

**FOURTEENTH
ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**



DEATH AND MIGRATION IN WORLD MYTHOLOGY

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

August 23-27, 2021

IACM

PROGRAM

PLEASE NOTE: TIME IN THE PROGRAM IS IN **EST**, I.E., THE **BOSTON, USA** TIME ZONE.

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TOKYO, JAPAN: **+ 13 HOURS**

MONDAY, AUGUST 23

09:30 – 10:00 OPENING ADDRESSES

MICHAEL WITZEL

Harvard University, USA; IACM

MARTÍN CUITZEO DOMÍNGUEZ NUÑEZ

*School of Anthropology and History of Northern Mexico,
Chihuahua, Mexico*

NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

Princeton University, USA; IACM

MONDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHS AND JOURNEYS

CHAIR/MODERATOR: NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

10:00 – 10:30 YURI BEREZKIN
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
ASIATIC MIGRATIONS INTO THE NEW WORLD: ANALYSIS OF THE
DISTRIBUTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN EURASIA AND AMERICA

10:30 – 11:00 JAN A. KOZÁK
*Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic &
University of Bergen, Norway*
MONOMYTH: HERO'S DEATH AND REBIRTH AS A STRUCTURAL
CROSSOVER OF SACRIFICE AND INITIATION

11:00 – 11:30 LOUISE MILNE
University of Edinburgh & Edinburgh Napier University, UK
THE RHETORIC OF DREAMS IN JOURNEYS TO THE OTHERWORLD

11:30 – 12:00 ATTILA MÁTÉFFY
University of Bonn, Germany
MIGRATION AND OTHERWORLD JOURNEY IN THE NORTH CENTRAL
EURASIAN MYTHOLOGIES AND RITUALS, AND THE MAIN THEORIES OF
MIGRATION IN THE MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE RESEARCH

12:00 – 12:30 DANIEL PRIOR
Miami University, USA
&
BENJAMIN STORSVED
Indiana University, USA
INDO-EUROPEAN TRAVESTIES OF STEPPE THOUGHT

12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch Break**

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES; MYTHOLOGY OF THE AMERICAS

CHAIR/MODERATOR: NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

- 13:30 – 14:00** STEVE FARMER
The Systems Biology Group, Palo Alto, California, USA
&
MICHAEL WITZEL
Harvard University, USA
DEATH AND MIGRATION IN PREHISTORIC MYTHOLOGIES:
NEW INSIGHTS FROM RECENT ADNA,
CLIMATOLOGICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE
- 14:00 – 14:30** PETRA VOGLER
Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany
DEATH AND MIGRATION IN THE CUBAN TRADITION OF PALO MONTE
MAYOMBE
- 14:30 – 15:00** JESPER NIELSEN, CHRISTOPHE HELMKE, MAGNUS PHARAO HANSEN
*Institute of Cross-cultural and Regional Studies, University of
Copenhagen, Denmark*
&
MICHAEL SMITH
*School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State
University, USA*
TRANSMISSION AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIGRATION MYTHS IN
CENTRAL MEXICO
- 15:00 – 15:30** LAURA ANGÉLICA ORTÍZ TENORIO
Proyecto Templo Mayor, Mexico City, Mexico
FLOWERS TO THE GODS: PRESENCE AND MEANING OF THE FLOWERS IN
AZTEC OFFERINGS
- 15:30 – 16:00** MARIA ALFONSA LARIOS SANTACRUZ
*School of Anthropology and History of Northern Mexico,
Chihuahua, Mexico*
AN APPROXIMATION TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE GIANTS IN
COMCAAC, RARAMURI AND INDE MYTHOLOGY

16:00 – 16:30 MARTÍN CUITZEO DOMÍNGUEZ NUÑEZ
*School of Anthropology and History of Northern Mexico,
Chihuahua, Mexico*
BETWEEN THE RITUAL AND THE MYTH. THE CELEBRATION OF THE DAY
OF THE DEAD IN MEXICO AND CHILE DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE
XIX CENTURY

TUESDAY, AUGUST 24

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION: INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY: SLAVIC

CHAIR/MODERATOR: ALEKSANDAR BOŠKOVIĆ

10:00 – 10:30 EMILY LYLE
University of Edinburgh, UK
CONCEPTS OF EXAUGURATION AND INAUGURATION IN RELATION TO
THE PANTHEON SUGGESTED BY IBN FADLAN'S ACCOUNT OF A RUS'
FUNERAL

10:30 – 11:00 MARINA VALENTOVA
Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow, Russia
DEATH AND THE WORLD OF THE DEAD IN SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY

11:00 – 11:30 OLHA VOZNYUK
University of Vienna, Austria
GALICIA AS A BORDERLAND OF CULTURES AND MYTHOLOGY

11:30 – 12:00 OKSANA TCHOEKHA
Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow, Russia
THE MOON AS THE SUN OF THE DEAD

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: SCANDINAVIAN, GERMANIC, BALTIC, AND FINNISH MYTHOLOGY

CHAIR/MODERATOR: STEVE FARMER

- 13:00 – 13:30** MARE KÕIVA
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL AND THE OTHERWORLD ON THE EXAMPLE OF ESTONIAN AND BALTIC FINNISH MATERIAL
- 13:30 – 14:00** TÕNNO JONUUS
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
TRAVELLING ROYAL MONSTERS IN THE EASTERN BALTIC IRON AGE
- 14:00 – 14:30** ALDIS PŪTELIS
Riga, Latvia
THE TWO WORLDS: THE DEAD AND THE LIVING IN THE LATVIAN TRADITION
- 14:30 – 15:00** EMIEL AMSTERDAM
Independent Scholar, The Netherlands
ON THE LOCATION OF VALHALLA: THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD WARRIORS IN OLD NORSE MYTHOLOGY
- 15:00 – 15:30** ARJAN STERKEN
Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands
THE AMBIGUOUS DEAD: *NĀLOUPERS* AND THEIR UNCERTAIN AFFILIATION IN NORTH SAXON FOLKLORE
- 15:30 – 16:00** JONAS WELLENDORF
UC Berkeley, USA
MIGRATION MYTHS AND STRANGER KINGS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

CHAIR/MODERATOR: LOUISE MILNE

- 09:00 – 09:30** KAZUO MATSUMURA
Wako University, Tokyo, Japan
THE BIRTH OF AMATERASU: DIFFUSION OF A GODDESS IMAGE
- 09:30 – 10:00** JINGHUA HUANG
Yunnan University, China
A JOURNEY TO ESCAPE DEATH AND DISEASE: “SEEK MAGIC MEDICINE”
IN YUNNAN MYTHOLOGIES
- 10:00 – 10:30** HONEY LIBERTINE ACHANZAR-LABOR
University of the Philippines Manila, Philippines
HUMAN SACRIFICE IN SELECT PHILIPPINE ETHNIC GROUPS:
CROSS-REFERENCING ARCHEOLOGY, ETHNOGRAPHY, AND ART
- 10:30 – 11:00** GORAN ĐURĐEVIĆ
Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China
DEAD BUT IMMORTAL: MIRRORS, DEATH AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN
HAN AND ROMAN EMPIRE
- 11:00 – 11:30** ONDŘEJ SRBA
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
WANDERING BEHIND DEATH IN THE WESTERN MONGOLIAN ORAL
TRADITION

11:30 – 12:30

Lunch Break

**WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF EAST ASIA;
MYTHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD**

CHAIR/MODERATOR: MARTÍN CUITZEO DOMÍNGUEZ NUÑEZ

- 12:30 – 13:00** ONDŘEJ PAZDÍREK & MICHAL SCHWARZ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF THE AFTERLIFE IN THE EARLY MODERN
MISSIONS TO EAST ASIA
- 13:00 – 13:30** MICHAL SCHWARZ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
JOURNEYS TO THE KINGS AND MARRIAGES ACROSS BOUNDARIES: ASIAN
FIRST LADIES AND SACRALIZED POLYGAMY IN MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIFS
AND IN PRACTICE
- 13:30 – 14:00** REET HIEMÄE
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia
NARRATIVES OF THE PROMISED LAND IN THE DISCOURSE OF
CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION
- 14:00 – 14:30** KATHERINE ANNA NEW
New College, University of Oxford, UK
TRANSCENDING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH IN
BYZANTINE MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES
- 14:30 – 15:00** SAROLTA TATÁR
Nordic Bible Museum, Oslo, Norway
MYTH GENERATION IN ANCIENT AND MODERN GNOSTICISM:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION: INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY: INDIA, IRAN, AND BEYOND
CHAIR/MODERATOR: YURI BEREZKIN

- 10:00 – 10:30** SUNIL PARAB
Sindhu Veda Research Institute & Doon Institute of Medical Sciences, Dehradun, India
ACCIDENTAL DEATHS AND GHOSTS: MYTHS OF PROTECTIVE DEITIES
- 10:30 – 11:00** KRZYSZTOF GUTOWSKI
Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Warsaw, Poland
BUDDHIST RELIC CULT IN COMPARATIVE AND COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES
- 11:00 – 11:30** YAROSLAV VASSILKOV
Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg, Russia
UNRECOGNIZED INDO-EUROPEAN MOTIFS IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA
- 11:30 – 12:00** VICTORIA KRYUKOVA
Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg, Russia
CALENDAR-CLIMATIC ASPECTS OF THE MYTH OF YIMA AND INNER AVESTAN PARALLELS
- 12:00 – 12:30** PAOLO BARBARO
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France
KUSH-NAMA IN KOREA: A MYTHOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE IRANIC-FAR EASTERN RELATION OR THE RENDERING IN LEGENDARY TERMS OF A HISTORICAL EXCHANGE?

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch Break

**THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY: INDIA, IRAN, AND BEYOND
(CONTINUED)**

CHAIR/MODERATOR: MICHAEL WITZEL

- 13:30 – 14:00** VÁCLAV BLAŽEK
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
PRELITERARY MIGRATIONAL MOTIFS REFLECTED IN EARLY INDO-
EUROPEAN LITERARY TEXTS
- 14:00 – 14:30** NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA
Princeton University, USA
THE DEADLY YEAR
- 14:30 – 15:00** BRIAN COLLINS
Ohio University, USA
WHY DOES PARAŠURĀMA THROW HIS AXE INTO THE OCEAN AND
DRIVE BACK THE WATER? A STUDY IN THE CIRCULATION AND
TRANSFORMATION OF MYTH MOTIFS
- 15:00 – 15:30** SIGNE COHEN
University of Missouri, USA
THE SUBSTITUTE GUESTS: FEEDING ANCESTORS AT THE INDO-
EUROPEAN FUNERAL MEAL

MYTHOLOGY OF MESOPOTAMIA

- 15:30 – 16:00** JULYE BIDMEAD
Chapman University, USA
BABY-SNATCHING DEMONS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM:
MESOPOTAMIAN LAMAŠTU
- 16:00 – 16:30** ANN M. AGEE
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
REEDS, DATE PALMS AND COSMIC MOBILITY IN THE AFTERLIFE OF THE
ANCIENT NEAR EAST

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF THE CAUCASUS; SLAVIC AND BALKAN MYTHOLOGY

CHAIR/MODERATOR: LAURA ANGÉLICA ORTÍZ TENORIO

- 10:00 – 10:30** HASMIK H MAYAKYAN
Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, Armenia &
LEVON MIKAYELYAN
Armenian State Pedagogical University, Yerevan, Armenia
THE ANCIENT SYMBOLS IN PARAJANOV'S FILM 'THE COLOR OF POMEGRANATES'
- 10:30 – 11:00** ELENA DYAKOVA
The Russian Museum of Ethnography, Saint Petersburg, Russia
OVERCOMING DEATH ON THE EXAMPLE OF SEVERAL ROMANIAN TRADITIONS
- 11:00 – 11:30** ALEXANDER NOVIK
Saint Petersburg State University, Russia
MYTHOLOGICAL DEITIES AND CHARACTERS OF THE FORTUNE AND DEATH AMONG THE ALBANIANS OF UKRAINE: FIELDWORK MATERIALS 1998–2019
- 11:30 – 12:00** LEDIA DUSHI
Institute of Cultural Anthropology and Art Studies, Tirana, Albania
FUNERAL RITES IN NORTHERN ALBANIA: MEN'S LAMENT (*GJAMA*), DEATH, AND SERPENT AS A CHTHONIC DEITY
- 12:00 – 12:30** KATARINA PEJOVIC
University of Toronto, Canada
SIN-EATING, SPIRIT COMBAT, AND THE NEGOTIATION OF GRIEF IN BALKAN FOLK NECROMANCY
- 12:30 – 13:00** CLOSING REMARKS

ABSTRACTS

HUMAN SACRIFICE IN SELECT PHILIPPINE ETHNIC GROUPS: CROSS-REFERENCING ARCHEOLOGY, ETHNOGRAPHY, AND ART

HONEY LIBERTINE ACHANZAR-LABOR
University of the Philippines Manila, Philippines

The Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country and has the greatest number of Christians in Asia. It will be celebrating next year the 500th year of Christianity in the archipelago, and the 500-day countdown has begun with a calendar that is jampacked with activities – exhibits, festivities, academic conferences, among others. Five centuries of Christianization is indeed a long period of time for pre-Hispanic beliefs and practices that run counter traditional Catholic beliefs to thrive; such is the case of human sacrifice.

Archeological data will be used to show that this was indeed practiced in the Philippines in the past. Discussion will be based primarily on the Sta. Ana diggings which showed skeletal remains of people who were subjected to human sacrifice. A different take on the interpretation of the Manunggul Jar, an anthropomorphic burial jar, may also be used to support this.

Ethnographic data, on the other hand will be utilized to show how remnants of the conduct of human sacrifice has managed to remain in a variety of practices carried out by a number of Philippine ethnolinguistic groups. Among these, are the Tagabawas who live at the foothill of Mount Apo, the highest among Philippine mountains. The earliest anthropological work done in the Philippines had the group as subject and extant anthropological treatises show that human sacrifice was still practiced at the time of early Spanish contact. The importance of the sacrificial element in religious worship among the Tagabawas has led them retain now other forms of sacrifice related primarily to domestic animals.

Peculiar in a number of lake-shore towns in the Philippines is the belief of the annual loss of human life in a lake. Among the Tigbanuas in Palawan, the spirit of the lake does this to ensure that their abode will not be subjected to abuse.

REEDS, DATE PALMS AND COSMIC MOBILITY IN THE AFTERLIFE OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

ANN M. AGEE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

This paper proposes to show some of the structure and function of the Sumerian cosmos as it related to death-and-rebirth(?) and to present some of the images that were used to explicate and refer to these concepts. The great majority of exegetical studies of Sumerian civilization have focused on literary sources—to great benefit of our overall understanding, while most art-historical research has been dedicated to answering important stylistic and chronological questions. This study shows how our understanding of Sumerian cosmography can be informed by historic and pre- and protohistoric period visual evidence, providing a framework on which to interpret mythological material and to recognize mythological information as opposed to quotidian happenings, where such may not be obvious.

This involves work which has not been done: examination of images on pre-Sumerian seals from more northerly Mesopotamian sites as precursors to mythological concepts appearing much later. Methodologically and intellectually, each depends on the other credibly to explicate meaning---supportable if an unbroken line of relation can be established, extending to and throughout the Sumerian period.

The kind of approach utilized here is capable, further, of exploring and elucidating changes in Sumero-Akkadian worldviews on cosmological subjects which have rendered previous interpretation of texts on this basis a confusing enterprise. This, however, lies outside the scope of the present limited study, but promises fruitful research to be taken up in future, hopefully by many scholars.

ON THE LOCATION OF VALHALLA: THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD WARRIORS IN OLD NORSE MYTHOLOGY

EMIEL AMSTERDAM

Independent Scholar, The Netherlands

In Old Norse mythology the cosmos is divided into three regions; i) the upper world, which is the world of the gods; ii) the middle world, which is the realm of men and iii) the underworld. People who die a natural death by old age or illness go to Hella; the god of the underworld. Half of the warriors that die in battle will go to Valhalla; the hall of the supreme god Odin. The other half is claimed by the goddess Freya. Valhalla is one of the 12 halls in Asgard and is located in the upper world. The Poetic and Prose Edda give an extensive description of Valhalla; an eagle hovers above it and a wolf hangs in front of its western gates. On top of Valhalla stand a goat and a stag that eat of the branches of the world tree. The milk of the goat, Heidrun, fills a cauldron with mead, a drink made from honey, that can never be drained. Heidrun has many similarities with the goat Amalthea; the goat that nurtured the supreme god Zeus and from who the cornucopia originates. Amalthea was afterwards rewarded for this service by being placed among the stars by Zeus. Comparative mythology is used to relate all the characteristics of Valhalla with elements and motifs in Greek, Judean, Sumerian and Hittite archaeological artefacts and mythology. Special attention is paid to elements with a free running hind/doe, broken off horn/antler, abundance of milk and honey, goats/ibex or deer flanking a tree and a bird on a pole. The comparison is used to determine the location of Valhalla, where the fallen warriors go to prepare for Ragnarök; the eschatology in Old Norse mythology. The relationship with Odin, the Wild Hunt and Ragnarök provide additional confirmation on the location of Valhalla.

KUSH-NAMA IN KOREA: A MYTHOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE IRANIC – FAR EASTERN RELATION OR THE RENDERING IN LEGENDARY TERMS OF A HISTORICAL EXCHANGE?

PAOLO BARBARO

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France

In the last decade, a group of Iranian and South Korean researchers and politicians has put forward the hypothesis that some passages in the Iranian epic of Kush-Nama actually mirror a historical event, i.e., the exile of a Persian king in the Korean kingdom of Silla. This hypothesis has created numerous narratives on the web that show interesting traits of mythopoiesis but little scientific accuracy. On the other hand, other scholars, such as Scott Littleton, Matteo Compareti or Egami Namio, have put forward in the past more sound and better constructed theory and reconstruction, though not flawless, about the travelling of symbols, themes, stories and artifacts across central Asia between the Far East and cultures of the Iranic group.

In this paper, I explore some of the relevant sources, of the previous studies as well as the material culture to offer an overview of the long history of cultural and commercial contacts and exchanges between two edges of Asia until the Islamification of Persia.

In this context, the discussion of the accuracy of the hypothesis of an actual heir to the Persian throne being exiled in the kingdom of Silla, and the identitarian and political agenda that has helped constructing it, becomes an excuse to discuss two points: (1) how mythopoiesis and the related mythology are still active, functional, enjoyed and useful in the contemporary world (especially in the internet) even in academic circles and (2) the main strengths and flaws of what could be defined as a diffusionist reconstructions of the exchanges – in terms of religion and mythology – between Far East Asia (China, Korea and Japan) and the Iranic world during the first centuries of the first millenium CE.

ASIATIC MIGRATIONS INTO THE NEW WORLD: ANALYSIS OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN EURASIA AND AMERICA*

YURI BEREZKIN

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

The aim of our research is to acquire additional information on the peopling of America and to reveal characteristics of tales and ideas that can be related to particular episodes of this process. Main analytical unit is the motif. It is either episode of a tale or an image that reflects the worldview. Only those motifs that are found in at least two (and usually in many) traditions and have uneven but not chaotic distribution across the world are included into the database. The latter contains at least 60,000 abstracts of texts. Among 2700 motifs which distribution across 980 traditions of the world has been tracked, 933 are selected for this presentation. All of them are recorded both in America and in the Old World.

The New World was peopled from Eastern Eurasia between 15-17,000 and 5000 (the Paleo-Eskimo entry into the American Arctic) cal. B.P. Concentration of parallels for American sets of folklore and mythological motifs is uneven. Some areas of the Old World were unrelated to the peopling of America and in some others the early heritage was mostly obliterated in cause of later migrations and cultural transformation. Areas with greatest concentration of American parallels are the NE Siberia, Western Siberia, Amur region, Eastern Himalaya and Melanesia. Cultural heritage of the earliest migrants to America best survived in South America and has parallels in Melanesia. Both regions are the most isolated from Continental Eurasia and could preserve a set of cultural traits that were widespread across the Indo-Pacific margin of Asia 15-20,000 cal. B.P. The North American Northwest shares the highest and the Southeast the lowest number of those motifs that have parallels in Siberia. Taking tendencies in distribution of folklore motifs as proxies for movement of people, we can conclude that Asiatic homeland for most of the North American Indians was in Southern Siberia – Central Asia (how much such links correlate with genetic map of Asia and America in Terminal Pleistocene, is an open question). Later migrants from Siberia did not move deeper than the NW Coast and Arctic. The American Southwest is related to East and Central Asia. The NW Coast is related to Western Siberia and Amur region. Links between the Amur region and the American Arctic are rather weak.

* The research is supported by Russian Science Foundations, project no. 18-18-00361.

Sets of motifs recorded for Ancient Greece is closer to sets found in American traditions than later sets recorded across the Mediterranean region, the Balkans and the Caucasus. This tendency is stable with any combination of regional and thematic groups of motifs selected for computing. The American sets of motifs are regionally specific. At the same time, they could preserve features that formerly were also known in Western Eurasia but disappeared there after A.D. 500 or so.

BABY-SNATCHING DEMONS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM: MESOPOTAMIAN LAMAŠTU

JULYE BIDMEAD

Chapman University, USA

The goddess/demoness Lamaštu was one of the most feared divine beings in ancient Mesopotamia. The rogue daughter of the primordial beneficent sky couple, Anu and Antu, Lamaštu brought death and diseases to humans and nature alike, but she had marked appetite for pregnant women and newborn babies. She caused miscarriages by tearing babies from their mother's womb, and crib death by sneaking into houses and suckling newborns with her breasts that are "bathed with the milk of death." In a civilization completely dependent upon producing numerous and healthy children for familial survival, Lamaštu, whose name means "she who erases," posed a persistent threat to society. For nearly two millennia women (and men) employed a variety of magico-religious practices to safeguard against Lamaštu's all-destructive power. This use of sympathetic magic included incantations and complex rituals as well as apotropaia in the form of amulets, figurines, and house plaques. The plaques and figurative amulets depict Lamaštu as a female monster with a lion's head, donkey's teeth, sharp talons as fingers, and a naked hairy body. Pigs and dogs suckle her pendulous breasts. Her accoutrements include female gendered objects—a comb, a spindle, and a toggle pin. Despite her murderous actions, according to Mesopotamian mythology, Lamaštu is actually fulfilling a cosmic function and divine decree. In the Atra-hasis creation myth, the gods in an effort to prevent human overpopulation demand that a female demon, an unnamed exterminator, exist to snatch babies from their mother's lap. Though no Mesopotamian mythological texts detail the specific origins or individual stories of Lamaštu a gender analysis of some of her visual representations and ritual texts expose a divine being who uses any means possible to fulfill her gendered role as mother, however deadly that may be.

PRELITERARY MIGRATIONAL MOTIFS REFLECTED IN EARLY INDO-EUROPEAN LITERARY TEXTS

VÁCLAV BLAŽEK

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

A purpose of the present contribution is to summarize and compare in a typological perspective the most characteristic migrational motifs reflected in the later literary sources. Specifically, I will examine the Balkan origin of Phryges according to Herodotus [6.45.1; 7.73.1] and Strabo [12.8.3] and that of Messapians by Pliny [3.16/102]; the migration of the Celts from the Gaul to Northern Italy described by Titus Livius [5.33-34]; mythical migrational waves to Ireland depicted in *Lébor Gabala*; mythical migrations of the Goths by Jordanes: *De origine actibusque Getarum* or *Getica* [§79–81]; migration to and from the island of Gotland by *Gutasaga* (Chapter 1); West Germanic invasion to Britain by Bede Venerabilis: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* [I, 14-15]; migration of the Langobards by *Origo gentium Langobardum* [1-7], etc.

THE SUBSTITUTE GUESTS: FEEDING ANCESTORS AT THE INDO-EUROPEAN FUNERAL MEAL

SIGNE COHEN

University of Missouri, USA

This paper explores the ritual feeding of guests at the funeral meal attested in ancient Indo-European cultures. I will discuss the feeding of Brahman guests at the monthly Hindu *śrāddha* ritual, the feeding of ancestors through gifts of food to monks as described in the Buddhist Pali text *Petavatthu*, the ancient Greek ritual of *perideipnon*, the Norse *erfi*, the *averil* meal of the British Isles, and the old English custom of *sinne-eating*. I argue that the feeding of living guests is also a symbolic feeding of the ancestors in all these cases, but that the larger significance of this ritual is very different in each of the societies involved.

While the Hindu and Buddhist ceremonial feedings are concerned with ritual purity and *karma* transfer, the *perideipnon* stresses the ritual performance of hospitality, the *erfi* the social recognition of the dead man's legitimate heir, the *averil* the warding off of threats from the lingering dead, and the custom of *sinne-eating* the maintenance of social hierarchy through the ritual transfer of sins to a pauper. I will discuss the theoretical implications of these local differences in the interpretation of the inherited Indo-European ritual for our larger collective project of comparative mythology. In their seminal work, A

Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age (2000), Kimberly Patton, Benjamin Ray, and their colleagues argue for a form of religious comparison that pays attention to differences as well as similarities, and to cultural context as much as shared origin. In this paper, I intend to show that this approach is fruitful in comparative Indo-European mythology as well.

**WHY DOES PARASHURĀMA THROW HIS AXE INTO THE OCEAN
AND DRIVE BACK THE WATER?
A STUDY IN THE CIRCULATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF MYTH MOTIFS**

BRIAN COLLINS
Ohio University, USA

Paraśurāma (“Rāma with the Axe”) is a divine hero of the *Mahābhārata* epic who is best known for exterminating the warrior class twenty-one times and decapitating his mother. In this paper, I will examine two related themes in Paraśurāma’s myth cycle: deathless exile and the settlement of newly created coastal land. In all of Hindu mythology, only Paraśurāma is both an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu and a *cirañjīvin* (immortal). After he has achieved the purpose for which he comes to earth (violently paving the way for a new righteous warrior race), Paraśurāma is left with a pointless existence that will terminate only with the end of the world, like Cain, the Wandering Jew, and another Indian hero, Aśvatthāman. After his destruction of the warrior class, Paraśurāma offers up the earth that he has conquered in sacrifice, depriving himself of the very ground on which he stands. As a result, he has to create a new land that he can only inhabit because it was not part of the earth when he gave it away. He does this by throwing his axe out into the sea and driving the water back to create a strip of coast (as in in the Irish myth of Tuirbe Trágmār). This new land is southwest India’s Konkan Coast. In this paper I will look at role of deathless exile and land creation motifs in the self-understandings of different clans and castes from this region who see themselves as having been brought from somewhere else by Paraśurāma.

**BETWEEN THE RITUAL AND THE MYTH.
THE CELEBRATION OF THE DAY OF THE DEAD IN MEXICO AND CHILE
DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE XIXTH CENTURY**

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The Day of the Dead in Mexico is a popular festival dedicated to the memory of the deceased; it is celebrated every year between October 31 and November 2. At this time altars are prepared in the houses, and the graves in the cemeteries are arranged with the belief that the dead would visit the living during the nights of these dates. This ritual was mixed with myth during the 19th century when it acquired its current form.

Studies and research about this date have focused generally on its local and national dimensions, and in some cases, on its celebration among Mexican migrants in the United States. The relationship between this celebration, the Mexican state and the nationalism has also been questioned. Research has also emphasized the relationship of the Day of the Dead with Mexican identity; scholars have discussed whether its origin is pre-Hispanic or European Catholic, and they have ethnographically described its celebration among different indigenous peoples of Mexico. Concerning the studies of the festivity during the 19th century, these have mostly focused on the folkloric and picturesque aspects of this date. In combination with the study of various hemerographic compilations, the scholars have figured out how the tradition of the Mexican skull emerged during this century.

Despite the above, no study researched the Day of the Dead in its global context, nor any study compared these festivals with celebrations in other countries. Additionally, the relationship between ritual and myth in this festivity have not been analyzed yet. Due to these shortcomings, I propose in this paper to compare the celebration of the Day of the Dead during the second half of the 19th century between Mexico and a Latin American country where this festival was also celebrated: Chile. The above has the purpose to understand the Day of the Dead during the XIXth century in a global way, going beyond the local or national.

For this reason, I want to investigate the differences and similarities in both celebrations, in order to understand the relationship between the rite and the myth in the feast of the dead in Latin America during the 19th century. To carry out this analysis I am going to use the historical comparative method developed by the historians Bloch and Kocka. I also will use the concept of ritual developed by Victor Turner and the concept of myth developed by the researchers Alfredo

López Austin and Elisa Castañeda. Finally, I will use the model of the ethnologist Pierre Lemonniere to understand the relationship between myths and rites.

DEAD BUT IMMORTAL: MIRRORS, DEATH AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN HAN AND ROMAN EMPIRE

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Mirrors in Qin – Han and Roman Empire had various roles based on the major usage as reflective surfaces. Some of the purposes included magic, social, political, religious, diplomatic and other functions. In this paper author discusses about mirrors and their relations with death and transformations that have been depicted on the decorative side of mirrors in both empires. Representations are designed from religion and mythology. As representative cases studies are chosen among others Roman mirrors with Dionysus, Venus and Chinese mirrors with immortals, Queen Mother of West and kui dragons. These decorative elements are used from Chinese myths of paradise (Mt. Kunlun where is palace of Queen Mother of West and meeting spot between gods and humans) and Greco-Roman mythology of Dionysus (re-birth or twice born) which is linked with death and transformations. Beside representations, mirrors are analyzed as metal (China, Rome) and glass (Rome) mediums which have symbolic usage of protection and longevity. Established on heterotopias (M. Foucault), synthesis (Ji Xianlin), archives (J. Derrida), actor – network theory (ANT), monumentality and double screen (Wu Hung) author analyzed Chinese and Roman mirrors as mediums with various mentioned representations in the social and functional purposes within his concept of reflection.

FUNERAL RITES IN NORTHERN ALBANIA: MEN'S LAMENT (GJAMA), DEATH, AND SERPENT AS A CATHONIC DEITY

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Part of the funeral rites, which is occurred even today in communities that have come down from the Christian areas of northern highlands of Albania, is what is known as the Men's Lament (Gjama). This phenomenon occurs in the Dukagjin

area or in communities that have moved from this area and living in the suburbs of Albanian cities. Men's lament is a rite that has begun a long time ago. Few Albanian scholars have talked about this phenomenon and have tried to explain and describe it. My goal was, and is to give a contribution in the field that has as an object of study this subject, because as well as previous works are not exhaustive and have had or not as their object the field research. I would say that precisely at this point there is my priority, since most of my work related to the study of this phenomenon; I have done in the field, having the opportunity to be part of the funeral ceremonies, to record them, and also to interview and photograph the men who lamented. I have also the opportunity of observation of numerous recordings of laments, certainly late recordings, of the period after the 90s, which have helped me to estimate and to judge more clearly about this phenomenon. Of course, men's lament has changed until today. It is already performed as a part of the meaningful tradition and identity of communities which execute it.

The men's lament known as *Gjama e Burrave* is a ritual executed by a group of men which is known also as s dance, a dance of grief. The Call of these lamenters is so deep and melancholic. They perform by beating the breasts, scratching the face, giving a perfect imitation of frantic grief. All this is documented by me. I filmed this ritual and I also interviewed different lamenters.

In the meantime, as Aleksandar Stipčević (Croatian archeologist, bibliographer, librarian, and historian who specialized in the study of the Illyrians) wrote, the death rituals are known in different Balkan areas as Dance of Serpent. From this point of view, I will see the study of the men's grief also from the ethological perspective.

The Cult of the Dead, Cult of Ancestors is well known from the Illyrian times. This Cult of Dead remained alive specially in the communities who used to live in the mountains of North Albania. The men's grief (*gjama e burrave*) is the most important moment of the death ritual, is the rite of passage which stresses the liminal moment in which the lamenters help the Spirit to pass from this life in the other life in which the ancestors (Cult of the Dead) wait for the dead person.

As the final part of my presentation, I will make a specific explanation about the Symbol of Serpent through the Illyrian tribes until today. The Serpent was something people feared and worshiped. It is also a totem, a magic fighter, a magic maker, and Chthonic Deity. Serpent as Chthonic Deity is very strongly and deeply related to the concept of Death.

The Serpent used to be and still is (in northern mountains of Albania) an important part of death ritual. It is said that the Serpent as the guardian of the house is also the guardian of the grave. The Serpent waits for the dead in the other life as the most important of Chthonic Animals.

In my paper, among others I will analyze the Illyrian belief in the underworld where the dead spirits went to, as in Greek mythology. The duality of the Serpent Symbol, as good and bad at the same time. The Illyrian Serpent is an Indo-European myth, the same as the origin of Illyrian tribes is.

OVERCOMING DEATH ON THE EXAMPLE OF SEVERAL ROMANIAN TRADITIONS

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Traditional culture includes ideas about the structure of the world, material and immaterial, as well as metaphysical space that contains various constructs and forms generated by the activity of human consciousness. Romanians living in Ukraine (Eastern Europe) can distinguish several forms of communication with the world of the dead. This is a ritual connection with the dead through the rites of the Orthodox religion (funerals, commemorations in the Church, at home, in the cemetery); it echoes the cult of ancestors in calendar holidays (*Malanka; Day of the Dead*). One-sided influence on the world of the dead is most consciously expressed in Orthodox rites as concern for the path of the soul in the other world. Rituals that are related to the cult of ancestors, obviously, lost the magical sense, and are governed by collective memory: this is a mass campaign in the cemetery during the *Day of the Dead* or making masks of people who came "from another world" during traversal masks *Malanka* on January 13. Individual memory of the dead is accumulated in the narratives of the local residents (stories and memories of the ancestors) and visual means (photos in albums, on walls and graves). Thus, the collective and individual memory of the ancestors materializes them in the present reality through rites and narratives in the social status that they had during their lifetime, and symbolically returns them to the world of the living.

DEATH AND MIGRATION IN PREHISTORIC MYTHOLOGIES: NEW INSIGHTS FROM RECENT ADNA, CLIMATOLOGICAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

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&

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Recent mass migrations driven in part by climate change and linked phenomena, including the Covid-19 pandemic and rising political-economic instabilities, have been accompanied by an intense search for antecedents of such phenomena in early human history. The universal nature of the linked themes of death and migration in literate mythologies covered in this Conference suggests that older roots of those themes might possibly lie in deep prehistorical times. After a quick summary of commonalities in those themes found globally in early literate traditions, we examine new studies of ancient DNA (aDNA), climatological, and archaeological evidence from the upper Pleistocene (ca. 129k ybp - 11,700 ybp) that reflect on those themes. We conclude by discussing how this evidence, along with recent findings from other scientific fields, force major revisions of earlier models of the prehistoric origins and spread of preliterate mythologies, including partly overlapping and partly conflicting models of our own.

BUDDHIST RELIC CULT IN COMPARATIVE AND COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES

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The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the Buddhist relic cult and to provide the explanatory contexts of this phenomena.

The cult of relics in Buddhism seems to be one of the most important elements of Buddhist religiosity regardless of time and place.

In the first part of the paper the comparative perspective is presented. This comparative context includes the parallels from the Christian and Islamic tradition, but the presentation is mainly focused on the other Asian religious traditions, especially Shintoism, shamanic-like practices of Central and South Asia, and the traces of relic cult in Jainism. The working hypothesis about the

possibly analogies or relations with the Hindu myth and tradition of *Śakti Pīṭhas* is worth considering.

The second part of the paper is related to the so-called Cognitive Studies of Religion. Within this theoretical framework there are several theories that provide the explanation of the origin and the mechanisms of the relic cult, not only in the religious universum of Buddhism, but also the phenomena of relic cult in general.

NARRATIVES OF THE PROMISED LAND IN THE DISCOURSE OF CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION[†]

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Based on material containing both individual and focus group interviews, my paper offers a comparison of mythological or mythologized motives in the narratives about immigrant life that are told in African source countries (mainly Tanzania and neighboring countries) and by African immigrants in European target countries (mainly Estonia and Finland). Most frequently, three types of narratives were distinguishable: 1) countries of European Union depicted as wealthy "milk-and-honey" countries; 2) countries of European Union as places of alienation and fear; 3) former African homelands as idealized real home where one would once want to be buried. My paper will delineate repeated narrative models, motives recurring in argumentation (e.g., the help of Jesus or supernatural beings in reaching promised land), reinterpretations and the role of such narratives in identity building, life history narrating and psychological self-help. Additionally, the above-mentioned narratives will be compared with views, beliefs, and narratives of Estonian local population (derived from interviews, internet forum posts and commentaries) in order to point out discrepancies (e.g., polarized archetypical narratives of evil and danger *versus* the ones of destiny, luck and supernatural agency).

[†] This research is supported by Estonian Research Council grant PUTJD962.

THE ANCIENT SYMBOLS IN PARAJANOV'S FILM 'THE COLOR OF POMEGRANATES'

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&

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Symbols, figurative images, allegories in Sergey Parajanov's art, is a system rooted in mankind's millennial experience and directed to the future. His exceptional film 'The Color of Pomegranates' is one of his masterpieces where Parajanov once again prefers a language of allegory.

In his film Parajanov appeals to beliefs related to the Underworld by using different symbols such as color and objects.

One significant symbol used in his film is window. Parajanov shows a number of allegoric perceptions of the window symbolism having parallels with beliefs connected to this important element of building in the Ancient Near East.

Generally, the specific symbolism of windows is not only their role of a borderline between the inner and outer worlds, but also suggests the penetrability of this border. Man in the Ancient World believed in dualistic character of windows. Apart from being a vital source of light, these objects, at the same time, were considered dangerous spots of contacts with the outer world. Window also established a symbolic connection with the world of the dead and especially holds a significant place in burial rite. Besides, Parajanov's film reflects the symbolic connection between the window and death. Sayat-Nova, the poet and the main character of the film, during the funeral of his lover who is his muse, looks at her for the last time through a symbolic and decorated large window-frame, which seems to be a border line dividing this and that world.

A few examples described here, once again prove the all-seeing nature of Parajanov's cinematography, capable to walk through all barriers of the past and the future and infiltrate the deeper layers of the human subconscious.

A JOURNEY TO ESCAPE DEATH AND DISEASE: “SEEK MAGIC MEDICINE” IN YUNNAN MYTHOLOGIES

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This article compares six texts of three groups in Yunnan of China. The motif of “seeking magic medicine to escape death and disease” is frequently mentioned in Yunnan’s folk literature. Based on six texts of the Naxi people, Yi people and Hani people, three main points must be kept in mind. Firstly, “magic medicine” is a key element to escape death and disease in all stories, but in the beginning of the story, no one knows where it is located and how to find it. The plotline revolved around the journey of trying to search for the magic medicine. The plot defines the sequence of events that lead the protagonists to their objectives.

There is one genuine difference of migration’s aim among these texts. In some texts, medicine is the only purpose of the journey, however, in other texts, “seeking magic medicine” is just an episode in the whole story.

Secondly, what is the magic medicine of escaping death and disease? According to these texts, “the magic medicine” is not the existing normal one, and each medicine differs from the others. In Naxi texts the magic medicine includes two types: magic grass which prolongs the life cycle, and magic water which brings one back to life. In Hani texts they are described in different ways. In one story, these three things are called “medicine of immortality”: the hottest tear among nine bowls of spicy ants’ tears, the bitterest gall among nine stones’ galls and the most poisonous intestine among nine pieces of the moon’s intestines. In an alternate story, dragon’s saliva gives humans access to immortality.

Thirdly, in all texts, after a difficult journey the protagonists finally find the magic medicine, but it ultimately does not belong to any group or human for a variety of reasons. According to one of the Hani texts, because of stealing magic medicine, the moon fades every month, and again from its fading reverts to fullness. In a Naxi text, magic medicine is spread on the land due to carelessness, so all plants have a cycle of growth and decline. Even so, in all stories the seeker could be seen as a cultural hero.

Given the above, that the genre of a story is a mixture or the overlap of three themes: the origin of death, the origin of some natural phenomena, and the hero’s adventure. According to these myths, seeking for the magic medicine implies a deep-seated yearning for immortal life.

TRAVELLING ROYAL MONSTERS IN THE EASTERN BALTIC IRON AGE

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It was a mighty dragon, who ruled the world of supernatural beasts in the Northern Europe for many centuries. It appears in narratives, sometimes crafted in weapons or jewelry and more rarely in rock-carvings. East of the Baltic Sea, the dragon seems to become a symbol of kinship of tribes in SW Finland during the Viking Age. Soon after, in the 12th century AD two other species – the leucrotta and griffin – spread to the region, representing the Christian European taxonomy.

In this presentation, I will first discuss the problems of identification – if narrative sources are missing, do we still see mythological beasts in material remains? Secondly, I am interested in how the mythological animals from the Christian Europe spread to pagan Baltic countries. Lastly, I will explore what sort of meanings were possibly ascribed to these species according to the material remains.

THE JOURNEY OF THE SOUL AND THE OTHERWORLD ON THE EXAMPLE OF ESTONIAN AND BALTIC FINNISH MATERIAL

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Estonians and Baltic Finnish peoples' perceptions of the otherworld are multi-layered, related to different ideas, influenced by biblical literature and various fictional works, partly related to everyday discussions about the otherworld. The tradition of the last (19th-21st) centuries links the otherworld with another world, or the so-called Off-world. All these places can be in the sky, on earth, or somewhere far away, or under the earth. The views on paradise and hell, known through Christian teaching, are also diverse in folk religion and placed in the sky: on the stars, near the sun or the moon, on comets; they can be located further afield, or underground. At the same time, there are quite a few beliefs that the lives of killed, dead or abandoned children and others will continue on the moon, for example. However, special treatment after death also extends to unmarried persons, criminals and other persons. Both earlier and today, it was imagined that their loved ones were in the sky, about which there is often no closer idea.

We can describe the otherworld as an emotional topography, where spatial descriptions, inhabitants, activities of the parallel world are presented with emotions, and influential views of fiction and folk belief are characterized by sublimity. Folklore researchers have pointed out that it is a vernacular fantasy, a miraculous time and space, where angels, saints, souls of the dead, etc. are located together and which differs from eschatology and fairy tale time. Folklore researchers have pointed out that otherworld is a miraculous time, where angels, saints, souls of the dead, etc. are located together. Spatial descriptions include rural views, the grass garden or exterior, as well as unusual buildings with magnificent spaces and almost city descriptions.

MONOMYTH: HERO'S DEATH AND REBIRTH AS A STRUCTURAL CROSSOVER OF SACRIFICE AND INITIATION

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The term 'Monomyth' has been popularized by Joseph Campbell who used it to describe a common pattern found in heroic myths. I would like to critically reassess the monomyth and provide a more clear-cut and well-defined working structure than what Campbell provides, as well as show its limits. However, the main bulk of my talk is devoted to putting the *monomyth* in the context of the structures of *initiation* and *sacrifice* and showing the nature their mutual relationship. According to my analysis, monomyth is closely related to initiation and sacrifice, and this can be demonstrated if we place each of the three structures side by side. All three are concerned with the communication between This World and the Otherworld and all three are composed of similar elements, albeit structured slightly differently. This analysis turns the monomyth into a less vague concept and allows its rational usage for the purpose of comparative studies.

The same analysis also provides generalized toolkit for analyzing mythological narratives that deal with the Otherworld journeys (which is a large part of mythological stories) and updates the narratological models of Vladimir Propp and Algirdas Greimas by connecting the story structures to the processes of sacrifice and initiation. It has been already theorized by a number of scholars that part of the appeal of Otherworld-journey narratives and the reason of their widespread popularity is that they psychologically reenact the process of initiation on the imaginative-narrative level and thus allows the audience to go through a kind of catharsis. My analysis provides support for this claim by

showing the exact correspondence of the Otherworld story-structure to the structures of initiation and sacrifice.

CALENDAR-CLIMATIC ASPECTS OF THE MYTH OF YIMA AND INNER AVESTAN PARALLELS

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A well-known and widely discussed myth of Yima who three times enlarges the earth and builds a shelter during a cataclysm, is set forth in the second fragment of the *Videvdāt*. Much less attention has been paid to the textual and mythological parallel to the passage about the construction of Yima's Vara contained in the *Videvdāt* itself (Kryukova 2006, 2012; Rezania 2017). *Videvdāt* 14.14 represents a variant of natural disaster (and, accordingly, a variant of the calendar period: winter in *Videvdāt* 2, drought in *Videvdāt* 14) and indicates the connection of Yima's *Var* with the heavenly abodes of gods. Another point of interest connected with calendar and climatic features is the fact that *Videvdāt* 2 counts the periods of time by winters, though the beginning of Yima's action is marked by noon, the period of day under the control of Rapithwin, a deity who appears in the ritual circle only in the springtime. Thus, taking into account the calendar and climatic features reflected in the myth can provide a new look at the history of the cataclysm in ancient Iranian mythology.

AN APPROXIMATION TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE GIANTS IN COMCAAC, RARAMURI, AND INDE MYTHOLOGY

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Three cultures that inhabit different places have stories about a race of giants that lived with them in the past.

The Comcaac consider the giants their ancestors, while the Inde and Raramuris say that they simply coexisted with giants who were 'bad people', and that is why they eliminated them.

The objective of this research is to explain three stories of giants in the three cultures according to Teun Van Dijk's discourse analysis, Maranda's method of

analysis, and Lévi-Strauss' structural analysis. These different methods allow us to have a comprehensive perspective of the myths.

The research questions are: What moral values are reflected in various stories? What are the characteristics of this genre? What values are shared among the cultures, and which of the values differ?

In conclusion, we will see that the Seris judge the actions of the giants and provide different comments on their behavior while considering them the ancestors, whereas the Inde and the Raramuris have a negative attitude towards this type of people. Myths build the parameters of the proper behavior in these cultures.

**CONCEPTS OF EXAUGURATION AND INAUGURATION
IN RELATION
TO THE PANTHEON SUGGESTED BY
IBN FADLAN'S ACCOUNT OF A RUS' FUNERAL**

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This Rus' funeral took place on the River Volga near present-day Kazan in Tatarstan in the year 922 AD and an account of it was recorded in Arabic by Ibn Fadlan who was a traveller from Baghdad. The main context is Scandinavian and there may also be Turkic elements. I have already examined aspects of this account in an article forthcoming in *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift* and have argued there that the funeral activities are royal ones and that they imply that the transition after the king's death involves the erasure of a closed group of people who are replaced by an equivalent group in the reign that follows. The implication appears to be that six men and an old and a young woman have a special relationship with the king, and it is further suggested that these nine people correspond to nine gods in the pantheon. The new king being inaugurated will be attended by a fresh set of eight supporters and study of inauguration ceremonies will be introduced here. The king's death marks the end of an era, and a link can be made with Adam of Bremen's well-known account of a sacrifice at Uppsala of sets of nine creatures including humans at the end of each period of nine years. Adam also speaks of the drowning of a human victim in a well and this victim may correspond to the god of death in the Indo-European tenfold scheme that I have posited whose human counterpart appears to be sacrificed as part of the ceremony of inauguration, so connecting the people in the forthcoming reign with the land of the dead.

**MIGRATION AND OTHERWORLD JOURNEY IN THE
NORTH CENTRAL EURASIAN MYTHOLOGIES AND RITUALS,
AND THE MAIN THEORIES OF MIGRATION
IN THE MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE RESEARCH**

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This paper focuses on two topics, in close correlation with each other. On the one hand, it focuses on the strong biocultural correlations between the leading role of the wild reindeer (caribou) cows during the spring migrations of the vast herds (Calef 1981: 23-24), and the belief of the ‘Mother of the Animals’ (or Master of the Animals, see: Jacobson-Tepfer 2015; Vitebsky 1995: 32; *Hauptgeist, ein ijäkyl, ‘Mutter-Tier’* Harva 1938: 477; leading female animal guardian or *Tiermutter* [animal mother] Vajda 1964: 268-290; Hultkrantz 1993: 89; female-spirit, Hamayon 1993: 16; spirit of animals, Helskog 1999: 77), the tutelary spirit of the South Siberian (mainly Mongolic, Tungusic and Turkic) shaman during his otherworld journey, within the framework of the biocultural theory of religion (Armin Geertz 2010). On the other hand, it briefly discusses the main theories on migration (*Wandertheorie*), distribution, and transcultural diffusion in the mythology research history, reflecting upon the first subject. In the first topic will be elaborated the problem of the biocultural bases of myth and ritual in a North Central Eurasian context: the journey to the land of the dead (otherworld). In the second one will be briefly surveyed the main ideas of mythology and folklore on migration, since the Kulturkreis theory by Leo Frobenius, through the concepts of the historico-geographical school, of the *Wandertheorie*, *Automigration*, and “ecotypes” (von Sydow 1934), of the so-called migratory legends (Christiansen 1958), of the migration of folktales (critiques to the merely diffusionist and evolutionist perspectives; Utley, and comments by Austerlitz, Bauman, Count, Dundes, Hultkrantz, and others 1974), till the present day theories of the epidemiology of beliefs and representations (Sperber 1985, 1990, 1996), and the immunology of cultural systems (Sørensen 2004).

In this paper, all theories and concepts will be reviewed through the examples of the first theme.

THE BIRTH OF AMATERASU: DIFFUSION OF A GODDESS IMAGE

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The topic is the diffusion of a goddess image from China to Japan. The Queen Mother of the West was well known in ancient China. With the rise of Daoism, her image was engraved on bronze mirrors. In the third century, an envoy of the Queen of Wa, Himiko, arrived at the northern kingdom of Wei from Japan asking for diplomatic recognition. In token of recognition, together with other goods, Himiko received one hundred bronze mirrors from the emperor. In Japanese mythological text, the *Kojiki*, the head of the pantheon is the sun goddess Amaterasu. Her position is enigmatic, since a female supreme sun deity is rare in other parts of the world. In addition, it is a prevailing opinion that in older times the head of the pantheon in Japanese myth was not Amaterasu but Takami-musubi, a male deity. Although there is no historical record, there possibly occurred a change that resulted in the ascension of a female solar deity. Some presume that the image of Himiko, who received round shining bronze mirrors from China, was instrumental in bringing about this change. She may have used them as her symbol and we can surmise that by producing more mirrors, she distributed them to her subjects, thereby consolidating the relationship. Himiko might also have used the image of the Queen of the West engraved on the mirror to refer to herself.

We can further assume that the bronze mirrors brought back from China in the third century as a symbol of power to a female ruler of Wa, Himiko, were copied and widely distributed. When the Yamato regime later decided to compile the mythological text to legitimize their position, the image of Himiko with a shining bronze mirror that symbolized the sun could have been employed as an ancestral supreme deity.

In sum, the image of the Queen of the West on Chinese mirrors could have been reproduced as the image of the Japanese sun goddess Amaterasu whose symbol in the *Kojiki* is a huge bronze mirror.

THE RHETORIC OF DREAMS IN JOURNEYS TO THE OTHERWORLD

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Travel is a master-metaphor in accounts of the Otherworld. Since the time of *Gilgamesh*, Otherworlds, including Lands of the Dead, are more frequently represented in terms of the trip to get there, rather than the destination itself. The idea that dreaming is a means of access to the Otherworld must be even older. In texts and images from the Bronze Age on, the basic imagery of travel is often elaborated through dream rhetoric, to do with impossibilities, reversals, condensation and displacement. This paper first examines the roles explicitly given to sleep and dreaming in framing such scenarios, then considers a selection of texts and images – from ancient, medieval and folkloric sources – which render stages of the journey to the Otherworld through recognisably oneiric transforms.

The formula of journey – of passage through terrain rendered liminal by specific landmarks – is thus more foundational than might at first be apparent. Arguably, without it, there would be no way of generating Otherworlds as Other. And the “journey” scenario, with its landmarks, also may be regarded as addressing intrinsic difficulties with death-as-social-rupture; thus, many societies stretch the moment of death through collective representation, to create a “lag” or limbo period, during which the deceased is represented as “in transit.”

TRANSCENDING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH IN BYZANTINE MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES

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The paper explores the boundaries between life and death in the account of the 12th century Byzantine mythographer Ioannis Tzetzes (*Chiliades*), which describes the return of a hero from the world of the dead to his living wife. The mythographer underlines the role of the deity of the Underworld (Pluto), who lets the Greek hero flee Hades and dwell again among the living. The paper traces the Medieval representation back to its donor traditions, Classical literary sources (*The Iliad* 2.695-704; *Cypria* fr. 1.10; Pausanias IV.2.74; Euripides’ fragmentary tragedy, recorded by mythographers Aristides, Lucian, Pseudo-Apollodorus, Eustathius, Hyginus; Ovid’s *Heroides* XIII; Catullus *Elegy* 68) and

extant archaeological and numismatic evidence (two Roman sarcophagi; a Greek drachm and tetradrachm coin). The paper argues that Tzetzes' version of the legend reflects mythological views on the fluidity of the borders between the worlds of the living and the dead and the potential for reanimation. In contrast to the donor tradition, Byzantine mythography explores the divine capacity for blurring boundaries between life and death, ascribing a new motivation to the agency capable of transcending death. The paper thus suggests a new interpretation of the Byzantine mythographic account of the reanimation of the dead.

TRANSMISSION AND TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIGRATION MYTHS IN CENTRAL MEXICO

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&

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In this paper, we trace the development of one of the key mythological themes in pre-Columbian and colonial Mesoamerica. The mythological theme in question is that of the departure, journey, and arrival of a group that eventually settles and founds a new city, a myth that found local expressions in a restricted geographical area near the famous archaeological site of Xochicalco in the present-day state of Morelos in Mexico. The most well-known example of this type of myth is that of the Mexica (Aztec) and how they, following the commands of their patron deity Huitzilopochtli, set out from the mythic place of Aztlan and eventually settled in the Mexico Valley.

What is so unique about this particular case study from Morelos, to the south of the Valley of Mexico, is that we are able to trace the development of the migration myth and its local variants over at least ten centuries, from the Epiclassic (c. AD 650-1000) to the 1990s. Thus, we have oral migration myths narrated by Nawa speakers in the 20th century in the town of Cuentepec, which we can compare to different versions recorded on native cartographic documents, most notably on the so-called *Lienzo de Tetlama* dating to the 16th century. The *lienzos* are rendered on large lengths of cloth, and combine iconography, Aztec glyphs and annotations in Nawatl written with Latin letters. In addition to the extant *Lienzo de Tetlama*, we have knowledge of a series of different versions that have since been lost, but fortunately preserved in copies made between 1810 and 1891. Finally, we suggest that these colonial myths find their origin at least in part from

much earlier migration and foundational myth that are recorded in glyphic texts and images of a series of monuments (literally, lienzos carved in stone) from Xochicalco and Tetluma, dating to the Epiclasic period. We are thus able to demonstrate that the time depth of a mythic migration theme harks all the way back to at least the Epiclasic period.

MYTHOLOGICAL DEITIES AND CHARACTERS OF THE FORTUNE AND DEATH AMONG THE ALBANIANS OF UKRAINE: FIELDWORK MATERIALS 1998–2019

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Present day situation. Nowadays, in Russia and Ukraine there are estimated 5000 ethnic Albanians. They live mainly in four villages situated in Odessa and Zaporizhia regions. From the ethnolinguistic and anthropologic points of view these Albanian villages are of particular interest and value since they are excellent examples of “melting pot”. Nowadays the Albanians of Ukraine continue to believe in mythological creatures, the parallels of which are found in the Balkans.

The analysis of lexis of the Albanian subdialect of Ukraine shows the continuation of mythological terminology with the districts of South-Eastern Albania (Korça, Devoll, Kolonja). The subdialect has no collective lexeme, which involves all the representatives of the demonic world. The most common variants of denotation are these ones: *nok janë të prastūrë* (lit. they are unclean), *shpírti nok i prastūrë* (lit. unclean spirit).

Vampirë. This character can be not only masculine, but also feminine – *vampirka* (*vampir/ë –a*). Albanian peasants in the Balkans would rather use the lexeme *lugat* ‘bogie’. It is perceived as a neologism of the last decades. Very often the stories about vampires are accompanied by narratives about witches, sorcerers and quacks.

Harm caused to domestic animals. *Nuse a lalos* (‘bride of l’al’o’) is the subdialect word for ‘weasel’. Weasels cause the most serious harm to livestock. *Nuse a lalos* looks like a totemic name. *Nuse a lalos* is registered in: [Atlasi dialektologjik i gjuhës shqipe / Gjinari J. ed al. V. I, II. Napoli; Tiranë: 2007–2008] as a word used in South-Eastern Albania.

The word *Maksull* means a good side which exists in every living being. ‘To steal maksull’ (*marr maksullnë*) means ‘to witch a house’. The concept *Maksull* among the Albanians of Ukraine is closely related to the mythological worldview of the Balkan peoples (Albanians, Serbians, Macedonians etc.) and is also

associated with belief in witches (particularly in cow witches) among Eastern Slavs.

FLOWERS TO THE GODS: PRESENCE AND MEANING OF THE FLOWERS IN AZTEC OFFERINGS

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In the Aztec mythology, the sun and the humankind were created through the sacrifice of the gods themselves, as a result, it is no surprise that an important part of their religion and rituals was to honor their deities through sacrifices and offerings.

The offerings were also one of the ways in which the Aztecs communicated with their gods: each of the objects that laid in their interior had a specific meaning that intertwined with its position and the other gods to conform a particular discourse destined to their gods.

We know, thanks to the Spanish chronicles and, more recently, through pollen analysis, that among those objects there were flowers. They had an interesting role in the Aztec world as they were linked to fertility, beauty, and life, but we also find them in the poetry as a metaphor of the war, sacrifice, dead warriors and blood.

It is interesting to find them specifically in offerings related also to the war and death, more yet, as the pollen analysis allow us to know which species of flowers were there, we can understand how their particular characteristics, such as their color or aroma, also correlated with the rest of the materials offered and the meaning of all of them as a message that materialized part of the Aztec cosmology in, now, archaeological material.

ACCIDENTAL DEATHS AND GHOSTS: MYTHS OF PROTECTIVE DEITIES

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India is treasure trove of mysticism, traditional beliefs, rituals and mythical motifs. This rich inheritance identifies India along with its exclusiveness for maintaining unity in diversity. One of such interesting rituals is the ritual of funeral. Indians as a society irrespective of religious diversities; believe that funeral rituals are necessary for each and every individual after death. These rituals yield freedom for the individual soul and attempts the union of individual soul with universal soul thus termed as Moksha, which in turn will also help the individual soul getting freedom from continuous circle of life and death along with associated pain and miseries. These rituals denote that the dead person is respected and being cared for even after death. There is a journey beyond death that individual soul needs to travel, and these rituals facilitate an easy and illuminated path. Thus, even apart from relatives and friends; we see demonstrations of funeral rites being performed for enemies killed during war in Indian history and mythology. Such is the importance of these rituals in Indian context.

The accidental deaths are caused or recorded specially of travelers, wanderers, small businessmen, saints. These people used to travel alone through forests and mountains. There are verbal accounts of many such people being killed due to difficulties in travel excursions or perhaps robbed and killed by dacoits. Such people did not have companions to conduct funeral and their families could not trace or identify location and cause of their deaths. The unnatural deaths thus occurred and not pacified with funeral rituals; leads to individual souls trapped on earth in wandering state.

The current study demonstrates such stories and experiences from distant villages of India which possess a common structure. These souls are either considered as scaring ghosts or as protective deities. These protective deities have led to creation of new folklores and associated rituals. Also, the innocent minds of Indian villagers have started connecting these deities to Kshetrapal and other mainstream Indian Mythical deities. The Indian treasure of mythical narrations, mystical experiences and rituals studded with motifs keeps on flourishing.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF THE AFTERLIFE IN THE EARLY MODERN MISSIONS TO EAST ASIA

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The Christian (or, more specifically, Catholic) idea of the afterlife strongly differs from the indigenous religious traditions of East Asia.

Christianity stresses the personal immortality of the soul and considers the post-mortal existence to be either an eternal reward or an eternal punishment for one's actions during life. Furthermore, the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints teaches that the living and the deceased remain connected to an extent: those in Heaven intercede for the living and the living pray for the souls in Purgatory.

In the main religious traditions of East Asia, the idea of the afterlife either takes the form of reincarnation or is hardly considered at all due to a high degree of individual variations even within one tribe (as shown in the case of partly christianized Bahnars). At the same time, the continuing spiritual presence of the deceased ancestors is emphasized and ceremonially venerated.

This difference was a major obstacle to the early modern missionary activities of the Catholic Church in the region (for example, those of Matteo Ricci in China and Alexandre de Rhodes in what is now Vietnam). Eventually, it became one of the causes of the bitter controversy over Chinese rites.

The purpose of our contribution is to show how the Christian views on the afterlife were presented and defended by the early missionaries, opposed by the Confucian polemicists, and gradually incorporated into the East Asian religious traditions.

SIN-EATING, SPIRIT COMBAT, AND THE NEGOTIATION OF GRIEF IN BALKAN FOLK NECROMANCY

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Pouring wine over gravestones on the feasts of local saints, casting live moths into fire to cleanse the community of grief, devouring bread over the dead to absolve them of their sins—in Serbia and much of the Balkans, these rituals and countless more form a thriving body of enduring practices frequently referred to by even the most pious Orthodox Christians as “the old ways”, and “the traditions of the folk”. From customs observed by broader rural communities around death and dying, to the ecstatic sorceries of psychopomps elected from birth to serve the communal dead, this paper will present survey a variety of approaches to communion with ancestor spirits still lived across the rural Balkans.

Drawing on extensive research in the Serbo-Croatian language, this paper begins by considering the features of Serbian “folk” Christianity—the beliefs and attitudes among rural Orthodox about the soul, the restless (disturbed, unpacified, unable-to-move-on) dead—and focuses on the precarious and vulnerable state of the deceased in the time leading up to their deaths and forty days after their passing. It surveys various rituals done both during the dying process and immediately afterwards, from the institution of the *slava* (family saint feast) to the rites of the *trudbenac* (a labourer who eats the sins of the dead), in the attempts to soothe, placate, and allow for the peaceful transition of the dead into the Christian afterlife. Finally, it considers the many perilous obstacles in the journey of the ancestors, including becoming enslaved by witchcraft and transforming into a vampire through the negligence of their descendants—and the ritual specialists who are called upon to intervene and deal with grief, sin, hunger, and haunting in the disputed landscapes of the dead.

INDO-EUROPEAN TRAVESTIES OF STEPPE THOUGHT

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&

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Scholarly consensus locates the Indo-European homeland in the western Eurasian steppe region, based mainly on linguistic, biogeographical, archaeological, and genetic evidence. This paper proposes a framework of ethnologic reasoning that links the attested thought of recent non-Indo-European steppe cultures with specific strains of Indo-European ‘myth’. Using this framework, we suggest that what the Indo-European **aryo-* carried out of the steppe was less an ethnolinguistic brand with specific mythic content than innovative notions about how to play gradients of power and wealth to their advantage, in part by refashioning ordinary pastoralist thought about social liminality and political transitions into a new kingly ideology, using strategies that could be classed in literary terms as travesty.

We will discuss these proposed processes on the basis of thematic evidence from the well-known ‘royal horse sacrifice’ ritual in Indic, Italic, and Celtic sources, and on wider comparisons. The seemingly ‘mythic’ character of the Indo-European sources appears to be derivative when compared with evidence from living thought in pastoralist cultures still residing in or near the Eurasian steppes. We argue that oral narrative traditions written down among these peoples in the last millennium (mostly in the last century and a half) can shed light onto substrata of archaic thought that underlie Indo-European ‘myth’.

THE TWO WORLDS: THE DEAD AND THE LIVING IN THE LATVIAN TRADITION

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As already mentioned several times, the Latvian tradition contains no specific mythological narratives. Still, as death is a powerful phenomenon that cannot be avoided, and it affects not only the one deceased, but - probably to no lesser extent – the surrounding survivors, it must be dealt with in different ways to mitigate the impact of the event.

There are numerous customs indicating a probable basic view of the phenomenon and the dead ones. From breaking the limbs of the dead, purging the house, decorating the road and gates with fir trees and their branches (an evergreen tree, but also with sharp needles – symbolically providing defense) to the chthonic animal (mouse) bringing the sleep, which may be seen as "the little death". The souls of the dead ancestors are welcomed during the *veļu mielasts*, they are supposed to roam the face of the Earth on specific occasions (similar to Halloween), but they should be avoided and driven back as soon as possible. Death can also be seen as an event happening more than once in a person's life. The transition from different developmental stages (child - adult - married person) is also seen as death in one role and rebirth in a new quality.

As it has been speculated that fear of death is the origin of mythology as such, the phenomenon indeed is represented prominently in different traditions, including those of the Latvians. And, poetically speaking, we are dying every day. Just a little...

JOURNEYS TO THE KINGS AND MARRIAGES ACROSS BOUNDARIES: ASIAN FIRST LADIES AND SACRALIZED POLYGAMY IN MYTHOLOGICAL MOTIFS AND IN PRACTICE

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Migrations of royal women may be studied even in the field of world mythology due to interdisciplinary connections with population studies or development of languages. Although imperial polygamy in Asian cultures is generally well known practice, contextual explanations and related habits contain many mythological motifs, since the life of the elites is different from conditions of common people. This paper is focused on selected customs of imperial courts mainly in Korea, Vietnam, and Central Asian nomadic states in relations with China. It also includes stories of noble ladies married and transported to different cultural environment to fulfill their role in keeping political integrity within the empires (or on the contrary international relations with vassal states) and ultimately keeping the lineage of the imperial family alive. In free, but still in obvious connection with migration topic, this paper analyzes the polygamy under the following themes:

1. Evolutionary background and rules connected with searching and selection of girls.
2. Titles of first ladies, the concept of “State Mother” vs. imperial harem and internal hierarchy.
3. Moral demands supporting polygamy and mythological symbols used by the royal couple.
4. Selected impacts of royal polygamy on development of historical populations, languages, and social rules in contemporary East Asia.

WANDERING BEHIND DEATH IN THE WESTERN MONGOLIAN ORAL TRADITION

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Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist practice provides a system of ceremonies and rituals to be performed by monk specialists upon someone's death. Through the classical Mongolian literature lay Mongolian Buddhists became acquainted with Indian and Tibetan notions of hells and the judgment executed by the Lord Yama – Erlig Khan, which are omnipresent in the popular apprehensions of the after-death.

In this contribution I assemble moments related to the “wandering through and behind the death” from within the oral tradition of Western Mongolian (Oirat) ethnic groups, which I recorded during my fieldwork mainly among Altai Urianhais, compared to published oral sources. The aim of the paper is to illustrate the popular understanding of death by following issues:

1. Qualified lamas are believed to be capable to provide guidance to the consciousness of the deceased and help him to pass various obstacles of the intermediate state after death. In Western Mongolia it led to a custom to bury defuncts close to graves of wise lamas. On the contrary, oral tradition provides examples of wrong placed burials, which caused harmful effects to the posterity.
2. Lamas and shamans capable of bringing the soul of a dying person back from the after-death stage. These narratives oscillate between a glorification of shaman/lama's skills and an ethic warning not to disturb the givenness of death.
3. Indications of the approaching death in oral tradition. Individuals considered rebirths of celestial entities in oral tradition (for example Hurmast tenger) manifested in the moment of their death.

Journey to a new homeland: Western Mongolian oral tradition vacillates between interpretations of the present situation and expectations of future changes. On one side, Western Mongols are transcendently tied to their current native places, on the other, frequently recall a future wandering to a new land imagined as a paradise.

**THE AMBIGUOUS DEAD:
NĀLOUPERS AND THEIR UNCERTAIN AFFILIATION
IN NORTH SAXON FOLKLORE**

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The supernatural world is often taken to be an allegory of a society's socio-political structure. When we consider any narrative dealing with supernatural beings like deities, ghosts, demons, or others, these beings are then interpreted as dealing with the specific socio-political circumstances of a society. In this sense, the gods are allies to the dominant group in that society, while demons are the enemies. In many narratives we also see that the image of the socio-political enemy is projected on the supernatural enemy.

This kind of analysis, however valuable, only provides us with a partial picture. The fact remains that the supernatural can also be extremely ambiguous. The gods may be our allies, but they can be extremely terrifying as well. Demons are dangerous, but their great powers can be harnessed for personal gain through magical means. How more ambiguous are the deceased, especially once they return from death. While during their lives they were allies or even part of society's in-group, now their ambiguous affiliation with the world beyond makes them potentially dangerous, arousing fear when sighted. The supernatural in general, and the dead in particular, arouse a sense of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*: a terrifying but fascinating mystery (Otto, *Das Heilige*, 1917).

In this paper I will discuss the process of identification and Othering as it affects supernatural entities. Foregoing the simple identification of some supernatural entities as good while others are bad, I will rather opt for discussing the ambiguous status that any kind of supernatural entity gets ascribed. In particular, I will consider the ambiguous status of *nāloupers*, those who return after their death, in the North Saxon areas of Groningen, Ostfriesland, and Schleswig-Holstein.

MYTH GENERATION IN ANCIENT AND MODERN GNOSTICISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Gnosticism was a collection of heresies that broke off early Christianity in the 2nd century, and continued to generate mythologies, theologies, and communities until approx. the 12th century. After the discovery of original Gnostic manuscripts in Syriac Orthodox monasteries in the 19th century, Gnosticism had a revival in the 20th century, which has recently been fuelled by the discovery and publishing of the Nag Hammadi desert library and such popular books as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. In my present paper, I examine modern Gnostic visions of Mary Magdalene as published by the American Gnostic Bishop Tau Malachi, and compare them to ancient Gnostic mythology as found in the Nag Hammadi library. The Gnostic visions published by Tau Malachi presumably predate Dan Brown's novel, although no exact timeline or source is given for them. They originate from several visionaries. I will compare the theological ideas expressed by Tau Malachi's collection to the theologies expressed in Nag Hammadi manuscripts to see how accents have changed. And I will analyze how myths are generated, by using the history of Gnosticism as an example.

THE MOON AS THE SUN OF THE DEAD

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The paper refers to the overview of the East Slavic folk beliefs that associate the Moon with the spirit world, with the realm of the dead and in that regard oppose it to the Sun. My discussion will be drawn from the archive data collected in Polesie (the archaic East Slavic area) during the 70-80 years of the last century, which is currently stored in the Department of Folklore and Ethnolinguistics in the Institute of Slavic Studies (RAS, Moscow). The fundamental works on the Slavic Mythology were also involved to provide a broader perspective and geographical coverage and in this way to enrich the report.

The ever-changing Moon may be considered a celestial body that itself grows old and dies: the waxing moon is called *молодик* [a young man], the waning moon is *старик* [an old man], while the interlunation period is referred to as *зубнет*

[dies, perishes]. Therefore, the moon is expected to see the other dead on regular basis – the numerous texts of the charms against the toothache represent the following ritual dialog between the waxing moon and the patient: "Moon, who has been to the underworld, did you see the dead?" – "Yes, I did." – "Do they have a toothache?" – "No, they do not." – "Never again shall I have a toothache!" (6742, № 123, Tchernigov region). The other spell mentions "three brothers" who actually are "the Moon in the sky", "the stone in the sea" and "a deadman in the coffin" (18538, №117, Zhitomir region). The moonlight shines to the dead, especially to those who died before their time, floaters and hangmen. On the contrary, the contact with the moonlight turns to be rather dangerous and harmful for living people – particularly for children and babies – and even to see the moon in the dream foretells the close death (6778, № 123, Tchernigov region).

Not only the Moon contacts with the dead, it could also become their dwelling place. Linked to this belief is the practice to watch the moon in case a person or a domestic animal gets lost to find out if they are alive or dead (please, refer the narrative 54242, № 6, Brest region, where a village sorcerer consults the Moon to find a calf, a colt and a piglet). The same idea is reflected in the various etiological legends on the origin of the dark blots on the Moon, which are interpreted as the shadows of famous sinners, e.g. as Cain taking up Abel with a fork (28949, Brest region).

DEATH AND THE WORLD OF THE DEAD IN SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY

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The Slavs have no written evidence of pagan mythology, but on the basis of beliefs, rituals, folklore, and mythological vocabulary, which have survived to this day, the most ancient Slavic ideas about death can be reconstructed.

Large and comprehensive literature is devoted to the concept of Death: it is actually descriptive material and also studies on different aspects of rituals, concepts, beliefs in Slavic traditions. A great deal of accumulated material concerns funeral rites, funeral lamentations; there have been recorded and studied narratives about apparent death (*obmiranie*), etiological legends about the origin of death and the lack of man's knowledge about the hour of his own death; attention was paid to signs, dreams and fortune-telling about death, magic against death; plots about wandering souls and "walking" deceased were investigated, mythological characters descended from the souls of the dead; subjects related to the concept of death also were studied – i.e. the soul,

metempsychosis, the eyes and vision of the dead, anthropomorphic tombstones, vocabulary and phraseology of death.

The report will briefly characterize the mythological and naive-philosophical understanding of death and dying in the traditional folk culture of the Slavs – beginning with its lexics (its analysis in English see in: Tolstaya S.M. Slavic folk conceptions of death according to linguistic data // *Etnolog. Let.* 9 (60). Št. 1. Ljubljana, 1999. P. 17–26) through the picturing of the “other world”, named *irey* (where the souls of the deceased travel and from where the souls of the newborns come), to the idea of reincarnation. Special attention will be given to the idea of metempsychosis in Slavic beliefs and rites.

UNRECOGNIZED INDO-EUROPEAN MOTIFS IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

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In my paper presented at our Tartu conference (2019), I demonstrated for the first time that several stories in the Mahābhārata are based on the motif of a character confined or asleep in a cave under a mountain, and that this type of mythic and epic tales belongs to a particular common legacy of the Indo-European and Caucasian traditions. Later, in an article which is now in the press (*The Journal of Indo-European Studies*, 2020, No. 4, December), I explored several other stories of this kind uncovered in the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa. Now I am going to present additional previously unrecognized Indo-European mythopoetic motifs in Indian epics connected with the wedding ceremony, warriors' practices, and royal consecration rite. In conclusion, I shall discuss the advantages provided by the comparative approach for the interpretation of Indian epic texts.

DEATH AND MIGRATION IN THE CUBAN TRADITION OF PALO MONTE MAYOMBE

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Two dominant Cuban religious groups can be differentiated, namely the Santería or Regla de Oché, La Regla de Ifá or Lucumí (Yoruba) and Palo Monte Mayombe, colloquially known as Palo Monte or Las Reglas de Congo, La Regla de Mayombe. In short it can be referred to *regla lucumí* (Western African origin) and *regla conga* (Central African origin) (see Cabrera 1993: 70).¹

In this paper the focus is on the Cuban tradition of Palo Monte² and inherent mythological concepts related to death and migration as well as to healing. Within the Palo Monte tradition the central beliefs circulate around the veneration of spirits and natural/earth powers. Earth/world, nature/wilderness and *el monte* are the same: "Tierra y monte son lo mismo (Cabrera 1993: 17)." Monte means earth within the concept of universal mother, source and origin of all life. Especially in Palo Monte it is believed that all natural objects (particularly sticks) are infused with powers, whereas the Orixas of the Santería tradition are associated with archetypal human beings.

The ancestral divinities and powerful spirits live in *el monte*³, here live the Orixas as well as the dead and the diseased (the Eleko, Ikus, Ibbayes, etc.). The kapok tree as the sacred tree of the Yoruba and Palo religions is the "place" where the dead and the deceased go and stay. The dead - according to the Palo tradition - are believed to live among us - wither in transmigrated form or on non-physical planes of the cosmos.

In the religion of Palo, Nzambi a Mpungu - the Congolese name for a high creator god - is the god who created the universe and animates it. Nzambi resides in all natural things and the spirits of the dead.

¹ The word *regla* can be translated with cult or religion; it refers to rites and religious and magical practices that during the colonial times were imported from African countries and over time also might have been altered or changed or became syncretized with Catholicism.

² A *palo* is a segment of wood, often a stick, monte is the forest or a natural area.

³ "El monte es sagrado' porque en el residen, 'viven', las divinidades. 'Los santos estan mas en el monte que en cielo (Cabrera 1993: 17)."

GALICIA AS A BORDERLAND OF CULTURES AND MYTHOLOGY

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The Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria became a part of the Habsburg monarchy in 1772 and it existed as a territory rich in intercultural and mythological traditions till 1918. After that Galicia became itself a myth in literature of Ukrainian, Polish, German, Jewish writers. In 19th century as a “terra incognita” Galicia became a popular destination to the German researchers, whose aim was to discover a new land, its culture and mythology (Kratter, Traunpaur, Jauernik). Galician mythology became a material of research for the local folklorists and researchers (Zaleski, Pauli, Chłędowski etc.). Researchers payed attention to the distinguishes and common motives and rituals in Ukrainian, Poles, Jewish, Armenian and German mythology and culture of Galicia in 19th century. Folklore mythology was an important part of the beliefs of Poles and Ukrainians in Galicia, as for Slavs in general, despite Christianity. Galician folklorists carefully described the whole cycle of religious holidays and ceremonies, translating Polish folk songs. One of the important factor which united that territory rich on different peoples, rituals, religions and culture was the idea of the common upper-identity (Wolff) – Galician identity, which is still exist on that territory, divided between Poland and Ukraine, and in memory of thousands immigrants from Galicia abroad. After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1918, the Galician literary and cultural narrative should have ceased to exist. However, Galician literature was developing, and as time went on, this narrative revived in a new phase of its existence, in the so-called Post-Galician phase, in which it acquired new features and became a phenomenon in world literature. The myth of Galicia, as the “lost Arcadia”, became not only one of the main features of Post-Galician literature, but also the material for creating a new entity in the literary and cultural discourse of Ukrainian, Polish and German literature of the late 20th-early 21st centuries.

MIGRATION MYTHS AND STRANGER KINGS

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In my presentation, I intend to contribute to the discussion of the extent to which early Old Norse saga literature, Ynglinga saga and Skjöldunga saga in particular, can be seen as *origo gentis* narratives. I will approach the account of the migration of the Norse gods from a comparative perspective and highlight the strong presence of the stranger-king motif in Ynglinga saga. This, I will claim, distinguishes it from older medieval European *origo gentis* accounts. The stranger king model, as developed by anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, provides a framework within which one may seek to illuminate the much-discussed notion of sacred or sacral kingship in pre-Christian Scandinavia.

THE DEADLY YEAR

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This paper takes into consideration a wide range of Indo-European myths and mythological motifs that view the year as an epitome of, on the one hand, time and order, and on the other, death. I start with the Vedic tradition – year-related motifs as they are presented in the R̥gveda and the Upaniṣads, then continue to Zoroastrian and later myths of South Asia and Iran and compare them with Armenian, Greek, Germanic-Scandinavian, Celtic and Slavic materials representing the year as death. I analyze multiple deities of time and year across several Indo-European traditions and demonstrate their close relationship with death and the world of the dead. As a conclusion, I attempt to reconstruct a possible Indo-European concept of the *deadly year* and features of a common Indo-European deity of time and death.