

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY  
&  
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY, St. PETERSBURG**

**SIXTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON  
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**



**GLOBAL MYTHOLOGY:  
TYPOLOGICAL AND REGIONAL STUDIES**

**PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS**

**September 1-3, 2012  
European University, Saint Petersburg, Russia**

**Conference Venue:  
European University  
3, Gagarinskaya Street  
Saint Petersburg, Russia**

# PROGRAM

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

10:00 – 10:20 PARTICIPANTS REGISTRATION

10:20 – 10:40 OPENING ADDRESSES

YURI BEREZKIN  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg,  
Russia*

MICHAEL WITZEL  
*Harvard University, USA*

### SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

CHAIR: YURI BEREZKIN

10:40 – 11:20 KEYNOTE LECTURE

MICHAEL WITZEL  
*Harvard University, USA*  
THE VISITING DEITIES OF THREE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES: THE  
HOPI, NEWAR AND ANIM-MARIND

11:20 – 11:50 KLAUS ANTONI  
*Tübingen University, Germany*  
ON THE DIFFUSION OF MYTHICAL MOTIFS IN EAST ASIA AND  
BEYOND: THE 'WHITE HARE OF INABA'

11:50 – 12:20 **Coffee Break**

12:20 – 12:50 KAZUO MATSUMURA  
*Wako University, Japan*  
JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY OF THE KOJIKI AS WORLD MYTHOLOGY

12:50 – 13:20 HITOSHI YAMADA  
*Tohoku University, Japan*  
BROTHER PAIRS AND TWIN BROTHERS IN JAPANESE AND  
CIRCUMPACIFIC LEGENDS AND TALES: POSSIBLE REFLECTION OF THE  
HUNTING-FISHING WORLDVIEW

13:20 – 14:40 **Lunch Break**

15:00 **Excursion to the State Hermitage Museum**

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

### SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

CHAIR: YAROSLAV VASSILKOV

- 10:00 – 10:30** YURI BEREZKIN  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
CONTINENTAL EURASIAN HEARTLAND OF STORIES
- 10:30 – 11:00** ANDRZEJ ROZWADOWSKI  
*Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland*  
JOURNEYING INTO THE ROCK AS A UNIVERSAL SHAMANIC THEME?  
REFLECTION BASED ON INTERPRETING ROCK ART IN SIBERIA
- 11:00 – 11:30** LOUISE MILNE  
*Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh, UK*  
QUESTIONS OF SENSE & NONSENSE IN VISUAL COMPARATIVE  
MYTHOLOGY

**11:30 – 12:00** **Coffee Break**

- 12:00 – 12:30** MARIA V. STANYUKOVICH  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
THE PHILIPPINE CHARON: CONDUCTORS OF SOULS IN MYTHOLOGY,  
EPICS AND EPIC-SHAPED FUNERAL CHANTS
- 12:30 – 13:00** JOEL DIETZ  
*University of Pennsylvania, USA*  
EUHEMERIZATION AND ESOTERICISM: TWO SIDES OF MYTHOLOGY IN  
ANCIENT CHINA
- 13:00 – 13:30** VLADIMIR V. EMELIANOV  
*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*  
SUMERIAN MYTHOLOGY IN THE MIRROR OF THE FAR EAST

**13:30 – 15:00** **Lunch Break**

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

**SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION**

**CHAIR: BORIS OGUIBÉNINE**

**15:00 – 15:30** PÁDRAIG MAC CARRON  
RALPH KENNA  
*Coventry University, UK*  
NETWORK ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF, THE ILIAD AND THE TÁIN BÓ  
CÚAILNGE

**15:30 – 16:00** YURI KLEINER  
*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*  
TIME DIMENSION IN SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY

**16:00 – 16:30** SERGEY KULLANDA  
*Institute of Oriental Research, Moscow, Russia*  
THE SCYTHIAN GODDESS API

**16:30 – 17:00** **Coffee Break**

**16:30 – 17:00** YAROSLAV VASSILKOV  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
THE BATTLE AS A SACRIFICE, THE HERO AS A (SELF-) SACRIFICER AND  
THE MYTH OF THE COSMIC GIANT

**17:00 – 17:30** NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA  
*Harvard University, USA*  
THE LORD OF THE WOLFS: INDIAN, SLAVIC, AND INDO-EUROPEAN  
PERSPECTIVE

**18:00 – Reception (European University, Golden Chamber)**

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3**

**MONDAY MORNING SESSION**

**CHAIR: MICHAEL WITZEL**

**10:00 – 10:30** EMILY LYLE  
*University of Edinburgh, UK*  
THE “ORDER, CHAOS, ORDER” THEORETICAL APPROACH TO  
RECONSTRUCTING THE MYTHOLOGY OF A REMOTE PAST

**10:30 – 11:00**      BORIS OGUIBÉNINE  
*University of Strasbourg, France*  
CAN A COMPARISON (SOMETIMES) MISREPRESENT THE COMPARED  
MATTER?

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

**11:30 – 12:00**      VICTORIA KRYUKOVA  
*Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia*  
THREE-LEGGED ASS AND AN IRANIAN WORLD PICTURE

**12:00 – 12:30**      MICHAEL MEYLAC  
*University of Strasbourg, France*  
ON SOME MYTHOLOGIES OF THE NEW AGE

**12:30 – 13:00**      BUKOLA ADEYEMI OYENIYI  
*Jospeh Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Nigeria*  
MYTHS AND THE PROVENANCE OF DRESS IN YORÛBÁ THOUGHTS

**13:00 – 14:00**      DISCUSSION & CONCLUDING REMARKS

**17:00 - 18:15 Boat Trip**  
**[leaves from Nab. reki Fontanki, 27]**

**19:00 - Dinner**  
**Restaurant Erivan**  
**Nab. reki Fontanki, 51**  
**Saint Petersburg**

## ABSTRACTS

### ON THE DIFFUSION OF MYTHICAL MOTIFS IN EAST ASIA AND BEYOND: THE 'WHITE HARE OF INABA'

KLAUS ANTONI

*Tübingen University, Germany*

The mythical story of the 'White Hare of Inaba' belongs to the most interesting motifs within the context of Japanese mythology. Concerning the core story of hare and wani ("crocodiles"), there do not exist direct variants in Japanese reference materials but a large number of related stories within the traditions of the non-Japanese-speaking world, especially Indonesia. Japan-centric methods of investigation must fail therefore, because they do not consider the wide dissemination of the story. All accessible direct variants of the story - a total of 22 versions - belong to the Indonesian oral tradition. In addition to the theory of Indonesian origin, our story is also interpreted within a Buddhist context, as many of the related Indonesian fairy tale motifs already can be found within the Buddhist traditions of South India. As probable sources of the Japanese version, two Jatakas of the Pali canon are discussed. But, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has pointed out in an essay on the topic only some years ago, the story is known in its basic structure from South American mythologies too. So the episode of the 'White Hare of Inaba' may be counted as one of the most 'international' motifs within the corpus of Japanese mythology.

### CONTINENTAL EURASIAN HEARTLAND OF STORIES

YURI BEREZKIN

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

The set of the motifs which I name the Boreal and which is represented in the folklore and mythological texts across the North-Central Eurasia with a core area from Southern Siberia to the Caucasus is very different from another set that is typical for the Indo-Pacific part of the globe. Because many Siberian – Central Asian motifs are found in North but not in South America, the probable terminus ante quem for their emergence in Eurasia is 10,000–15,000 B.P. Those motifs, which are represented neither in the New World nor in the Northeast Siberia, spread later. The Western Europe and the Mediterranean were fully incorporated into the Boreal area rather late because the percentage of the Boreal motifs in stories recorded since ca. A.D. 1500 is much greater than in the ancient written texts.

Inside the Boreal complex several subgroups of motifs could be selected. They are different both in relation to their areal distribution and their content. One set of motifs is found in stories about heroic adventure of male protagonists and are typical for the Caucasus, Central Asia, South Siberia. Another kind of stories are found mostly across the taiga zone of Siberia with parallels in Tibet, the typical protagonists are girls or young women. Considering the areal distribution of the corresponding motifs in North America, the heroic male complex was brought to the New World earlier than the stories with female protagonists.

In the sub-Saharan Africa most if not all adventure stories were brought from Asia. The precise age of such a diffusion is difficult to pinpoint but in many cases it was certainly after the spread of productive economy, i.e. not earlier than the III-II mill. B.C. Many African trickster animal tales can be of the same age and origin.

The most unexplored category of the Eurasian stories are etiological legends with zoomorphic protagonists. They are mostly found from Europe to Western and Southern Siberia but isolated North American parallels also exist. Totally enigmatic but certain are folklore ties between Western Siberia and the Balkans.

## **THE TRAGIC MODE: EUHEMERISM AND ESOTERICISM IN CONFUCIAN IMPERIAL MYTHOLOGY**

**JOEL DIETZ**

*University of Pennsylvania, USA*

Recent research and documentation of the mythological substrate of imperial mythologies documents the link between various esoteric practices and mythologies that grew up around them. In particular, in many cases private oral tradition providing explanations and specific practices complemented a widely circulated mythology or poetic stream with opaque elements.

Although such a modus exists clearly in certain contexts within early China, including the enigmatic Songs of the South and the Dao De Jing, this has not yet been explored within the earliest strata of Confucian mythology, including both the collected sayings of Confucius and the Shangshu.

A careful examination of both reveals that certain pan-Eurasian myths, including the primordial combat myth between a dragon and dragon-slayer and golden age, exist also in Chinese version. However, various aspects of the myth are obscured through reverse euhemerism. Specifically, the dragon to be defeated is transformed into a "minister of the works."

Various implications for the evolution of thought in China are explored with respect to two themes: the presence of a tragic mode and the pacification of seemingly

violent elements. Confucius, appears as a deliberate « traditionalist » in the sense of preserving of myths in their original form, which implies a tragic orientation, insofar as the glories of the golden age are not continued.

Later Confucianism (or “Ruism”), conversely, is frequently comfortable re-writing obscure aspects of the mythology to conform to contemporary sensibilities. Brief parallels and tensions related to these patterns are explored in later periods, including the Chu appropriation of Shamanism, and tendencies in other religious traditions when responding to the “esoteric”.

## **SUMERIAN MYTHOLOGY IN THE MIRROR OF THE FAR EAST**

**VLADIMIR V. EMELIANOV**

*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*

In the past two decades, there was a tendency to originate the Sumerians from the territories, located to the east of the Zagros Mountains. Linguists have proposed relationship between the Sumerian and the Munda languages, as well as kinship with the Tibetan language. Ethnologists have tried to trace the cultural ties between Sumer and Aratta. Our report will focus on the comparison of the two myths, equally valuable for both the Sumerian tradition, and for the peoples of the Far East. First, it is the cult of the Heaven and the image of the Mandate of Heaven (Sumer and China). Secondly, it is a myth about the fight with the monster who blocked waters of river before the New Year (Sumer and India).

## **NETWORK ANALYSIS OF BEOWULF, THE ILIAD AND THE TÁIN BÓ CÚAILNGE**

**PÁDRAIG MACCARRON &  
RALPH KENNA**

*Applied Mathematics Research Centre, Coventry University, UK*

Although the distinctions between them are not always sharp, myths differ from legends and folktales. Mythology entails a plethora of characters and timeless narratives outside documented history. Legends, on the other hand, are couched in a definite historical timeframe and folktales are intentionally fictional. It has been claimed that mythological narratives from a variety of cultures share the same universal structure, called the monomyth. Indeed, the Táin Bó Cúailnge has been compared to the Iliad and Beowulf. Before it was committed to writing by medieval Irish scholars, the Táin had an extensive oral tradition. However, the historicity of the Táin is questionable. Some argue that it corroborates Greek and Roman accounts of the Celts while others object that such tales have no historical basis.



This concept of universality also lies at the heart of network theory, a new branch of theoretical physics with very broad applicability. Striking similarities were noticed between the structure of an electrical grid, social networks and the wiring of the neural system of a nematode worm, and network theory allows one to classify and compare these. The theory has since been extended to the study of transport, polymers, economics, particle physics, computer science, sociology, etc. And it is an exceptionally useful tool to describe real-world networks.

Here we apply this theory to study networks of characters appearing in different mythologies. We characterise and classify mythologies according to their quantifiable network properties and then compare them across different cultures and countries. We also compare mythologies to other networks, both actual and fictitious. Here we make a mathematical comparison of the Táin to both the Iliad and Beowulf, as well as to other networks, ranging from the real to the imaginary. Thus we attempt to shed mathematical light on the question of the Táin's historicity.

Note: This work is part of a project supported by The Leverhulme Trust under grant number F/00732/I

## **Time Dimension in Scandinavian Mythology**

**YURI KLEINER**

*St. Petersburg State University, Russia*

According to Georges Dumézil, the 'unity and happy harmony (of the Scandinavian Æsir and Vanir – Yu.K.)' characterizes the 'present situation', while in a far distant past the two divine groups lived separately, ... then fought a fierce war.' Such a succession of events, typical of historicizing approaches to mythology, reflects an outsider's point of view different from the Scandinavian (resp. Old Germanic) picture of the world, as it is represented in the *Poetic Edda*. (*Völuspá*, *Vafþrúnirsmál*, etc.). In it, the time limits embrace a period from the 'first creation' to the *ragna-rök*. The former consists of various episodes, none of which can be regarded as a beginning per se, cf. creation of Miðgarðr lifted from the sea by Bur's sons (*Vsp* 3) and at the same time, formed of Ymir's body (*Vfþr* 21), that of the sun and moon, the earliest giants, who, in turn, had ancestors, etc. Likewise, the *ragna-rök* is not 'the end of the world', strictly speaking, because after it, 'the earth comes up a second time' (*Vsp*. 59), 'the Æsir meet at Idavelli' (*Vsp*. 60), 'chessmen of gold will be found in the grass' (*Vsp*. 61; cf. the same before *ragna-rök* in *Vsp*. 7 – 8: *Hittask æsir á Idavelli*), and, most significantly, Baldr (Oðin's son, whose death is synonymous with the end of the world) comes back (*Vsp*. 62). A complete mythological cycle forms a circle, as it were, in which the beginning and the end of creation meet at a certain point, implying the recurrence of the entire cycle: what will happen during the present cycle did take place during the previous ones. Oðin's wisdom, including his knowledge of the future of the gods, results from his having visited the nine worlds (resp. his participation in the nine cycles of creation; *Vfþr* 43), cf. Völva's memories of the nine worlds corresponding to the nine roots of

Yggdrasil (Vsp 2). Such events as Thor's journeys, the stealing and recovery of his hammer, etc., although located within the same mythological cycle (circle) are not connected either with any of the episodes of creation or with localization in time generally.

In the absence of cause-and-consequence relationship between the individual episodes, they all can and must be regarded as belonging to the synchrony ('present situation') of the Scandinavian mythology, its diachronic dimension lying outside the tradition in question (in etymology, genetic and typological parallels, etc.).

This perception of time has reflected itself in the structure of the mythological poems of the *Poetic Edda*, where the boundaries of a plot (episode, story about the gods) coincide with those of a poem, dealing either with the entire circle (creation cycle), as in *Völuspá*, or being limited to a part of it, related in detail (*Vafþrúnirsmál*, *Grimnismál*), cf. two strophes devoted to Ymir and the giants in the *Völuspá* vs eight strophes of the genealogy of the giants in the *Vafþrúnirsmál*. That this feature is an archaic one follows from a comparison with both the Eddic heroic poems, connected by 'genealogical ordering', and the modernized accounts of mythology in the *Prose Edda* and Saxo Grammaticus.

## **THREE-LEGGED ASS AND AN IRANIAN WORLD PICTURE**

**VICTORIA KRYUKOVA**

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

Avestan Yasna 42 proves to be a list of world picture's objects with the fish(?), the animal (the ass, avest. xara-) and the plant (Haoma) mentioned also in the Middle Persian Bundahishn and Menog i xrad. It is remarkable that a description of the Bundahishn not only reveals particular details (which are absent in the Avesta) of the objects, but also almost precisely corresponds to a Rgvedic text of IV. 58, though not three-legged ass, but three-legged ox is mentioned in the Rgveda in the same context. The fact that the ass is a specific Iranian beast in mythology is justified by a Pamir New Year rite when the ass, who is treated with disdain in Iran and Central Asia nowadays, is the first to enter the ritually purified house.

## **THE SCYTHIAN GODDESS API**

**SERGEY KULLANDA**

*Institute of Oriental Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow*

According to Herodotus (IV, 59), the Scythians call the goddess of the earth  $\Lambda\pi\acute{\iota}$  or  $\Lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\alpha$ . The name goes back to Iranian  $\bar{a}p$ -/ $ap$ - ‘water’ or  $*ap$ - $\bar{i}\bar{a}$  ‘water, aquatic.’ It is reminiscent of the goddess Ardvi Sūra Anāhitā who is explicitly called ‘Water’ ( $\bar{A}p$ -) in the Avesta: *nəmō arəduiiā āpō anāhitaiiā* (“salutation to [the water] of Ardvi Water Anāhitā – Yt I, 21); *yazāi āpəm arduuīm sūrəm anāhitəm* (“Let me sacrifice to Water Ardvi Sūra Anāhitā” – Y. 65, 1).

## **THE “ORDER, CHAOS, ORDER” THEORETICAL APPROACH TO RECONSTRUCTING THE MYTHOLOGY OF A REMOTE PAST**

**EMILY LYLE**

*University of Edinburgh, UK*

The first order is that of a mythology embedded in an oral society, the chaos is that of the fragmentary mythological record in history, and the final order is that of science. This way of articulating a specific theoretical approach was suggested by *The Measurement of Reality* by Alfred W. Crosby. Crosby demonstrates a scientific order emerging with the beginnings of exact quantification which he sees as replacing a qualitative view of the universe. Clearly the thinking had been qualitative but something has been lost sight of in making a simple contrast between the scientific and the pre-scientific modes. This is the fact that qualitative thinking is found in association with quantitative thinking of a kind that may be inexact in scientific terms but is quite adequate for the needs of an orally based society. This qualitative/quantitative thinking can be seen in operation in a number of small-scale societies that have been the subject of anthropological studies. These give a means of exploring the possibilities open to a society before writing and before the written historical records. Robin Fox speaks of a human characteristic he calls *chronomyopia* which makes it difficult for modern humans to envisage the societies in a remote past who similarly operated within a limited temporal framework and could continue indefinitely to run in the cycles expressed in their kinship systems (*The Tribal Imagination*). Writing and history smashed such systems which might already have been weakened by the rapid changes of the Neolithic period. What our written records give us is a chaotic range of possibilities, including the reflections of philosophy. Our records come from a period of mythological chaos, and we have the option of interpreting and reassessing them in terms that would have made sense in a prehistoric oral context.

# **JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY OF THE *KOJIKI* AS WORLD MYTHOLOGY**

**KAZUO MATSUMURA**  
*Wako University, Tokyo, Japan*

Japanese mythology is very consciously composed from various heterogeneous components. The composing elements could be listed as follows:

1. Primal chaos
2. Appearance of gods
3. Sexual intercourse of brother-sister pair and resulting birth of lands and gods
4. The birth of fire god and the death of Izanami
5. Izanagi's attempt to take back his wife and its failure due his breaking of the taboo of not looking back (Orpheus type of descent to the world of the dead, F81.1 )
6. Izanagi's return from the world of the dead and his purification in the Heavenly River resulting in the birth of celestial deities, Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi, and Susanowo.
7. Expulsion of the atmospheric deity Susanowo by Izanagi
8. Susanowo's visit to Amaterasu and her kingdom of the Heavenly Land
9. Birth of deities through the exchange of personal items between Amaterasu and Susanowo.
10. Susanowo's mischievous conducts and hiding of Amaterasu into the Heavenly Cave.
11. Corruption of the world order due to the absence of the sun goddess
12. Rituals performed by gods to induce the sun goddess from the cave.
13. Punishment toward the atmospheric god Susanowo and his expulsion from heaven.
14. Susanowo's killing of food goddess Ohogetsu-hime and the appearance of cereals from the corpse.
15. Susanowo's victory against eight-headed serpent Yamatano-worochi through the trick.
16. Perfection of the terrestrial zone by Ohokuni-nushi, descendent of Susanowo.
17. Descent of sun goddess' grandson and his lieutenants to the terrestrial zone for its conquest.
18. Demand of cession of the land by the heavenly group and its eventual approval by Ohokuni-nushi's children.
19. The Marriage of sun goddess' grandson Ninigi and Konohana-sakuya-hime, daughter of the mountain god.
20. Their child Yamasachi's visit to the undersea kingdom and his marriage with Toyotama-hime, daughter of the sea god.
21. Military advance of Jinmu, the descendant of heavenly gods, to the Central Land from periphery.
22. His Victory and Enthronement.

These sequences show transition from undivided chaotic space into the emergence of the ordered world. With the ascension of the ruler, cosmology is completed. The order of the events is easily predictable.

Ohono Fumimaro, the editor of the *Kojiki*, frankly admits in preface that he arranged former records of various origins to make it into a meaningful book. Intentional systematization of myths in 712 (incidentally, 1,300 years ago this year) is obvious. Then the next year of 713, the court ordered local officials to submit local gazettes, the *Fudoki*, listing the history, geography, products, myth, and legends of each region. Some of these local gazettes still survive in complete form but most of others are now in fragments. Further, in 720 the first official history book *Nihon-shoki* was compiled under the leadership of Prince Toneri. Its first part is called “the Age of the gods” (*Kamiyo*). Lastly in 807 the Imube clan submitted the *Kogo-shui*, a record of their family tradition. The Imbe clan was responsible for imperial rituals and this clan was unsatisfied with what was recorded in previous books.

In sum, we have various records for the study of Japanese mythology enabling us to glimpse into the older forms of myths before the systematization of editors who made myths fit for the royal ideology. By comparing these older strata of myth motifs with myth motifs of neighboring countries, we hope to specify when, wherefrom, and by whom each myth motif reached Japanese islands.

The role of the *Kojiki* in Japanese mythology is similar to that of Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Work and Days* or Apollodoros’ *Bibliothèque* in Greek mythology. The *Theogony* talks about the beginning of the world and the formation of pantheon. In the *Bibliothèque* stories of gods and heroes, and the genealogy of royal families are recorded. Gods and heroes of course appear in older records such as the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and Apollonios’ *Argonautica*. Although Greek mythology exceeds other mythologies in its richness and multiplicity, it is not so coherent. In ancient Greece, poleis were racing each other and political unity was impossible to achieve. In ancient Japan, the Yamato court accomplished military and political unification and in order to legitimize its dominion, mythological texts such as the *Kojiki* were compiled. Coherence of the mythology was from the beginning sine qua non.

Mythology is not always the product of political unification. In fact, most mythologies are not and they thus lack coherence. Mythologies of non-literate societies lack coherence because they are not politically unified and they therefore feel no need of coherence in their mythologies. Even in a country with strong central government, sometimes coherence in mythology is intentionally avoided. In ancient China, systematization of mythology was rejected and moral policy of Confucius was preferred. In ancient India mythology was in serve of rituals rather than in politics. Rituals aim for perfection and there the element of history is not necessary. So if the ritual system is perfect, you have no need of coherence in mythology. In other cases, such as Korean mythology, Iranian mythology, Scandinavian mythology, and Celtic mythology, lack of sufficient amount of surviving mythological texts make it difficult for researcher to estimate the degree of systematization.

The ancient Egyptians possessed multiple mythological traditions about cosmogony such as the versions of Heliopolis, Memphis, Hermupolis, and Thebes.

The worship of the Sun Ra and that of Osiris the ruler of the kingdom of dead coexisted, too. We have plenty of mythological materials in Egypt: mural paintings, sculptures, mummies, and papyrus scrolls. Still we cannot make a coherent picture of Egyptian mythology. On Isis and Osiris by Plutarch is a fairly well organized story but it is only a part of Egyptian mythology.

Thus I say that there are not many mythologies in the world that have consecutive, coherent narration from the beginning of cosmos down to the establishment of kingship. In that respect perhaps only the Old Testament could be a match to Japanese mythology. The Old Testament starts from Genesis, then Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and so on continuing until the Israelite led by Yahweh reach the promised land of Canaan. Then further on David and Solomon ascend to the throne. The Old Testament has clear intention of praising the contact between the God and the Israelite by showing the completion of the God's promise letting his people out of Egypt and giving them the land of Canaan in spite of the occupying peoples. In my understanding Japanese mythology is important even in the study of mythological theory since, as I have mentioned previously, Japanese mythology is rather unique in showing a coherent narration (which is not very common) and at the same time supplying materials for the classification of different cultural strata in its motifs.

In this way, not only evaluating Japanese mythology from structural point of view, I will evaluate it from historical point as well, by comparing it with mythologies of neighboring cultural groups. Where and when the composing motifs of Japanese mythology come from? I try to answer that question by comparing motifs of Japanese mythology those of the neighboring countries. Presenting Japanese mythology as a structural system is one goal and presenting the cultural layers of mythological motifs with the help of ethnology and history is another.

## **ON SOME MYTHOLOGIES OF THE NEW AGE**

**MICHAEL MEYLAC**  
*University of Strasbourg, France*

*Improbabile probabilius, impossibile probabilissimum.*

Myth creation mechanisms proper to mankind do not seem to have been affected by rationalism, on the contrary, new "scientific myths" are flourishing today in their own right. The twentieth century also brought to life some powerful political mythologies. Nazi ideology used extensively old Germanic myths adding to them pseudo-scientific racial prejudices and sharing with Soviet neo-mythology cults of the chiefs of respective States (and even of their mummies, as in cases of Lenin and Stalin). Soviet historiography invented a whole mythologized pseudo-historical background of the Revolution and largely falsified its history decorating it with a pantheon of "saint" martyrs. An utopian communist paradise was placed in immediate future within a lifetime of one generation. Both régimes, the Nazi and the communist ones, justified their aggressiveness and terror by the necessity to

suppress mythical enemies and to liberate people in other countries suffering under the yoke either of communism or of capitalism.

More examples proper to New Age include a revival of Jewish messianism throughout the 16-18th centuries, with at least three historical figures who proclaimed themselves as Messiahs. Early in the 20th century, an interesting neo-mythological system was created by George Gurdjieff who stated inter alia that the principle function of mankind was to produce psychic energy serving as nutrition for the Moon, a cosmic body in evolution. Therefore, from a “cosmic” point of view, human energy used for spiritual development by individuals was just wasted. Gurdjieff used this very personal myth to explain to his students the difficulty of spiritual awakening as going “against the current”. His other mythologized explanation for this has something to do with the notion of demiurge who after creating the world withdrew himself from it, thus leaving it to itself. Gurdjieff claimed, the Earth was situated in a far dark corner of the Universe, hardly reached by emanations of the Absolute. In his writings, he kept giving his own names to natural, anthropological and spiritual phenomena, based on Greek, Turkish and Armenian roots.

## **QUESTIONS OF SENSE & NONSENSE IN VISUAL COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**

**LOUISE MILNE**

*Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh, UK*

Apparently dense and inscrutable imagery exerts a peculiar fascination due to its resistance to standard interpretative models. Of this ilk are the enduring “nonsensical” motifs in folk-culture; adynata imagery which pushes at or exceeds the mind’s capacity for visualisation: from the World-Turned-Upside-Down (or inside out), to impossible composite creatures or artefacts (the fachen monster, the ship Naglfar). Akin to the more coherent mythical phyla – horned man, mermaid, dragon – persisting over millenia, we also find nameless hybrid monsters (such as Norse and Celtic interlaced biting creatures) devolving into pure pattern; visual parallels to nonsensical rhymes or syllabic incantations found in certain songs, tales and rituals. The origins of these traditions go back to the cultures of the Ice Age and beyond; leaving aside decodable animal-human composites, the oldest extant depictions of “impossible” creatures date from 15,000 BCE (Pergouset cave). Manifestations of this kind are usually interpreted either as degraded relics of materials that once made sense, or as non-semantic decoration. Yet, in the massive palimpsest of folk and tribal cultures, the oldest inherited materials would always appear opaque or fragmentary, as if part of a lost whole; and this would be true no matter how far back we could trace the imagery. It is therefore more useful to consider the more tractable questions of how and why nonsensical or impossible imagery is generated in specific contexts and how this material is articulated in relation to the “sensible” or legible components in each case. Using tools drawn from the history and theory of dream-representation, this paper presents a range of nonsense forms drawn from prehistoric art, mythic literature, folk culture and

ethnography, considers their possible historical trajectories in and out of sense, and suggests that nonsense imagery in mythic representation is best seen as a kind of oneiric rhetoric, with a wide variety of uses.

## **CAN A COMPARISON (SOMETIMES) MISREPRESENT THE COMPARED MATTER?**

**BORIS OGUIBÉNINE**  
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When comparing myths or narratives, we should not forget that all comparisons never exhaust the compared matter. There is always a leftover or a surplus due to approximations in the provided comparison.

Not that these approximations necessarily invalidate the effectuated comparisons or the comparative technique as such. The main outcome of approximate comparisons (“two myths/narratives more or less corresponding to each other”) is that, consciously or not, one formulates a comparison as a *metaphor*. (See R. Jakobson’s concept of metaphor: the metaphoric way in discourse is based on unveiling similarity of compared items as opposed to the metonymic way developed on the basis of their contiguity).

For example, when Baba-Yaga, a female figure of Russian folktales, is compared to Hittite Old Woman, the task, as clearly formulated by V.N. Toporov, is to reconstruct elements of one sign system (that of Russian folktales) using the elements of another sign system (that of Hittite ritual texts). Such comparison is analogous to a situation when a narrator belonging to one tradition is telling a “similar” tale of another tradition trying to accommodate both within a sensible and common whole.

Baba-Yaga is characterized by two sets of distinctive features contradicting each other: she is, at the one hand, a benevolent wise old woman presenting gifts to the hero and helping him to find his way out of a dangerous situation; on the other hand, she is depicted as a malevolent being kidnapping children, chasing the hero and trying to kill him. The comparison between Baba-Yaga and Hittite Old Woman is made possible on assumption that these contradictions are explainable by a supposed archaic ritual background underlying the narratives involving both characters. The ritual in question (supposedly that of initiation) is assumed to deal with the fundamental themes of life and death: this fact implies the changeability of Baba-Yaga’s features.

Whatever may be the probability of a Slavic ritual of initiation – unattested, but assumed and confirmed on the basis of the well-attested Hittite ritual, I claim that in this case we witness the metaphorizing approach that consists of mapping the features of one character (Hittite Old Woman) on another character (Russian Baba-Yaga) in order to disclose their common background (which after all is the general



and ultimate goal of comparisons). I also claim that the metaphorizing approach may be fruitful, if it successfully sheds light on the compared items or narratives, especially when a feature-by-feature comparison adds something to a narrative with missing features or helps to explain obscure features. In any case, the comparatist should pay attention to possible outcomes, namely such as the creation of an additional intertextual narrative product generated within comparison.

## **MYTHS AND THE PROVENANCE OF DRESS IN YORÙBÁ THOUGHTS**

**BUKOLA ADEYEMI OYENIYI**

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Like most phenomena in Yorùbá thoughts, dress was believed to have been handed down to the Yorùbá either by Olodumare (God) himself or by Esu, one of His angels. In Okaran Meji and Oyeku Meji, two notable corpuses in Odu Ifa (or simply Ifa), the story was told of how Olodumare had dispatched the earliest beings in semi-nudity to populate the world and how Esu, the famed trickster of Yorùbá mythology, had approached this band and invented bosom covering for the females among them. It was believed that from this modest beginning sartorial tradition entered the Yorùbá world. Using this and other related mythical stories and folktales from the Ifa corpus, and archeological remains excavated in different parts of Yorubaland from the 1900s, this paper examines the nexus between mythical stories and archeological remains in weaving a narrative that traces the provenance and purpose of dress among Yorùbá people of Nigeria. The paper argues that while the Ifa corpus may document Yorùbá sartorial thoughts in an age when writing was non-existent, archaeological remains adduced a rather distant date to dress-use and dress tradition in Yorubaland than contemporary literature can comprehend. Closely related to this is also the position that mythology, unscientific as it may appear, holds important place in reconstructing a people's individual and corporate identity.

## **JOURNEYING INTO THE ROCK AS A UNIVERSAL SHAMANIC THEME? REFLECTION BASED ON INTERPRETING ROCK ART IN SIBERIA**

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The issue of interrelation between rock art and shamanism has recently been hotly debated. Most intriguing interpretations concerned the Palaeolithic cave paintings which were supposed to be importantly inspired by trance induced visions, and as such were claimed to be shamanistic in nature. One aspect of this theoretical construct is the supposition that the cave itself functioned as an entrance to the other world – the assumption based on observation of neuropsychological reactions to altered states of consciousness which are often described by persons being in

trance as passing through the tunnel. In my presentation I refer to an unique example of rock art in Siberia (Khakassia), which however is much younger, probably not older than four thousand years ago. This site, however, holds an unique image of, among other petroglyphs, a shaman plying drum. The composition appears particularly interesting as the petroglyph showing a shaman is placed not on the smooth rock surface, but in the large cleft. This specific relation of the image to the rock structure, which probably was intentional, enables us to discuss deeper semantic context of this rock art composition. Exploration of local beliefs connected with the rituals of shamanic initiation reveals one specific feature of this ritual, i.e. journeying into the rock for shamanic drum to be obtained there (i.e. inside of the rock) by the initiate. I argue that these Siberian petroglyphs can be graphic expression of this shamanic belief, which furthermore seems to be a variant of more common motif (noted in different Siberian shamanic traditions) of journeying to the other world through the earth openings or cracks in rocks. Finding this correspondence between the Khakass rock art and Siberian shamanic beliefs I raise the question if this observation can support the hypothesis about shamanic nature of Palaeolithic cave art in Europe.

## **THE PHILIPPINE CHARON: CONDUCTORS OF SOULS IN MYTHOLOGY, EPICS AND EPIC-SHAPED FUNERAL CHANTS**

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The Philippines is one of the few areas where living epics are widely represented nowadays among the ethnic minorities of hinterlands and the Moslem Southern areas. Although the lowland epic traditions were lost in the process of Christianization, early Spanish sources contain enough data on their ritual use and major mythological connotations; some of them were inherited by the Catholic Pasyon, sung on Good Friday.

Travels between the worlds of the living and the dead, shamanistic in nature, as well as Orpheus-like trips to the underworld to bring back the soul of the deceased beloved maiden constitute an important part of Philippine epic hero's activities. However, in funeral rites epics and epic-shaped funeral chants the deceased is identified with an epic hero/heroine. In this case the function of conducting the soul to the abode of the dead is performed by a specific mythological character. Like Charon, this female spirit, in some localities with a help of her husband, leads the soul of a deceased downstream the local rivers into mythological geography and finally brings it to the underworld.

The paper gives a general overview of the issue with specific references to the Ifugao hudhud epic, internationally known after 2001 UNESCO nomination as intangible heritage of mankind, widely advertised as a non-ritual genre, 'pure entertainment'.

# THE BATTLE AS A SACRIFICE, THE HERO AS A (SELF-)SACRIFICER AND THE MYTH OF THE COSMIC GIANT

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The paper offers a new approach to the well-known Sanskrit epic metaphor *raṇayajña*, *yuddhayajña*, *saṃgrāmayajña* 'sacrifice of battle'. The author agrees with Danielle Feller that the metaphor was born due to the fact that the epic narrators indeed regarded the battle a kind of sacrifice, but cannot accept the idea that the identification of the epic war with the battle was a later phenomenon, a device used by the Brahmins in order to justify and legitimize the “haphazard, indiscriminate violence” of a “morally reprehensible family-feud”. In my opinion the association of the battle with a sacrifice in the Mahabharata is sooner a legacy of the archaic Indo-Aryan and Indo-European culture.

The analysis of many epic descriptions of the battle enables us to conclude that the Mahabharata battle was perceived by the narrators and their audience as a kind of ritual identical to an archaic sacrifice. Before the battle, every hero had to undergo a preliminary initiation rite - *ātmayajña* 'sacrificing one's self', or 'renouncing one's life'. After that he offered to the gods the «share» of the enemies, allotted to him, killing them in the way sacrificial animals were usually killed in a sacrifice. We have to keep in mind also that every hero was considered to be himself a part (*bhāga*) of a certain god. Killing their “share” (*bhāga*) of the enemies, the semi-divine heroes activated their “shares” (*bhāga*) of participation in the ritual of battle. At the same time they provide the allotted “shares” (*bhāga*) of offerings to the gods of whom they are themselves partial incarnations (*bhāga*) on Earth. Having been eventually killed, the hero merely completes the *ātmayajña* that he has performed before the battle.

In the rest of the paper we shall discuss the connection of the concept described above with the myth of the Primeval Man and his self-sacrifice. In conclusion, the author plans to demonstrate how the idea of the battle as a sacrifice and the hero's self-sacrificing reveals itself in the scenes of apotheosis and in the general design of Indian «hero-stones» and the Bronze age anthropomorphic stelae found in the Great steppe and other regions of Eurasia.

# **THE VISITING DEITIES OF THREE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES: THE HOPI, NEWAR, AND ANIM-MARIND**

**MICHAEL WITZEL**  
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The mythologies and rituals of the three populations selected for study show a remarkable amount of overlap, though they are located far distant from each other, in N. Arizona, the Kathmandu Valley, and S. New Guinea. In addition, they belong to three totally different language families. Nevertheless they exhibit the mytheme of a large number of visiting deities that appear at certain periods during the year. They ritually undertake a number of actions, usually related to the agricultural cycle, and then return to their respective homes. Usually violent sacrifice is involved as well. In addition to investigation these traits, a suggestion will be made how these sacrifices evolved in these Neolithic societies.

## **BROTHER PAIRS AND TWIN BROTHERS IN JAPANESE AND CIRCUMPACIFIC LEGENDS AND TALES: POSSIBLE REFLECTION OF THE HUNTING-FISHING WORLDVIEW**

**HITOSHI YAMADA**  
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The aim of this talk is to further develop the comparison suggested by Obayashi (1965) between brother pair figures in (especially Northeast) Japanese legends and tales on the one hand, and twin brother heroes in Circumpacific (especially American) counterparts on the other. The brother pairs are found in Japanese legends and folktales in two ways: as hunters or as salmons.

In the first cases, they are (often the first) hunters and are named as Banji and Banzaburo with other variations. Their names are interpreted as showing their brother relationship with each other — Banji being the second son, and Banzaburo the third. According to some legends, they were conquered by a Buddhist monk, who seems to symbolize the political power of the central government.

In the second cases, we have a pair of salmon named Osuke and Kosuke (“bigger and smaller man”). They are said to run upriver crying loud in human language, thus letting know of their yearly return.

These brother pairs in Japanese cases can be compared with American parallels. Twin heroes in South American mythology are often hunters or are culture heroes who created game and fish for the mankind (Métraux 1946). Northwest Coast peoples have connected twin brothers or siblings with salmons in their customs and myths (Obayashi 1990). It is known that in many cultures twins have been associated with animal parents or deified with theriomorphic characters (Harris

1913, Sternberg 1916, Lagercrantz 1942). This would suggest that brother pairs and twin brothers partly reflect the worldview of hunting and fishing societies where humans and animals were considered nearer with each other.

## **THE LORD OF THE WOLFS: INDIAN, SLAVIC, AND INDO-EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE**

**NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA**  
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This paper presents and analyzes folklore and mythological materials related to a character sometimes called in various Slavic traditions “the Lord (or Master) of the wolfs” or “the wolf Herdsman”. I will start by presenting a vast amount of Slavic data and then by using the comparative approach, an attempt is made to reconstruct an older Indo–European myth, which we find some traces of in Indian, Scandinavian and other Indo–European sources.