

From Blood to Vital Energy: A Study of the Rites of the Order of the Red Dragon and the Brotherhood of the Black Waters

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Introduction

The Order of the Red Dragon and the Brotherhood of the Black Waters represent two secret societies whose history has been largely shrouded in mystery, rumour, and legend. While the Brotherhood of the Black Waters can with certainty be attributed to Irina Stănescu-Bibescu, its founding figure, the Order of the Red Dragon is often, wrongly, presented as having been founded by Dorian Bibescu. This erroneous attribution stems more from a popular conflation than from historical fact. These two societies have been associated with ritual practices involving blood practices, giving rise to criminal myths amplified by their detractors. The purpose of this study is to resituate these practices within their historical, archaeological, and symbolic context, distinguishing the energetic and symbolic uses of blood from mere accusations of criminality, while analysing the influence of Thraco-Dacian heritage and modern reinterpretations.

1. Historical context and origins of the societies

The Order of the Red Dragon appears in reliable sources at the beginning of the 19th century. The oldest known document, dated 20 September 1807, mentions one Andrei Odobescu, described as a Rosicrucian and Grand Master of the Order. His presence fits into a period of European spiritual renewal marked by the rise of hermetic societies, Masonic lodges, Theosophy, and occultist movements inspired by ancient traditions. The writings of Papus (Gérard Encausse) and Éliphas Lévi at the end of the 19th century reflect this desire to restore to occult rites and the symbolism of blood an energetic and spiritual dimension. The practices codified by these societies draw on concepts of the circulation of vital energy, meditation, and initiation, aimed at the inner transformation of the adept.

Contrary to popular accounts, no evidence links the Order of the Red Dragon to the Order of the Dragon founded in 1408 by Sigismund of Luxembourg. The connection between the two Orders rests essentially on the similarity of their names, which has encouraged historical conflations and urban legends. The Brotherhood of the Black Waters, for its part, benefits from more precise documentation, particularly concerning rituals linked to blood, inspired by ancient traditions and incorporating practices of feminine magic.

2. Criminal accusations and the construction of myths

The criminal reputation of these societies rests largely on exaggerations and rumours. As early as the 19th century, anti-esoteric pamphlets and sensationalist press articles reported human sacrifices and bloodthirsty practices, even going so far as the consumption of blood. These accusations, similar to those levelled by the Inquisition or against certain Masonic lodges, were intended to legitimise repression, imprisonment, and social exclusion.

The available internal archives suggest a completely different reality. Ritual practices were

limited to voluntary offerings of blood, regarded as vectors of vital energy and of communication with spiritual entities, such as the spirit of the Dragon or vampiric forces. In this context, blood served as an energetic link to strengthen concentration, the meditative state, and the effectiveness of initiation rituals. These practices were aimed neither at crime nor violence, but at spiritual transformation and the transmission of vital energy.

3. Thraco-Dacian heritage and the centrality of blood in ancient rites

The societies studied draw heavily on the cults practised by the Thraco-Dacian tribes, the Getae, and the Triballi. Blood occupied a central place in rites, oaths, and funerary ceremonies. According to Herodotus, every five years the Getae sacrificed a man chosen by lot to send him as a messenger to Zalmoxis. His impalement was interpreted as a propitiatory act beneficial to the community. These ritual practices illustrate the centrality of blood in the relationship with the divine and the role it plays as a vector of communication between the human world and higher forces.

Blood-related rites also appeared during warrior alliances. Participants pricked their arm or tongue and mixed a few drops of their blood with wine or mead, consumed collectively to seal a sacred pact. These practices are confirmed by archaeological artefacts and bas-reliefs discovered in the Orăştie Mountains, depicting sacrificial figures and collective ceremonies. The pileati aristocrats and the capnobatae priest-warriors practised ecstatic rites involving self-mutilation and bloodletting, as shown in certain scenes on Trajan's Column and in princely tombs of the Sarmizegetusa necropolis.

The ritual suicides at the death of sovereigns, particularly the fall of Sarmizegetusa in 106 CE, when seventy dignitaries took their own lives to accompany King Decebalus, illustrate the importance of blood as a sacred link between the sovereign and community, and as a means of ensuring spiritual and political continuity.

4. Menstrual blood and feminine magic

The Brotherhood of the Black Waters also draws on ritual practices using menstrual blood, regarded as a vector of subtle energy and a magical element. Herodotus and Pliny the Elder report that female blood could wither plants, rust metal, or protect against demons. Strabo and Pomponius Mela mention Thraco-Dacian sorceresses using blood to purify or consecrate sacred objects.

Archaeology confirms these uses: ceramic and bronze cups containing traces of human haematin have been discovered in exclusively female pits in sanctuaries of the Orăştie Mountains, while bone or bronze spatulas were used to collect menstrual blood. These practices included votive deposits, the consecration of weapons and fortifications, and the initiation of young girls through the gift of their first menstrual blood. Menstrual blood, considered impure in everyday life, became hyper-sacred when handled by initiated women, priestesses, or sorceresses, underlining the central role of feminine magic within the Brotherhood.

5. Symbolism and contemporary practices: vital energy and blood rites

In the Order of the Red Dragon and the Brotherhood of the Black Waters, blood was never used in a criminal manner, but as a symbolic and energetic vector. Adepts consider that blood contains a subtle essence capable of circulating through the chakras and nourishing vital energy.

Modern esoteric writings, those of Papus and Éliphas Lévi, insist on the role of blood as an energetic catalyst in rituals. It enables the elevation of consciousness, the establishment of

a link with spiritual entities, and the strengthening of the capacities of perception and inner transformation. Accusations of bloodthirsty practices therefore do not reflect the reality of the rites, but constitute a social and ideological mechanism aimed at demonising the secrecy and sacrality of these societies.

6. Symbolic and energetic interpretation of blood

Blood, whether menstrual or voluntarily offered, constitutes in these rites a central vector of life force, a mediating element between man and the divine. It embodies life, energy, and the power of inner transformation. In Thraco-Dacian traditions, it symbolises communication with Zalmoxis, the consolidation of alliances, and the participation of initiates in cosmic forces. In the modern societies studied, it becomes an energetic support and a tool of inner magic, reinterpreting ancestral practices through the prism of European occultism and esotericism.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Order of the Red Dragon and the Brotherhood of the Black Waters reveals a complex interaction between ancient legacies, symbolic practices, and social myths. Blood plays a central role in the constitution of these rites, not as a criminal agent, but as a vector of vital energy and spiritual connection. The criminal accusations that have surrounded these societies bear witness to mechanisms of demonisation linked to fear of secrecy and the sacred. Understanding these practices in their historical, archaeological, and symbolic context makes it possible to rehabilitate their initiatory and energetic dimension, showing that the fascination with blood stems as much from the imagination as from the reality of the rites.