

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY  
&  
INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY, YEREVAN**

**EIGHTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON  
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**



**FIGHTING DRAGONS AND MONSTERS:  
HEROIC MYTHOLOGY**

**PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS**

**May 24-26, 2014  
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of  
Sciences of the Republic of Armenia**

**Conference Venues:**

**Mesrop Mashtots Institute of  
Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran)  
&  
University Guest House**

# PROGRAM

**SATURDAY, MAY 24**

**Mesrop Mashtots Institute of  
Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran)  
53 Mashtots Avenue, Yerevan**

**10:00 – 10:20** PARTICIPANTS REGISTRATION

**10:20 – 10:30** OPENING ADDRESS

ARMEN PETROSYAN

*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan, Armenia*

## **SATURDAY MORNING SESSION**

**CHAIR: ARMEN PETROSYAN**

**10:30 – 11:00** YURI BEREZKIN  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
SERPENT THAT CLOSED SOURCES OF WATER AND SERPENT THAT  
DEVOUR NESTLINGS OF GIANT BIRD: ASSESSMENT OF THE AGE OF  
THE EURASIAN TRADITION BASED ON COMPARISON WITH AMERICAN  
DATA

**11:00 – 11:30** JESPER NIELSEN  
CHRISTOPHE HELMKE  
*The Institute for Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of  
Copenhagen, Denmark*  
BATTLING THE GREAT BIRD: HEROES AND CREATION MYTHS  
IN PRE-COLUMBIAN MESOAMERICA

**11:30 – 12:00** **Coffee Break**

**12:00 – 12:30** PAOLO BARBARO  
*EPHE, France*  
INSPIRATION IN COMPARISON: REFLECTIONS AND NEW  
PERSPECTIVES ON THE EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE JAPANESE  
MYTH OF SUSANOO FIGHTING THE DRAGON

**12:30 – 13:00** HITOSHI YAMADA  
*Tohoku University, Japan*  
HERO'S SECRET: "DONKEY'S EARS" LEGENDS IN EURASIA AND THEIR  
DIFFUSION TO EAST ASIA

**13:00 – 13:30** KAZUO MATSUMURA  
*Wako University, Japan*  
HEROIC SWORD GOD: A POSSIBLE EURASIAN ORIGIN OF JAPANESE  
MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIF

**13:30 – 14:45** Lunch Break

**14:45 – 16:00** Excursion to the collection of Matenadaran

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION**

**CHAIR: LEVON ABRAHAMIAN**

**16:00 – 16:30** ROBERT MILLER  
*The Catholic University of America, USA*  
BAAL, ST. GEORGE, AND EL-KHADER: LEVANTINE DRAGONSLAYERS

**16:30 – 17:00** VLADIMIR V. EMELIANOV  
*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*  
SUMERIAN *ME* AND VEDIC *MAYA*: MAGIC FORCE OF THE DRAGON  
SLAYER

**17:00 – 17:30** MIQAYEL BADALYAN  
*Historico-Archaeological Museum-Reserve “Erebuni”, Armenia*  
URARTIAN HALDI, MESOPOTAMIAN NINURTA, AND ARMENIAN  
VAHAGN

**18:00 – Reception**

**Aragast Café**  
**41 Isahakyan St.,**  
**Yerevan**

## **SUNDAY, MAY 25**

### **University Guest House 52 Mashtots Avenue, Yerevan**

#### **SUNDAY MORNING SESSION**

**CHAIR: YURI BEREZKIN**

**09:30 – 10:00**     **MARIA V. STANYUKOVICH**  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
**FLYING MONSTERS OF THE MOUNTAINS AND OTHER  
MYTHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WILD WATER BUFFALOES IN  
PHILIPPINE EPICS**

**10:00 – 10:30**     **STEVE FARMER**  
*The Cultural Modeling Research Group, California, USA*  
**BRAIN RESEARCH AND GLOBAL MYTHOLOGIES: THE CASE OF HERO,  
DRAGON, AND MONSTER MYTHS**

**10:30 – 11:00**     **LEVON ABRAHAMIAN**  
*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan, Armenia*  
**ARA DEMIRKHANIAN**  
*Institute of Arts, Yerevan, Armenia*  
**THE TWIN MYTH ON THE FIRST TWINS: PROBLEMS OF  
RECONSTRUCTION AND INTERPRETATION**

**11:00 – 11:30     Coffee Break**

**11:30 – 12:00**     **ARSEN BOBOKHYAN**  
*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan, Armenia*  
**ALESSANDRA GILIBERT**  
**PAVOL HNILA**  
*Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Altorientalistik, Germany*  
**DRAGON-STONES OF ARMENIA: FROM ARCHAEOLOGY TO  
MYTHOLOGY**

**12:00 – 12:30**     **HASMIK HMAYAKYAN**  
*Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, Armenia*  
**THE GODDESSES OF ARTAMET**

**12:30 – 14:30     Lunch Break**

**[Business Lunch for IACM Officers, Directors and Conference Organizers]**

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION**

**CHAIR: BORIS OGUIBÉNINE**

- 14:30 – 15:00**     ATTILA MÁTÉFFY  
*Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey*  
THE FIGHT AND MARRIAGE OF THE HERO WITH THE DAUGHTER OF  
THE DRAGON KING
- 15:00 – 15:30**     ARMEN PETROSYAN  
*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan, Armenia*  
INDO-EUROPEAN \*WEL- IN ARMENIAN MYTHOLOGY
- 15:30 – 16:00**     MICHAEL WITZEL  
*Harvard University, USA*  
DRAGONS IN BACTRIA AND SEISTAN

## MONDAY, MAY 26

### University Guest House 52 Mashtots Avenue, Yerevan

#### MONDAY MORNING SESSION

CHAIR: KAZUO MATSUMURA

**09:30 – 10:00**     MARCIN LISIECKI  
*Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland*  
THE WAWEL DRAGON IN CHRONICA POLONORUM. MYTHOLOGICAL  
SOURCES AND REFERENCE TO POLISH CULTURE

**10:00 – 10:30**     BOJANA RADOVANOVIC  
*University of Wien, Austria; University of Belgrade, Serbia*  
THE SLAVIC AND INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND  
OF THE SERBIAN FOLKTALE *BAŠ ČELIK*

**10:30 – 11:00**     BORIS OGUIBÉNINE  
*University of Strasbourg, France*  
NEW LIGHT ON SOVIJ AND SAVITAR

**11:00 – 11:30**     **Coffee Break**

**11:30 – 12:00**     YAROSLAV VASSILKOV  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON INDIAN AND MESOPOTAMIAN FLOOD  
MYTHS

**12:00 – 12:30**     NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA  
*Harvard University, USA*  
ATYPICAL DRAGON-SLAYERS IN INDIAN AND SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY

**12:30 – 14:00**     **Lunch Break**

**MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION**

**CHAIR: MICHAEL WITZEL**

- 14:00 – 14:30**      LOUISE MILNE  
*University of Edinburgh, UK*  
THE HERO, THE MONSTER AND THE NIGHTMARE
- 14:30 – 15:00**      JONAS WELLENDORF  
*UC Berkeley, USA*  
TROLLS, TOMB RAIDERS, AND BATTLES NOT WORTH FIGHTING IN  
NORSE TRADITION
- 15:00 – 15:30**      YURI KLEINER  
*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*  
GERMANIC DRAGONS: MYTHOLOGICAL OR HEROIC?
- 15:30 – 16:00**      GENERAL DISCUSSION & CONCLUDING REMARKS

**18:00 – Conference Dinner**

**TUESDAY, MAY 27**

**10:00 Bus Excursion to the Temple of Garni and the Monastery of  
Geghard**

# ABSTRACTS

## THE TWIN MYTH ON THE FIRST TWINS: PROBLEMS OF RECONSTRUCTION AND INTERPRETATION

LEVON ABRAHAMIAN

*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan, Armenia*

&

ARA DEMIRKHANIAN

*Institute of Arts, Yerevan, Armenia*

In the paper, we will present a myth, or rather a mythologem, on twins related with some vegetative motif. This myth on twins is itself a twin myth, with two parallel versions forming a pair – the heroes of one version are opposed brothers and the heroes of the other version – incestuous brother and sister. Fighting brothers is a universal motif, but we will discuss only those cases, where the deadly fight gives rise to a kind of a plant, a sprout, a tree – ideally arbor mundis. While incestuous siblings die giving rise to a specific plant on their grave or are related in one way or another with a tree. Prima facie we have a particular line of universal motif of fighting brothers and incestuous siblings, but a more attentive observation and comparative analysis shows that this line is much more wide, involving such seemingly remote topics as fairy-tale third/seventh brother's opposition to his elder brothers (with an important dragon fight in underworld and tree-related rising to our world) or original sin at the tree of the knowledge.

The two versions of the twin myth often form hybrid variations – about two brothers and their sister, such hybrid versions found in different loci of the world – from the Seram myth about such sibling triad to the paired myth on Osiris and Seth and on Osiris and Isis. The focus of the paper will be on the dragon/serpent code of the twin myth: the fight of twin brothers transforming into the dragon fight and incestuous marriage into the search for the snake-bride. We will discuss also the possible reasons of the persistence of the twin myth on twins, the ways of its transformation and relation to such constructs as Tree of Life and arbor mundi.

## URARTIAN HALDI, MESOPOTAMIAN NINURTA, AND ARMENIAN VAHAGN

MIQAYEL BADALYAN

*Historico-Archaeological Museum-Reserve "Erebuni"*

In our paper we attempt to make some comparison between some of the aspects of the above-mentioned three deities. Their cult was associated respectively with the Urartian, Neo-Assyrian and Armenian royal ideologies and monarchs. They were also represented as young heroes and warriors, depicted or mentioned (Armenian Vahagn) in running posture. Both Ninurta and Vahagn were considered as slayers of chaotic forces and "reconstitutors" of cosmic order. In all probability, a similar motif existed also in Urartian religious ideology.



In this respect the Urartian rock-cut niches with cuneiform inscriptions called “gates of Haldi” (Ashotakert, Mheri Dur) are noteworthy. In the beginning of the Mheri Dur inscription, where the Urartian gods and their sacrificed animals are listed, the Urartian monarch Ishpuini and his son Menua made an order to organize some rituals in the month of the Urartian Sungod. In all likelihood this time of the year coincides with the Areg (sun) month of the ancient Armenian calendar and corresponds to April. We suggest that in Urartian religious worldview, the long and severe winters of Armenian Highland were associated with chaos. This time corresponded to the disappearance of Haldi and his journey to the Underworld (invisible god, entrance to the rock). Haldi’s comeback and appearance from the rock-cut “gate” might symbolize his victory against the forces of darkness and reconstitution of the Cosmic order.

## **INSPIRATION IN COMPARISON: REFLECTIONS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE EXISTING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE JAPANESE MYTH OF SUSANOO FIGHTING THE DRAGON**

**PAOLO BARBARO**  
*EPHE, France*

The Japanese myth of Susanoo slaying the eight-headed monster, which has been recorded for the first time during the eighth century, has been analyzed and interpreted by a great number of prestigious scholars, with disagreeing results. The existing theories could be classified in three major groups: (1) the nativist perspectives, sustaining – in the best case – an autonomous development of the myth, as well as the symbolic representation of archaic history in myth; (2) the Indo-European contribution, according to which Indo-European myths made their way to Japan from Central Asia; and (3) the Laurasian theory. It is evident that these interpretations are not always mutually exclusive.

It is also a well-known fact that the Indo-European explanations are quantitatively predominant and probably the most popular among Japanese scholars. This is mainly due to the fact that they’ve been sustained by leading scholars both in the west and in Japan: Dumézil and Scott Littleton are probably the most known scholars to have treated the subject in western languages. With greater knowledge of the sources as well as of the cultural context, the myth of Susanoo slaying the dragon has also caught the attention of some of the most inspired and influential Japanese scholars of compared mythology, such as Yoshida Atsuhiko and Ōbayashi Taryō. Yet, contradictions and flaws in the Indo-European contribution theories are not rare. On the other hand, very few Japanese scholars (or western scholars with a linguistic competence) sustain the Laurasian theory, which could explain some of the flaws.

A critical and compared overview of existing theories and researches is therefore both necessary and inspiring to point future research toward specific aims and methods, namely linguistic research and Shinto studies: the first steps into that direction have been taken with promising results.

# **SERPENT THAT CLOSED SOURCES OF WATER AND SERPENT THAT DEVOUR NESTLINGS OF GIANT BIRD: ASSESSMENT OF THE AGE OF THE EURASIAN TRADITION BASED ON COMPARISON WITH AMERICAN DATA.**

**YURI BEREZKIN**

*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,  
St. Petersburg, Russia*

The assessment of the time of appearance (better say, terminus post quem) of mythologemes is possible thanks to comparison of their areas in the Old and in the New World. Both the time of the peopling of America and the time after which distant migrations across Beringia / Bering strait became unlikely are basically known. Therefore the existence of the similar motifs (and particularly sets of motifs) with similar geographic distribution in Eurasia and America provide a basis for the hypothesis that such motifs already existed in Eurasia as early as 18-10,000 B.P. cal. More precise chronological assessments depend on the particular arrangement of the areas in question (in South or in North America, in the North American Northwest, West or Southeast, in Northern or in Southern Siberia, etc.).

Two Eurasian motifs related to the theme of the struggle with dragons and serpents find parallels in America.

The motif “Hero helps the nestlings” (K38 in my catalogue) which is mostly combined with the motif of “Snake threatens nestlings” (K38B) is found in Eurasia across the Steppe zone from the Balkans to Manchuria as well as in South Asia, Tibet, Middle Volga, Iran and Asia Minor (fig. 1). The westernmost areas where it has been recorded are Malta, Algeria and Bohemia. These motifs are definitely absent in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, Oceania, Australia, sub-Saharan Africa as well as in Northeast Siberia. My two motifs combined (K38 + K38B) correspond to the tale-type 301E in the Iranian folklore index (Marzolph 1984). In other indexes, including ATU (Uther 2004) they are not defined and selected. The earliest known Eurasian text that contains the K38 episode is the Sumerian “Lugalbanda and the Anzu bird” but it does not contain the episode of slaying of the aggressive snake (king Lugalbanda only feeds and “decorates” the nestling). However, because the corresponding texts of American Indians, in particular the inhabitants of the Great Plains, do contain this episode combined with the motif of a hero killing the monstrous reptile, there remains no much doubt that the snake-slaying heroic myth had emerged not in the late III millennium B.C. but much earlier, in the terminal Paleolithic if not earlier. At this time it had to be spread across Southern Siberia where one of the “homelands” of the American Indians is usually localized and where most of the parallels for the Great Plains Indians’ texts were recorded in the 19th and 20th centuries. Almost all traces of this myth in Northeast Asia and in Northwest North America were wiped out by the subsequent waves of migrants. The only possible relict is the story recorded among the Chukotka Eskimo (Menovschikov 1985, no. 41: 97-101), though the possibility of the later borrowing is not here completely excluded. No direct evidence exists to define the western limit for these cluster of motifs in Paleolithic Eurasia but the early spread till the Caucasus looks plausible. This story about the hero, the bird and the reptile came to the Great Plains across Yukon and Mackenzie valleys. The

so-called Mackenzie corridor became suitable for habitation ca. 12-11,000 B.P. cal. Like the Athabaskan migration from Yukon that reached the Southwest at about A.D. 1500, this prehistoric migration left no archaeological traces but its traces in folklore are well visible.

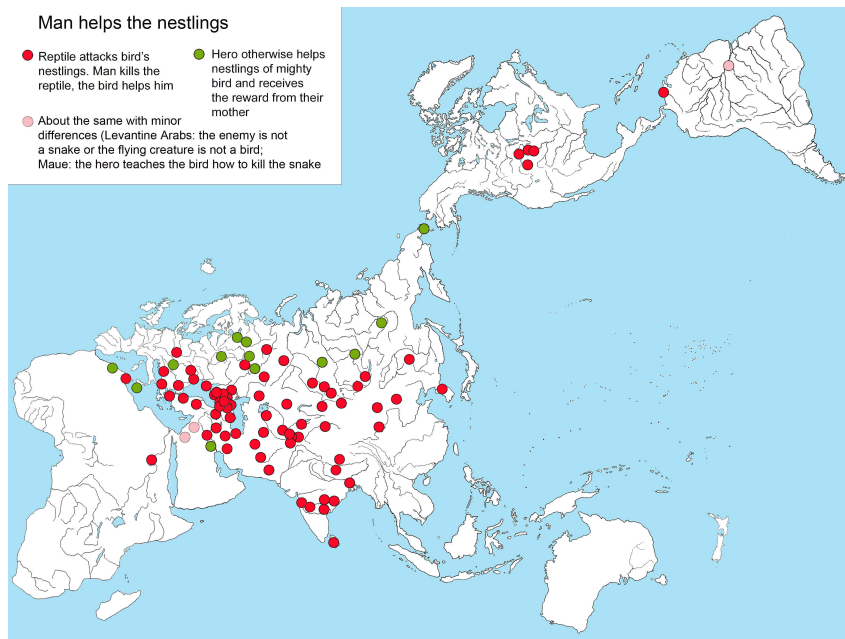


Fig. 1

The situation with the motif K38D (a demonic person or creature closes the sources of water) is more complicated (fig. 2). In about 50 percent of the cases it is combined with K38+K38B. Just as these motifs, it is absent in Western Europe and is most popular in the Caucasus. However the areas of K38+K38B and of K38D do not completely overlap. The Siberian version of K38D is unique, peculiar and recorded not in the Altai-Sayan zone but among the Kets. There are important Vedic data for South Asia but this motif, unlike K38+K38B, is practically absent in the late folklore of the region. Only one text of southern Munda (the Sora) which is a trickster tale and not a heroic myth begins with a story about a crocodile that does not let people to drink from a pond. It is possible that the South Asian folklore traditions did not acquired the Indo-Aryan story about the struggle of Indra with Vritra just because such a tale had no counterpart in the local folklore. The Vedic tradition also lacks the motif of human victims sent to the dragon in exchange for the water. This motif is typical for the core area of the K38D tale (the Caucasus, the Near East, Asia Minor, Iran) and is absent in many peripheral traditions (the Mongols, Dahurs, Shans, Hausa, etc.). In Africa, especially in West Africa, the stories about a serpent that closed sources of water are rather numerous but they got there recently (the Guinea tales were most probably borrowed from the Portuguese). To sum up, I would not suggest a Paleolithic age for this (K38D) tale if we had not some American parallels.

For Indra struggle against Vritra type stories their heroic context is typical. But the very theme of the getting of the water from its original possessor is not directly related to the heroic mythology and was widely known across the circum-Pacific region. Among different possessors of the water snakes seem to be absent but frogs and toads are usual. It is not easy to select versions in which the hero overcomes

the possessor of the waters and takes the water by force from ones according to which he gets the water thanks to a stratagem. If the Eurasian heroic myth about the release of the water developed from similar undifferentiated stories it is difficult to suggest a precise epoch when the heroic myth could emerge. We can only be sure that it was before the time of the Indo-Aryan migration to South Asia.

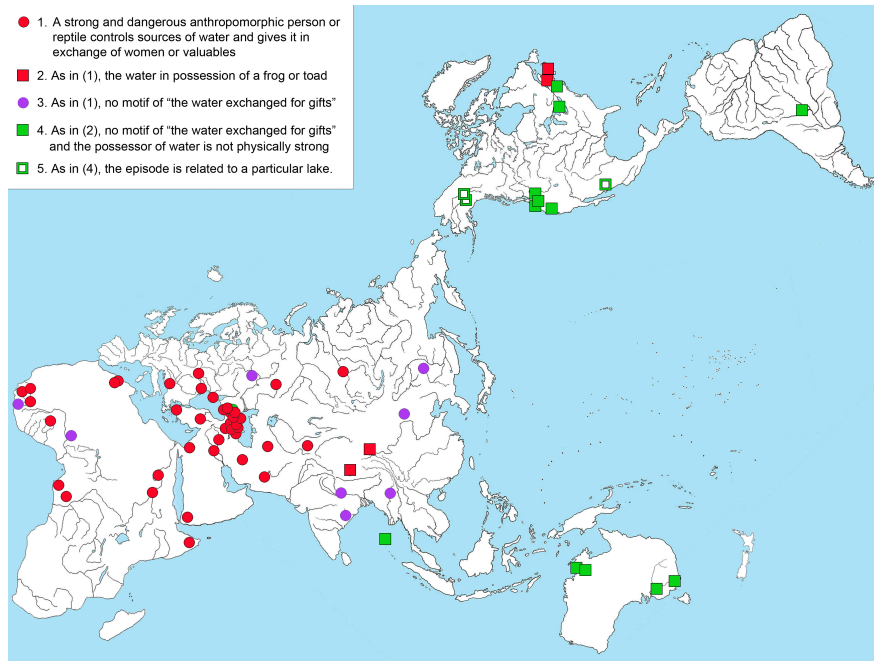


Fig. 2

Fortunately we still have an important American parallel. As it was told already, a frog swallows the water in many Amerindian stories (motif B8 in my catalogue). In Eurasia the frog is the possessor of the water in the Tibetan texts though there it does not swallow it like in America but just controls the access to springs. As about the “Hero helps the nestlings” myths, here the frog takes the place of the snake among the Mansi. In America the motif of a frog that had swallowed all the water was known in particular to the Kalapuya, Nez Perce and Tillamook of the Columbian Plateau and the adjacent part of the Pacific Coast and to the Eastern Algonkians (the Micmac, Malecite and Penobscot) and the Hurons of the American Northeast. Such a geographic distribution suggests a possible spread of this motif to the east with the proto-Algonian migration from the Plateau at about 1500 B.C. Versions recorded among the Micmac and Malecite contain important details. Firstly, the frog gives water in exchange for women. In Kalapuya stories the frog sells the water for the dentalia shells (Jacobs 1945, № 1: 135-136; Gatschet et al. 1945: 236-237; Erdoes, Ortiz 1984: 355-356). Secondly, in the Micmac and Malecite texts the frog is not just an animal but a powerful giant whom Gluskap the hero killed. It does not seem that these tales contain any European borrowings. Besides the Tibetan parallels for the Algonkian tales, we should mention the Ket version. There are no common details in the Ket and the Algonkian texts and the person who closed wells in the Ket story is not a serpent or a frog but a person, more a hero than an antagonist. At the same time just the Eastern Algonkians, the Micmac in particular, and the Kets with adjacent Siberian groups share the Cosmic Hunt story that contain detailed correspondences concerning the interpretation of the stars of the Big Dipper (Berezkin 2006). We have also parallels for this story

among the Plateau Indians. Though these Circum-Yeniseian – American links should be dated to a later time than the Great Plains – Southern Siberian links, they cannot be later than the Early Holocene. An episode with a frog that swallowed the water is also known to the Northern Athabaskans (the Han and Upper Tanana) but these texts are not related to cosmology and the swallowing of the water of a lake is but a particular episode of the struggle between a hero and his bear antagonist.

We should suggest that some heroic elements in the Eurasian story about the acquisition of the water could appear already in the Upper Paleolithic. Considering the recent areal distribution of stories related to the theme of the struggle between a hero and a monstrous serpent, the Caucasus should be suggested as a core area of their spread. However, the early elements of culture usually survive easier in the mountainous multiethnic regions than on the planes. So the Eurasian Steppe Belt can well be the real homeland for the original spread of the heroic mythology. Western Eurasia certainly was outside of this zone and the Eastern Mediterranean could be but a periphery.

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Erdoes, Richard, & Alfonso Ortiz. 1984. *American Indian Myths and Legends* selected and edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz. New York: Pantheon Books. 527 p.

Gatschet, Albert Samuel, Leo J. Frachtenberg, & Melville Jacobs. 1945. *Kalapuya Texts*. Kalapuya Texts. University of Washington Publications, Anthropology, Vol. 11. Pp. 143-369.

Jacobs, Elisabeth D., & Melville Jacobs. 1959. *Nehalem Tillamook Tales*. Recorded by Elisabeth D. Jacobs. Edited by Melville Jacobs. Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon. 216 p.

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# **DRAGON-STONES OF ARMENIA: FROM ARCHAEOLOGY TO MYTHOLOGY**

**ARSEN BOBOKHYAN**

*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan, Armenia*

**&**

**ALESSANDRA GILIBERT &**

**PAVOL HNILA**

*Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Altorientalistik, Germany*

This paper considers the question of using archaeological data as a source for mythological reconstruction, drawing attention on the Armenian monuments called by local population *višaps* ('dragons'). They are cigar-shaped, monumental stones, up to 20 feet tall, situated in the mountains – precisely, at high-altitude summer pastures of the northern regions of the Armenian Highland (province Ayrarat and adjacent areas), sometimes near the sources of rivers and lakes and ancient burial grounds. The stelae are located in flat meadows, within barrows or ritual platforms, and were used especially during the 2nd millennium BC. According to their shape and iconography, dragon-stones are divided into three types – 1. fish-shaped, 2. tetrahedral stones, carved as if the hide of a bovid had been draped or spread on them, 3. hybrids, which combine the traits of the former two.

The dragon-stones are highly symbolic artifacts, reflecting the spiritual world of the ancient population of the region. In the scientific literature, they have been interpreted as connected with mythical dragons (Atrpet, N. Marr, B. Piotrovsky), a mother goddess (M. Abeghian), the “dying and rising god” (G. Kapantsyan) and with a dragon-fighting myth (A. Mnatsakanyan, A. Petrosyan, S. Harutyunyan). A fish-shaped dragon-stone excavated by the joint Armenian-German expedition on the slopes of the mount Aragats was originally situated in an ancient cemetery, at the center of a round stone construction, as if the “dragon” had been itself formally “buried”. According to the ceramic repertoire found, the structure dates to ca. 1500 BC. Thus, it may be inferred that the dragon-stones were associated with the underworld cult.

## **SUMERIAN *ME* AND VEDIC *MAYA*: MAGIC FORCE OF THE DRAGON SLAYER**

**VLADIMIR V. EMELIANOV**

*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*

In this paper, we would like to draw attention to the phonetic and semantic similarity of the two words for magical power of the dragon slayer in Sumerian and Vedic tradition.

Throughout the last century there have been many attempts to define *ME*. We know the following translations: “Bestimmungen” (Thureau-Dangin, 1907, 89), “spezifisch göttliche Gewalt (Funktion) oder “heilige Macht” (Landsberger, 1924, 66), “göttliche Ordnungen von ewiger, unveränderlicher Geltung” (Landsberger, 1926, 369), “göttliche Kraft (Kräfte)” (Falkenstein, 1949 I, 6), “norm, manner of

creation, *modus operandi*” (Jacobsen, 1970, 359–360), “numinose Wirkkraft, numinose Macht; Numen, Numinoses” (Oberhuber, 1963, 9), “constructive principle of the world being” (Kramer, 1963, 115), ‘cultural norm or archetype, its manifestation, the process of manifestation, and its insignia” (Alster, 1975, 20). A. Zgoll knows three main aspects of ME. These are: 1) its connection to birth, growth and death; 2) forces of Nature and military power; 3) political power. She saw the origin of ME-concept in the mental act of personification and humanization of the forces of Nature (Zgoll, 1997, 66–75).

The noun ME can be derived from the verb *me* “to be apparent, to be seen, to be in someone’s real status”. All meanings of the noun *me* fall into four groups:

Group I. A distinctive feature of appearance (something that makes the object different from other similar objects): tall size, terrifying glow, fine light (as a special case – moonlight), sacred attires, a belt around the genitals, motley clothes.

Group II. Force, authority (the essence of an object that defines its influence on others and determines the sequence of its actions): a temple office, a function of a god, a function of a calendar month, authority, signs and attributes of power, construction and restoration of temples and thrones, ceremonies and rules, destiny, a command of gods, procreation of people and cattle.

Group III. An offering (that gives energy and allows the object to manifest itself in the world): shares that gods divide between themselves; rations of temple gods; rations of the gods of the Nether World.

Group IV. The world order (a set of features, objects and attributes providing correct functioning of the universe): city life, attributes of human age, home life, activities, emotions, the Tablet of Destinies.

In Sumerian epic tradition there are two versions of the Dragon myth. Both versions begin in an absolutely identical way: the young god receives from the senior god the ME’s that form the basis of his authority and life in the city entrusted to him. The first version coming from Eredu and reflected in the text “Enki and the world order”, seems to be the most archaic. During a circular tour the demiurge god distributes ME’s to younger gods. Then a war with Elam breaks out. The trophies of that war are delivered to a temple of the senior brother who grants the god-hero the right of ascension to the throne and a sacred marriage. The sacred marriage with a woman is replaced here by making the rivers fertile, while the struggle against a monster is transformed into quite a real war with an eastern neighbor.

The second version from Lagash seems to be much more poetical and fantastic. Here god-hero Ninurta struggles with a certain shapeless monster or a bird, kills the contender according to advice of his father, brings the trophies to the father, ascends to the throne and enters the sacred marriage. All Sumerian texts results in the following consecutive actions:

1. Preliminary reception of ME’s (from the senior god, or the senior brother, or an ancestor).
2. Fight for ME’s with a certain villain living in the highlands.

3. Victory over the villain and capture of trophies.
4. Solemn delivery of the trophies into a temple of the senior god (an ancestor or the entity the ME had been received from).
5. The need for authority and reception of signs of power.
6. Sacred marriage (with a woman or a river).

Both versions of Dragon myth have in ancient Mesopotamia very definite calendar connotation, expressing the transition from the chaotic state of the world at the end of the year to an ordered world in the early months of spring. The randomness of the universe connected with the strengthening of the rainy season and irregular river floods in winter, ordering corresponded with the arrival of the spring overflow and the beginning of farming.

Skr. *Māyā* also has different definitions and etymological interpretations: “supernatural power, might, ability, skill, wisdom” (RV I 65, V 85) = Av. *Māyā* “Zauberkraft” (Gathas I 110, II 48); *mā* “messen” = ausmessen, bilden, bauen; toch. B *maiyyā* “Macht, Kraft”; heth. *māi* “wachsen, gedeihen, reifen”; idg. *mā* “winken, zuwinken” (Meyrhofer, Kurzgefasstes 2, 624-625); *Māyā* (von *mā* = man, vgl. *Māti* gr. Metis) übermenschliche Weisheit oder List, göttliche Kunst oder Zauberkunst, Zauberbild, Trugbild, pl., weise oder listige Anschläge (Grassman, Rigveda 1034-1035); “*Māyā* “She who measures;” or “mirific energy.” The substance emanated from Siva through which the world of form is manifested. Hence all creation is also termed *Māyā*. It is the cosmic creative force, the principle of manifestation, ever in the process of creation, preservation and dissolution. Maya is a key concept in Hinduism, originally meaning “supernatural power; God's mirific energy,” often translated as “illusion” (Sanskrit Lexikon Page); *Māyā* “incomprehensible wisdom and power enabling its possessor, or being able itself, to create, devise, contrive, effect, or do something”; “Maya encompasses power, process and tangible result. a) power which engenders an appearance; b) the performative act of engendering an appearance; c) the resultant appearance itself” (Gonda, 1965; Goundrian, 1978, 2). The most important functions of *Māyā* in Rigveda are the following:

- Indra defeated Susna, owner of Maya, with the help of Maya (I 11 7)
- Indra overcame Maya of witches using his own Maya (I 32 4)
- Bulls capable of Maya (I 64 7)
- Purification by means of Maya (I 160 3)
- Vritra as the owner of Maya (II 11 9)
- Indra killed the serpent having Maya (II 11 5)
- Strengthening of heaven and earth with the help of Maya (II 17 5)
- Agni has numerous forces of Maya (III 20 3)
- Maya as the source of Indra’s transformation (III 34 3)
- Owners of Maya gave the appearance to a bull and a cow by fitting qualities (III 38 7)
- Maya around the body allows gods to purchase many images (III 53 8)
- great Maya of Mitra and Varuna allows them to change the time (III 61 7; cf. Sumerian me-mah “great ME” and mahī māyā “great Maya”).

The author of the paper came to conclusion that in the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. on the territory between the southern part of Mesopotamia and Indus valley there was common epic tradition, with probable borrowing of words



and plots, as well as with identical representations of climatic and military events in the mountain region of Zagros. In my Russian article about the Dragon myth in cuneiform texts I divide it on two stages: a) battle with mountains (Ninurta, since the middle 3rd mil.); b) battle with water monsters (esp. with sea-monsters) (Marduk, Baal, Tarhunus, since the middle 2th mil.) (Emelianov, 2006). So, it would be possible to suppose that Vedic story of Indra's battle with Vritra also is the example of the first stage of the Dragon myth.

## **BRAIN RESEARCH AND GLOBAL MYTHOLOGIES: THE CASE OF HERO, DRAGON, AND MONSTER MYTHS**

**STEVE FARMER**

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Remarkable similarities show up in hero, dragon/serpent, and monster myths in civilizations widely separated in space and time in premodern Africa, Eurasia, Oceania, Australia, and North, Central, and South America. Establishing genuine historical links between outwardly similar myths requires the development of rigorous methods to distinguish similarities involving direct or indirect transmissions from those emerging from neurobiological processes or from oral/literate transformations that over long periods change myths in predictably convergent directions. This paper expands on this issue by reviewing recent brain studies that throw light on global similarities in myths that show up often even when long-range transmissions seem impossible. Special attention is paid to recent brain-imaging studies that suggest how perceptual responses are similarly altered by behaviorally evoked waking-visions, the ingestion of hallucinogenic drugs, the emergence of common psychoses, and by other dream-like states known from extensive ethnographical data to be involved globally in myth generation. Examples are given from those studies of why we can expect hybrid monsters, including those with serpent- or snake-like elements, and other common features of myths to emerge from these altered perceptual states. The talk ends with a discussion of how neurobiology can help rigorously test claims of global transmissions in myths even in the face of the dirty literate, ethnographic, and computational data typically employed in comparative mythology, expanding on a theme introduced in the first official meeting of this forum in Edinburgh in 2007 (<http://www.safarmer.com/Indo-Eurasian/Farmer.Edin.abstract.pdf>).

## **SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE URARTIAN PANTHEON AND MYTHOLOGY**

**YERVAND GREKYAN**

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The Hurrian pantheon has little in common with the Urartian, in spite of the fact that the Hurrian and the Urartian are related languages. Only the name of the thunder/storm god is shared by both Urartian and Hurrian pantheons (Urart. Teišheba, Hurrian Teššub).

The second anomaly in Urartian pantheon is the huge number of divine names inscribed in the sacrificial list of the inscription of Mheri duř (Turk. Meher kapısı), seventy in number (including some deified manifestations of different aspects of Haldi, chief god of the pantheon). The Hurrian deities, known from the state and local pantheons of the Hurrian realm, are noticeably lesser in number.

The consideration of the Urartian pantheon lead us to think that the number of the Urartian deities was also limited and that the Mheri duř inscription included also many non-Urartian deities from various regions of the Urartian empire. Probably, only a dozen gods were in reality worshipped by the Urartians.

The number and characteristic features of those gods are quite comparable with those of the Hurrians. Besides, there is a good ground to think, that the cult centers of the Urartian gods share almost the same regions with the Hurrians, somewhere in the southern areas of the Armenian Highland, where the city of Kumme/Qumenu, cult center of Teřřub/Teiřeba lied.

This leads us to make another suggestion. Although it has no any text on Urartian mythology, one can think about the existence of a circle of myths centered around the god Teiřeba (associated with those of Teřřub). Moreover, it is possible to identify the Urartian god Quera with the Hurrian Kumar(bi). If so, the names of the cities Querai taře and Taře in Urartu may infer that the Hurrian Kumarbi-Tařša cycle of myths could have been known in Urartu as well. It seems that there is a soft light to lead us towards the mysteries of the Urartian mythology.

## **THE GODDESSES OF ARTAMET**

**HASMIK HMAYAKYAN**  
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The village of Artamet of the historical Armenia (on the south-eastern shores of the Lake Van) in various periods has related to a number of goddesses and their epicized figures. According to the historical sources, Artamet has been built by King Artashes as his summer quarters where he spent his honeymoon with the Alanian princess Sat'enik. This figure directly relates to the central heroine of the Caucasus epic Satana. In oral tradition Sat'enik was correlated with Shamiram (Greek Semiramis) and a number of legends concerning her are located in Artamet.

The character of Shamiram, legendary queen of Nineveh, originates back to Iřtar-řawuřka, goddess of Nineveh, the Armenian parallel of which is the love goddess Astlik. It is not occasional that King Artashes erects Astlik's statue in Artamet. And it is probable that the toponym Artamet relates to the name of Artemis. Artemis displays direct and mediated links with the above deities. There exists a parallel in cults of both goddesses – two famous Greek and Armenian legends of bathing of Artemis and Astlik. These legends share evident common content that will be discussed in detail in our report. The analysis of mythological, folkloristic and ethnographical material enables us to suggest that all these figures trace back to the figure of the ancient Mother goddess, in the cult of which we want to single out the

motives of punishment of the youths because of seeing the nudity of the goddess during her ritual bathing, and the sacrifice of hair.

## **GERMANIC DRAGONS: MYTHOLOGICAL OR HEROIC?**

**YURI KLEINER**

*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*

The two versions of the dragon/serpent-fight motif in the Germanic tradition correspond to two types of narratives, mythological and heroic, with two different dragon-slayers (Þór, the Thunder God and Sigurðr, Beowulf), and their adversaries, the Eddic *Miðgarðsormr* 'the World Serpent', and the *orm* of the *Eddas* and *Völsungasaga*, formerly a human-being. The latter may be true of the *wyrm/draca* in *Beowulf* (cf. Grendel, another supernatural creature, described as *wer* 'man' in *Beow.* 105).

A possible link between the Eddic water-dweller *Jörmungandr*, and the hoard guardian of the *Eddas* and *Völsungasaga* is through gold associated with flame and water, cf. kennings: flame of sea, wave(s), etc.: *sunds-/a-*, *brims-*, *unna-* 'of water, sea, wave' + *bál* 'bonfire'.

A similar pattern in (a) mythological narratives (death of both adversaries followed by the end of the world, *Ragnarøkkr*) and (b) *Beowulf* (death of the adversaries and the end of the dynasty and the tribe) may go back to the same Ur-Myth, being its direct reflection in (a) and adaptation in accordance with new poetic themes and poetics generally in (b).

The evolution, from epic/saga to the romance of rescuing the princess and treasure-hunt, with the evil tribute-demanding dragon of the *zmej* type (*Hürnen Seyfert*), demonstrates the decline of the motif and of the dragon-slaying tradition as a whole.

## **THE WAWEL DRAGON IN CHRONICA POLONORUM. MYTHOLOGICAL SOURCES AND REFERENCE TO POLISH CULTURE**

**MARCIN LISIECKI**

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The main purpose of this paper is analysis of myths about dragons in Polish culture. The most popular example is myth about the Wawel Dragon (*Smok Wawelski*), which was described in two medieval chronicles: *Chronicles of the Kings and Princes of Poland (Chronica seu originale regum et principum Poloniae, 1202)* and *Chronicle of Poland (Kronika polska, 1597)*.

The case of the Wawel Dragon is unique because it is the oldest and most frequently reproduced one in popular culture in the contemporary Poland. First of all, the story in both chronicles has different plots and meanings, which may indicate its

Slavs and Christian sources and also connections with Polish politics as well as with national identity. For this reason we can enumerate three problems, such as:

- quarrel between Prince Krak and the Wawel Dragon in context of Slavs mythology;
- Christian sources of quarrel between two sons of Prince Krak;
- slaying the dragon by sons of Prince Krak in *Chronica Poloniae* or Prince Krak in *Kronika polska* as an example of political myth.

The Wawel Dragon, in the contemporary Polish culture, is one of the best known creatures, which is still popular in stories for children, animation and as a toy. Furthermore, in Slavs culture there are three kind of creatures: dragon (*smok, drak, дракон*), basilisk (*bazyli szek, bazilišek, басилиск*) and Slavs dragon (*žmij, zmej, змей*). It should be emphasized that concept of “dragon” and “Slavs dragon” has been mixed in the Wawel Dragon, which is currently connected with the Western legend and myths. Therefore the Wawel Dragon is interesting not only as mythical relict but also as an important example of the changes that occur in the mythological stories in the contemporary Poland.

## **THE FIGHT AND MARRIAGE OF THE HERO WITH THE DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON KING**

**ATTILA MÁTÉFFY**

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This paper focuses on a common episode of some Central Eurasian heroic epics – the different variations of the North Caucasian Nart Epic and the Mongolian version of the Gesar Epic. The core of the episode is the hunt of the protagonist, where the hero tries to bring down the marvelous deer that appears in front of them. Later it turns out that this animal is actually not a deer, but the daughter of a foreign king (Thompson D114.1.1.1./2.), while in the Mongolian Gesar Epic she is the daughter of the Dragon King and sister of the powerful Monster. The figure of the Dragon King from the Gesar Epic corresponds with the Sea-God (Donbetyr) in the Ossetian Nart Epic.

Although the Gesar Saga is of Tibetan origin, the main motifs and characters of the Chapter VI are not Tibetan but clearly of steppe (Irano-Turkic) origins: two heroes, hunting, the fleeing wondrous deer, traces leading to the castle, where the chased animal is no longer waiting for its' pursuers in the shape of a deer, but as a woman, marriage. In the Mongolian text (1716, Beijing) of oral inspiration the Monsters' sister, that is the daughter of the Dragon King has fathoms-long bushy eyebrows hanging from her eyes, her flat breasts are fluttering her knees, and she is snarling her teeth. Her description and actions show that she is a monster herself.

With the methods of comparative motif analysis I intend to prove, that even if the figures of the Monsters' sister and the Dragon King are originated from the Buddhist culture, their mythical function is inherited from the origin myths, and later from the heroic epic of the Central Eurasian steppe region.

# HEROIC SWORD GOD: A POSSIBLE EURASIAN ORIGIN OF JAPANESE MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIF

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The basic structure of Japanese mythology is designed in tripartite divisions whose main characters are the three divinities: 1) Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess; 2) Susanowo, the Violent Warrior; and 3) Ohokuni-nushi, the Great Landlord. According to my teachers Atshuhiko Yoshida and Taryo Obayashi, this structure was brought into Japan by nomadic tribes through the Korean Peninsula during the Tumulus period (3rd to 6th century PE, but the assumed intrusion was most likely in the 5th century).

There are several myths related to swords and heroes in Japanese mythology:

- 1) Susanowo kills the Eight-headed dragon and discovers a sword in its tail. This sword, called Kusanagi, was first presented to Amaterasu and then to a tragic hero Yamato-takeru. The sword is said to be one of three imperial regalias.
- 2) When Amaterasu sends her grandson Ninigi from heaven as ruler of the land, she first dispatches two sword gods Takemikazuchi and Futunushi. They take the forms of swords and demand that Ohokuni-nushi surrender the land to the heavenly prince Ninigi.
- 3) There is a story about the Korean prince Ameno Hiboko (“The sun-spear of Heaven”) who came to Japan. One of his treasures was a short sword. The story says that this sword was worshiped as a divinity in a shrine.
- 4) The tragic hero Yamato-takeru had been sent by his father, Emperor Keiko, to various disobedient territories. With the help of the sword Kusanagi which was given to him by his aunt Yamato-hime who was serving as a priestess of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, he successfully conquers the enemies. When in the end he goes to conquer a mountain god without the sword, however, he is utterly defeated and dies. The story thus tells of the importance of a sword for a hero.

Archaeological excavations also show the importance of iron swords: During the tumulus period, the power of the great king (later emperor) expanded greatly. For instance swords with the name of Wakatake (=Emperor Yuryaku) have been excavated from the central part of the main island Honshu and from the southern island of Kyushu. Unification of the country is suggested to have taken place through symbolic iron swords.

These stories and archaeological excavation reports indicate that the introduction of metallurgy from the continent and subsequent production of iron weapons resulted in 1) the unification of the country by a great king, 2) the construction of huge tumuli by the ruling class to show their prestige, and 3) the worship of the iron sword and related myths about its power.

Such worship of iron swords is told about the Scythians by Herodotus. In the Arthurian legends, the sword Excalibur is the source of the power and prestige of King Arthur. When he dies the sword is taken back by the Lady of the Lake.

Another teacher of mine, late Scott Littleton, suggested that the worship of the iron sword as a divinity spread from the Scythians to both ends of the Eurasian continent, west to the Celts and east to the Japanese. I think this hypothesis could be supported by both mythology and ritual.

## **BAAL, ST. GEORGE, AND EL-KHADER: LEVANTINE DRAGONSLAYERS**

**ROBERT MILLER**

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The Canaanite myth of Baal's defeat of the dragon Yamm -- and the Hittite myths upon which it builds -- formed the basis for later myths ranging from the Greek Typhon to the legends of St. George, the paradigmatic Christian dragon-slayer. The cult of St. George has been very popular in the southern Levant, where legends of St. George merged with stories about Elijah and with the Islamic figure of "El-Khader." A few scholars have speculated that Levantine shrines of El-Khader might preserve the locations of Hellenistic and even Canaanite shrines of Baal, but without any research into these connections. This essay examines the relationship between Baal and St. George/El-Khader, with primary emphasis on locations of cultic continuity.

The nature of St. George veneration in the Levant is the starting point, along with discussion of the enigmatic El-Khader, the Islamic Green Man. Focus is then turned to specific groupings of Syro-Palestinian George/Khader shrines, which cluster around a few key mountains. Examination of ancient Near Eastern texts and of the archaeology of these sites, some based on my own work with the remains, establishes fascinating chains of cultic continuity stretching at times as far back as the Canaanite Baal. Conclusions about the paths of mythic development and borrowing explain the reasons for both this continuity and the origins of George's dragon myth.

## **THE HERO, THE MONSTER, AND THE NIGHTMARE**

**LOUISE MILNE**

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At some point in the Bronze Age, the evolving figure of the heroic warrior draws together what were already some very old components: hybrid animal imagery, metaphoric identifications between men and predator animals, and a rhetoric of commotion associated with ecstatic ritual. In visual art, we see a particular image-constellation wherein man and monster are interlocked: variants may represent a fight between hero and monster, or a supernatural attack in a dream or vision, or a creature with a double identity, or a moment of transformation (in ritual dance, for example). We find hero, nightmare and monster recognizably interwoven in art, myth, dream representation, hero-tale and folk-culture, briefly moving to center

stage in Renaissance art and thought. The constellation developed in different ways, in tales of the warrior's animal alter ego (e.g. the berserker), in the symbolism of war as emotional catharsis, in the figuration of panic, and as conventions for representing hostile dreams. Comparing imagery from anthropological, archaeological, art historical, literary and folkloric sources, this paper first establishes the marked elasticity, tenacity and longevity of the hero-nightmare-monster cultural package, and then shows how, over many generations, the status of the constellation underwent shifts in emphasis and internal rearrangement, eventually coming to be understood in primarily psychological rather than supernatural terms.

## **BATTLING THE GREAT BIRD: HEROES AND CREATION MYTHS IN PRE-COLUMBIAN MESOAMERICA**

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Mythic narratives occupy a privileged position in human cultures, and relate not only the creation of the world, plants, animals and people, but also the origin of social values, hierarchies, rituals and institutions. In this paper we provide a discussion of a particular mythic motif, involving the defeat of a giant monstrous bird, with solar attributes, at the hands of a culture hero or heroic twins. While we will focus on identifying the distribution of this motif across Mesoamerican cultures in text as well as in imagery, including those of the Maya and the central Mexican metropolis of Teotihuacan, it bears remarking that similar motifs, occur among Amerindian cultures in both North and South America. Together this collection of myths can be ascribed to a series of mythic cycles, wherein culture heroes set out to vanquish monsters and make the world a place suitable for the creation of humanity. This includes the release of, or access to, a series of cultural elements that was considered necessary for the rise of civilized life. In addition, Mesoamerican royal lineages sought to demonstrate an ancestral link between these primordial monster-slayers and their own dynastic founders. Thus, the mythic heroes were also the first kings. Surprisingly, several Old World myths also exhibit such remarkable structural and substantial similarities that these may point to common prehistoric origins and widespread diffusion rather than independent and coincident convergence.

## **NEW LIGHT ON SOVIJ AND SAVITAR**

**BORIS OGUIBÉNINE**

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The purpose of my paper is to analyze the relations between two Indo-European divine figures, Slavic *Sovij* (*Совиѣ*) and Vedic *Savitar*, and the Baltic linguistic data. The chief guideline of the analysis is the Indo-European etymology of the divine names (Baltic material that has been neglected in the research I am aware of).

The deeds of *Sovij* and *Savitar* acting as solar figures are centered on the conquest and (re)generation of the universe obstructed by demonic forces, i.e., dragons and other monsters. These motifs appear in the narrative material displaying *Sovij* and *Savitar*, and correspond to the general comparative perspective that frequently shows the opposition of solar and anti-solar figures the latter being represented by the dragon-like beings.

The interest of my analysis is therefore to show the previously uninvestigated relations between Slavic and Indo-Iranian myth narratives and the Baltic linguistic data.

## **INDO-EUROPEAN \*WEL- IN ARMENIAN MYTHOLOGY**

**ARMEN PETROSYAN**

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This stem is reflected in several Armenian mythological names: Angeł ‘god of otherworld’, equated with Mesopotamian Nergal (in Bible), eponym of the fortress Angeł, the burial place of early Armenian kings; Turk‘ Angeleay (‘Angeł’s Gift/Son’), ugly giant whose image is reminiscent of Polyphemus; Gełam, descendant of the mythic forefather of Armenia Hayk, eponym of Lake Gełamay (modern Sevan), Gełamay mountains, and Gełak‘uni district to the west of Sevan; Ara Gelec‘ik, descendant of the latter, last divine ethnarch of the ethnogonic myth, who had been killed in battle and then resurrected from the otherworld. Ara’s epithet Gelec‘ik ‘beautiful, handsome’ means ‘having good look’ (IE \*wel- ‘see, look’); Angeł < \*ŋ-wel- ‘invisiblsle, having no look’ (invisibility is common characteristic of the otherworld deities, cf. Greek Hades ‘invisible’ < \*ŋ-wid-); Turk‘ Angeleay’s ugliness is associated with the same meaning ‘having no/bad look’.

The unique monuments of Armenia, the višaps (‘serpent, dragon’ < Iran.) or “dragon stones” are concentrated mainly in the Gełamay Mountains and Gełak‘uni district. The two largest groups of them are located on the summit of Mt. Geł and near the Geli fortress, which allude that they had probably been called \*gel- < \*wel- before the Iranian loanword višap replaced their original Indo-European name, cf. Georg. \*gvel- ‘snake,’ from the intermediate Proto-Armenian stage of IE \*wel- (> \*gwel- > gel-) and *gwelešapi* (< *gwel-wešapi*) ‘snake-dragon’ which combines two names of the serpent.

The Armenian data can be considered as arguments for the reconstruction of IE \*wel- as the name of the otherworld and its king/ruler, the serpent, adversary of the thunder god (Puhvel, Ivanov, Toporov). On the other hand, the dragon stones of Gełak‘uni, Urtat. Ueliku-ni/hi, are comparable with Ullikummi, the stone giant, adversary of the thunder/storm god in the Hurrian mythology (-ni, -hi and -mmi are Hurro-Urartian suffixes), which show the areal associations of IE \*wel-.



## **THE SLAVIC AND INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SERBIAN FOLKTALE *BAŠ ČELIK***

**BOJANA RADOVANOVIC**

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The motif of the “iron man” appears in several Serbian folktales, most prominently in the Serbian folktale *Baš Čelik*, which has preserved some of the elements protruding from the Slavic pagan Pantheon. This paper will thus seize the opportunity to examine the extent of Indo-European mythological patterns and origin hidden in the attributes of *Baš Čelik*, one of the main characters of the homonymous folktale. A winged dragon-like creature, intrinsically linked with heroic initiation, beneath whose name (srb. *čelik* = steal) lies the direct possible relation to the ancient Slav deity, *Svarog* (linked to Hephaestus by Malalas’ Chronicle, and to more ancient Iranian *Varagna*). According to some hypotheses, the connections between the Slavic *Svarog* and Iranian birth-shaped and man-shaped mythological hero is observable in Slavic *Rarog*, Czech *Rarach* and Russian *Rarashek*, accompanied by the similar set of distinctive features (ornithomorphic aspect, fiery nature, whirlwind, transformations). The emphasis will be to trace this thread up to the Serbian *Baš Čelik*.

## **FLYING MONSTERS OF THE MOUNTAINS AND OTHER MYTHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF WILD WATER BUFFALOES IN PHILIPPINE EPICS**

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Philippine oral epics are abundant in heroic scenes of fighting multi-headed singing serpents, gigantic flying manta rays and sharks inhabiting sea shores as well as the thickets of tropical forests. The heroes defeat various kinds of monstrous beasts that combine features of dragons, crocodiles, horses, apes and humans.

Far from being the most picturesque and famous among those creatures, wild water buffaloes are among the most interesting representative of a Filipino bestiary.

Fighting, taming or killing wild buffaloes belongs to the basics of heroic pattern throughout the archipelago, from the Tingguian (Itneg), the Ifugao and other highland groups of Luzon, to the Bicol, Visaya and the Southern traditions of the island of Mindanao. They are endowed with special powers: in some traditions buffaloes are flying monsters (Bicol); in others a buffalo is an owner of a magic stone that empowers an epic hero (Ilocano). In ‘Maharadia Lawana’, the Maranao version of Ramayana, a buffalo is also connected with a precious stone – a testicle of Raja Mangandiri. Gored out by the beast, the ‘stone’ is swallowed by a maiden who begets a monkey child – Laksamana. That Filipino-introduced episode is not to be met in the classical versions of Ramayana.

Representation of a wild buffalo as a mythological monster in Philippine folklore appears to be of special interest for a student of comparative mythology.

## **SOME OBSERVATIONS ON INDIAN AND MESOPOTAMIAN FLOOD MYTHS**

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Having taken (with the help of Yuri Berezkin's Catalogue) a bird's eye view on the distribution of various flood motifs all over the world, one can see that Indian (fixed in the Sanskrit sources) and Near Eastern (primarily Mesopotamian) flood myths contain the unique common sequence of motifs. Some points of similarity have been noticed previously, some have escaped attention of scholars until now. The measure of similarity is so high that it points to a kind of genetic connection. A link connecting the Sumero-Babylonian myth with the flood stories in Indo-Aryan, Sanskrit sources was provided probably by the civilization of the Indus Valley.

## **DRAGONS IN BACTRIA AND SEISTAN**

**MICHAEL WITZEL**

*Harvard University, USA*

The Indo-European dragon (Watkins, Fontenrose) and its Pan-Asian relations have been discussed at length (Ivanov, Lyle, Witzel). In this talk attention will be paid to the differences seen in the Vedic and Iranian descendant religions of the Indo-Iranians: especially to the motif of dragon slaying in the Avestan lands of Bactria-Arachosia, with the Nuristani (Kafir) populations, and in the early Veda. The strong local influences visible in the Bactria-Arachosia area will be outlined and the archaeological sources for their occurrence in the pre-Indo-Iranian period will be outlined. Some attention will also be given to the descendant myths in Armenia and those of Nuristan and Dardistan ("Peristan").

## **TROLLS, TOMB RAIDERS, AND BATTLES NOT WORTH FIGHTING IN NORSE TRADITION**

**JONAS WELLENDORF**

*UC Berkeley, USA*

Some dragons function as symbols of greed and hoard treasure in subterranean dwellings. They share this trait with the Norse mound dwellers. Some dragons even originated as buried warriors whose reluctance to part with their amassed riches transformed them into dragons.

In my paper, I wish to analyze a set of medieval Scandinavian accounts of tomb raiding. In these accounts a young hero who often seeks fame and fortune (but who occasionally has more noble goals) intrudes into the mound of a long dead warrior who turns out to be unwilling to part with his treasure. This leads to a fight between the intruder and monstrous undead who might also take the shape of a fire-breathing troll. I will sketch a chronological development of these accounts and

speculate on their possible significance to their original audiences. Some links to the myths about Þórr's encounters with the world serpent will also be explored. Attempts have been made to connect the medieval accounts of grave robberies to archeologically attested openings of mounds. Thus Myhre (2003 and elsewhere) has argued that power struggles in Viking society led to the opening and desecration of grave mounds, and Steinsland (2002) has argued that grave goods were deposited with the intention of being retrieved at a later stage by an heir of the deceased. Although Steinsland's hypothesis finds some support in medieval accounts, the message of the majority of them seems to be that treasures taken from burial mounds come with a price that is not worth paying.

Myhre, Bjørn. 2003. "Borregravfeltet som historisk arena". *Viking* 66, 49–77.

Steinsland, Gro. 2002. "Herskermaktens ritualer". *Plats och praxis*, 87–101. Lund

## **HERO'S SECRET: "DONKEY'S EARS" LEGENDS IN EURASIA AND THEIR DIFFUSION TO EAST ASIA**

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Armenia belongs to the wide range of regions where the "Donkey's Ears" legends have been told. As is well-known, the legend was recorded in the 11th volume of *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, King Midas being the hero whose ears were enlarged just like those of donkeys. Parallels with varying heroes besides Midas are known from many parts of Eurasia, probably Alexander the Great (Iskandar) being one of the most widespread characters especially in Islamic countries. The Persian poet Nizami described one variant in his *Iskandarnama*, as well as the *Qur'an*, in which Iskandar is said to have two horns.

So far the most comprehensive study of this legend is the monograph written by the late Croatian folklorist Maja Bošković-Stulli (1967). Though she collected 291 tales from many parts of Eurasia and analyzed them from various perspectives, she was not aware of a Classical Korean parallel, Han-Chinese variants, and possible import in medieval Japan.

In this presentation, these less known East Asian narratives are described and compared with Eurasian parallels. The Korean legend (recorded in the 13th century) refers to a king whose ears became longer like donkeys', which only a hat-maker knew. This man, when about to die, revealed the secret in a bamboo grove. As the wind blew, a sound was heard, saying, "My lord's ears are like donkey ears." In many Han-Chinese variants, the hero is Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, who wanted no-one to find out he suffered from skin disease in his head. Finally, the possible Japanese version (11/12th century) only mentions in a proverbial manner that to keep a secret is so hard that people in the past had buried it in a hole dug in the ground.

## THE PROGRESSIVE DEMONIZATION OF DESTINY IN SOME INDO-EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

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There is a number of deities in Indo-European cultures, whose designations are derived from verbs meaning ‘to scratch, write’. The comparison between the respective traditions suggests that the divine “writers” were prone to undergo progressive pejoration from destiny gods to angels of death and further to demonic figures.

The Hittite *Gulsa*-goddesses assisted in the care of the newborn, and frequently appeared in association with the Mesopotamian Mother-goddess DINGIR.MAḪ. Their main responsibility, however, was to write (*guls-*) human destiny. As such, they could be occasionally called “evil” (KUB 58.108 i 5), while an unlucky person could be consoled with a statement “the Gulsas have oppressed you” (KUB 23.85 rev. 6). Finally, they can determine the time of a person’s death (KUB 12.70 obv.? 14).

The Armenian mythological figure *Grot* (lit ‘writer’) was recording human deeds and conveying the souls of the dead to the divine judgment. In medieval courtly poetry he was identified with Archangel Gabriel. But in modern Armenian he is mostly known through curses, such as ‘May *Groy* take (you)’ or ‘May *Groy* (be) with you’.

Slavic \**čьrtь* ‘demon, devil’ formally represents an agent noun derived from the verb \**črestī* / *čьrtō* ‘to draw a line’. The traces of \**čьrtь*’s old association with the knowledge of destiny are still alive through the Russian folk custom of summoning *čort* ‘devil’ from beyond the protective line (*čerta*) in order to learn about one’s future spouse.

These similarities reflect the early development of the cultures under considerations in a shadow of literary civilizations, respectively Mesopotamia, Iran, and the Byzantine Empire. When particular communities have no practical command of writing but only a general knowledge of its concept, it is likely to acquire magical and ominous connotations in their eyes.

## ATYPICAL DRAGON SLAYERS IN INDIAN AND SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY

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This paper analyzes various myths and motifs related to dragon slayers in Indian and Slavic traditions. In particular, attention is paid to myths and folktales where a dragon-killing protagonist is a trickster or a weak and non-heroic character, whereas the Indo-European scheme is such that the thunder god or a substituting allo-character slays a dragon or a snake-like adversary.

By using the comparative approach, an attempt is made to clarify the role of such atypical dragon slayers within the Indo–European scheme of the “fundamental myth”.