seems like a polyvalent god, from the kingdom of the underworld and dead ones, of the music and magic, of the cattle and wealth, and all of this is linked to the ophidian rites in the continent. In France and the Netherlands we can also see the dragon processions, *guivre (vouivre)* reveal their function as heroes or cultural antecedents, as Melusine.

The geographical-historical method has marked known Types and Motive Tables, that set up exchangeable stories, as the Saint George or Saint Martha in their battle against the dragon, similar to other primitive fights against serpents, lizards or Tarasques who killed herds. In the case of Spain, for example, starting from the studies of A.M. Espinosa (1946), a prototype is built with this sequence:

- Beginning of Aarne-Thompson 327A (it means, Hansel and Gretel).
- The brother leaves, and on the way, he obtains marvelous dogs as an exchange of his cattle.
- A donor gives him an invincible sword.

Sub-variants:

- C1. He comes to the kingdom where the princess is going to be devoured by the serpent.
- C2. He kills the snake, picks up its tongues and leaves far away with the princess, who is going to marry him.
- C3. A usurper cuts the snake's heads and because he saves the princess, he is about to marry her.
- AC5. The return of the hero with the tongues of the serpent clears the situation. It is followed by the wedding of the hero and the princess.

It is significant the archaic pattern of the primordial serpent. Later, Church Fathers, following the Semitic tradition, will identify this *serpens anticuus* or dragon with the devil, and the fights of Saints and knights against it. But there is nothing explained about the triad *serpent-killer-heroine victim* variants in legends, for example, the *serpent-woman*, or the link between *cuélebres* and *xanas* in the Asturian folklore.

*Xanas* and *cuélebres* are not hostile to each other, they are first of all protectors of some places and treasures (ayalgas). The same happens with other *genius loci*, as the *Tragantía* of Carloza (Jaén), which is actually an avatar of lamia, as it is in Morocco *Aisha Kandisha*, a female genie devourer of men.

As C. Cabal (1983) announces, the parallelism between *xanas* and *deceased* is almost the same, and it can not be unlinked from the fact that the majority of these fairies, known as *banshees*, washerwoman, white ladies, etc., are ghosts who lament and warn the living, it means, they have oracular functions. So ancestors, dead ones and enchanted ones are confused each one with the others, because fairies, just like the dead ones, live in sacred places and walk the paths. In that way, nymphs are anchored to the same places that snakes, forts, dolmens and other megalithic constructions are, known as fairy houses, fairy stones, fairy caves...

Moreover, the discovery of what it is called "soul holes" in many of these constructions justifies topics like the *estantigua* or procession of the deceased, which is the complementary sequence: the xana who is visited vs the xana who visits, since the ancient paths are sign by the dead ones (that is where the *psychopomp* character of gods like Hermes/Mercury comes from).

It is not necessary to analyze the related topics, as the enchanted ones, the dragon killers and others. Now we will focus in the *status* and attributes of the *gobbler serpent*, even though in many legends -unlike the Asturian myth of the *cuélebre* and the *xana*- serpents and woman are overlapped, the *xana* acts in fact as a serpent-woman, following the tradition of *Melusine*; it is, as a fact, a hybrid that can get marry and have children but it always returns to its "natural environment". The "prey", the human with who it interacts has also two faces, or it is just a prey that falls into its claws and can be a disenchanter, who tries to free it in the night of Saint John's eve. However, the classification of Aarne

Thompson (1971) of the marvelous tales determines two different subgroups at the beginning of itself:

1. Supernatural adversaries (300-399).
2. Husband, wife or any other enchanted supernatural relative (400- 459).

Group 1 englobes tales about the dragon, the ogre or other supernatural adversary and group 2 includes those tales about the enchanted ones, who are intimately connected, but are posteriors, it means, the primal myth, previous to the fighting myths, is the primal or cosmogonical serpent, so the leadership of the story belongs to the serpent/aggressor and its actions, while the other group of Types the hero/heroine and the casuistic of the enchantment are the main interest point.

We focus in those types that refer to the image of the primordial serpent, to the Ancient Serpent, a predator. In Espinosa (1946) and the *Love Tales of the Light* by A.R. Almodóvar (1986) it is included the named *The serpent of the seven heads* and *The castle of going and not returning*, texts where the serpent obtains the value of being evil and annihilator. This form of the serpent also appears hidden in other well known tales that have nothing to do with snakes, as *John the Bear*. In the Andalusian version which J.L. Agúndez (1998) examines, in addition to the extraordinary strength of *Lucifer*, it also appears the descent from the fireplace, the cauldron or the well where the treasure is, all of them are equivalent elements to "being swallowed" and to the initiation tests, being the ear of the devil the gift which the serpent grants in other tales.

### 3. The Serpent with Two Faces: Devourer and Ally Which Gives Wealth and Gifts. The Three Patterns of the Serpent in the Mediterranean Area.

Indeed, the known scheme of Saint George and the Dragon, widely Christianized and with quite modern connotations, must not make us loose the point on the personification of the ancient serpent or deity of the protean representation of Nature, which later is extended in different avatars, from snakes to enchanted ones. The essential is what lies in the initiation myth, since the knowledge and the "charismatic gift" can only be acquired after overcoming this sacred experience which is always a regeneration experience, of redemption, of "being born twice". We can see it in every legend where appear a dragon and a lady - duplicated forms of the ancestral representation of the Mother Goddess- but it is something that also happens in many popular tales.

To sum up, all of this means that the *ancient serpent* is an ancestral initiation snake, and the *predator serpent* comes from it, and for its shocking myths (as the myth of Santa Margarita, cf. Pedros, 1986) we can interpret it in maieutic key, which means, the disciple was illustrated by the master. Coming out of the dragon's bowels is the same as when John the Bear wants to come out of the well where he went to rescue the princess or to find a treasure, according to different versions. The way to be "vomited" or "being born" to the "new life" can be anecdotic, the hero can be vomited by the monster after a substance (as in the myth of Chronos, where he regurgitate his own children) or it can be by a magical object, as the ear of the devil.

The important is that this teaching must be done "into the depths" (in a cave, in a well...) which reveals its connection to the infernal chthonic deity, and with water, and to sum up, with the underworld where the powers of Nature appear in all their glory. The chapter of the gobbler serpent it is always linked to a powerful place, like the named ones, and to an act of power, of apotheosis or "hit" (which is the old notion of "plague"), which holds the human being (Otto 1958). Otherwise are the intentions with those numens, the fights between them (comparative mythology) or between them and the human beings, like its seen in the labours of Heracles.

Finally, our theory is that, historically, three kind of successive Patterns are established, but all of them are later mixed because of the importance of the Christian traditions, which would be:

- A. *the primordial/predator serpent- Predator myths and introductory ritual myths: the Serpent that devastate the region... Often seen as allied serpent.*
- B. *Duel with the serpent - Fighting myths. Duels against enemies of the same level as the serpent: Gods, Saints... or duels against human enemies: mortal hero who kills the dragon.*
- C. *Enchanted one (Serpent) - Disenchanter- Local Myths, oracles.*

### Narratological Patterns about Serpents (Martos, 2011)



The multiple habitat of the serpent supports its nature of linking the cosmic plans; it is especially important the connection *water-mount-cave*, which confirms what it is seen in legends: it lives into the water, in shores, caves or mounts with no continuity solution, they all are enclaves which mark the entrance to the underworld. Water is seen as the limit of the Hades, the frontier with the other world, as the medieval ocean. Normally it is the place located in this linked habitats, since the shore is the usual territory that agglutinate this spaces, it is beside the river or the lake, which is the entrance to it and to caves and close mounts: it is what can be seen in many legends of the enchanted ones. The essential is the amphibian behavior of the monster, its den is between some levels and others, it can be a cave next to a river, a cave into the mountain, etc.

The *Ancient Serpent* is similar to the primordial monsters, and that is where it is different from the enchanted one, which is its human form origin, and the prey is similar to the hero. The contaminations and amalgams explain this scheme *Serpent and/or enchanted one + Prey and/or Killer/Disenchanter*.

In the three patterns there is a "seizure" of the victims. The serpent is seen as a primordial animal, and for that reason it is seen dual -beneficial and dangerous- and linked to the water and regeneration. The difference is that in the first pattern the raptor acts as in the pure predation myth, that is why it is seen as a rite test from what it is obtain a benefit, for that reason it is the most archaic. In the posterior vision the benefit gets darker, it is introduced the woman as a prize or object of a kidnapping process, and it is spoken clearly about the hybrid monster generation, which means, a crossbreed with humans. The underlying ecological model is the fight for the possession of females, in fact, Greek gods used to rape and rape nymphs and princesses, for example, Medusa (Goldman, 1961).

In pattern C it can be seen that the serpent becomes the background of the enchantment, it becomes the motive of the enchantment (kidnapping, seclusion in a cave or a tower...). Anyway, what is important is that this enchanted ones are the human transformation that is attributed to this mythological beings, for example, turning the enchanted one or xana into a serpent-woman, a hybrid, as it can be seen in the *La Tragantía* and many other legends. The hypotheses studied are many; the most plausible is that they are *shades* or deceased souls and therefore places of power linked to the cult of the ancestors, the ancient kings or local wizards, who also used to interact in a dangerous way with tricks when the intruders bothered them.

In any case, the Gobbler Serpent of the first pattern acts with the forcefulness of a plague that is about to come, it is an uncontrollable fact that threatens the community. It appears as primal and protean beings, as the ancestral serpents. We already said that its primal sense is to hit, and this, as in the chapter of the Jacob's fight against the angel, also implies to be granted with a mark or a gift, that can be outsourced ( the seven tongues of the serpent that the hero carries with him) or internalized, as the Jacob's wound. The initiation-maieutic myth is about it, who survives the test receives a gift, which gives a superior reason to the simple act of dismembering the victim, as the "Chupacabras". In fact, even though the duel is not dramatized as in the legend of Saint George, it is also possible here to beat the giant ancestral serpent that devours cattle and demands tributes or human sacrifices, and there is often anonymous heroes who try to eliminate it subtly, like throwing bread filled with pins (agricultural topic + metallurgy, magical smiths).

Why do we know that this pattern is so important and archaic? First of all, because of its ambivalent sense of the relation between the local people and the wild beast, the ambiguity between valor and fear, the feeling of being a prey, the feeling of calming the beast with offerings. We also know by the rites of initiation that an important element is the ritual

death, which means, the act of gobbling followed by the monster, which matches with this pattern. This part would not be logical if the swallow were not followed by a "resurrection", a reborn, and that is what can be seen in scenes where the sea monster regurgitates the "swallowed one", like Jonah and the Whale.

In conclusion, we can see an archaic monomyth where the snake, transfiguration of these figures of the modern myths (anunnaki, reptilians, ancient astronauts...), is associated to the rapt and the predation but also to the prosperity and the absolute otherness, that is where the triple dimension of the *trickster* comes from, as a hero or cultural antecessor, as a cheater and a buffoon; so the three mythical sequences are linked, and this gift is only acquired by being "swallowed" and the aspect of the serpent is always grotesque. The serpent is, in fact, a fecundity symbol, a creation symbol, and those wealth are associated to its mouth, since it is what guarantees wealth. It should be noticed the egyptian idea of the mother earth with form of snake, where it is produced the alchemy. Wealth obtained by the lady of *Frau Holle* come from the "well's mouth", and they come out from it, in shape of gold and pearls. In China, the generator power is also associated to the mouth of the snake, to the spittle of the dragon that has the power to fecundate women, and sometimes in tales, the hero must introduce his own hands into the mouth of the snake, where the wealth come from.

Therefore, this ancestral figure has two faces, it is equivalent to the "mythical ancestor and civilizing hero" that "sacrifice himself for the human beings, that is the ritual death, and at the same time it is his predator, which demands tributes. This ambivalence to what is sacred appears in numerous texts, it is respected, venerated, feared, and it is begged for favors as an exchange to offerings. Little by little, the obsolescence of this codes ends up reverting its relation into a malefic one, it is something that appears in many legends, where someone raises a serpent or plays with it, having a friendly relationship with it, and when it grows up and faces again the peasant, it kills him because it does not recognize him (like the Valencian legend of *The Peasant of the Albufera*).

To sum up, it can be seen that this ancestral figure that embodies so many different forms (angels, demons, fairies, genies...) could be understood in a metaphoric or symbolic way, as the defenders of the myth's critic want (Lecounteux, with his theory of the shamanic double we are able to project), or as well in a literal form, linked to a lived experience, if it is linked to the theories of Evermero. The ancient astronauts thesis is one of them, and of course it clears up many of the phenomena treated and gives them a new perspective.

#### 4. Sacrifice as a Substitute Form of Predation

From the point of view of hunting, the tramp is one of the basic ways of interaction between the hunter and the victim, and the tramp is not just about the prey being reached by the predator in advantageous conditions but it being offered in a immolated way.

The ritual sacrifices are an essential part of the elements of religions, but in the Abrahamic religions the blood ritual seals the alliance and establishes the *keringa*, which means, the revelation, and it is also linked to gifts and charms. If we follow this Mediterranean mythologies (berbers, canaanites...) and we made from them genies, demons or *tricksters* the main figures, then it is logical that the predation offers a deceptive form both in the aspect and prosopography and the fight strategies.

That is how the model of the Jewish Easter is a blood ritual used as a protectoral and blessing ceremony, as it correspond to the ambiguous nature of the *Trickster*. This protectoral ritual has a supernatural nature (Otto 1958), and as the angel of death, it also has a blessing feature, as the blessing mark that Jacob receives.

The story of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* is related to the model of sacrifice, according to the number of implicit and explicit features that contains. Expressly, appears the wizard or shaman who takes the children, the importance of music and drums, the connection to the mount or the heights (*tofet*) of the molok rites, and the extravagant aspect (clothing) of the Piper. Implicitly, the collective disappearance leads this ritual to Moloc and all the biblical sacrifices and holocausts.

It is also truth that this gothic and dark lecture, which sees in this rites murders of execrable children, contrast with the esoteric vision that extends the ritual as a palingenesis, the soul is offered to be reborn, as the phoenix bird. Borges explains it perfectly in the tale of The rose of Paracelsus, where appear the similarities between the wizard and the cheater. The folklore offers many other similar stories, as the Jacobean legend of the rooster of saint Domingo, who sang after being cooked.

#### 5. Enchantments and Enchanted Ones

The enchantments are linked to magical processes related not only to an archetype of fight but a local danger, in fact, the charms take place in places of power or memory, that are especial in each environment, and it has a bigger impact in the mythology of the nomadic people, when they walk through the countryside, the *oros* (according to the greek concept), is

about getting into the lands of these *genius loci*, who must be conciliated.

In the Mediterranean mythology, genies are constant threats for pastors, and it seems that the *Pesaj* or Jewish Easter has as an origin this ritual which is at the same time a protectoral, salvation and blessing ritual against genies. Genies cheat, harm and manipulate mortals unless these are wise and known what to do. Mythology is full of the taboos: bread of the dead should not be eaten, the offering must be left to be accepted by the god, and its messages must be known how to be interpreted, for example, not following its music (Odysseus, *The pied piper of Hamelin...*) or knowing its sacred name (*Rumpelstiltskin*).

On the other hand, the metamorphosis is linked to the grotesque character of the *trickster*, related to what is monstrous or extraordinary. It is also true that the legends of the enchanted ones sometimes belong with the tales of the enchanted boyfriend or girlfriend, what Bettelheim (1977) calls the *animal-boyfriend cycle*, not only because of its thematic affinity of the enchantment, but because of deeply structural correlations. We also explain what it is called the magical-identity *chronotope* according to the Segovian tale "*The wild beast of the garden*", it should be known that these stories actually show places/events of memory, and fabling about places of power and their impact into the community is actually an act of building a communal monument or symbol to be shared, according to the expression of Keith Basso.

The *maraboutisme* from the Maghreb is one of the evident codes, because, as it is said in the Bible, it is characterized for defining sacred places and mystic-ascetics practices that follow certain patterns, different to those used by the druids. It is not a religion of Nature, the meeting place to practice the cult was the place where the hermit used to become the "spokesman" of the revelation -understood as a chain- and used to bless the place (Ferchiou, 1972). Therefore, we have two key elements: a sacred place linked to water and the perpetuation of the tradition, using a intermediary, which is a sacred man, who is gifted with the *baraka* and make miracles, even when he is dead, using his grave and the veneration of his devotees.

It is therefore a religion of the *genius loci* and at the same time it is a cult which has been compared to the Christian cult to saints, and encloses elements like the saint's burials, peregrinations, recoveries...

Such places of power are consecrated spaces, surrounded by a sacred wood, which is in heights, where the profane action is a taboo. All the expert link this group of elements not as much with the Islam as with the Berber culture, with its primitive paganism. It must be taken into account that in the Berber mythology existed an autochthonous cult to the dead ones and the graves that made the soothsayers and wise men go to sleep to receive in their dreams messages from them. The genies of the place are those who can bless, bring the *baraka*. On the other hand, for Muslims, genies or *djins* are beings created by God, intermediates between men and angels. These are spirits of light, but genies are spirits of fire, who share the physic world of humans, even though they can become invisible or adopt diverse forms. There are those who are obedient to God, others are obedient to devil, and there are those who do not eat, drink or engender and others who do have human necessities. In general, these genies, in every variety, are able to do both benign and maleficent actions, and many of them are full of resentment against men. Genies' metamorphic character is also difficult to distinguish, they can be presented with a male or female physiognomy, beautiful or monstrous, and sometimes they grant a curse related to family, as the locked ifrit in the tale of Aladdin. Therefore, when they appear linked to a place, their diversity of natures and intentions shows up, many of them are thirsty from human blood and hungry for meat, even though there is a group of genies who are beneficial and try to protect humans from those who do try to harm them.

A wife of one of these genies is Aicha Kandicha, a *djinn* with woman body and feet of lambs, who lives next to water, fountains or woods, and appears in lonely paths. She is a very attractive and insinuating woman who subjugates the unwary ones, normally young men, getting them sunken and drowned.

This *ghula* or genie is the arabic equivalent of the lamia, Lilit, with its evil habits of kidnapping children or sleeping with men as a succubus, because genies, as we suggested, can have sexual relationships with human beings, men or women, as they can also change its own children with human's children (v.gr trolls' supplanting actions in the nordic folklore). Genies surround places and spaces like the ones we already mention, and people can only try to appease them and avoid them, appearing many different superstitions about it.

The nexus with all the Indo-European myths is clear, for Berbers serpents are just terrible *djins*, but, Berbers' autochthonous traditions are different from the Indo-European myths, as what we said about going to a wise man's grave to obtain in dreams the knowledge about divination. It should be remembered, for example, the Galician legend of "The invited skull", which accentuate the opposite, the taboo about the dead ones and the punishment for profaning its space.

Legends about the enchanted ones are oracular myths, myths of communication with the dead ones which actually is a test, the waters (the enchanted ones) know how to discriminate between those who are fair and those who are unfair, the waters, as A. Silvia Karacic says, punish and denounce the fault. This is the topic of the background, the atonement of a fault, the legend of the expiatory target (R. Girard 1982) in shape of a character who is sent to sacrifice. The fabled way is to do a research, to fix a harm or a fault, but in deed is a mediator of the community, which links violence and what



is sacred. The enchantment can only be undone by some kind of sacrifice.

In the pattern of the serpent lies the collective violence, which is reciprocal. On the other hand, Jarramplas, Carantañas and other suspicious ways of theriomorphism assume the role of the athenian *pharmakós*, a cripple or another unfortunate individual, who was taken through the streets and people used to throw all kind of elements, the victim was the target of every joke and anger (in that is analogous to the Peropalo), but at the same time was target of veneration as a central part of the rite, since at dying he turns unhealthy violence into beneficial violence, peace and fecundity.

So, from our point of view, the myth/rite of the enchanted one has a double spectacular shape, it means, inverted: if it is presented as a figure that comes to the community, which is the case of the *Jarramplas* of Plornal and many other figures of the folklore, it adopts the form of the deceased's masks that visit the village and are objects of "offerings", even if they adopt the form of thrown objects, since it would take part in apotropaic rituals with all the screams, jokes, and laughs. The symmetrical rite consist in a villager who goes to the place of the dead ones, the place of the enchanted one and the rite inverts: he is the one who offers and who, eventually, is pursued, as in many versions.

It means oneiromancy was usual, they used to believe in communication with the dead ones in dreams, just the same as the Berbers used to do. Death did not interrupt the dialogue with the livings and it was not necessary an expulsion to the periphery, in the necropolis. People from El Algar's culture also used to bury their dead in tubs, under the floor of their houses, in caves or in natural cracks closed to their houses. Those kind of funerary practices fix with the pattern's distribution we have been defending.

Grotesque features, which try to scare, etc. leave no doubt: Carantañas are the collective reverse of the enchanted one, or this one is the "banished" copy of the Carantañas, representations or masks that, as Gorgon, are endowed with a great magical power, and they are linked to the myths already referred: death-moon-serpent-water...

## 6. Conclusions

We have revised many cases where it can be seen how the Mother Goddess of the Paleolithic and Neolithic, who was venerated and found the serpent as a significant avatar, evolved into a dangerous and maleficent representation of an animal. All of these opposites to what it can be found in Crete, Cocullo or Portugal, citing some examples. The connection lady-serpent became disastrous and negative, the most important example are the Gorgons. The disdain to what is hybrid, for example, the Chimera, would represent the superiority meaning of the patriarchal culture to all these mixed representations between what is animal and what is feminine, the grotesque intensification features in Medusa would be connected with the male's fear to this female's ancient values, the self-sufficiency or its deep connection with fertility and what is chthonic (DuBois, 1988). This idea is forced by the paradoxical used of the *gorgoneion* in a positive and apotropaic function, as an antidote to the evil.

Adorno (2001) highlights the relation between myths and stereotypes, in fact, the popularity of legends like the Saint George's one have instilled a canonical lecture where the dragon is the murderer, the heroine is a passive victim and the conflict is just solved by killing the serpent. In the same way, we have shown the demonization of women in greek myths, such as harpies, Fates, sirens, lamias, etc. Nevertheless, the recurring myth of the serpent-women all over the Mediterranean area (Giallongo) shows this double pole between repulsion and attraction which overflows the stereotype that links women to monsters, because the demonization of women is an operation of censure and fear to the contamination of the diversity that women and serpent represent. In fact, the connection between the serpent and the female menstruation (both Medusa and the menstruating woman have the power in their eyes) feeds this superstitions that link menstrual blood, serpent, poison, mirror, lethal look and death (Cardigos 1996).

The change from the gynocentric model to an androcentric model that is documented by Gimbutas generated all this theories about the serpent-woman -with recurring myths as the sacrifice-, but at the same time the new cultural movements -ecocriticism, feminism...- are leading to a new emergency for the *gylanic* culture (Eisler), which means, it is leading to an androcratic model's crisis.

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