

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY
&
INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, BELGRADE, SERBIA**

**FIFTEENTH
ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**



SACRED GROUND:

PLACE AND SPACE IN MYTHOLOGY AND RELIGION

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

June 7-11, 2022

**Serbian Academy of Sciences & Arts
35 Kneza Mihaila St., Belgrade
1st floor, Hall 2**

PROGRAM

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

09:00 – 09:30 **PARTICIPANTS REGISTRATION**

09:30 – 10:00 **OPENING ADDRESSES**

**TUESDAY MORNING SESSION: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES &
SEMITIC AND SUMERIAN MYTHOLOGY & MYTH AND RITUAL OF MUSLIMS IN SERBIA**

CHAIR: ALEKSANDAR BOŠKOVIĆ

10:00 – 11:30 **KEYNOTE LECTURES**

ROBERT SEGAL

University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH
CENTURIES: THE CONTRASTS

DANIJELA STEFANOVIĆ

University of Belgrade, Serbia

WHEN APA MOSES MEETS OSIRIS: THE SACRED LANDSCAPE OF ABYDOS

11:30 – 12:00 **Coffee Break**

12:00 – 12:30

VLADIMIR EMELIANOV

St. Petersburg State University, Russia

WHAT COULD BE AN OPPOSITION TO THE SUMERIAN SELF-
DESIGNATION "THE BLACK-HEADED"?

12:30 – 13:00

KATARINA M. MITROVIĆ

Institute of Ethnography, Belgrade, Serbia

TÜRBE: THE BLESSING OF THE SACRED SITES

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: SACRED SPACE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE AND BEYOND & MYTH AND MEDIA

CHAIR: NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

14:00 – 14:30 ONDŘEJ PAZDÍREK
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
MARIA CIVITAS DEI MYSTICA: METAPHORS COMPARING A PERSON TO A SACRED PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY

14:30 – 15:00 LOUISE MILNE
University of Edinburgh & Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland, UK
THE PLACE OF THE DREAM: SITE-SPECIFIC DREAMS AND CLOSE ENCOUNTERS IN EUROPE AFTER THE ROMANS

15:00 – 15:30 MICHAEL MEYLAC
University of Strasbourg, France
THE IMPASSABLE DISTANCE BETWEEN LOVERS IN THE POETRY OF PROVENÇAL TROUBADOURS (AD 12TH – 14TH): “LOVE FROM AFAR” AND EXOGAMY

15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee Break*

16:00 – 16:30 ANA R. CHELARIU
New Jersey, USA
SACRED SPACE IN ROMANIAN FOLKLORE

16:30 – 17:00 BRIAN COLLINS
Ohio University, USA
A NEW LOOK AT MEDIA FRANCHISE FANDOM AND COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY: THE CASE OF THE ‘ONCE-LE’

17:00 – Cocktail Reception

Mezzanine

**Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
35 Kneza Mihaila St., Belgrade**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION: COMPARATIVE AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES & INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY I & POSTERS DISCUSSION SESSION I

CHAIR: YURI BEREZKIN

- 09:00 – 09:30** ALEKSANDAR BOŠKOVIĆ
Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia
MYTH IN SOCIETY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
- 09:30 – 10:00** STEVE FARMER
The Systems Biology Group, Palo Alto, California, USA
BRAINS, MYTHS, AND FERMI'S PARADOX: PREHISTORIC
THREATS TO THE FUTURE OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION
- 10:00 – 10:30** MILAN TOMAŠEVIĆ
Institute of Ethnography, Belgrade, Serbia
MYTHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MODERN COSMOLOGY

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY I

- 11:00 – 11:30** EMILY LYLE
University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
THE INDO-EUROPEAN DEITIES OF THE DIRECTIONS AS REPRESENTED IN
RITUAL
- 11:30 – 12:00** IVAN MARAZOV
New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE ANCESTORS
- 12:00 – 12:30** POSTERS DISCUSSION SESSION I:

MIYUKI ONOE
Toho High School, Attached to Toho University, Japan
THE LEGEND OF THREE DRAGON TEMPLES

HASMIK HMAYAKYAN

Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, Armenia &

LEVON MIKAYELYAN

Armenian State Pedagogical University, Yerevan, Armenia

THE WORLD'S THREE-DIMENSIONAL ARCHETYPAL MANIFESTATIONS IN
PARAJANOV'S STILL LIFE COLLAGES

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch Break

**WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY II &
BROAD EURASIAN AND AMERICAN COMPARISONS**

CHAIR: BORIS OGUIBÉNINE

14:00 – 14:30

VÁCLAV BLAŽEK

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

FOUNDING OF A CITY

14:30 – 15:00

ALDIS PŪTELIS

Riga, Latvia

ROMOW. SCIENCE (WITH FOOTNOTES)

15:00 – 15:30

MARCIN LISIECKI

Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland

THE SEARCH FOR THE CAPITAL OF THE FIRST PIASTS.

POLITICAL MYTH IN POLISH NATIONAL IDENTITY

15:30 – 16:00

JOHN LEAVITT

University of Montreal, Canada

REFLECTIONS ON THE MILKY WAY AND THE EARTHLY LANDSCAPE IN
INDO-EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

BROAD EURASIAN AND AMERICAN COMPARISONS

- 16:30 – 17:00** YURI BEREZKIN
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
THE UNDERWORLD DWARFS
- 17:00 – 17:30** TEREZA KABELÁČOVÁ, ONDŘEJ SRBA & MICHAL SCHWARZ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
MOTHER DEITIES ACROSS EURASIA: A COMPARISON OF LATVIAN,
VIETNAMESE, AND MONGOLIAN TRADITIONS
- 17:30 – 18:00** SIGNE COHEN
University of Missouri, USA
MAPPING THE OTHERWORLD

THURSDAY, JUNE 9

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF EAST AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

CHAIR: STEVE FARMER

- 09:00 – 09:30** KAZUO MATSUMURA
Wako University, Tokyo, Japan
HOW TYRANTS ARE BORN: A THEORETICAL HYPOTHESIS
- 09:30 – 10:00** KLAUS ANTONI
Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, Germany
FROM MIMITSU TO UNEBI – SACRED GROUNDS AND MODERN PLACES
OF MEMORY CONCERNING THE MYTH OF ‘JINMU-TENNO’
- 10:00 – 10:30** PAOLO BARBARO
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France
A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE METHODS EMPLOYED TO DATE MYTHS,
USING A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE YAMATO CALENDAR AS A CASE
STUDY

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 11:30 JINGHUA HUANG, SI CHEN & CHUJING YANG
Yunnan University, China
THE SACRED MOUNTAIN, CAVE, AND CLIFF IN EASTERN HIMALAYAN
FOLK NARRATIVES: A STUDY ON FOLK NARRATIVES OF THE NU AND
DERUNG PEOPLE IN CHINA

11:30 – 12:00 IWAO ISHIKAWA
The Nakamura Hajime Eastern Institute, Tokyo, Japan
PATH TO THE PARADISE OF THE DEAD IN AN INDIGENOUS TIBETAN
FUNERAL SONG

12:00 – 12:30 WANG WEI
University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China
RESEARCH ON THE ORIGIN OF THE JOURNEY TO THE DIVINE WORLD
AND ITS DESCRIPTION IN CHUCI

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch Break

**Business Lunch for the IACM Board of Directors
and Conference Organizers**

THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF SOUTH ASIA

CHAIR: LOUISE MILNE

14:30 – 15:00 SHAKUNTALA GAWDE
University of Mumbai, India
CHANGING IDENTITIES OF GOVARDHANA – A STUDY OF MYTHS AND
RITUALS

15:00 – 15:30 NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA
Princeton University, USA
SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM AS A DIVIDED DIVINE BODY

15:30 – 16:00 KRZYSZTOF GUTOWSKI
Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland
VEDIC ALTAR AS A METAPHOR. COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VEDIC
SACRED SPACE

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

- 16:30 – 17:00** NATĀLIJA BURIŠINA
The Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg, Germany & University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia
 SHIFTING AGENCY OF AŠVINS AND DYNAMICS OF ATIRĀTRA/ĀŠVINA ŚASTRA RITUALS AS DESCRIBED IN THE BRĀHMAṆAS AND ŚRAUTA SŪTRAS OF ṚGVEDA
- 17:00 – 17:30** YAROSLAV VASSILKOV
Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg, Russia
 FOLKLORE OF THE EUROPEAN ROMA (GYPSIES)
 AND THE MYTHOLOGIES OF INDIAN TRIBAL WORLD
- 17:30 – 18:00** EVGENIYA DESNITSKAYA
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St. Petersburg, Russia
 MAṄGALA AND FICTIONAL RITUALS IN PRE-MODERN INDIA
- 18:00 – 18:30** NEHA SAYED & SALIL SAYED
Aalto University, Finland
 ‘PHERI’ OF A PROTECTING SPIRIT: DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SACRED AND PROTECTED

FRIDAY, JUNE 10

FRIDAY MORNING: TRIP TO VIMINACIUM

- 08:30 – 9:00** GATHERING OF THE PARTICIPANTS (LOCATION TBA)
- 09:00** DEPARTING TO VIMINACIUM
- 10:30 – 13:30** VIMINACIUM GUIDED TOUR
- 13:30 – 14:30** LUNCH: TASTING ROMAN FOOD AT VIMINACIUM

**FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: ROMAN, IRISH, AND SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY;
MYTHOLOGY OF THE AMERICAS**

CHAIR: ALEKSANDAR BOŠKOVIĆ

- 14:30 – 15:00** ILIJA DANKOVIĆ
Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia
THE REFLECTION OF WHO SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE: ONCE AGAIN ON
RELIEF MIRRORS FROM VIMINACIUM
- 15:00 – 15:30** JELENA ANĐELKOVIĆ GRAŠAR & NADEŽDA GAVRILOVIĆ VITAS
Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia
MAKING SACRED (BACK)GROUNDS: MYTHOLOGY IN SERVICE OF
IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY IN THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE
- 15:30 – 16:00** PAOLO TAVIANI
University of L'Aquila, Italy
THE LANDSCAPE OF ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY
- 16:00 – 16:30** *Coffee Break*
- 16:30 – 17:00** BRANISLAV ŽIVKOVIĆ
University of Belgrade, Serbia
"THEY ALL LAUGHED, EXCEPT TYR; HE LOST HIS HAND." THE NORSE
MYTH FROM THE CELTIC COIN
- 17:00 – 17:30** JOSEPH HARRIS
Harvard University, USA &
NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA
Princeton University, USA
ICELAND'S HOLY HILL (HELGAFELL) AS AN INDO-EUROPEAN SACRED
MOUNTAIN
- 17:30 – 18:00** MARTÍN CUITZEO DOMÍNGUEZ NUÑEZ
*School of Anthropology and History of Northern Mexico,
Chihuahua, Mexico*
MATERIALITY, MYTH, AND DEATH IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF
PAQUIMÉ AND TEHUACÁN. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN THE STUDY
OF THE REPRESENTATIONS OF DEATH IN ANCIENT MEXICO

- 18:00 – 18:30** MARIA ALFONSA LARIOS SANTACRUZ &
MARTÍN CUITZEO DOMÍNGUEZ NUÑEZ
*School of Anthropology and History of Northern Mexico,
Chihuahua, Mexico*
THE HISTORY OF THE *XIICA CMOTOMANOJ* CELEBRATION AMONG THE
SERIS FROM MEXICO
- 18:30 – 20:00** **DINNER AT VIMINACIUM (OPTIONAL & SELF-PAID)**
- 20:00** **DEPARTING TO BELGRADE**

SATURDAY, JUNE 11

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA II; MYTHOLOGY AND MODERNITY

CHAIR: BRANKO BANOVIC

- 09:00 – 09:30** DIEU T.M. NGUYEN
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
SOLAR AND LUNAR ECLIPSE MYTHS IN VIETNAM AND SOUTHEAST ASIA
- 09:30 – 10:00** MICHAL SCHWARZ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SACRED LIGHT AND TRACING OF ITS
EVOLUTION IN INNER ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS TEXTS, AND
MODERN K-POP IMAGINATION
- 10:00 – 10:30** MARKO PIŠEV
University of Belgrade, Serbia
HAUNTED LANDSCAPES IN ANGLO-SAXON HORROR FICTION
- 10:30 – 11:00** *Coffee Break*
- 11:00 – 11:30** VALENTINA GANEVA-MARAZOVA
New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria
CONSTRUCTING THE WORLD. THE RITUAL AND BAUHAUS

11:30 – 12:00 JELENA ĆUKOVIĆ
University of Belgrade, Serbia
SACRED GROUND AND ECOLOGICAL ACTIVISM

12:00 – 12:30 POSTERS DISCUSSION SESSION II:

CHENG MENG
Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China
AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION OF
ARTHURIAN LEGEND IN VIDEO GAMES

SUNIL PARAB
*Sindhu Veda Research Institute & Doon Institute of Medical
Sciences, Dehradun, India*
FORESTS & CREMATION GROUNDS AS SACRED SITES THROUGH
INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

PETRA VOGLER
Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany
MOUNTAIN SPACE IN CUBAN MYTHOLOGY: SACRED PLANTS AND
TREES IN CUBAN HEALING PRACTICES AND POPULAR MEDICINE

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch Break

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: SLAVIC MYTHOLOGY & METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

CHAIR: KATARINA M. MITROVIĆ

14:00 – 14:30 PETRO SARKANYCH & YURIJ HOLOVATCH
National Academy of Sciences, Ukraine
NAZAR FEDORAK
Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine
PÁDRAIG MACCARRON
University of Limerick, Ireland
JOSEPH YOSE & RALPH KENNA
Coventry University, UK
KYIV CYCLE OF *BYLYNY* AMONG EPIC EUROPEAN NARRATIVES:
A COMPLEX NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

- 14:30 – 15:00** MARINA VALENTOVA
Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow, Russia
MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS RELATED TO SPACE AND PLACE
IN SLAVIC TRADITIONS
- 15:00 – 15:30** KATARINA PEJOVIĆ
University of Toronto, Canada
NEITHER IN HEAVEN NOR ON EARTH: DWELLING PLACES OF
DRAGONS AND FAIRIES IN SERBIAN FOLKLORE AND FOLK SONGS
- 15:30 – 16:00** YURI KLEINER
St. Petersburg State University, Russia
“MYTH OR MÄRCHEN?” IN THE LIGHT OF STEBLIN-KAMENSKIJ’S
THEORY
- 16:00 – 16:30** GENERAL DISCUSSION & CONCLUDING REMARKS

17:00 – Belgrade Guided Walking Tour

19:00 – Conference Closing Dinner

Mali Vrabac Restaurant
Skadarska 34, Belgrade 11000

ABSTRACTS

MAKING SACRED (BACK)GROUNDS: MYTHOLOGY IN SERVICE OF IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY IN THE LATE ROMAN EMPIRE

JELENA ANĐELKOVIĆ GRAŠAR & NADEŽDA GAVRILOVIĆ VITAS

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia

During the 3rd and 4th centuries CE Roman provinces on the territory of present-day Serbia came into the focus of the Late Roman history. Political, economic and religious changes occurred as indicators for various messages which were communicated with acts, activities, narratives and images. The territory of present-day Serbia is known as the homeland of 18 Roman emperors, whose reign belonged to the mentioned period. Significant artistic and building activity is associated with emperors such as Galerius, Maximinus Daia and Constantine the Great, and their carefully created imperial ideology behind it. An important aspect in this imperial ideology construct was mythology and close connection by birth of the Roman emperors to different deities. To achieve the noble origin, mythology was used as good narrative to fabricate background for instance of Galerius as divine son of God Mars and empress Romula (paraphrasing to the Alexander the Great) or Constantine the Great as the first Christian emperor and son of Helena whose origin was reintervened with several legends. Important ideological construct as well was the building activity of monumental palatial complexes, positioning Emperor's birthplace as the sacred ground of the divine ruler origin and the ideology containing proskynesis introduced by Diocletian. Several layers of this ideology were based upon the mythology and those examples will be presented and explored in the paper, considering imperial domains built by emperors, like Galerius with Felix Romuliana, Maximinus Daia in Šarkamen and Constantine the Great at Mediana.

**FROM MIMITSU TO UNEBI – SACRED GROUNDS
AND MODERN PLACES OF MEMORY
CONCERNING THE MYTH OF ‘JINMU-TENNŌ’**

KLAUS ANTONI

Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, Germany

With the voluntary abdication of the throne by the previous tennō Akihito (Heiseitennō) and the transition to the era of the new tennō, his son Naruhito, the year 2019 became witness of a historically exceptional caesura for Japan. The enthronement of the successor, however, was not just the beginning of a new tennō's term of office, but also the beginning of a new era, the Reiwa-era, and the transfer of the throne was accompanied by a set of extremely elaborated and highly complex ritual celebrations, some of them grounded in the religious, with the Daijōsai as the ceremonial climax, concluded by imperial visits to the most sacred places of the imperial house. On November 22, 2019, the new imperial couple first paid their respects in person at the shrine of the sun goddess Amaterasu in Ise, the holiest place within the context of Shintō religion, to inform the imperial house's ancestral deity about the transition of the throne. Afterwards, the imperial couple made a round trip to the tombs of four emperors of the past. These were the mausoleums of the three direct predecessors and finally of the tomb of the mythical-legendary founder of the dynasty and the state, Jinmu-tennō, who, according to tradition, founded the Japanese imperial house in 660 BC (Sokuirei-oyobi-Daijōsai-go-Jinmu-Tennō-Sanryō-oyobi-ShōwaTennō-izen-Yondai-no-Tennō-Sanryō-ni-Shin'etsu-no-gi 即位礼及び大嘗祭後神武天皇山陵及び昭和天皇以前四代の天皇山陵に親謁の儀). The visit to this sacred place on November 26, 2019 represented the conclusion of all official succession ceremonies.

Regardless of the historically indisputable fact that the mythical founding of the empire cannot be ascribed any historical factuality, the ritual announcement of the transition of throne in front of the (supposed) tomb of Jinmu-tennō showed how deeply the mythology of origins continues to be interwoven with the official historiography and also legitimization of rule by the Japanese imperial house. It seems hardly possible to separate real history from the chronology of myth. Archaeological research since the late 19th century has successively led to a complete deconstruction of the mythical view of Japan's early history, including evidence of the fictionality of Jinmu-tennō's alleged founding of the empire. Nevertheless, various sites of memory still suggest the historicity of this "First Emperor." Here, the most notable sacred sites are the Kashihara Shrine and the Tomb of Jinmu-tennō at Unebi Mountain in Yamato (Nara prefecture), as well as modern sites of memory, such as the Hakkō-ichiu (Heiwa no to) Monument

in Miyazaki and the Naval Monument at the supposed site of Jinmu's departure in Mimitsu. The lecture is mainly devoted to the analysis of these four memorial sites against the background of theoretical considerations on the concept of “places of memory”.

A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE METHODS EMPLOYED TO DATE MYTHS, USING A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE YAMATO CALENDAR AS A CASE STUDY

PAOLO BARBARO

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, France

Numerous methods have been employed by comparative mythologists along the history of the discipline, as well as in other relevant and adjacent fields, to date myths. I present in this paper a portion of my recent research on the reconstruction of the Yamato calendar, i.e., on the calendar in use in Japan before the introduction (somewhere around the sixth century) of Chinese astronomy and calendar making. This research has forced me to face some of the limits of current knowledge and methods, as well as the limits imposed by the treated subject itself, as for instance the lack of material and sources, but also some epistemological stands that are typical of the sinosphere. This research has also helped me re-evaluating the advantages of specific disciplines (e.g., structural anthropology and linguistics), and the fundamental need, for a better understanding of the history of mythology, of a multi-disciplinary approach. Presenting the problems that I have encountered and the results that I have reached while studying the Yamato calendar, I aim at contributing to the discussion on comparative mythology methodology, retracing some of the most employed methods in the discipline, and analyzing them in a critical perspective. I present also, for comparative and analytical purposes, examples from existing research on other calendars (e.g., the Maya and the ancient Roman ones), highlighting the advantages and the limits of the disciplines like linguistics, ethnoastronomy, comparative mythology, archaeology, figurative arts, physical anthropology, epistemology and history of calendars.

THE UNDERWORLD DWARFS

YURI BEREZKIN

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

Our textual Catalogue and digital database on folklore and mythology of the world were created in context of a particular project: the search for Eastern Eurasian homeland of Native Americans. Any reconstruction of Western Eurasian mythology deeper than the Proto-Indo-European level seemed to be hopeless. However, dozens of exclusive parallels between Europe (or better say SW half of Eurasia) and America have been selected during the last years. At the same time, genetic data of extraordinary importance were obtained in Siberia. Now we know that at least since 30 cal. kyr B.P. and until 15-20 cal. kyr B.P. (or even later) Eastern Siberia was genetically similar to Europe. After 15 cal. kyr B.P. this Boreal cultural and genetic continuum was extended into North America. In the Holocene, the early inhabitants of the Eastern Siberia were slowly replaced by people with ever more pronounced Mongoloid characteristics who brought with them a new set of motifs. The continuum was broken. The corresponding set of genetic and cultural features emerged among the first Sapiences who came from Africa and moved to the North. The descendants of those who moved to the east now live in the Andaman Islands, Melanesia and Australia.

The “Underworld dwarfs” are but one of many motifs of the SW Eurasian – American set. In the New World this motif is known from the Southwest and Plains (Pawney) to Bolivia, and in the Old World is mostly widespread in Europe and Southeast Asia being absent in Siberia and in the Northwest part of North America. Another motif shared by American and Eurasian traditions is “Four male anthropomorphic persons who support the layers of the universe or are guardians of the cardinal points. The Eddic and the Bolivian Tacana dwarfs who support the earth are practically identical. Narratives concerning the battle between the dwarfs and the cranes are widespread across the Globe according to the same Eurasian-American pattern. What seemed to be nonsense in Franz Boas’ times (parallels between Ancient Greece and British Columbia) finds explanation now thanks to the interdisciplinary research.

FOUNDING OF A CITY

VÁCLAV BLAŽEK

Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

The contribution summarizes the information from ancient and medieval sources about founding of five important cities, arranged in the chronological order of their origin: Athens, Rome, Kyjev, Kraków, Vilnius. The details of founding and building of these cities are compared, and their common features and differences are discussed in depth.

MYTH IN SOCIETY: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

ALEKSANDAR BOŠKOVIĆ

Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade, Serbia

What can myths tell us about a society? Can they be seen as a product of historical processes, philosophical developments, or biological and social needs of a group of people? Can historical, philosophical, and biological/ functional explanations be combined, and to what effect? These are just some of the questions that I am going to deal with, comparing three very different scholars, but who all shared a very humanistic ideal of understanding their own, as well as other, cultures: Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744), Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). A legal scholar, a philosopher, and an anthropologist – these three remarkable men have set out on an illustrious journey into understanding the functioning of human mind, exploring the limits of human understanding, and bringing forth some of the basic questions related to morality, liberty, cultural relativism, and the role of individuals as rational agents – the questions that still resonate today. The paper will explore their theories (even though only Vico and Cassirer explicitly dealt with myth), both in their origins and context in which they were formulated. I will also show the extent to which these scholars were theoretically related to each other, as well as how can their understanding of the role of myths in society help us navigate the complexities of our own world. Using examples from Vico, Cassirer and Malinowski, I intend to show how a genuinely and positively collaborative view of human capacities can arise, develop, and that it can be based on our basic humanity.

**SHIFTING AGENCY OF AŠVINS AND
DYNAMICS OF ATIRĀTRA/ĀŠVINA ŚASTRA RITUALS
AS DESCRIBED IN
THE BRĀHMAṆAS AND ŚRAUTA SŪTRAS OF RĠVEDA**

NATĀLIJA BURIŠINA

*The Ruprecht Karl University of Heidelberg, Germany &
University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia*

The aim of this study is to trace the shifting agency and mythological background of celestial twin deities Ašvins and dynamics of Atirātra/Āšvina Śastra ritual that is part of Jyotiṣṭoma sacrificial session, which in turn is a subsection of one of the great Soma sacrifice or *sattra*. In order to investigate it, diachronic approach and combined methodology will be applied: study of primary sources, review of secondary literature, analyses and synthesis.

The author of this paper is going to demonstrate how, over the course of time, mythological story, and functions of celestial deities Ašvins are replaced or merged into a complex ritual, where two initially distinct ritual acts, namely Atirātra and Āšvina Śastra are fused into one as described in the Brāhmaṇas of the R̥gveda: Aitareya and Kauṣītaki, and corresponding Śrauta Sūtras: Āśvalāyanaśrautasūtra and Śāṅkhāyanaśrautasūtra.

Keywords: R̥gveda, Brāhmaṇas, Śrauta Sūtras, ritual, Atirātra, Āšvina Śastra, Ašvins, Soma.

SACRED SPACE IN ROMANIAN FOLKLORE

ANA R. CHELARIU

New Jersey, USA

God's Banquet and the Theft of the Sun and the Moon:

Folklore from all over Europe, as well as Romania, is very rich in customs related to the winter solstice. Christmas Eve was marked by the popular tradition of colind, 'caroling.' During the end of year, Romanians believed that the skies were opening, and the crossing from the old year to the birth of the New Year meant that 'the time' broke into chaos, and the dead came out among the living. People were not afraid of their dead ancestors, instead, received them with food offerings; everyone, relatives, neighbors and especially the poor, were invited to

accept the food, and in return, they requested the dead relatives to help in with current wants, marriage, good crops, conflict solutions, sickness, and so on, believing that all would be fulfilled. (Ghinoiu 1994: 320) It was the time when the old saints were celebrated in the Romanian tradition, as a tribute towards the ancestors. The fest was called the day of the 40 moși 'elders' revered by special foods and gifts, among whom the most important were Moș Crăciun 'Old Christmas' envisioned as an old white bearded shepherd, with his younger brother Moș Ajun 'Old Christmas Eve', and Moș Nicoară 'Old Nicoară/Nicholas.' The Eve when the Old Year was ending and people are waiting for the arrival of the New Year, the Romanians believed it was the time when the sky was opening, and they could see in the sky God and his companions, angels and saints. The sacred space imagery relating the divine dwellings, is best recorded in a Romanian Christmas carol in which the divinities are sitting and drinking at an adorned table on the green pasture in the sky, under the 'cosmic tree,' a feast visible to the common people during the New Year's Eve. At this feast are God, Saint Peter, Saint John, and Santa Claus/Moș Crăciun, merrily enjoying themselves, and falling asleep after too much drinking, leaving the cosmos unattended. The profound sleep of the divinities suggests the pre-cosmic era, the weariness specific to Chaos, the time before the creation of the orderly cosmos. It is the time when the monstrous creatures revive, in our story the moment when Judah or a demonic creature, dragon, or wolf, takes the Heaven's keys from the sleeping Saint Peter, and steals the sun, the moon, and the Heavenly judgment throne, and hides them in Hell, a dark cave, or are swallowed by the monster. (Oișteanu 1089: 30)

The feast of gods is a frequent motif in the Indo-European myths. In Northern mythology the Trickster, Loki, or, the Irish god Bricriu, whose nickname was Nemthenga, Poison-Tongue, builds a splendid hall, preparing a feast to which he invites all gods of Ulster. (Early Irish Myths and Sagas 1981: 219)

Another image of a sacred space in Romanian folklore is found in a Christmas carol addressed to a young man: the recital invoked the sacred golden stag of mythic proportions, perhaps a solar manifestation, a towering animal that invaded and damaged the community fields; the caroler wishes the young man to show courage and strength to find the stag's place resting under a huge tree, seemingly the cosmic tree, to shoot the stag with his deadly arrow, and restore fertility to the fields. (Hulubaș 2009: 122) The description of the stag's location from the Romanian carol meets all criteria of a sacred realm, and the symbolic ritual killing of the mythic stag resembles the ritual killing of the 'primordial being,' followed by its dismembering, the symbolic creation of a new world, the regeneration and the regrowth of the fields. The caroler gives detailed instructions for the young man on how to use each of the stag's body parts for

building a house for his future family: the horns should be used as stilts for his house, the blood should color the house in red paint, and the flesh should be used to feed the wedding guests. (Coman 1986: I. 163)

The Sacred Space housing the Departed Husband from the Romanian Fairy Tale “Beauty and the Beast” motif:

The journey in which the heroine from the Beauty and the Beast motif and must go in search of her departed husband, the motif of ‘the quest for the vanished husband,’ has its correspondences in the myth of Cupid and Psyche, (ATH 425C) and even in the Egyptian story of Isis and Osiris. The young woman’s journey from the Romanian folktale, follows the same pattern: after she spends some time as a maid, she begins her journey to the magic world, reaching the House of the Moon, then the House of the Sun, ending in the Wind’s house; in each of these houses she is received with kindness, each giving her some advice, and the chicken

bones left from her dinner. After wasting three pairs of iron shoes, she reaches her

husband’s house, a house without a door or windows, suggesting that it may be a tomb, interpreted as a womb, perhaps the Earth womb. As Eliade explained, the archaic image of boys’ initiation was that of entering into a womb, an introduction into the invisible world from where they would come out anew; however, girls initiation consisted of revelations of the secret meaning of the natural phenomena, the visible, (M. Eliade 2005: 47-55) which in our story is represented by the houses of the Sun, the Moon, and the Wind. Facing his womb/tomb, the girl makes a ladder of chicken bones received from the miraculous helpers, the cosmic houses, as the only way to enter it would be from atop, describing here elements of a possible archaic funerary ritual. Reaching him, she acts like a goddess, taking him out the womb, bringing him to life, reborn into his new role, that of a husband and a father, marking the end of their initiation journey.

The Apprentice at the Other World Wizards School:

The hero’s journey of adventure and discovery, and the obstacles to overcome as told in the Romanian story, begins with the hero going to the wizard’s school, into sacred underground space of the Other World, where he acquires the powers of metamorphoses into any animal, from where he retrieved by his father; in some other stories, the wizard’s daughter falls in love with him and helps him escape the powerful master.

MAPPING THE OTHERWORLD

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This paper explores descriptions in religious and mythological texts of places that are not of this world (Mt. Meru, Harā Bērəzaitī, Olmo Lung Ring, the Garden of Eden, Hy Brazil, Avalon). Sometimes, detailed maps are even created of places that lie beyond the visible universe. I analyze this verbal and visual mapping of non-earthly realms and discuss the religious function of otherworldly cartography. This paper also examines the phenomenon of mapping mythological places onto real-world maps and sea-charts, including placing Hy Brazil and Ginnungagap in the Atlantic Ocean, the Garden of Eden in Mesopotamia or Missouri, and Olmo Lung Ring on Mt. Kailash.

A NEW LOOK AT MEDIA FRANCHISE FANDOM AND COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY: THE CASE OF THE ‘ONCE-LER’

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While archaeology, philology, and ethnography are often the best tools with which to track the diffusion and transformation of myth motifs, comparative mythology can also benefit from a robust theoretical model that draws on analogy with better understood and documented social and psychological processes. Such an analogy might be built with the study of fandom. With its murky origins in the long-running popularity that the original *Star Trek* TV show enjoyed after its cancellation in 1969, “fandom” refers to any subculture that is built around shared enthusiasm for a media franchise. Members of a fandom may attend conventions where they don elaborate costumes (“cosplay”), interact with one another online, and write fiction (which can be either “canon” or “noncanon”) set in the universe of the franchise. They may also report that it is in the fandom, interacting with a fictional universe alongside like-minded people, where they can be their true selves. With its imaginative worlds, ritualized performances, deployment of personal and cultural symbols, concern for textual authority, and promises of achieving a better integrated personality, fandom is an excellent place to observe the processes documented in Obeyesekere’s classic study of myth and ritual in Sri Lanka, *Medusa’s Hair*. In this paper, I will employ Obeyesekere’s Freudian-Weberian model to explore the

well-documented and clearly demarcated “Onceler fandom,” an online community (consisting of mostly teen girls and only active for a few years in the 2010s) centered on the “Onceler,” the antagonist of Dr. Seuss’s 1971 ecological fable *The Lorax*. If my observations bear out Obeyesekere’s conclusions, it becomes more likely that the fandom analogy, combined with the insights of Weberian sociology and psychoanalysis, is a good explanatory model for how and why myth motifs are elaborated, inverted, and eventually differentiated enough to be properly regarded as new and independent myth cycles.

SACRED GROUND AND ECOLOGICAL ACTIVISM

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The concept of sacred ground is broadly used in narratives of local ecological activists. Using analytical tools of environmental anthropology, ethnoecology and political ecology I will explore the complicated entanglement of nationalistic and religious myths in ecological narratives of the local community in the Jadar area in the Republic of Serbia. These narratives constructed distinctive discourse of sacred nature and sacred ground that became foundation for mobilizing the community to oppose mining corporation Rio Tinto, which was about to invest in the extraction of a mineral named *jadarit*. Stories about spirits of ancestors, combats and resistance, blood and soil, churches and cemeteries in this region, define what nature is and provide reasons for local pride and fearlessness. The research was conducted through fieldwork and interviews with the local community, but also through media and social network content. The presentation aims to open discussion about the importance of the local perspective of surroundings in the context of global perception of ecology crisis and corporate inclination towards profit.

THE REFLECTION OF WHO SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE: ONCE AGAIN ON RELIEF MIRRORS FROM VIMINACIUM

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In the Roman world, the family was deemed the most important structural unit of society. It was within the family that the processes of socialization and education of new generations, i.e., the reproduction of Roman cultural norms, took place. In such a worldview, the family household became the sacred area, vital for the survival of the entire civilization. It is considered that the Roman state religion was actually the religion of the house hearth on a grand scale. Priestesses of the goddess Vesta protected the eternal flame that symbolized the sanctity and purity of the Roman *domus* (Laurie 1895).

While the role of the *paterfamilias* was bound to the public domain (business, clients, politics, army, etc.), it was a matron's task to take care of the household. If she was successful, it could bring her great respect within the community. Ancient literary sources and epitaphs are full of praise for women who dedicated their lives to the family, but that message could have also been communicated through various parts of material culture.

Roman relief mirrors are certainly such artefacts. These were luxurious items, probably acquired for the marriage ceremony or as a part of the dowry, and, most importantly, decorated with an array of mythological scenes. In this paper, three specimens from Viminacium will be reassessed. Published before, they were interpreted as bearers of complex philosophical and religious concepts, or parts of imperial propaganda (Каровић 1995, Спасић-Ђурић 2001). One of the specimens was later reinterpreted, convincingly showing that the depiction served as a moral lecture to a bride-to-be (Mihajlović 2011). In such light, supported by a broader contextual analysis, the remaining artefacts from Viminacium will be discussed.

MANGALA AND FICTIONAL RITUALS IN PRE-MODERN INDIA

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India is well-known for a variety of rituals performed in different historical periods and in different regions. Some rituals were evidenced in recent times, other were described in normative works. Still, there are some rituals that are mentioned in the texts, but it seems unlikely that they were actually practiced. An example of a fictional ritual is the *maṅgala* practice as presented in the *Maṅgalavādas*, a genre of philosophical works of the Navya-Nyāya school. Though generally *maṅgala* is an auspicious verse at the beginning of a literary or a philosophical work, in the *Maṅgalavādas* it appears not a piece of poetry, but a specific ritual practice inherited from the elders. *Maṅgala* is compared with other rituals, like the *darśapūrṇamāsa*, and is believed to result either in the successful completion of a work, or in the removal of obstacles. The *Maṅgalavādas* consider *maṅgala* a specific kind of cognition with Ātman being its substrate. But what exactly is meant by 'ritual' in this case remains uncertain. *Maṅgala* can be considered a fictional ritual introduced in order to justify a popular textual practice. Similar fictional rituals or meditational practices are mentioned in some other philosophical works. This might be the case of the so-called *śabdapūrvayoga* referred to in Vṛṣabhadeva's commentary on the *Vākyapadīya*. Praśastapāda's claims that Vaiśeṣika's atomistic doctrine can be conceived directly in the course of a yogic practice may be another example. The same can be said about Sāṃkhya's claims that its intellectual procedures are a practical way to attain liberation. The question of fictional rituals and practices invented for some theoretical reasons deserves a further attention. It seems promising to consider fictional rituals in a comparative perspective.

**MATERIALITY, MYTH, AND DEATH
IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF PAQUIMÉ AND TEHUACÁN.
METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN THE STUDY
OF THE REPRESENTATIONS OF DEATH IN ANCIENT MEXICO**

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The archaeologist and mythologist Lotte Hedeegger has proposed a methodology for studying the materiality of myth in Scandinavia. He combines the study of written sources with the analysis of material culture. In this work, I will test this methodology by studying the material and mythological dimension of the representation of death in the archaeological sites of Paquimé or Casas Grandes in Chihuahua and Tehuacán in Puebla, Mexico.

The methodology proposed by Hedeegger consists of starting from the written stories and going back in time trying to identify the association of various elements of the story in the material culture. This methodology also tries to find the changes that have occurred in this relationship.

In the case of Paquimé, I will study the archaeological contexts related to the death and sacrifice of individuals, starting from the ethnographic and historical records regarding this practice. In Tehuacán, I am going to analyze the story recorded by Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, a priest from the 16th century, which refers to some elements found at the site, such as the representation of the goddess-mother. Then I will contrast this with the spatial relationship of different gods and goddesses of death and sacrifice found in the archaeological site.

WHAT COULD BE AN OPPOSITION TO THE SUMERIAN SELF-DESIGNATION “THE BLACK-HEADED”?

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The self-name of the Sumerians *saĝ-gi₆-ga* “the black-headed” has not yet received a convincing interpretation. And the fact that over time the Babylonians and Assyrians also began to call themselves *šalmat qaqqadi* “blackheads” shows that this is not about the name of an ethnic group, but about the name of a certain social entity. We have not been able to detect opposition to the black-headed in the form of the red-headed, gray-headed, or any other hair colors on the heads of the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamia. Consequently, the antonym to the black-headed should be located not in the area of color, but in the area of social stratification.

The article by Xenia Keping about the black-headed and the red-faced people in Tangut texts shows that in the medieval state of Xi Xia, noble people were called the black-headed people, and poor and ordinary people were called the red-faced people. However, in earlier times, the black-headed people were identified with people, and the red-faced ones with monkeys (Keping, 2003, 275-298).

This observation of a specialist in Tangut texts made us remember the numerous lexical parallels between the Sumerian language and the Sino-Tibetan languages, of which the Tangut language is one. These parallels in all cases do not belong to the basic vocabulary and testify not to kinship, but to the neighborhood of the Sumerians with the Sino-Tibetans before the Sumerians migrated to the south of Mesopotamia (Braun, 2001). Therefore, we should take a closer look at this social parallel first seen by T. de Lacouperie in 1891.

In Ancient China Qianshou “black-headed” is a term that has referred to the entire population of China since the time of Shi Huan-di (III BC). However, it is also found in more ancient texts: *Li chi*, *Zhangguo-ce*). There are three interpretations of this term. 1. Ordinary people tied their heads with black scarves. Slaves also had blue bandages. 2. Ordinary people were under the rays of the sun, and therefore had dark, tanned faces. 3. Black people, a laborer who deals with dirt. (Vyatkin, 1975, 2, 347). In Tibet “the black-headed” would be ‘a poetic term for mankind as a totality, created by the gods and kept in safe pastures by the kings.’ (Hill, 2017, 214).

Let’s turn to the Sumerian material. First of all, we see that *saĝ-gi₆-ga* “the black-headed” is the Sumerian designation of city dwellers, civilized people, which

follows from the remark in the text *Inanna and Šukaletuda*: “His father replied to the boy; his father replied to Šu-kale-tuda: ‘My son, you should join the city-dwellers, your brothers. Go at once to the black-headed people, your brothers! Then this woman will not find you among the mountains.’” He joined the city-dwellers, his brothers all together. He went at once to the black-headed people, his brothers, and the woman did not find him among the mountains.” (ETCSL 1.3.3., 231-238). Then from the royal inscriptions we learn that Warad-Sin (Warad-Sin 20, 34; 21, 77) and Rim-Sin I (Rim-Sin I 15, 28) are “the shepherds of the black-headed”. Here also, undoubtedly, the citizens of Isin are meant.

Who is opposed to the city dwellers in the Sumerian texts? This question can be answered unambiguously. In several texts that describe nomads, these peoples are compared to monkeys: “The days have multiplied, no decision has yet been made. (Adġar-kidug’s girlfriend speaks to her:) “Now listen, their hands are destructive, and their features are those of monkeys; he is one who eats what Nanna forbids and does not show reverence. They never stop roaming about, they are an abomination to the gods’ dwellings. Their ideas are confused; they cause only disturbance. He is clothed in sack-leather, lives in a tent, exposed to wind and rain, and cannot properly recite prayers. He lives in the mountains and ignores the places of gods, digs up truffles in the foothills, does not know how to bend the knee, and eats raw flesh. He has no house during his life, and when he dies, he will not be carried to a burial-place. My girlfriend, why would you marry Martu?” Adġar-kidug replies to her girlfriend: ‘I will marry Martu!’” (ETCSL 1.7.1. *Marriage of Martu*, 126-141); “Enlil brought out of the mountains those who do not resemble other people, who are not reckoned as part of the Land, the Gutians, an unbridled people, with human intelligence but canine {instincts} {(some mss. have instead:) feelings} and monkeys’ features” (ETCSL 2.1.5. *The cursing of Agade*, 155-157). Any person of non-Sumerian origin, any illiterate, ignorant person who did not go through a scribal school, was perceived in the south of Mesopotamia as a kind of monkey: “Today (?) Enlil loathes Sumer and has elevated to the shepherdship of the Land an ape which has {descended} {(2 mss. have instead:) come forth} from those mountain lands. {Now Enlil has given kingship to a dishonest man, {a seller of} {(1 ms. has instead:) who values} asafoetida} {(1 ms. has instead:) At this moment Enlil to somebody who sells asafoetida, a peripatetic criminal} -- to Išbi-Erra, who is not of Sumerian origin” (ETCSL 3.1.20. Letter from Ibbi-Suen to Puzur-Šulgi hoping for Išbi-Erra’s downfall, 15-19), 3-11. “Engar-dug, croaker (?) among singers, a man without good judgment, braggart,, a man! -- open (?) the house, I have a quarrel with you! In appearance a monkey, a rogue, a witness without shame, not accepting a verdict, a slippery place which respected men avoid, despising (?) the leader of the workforce, a man who does not a festival, a pig spattered with mud...” (ETCSL 5.4.11. A diatribe against Engar-dug (Diatribe B), 3-11).

Thus, the same pair of antonyms can be assumed in the Sumerian culture as in the Tangut texts. “The black-headed”, as townspeople, are opposed by nomads, Amorites and Gutians, reminiscent of monkeys in their appearance. Interestingly, the Sumerian word *ugubi* “monkey” literally means “his/her forehead” and this is similar to the Slavic word “человек” (*chelovek* – ‘man, person’). The words that denote these terms in the Sumerian and Tangut languages have nothing in common. In addition, in the Sumerian texts the very name “black-headed” appears only at the end of the III millennium BC. However, it is firmly rooted in the Akkadian language, without having any Semitic parallels. And now this rooting can be explained quite unambiguously: calling all the inhabitants of Mesopotamia “the black-headed”, the scribes did not mean the color of the hair on their heads or their ethnicity. Rather, they put their belonging to the urban community in the first place.

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BRAINS, MYTHS, AND FERMI'S PARADOX: PREHISTORIC THREATS TO THE FUTURE OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION¹

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*History makes no sense without prehistory, and
prehistory makes no sense without biology.*

*E.O. Wilson, The Social Conquest of
Earth, 2012*

*Why is thought being a secretion of brain, more
wonderful than gravity a property of matter? It is
our arrogance, our admiration of ourselves.*

Charles Darwin, Notebooks, 1838

Brain imaging and developmental studies confirm what ethnographic research has suggested for over 200 years: that mythical/magical thought, whose roots can be tracked in children and early societies, represent humanity's oldest forms of cognition. Some of those studies suggest that scientific training can override these default conditions in the so-called social brain.^{2,3} Others stress the resilience of these conditions, making most humans easy targets of ideological manipulation by political elites. As Cassirer wrote at the end of the first fascist era, in every period of stress “myth is always there, lurking in the dark and waiting for its hour and opportunity. This hour comes as soon as the other binding forces of man’s social life, for one reason or another, lose their strength and are no longer able to combat the demonic mythical powers.”

These lines are among the most pessimistic Cassirer ever wrote.⁴ He died in April, 1945, four months before US atomic bombs killed over 200,000 civilians

¹ This abstract with live links to all the references can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.safarmer.com/Belgrade.2022.pdf>

² Cf. S. Farmer 2010; go [here](#) to download a 2009 preprint of that paper.

³ [Mark H. Johnson et al, 2005.](#)

⁴ [Myth of the State \(1946: 280\)](#). On these topics, see the further evidence in what [C. Bottici 2017](#) labels a “forgotten” manuscript of Cassirer’s from this era, which was not published until 2008. Bottici suggests that Cassirer's editor, Charles Hendel at Yale, or others known to assist him, may have stripped out even darker passages from *Myth of the State's* posthumous edition, reflecting Hendel’s interest in assuring the “scholarly character” of any “book published under the name of Professor Ernst Cassirer.” Whatever the case, there is no doubt that Cassirer's views of myth by the end of WWII were radically different from those expressed in any earlier text published under his name, including *Essay on*

in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Judging by other evidence of Cassirer's deep pessimism late in life, it is reasonable to expect that had he lived a few months more he would have joined others including Einstein in viewing the start of the atomic age as a warning of the potential approaching end of human history.

Neither Cassirer nor Schelling, Comte, Tylor, Frazer, Lévy-Bruhl, Malinowski, and or other forerunners of Cassirer's work could make use in their studies of brain-imaging research or computational models of complex systems, which in recent decades have begun to replace older narrative approaches to the history of thought. At the 2017 IACM Conference, I reviewed a few sides of these studies, focusing on how changes in rates of information flows drove a long series of phase-like transitions in the structure of human traditions stretching from prehistoric to modern times.

Today I want to discuss some of these developments from a slightly different angle, focusing on how massive changes in the scale of human cultural networks in the last 10,000 years have transformed mythical thought in ways quite foreign to its original forms. These changes can be compared to those known in medicine as results of “evolutionary mismatch,” referring to evolved traits that had positive survival value in prehistoric environments but negative results in modern contexts. Evolutionary mismatch involving factory-made foods or drug interventions or industrial pollution were increasingly linked in the last half of the 20th century to the origins of dozens of chronic “diseases of civilization.” A few classic examples include massive global increases since World War II of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and related metabolic disorders; of most types of cancer in all stages; of neurodegenerative conditions including Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s diseases, multiple sclerosis, ALS, and Huntington’s disease; and of many muscular-skeletal diseases including osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, and sarcopenia, all known today to negatively affect other organ systems and significantly shorten human lifespans.

In mythology the same kind of “mismatch” can be linked to social pathologies including hypernationalism, fascism, xenophobia, and racism; adulation and sometimes near-worship of psychopathic leaders; and misogyny and other forms of sexual intolerance. Given mankind's abilities to create far deadlier weapons today than in Cassirer’s era, these kinds of mismatch pose graver dangers to the survival of civilization than the climate crisis alone or the massive pollution driving animal and plant extinctions at rates last seen on the planet 66 million years ago.

Man, published less than a year before he died. I’ll discuss the importance of these findings more fully elsewhere.

In this talk I'll suggest how each of these results is related not only to neurodevelopmental issues but to shifts as well in global demographics that have radically transformed the role in human thought of mythopoeic thinking. Dozens of studies warn that changes of nearly everything in modern life would be needed to prevent the total collapse of civilization following the intensified climate change and linked social upheavals predicted for the next decade. In my lecture I'll explore a few possible if admittedly low probability events that that might force a few needed social reforms before the most destructive of those forces set in. Paradoxically, if ever enacted, these reforms could potentially trigger a cultural and ethical renaissance in human traditions that might not be achievable in any other way.

At the end I'll review new analyses of Fermi's paradox that assign low odds to the survival of any industrial civilization that fails to adopt sound ecological policies within a few centuries of reaching technological maturity.⁵ Climatologists in recent years have detected large numbers of "early warning signals" (EWSs) of violent planetary change and linked social upheavals, suggesting that tests of those analyses on our home planet can be expected soon. The implication is that any delays in addressing the political and social as well as technical drivers of ecological decline will further lower the odds of humanity's long-term survival. The take-home message of my talk is that any attempt to deal with these problems will require a full grasp of the neurodevelopmental origins of mankind's primitive myth-making abilities, which are embedded in perceptual biases fixed even before birth, making them exceedingly difficult to control or override.

⁵ See, e.g., the detailed discussion in [Bologna & Aquino 2020](#), esp. pp. 7-8.

CONSTRUCTING THE WORLD. THE RITUAL AND BAUHAUS

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The principles of the ritual are embedded in the very idea of creating this art school in 1919. Bauhaus represents a new beginning both in the midst of art education and socially, as a whole social organism. The ritual is called to structure, to arrange, to construct and build the life of the community. It “puts into action”, soldering, and ensuring the realization of the common idea for the team, for the whole community.

The study examines plenty of ritualistic facts in connection with the concept, structure, and life of the Bauhaus, both in the aspects of time and space.

CHANGING IDENTITIES OF GOVARDHANA – A STUDY OF MYTHS AND RITUALS

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Govardhana is the sacred mountain of Vṛundāvana, India. Govardhana is part of Mathurā pilgrimage and also the independent centre of worship among Vaiṣṇavas. Circumambulation of mountain Govardhana which is known as Govardhana parikramā is considered meritorious among cultural ethos of India.

References to Govardhana can be found in myths related to Kṛṣṇa’s biography. It appears in Harivamśa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa and Gargasamhitā. It can be seen that there are certain additions and omissions as myth of Govardhan travels from Harivamśa to Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. It seems that Govardhana worship propagated by Kṛṣṇa is rejuvenation of mountain worshipping cult. It can be seen that Govardhana Mountain was ‘protector deity’ similar to Nāga and Yakṣa as gleaned through certain myths reflected in the above texts. Etymological meaning of the word Govardhana (*go* – ‘cow’ and *vardhana* – ‘one who nourishes’) points out its strong connection with cows and also its association with pastoral community. Govardhana seems to be the fertility god worshipped by pastoral communities. Cow is significant part of rituals reflected in texts as well as prevalent in current traditions of Govardhana worship.

Later Vaiṣṇava schools gave due importance to Govardhana in their saṁpradāya texts as well as philosophy. Śuddhādvaita school worship Govardhana as Śrī Nāthjī which is reflected in narratives like Śrī Nāthjī ki Prākāṣya Vārtā. Govardhana Māhātmya (Glory of Govardhana) has become significant part of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava texts and tradition. Govardhana is identified as 'Haridāsavarya (the best of devotees)', the seed of which is present in Bhāgavata Purāṇa itself. Later he is also observed as svāminī svarupa i. e. Rādhā.

This paper will analyze the myths about Govardhan in order to understand the changing identity of Govardhana in order to explore the socio-cultural and philosophical elements which were responsible for this.

VEDIC ALTAR AS A METAPHOR. COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE VEDIC SACRED SPACE

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The main aim of the paper is to describe Vedic altar as a metaphor of Reality. The textual sources analyzed in the paper are the *Brāhmaṇas*.

Both classical views on the relationship between myth, metaphor, and ritual practice, as well as newer approaches (e.g., the theory of ritual as a multimodal metaphor by J. Jurewicz or cognitive theories of symbolization) will be discussed.

As an example, creation of sacred space, establishing the three Vedic fires, and the elements, objects, and space important for the *agnihotra* and *agnicayana* rituals –in many texts described as model Vedic sacrifices– will be presented. The creation of sacred space accompanied by the ritual activities will be discussed as well.

According to the texts, not only the Vedic ritual has both cosmogonic and soteriological meanings, but also a magical one. In the light of the thesis presented in this paper, building of the Vedic altar that is developed by the *Brāhmaṇas* as a practical metaphor expressing the Brahmins' vision of the world and being a consequence of the whole Vedic ritual activity, is understood as *a model of* and *a model for* Reality.

ICELAND'S HOLY HILL (HELGAPELL) AS AN INDO-EUROPEAN SACRED MOUNTAIN

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&

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Helgafell is a free-standing hill or small mountain on a peninsula connected to the mainland by a relatively narrow causeway, a big chunk of rock that rises some 73 meters above the flat valley terrain and the broad, island-studded bay. It is about two miles from the metropolis of the West Fjords, Stikkisholmur, and its present popularity in the Icelandic tourist industry thrives on the views and perhaps on some sense of “holiness” still upon the land. Helgafell figures largely in the thirteenth-century *Eyrbyggja saga* as the sacred mountain overshadowing the Thorsness Thing or meeting place. In the settlement period, Helgafell was a contested space, both as to its actual sanctity and as profane real estate and hereditary property; later it was the last home of a famous saga woman, who became Iceland's first anchoress.

We propose to test Helgafell as a model for comparison with a selection of other holy mountains or *sacromontes* far beyond Iceland, in a preliminary search for some parts of a “typology of holy places,” as suggested by the Swedish archeologist Per Vikstrand.

Helgafell will primarily be compared with a number of mythological and ‘physical’ place-specific holy mountains in different Indo-European cultures, such as mountains Meru, Kailāsa (Kailash), and Govardhana in the mythology of South Asia; Greek Mount Olympus and Mount Athos; Roman/Italic mounts Etna and Vesuvius; Armenian Mount Ararart; various holy mountains and hills in several Slavic folk and mythological traditions, etc. We will also discuss certain materials beyond the Indo-European realm, i.e., the biblical mount Sinai as well as other places. In conclusion, we aim to arrive at a general model of an Indo-European Sacred Mountain.

THE WORLD'S THREE-DIMENSIONAL ARCHETYPAL MANIFESTATIONS IN PARAJANOV'S STILL LIFE COLLAGES

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&

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The genre of still life was developed in Dutch and Flemish painting traditions of the 17th century, however elements of this genre can be already seen in the Ancient Egyptian culture as well as other cultures of the Ancient Orient. Particularly, the fragments of still life are present in Ancient Rome, frescos of Pompeii and elsewhere. It is in the Dutch painting, that the still life nevertheless acquires symbolic meaning. The life symbolism also stems from the reality that fruits, flowers painted in still life are picked off and should have a short life, while various fish species, crabs, birds are killed before being depicted.

The still life not only reflects the symbolism of human life, temporality of this earthly life, but also emphasizes the three-dimensional system the universe which can be seen best of all when exploring a floral still life.

For example, longer living flowers connected to the Kingdom of Heaven and Holy Spirit, which are the bearers of the heavenly symbolism are painted in the upper part of a still life. Those blossoming flowers that however will die quickly and symbolizing this earthly life and its temporality come in middle of the composition, while cut off and already dead flowers as well as various insects depicted in the lower part of vase relate to the symbolism of the underworld and death.

Generally, each element of still lifes acquires dualistic symbolic meaning, being subject of many studies. In this context, what interests us is the archetypal manifestations of the three-stage system of construction of the universe – the celestial space, the earth, and the underworld in Parajanov's still lifes. Parajanov's floral still life-collages are especially remarkable, where the above three-level system is clearly evident. For instance, Parajanov-style flowers are painted in the upper part of the vase in his collage-still life 'Echo of War', a glass vase in front of the mirror is placed in the middle, usually symbolizing fragility of life just as glass can easily break and a picture of a killed youth is seen in the lowest part with a number of attributes associated with memory and death.

In our paper we will analyze a number of Parajanov's still life-collages from the point of view of the three-stage structure of the universe and the life and death symbolism.

STORY AND RITUAL: HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE LAHU'S CREATION MYTH IN FOUR VILLAGES?

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The NuJiang valley in China is an extension of the Eastern Himalayas, inhabited by Lisu, Derung, Nu, Pumi, Bai, Tibetan, and other ethnic minorities. The landform of highland and ravine is integral to local culture. The Mountain, cave and cliff are recurrent themes in Nu and Derung people's folk narratives, including myth, legend and folk tale.

Firstly, sacred mountains are manifested in the flood myth and the myth of the ladder into Heaven.

For example, in the Nu people's *Genesis*, the flood submerged the world, and a brother and sister, under the guidance of the gods, collected mushrooms all the way to the Silong Mountain of Neyamen and survived. They then cut down trees and made ladders to climb into the caves, allowing people, animals and ghosts to survive. In this myth, the location combination of mountains, ladders, and caves has become an important space for species regeneration.

In the Derung People's *Genesis*, after the flood broke out, a brother and sister picked up mushrooms to the top of the Kawakapu Mountain, and avoided the flood in the cave. After the flood receded, the two became the Mountain god after they gave birth to nine pairs of siblings. In this myth, the Derung people regarded the Kawakapu Mountain as the sacred land of Human Origin. As the ancestors of humans/Derung people, the brother and sister have become the gods of the sacred mountain. In addition, the sacred narrative of the Derung people about the ladder involves another sacred mountain called Mukemudang—*Ants Ate the Sky Ladder* and *Ants Evacuated the Sky Ladder*. In both of stories, there were nine levels connected to the sky on the top of the Mukemudang Mountain. The ladder, after the Derung people named Mupu (one say Gemeng) ascended to the sky, the ants gnawed off the ladder because of his ridicule, the sky and the earth were separated from then.

In the above two types of myths, the specific mountain is endowed with the meaning of sacred ground, which is related to the regeneration of human beings and the reconstruction of the cosmic order.

Secondly, caves often appeared as sacred spaces for survival prospects of species in the flood myth, that is, grounds to escape from flood -- this is reflected in the Flood regeneration myth. As a space to avoid floods, these caves saved creatures. The function of these caves is similar to the ark and gourd in the flood myth, and can also be regarded as a subtype of the myth of the Emergence of the first people from the underworld. In addition, the cave separated man from monkey and ghost. When the flood receded and man left the cave, the relationship among species in the universe began to diverge. The Cave serve an important function of recreating the structure or relationships of species. For example, a myth narrates how ancient people distinguished men from monkeys by moving fire into the cave.

Based on the metaphor of human regeneration, some cave myths relate to fertility, which is embodied in the folk narrative of cliff-god/goddess and the god/goddess of the chase. In the Nu and Derung's beliefs, the god/goddess of the cliff and the god/goddess of the chase are responsible for the fertility of animals, plants and human beings. They are sometimes regarded as the same god/goddess, and people hold sacrificial ceremonies at a certain time. For example, in *La Shan and Ci Shan* of the Nu people, after a fierce flood the surviving brother and sister were married, then the ants, hacking knife, cloth and so on dropped from the sister became the ancestors of different creatures. The ants became the ancestors of ghosts, and was assigned to live on the Crag, and took charge of mountain animals and vegetation. The ants in this folk narrative have the same function as cliff-god/goddess and the god/goddess of the chase.

In the Nu people's story, a maid who got honey through a rope ladder fell off a cliff when the rope ladder was cut. She floated up and fled into the cliff and became a cliff-goddess from then on. Such as these, among the Nu people, the cliff-god/goddess (sometimes is seen as the owner of the cave) was often transformed from human beings. Before becoming gods, they all experienced death crisis in cliffs or caves on mountains, and then they became gods/goddess, controlling the prosperity and decline of vegetation or directly controlling the marriage and reproduction of human beings. The Nu people's Flower festival is based on this kind of belief.

In the Derung people's story, cliff-god called "Renmuda" is sometimes regarded as the god of the chase. When hunting, Renmuda disappeared on the cliff, then became into an odd-looking people whose lower part of the body turned to stone.

From then on, Renmuda helped his brother with hunting as the god of the chase. To thank Renmuda, The Derung people offer sacrifices in the ritual called Demowa held before the large-scale hunting activities in winter.

In another Derung people's story—*Duna RungPa*, the goddess of the chase is Duna. "Duna RungPa" means Duna's cave. Duna was an orphan and lived in the cave, then taken to the fairy palace by the god of chase and given charge of hunting. Local hunters used to live in the caves of Duna when hunting and offered sacrifices to the god of the chase to catch more prey.

Disappearance or appearance of the god/goddess of the chase is related to the prosperity and decline of all things. In the Nu people's narratives, the goddess's soul was abducted by a beast, or she is seen as the wife who has mysteriously disappeared. There is a similar story narrated by the Derung people: when Akati was born, he was abandoned by his parents in a cave because of his strange behavior. Only a month later, he grew up and became a good hunter. When his parents returned to the cave, Akati told them he would not die and asked them to come back when the moon turned to be red and full. Three years later, the moon turned to be red and full, and Akati was killed by a tiger. Since then, the Derung people hunted on the night when the moon was red and full, believing that the moon was dyed red by the blood of Akati on this day, so as to protect hunters.

Thirdly, on the subject of sacrifice or the tripartite system, these narratives are worthy of a further discussion that takes into account the theories of Dumézil, Mallory, Puhvel, etc.

The sacred mountain, cave, and cliff are widely narrated by the Nu and Derung people. These narratives almost have all genres, such as myth, legend, and folk tale, and all describe the alternation and rotation of life cycles, which are full of cosmological significance. This important link would be easily overlooked if strict genre distinctions are followed. If only relying on genre to determine narrative meaning, just as Dumézil said, it would damage the essence of the narrative. Therefore, only by transcending the limitations of genres can we describe and understand a sacred belief about the mountain, cave and cliff as a whole.

PATH TO THE PARADISE OF THE DEAD IN AN INDIGENOUS TIBETAN FUNERAL SONG

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Paths to the land of the dead in the myths of Mesopotamia and the neighboring areas in the ancient world, especially in Inanna/Ishtar's Descent into the Underworld which are partitioned by seven gates, are well known for us. The fact that the path consists of seven places recalls us the 49 days of bardo in Buddhism, that is if one stays one place for seven days, he is to stay all seven places for 49 days. However, the concept of bardo has no suggestion of travel. Therefore, many people may think that bardo was established in Buddhism uniquely and with no relation to the myths of West Asia.

However, I produce testimony of highlighting the possibility of the 49 days of bardo made under influence from West Asia. At the end of Pt 1134, a long scroll discovered in Dunhuang an oasis on the Silk Road in Western China, we can find a remarkable funeral song. Despite its unknown or archaic vocabularies, this song shows us the arrangement of seven regions along path to the paradise of the dead, in which one can cross over one region for seven days. Thus, it takes the dead 49 days to travel from this world to the beyond. This manuscript belongs to old indigenous tradition before the inflow of Buddhism into Tibet, so that has no Buddhist term but many indigenous archaic words and metaphorical expressions. These features can mean that the 49 days of Pt 1134 comes from very old non-Buddhism similar to ancient Mesopotamia's, which might have given influence on the *bardo* concept in India. I mean this funeral song can be a missing link in the global transmission process of the concept "path to the other world".

MOTHER DEITIES ACROSS EURASIA: A COMPARISON OF LATVIAN, VIETNAMESE, AND MONGOLIAN TRADITIONS

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An extraordinary rich tradition of mother goddesses (*mātes*) attested in the Latvian folklore calls for a direct comparison with its counterpart in the Vietnamese or Southeast Asian living cult of mother goddesses (*thờ mẫu*). Both

geographically distant pantheons are characterized by a similarly universal coverage of all aspects of life and religiosity. Both systems are related to the economy relying on the importance of women. Modern densely populated Europe and Vietnam increased their social interactions and needs and enriched the systems by new strata where the already existing mother goddess became a general prototype for a new set of deities. We try to compare these two systems with a set of female deities in the less densely populated Mongolia with a rare continuity of spiritual approaches since the pre-collectivization period. With a highly syncretic and multilayered religion labelled as the Mongolian Buddhism and shamanic traditions, the Mongolian cultural area does not provide a self-standing tradition of female deities, but many female deities can be found in local cults expressed through the Buddhism-shaped ritual texts and through the local oral tradition of extraordinary personal encounters with a deity, providing a structureless patchwork of deity-imageries, yet constantly reenacted by personal experiences. On one side, the Mongolian oral tradition reveals spiritual concepts comparable to Latvia, where the pantheon of goddesses has rich structure and diversity of their specialized functional roles. On the other side, the role of mediums (with female shamans in Mongolia) is comparable to the practices in Vietnam (mostly *lên đồng* rituals). Our paper focuses on the context, functions, similarities and differences in three distinct traditions.

“MYTH OR MÄRCHEN?” IN THE LIGHT OF STEBLIN-KAMENSKIJ’S THEORY

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The title is a summation of a variety of problems connected with the relationship of myth and different narrative genres, from those allegedly going back to oral tradition (wondertale, legend, epic) to works of literature. The very comparison of myth with textual narratives presupposes that myth belongs to a system of genres on a par with textual narratives, itself being a text, cf., “they are very long,” “the myths are in a story form,” etc. (Leach 1981: 5).

A different view of this is Steblin-Kamenskij’s theory. According to him, myth belongs to the plane of content; it can materialize, both non-verbally (e. g., in a ritual) and verbally, the plane of expression depending on the rules specific to each particular form and the tradition it belongs to. In this context, no text can be regarded as purely mythological, but some of these can be “narratives regarded as true” (Stebelin-Kamenskij 1983: 75), at a stage of evolution of a society, when mythology underlies the society’s unalternative *Weltbild*. (Not

coincidentally, the first chapter of Steblin-Kamenskij's *Myth* is devoted to "Space and Time" in Eddic mythology.)

Such an approach automatically excludes from the category of *myths* proper any verifiable 'post-folklore mythology' (e.g., "the oral traditions of my local village football club" – Leach 1981: 6), not representing "syncretic truth." As metaphoric is the term "myth(ologism) in literature" (Meletinskij 1976), reflecting superficial affinity of notions (plots, names, etc.) created by the language of mythology and borrowed from it into the language of literature.

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THE HISTORY OF THE XIICA CMOTOMANOJ CELEBRATION AMONG THE SERIS FROM MEXICO

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&**

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The *Seris* live in two communities on the coast of Sonora, Mexico. The men are mainly engaged in fishing, diving, and hunting. The women make handicrafts with shells, snails, and fish vertebrae. The sea is their main source of food and work, but it is also closely related to their myths. The *Comcaac*, as they call themselves, speak their own language, the *Cmíique Iitom*. Historically they were a semi-nomadic group until 1950 when they settled in two communities with the support of the Mexican government.

In this presentation, we analyze a *Comcaac* oral history about the origin of the celebration of the *Xiica Cmotomanoj* in honour of the *Mosnipol*. The *Mosnipol* is a turtle, named as Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). It is considered a sacred animal because it has the soul of a woman who died before her puberty celebration.

Our methodological framework to study this oral history is going to combine linguistics, semiotics, and anthropology. In order to develop this, we will analyze the original story in *Comcaac* language identifying the verbs and actions inside the narration, and then we will try to infer their narrative functions. After, we will try to understand the social and historical dimensions of these functions inside the *Comcaac* society.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MILKY WAY AND THE EARTHLY LANDSCAPE IN INDO-EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

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Through most of human history, and still today in areas relatively free of light pollution, the Milky Way is one of the most striking objects of the night sky. Given its elongated shape, many traditions have seen it as a celestial river or pathway—the way of the birds, the path of straw, or the road of souls. Sometimes this connects the earth to the sky or leads to another realm (relationships of contiguity); sometimes it mirrors an earthly way (a similarity relationship). And in some cases, it is seen as an extension and/or reflection of features of the earthly landscape. This talk will reflect upon four traditions that use Indo-European languages, two in which rivers, two in which roads, have the same name as that of the Milky Way. These are the royal River Boyne, or White Cow, in Ireland, corresponding to the “Way of the White Cow” in the heavens; Indian identifications of sacred rivers, once the Sarasvatī, more recently the Ganges, with the “river” of the sky; the royal road Watling Street across England, a name also used for the Milky Way; and the pilgrimage route through Western Europe to St James of Compostela, the “field of stars”. In each of these cases, as well as in some other Indo-European traditions, there is, or is evidence for, a further link to bovines and/or milk—as, for instance, in Greek, the source of the English term ‘Milky Way’. The distinctive character of these complexes will be set out through comparison with some traditions of non-Indo-European or apparently non-Indo-European origin identifying the Milky Way as a river (China, Andes) or a road (the “straw road”, including the Serbian *Kumova Slama*).

THE SEARCH FOR THE CAPITAL OF THE FIRST PIASTS. POLITICAL MYTH IN POLISH NATIONAL IDENTITY

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The purpose of the present contribution is to show the process of creating national identity in Poland in the 20th and 21st centuries based on political myths related to the capital of the state. I would like to show references to political ideas and symbols related to the statehood of the first Piasts, i.e., the dynasty of rulers recognized in historiography as the founders of Poland as a state, and which have become an important basis for political myths in contemporary Poland. I want to trace the presence of references to the state of the first Piasts – not so much as an idea, but as space – in the political and public discourse and define their significance for the Polish national identity. Particular interest will be related to the references to the first Piast capital, which play an important role in shaping the national identity. The case of contemporary Poland is interesting because there are disputes over the location of the first capital, which could be located in the following places: Piastów, Poznań, Gniezno, Giecz, Ostrów Lednicki, and Grzybów as well. It is worth adding that the disputes over the definition of the first capital are conducted against archaeological research and result, as I would like to demonstrate, from ideological reasons. Namely, politicians and ideologists want to show the continuity of Poland as a nation with a specific spatial location, and the capital is a source for shaping national identity.

THE INDO-EUROPEAN DEITIES OF THE DIRECTIONS AS REPRESENTED IN RITUAL

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I would like to emphasize the position I have recently explored at the last IACM conference and in an article in the issue of *Nouvelle Mythologie Comparée* in preparation and currently available [online](#).

At a conference like this one devoted to space it may be possible to build up a foundation in association with scholars having similar opinions who will seriously consider the possibility that the Indo-European deities, although known to us in the historical record through the literature of hymns and stories, were based on a limited set of gods in the Proto-Indo-European period whose identities included their placement in space. The view taken is that an originating

tribal group lived in a spatiotemporal context based on the human body and the human life stages. Work on Indo-European structuring must necessarily take account of the tripartite theory of Georges Dumézil and it is possible to build on this, with the triad of the sacred, physical force and prosperity equating with the stages of life of old men, young men and mature men and with the directions of front (east), right (south) and left (north) while fertility is equated with women and the back (west). It is argued that the concept of the gods in locations in space was present in the source society and was retained in ritual contexts such as sacrifices and the inauguration of kings when men and women ceremonially represented the gods.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE ANCESTORS

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The report examines the various pictorial formulas for “paths” and “steps” in the culture of ancient Eastern Europe. The semantics of the “shoes attached to the belt” from the stelae of the Bronze Age is defined as “the step of the progenitor”, which marks the path of ancestors. It is revered as sacred, as the road that Xerxes passed through Thrace and which the Thracians did not sow. The royal tour is another form of the road through which the territory of the kingdom is constructed and delimited.

The path is an essential element of initiation both in the mythical and epic narrative and in the rite. Finding the “right” path is the main task of the heroic journey. The mythology of the road is plot-forming in the rites of marriage and death. The road is “long”, “labyrinthine” and “dangerous”. To pass successfully, the hero needs either a vehicle (chariot, ship, horse) or sturdy shoes. These items are a mandatory attribute in the funeral.

The step is a means of identification, of belonging to the clan and the tribe. In archaic funeral practices in Macedonia, gold sandals were placed in the tomb along with other identifying items – a gold mask and a hand. A step has been cut on a rock from the Beglik Tash megalithic complex. Its function is to remind of the residence of the local hero in these sacred places, as semantized and the so-called “Marko’s steps” on rock topoi all over Bulgaria. On the other hand, this “imprint” may have served in enthronement rites similar to the Irish “Tara stone” – the contender took the step printed on it, which shows that he is on the path trampled by the heroic kings from the past, he “comes to power”.

These plots-roads and objects-roads are especially important principles in the formation of the mythical, epic and pictorial text. As a measurement unit, the step also determines the poetic art.

The Thracian evidence and artifacts are placed in a broad Indo-European context.

HOW TYRANTS ARE BORN: A THEORETICAL HYPOTHESIS

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Lives of heroes universally show common elements such as miraculous births, journeys to the otherworld, conquering of monsters, and enigmatic and tragic deaths. The heroic pattern of life thus attracted people's attention and has been well studied by such scholars as Thomas Carlyle, Otto Rank, Lord Raglan, A. M. Hocart, Joseph Campbell, Jan de Vries, and Archer Taylor. This paper is an attempt to discover whether such a pattern could also be formulated for the lives of tyrants. Tyrant in this paper designates a ruler whose cruel acts are emphasized across the world and is not restricted to ancient Greek history.

On tyrants many myths and legends are known all over the world. Are they simply de facto historical figures? Or is there rather a universal process of "tyranization" so to speak that makes a historical or mythological figure a tyrant when necessary. Judging from the similarities in the lives of many tyrants, making a hypothesis about the process of "tyranization" might be helpful. In this paper, examples of mythological and legendary tyrants are taken mainly from Japan (Emperors Yuryaku and Buretsu), but cases of China, Rome, Greece, and England will also be considered.

In Japanese ancient history, most of the early emperors are not historical figures, but rather legendary. Gradually, however, historical elements increase. The lives of these early emperors are recorded in the earliest historical records: the *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon-shoki* (720). On Emperor Yuryaku (21st), there are two opposite evaluations, one capable and the other wicked. Emperor Yuryaku's poem is placed at the top of the *Manyo-shu*, the first collection of poems finally compiled in 783. We can say his greatness is honored in this way. Emperor Yuryaku is also well known by some of his cruel actions. Likewise, Emperor Buretsu (25th) is depicted as a cruel ruler. Most of the recorded emperors of the legendary period were not characterized as tyrants. Only Yuryaku and Buretsu are so. This puzzled

many historians. Perhaps the reason is that in the case of these two emperors there were discontinuities in succession. New emperors of different lines may have emphasized the nefarious sides of former emperors in order to legitimate new imperial lines.

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION OF ARTHURIAN LEGEND IN VIDEO GAMES

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King Arthur, the classic cultural and spiritual symbol in Western European culture, shaped as warrior and leader, is all the rage in contemporary video games, transmitting a unique and distinct athletic aesthetic based on physical strength worship, which helps reduce players' identity anxiety from daily life. By family resemblances between the Eastern and Western culture in typical characters and their spiritual attributes, Arthur's Round Table and sacred figures in Chinese tradition have been exchanged and mutually learned, which endows the players with diversified spiritual freedom and transcendental liberation. In Game Meta Narration, under the joint influence of cultural resources' repetitive reproduction and creative proliferation, what players have absorbed is a kind of beauty without humdrum or boredom but delicacy from those repetitive game stories. In view of this, it's feasible to realize cultural exchange as well as mutual learning and creative transformation of cultural resources by a clear grasp of the aesthetic demands of the young generation, the aesthetic values of cultural resources and the narrative nature of video games.

Keywords: Arthurian legend, aesthetic characteristics, athletics, liberation, repetition.

**THE IMPASSABLE DISTANCE BETWEEN LOVERS
IN THE POETRY OF PROVENÇAL TROUBADOURS (AD 12TH–14TH):
“LOVE FROM AFAR” AND EXOGAMY**

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In the songs of an early Provençal troubadour Jaufre Rudel (AD 12th), we find insistently repeated motifs of ‘love from afar’ (*amor de lonh*) and of ‘love for [a lady in] a distant land (*amor de terra lontana*)’. About a century and a half later, to explain this passion, those motifs were developed in his fictitious biography (*vida*), according to which this troubadour had fallen in love with the Princess of Tripoli (i.e., belonging to the Sacred Ground of the Holy Land), whom he had never seen (*ses vezer*). To see her, he joined a crusade and got sick on board a ship just to die happily in her arms.

In terms of anthropology, these motifs, well known from world folklore (AaTh A516, Th. Mot. T11), finally go back to the tradition of exogamy which imposes to seek one’s spouse outside of one’s lineage, then outside of one’s clan and of one’s territorial group. With progressive cultural individualization, a girl belonging to the collective category of “authorized fiancées”, becomes the predestined spouse who should be sought “elsewhere” and finally “far away”. Love for a young girl whom the hero has never seen before can be provoked by a portrait, a description, a dream or by rumor about her, as with Jaufre Rudel.

We also suggest seeing in these motifs of his poetry, as well as in the narrative structures of the *vida* comparable to those of folk tales, a special manifestation of the main motif of the poetry of Provençal troubadours (AD 11th–13th) being the idealized courtly love (*Fin’Amors*) for a higher rank married lady, which for this reason can never reach consummation. It is the *Fin’Amors* which prevents the lovers to be united and forces the narrative to create ‘obstacles’ like distance, travel dangers, sickness, and death. We find similar motifs starting from the poetry of ancient Rome, then found in medieval literatures of East and West and up to Romanticism where they were especially popular: all these motifs create the essence of Wagner’s “Tristan and Isolde”, going back to a courtly novel by Gottfried von Strassburg (AD 13th) and enriched by deeper metaphysical meaning.

**THE PLACE OF THE DREAM:
SITE-SPECIFIC DREAMS AND CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
IN EUROPE AFTER THE ROMANS**

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The practice of incubation, wherein a lay individual seeks aid or advice from supernatural entities by sleeping in a place dedicated to them, dates back at least to the ancient Egyptians; in the Classical world, incubation is most famously associated with Asclepius, Amphiaraus, nymphs and other healing deities. This paper explores evidence further North and West – as Roman ascendancy waned – for ties between dreams (including visions and nightmares) and specific kinds of place. While lacking the institutional organization of, for example, the *asclēpia* (hospital-temples) of the Mediterranean and the Illyrian Way, evidently NW Europeans and Scandinavians did expect dream encounters with the supernatural world at certain sites – such as tombs, riverbanks, and fountains – and developed ritual means for attracting (or repelling) such dreams. Looking at materials from late Classical, medieval Norse, Anglo-Saxon and Celtic sources, together with folkloric and ethnographic evidence from the early and late modern periods, the paper considers what patterns can be seen here, how they might be shaped by social divisions (gender, class), and in particular what they might tell us about how and why certain kinds of “sacred ground” are created and maintained over very long periods, as portals to the Otherworld.

TÜRBE: THE BLESSING OF THE SACRED SITES

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In this paper, I will present religious practices related to sacred mausoleums (*türbe*), while exploring the concepts of blessing (*baraka*) and the idea of saints in Islam. Türbe is a single-celled construction, mausoleum, tomb, or tombstone building constructed in memory of a holy figure, religious leader, or martyr who died in the war. It is believed that shrines and tombs of holy figures are sacred sites, endowed with baraka – holiness and blessing. According to some Muslim traditions, the blessing of relics and shrines can be transmitted to people who visit sacred sites, especially if devotees interact with the sacred site through various customs and physical contact. This paper aims to describe and analyze the custom of tying ribbons on the window fences of Sheikh Mustafa's türbe and Damat Ali-Paša's türbe in Belgrade, Serbia. For the purpose of this paper, I will use the theoretical framework of anthropology of religion, as well as qualitative method and field research. While focusing on customs related to the cult of saints and relics, I will consider perspectives of both folk and official Islam.

SOLAR AND LUNAR ECLIPSE MYTHS IN VIETNAM AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

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A solar eclipse is a natural phenomenon that occurs when the sun, moon, and earth are in a straight line, causing the moon and earth to eclipse each other. Since the early days, the ancients mystified this phenomenon and imagined stories about gods in the mystical, supernatural world. The ancient ethnic groups feared solar and lunar eclipses and considered them a bad omen, believing it to be the wrath of the gods coming upon their lives. Therefore, myths explaining solar and lunar eclipses are stories told in the mythical narratives about the sun and moon and are very popular all over the world.

There are also many stories about the sun and moon in the myths of Southeast Asian countries. Starting from the theoretical pivot of the motif and the method of textual analysis combining the cultural approach, the article compares the myths explaining the solar and lunar eclipses in Vietnam and some Southeast Asian countries, the story field to which few people pay attention, but which is

no less rich and popular. The literature review shows that the myths explaining solar and lunar eclipses in Vietnam and some Southeast Asian countries have great similarities. The basic plot is woven by two motifs: the motif that hides the sun/moon and the motif that repels the sun/moon eaters.

In general, the significance of the myths in both motifs is that they explain solar and lunar eclipses in Vietnam and Southeast Asian countries, reflecting the pursuit of explanation and conquest of nature, the desire for harmony and support of the people, nature for human life. This aspiration is expressed by each ethnic group with its own coloration, but all are based on the cultural concept of reverence for the role of the sun and the moon in connection with the wet rice agriculture.

THE LEGEND OF THREE DRAGON TEMPLES

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There are three temples that were named after a legend of the water god, dragon in Shimofusa (Chiba Prefecture) in Japan. The legend is as follows: in the 8th century a drought took place by the order of the dragon King. Buddhist monks and people prayed for rain. At last, a little dragon made rain and sustained all living beings. But the dragon King got angry and cut the little dragon into three pieces: head, body and tail. People enshrined these pieces in three temples for his soul.

I have concluded that the origin of 'the legend of dragon temples' is in an ancient capital city, Yamato (Nara Pref.). In ancient Japan, many shrines and temples were built for praying at sites related to water, for example, sources, falls, springs, ponds, wells and so on, because the problem of water was a matter of life or death. And many legends about dragons were created in Nara around the 8th century. The story of how shrines or temples were built for the dead dragon is one of them.

The legend propagated to Kawachi (Oosaka Pref.), and Owari (Aichi pref.) near Yamato around 10th or 11th century. And the legend of the three-dragon temple in Shimofusa was made based on the Yamato's version in the 12th or 13th century. I will verify the process by the documental and archaeological evidence and will refer to a possibility that the original legend had come from Okinawa in Japan, China or Korea.

FORESTS & CREMATION GROUNDS AS SACRED SITES THROUGH INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

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Indian Mythology venerates various religious sites, temples, rivers, and mountains as sacred specifically through Puranas. Visiting these sites grace the individuals with merits in terms of wealth, wisdom and even moksha. But apart from these specific sites; author finds exquisite sacredness associated with Forests and Cremation Grounds in Indian Society. They do not yield particular merits; but they do help an individual explore and comprehend the truth of life. Thus, Indian Mythology mentions of Lord Shiva staying in Cremation Ground, whereas Lord Rudra is lord of Forests and Mountains. King Harishchandra spends his life in exile at Cremation Ground, whereas it is Forest (Dandakaranya) for Rama - Lakshmana - Seeta (in Ramayana) and Pandavas (in Mahabharata). Thus, we can observe the significance associated with both Forest and Cremation Ground through Indian Mythology. The Dharmashastra depicts life of an individual ideally divisible into four parts, v.i.z., Bramhacharyashrama, Vivahashrama, Vanaprasthashrama and Sanyasashrama. Out of these, Vanaprasthashrama is specifically meant for life span mandatorily to be spent in forests. In Vedic Literature, we have Samhita, Bramhana, Aranyaka and Upanishads. Out of these, Aranyakas are texts to be studied in Forests. Cremation Ground on the other hand is the final destination where each individual's body is taken after the death. Thus, forests and cremation grounds both have significance in Indian Society from perspectives of rituals and sociology. The current paper thus explores this significance of Forest and Cremation Ground as sacred sites from perspective of Indian Society through references found in Indian Mythology. In addition, the author also ponders upon a question if today's deserted distant Indian villages also serve the same purpose due to excessive distressed migrations with urbanization for jobs, education and healthcare services.

**MARIA CIVITAS DEI MYSTICA:
METAPHORS COMPARING A PERSON
TO A SACRED PLACE IN CHRISTIANITY**

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In one strand of the Christian Mariology and Marian mysticism, Virgin Mary is honored with a curious metaphorical title: *civitas Dei mystica*, the mystical city of God. In this title, the person of the Virgin Mary is symbolically represented as a sacred place. The origins of this metaphor lie in the (anachronistic but widespread) Mariological readings of several Biblical passages in which a city is personified as a female figure (e. g. Lamentations 1:1, Revelation 21:2). The Marian title itself is already quite common in the Middle Ages, but most comprehensively elaborated by Mary of Ágreda in the 17th century. This contribution attempts to explore the meaning and motivation of this metaphor and to describe its development and its doctrinal rationale, drawing some parallels to non-Christian religious traditions, especially those of Asia.

**NEITHER IN HEAVEN NOR ON EARTH:
DWELLING PLACES OF DRAGONS AND FAIRIES
IN SERBIAN FOLKLORE AND FOLK SONGS**

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Among all the saints, spirits, ghosts, witches, vampires, and other liminal beings that dot the landscape of Serbia's rich and extensive corpus of folklore, oral tales, folk songs, and rural magico-religious customs, it is perhaps dragons (*zmajevi*) and fairies (*vile*) that are the most prominent and perplexing. They marry into human families, sire children with their lovers, whisk away maidens and young shepherds into their worlds (and, most intriguingly, transform them into their kin), swear patronage as godparents to heroes, punish the wicked, and themselves become embroiled in conflicts both mundane and fantastical, spanning the social hierarchies of humans and other non-human beings alike. Their peculiar relationship to the Orthodox Christian spiritual hierarchy—at times sitting outside of it, and at others standing directly in alliance with saints and angels—further entwines them with even the religious worlds of men.

This paper seeks to understand and contextualize the relationship between dragons, fairies, and the world of the living by examining the very places in which these myriad encounters occur. Drawing on extensive research in the Serbo-Croatian language, it will survey folk songs, tales, and customs surrounding dragons and fairies to map out the physical and mythic attributes of their caves, rivers, mountains, skies, forests—and most especially, the oneiric worlds in which they appear to the living through dreams and trance-states. By examining the characteristics and liminal nature of these sites of crossing, trafficking, marriage, battle, initiation, and camaraderie, this paper will consider questions of sacredness, what marks a territory as belonging to a dragon or fairy, the relationship between dragons and fairies, humans, and each other, and how their own worlds, territories, and kingdoms are conceptualized, understood, entered, and even escaped. In surveying both physical locations in Serbia that are considered to belong to or be inhabited by these beings, as well as mythic geographies that can only be accessed by invitation, this paper will provide not only a thorough folkloric account of these encounters and their shared qualities, but also question what it means for a dwelling space of the living to become one that is shared with the Other—especially in accounts of marriage and the intertwining of spirit-human families.

HAUNTED LANDSCAPES IN ANGLO-SAXON HORROR FICTION

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The notion of the haunting could be regarded as paradigmatic for the modern horror genre. Haunted buildings, villages, and even mechanized objects, such as trains, cars, puppets, etc. act as sources of supernatural threat in the genre's best-known works. The concept of a haunted item of material culture differs, however – in quality, as well as in ontological implications – from the notion of a haunted natural landscape: the first is more closely related to human cultural worlds (past and present) and can be described as largely anthropocentric; while the other is conceptualized as fundamentally alien to humans, provided that it emanates from (pre-human) realms of nature. This paper analyses three classical horror stories in which the natural environment is portrayed as a doorway to other dimensions of physical being, awareness, and cognition: Algernon Blackwood's *The Willows* (1907), Clark Ashton Smith's *Genius Loci* (1933) and Ramsey Campbell's *The Voice of the Beach* (1977). The aim of the paper is to provide answers to three analytical questions: how such spaces are narratively constructed, what meanings do they communicate, and how do they persuade us

to imagine the limits – as well as potential transformative properties – of human body, perception, and intellect.

Keywords: Space, liminality, *genius loci*, human body, human cognition, horror fiction.

ROMOW. SCIENCE (WITH FOOTNOTES)

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Great empires tend to prove their greatness through their conquests. The conquered people, when trying to assert their rights, rely on heritage, culture, myths.

In Latvian history we count “Awakenings” – the periods of asserting and reasserting Latvianness. In mid-19th century the only social division on the soil of present-day Latvia was between ‘die Deutsche’ and ‘die Undeutsche’, the first meaning the better off, learned, cultured, and the others – all things low and nearly uncivilized. Having no notable kings, states and conquests known to historians, the first men not shying away from their low origins after acquiring higher education created the concept of notable cultural heritage as a proof of former greatness in some “Golden Age”.

The available historical documents provided some material useable to these ends. Though scarce and contradictory, there were testimonies to the mythology of the indigenous inhabitants of the Baltic lands. Using a slogan that “no nation with sophisticated mythology can be unsophisticated in the other fields” they started building Latvian mythology out of available bits with the ambitious aim to create something equaling the classic mythology systems.

No myth can live without some ritual. A nation-wide myth requires a temple. The historical documents provided quite a spectacular one – the Romow. Originally mentioned in early 14th century as a central temple site in Prussia, as the temple and residence of a high priest with power over not only Prussia but also Lithuania and Livonia (there was no such notion as Latvia then), the story received quite a supplement 2 centuries later, gradually becoming a mainstay of all treatises dealing with Latvian mythology.

The origins of the story are unclear. The site must have been destroyed at least decades before the initial mention. The details from the wider description resemble those known in several other cultures and on other sites as well. Still there had been quite a few attempts to etymologize the names of the deities and explain the meaning of the site. The characteristics of the deities, as pointed out by Emily Lyle, correspond to the tripartite system as proposed by Dumézil. Still, the description does not completely fall in line with the rather few but nevertheless existing other documents.

The story and the mythical temple both played a significant role in boosting the national self-assurance and have found new incarnations despite quite some doubt regarding its veracity. The doubt was undermined by the fact that the first wave of it came from the aforementioned 'Deutsche' opposing the idea that the lowly people they dominated and patronizingly considered them entrusted to their custody could have any history at all, even less – aspiration to nationhood. Which narrows the whole discussion down to ideology.

KYIV CYCLE OF *BYLYNY* AMONG EPIC EUROPEAN NARRATIVES: A COMPLEX NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

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&

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Bylyny are the epic narratives of Eastern Slavs. They cover the period from 9th till 12th century when the Kyivan Rus' rose to be one of the strongest countries in Eastern Europe. We focus only on the Kyiv cycle of *Bylyny* since they consist mostly of heroic epic songs. Our goal is to compare them with other well-known heroic epic narratives in European heritage, such as English *Beowulf*, Irish *Tain Bo Cualinge*, Icelandic Sagas, Welsh *Mabinogion* and the classics. To this end, we adopt the complex networks approach, where each of the characters forms a vertex in the network and their interaction is seen as an edge. Our results show

the similarity in the structure of the character networks as well as support some of the hypotheses about *Bylyny*, that concern the historical and geographical origin of its protagonists.

‘PHERI’ OF A PROTECTING SPIRIT: DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SACRED AND PROTECTED

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The word ‘pheri’ meaning a round trip exists in most north Indian languages and is probably derived from ‘peri’ in Hellenistic Greek. A ‘pheri’ is a short journey made often, and when performed as a part of a ritual circumscribes an area of significance, a sacred ground when performed by a devotee, or a zone of protection when performed by a deity. During a fieldwork conducted in the coastal town of Panvel which is now part of Navi Mumbai we chanced upon several narratives of ‘pheris’, night vigils performed by spirits of Sufi saints and Hindu deities protecting the humble lives of their devotees. These coordinated nightly pheris are also complemented in annual fairs when the deities are made to visit each other symbolically. The urban fabric of such coastal towns evolved out of traditional marketplaces. The multiethnic communities maintained their ties through the roles ascribed to the saints, spirits and demigods protecting the lanes and squares of the marketplace. We processed these narratives as data in a geospatial database. A folkloristic analysis has been presented at an appropriate forum. In this paper, we explore the mythological underpinnings of these belief systems and the extent to which we can find basis for them in the history of mythology. We aim to articulate the distinction between the ‘pheri’ of a protecting spirit and the circumambulation of a sacred object by a devotee by analyzing the collected narratives, their geospatial analysis, and referencing documented phenomena in mythology literature.

**COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY
IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES:
THE CONTRASTS**

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Nineteenth-century theorists of myth, as epitomized by Tylor and Frazer, saw myth and science as incompatible. Myth and science, meaning natural science, originated and functioned to serve the same need. More important, they did so incompatibly. One could not consistently espouse both myth and science. By contrast, twentieth-century theorists, ranging from Freud and Jung to Malinowski and Levi-Strauss, deemed myth and science compatible, for they originated and functioned to serve different needs. What those needs were varied from theorist to theorist. For some, myth was not even about the physical world. For others, myth was about, say, the experience of the physical world rather than about the world itself. There were other ways of reconciling myth with science.

**CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SACRED LIGHT AND TRACING OF ITS EVOLUTION
IN INNER ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY, RELIGIOUS TEXTS,
AND MODERN K-POP IMAGINATION**

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Widely used motif of light belongs to the most important universals in human culture and mythology. This paper is trying to map the evolution of this motif and to trace its development on three stages: I) Inner Asian religious artefacts including rock art for preliterate level, where this motif starts mostly in non-abstract form as the depiction of heavenly planets. II) In the second literary stage and after full diffusion of this motif into Inner Asian cultures, the motif of light also appears in abstract form in written texts of various religious systems. Here the two special features are II.1) metaphorical expressions and II.2) direct anthropomorphism, when also newly a person (deity, ruler, hero) becomes a source of light. III) Finally modern (audio)visual art is depicting the light in natural form. It is interesting that in the third stage, the light itself does not have any special value as it had for ancient populations and to reach its symbolical function, it must be depicted in additional religious or cultural contexts of other

religious symbols or in a special scene. Special means are characteristic also on both previous levels, i.e., ordinary words for “light” usually have metaphorical connotations or are connected to important persons and deities. And on preliterate level on the rock art, there is usually a vertical orientation or other ways how the ordinary sign is conceptualized as a sacred one.

Above mentioned stages are documented I) by Inner Asian preliterate petroglyphs and archaeological artefacts with astral symbols and heavenly planets, II) by examples of religious texts of Buddhist and Manichean origin as well as important chronicles, III) by the presence and use of this motif in music videos of contemporary Korean pop music. Although it may seem that there is a great distance between classical symbolism of Inner Asia and modern K-Pop, surprisingly it is not true. On the contrary it can be clearly shown that the motifs in the K-pop preserve highly traditional connotations and visualize them in relatively orthodox way, since the reproduction of the motif of light must be simply understandable to international audience.

WHEN APA MOSES MEETS OSIRIS: THE SACRED LANDSCAPE OF ABYDOS

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The site of Abydos (about 450km south of Cairo, in Upper Egypt on the west bank of the river Nile) was one of the most prominent religious centers over the course of nearly four millennia. Initially royal necropolis of early dynastic rulers Abydos has reached the prominence of a “national” cult center dedicated to the god Osiris. Over the time, with the change of the political situation, the sacred landscape of Abydos has witnessed not just a shift of deities, namely from Osiris to Osiris-Serapis, and then to Bes, but also experienced the completely new religious concept – the Coptic Christianity.

THE LANDSCAPE OF ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY

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During the Late Middle Ages, the tradition of St. Patrick's Purgatory was one of the best known throughout Europe. It gave rise to a pilgrimage that still today attracts thousands of people every year. Destination of the pilgrimage was (and is) an islet in the centre of a small lake, in northwest Ireland: Lough Derg's Station Island (Co. Donegal). In the past, for about two centuries, it was said that by going to that islet one could have the opportunity to visit the world of the afterlife and come back alive on this earth. The topic of this presentation is the set of landscape elements of the pilgrimage destination. To retrieve their symbolic value may help a comparison between the *Tractatus de purgatorio sancti Patricii* and other traditions, Irish and non (*The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, *The Gospel of John*, *The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Muigmedón*).

MYTHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF MODERN COSMOLOGY

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Contemporary inflationary cosmology, together with the Big Bang theory, is an extraordinary narrative that relies heavily on traditional mythological structures and elements of representation. The intention of the report is to use the modern cosmological narrative present in popular science literature as an opportunity to re-examine the role of mythology in modern society and to point out the cultural aspects of contemporary science.

The presentation will rely on the semiotic analysis of A. J. Greimas in the deconstruction of mythical elements in the cosmological narrative. This analysis results with a consideration of the role of science in contemporary philosophy, and thus the role of mythology in the modern-day world. Relying on the mythological elements of popular science, it is possible to see the religious and philosophical issues facing modern man and the society he is creating. The main goal of the presentation is to highlight the semiotic elements of modern cosmology present in popular science literature and television programs.

Authors such as Neil DeGrass Tyson, Lawrence Krauss or Brian Green present contemporary cosmology in such a way that these performances act as a close mixture of science, philosophy and mythology, as the foundation of a worldview that aims to establish itself as an important part of viewers and audiences value system. In this context, modern cosmology can be viewed as a hypermodern cosmogonic myth and text that contains a deep philosophical conception of the identity of a humanity. With such an approach, it is possible to open the topic of the role of modern cosmology in the domain of philosophy of mythology.

MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS RELATED TO SPACE AND PLACE IN SLAVIC TRADITIONS

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The report will see into the typology of mythological characters – patrons and inhabitants of place and space in different Slavic traditions.

It is quite obvious that mythological beliefs are connected with the climate and the geographical landscape of the habitat of the people carrying the tradition. For example, in the mountainous regions of the Carpathians and the Balkans, dwarfs and underground spirits, dragons and lamias are present, which are practically absent in lowland cultures; in areas where there are many rivers, lakes, ponds and swamps – there are numerous beliefs about water spirits, etc.

But besides this direct correlation with real objects of nature, the composition of the demonological system can be analyzed from the typological point of view. For example, there are different types of forest demons in different traditions: terrible wild women (*divá ženka, bohynka*); beautiful young forest maiden (*vila, samovila, rusalka*), whom village guys can even marry; ambivalent (depending on people's behavior) forest spirits *leshii*; incomprehensible amorphous characters such as *blud, hejkalo*, which causes people to wander in the forest, etc. Water demons are sometimes comprehended as demonic masters of water, sometimes as the souls of drowned people who are waiting to drown the next victim. Demons associated with home space either appear in the form of an anthropomorphic spirit of the house, or in the form of a domestic snake, or in the form of an enriching demon.

The typology of the Slavic mythological characters is also influenced by the way of life and management of the peoples, by their cultural ties with the neighbors and a number of other factors. But mythological concepts very often appear to be Indo-European and even global.

FOLKLORE OF THE EUROPEAN ROMA (GYPSIES) AND THE MYTHOLOGIES OF INDIAN TRIBAL WORLD

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At present, a domineering scholarly point of view is that in the folklore of the European *Roma* there is nothing that they could have brought with them from their homeland – India. It is a common opinion that ‘gypsies’ everywhere borrowed myths, fairy tales, legends, and folk beliefs from the peoples in whose milieu they had to live.

In this paper we shall demonstrate for the first time the Indian origin of several myths, folktale motifs, and of one specific folktale plot which were recorded from the *Roma* speaking a dialect of the Vlax group. It must be noted that the most obvious and convincing parallels to these myths and folklore motifs are found not in the Sanskrit literature, but in the traditions of Indian tribes.

MOUNTAIN SPACE IN CUBAN MYTHOLOGY: SACRED PLANTS AND TREES IN CUBAN HEALING PRACTICES AND POPULAR MEDICINE

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In 1954 the Cuban ethnographer and poet Lydia Cabrera published her famous book *El Monte*, a classic of Cuban literature, emphasizing that the essence of the described ancestral religion lies in Nature and that the mountain or woods – *el monte* - is its temple. With devotion and humility, she portrays local beliefs of spirits living in the mountains, like in forests in ancestral Africa, powerful spirits whose kindness and hostility pull the strings of human fate. So, any mountain space is considered sacred because of the invisible, and sometimes visible, presence of spirits and deities; “Saints are in the mountains more than in the heavens.” (see Cabrera 1993: 17)*

* “‘El monte es sagrado’ porque en el residen, ‘viven’, las divinidades. ‘Los santos estan mas en el monte que en Cielo.’” (Cabrera 1993: 17)

Lydia Cabrera explains this perception with knowledge and love, her book revealing one of the most deeply rooted aspects of Cuban customs and traditions. Because in order to receive benefits and protection from *el monte* you need to first ask for permission to take a rock, a plant or a stick for something. Because just like a temple, every tree, bush, plant has its owner and a well-defined purpose.

So, feeling that there is an understanding between heaven and earth within or behind a ceiba tree, a palm tree, or among the grass, has irrefutable beauty.

Furthermore, Cabrera's work *La Medicina Popular Cubana* (1984) sheds light on the sacred plants and trees used and referred to in Cuban healing practices and popular medicine.

RESEARCH ON THE ORIGIN OF THE JOURNEY TO THE DIVINE WORLD AND ITS DESCRIPTION IN CHUCI

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Shijiahe Site 石家河遗址, located in Tianmen City, Hubei Province 湖北天门, is the largest, best-preserved and highest-grade Neolithic settlement site in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River in China, representing the highest level of prehistoric culture in this place. Since November 2015, more than 250 exquisite jade articles (around 4300 BC) have been unearthed from the Shijiahe site, which represents the highest level of jade carving skills in East Asia at that time. Moreover, compared the other sites of the same period (such as Taosi 陶寺 culture in the central and Longshan culture of Shandong 山东龙山 in eastern China) where a number of jade objects have been unearthed, this site has obvious burial functions and aesthetic features. Chuci, the text composed during the Warring States period, is the most important mythological classic of the pre-Qin Period, integrating the characteristics of Chu culture in the south. In this text, there are abundant romantic and elegant descriptions of traveling to heaven. Associating this content with Shijiahe culture—an important source of Chu culture and the burial jade tradition formed in the Longshan Period—might help us to find a cultural source to trace the descriptions of the journey to the divine world in Chuci.

In this paper, the jade objects unearthed in Shijiahe are divided into three categories: jade ritual objects with abstract geometric modeling; animal and

human head-shaped jade with mainly realistic appearance; daily-use types with plain surfaces. Researching these objects while considering their specific archaeological surroundings and detailed characteristics, we found that the human head-shaped jade has obvious features of a wizard. Considering the animal and human head-shaped jades, it can be concluded that they all share the same cultural characteristics of ‘the man and the beast’ motif 人兽母题 put forward by Zhang Guangzhi, which shows a close relationship between mythological wizards and their animal assistants. The usage of the jades in the ritual indicates that there existed mature witchcraft-related ceremonies in the Chu 4000 years ago. For instance, the simplified handle-shaped ware 柄形器 played a role in the ancestor sacrifice. A large number of jades *bi* 璧 and *cong* 琮 were the tools for wizards in offering sacrifices to heaven and communicating with gods. The shape, function and cultural significance of these jade objects provide a new way of understanding the source of the poet’s journey and his thoughts on the divine world in Chuci.

SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM AS A DIVIDED DIVINE BODY

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The paper discusses multiple Indo-European myths dedicated to the creation of space and, in certain cases, time from the divided body of a divine being. First, I will focus on myths describing the creation of the universe from the body of a sacrificed Cosmic Giant, such as Vedic Puruṣa in the Ṛgveda, Adam in the Slavic *Book of the Dove*, Germanic Ymir, etc. I will juxtapose these creation myths with some ideas of space-time continuum created from the body of a sacrificial animal found in several Indo-European texts, i.e., creation of the universe from the body of the sacrificial horse in the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka-upaniṣad* (India); forming the landscape from the primordial bull in the Old Irish epic *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, and other similar motifs. I will proceed by analyzing a variety of myths that describe an act of establishing a sacred space (or consecrating a landscape) with the body parts of a deity, the most striking example being the consecration of the South Asian subcontinent with the divided body of goddess Sati.

Overall, I examine multiple Indo-European sources, including Indic, Iranian, Germanic-Scandinavian, Slavic, Armenian, etc., and reconstruct a common Indo-European *ur*-myth of creating the time-space continuum out of a sacred body and marking and consecrating an actual space/landscape by the body parts of a divine being.

**“THEY ALL LAUGHED, EXCEPT TYR; HE LOST HIS HAND.”
THE NORSE MYTH FROM THE CELTIC COIN**

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Although the imagery of a coin deals with an immense amount of information, the absence of implementation of numismatics in the research of mythology is, nonetheless, quite noticeable. In this paper, an examination of one particular issue will demonstrate how archaeological findings are capable to attest a storytelling tradition well-known from a much younger historical source. To be precise, the obverse of an auction specimen minted around 2nd – 1st cent. BC by the Celtic tribe of Parisii (Paris region, France), mentioned by Caesar and Ptolemy, carries a rather bizarre scene of a monster-wolf savaging a humanoid figure's hand. Accordingly, the puzzling scenery like this one does not appear in any of the acknowledged Celtic sources, yet it looks like a fable we can recognize from the 13th cent. Icelandic version as *'The Binding of Fenrir'* (Norse myth of wolf Fenrir biting of Týr's hand). Hence, it shows that the folk tale was at least 1300 years old when [Snorri Sturluson](#) made it part of *'The Prose Edda'*. The author's combined approach to this subject brings into question its 'exclusiveness' for the Germanic people and interprets whether the Celtic one-handed god might be an Indo-European legacy or a merely foreign influence.

Keywords: Coin imagery, Indo-European, Celtic, Norse, Tyr.