

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY
&
RATHCROGHAN VISITOR CENTRE, TULSK, IRELAND**

**SIXTEENTH
ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY**



MYTHOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE:

WAR IN HEAVEN, WAR ON EARTH

PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS

August 21-25, 2023

**Rathcroghan Visitor Centre
Tulsk, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon,
Ireland, F45 HH51**

PROGRAM

MONDAY, AUGUST 21

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

09:30 – 10:00 **OPENING ADDRESSES**

MONDAY MORNING SESSION: GENERAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

CHAIR: NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

10:00 – 10:30 **STEVE FARMER**
The Systems Biology Group, Palo Alto, California, USA
**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, PHILOLOGY & NEUROBIOLOGY, &
COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY:
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE EVOLUTION OF PREMODERN THOUGHT**

10:30 – 11:00 **JAN A. KOZÁK**
Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
**THE CIVIL WAR OF SYMBOLS: THE TYPES OF CONTEMPORARY
SECULAR MYTHOLOGY**

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:30 – 12:00 **LUCIE VINSOVA**
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
**FACING THE BEAST WITHIN: INTEGRATING VIOLENCE AS A SOURCE OF
UNDERSTANDING IN SELECTED COSMOLOGIES, SPIRITUAL PRACTICES
AND MODERN PSYCHOTHERAPIES**

12:00 – 12:30 **WILL LINN**
Hussian College, Los Angeles, USA &
JOHN COLARUSSO
McMaster University, Canada
WAR IRON

12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: IRISH & CELTIC MYTHOLOGY

CHAIR: STEVE FARMER

14:00 – 14:30 RALPH KENNA
Coventry University, UK &
CHRIS THOMPSON
Story Archaeology & EIRI Project, Ireland
HOW MATHEMATICS RAISED AWARENESS OF THE “GODDESS” OF THE
RIVER SHANNON - AND SPARKED A RECENT REVOLT AGAINST
COLONIALISM AND MISOGYNY

14:30 – 15:00 ANA R. CHELARIU
New Jersey, USA
CELTIC TRAITS IN ROMANIAN FOLKLORE: *OISIN OF THE LAND OF*
ETERNAL YOUTH AND THE ROMANIAN BELOVED FAIRY TALE *YOUTH*
WITHOUT OLD AGE AND LIFE WITHOUT DEATH

15:00 – 15:30 MIKE MCCARTHY & DANIEL CURLEY
Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, Ireland
FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ENIGMATIC NATURE OF THE
HEROIC CONNACHT WARRIOR FRÁOCH MAC FIDACH FOLTRUAD

15:30 – 16:00 **Coffee Break**

16:00 – 16:30 BRANISLAV ŽIVKOVIĆ
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary
THE DEVIL WHO USED TO BE A GOD: LIMPING BETWEEN THE IRISH
AND SERBIAN MYTHOLOGICAL REALM

16:30 – 17:00 ANNA PAGÉ
University of Vienna, Austria
VIOLENCE AND CHILDBIRTH

18:00 – Reception

Gleasons Townhouse
Market Square, Roscommon

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION: MYTHOLOGY AROUND THE WORLD

CHAIR: BORIS OGUIBÉNINE

09:00 – 09:30 YURI BEREZKIN
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
VIOLENCE IN NARRATIVES AND IN REALITY: ALMOST NO CORRELATION

09:30 – 10:00 JULYE BIDMEAD
Chapman University, USA
"ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR"

10:00 – 10:30 MARIA V. STANYUKOVICH
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
MIGHTY PYTHON: SHAPESHIFTING HERO-SNAKES IN PHILIPPINE EPICS
AND MYTHOLOGY

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 11:30 LOUISE MILNE
*University of Edinburgh & Edinburgh Napier University,
Scotland, UK*
WAR IN HEAVEN: REPRESENTING THE REBEL ANGELS IN MEDIEVAL AND
RENAISSANCE ART AND THOUGHT

11:30 – 12:00 BRANKO BANOVIĆ
*Institute of Ethnography SASA, Belgrade, Serbia &
MILOŠ MILENKOVIĆ
University of Belgrade, Serbia*
ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF SAINT BASIL OF OSTROG
CULT IN MONTENEGRO'S CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL LIFE

12:00 – 12:30 ONDŘEJ PAZDÍREK
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
MARTYRDOM AND IDENTITY IN CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY IN EAST ASIA

12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch Break**

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF CHINA

CHAIR: DANIEL CURLEY

14:00 – 14:30 FAN WEI
Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China
HUMAN REGENERATION AND ITS CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN THE
FLOOD MYTHS IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

14:30 – 15:00 JINGHUA HUANG & HUILING YANG
Yunnan University, China
THE WAR OF FIRE: A STUDY ON MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES IN
SOUTHWEST CHINA

15:00 – 15:30 **Coffee Break**

15:30 – 16:00 CHUJING YANG
Yunnan University, China
A STUDY ON THE VIOLENCE IN FLOOD MYTH OF THE DRUNG PEOPLE

16:00 – 16:30 **POETRY PERFORMANCE:**
CHRISTINA CARTY
London, UK
A SERIES OF BILINGUAL POEMS INSPIRED BY THE FEMALE CHARACTERS
IN THE ULSTER CYCLE

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION: INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY – MYTHOLOGY OF SOUTH ASIA

CHAIR: YURI BEREZKIN

09:00 – 09:30 SUNIL PARAB
*Doon Institute of Medical Sciences &
Sindhu Veda Research Institute, Dehradun, India*
RAWALNATH: THE STORY OF MIGRATED COMMUNITY AND ITS DEITY

09:30 – 10:00 BRIAN COLLINS
Ohio University, USA
LORD VEṬĀL: VAMPIRE GOD AND EXEMPLAR OF THE HAUNTING AND
HUMAN SACRIFICE COMPLEX

10:00 – 10:30 SHAKUNTALA GAWDE
University of Mumbai, India
TRANSFORMATION OF DEMON INTO DEVOTEE: A CASE OF PŪTANĀ

10:30 – 11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:00 – 11:30 BORIS OGUIBÉNINE
University of Strasbourg, France
VIOLENCE AS NON-VIOLENCE

11:30 – 12:00 JOHN LEAVITT
Université de Montréal, Canada
TWO DIMENSIONS OF EARTHLY AND DIVINE BATTLES IN CELTIC AND
INDO-EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

12:00 – 12:30 XIAOQIANG MENG
Leiden University, Netherlands
THE DEVA-ASURA WAR (DEVĀSURASAMGRĀMA) IN BUDDHIST
CONTEXT: A “COMBAT MYTH/CONFLICT TOPOS” IN AN INDIAN
AVATAR?

12:30 – 14:30 Lunch Break

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

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: MYTHOLOGY OF SOUTH ASIA

CHAIR: LOUISE MILNE

14:30 – 15:00 SIGNE COHEN
University of Missouri, USA
THE VAJRA, THE VĀSARA, AND THE LORG MÓR:
THE WEAPONS OF THE THUNDER GOD

15:00 – 15:30 NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA
Princeton University, USA
INSTRUMENTS OF FATE:
ON WAR AND DESTINY IN THE INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY

15:30 – 16:00 YAROSLAV VASSILKOV
*Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
St. Petersburg, Russia*
TERMITE MOUND (“ANTHILL”) IN THE MYTHOLOGIES OF SOUTH ASIA

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:00 SUNTHAR VISUVALINGAM & ELIZABETH CHALIER-VISUVALINGAM
Chicago, IL, USA
VIOLENT TRANSGRESSION IN THE MYTHOLOGY OF BHAIRAVA AND
VARUṆA

17:00 – 17:30

ARJAN STERKEN

Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands

WARRIORS OF KUBERA AND DEMONIC *DHARMA*: THE AMBIGUITY OF
THE *YAKṢAS* IN THE *ARANYA PARVA* OF THE *MAHĀBHĀRATA*

THURSDAY, AUGUST 24

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION: CLASSICAL GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY; MYTHOLOGY AND MODERNITY

CHAIR: LOUISE MILNE

09:00 – 09:30

KAZUO MATSUMURA

Wako University, Tokyo, Japan

PECULIARITIES OF MEDEA IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

09:30 – 10:00

DMITRI PANCHENKO

St. Petersburg State University, Russia

ASTRONOMICAL CLUES TO THE VIOLENCE IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

10:00 – 10:30

PETRA VOGLER

Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany

THE FORGOTTEN ORACLE OF PRAENESTE: RECONSTRUCTING DECISION-
MAKING PROCESSES ABOUT WAR

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee Break

MYTHOLOGY AND MODERNITY

11:00 – 11:30

CHENG MENG

Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China

ON MODERN NARRATIVES OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN VIDEO GAMES:
A CASE STUDY OF *IMMORTALS: FENYX RISING*

11:30 – 12:00 SHANE SURREY
Pasadena, California, USA &
WILL LINN
Hussian College, Los Angeles, USA
EPIC WAR & THE PACIFIC RIM

12:00 – 12:30 JELENA ĆUKOVIĆ
University of Belgrade, Serbia
BATTLE FOR JADAR: MYTHOLOGICAL WAR NARRATIVES
IN ECOLOGICAL ACTIVISM

12:30 – 13:00 AVANI UDGAONKAR
University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK
SWORDS AND/OR SEDUCTION: THE INTERTWINING OF SEX AND
VIOLENCE IN GODDESSES OF WAR

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

**THURSDAY AFTERNOON SESSION: IRISH AND SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY IN A COMPARATIVE
PERSPECTIVE; MYTHOLOGY OF INNER ASIA**

CHAIR: NATALIYA YANCHEVSKAYA

14:00 – 14:30 FROG
Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, Finland
MYTHIC KNOWLEDGE, SEX AND DEATH IN SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY

14:30 – 15:00 PAOLO TAVIANI
University of L'Aquila, Italy
KWAKIUTL WARRIORS AND THE THEORIES OF *FUROR BELLICUS*

15:00 – 15:30 AKIRA OTA
Sendai, Japan &
AKIYOSHI MARUYAMA
Digital Hollywood University, Tokyo, Japan
IRELAND, OKINAWA, AND JAPAN IN MIGRATION AND CREATION MYTHS

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

- 16:00 – 16:30** SACHIE KIYOKAWA
Bukkyo University, Japan
THE SKY HAS FALLEN: TAMIKI HARA'S VIEW OF MYTHOLOGICAL
HUMAN HISTORY
- 16:30 – 17:00** ONDŘEJ SRBA
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
KAZAKHS BETWEEN BROTHERS AND ENEMIES IN THE MYTHOLOGY AND
HISTORICAL ORAL TRADITION OF THE WESTERN MONGOLS (OIRATS)
- 17:00 – 17:30** MICHAL SCHWARZ
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN TRIBUTARY RELATIONS AND
REGULATORY FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS IN INNER ASIA
- 17:30 – 18:00** CONFERENCE CLOSING REMARKS AND FINAL DISCUSSION

19:00 – Conference Closing Dinner

*Abbey Hotel
Galway Road, Roscommon*

FRIDAY, AUGUST 25

10:00 – EXCURSION
*A guided tour of
Rathcroghan and Carnfree*

ABSTRACTS

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF SAINT BASIL OF OSTROG CULT IN MONTENEGRO'S CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL LIFE

BRANKO BANOVIĆ

Institute of Ethnography SASA, Belgrade, Serbia

&

MILOŠ MILENKOVIĆ

University of Belgrade, Serbia

Saint Basil of Ostrog cult is one of the most revered in Montenegro. A large number of Orthodox pilgrims (from Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also from abroad) visit the Ostrog monastery to venerate Saint Basil of Ostrog's relics. Some Catholic and Islamic believers also believe in the healing power of this important Serbian Orthodox Church saint. In 2020, the cult of Saint Basil of Ostrog became an especially important aspect of Montenegro's political life. Namely, in late December 2019, Montenegrin Parliament voted new "Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities". According to this law religious communities must prove ownership of church property that had been built before 1918, and if there is no such evidence, that property will be considered state property. The Serbian Orthodox Church believed that this law is taking away its property, thus a wave of protests started against the controversial religion law. As time went on a considerable percentage of Montenegro's population took to the streets opposing the law. On the wave of these protests walks called "litije" (processions), the Montenegrin opposition led by pro-Serb forces gained a slender victory on the August 2020 elections, so the first change of power happened since the beginning of nineties. The great Serbian poet Matija Bećković, in urging citizens to vote in the parliamentary elections, pointed out that "the opponent of President Đukanović and his ruling party this time is Saint Basil of Ostrog". Zdravko Krivokapić, the leader of the winning electoral list and afterwards the Prime Minister of Montenegro, joyously proclaimed during the election night address: "After 31 years of absolute power, this had to happen. The rationale is simple: anyone who insults God and Saint Basil of Ostrog must go that way."

To comprehend this political-religious discourse, which is entirely unusual in contemporary European political life, it is crucial to examine modern Montenegro's identity politics. Our research shows that Montenegro's identity politics implemented after independence (2006) created a strong sense of

exclusion and injustice among Serbs in Montenegro due to the belief that Serbs are being deliberately marginalized, that Serbian heritage, culture, and identity are being ignored, and that the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro is considered undesirable. This incendiary identity setting culminated following the passage of the controversial “Church law”, and it conditioned the strong dominance of religious discourses in the political campaign for the 2020 Parliamentary elections. After analyzing identity issues surrounding the “Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Legal Status of Religious Communities”, the ethnographic research analyses the shift of processions (“litije”) from religious to political contexts and examines the usage of Saint Basil of Ostrog cult in the political campaign for the 2020 Parliamentary elections. Finally, from the standpoint of applied anthropology, the research examines the influence of various models of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) preservation in order to overcome identity issues in Montenegro and Western Balkan countries.

VIOLENCE IN NARRATIVES AND IN REALITY: ALMOST NO CORRELATION

YURI BEREZKIN

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

Few societies, if any, did not practice some sort of violence, both inside social and cultural units of any size and in context of the relations with the alien bands, tribes or states. The extreme degree of violence during the intertribal wars among North American Indians to the east of the Rockies, some South American groups like Yanomami or Waorani as well as archaeological and iconographic evidence concerning pre-Columbian civilizations is widely known. Despite this, almost no Amerindian mythological narratives describe battles, wars or cruel treatment of prisoners. The confrontation between the opponents always develops as a sport or a game of chance with the lost party annihilated by the winners. The heroic epics of Eurasia with its duels of warriors or battles and sieges looks like a unique phenomenon, a fortuitous result of cultural development inside a particular region.

The same can be said concerning the treatment of the antagonists or victims. The spread of the corresponding episodes (and others too, of course) indicates the extent of particular interaction spheres and not the predominance of particular forms of behavior. The stepdaughter sent to the forest by her stepmother is neither a relic of the initiation nor a common Eurasian habit but a narrative motif that became popular across a certain territory in a particular epoch.

This does not mean that particular themes and plots had no reasons at all. The statistical processing of thousands of motifs suggests three epochal transformations in the development of folklore/mythology. These are the discovery of death as a major theme for reflection (already at the African homeland), of the love and hate (after this but before the peopling of America) and of social conflicts (during a few last millennia if not centuries and only in Eurasia with part of Africa).

“ALL’S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR”

JULYE BIDMEAD

Chapman University, USA

In ancient Mesopotamia, Ishtar was the most important goddess in the pantheon. Functioning in seemingly contradictory roles as the patroness of love, sex, and fertility and on the opposite end as the goddess of war, military, and violence, Ishtar could grant life and take it away. Iconography and texts depict not only Ishtar’s beauty but show her as a fierce warrior armed with a bow and arrow as her weapons. In the Ugaritic myths, Anat, the maiden warrior goddess of hunting and war, is portrayed similarly to Ishtar. Initially identified as a fertility goddess, Anat was a bloodthirsty warrior who butchered soldiers on the battlefield and adorned herself with their body parts. Both goddesses are volatile figures who exhibit non-confirmative gender roles, embodying male and female stereotypes. These goddesses threaten to wreak havoc on their enemies with destructive means to get their way. Their threats are never ignored, as catastrophic circumstances affecting the whole of creation could occur. Renowned for their military prowess, they are also revered for their femininity, suggesting a link between sexuality and procreation with war. The analogy between procreation/childbearing and warfare is widespread in ancient literature, as childbirth could be just as deadly as war. Various texts employ the metaphorical images of the terrifying power of giving birth to military violence. In one gynecological text, a woman experiencing perilous labor is likened to a dying warrior. In another, two combatting armies are envisioned as two birthing mothers drenched in their own blood. The parallels between the battle to bring forth a child and the actual battlefield are numerous. Beyond fatality, both involve extensive preparation, shedding of blood, a dose of heroism, and much uncertainty, which requires divine intervention. This paper explores the parallel between war and childbirth through a gendered analysis of ancient Near Eastern goddesses.

**CELTIC TRAITS IN ROMANIAN FOLKLORE:
OISIN OF THE LAND OF ETERNAL YOUTH
AND THE ROMANIAN BELOVED FAIRY TALE
YOUTH WITHOUT OLD AGE AND LIFE WITHOUT DEATH**

ANA R. CHELARIU
New Jersey, USA

The Celtic influence on the European folklore is a well-known fact. Alas, due to the political isolation of Romanian researchers in the last half of the 20th century, the possible relations between the Celtic heritage and Romanian culture received limited attention. A notable exception is made by the Romanian researcher Virginia Cartianu, who in 1972 published a very important book, 'Urme celtice in spiritualitatea și cultura românească' [Celtic Traits in the Romanian Spirituality and Culture] work that stands out as a unique attempt on a very intriguing subject. This paper will address a folk tale found in both cultures that deserve a special attention: the Celtic famous folk tale Oisín of the Land of Eternal Youth and the Romanian beloved fairy tale Youth Without Old Age and Life Without Death, Discussing the similarities as well as the differences between these two, I will attempt to bring to light the possible cultural connections between either two former neighbors, the Celts in central Europe and the Dacians, or a common Indo-European heritage.

**THE VAJRA, THE VÁSARA, AND THE LORG MÓR:
THE WEAPONS OF THE THUNDER GOD**

SIGNE COHEN
University of Missouri, USA

This paper examines the descriptions of the thunder god's weapon in Indo-European and Finno-Ugric mythology. Indra's *vajra* in the Vedas, Thor's hammer *Mjöllnir* in Norse mythology, *Ukko's vásara* in Finnish mythology, and the *veccera* of Tiermes/Horogalles in Sami mythology will be compared to the axe of the Slavic Perun and the Baltic Perkunas, the *vazra/gorz* of the Iranian Mithra, the club of the Celtic Dagda, and the hammer of the Gallo-Roman Sucellus. I argue that there is evidence that the weapon associated with the thunderbolt was not only connected with warfare and the slaying of threatening opponents in Indo-European and Finno-Ugric myth, but also with blessing and healing.

LORD VETAL: VAMPIRE GOD AND EXEMPLAR OF THE HAUNTING AND HUMAN SACRIFICE COMPLEX

BRIAN COLLINS
Ohio University, USA

The *kṣetrapal* (guardian deity) Veṭāl or Beṭāl is worshipped in villages throughout southwest India, where he patrols their boundaries at night. His mūrti is typically black stone with a sculpted (flaccid) penis and testicles—usually hidden under his clothing—and a face adorned with a warrior’s mustache and vampire-like fangs. The name appears to derive from the Sanskrit *vetāla* (“revenant”), which may in turn come from a Jain Prakrit word meaning “destroyer.” In the *Mahābhārata*, the name “*vetāla-janani*” refers to a class of guardian spirits associated with trees, bodies, of water, crossroads, and cremation grounds. In this paper, partly based on fieldwork conducted in January of 2023, I will argue that Veṭāl exemplifies a form of popular religion found throughout African, Amerindian, Austronesian, and Eurasian cultures in which an angry ghost who haunts a place is recognized as its guardian. Scholars of comparative religion have long noted this common folkloric motif. But I will go farther and argue that it is a vestigial remnant of an older and more widespread pattern that dates to the Neolithic civilizations of West Asia and the Levant called the “Haunting and Human Sacrifice Complex” (HHSC). Put simply, ghosts prefigure gods, haunted places prefigure sacred places, and the archetypal form of human sacrifice is the mortuary sacrifice, in which victims are killed on the tombs of the dead or at places where their ghosts are seen or heard, such as ponds, mountains, groves, caves, and boundaries. My explanation for this practice’s origin is that ghosts themselves, acting as what Marshall Sahlins called “metahumans,” commanded it in dreams, possessions, or the kind of auditory hallucinations that were common for most of human history, as Julian Jaynes argued long ago.

BATTLE FOR JADAR: MYTHOLOGICAL WAR NARRATIVES IN ECOLOGICAL ACTIVISM

JELENA ČUKOVIĆ
University of Belgrade, Serbia

In recent years, there has been a public debate in Serbia about whether or not mining giant Rio Tinto should continue its project and start extracting lithium in the western part of Serbia, in the Jadar region. While the government and part of the public support this multinational company, many formal and informal political groups and activists oppose the idea because of the company's poor reputation concerning environmental issues. The local communities around the Jadar River, where the mineral (Jadarite) is found, are the ones most concerned about the future of the project and its impact on their lives and nature. In their narratives, they refer to this situation as a colonial occupation and feel as if they are in a state of war. There is a widespread analogy that compares Rio Tinto to the Austro-Hungarian army in the Great War and ecological resistance to the glory of ancestral fighters. The historical interpretation of the Battle of Cer and mythological narratives of local national bravery play an important role in mobilizing the community in the struggle against Rio Tinto. The purpose of my presentation is to introduce my field studies and discuss questions about the use of mythological elements in environmental activism.

**FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE ENIGMATIC NATURE
OF THE HEROIC CONNACHT WARRIOR
FRÁOCH MAC FIDACH FOLTRUAD**

MIKE MCCARTHY & DANIEL CURLEY
Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, Ireland

An initial exploration into the cult of the warrior Fráoch mac Fidach Foltrud, a heroic martial figure from the early medieval Irish mythological Ulster Cycle, enabled the present authors to present a series of connections between Fráoch and some prominent archaeological and topological features in Mag nAí or Machaire Connacht (the Plains of Connacht – mid-Roscommon, Ireland).

1. The figure of Fráoch was deliberately adopted by the Síol Muireadhaigh branch of the Uí Briuin Aí royal dynasty, and ultimately used by their most prominent descendants, the Uí Chonchobair [Ó Conor] as a symbolic legitimiser of their authority over the later medieval landscape.
2. Perhaps the enigmatic character of Fráoch possessed a now lost attribute as that of a legendary king, which is why the Síol Muireadhaigh and subsequently the Uí Chonchobair strongly associated themselves with him as a vehicle for this concerted and multi-generational legacy-building exercise.

The purpose of this talk and forthcoming publication is to expand on the themes explored in our original thesis and to suggest a further theory or question about the seemingly hidden nature of the character Fráoch, particularly in relevance to his death in the *Táin Bó Cuailnge*. This event occurs relatively early in the epic and given Fráoch's apparent status in the supporting literature, it is presented today as quite a brief, and rather unremarkable episode.

We will propose some potential motivations behind this occurrence, combining them with the recent results obtained by our colleagues from the Research Centre for Fluid and Complex Systems in Coventry University, who in a novel approach have applied their singular skills in mathematical statistics to our proposal.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, PHILOLOGY & NEUROBIOLOGY,
AND COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY:
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE EVOLUTION OF PREMODERN THOUGHT**

STEVE FARMER

The Systems Biology Group, Palo Alto, California, USA

Success in creating effective AI could be the biggest event in the history of our civilization. Or the worst. We just don't know. So we cannot know if we will be infinitely helped by AI, or ignored by it and sidelined, or conceivably destroyed by it. It brings dangers, like powerful autonomous weapons, or new ways for the few to oppress the many.

Stephen Hawking,

Web Summit Technology Conference,

Lisbon, 6 November 2017.

In this talk I'll describe recent advances in artificial intelligence, especially those based on so-called large language models (LLMs) and generative pre-trained transformers (GPTs). The unique properties of LLMs and GPTs have impacted nearly every side of AI in the last few years. I'll begin by describing the unique architecture of GPTs, introduced in a ground-breaking paper entitled "Attention is All You Need" published by a Google research group six years ago ([Vaswani et al., 2017](#)). To give a crude idea of the scale of the revolution unleashed by that paper: according to Google Scholar, by the end of May 2023 Vaswani et al. had been cited by well over [76,000 other research papers](#), the vast majority only published in the last year. Putting these numbers in perspective: [According to a classic study in Nature](#), roughly half of all published research papers receive no citations at all in research journals, or one at most.

In a second part of my talk I'll describe ways that special-use research and teaching applications built downstream from transformer-based LLMs, especially those employing chat-bot interfaces, could rapidly revolutionize studies in comparative mythology and dozens of related fields. I'll especially emphasize their use in philological analyses central to tracing the patterns of growth and decay over thousands of years in heavily layered religious, philosophical, and cosmological traditions world-wide, some of which still guide the lives of billions of humans in the 21st century. It's critical to note that general-use chat-bots like ChatGPT-4 do not have access to enough data to deal with any complex historical issues on their own: they first have to be prepared for specialized research like this in later "fine-tuning" stages of LLM training.

In a last section I'll discuss serious unresolved problems in AI, recently underlined in dozens of sharp critiques written by prominent AI researchers. These dangers include the tendency of AI models to generate corrupt or meaningless data at times — referred to formally as AI "hallucinations" (for a detailed review, see [Ziwei Ji et al. 2022](#)) — or in other cases amplifying ugly racist, misogynist, class/caste, neofascist, and other anti-democratic biases found in those models' pre-training textual sources, in many cases "scraped" indiscriminately from the Web. Claims of massive dangers from minor errors even in specialized AI fields shouldn't be taken lightly: The corruption of a single digit in AI medical diagnostic software, or self-driving vehicles, or the autonomous weapons Hawking complained of have already resulted in tens of thousands of deaths, and in future wars could plausibly put a quick end to all of higher civilization.

At the end of my talk I'll discuss attempts to confront these problems by progressive open-source research groups not linked to nationalist governments or the billionaire investors and internet megacorporations that now control nearly all AI technologies. I'll conclude by reviewing recent neurobiological discoveries, not yet widely discussed in public, that suggest that far deeper similarities may exist than previously known between key features of transformer-based LLMs and human neural systems. If these claims hold up, they could support Hawking's hopes at the end of his life that in the long-run AI might help human civilization flourish, and not destroy it or result in little more than "new ways for the few to oppress the many," which I'll argue is the greatest immediate danger that humanity faces from generative AI.

MYTHIC KNOWLEDGE, SEX AND DEATH IN SCANDINAVIAN MYTHOLOGY

FROG

Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, Finland

This paper outlines a semiotic approach to mythology and its relationship to ritual, illustrated centrally through applications to Viking Age and Medieval Scandinavian traditions on the one hand and Finno-Karelian traditions on the other. Within this approach, the elements of both mythology and enactable, performable elements of rituals are approached as socially accessible signs. Signs of cosmological mythology may be shared with ritual, and the meanings and significance of such signs are constructed in dialectic between them. Four types of cases will be outlined and discussed: (1) accounts of rituals and religious activities described among cosmological actors and/or in cosmogonic time; (2) human rituals that enact or reperform particular cosmogonic events; (3) human rituals that enact paradigms of actions and relations among cosmogonic actors; (4) a human ritual that emerged through interpreting situation-specific factors through relationships to mythology leading to the emergence of a new ritual; (5) rituals embedded in cosmological models and situated in relation to their actors without tight connections to cosmological events. The final type of case highlights that mythology may vary considerably within a community, and that it nests in social practices, with social institutions of ritual specialists as mooring posts of its stability and durability. The studies illustrate how ritual and cosmological mythology can be co-constructive. This co-construction and its connection to ritual specialist institutions may have long-term consequences in what cosmological mythology advances to greater centrality, what may wane, and how mythology may transform over time.

TRANSFORMATION OF DEMON INTO DEVOTEE: A CASE OF PUTANA

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Wondrous deeds from the life of Kṛṣṇa are very popular. Kṛṣṇa's combats with various demons are described in Mahābhārata, Harivaṁśa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa etc. In earlier texts, though they are just Kṛṣṇa's victories over demon, later texts portray demons as devotees getting merged in Supreme Lord. This paper discusses the case of Pūtanā to understand the transformation of demoness to devotee.

Pūtanā was sent by Kāṁsa to kill infant Kṛṣṇa. She lifts the child Kṛṣṇa and fed him with the breast full of poison but Kṛṣṇa sucked her life and thus Pūtanā was killed. These narratives are mentioned in Mahābhārata, Harivaṁśa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa.

In all narratives, she is referred as infant killer i.e., *bālagraha*. Suśruta Saṁhitā, kūmāra Tantra section of Uttara Tantra, 27th adhyāya is devoted to describe the signs, curative measures and causes of *bālagrahas*. This clarifies that Pūtanā was infantile disease later personified as ogress. Narrative of Bhāgavata Purāṇa call this narrative as Pūtanā-mokṣa (liberation of Pūtanā) rather than Pūtanā vadha (killing of Pūtanā) unlike previous versions. It is said that there was fragrance of sandal when her dead body was getting burnt. Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa elaborates this motif by showing that chariot which carries her to celestial realm.

All these points to the different connotation of the narrative in Bhāgavata and Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa. Pūtanā is getting liberated as she is killed at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. It's interesting to understand this process of transformation from demoness to devotee through various versions of the narrative and changing context of the text.

THE WAR OF FIRE: A STUDY ON MYTHOLOGICAL NARRATIVES IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

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This article deals with the thematic significance of mythological narratives of fire in Southwestern China, which narrate the origin of fire and the Fire Torch Festival. War or violence stands at the center of these narratives.

Myths of the origin of fire focus on the acquisition of fire or fire-making skills which was mainly achieved through 'war', mainly presented as a 'fight' between individuals or a few individuals. Based on the intention to break the private ownership of fire, multi-species coalition without fire accomplished their goal by stealing, robbing, tricking, etc. As a crucial part of the transformation to common ownership, the process of war, namely the process of acquiring fire, reveals the complexity of the rivalry and the mutualism.

Narratives of the Fire Torch Festival shift the focus from fire itself to the torch as a manifestation of the applicability and convergence of fire, which is also closely

linked to the war. The 'war' is seen as a necessary process of the establishment of a regime, or equal relationship among diverse subjects. Although the forms of the war vary across groups, the consistency lies in the fact that using torches as weapons. The torch is crucial to the union and coexistence of multispecies, and it's used to achieve two types of transformation: the first is taking a turn to be out of danger, and the second category is expanding common ground and narrowing differences. In addition, in some texts the torch appears mainly in the post-war period, when people carried torches to seek out and commemorate those who had contributed to the war.

In general, as narrating the origins of civilization, the mythological Narrative of the fire offer an interpretation of publicity. As the core of events of creation, various wars are given legitimacy or justice based upon two considerations. On the one hand, creativity itself means everything is right. On the other hand, these wars are closely associated in the public mind with the specific beginning of various civilizing events. It is a curious subject of observation and inquiry, whether legitimacy and justice be not the same thing at bottom. If these narratives can be defined as the myth of 'creating justice', it is essential that we learn to think about how to judge the justice of creation. In the narrative discourse of these texts, judgements about the justice of creation are not held to the same standard and no definitive answer can be found. There's the fact that either make fallacies, or argue fallaciously ourselves. However, as one of them, *The Fire Burned the Pine Tower*, shows, reflection on conflicting evaluations is in the implicit emergence of moral ideals, which is perhaps the most enlightening aspect of these mythological narratives.

HOW MATHEMATICS RAISED AWARENESS OF THE “GODDESS” OF THE RIVER SHANNON - AND SPARKED A RECENT REVOLT AGAINST COLONIALISM AND MISOGYNY*

RALPH KENNA

Coventry University, UK Chris Thompson

&

CHRIS THOMPSON

Story Archaeology & EIRI Project, Ireland

In 2016 Professor Ralph Kenna and his team published a paper in which they used network science to compare the societies described in James Macpherson’s epic poems of Ossian with those of ancient Classical and Irish mythological sources. While results indicated significant network-structural differences between Macpherson’s text and those of Homer, they showed strong similarities between Ossianic networks and those of the narratives known as *Acallam na Senórach* (Colloquy of the Ancients) from the Fenian Cycle of Irish mythology.

In 2020 a male colonial-style neo-classical, river god sculpture was set up by the Shannon, in Athlone, around 20km from Rathcroghan as a representation of the river. It seemed that the Irish mythological figure of Sinann, a woman whose ancestry is referenced in the *Acallam na Senórach*, and whose story of the creation of the Shannon is remembered in the *Metrical Dindshenchas*, had been entirely ignored.

I will be telling of how this is not the first time that Sinann, who gave her name to the Shannon, has suffered neglect and misogyny and exploring the background to this mythological tale, a journey with as many twists and turns as the river itself.

I will also tell how developments from the publication of papers from Professor Kenna and his team have greatly aided in restoring her story and its connection to the greatest river in Ireland.

* The paper will be presented by Chris Thompson.

THE SKY HAS FALLEN: TAMIKI HARA'S VIEW OF MYTHOLOGICAL HUMAN HISTORY

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Tamiki Hara (1905-1951) left only two published books during his lifetime: *Blaze* (1935; at his own expense) and *The Summer Flower* (1947). It was Kenzaburō Ōe, the editor of the anthology called *The Crazy Iris: And Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath* (1985), who made the poet garner international attention and a reputation as a *hibakusha* poet. Meanwhile, recently, researchers from different areas have added several new perspectives. According to Kumiko Kakehashi's bibliographical work (2018), Hara concentrated on one coherent theme before the bomb hit: bereavement and solitude. His elder sister, who was a Christian and told Bible stories to him, and his wife had left him before. After the 6th of Aug 1945, he felt abandoned by the people there and even the city of Hiroshima itself.

My paper aims to clarify how A-bomb affected his view of mythological human history. Hiroyuki Kakigi (2015) has drawn comparisons between Hara's experience of the atomic bomb and that of Holocaust survivors like Paul Celan. Although they had certain similarities, the poet had already been obsessed with the nightmare that the sky or the stars would fall down on him and pierce him in his early years. Thus, his experience was the recurrence of his inner experience typologically. The grave fact is that mankind passed across the threshold to murder their fellow kind with the most sophisticated and inhumane weapon. Hara's descriptions of the post-A-bomb world should be read also as an elaborate presentation of a new myth as well, which sonorously indicts the sin of humans. And Hara did not idly stay in that despair - before his suicide, Hara expressed hope that something would usher in a new era of humanity, one that would begin new chapters in the mythological history of the world.

THE CIVIL WAR OF SYMBOLS: THE TYPES OF CONTEMPORARY SECULAR MYTHOLOGY

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We usually think about mythology as neatly belonging to other eras or other cultures. It is always “they” who have or had mythology, never us. If we call something “myths” in our own society, it is typically just a synonym for “popular error” or some kind of folklore narrative. We have always safe distance from myth. In this paper I claim that mythology that works is always hard to spot, only mythologies that went out of fashion, or are culturally foreign, are easily discernible as myths. However, our society is not a historical exception, we have myths too and they are core players in the cultural war of our contemporary “post-factual” society.

I will sketch the landscape of contemporary secular mythology – from fictional myths of pop culture, through political myths, national myths, environmental myths to conspiracy theories. I will show that the border between religious myths (either connected to established religions, or to alternative spirituality) and secular myths is for the most part artificial and that the landscape is one continuum. My main thesis is very practical: without recognizing social myths as true myths we cannot deal with them properly – the mainstream approach of e.g., “debunking” conspiracy theories misses the point completely and is demonstrably ineffective.

While defining myth as a “sacred narrative”, I will show the issues connected to the definitions and will present a systematic typology of modern mythology based on features such as systemicity-antisystemicity or surreality-realisticness.

TWO DIMENSIONS OF EARTHLY AND DIVINE BATTLES IN CELTIC AND INDO-EUROPEAN TRADITIONS

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A number of Indo-European traditions feature an epic or epics of a great battle over sovereignty of the earth, involving the destruction of a large part of both armies, sometimes of much of humanity, and the beginning of a new age.

Comparative studies of these battles have developed along two interrelated but distinct dimensions of correspondence. One is lateral or “horizontal”, proposing concordant personages and patterns of action across the *Mahābhārata*, Ragnarök, the *Táin*, and the early “history” of Rome, among others (e.g., Dumézil, and O’Brien’s foundational article). In some cases, on the other hand, earthly battles have been interpreted within a single tradition “vertically” as epic reflexes of a mythic war in heaven or at the beginning or end of time. In the most explicit case, the participants in the Mahābhārata war (1.61 and elsewhere) as presented as incarnations of the gods and anti-gods of the cosmic struggle (Dumézil, *Mythe et épopée* I). This kind of relationship has been proposed, for instance, for the Battle of Brávellir as an “incarnation” of Ragnarök, or in the parallels and connections drawn between the epic *Táin Bó Cualnge* and the mythic Battle of Moytura: Cú Chulainn, the hero of the epic, is explicitly the son of Lug, the champion at Moytura; it has been argued (Hily and Oudaer) that Fergus mac Róech shares qualities and adventures with the Dagda; and Queen Medb has long been considered a form of the goddess of sovereignty. Here I will focus on correspondences between Fergus and the Mahābhārata’s figure Bhīṣma and their respective divine counterparts to exemplify this two-dimensional comparative scheme: laterally, between the two heroes themselves; vertically, between Fergus and the Dagda and between Bhīṣma and the god Dyaus; and, on the fourth side of this virtual square, between Dyaus and the Dagda.

WAR IRON

WILL LINN

Hussian College, Los Angeles, USA

&

JOHN COLARUSSO

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This paper and presentation are focused on the literal and metaphorical conflict between bronze and steel that defines the mythic dimension of the Bronze Age Collapse. As weapons became steel, so too did mythic warriors; warriors who, like the earliest steel, were fallen and/or born from stone, quenched, and impervious—except for a single weakness.

Iron-based motifs spread across the mythic landscape with the rise of steel and the Bronze Age collapse. These motifs carried philosophical and spiritual implications concerning how to be righteous as an individual, steadfast as a warrior, and just as a society. The civilizations that lost their position in the Bronze Age collapse were established in the time of early gold work and based their power on golden grain. Their disruption by armies with greater access to steel was complimented by a disruption of their spiritual and

philosophical paradigms which were discredited by a metaphorical paradigm that had been transformed by steel.

PECULIARITIES OF MEDEA IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

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I once had the honor of having a talk with the late Martin L. West at the first IACM conference organized by Emily Lyle and held at Edinburgh University on August 28-30, 2007. The talk was unfortunately not academic. He mentioned the names of several Japanese classicists he knew, and I responded that I also knew them since some of them were my acquaintances. I mention West's name because he was the world authority on Homer and also left a paper which inspired my thought (West, M. L., "Odyssey" and "Argonautica", *The Classical Quarterly* 55, 2005, 39-64). Homeric epics and the *Argonautica* are chronologically a world apart: the former was composed orally before the 8th century BC, the latter written by Apollonius of Rhodes in the 3rd century BC. Yet they share basic motifs: a visit to the Pontic area to bring back lost Greek treasures. In the case of the Trojan War, the treasure is a living woman Helen, the daughter of Zeus; in case of Colchis it is the skin of a dead sheep, the Golden Fleece. Are these two groups of epics, one on Troy, the other on Colchis, related, or do they have a common origin? I think they do, and I am planning to explain the reasons at the coming conference.

The beginning of the inquiry is the two antagonists of the *Argonautica*: Medea and Jason. Medea is an exceptional heroine of Greek tragedy. She does not die and rather she kills several people including her brother and two children. She is said to have acquired eternal life and lived in the Elysium. Jason is often accused by classicists of his un-heroic behaviors.

Considering these enigmatic characterizations of the pair Medea and Jason of the *Argonautica*, the best way to solve this enigma seems to be to introduce another pair, of the immortal heroine and un-heroic lover of the Trojan War for comparison: Helene and Paris.

In this presentation, through the comparison of the two couples, Medea/Jason and Helene/Paris, several observations on their origin will be given.

ON MODERN NARRATIVES OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN VIDEO GAMES: A CASE STUDY OF *IMMORTALS: FENYX RISING*

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Greek mythology humanized the gods with a strong sense of human feelings and desires through lots of classical conflicts and wars among them, which mirrored the early human family life and social development. However, many life concepts from these ancient conflicts and wars are clearly falling behind the times, and thus dissatisfy many modern audiences, just as Jeffrey Yohalem, the narrative director of the video game *Immortals: Fenyx Rising* explained, “the whole of mythology is [enriched by] people who have found parts of it unsatisfying, who then add things to it to make it feel more balanced.”

The voice indeed echoes in many other popular video games, like *Zeus: Master of Olympus*, *Age of the Gods*, *Assasin’s Creed Odyssey*, *Hades*, which all retell what the gods of Greek mythology thought and did with modern concepts and narratives. The narrative practice that extracts the grand narrative of Greek mythology to reflect the current life has led to the narrative trend in video games. Greek mythology is having a bit of a gaming moment when ancient myths are made to keep pace with the times and align with current life in video games so as to better serve the spiritual and daily life of modern audiences.

This paper focuses on the adventure game *Immortals: Fenyx Rising* released by Ubisoft Entertainment in 2020 to reveal the modern narrative of Greek mythology in video games, and finds firstly *Immortals: Fenyx Rising* prepares a virtual oral narration specifically to advance the narration of mythology that pays tribute to the oral tradition, along with which players, on one hand, could experience the ancient myths and on the other hand grow into a new Greek hero; secondly, it makes use of intertextuality between image texts and written texts to narrate the ancient myths; finally, and most important of all, it reinterprets and deconstructs the mythological motifs with modern significance. For example, it endows prophecy with encouragement instead of a kind of inevitability in Greek mythology, because *Immortals: Fenyx Rising* emphasizes the individual growth of the avatar that players role-play, which creates motivation for contemporary players and helps them to understand growth, and it also deconstructs the motif of prophecy to respond to the demands of our modern life, such as the call for resolution of parent-child conflict in our daily life. In these ways, ancient myths have been imprinted with the modern traces of life and realized a modern inheritance.

THE DEVA-ĀSURA WAR IN BUDDHIST CONTEXT: A “COMBAT MYTH/CONFLICT TOPOS” IN AN INDIAN AVATAR?

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The popular Indian myth of the cosmic war for supremacy between Gods and Titans (*devāsurasamgrāma*) is found in different religious literary traditions. While scholars of Classical India in general have devoted numerous studies to it, Buddhist scholars have paid less attention. However, the *devāsurasamgrāma* topos is attested in several Buddhist cosmological texts. Exploring the origin(s) of the Deva-Asura war(s) as demonstrated in those texts, this paper investigates different aspects of this war myth as interpreted in Buddhist context: its function legitimating the current cosmic hierarchy and divine order; and its eschatological connotation which makes space for Buddhist soteriology. Inspired by the Combat Myth/Conflict Topos theory from Biblical studies, this paper examines the aforementioned two aspects of the *devāsurasamgrāma* topos as transformed in Buddhist religion, and discusses the gains and losses when using the imported theory to read an ancient Indian myth.

WAR IN HEAVEN: REPRESENTING THE REBEL ANGELS IN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ART AND THOUGHT

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This paper examines how the troops of Lucifer were visualised and imagined, from their appearances in medieval best-sellers such as the *Voyages of Brendan*, to their radical reassessment by the Italian Neo-platonists in the 15C, and by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in the 16C. Working back from Bruegel’s innovative depiction of the falling angels as metamorphic monsters, his sources for this idea are investigated, and set in the contexts of popular Christianity, folk beliefs, Humanist creative mythography and philosophical speculation about the origins of humanity and human nature.

VIOLENCE AS NON-VIOLENCE

BORIS OGUIBÉNINE

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My paper examines the effects of the speech used in the animal sacrifice in Vedic India. Speech is considered a mediator between the sacrificer and the sacrificed animal. Due to special expressions used during the sacrifice, violence is presented as non-violence. Vedic data will be considered in comparison with various Indo-European materials, such as Slavic and Hittite ritualistic texts and myths.

IRELAND, OKINAWA, AND JAPAN IN MIGRATION AND CREATION MYTHS

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&

AKIYOSHI MARUYAMA

Digital Hollywood University, Tokyo, Japan

This presentation aims to explore the possibility of adaptation to Irish mythology of the relationship between migration myths and creation myths in Japanese and Okinawan mythology.

Okinawa is divided into three regions (the main island, the Miyako Islands, and the Yaeyama Islands), each of which has its own independent creation myth. According to the studies of linguistics and genetics, Okinawa and Japan are linked. Furthermore, the creation myths of the three regions can be related to the Japanese myths in a comparative mythological view. On the other hand, the founder of the first Okinawan dynasty claims a connection to Japan through the myth that his father was a renowned samurai who emigrated from Japan. Furthermore, oral myths of islands and villages tell various stories of the migration of gods or people from other lands. At the same time, the creation myths of the islands are also variously narrated.

In the case of Okinawa, those who recognize themselves as marginal claim their legitimacy by narrating the relationship with the place from which they came (historically or not). On the other hand, this does not preclude the manifestation of an indigenous creation myth, i.e., the practice of mythical thought.

In Lebor Gabála Éirenn, the migrating gods/people also claim a relationship with Greek and the Holy Bible. However, various elements such as the sage salmon - Fintan, the staged development of the earth, and the wars can be seen as a practice of mythical thought rather than literary embellishments or pseudohistory, as can be seen by comparison with the example of Okinawa, with the European narration of immigration, and with mythological motifs.

VIOLENCE AND CHILDBIRTH

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Childbirth is often understood as an act of creation, associated with fertility and the continuation of life, but it is also often accompanied by danger, acts of violence, and death. This paper considers some of the ways in which the natural dangers inherent in pregnancy and childbirth are encoded in mythological narratives as corresponding dangers with supernatural origins or as acts of violence perpetrated against the mother and/or the child. The act of gestating and delivering a child may itself cause harm to the mother (or parent, as myths involving male pregnancy will also be considered), but there are also multiple types of deliberate violence present in myths about birth. These can broadly be categorized into three main types: stories in which the mother harms her child, stories in which the child harms its mother, and stories in which a third party harms the mother and/or child. These acts of violence may then rebound against their perpetrators, or upon society as a whole. Stories such as these highlight both the dangerous vulnerability of childbirth and the extent to which the ability of women to safely bear children affects and reflects the well-being of society as a whole. The primary focus of this paper will be on stories from medieval Irish sources, but stories from a number of other mythological traditions will also be considered.

ASTRONOMICAL CLUES TO THE VIOLENCE IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

DMITRI PANCHENKO

Astronomical Clues to the Violence in Greek Mythology

Violence occupies a prominent place in Greek myths. It may appear in a heroic disguise, as in the case of Odysseus punishing the suitors of Penelope, or just as a shocking cruelty, in the case of Cronus devouring his children, or in some other versions. There is probably no general explanation to this phenomenon. In many cases, however, the core of the story seems to go back to the perception of various celestial phenomena – such as eclipses, occultation, seasonal disappearance and reappearance of the constellations, the phases and seemingly erratic movement of the moon. Astronomical matters are sometimes clearly present in mythical stories in question: Lykourgos persecutes the nurses of Dionysus and they turn into the Hyades (this asterism was an important seasonal marker for archaic Greeks). Sometimes, valuable information comes from ancient lexicographic comments – we are told, for instance, that the name of Io means ‘moon’. Bronze Age neutral accounts of celestial phenomena have not been preserved, but the study increasingly reveals reasons to assume quite an advanced knowledge of astronomical matters in Bronze Age Europe. The transformation of originally neutral accounts into striking (and ‘barbaric’) stories filled with violence is probably due to the atmosphere of the Mediterranean Late Bronze Age, followed in the Aegean by Greek Dark Ages, an epoch of migrations, cultural decline, cultural amalgamation and ubiquitous violence; the sky, one guesses, was now seen as a realm of mutually hostile powers. In such an atmosphere, the phenomenon of occultation – when a planet approaches a lunar crescent and disappears for a while within the dark area between the crescent’s horns (and then reappears) – could have been turned into the myth of Cronus devouring and disgorging his children. While Max Müller, with a rather similar approach, repeatedly assumed a nearly chance distortion of an original meaning, I point to the working of a particular historical situation.

RAWALNATH: THE STORY OF MIGRATED COMMUNITY AND ITS DEITY

SUNIL PARAB

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India is country with diversity of culture and traditions. The widespread umbrella of Hinduism is enclosing numerous deities which are part of mainstream Puranic Mythology. At the same time there are numerous folk deities about whom documented research-based study is not yet done. Indian population is also a mix of multiple communities who have migrated from one place to another. Their history of migration is sometimes remembered through folk stories and folk songs. Interestingly across dimensions of time and place, these communities have not yet deserted their folk-deities and rituals. One of such folk deities studied as objective of this paper is “Lord Rawalnath”. Rawalnath is a peculiar deity found in Southern Maharashtra and Northern Goa states of India. Not much has been written about this folk deity in mainstream mythology or associated literature of India. Since the deity is associated with specific community; its worship and rituals are not widely known or practiced. This exploratory study is focused on identifying Rawalnath temples in given geographic region. The iconography of the deity is studied and documented. The rituals and history of the deity has been documented in accord with associated temple priests and nearby communities. Since the majority of young population of this region is migrating to metro cities like Mumbai and Pune for studies and jobs; it is a need of time to document the folk beliefs known to elderly people currently present in the region; so that the knowledge can be preserved and transmitted even from one generation to another in format that is easily accessible and understandable. Though as mentioned before; not much information is in documented form; few separate references from regional publications have been incorporated in the study. These folk beliefs and geographic distribution define the Community and history of Rawalnath Deity.

MARTYRDOM AND IDENTITY IN CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY IN EAST ASIA

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The spread of Catholic Christianity to East Asia, especially to Japan, Korea and Vietnam, was associated with several waves of bloody persecution of missionaries and Christian converts, in which many Christians were martyred. The martyr narratives (both about martyred missionaries and about converts from East Asian countries) were systematically disseminated and promoted, and played, and still play, a crucial role in the formation of the identity of both the new Christian communities in Asia and of the missionaries themselves, as well as in creating a spiritual connection and overcoming the barrier between the “old” Christians in Europe and the “new” Christians from East Asia. The present paper seeks to analyze the role of martyr narratives in the spread of Christianity to East Asia in the context of the role of martyrdom in Christianity and its history.

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN TRIBUTARY RELATIONS AND REGULATORY FUNCTION OF RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS IN INNER ASIA

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This paper compares traditional tributary relations of Mongolia, Korea and Vietnam with their Inner Asian neighbor (China). The purpose of this presentation is to explore the rules of negotiated relations under the condition of latent conflict as this circumstance is basic for international politics and even for the lower level of the “violence of everyday life”. Besides analysis of factors contributing to withdrawal from active violence, the main aim of the paper is evaluation of the role of religious systems contributing to moderation of conflict in both senses of suppression and ignition of violence. As a regulatory or catalyst principle for both strategies (ignition or suppression), the religious systems use ethical norms or mythological justification. From evolutionary point of view, the available data show the growing role of religious moderation or suppression in correspondence to growing sedentarization on one side and cultural unification on the other side. On the contrary populations highly dependent on traditional mobility like the Turks and Mongolian groups had more fluid attitude to particular religions, but later followed the same processes as large sedentarized cultures. The data also show, that after prehistorically co-evolved relation of religious and ruling professionals, later conditions of socially, geographically and

politically unified cultures are widening the conflict of interests between both religion and governance and have also deeper and large scale impact on their mutual influences and continuing co-evolution.

KAZAKHS BETWEEN BROTHERS AND ENEMIES IN THE MYTHOLOGY AND HISTORICAL ORAL TRADITION OF THE WESTERN MONGOLS (OIRATS)

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Traditionally sharing a similar mobile pastoral lifestyle, the Kazakhs can be considered one of the closest cultural partners of the Mongols. The Kazakh aristocracy traces its origins to the Chinggisids and this fact was giving to some of the Kazakh groups even a higher sacral authority that was possessed and claimed by the mostly non-Chinggisid ruling clans of the Western Mongols. However, long periods of the Oirat (Western Mongolian) domination over a part of the Kazakhs and the later Kazakh migration to areas inhabited by the Mongols gave rise to many narratives of mutual hostility. At the same time, the need to support friendly and tolerant neighbourly relations produced narratives emphasizing mutual brotherhood.

This paper based on the Mongolian oral tradition viewed as source of local historical consciousness tries to describe these two partially contradictory, but always interconnected community-shared ideas about Kazakhs, as manifested in the interpretation of narratives in the mythology about the origin of Kazakhs and in historical oral tradition about encounters between Kazakhs and Oirats in recent local history. With their numerous occurrences among the narratives of the oral tradition of the Oirats, stories of enmity as well as cooperation represent an important building block of communitarian identity expressed through oral memory.

The narratives from the oral tradition differ from the mythological narratives by involving a genealogical link between the characters engaged within the story and the current recipients. The oral genealogies – forming the backbone of oral tradition among Western Mongols and Kazakhs – play a significant role in passing down feelings of grievances and enmity, as well as memories of cooperation and alliances.

MIGHTY PYTHON: SHAPESHIFTING HERO-SNAKES IN PHILIPPINE EPICS AND MYTHOLOGY

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The paper aims to define the features of Austronesian mythological snake hero that preceded Indianization. The Austronesian cultures of the Insular Southeast Asian were deeply influenced by India. Snake characters either named Vasuki (Basuki in Indonesian pronunciation) or demonstrating his characteristics frequent the narratives; the term 'naga' is widely applied to mythological snakes all over Nusantara.

The Philippines is the least Indianized part of the Southeast Asia, although Indian influences are still there [Francisco 1971; Churchill 1977; Orlina 2012 (2013)]. Shapeshifting snakes that are depicted as heroes, hero's adversaries, allies or sweethearts in Philippine oral literature. In the paper, present-day ethnographic facts are compared with those from early Spanish records (e.g., Oryol, Ibangan and other snakes of the ancient Bicol epics), epic and other ritual texts of the indigenous groups recorded in the 20th and 21st centuries (Kalinga and Ibaloi of Northern Luzon, Bakunawa and other snakes from Visayas, old female shaman- snake of the Manobo of Mindanao).

We come to a conclusion that the Philippine mythological snake is predominantly a python, an 'Austronesian prototypical snake', as R. Blust described it on the basis of historical linguistics; also, it has additional features and connotations with sea-snakes. Pythons cause earthquakes, swallow the moon and the sun; epic heroes fight male and female snakes, but also treat them as allies and companions in combat, fall in love and even marry them, or turn into pythons themselves. The latter shape-shifting motifs in combination with snake-fighting ones are of special interest. My field materials collected in Southeast Asia (The Philippines and Cambodia, 1994-2023) are used.

**WARRIORS OF KUBERA AND DEMONIC DHARMA:
THE AMBIGUITY OF THE *YAKŠAS*
IN THE *ĀRAṆYA* PARVA OF THE *MAHĀBHĀRATA***

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The *Āraṇya Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* chronicles the exile of the Pāṇḍava brothers into the *āraṇya*, the wilderness of the Indian subcontinent. The *āraṇya* is an ambiguous place. On the one hand, it is the homestead of dangerous beings like tigers, *guh̥yakas*, and *bhūtas*. On the other, it is also the shelter for *sannyasins*, who hope to gain liberation from *saṃsāra*. The travels of the Pāṇḍavas into the *āraṇya* are therefore perilous, but through them they also acquire essential knowledge and weapons for their battle against the Kauravas at Kurukṣetra. The *āraṇya* can be someone's demise, or it can reward them.

One of the creatures the Pāṇḍavas encounter are the *yakṣas*. The *yakṣas* are often characterised as tree spirits who may also guard underground treasures, and are part of the entourage of Kubera or Vaiśravaṇa, the *deva* of the north and wealth. Just like the *āraṇya*, the *yakṣas* are also surrounded by ambiguity. Sometimes they are the mortal enemies of the Pāṇḍavas, while at other times they are the entourage of high deities like Skanda or Indra. Their determination in Indian literature and folklore shifts with every source, even between different passages within the same text. In order to understand the *yakṣa*, therefore, we cannot produce a description based on the generalization of certain key passages.

This paper will come to a fuller understanding of the figure of the *yakṣa* through examining the 98 passages which mention the *yakṣa* in the *Āraṇya Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*. These passages will be analysed through the ideal-type model of positively and negatively evaluated supernatural beings (Sterken 2022, 4-5). Special attention will be paid to the link between the *yakṣas* and war; the *yakṣas'* allegiance to Kubera and other supernatural beings; and their initial hostility towards the Pāṇḍava brothers and its resolution.

EPIC WAR & THE PACIFIC RIM

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Del Toro's Pacific Rim presents an epic war between Kaiju, hive-minded monsters from beneath the waves, and a Pacific community that forms in response. Our paper looks at this film as a cultural reflection on ideas that pertain to meaning and purpose in the context of community and cataclysm. From the emergence of war propaganda and international collaborations to the creation of a "coastal wall" and super weapons known as "Jaegers," the film explores the mythic landscapes of war and the repetition of these patterns on a psychological level. What we find is a mimesis between the symbolic transformation of an epic world and the inner transformation of an individual.

On multiple levels, we see separation as a set up for climactic integration. On the macro level, we see the separation of upper and lower worlds and their paradigmatic disparity give way to cross-pollination and synthesis that allows their conflict to subside. On a micro level, we see the hyper-individualistic mindsets of the film's heroes integrate community-driven and hive-mind qualities that enable them to redirect the destruction of order into the establishment of a new and more balanced reality – within and without.

KWAKIUTL WARRIORS AND THE THEORIES OF *FUROR BELLICUS*

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In 1942 Georges Dumézil published *Horace et les Curiaces*, a little volume dedicated to demonstrating the existence of an ancient Indo-European tradition, the so-called *furor bellicus*. About twenty years later, Ernesto de Martino published "Furore in Svezia", a long article dedicated to the analysis of much more recent events: the raids that hordes of young people had carried out in Stockholm on New Year's Eve 1957. In both of these works the authors extensively refer to the Kwakiutl (Kwakwaka'wakw) warriors, as described by Franz Boas. The comparison between the two works sheds light on certain

aspects of the social use of force and on the difference between *furor bellcus* and *voluptas necandi*.

SWORDS AND/OR SEDUCTION: THE INTERTWINING OF SEX AND VIOLENCE IN GODDESSES OF WAR

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Goddesses of war exist in nearly every culture, turning the tide of mythological epics yet differing from their male counterparts in one important aspect: their abilities as warriors are inextricably linked to their sexual identity. The heteronormative and patriarchal framework of most of these myths hesitates to allow women the physical and mental acumen required of a goddess of war without some form of control over their bodies, pushing them to occupy one of two extreme categories: sexual frigidity or eroticism.

Modern literary representations of these goddesses, such as Madeline Miller's Circe and Genevieve Gornichec's *The Witch's Heart*, relocate this binarism within contemporary stigmas around women lacking in feminine warmth. Miller's Athena, for example, is cold, rational and desexualised; her superior intellect is balanced by her lack of physical desire and feminine tenderness, making her eternally other and beyond human aspiration. Gornichec's Freyja, however, matches her military and magical might with her sexual promiscuity, presenting a model of 'deviant' female sexuality in the excessiveness of her greed; her calculative and transactional apathy jars against both feminine and feminist ideals, pushing her into abject space.

As a result, by placing these war goddesses within contemporary feminist and revisionist frameworks—and by examining the unbroken intertwining of violent potential and carnal extremism—this paper will examine the forms of gendered control that these warmongering goddesses have been and continue to be subject to, including and beyond the sexual.

TERMITE MOUND (“ANTHILL”) IN THE MYTHOLOGIES OF SOUTH ASIA

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The starting point for this research was provided by a Telugu epic tale translated into Russian by Nikuta V. Gurov (1935-2009). In this tale Vishnu, in the form of a boar, devastates the miraculous field belonging to “The Wizard”, who will later become the ancestor of the Eruku tribe. The Wizard wounds the Boar with an arrow and pursues him, following bloody footsteps. The Boar disappears in an “anthill”, which is, in fact, the termite mound with its characteristic ventilation shaft. The Wizard with a spade digs a tunnel under the “anthill”, yojana after yojana, until he comes to the Vishnu’s underground Bronze Temple.

The analysis of this story reveals that, behind its superficial connection with the imagery of the Sanskritic Hindu tradition*, we can see the plot based on the specific motifs of South Indian (mostly Dravidian) folklore. The cult of the sacred termite mound (Sanskrit *valmika*), in Indological literature usually misnamed as “anthill”, is widespread in South and Central India. The termitary is worshipped as an entrance to the mysterious underworld, the realm of divine serpents, or the secret abode of a god/goddess who hides in it or suddenly appears out of it. In the Dravidian folklore there is a series of myths which are very similar structurally and semantically to the Telugu tale translated by N.V. Gurov, such as, e.g., the myth of the shrine at Ceyūr in Tamilnadu. The mythology of termitary, originally an element of ancient, pre-Aryan cultural substratum, gradually increased its influence on the mainstream tradition and became eventually widespread in the Folk Hinduism. Interaction between the Dravidian and Sanskrit traditions has a long history, as we shall try to demonstrate with references to the mythological aspects of the termite mound in the Sanskrit epics. In conclusion, we discuss the possibility of a connection between the Telugu story and the enigmatic myth of killing the Boar (Emuśá) by Indra in the Rígvēda (1, 61.7; 8, 69.14-15; 8, 77.6, 10; 8, 96.2).

* Vishnu repents of his sinful deed in the Rama avatara: he treacherously killed Vali, king of the Vanaras. To atone for it, he decides to take the form of a boar and embrace suffering from the hands of Vali's son named Angada, who appears in the Gurov's translation of the Telugu tale as ‘The Wizard’.

**FACING THE BEAST WITHIN:
INTEGRATING VIOLENCE AS A SOURCE OF UNDERSTANDING IN
SELECTED COSMOLOGIES, SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AND MODERN
PSYCHOTHERAPIES**

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Indigenous cosmologies, religions and modern psychotherapies throughout the world devised various strategies of integrating violence into spiritual practices using the direct experiences of emotions connected to violence in order to arrive closer to the understanding of the complexity of human soul. Visual arts, especially constructed figures of speech, music, dance, reenactment of myths, entheogens etc. have often been used in the process which has traditionally been performed under the guidance of an expert– be it a skilled shaman, experienced meditator, priest or a psychotherapist.

The traditions and practices mentioned in my presentation share the realization that violence comes from the source of vital energy, and as such serves in certain situations as a survival strategy to an individual or a community. Within the cosmological background of the given social group, and in the context of its primal myths, the expressions of violence (warfare, sacrifice, archetypes of violent deities or enemies) suddenly restore their original meaning, even though their symbolic representations may vary from the Tibetan mandalas depicting the wrathful gods, through the ceremonies evoking the cannibalistic jaguar ancestors in the Kogi tradition (North Colombia), to the Celtic king initiation ceremony, or the European religious fine arts. In modern psychology, many techniques applied to integrate the violent part of the self are based on drawing the meaning (personal as well as collective) from the mythological context of one`s cosmological and cultural background.

In my talk, I would like to address the similarities and specifics of the various techniques, rituals and practices dealing with the “violent part of one`s soul” from selected eras and cultures in the context of their mythological settings (e.g. Tibetan Buddhism, Kogi and Tukano tribes in Colombia and Peru, ancient Celts, etc.), as well as their modern psycho-therapeutic counterparts (Jung`s depth psychology, holotropic breathwork of Stanislav Grof, and the systemic constellation practice first introduced to Europe by Bert Hellinger).

VIOLENT TRANSGRESSION IN THE MYTHOLOGY OF BHAIRAVA AND VARUNA

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Bhairava is defined—in his Puranic origin-myth and as reflected in his pan-Indian iconographic representations—by his violent act of brahmanicide, the most heinous crime in Hindu tradition. This impure tantric god of terror abruptly cuts off the fifth head of Brahmā, embodying the values of the Vedic brahmins, who in the reformed classical era insisted on the public ideal of non-violence (*ahimsā*). Bhairava, who has assimilated diverse bloodthirsty tribal deities across the subcontinent, was nevertheless celebrated as the supreme Absolute by brahmin adepts of transgressive sacrality (TS). This criminal god must wander about expiating for twelve years before arriving in Kāśī, where he is not only absolved but promoted to policeman-magistrate of the sacred city.

For Dumézil, the dual-deity Mitra-Varuṇa represents respectively the pure, peaceful versus transgressive, magical poles of the priestly caste. For FBJ Kuiper, on the contrary, they represent opposed poles of a dualistic cosmos: ordered upper world versus chaotic underworld. The deformed brahmin scapegoat of the Vedic horse-sacrifice, who personified this evil dangerous aspect of Varuṇa, is the prototype of the (ritual) ‘clown’ (*vidūṣaka*) who takes on the royal protagonist’s impurity. These two paradigms—sociological and cosmogonic—are incompatible. The TS perspective subsumes and harmonizes both approaches: Mitra represents the pure socio-cosmic ritual order that is willfully violated by the Varuṇa-*vidūṣaka*. The paradox is that both poles are incarnated by the same person, exemplified by Abhinavagupta (11th C) as both lawgiver and lawbreaker.

Kuiper was examiner of Sunthar’s PhD thesis (1984) on the *vidūṣaka* as embodiment of both Brahmā and Varuṇa. When we first visited Dumézil (1984), he accepted our above attempt to reinstate his pivotal volume on *Mitra-Varuṇa* that he had disowned due to his subsequent sociologizing of Indo-European mythology. TS has since been applied to such violent deities also in ‘primitive’ societies around the world. This paper argues that Kuiper’s rapprochement implies a hidden transgressive dimension invested in the Varuṇa pole of the dual divinity. ‘Tribal’ outsider Bhairava has inherited the mythicoritual function of the supreme Vedic insider, Varuṇa.

THE FORGOTTEN ORACLE OF PRAENESTE: RECONSTRUCTING DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES ABOUT WAR

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The Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Palestrina (ancient Praeneste) in Italy was built in the 2nd century BCE to honor the Egyptian goddess Isis and the goddess Fortuna. The massive site spans a mountainside and remains a rare example of an intact pagan temple complex. The design reflects Hellenistic and Egyptian influences and was the site of the Nile Mosaic of Palestrina, a 1st-century BCE portrayal of Nile river life.

In ancient times, Praeneste was also one of Latium's most important and powerful places. It has been claimed that the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia was one of the largest, if not the largest, temples in ancient Italy.

The massive structure spans nearly a quarter mile (c. 400 m) across, is nearly as high along the steep slopes of the mountain, and rises level by level. Broad ramps allowed devotees to climb from one terrace to another and finally to the place where sacrifices were made, and divination practiced. Cicero records that a young boy was chosen to pull the lots from a well to reveal the divination. The oracle was trusted by the local people but also by Roman emperors and military elite who sought advice from the oracle of the goddess Fortuna. Although in his *On Divination*, Cicero questioned the value of the oracle, Romans believed the casting of lots could predict the future, and reliance upon divination here was also described by Livy. During the First Punic War in 241 BCE, Roman commander Lutatius Cerco wanted a verdict from Fortuna at Praeneste to reveal whether he should act. Cicero reported that Carneades was sure that "at no other place had he seen more fortune than at Praeneste" (Book II, 41.87). Roman generals hoped for an auspicious message before their military campaigns from the oracle.

My current research aims at providing more precise details about the importance of the Oracle of Praeneste in terms of its function as a central decision-making instrument over war operations. One source of study is the original Latin version of Cicero's *De Divinatione*.

HUMAN REGENERATION AND ITS CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN THE FLOOD MYTHS IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

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The Flood myth is one of the most widespread and probably the most exhaustively studied tales in the world. There are two types of flood myths in China: the flood-taming myth and the human regeneration myth. The flood-taming myth originated from the story of Gun and his son Yu to tame flood recorded in the well-known book of *Mountains and Seas*, while the human regeneration myth was largely disseminated in southwest China like Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and other remote provinces, which lacks enough academic attention.

Based on 329 variants of human regeneration myths in southwest China, this paper finds there exist four typical motifs: conflicts between humans and the Thunder God rendering flood; a brother and his sister sitting on a gourd to survive the flood; them getting married through divination; human beings regenerated from meatballs. Specifically, when the flood happened, there was a brother and his sister who, because of their kindness, got a magical gourd from the Thunder God, they sat on the gourd to survive the flood. After the flood, they obtained permission to get married through divination ritual, and gave birth to a meatball. When they cut it up into small meatballs and spread them around, these small meatballs eventually grow into a lot of human beings.

The human regeneration myth takes the deadly flood as the background and the human regeneration as the core motif, but what surprises us most is that there are 204 variants that mentioned people use “gourd” to survive the flood. Why was “gourd” frequently mentioned in these myths? This study further finds that: first, the land of the Southwest region in China is rich in gourds, so the image of gourds has been naturally absorbed in the oral creation and spreading of human regeneration myths. Second, the shape of the gourd resembles a woman’s body, and furthermore under the harsh natural conditions during the primitive period when people were hard to survive, the gourd featured fast-growing, many seeds, and strong reproduction ability, which exactly carries the yearning of the people in southwest China for vitality and fertility.

**INSTRUMENTS OF FATE:
ON WAR AND DESTINY IN THE INDO-EUROPEAN MYTHOLOGY**

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The Mahābhārata, a great epic of Ancient India, discusses in multiple passages (including its most famous part, the Bhagavad Gita) the warriors' code and duty during the war. It is explicitly stated that the warriors on the battlefield are simply instruments of fate: they cannot avoid participating in battle; they will unavoidably kill those who are destined to die by their hand. Moreover, their own death in battle is predetermined and inescapable as well.

I will discuss how fate of a warrior is understood in myths of Classical India and will offer a comparative analysis using the materials from the other Indo-European traditions and epics, including Classical Greek (especially as discussed in the Homeric epics the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), Ancient Iranian, Scandinavian, Slavic, and other data. My goal is to reconstruct possible features of common Indo-European mythological views on destiny and determination during the war.

A STUDY ON THE VIOLENCE IN FLOOD MYTH OF THE DRUNG PEOPLE

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This paper explores the flood myths narrated by the Sire and Kochin families, branches of the Drung minority living in Southwest China. In both myths, the flood was the result of the series of violent act.

In the Sire Family's narrative, humans used to live with spirits which called Pulang, until Pulang began eating human children. This event provoked a battle, and the celestial deity Gemu, angered by the fight between human and Pulang, sent a flood to submerge the world. In the Kochin Family's narrative, humans also lived with Pulang, specifically a human-like Pulang named Nixiam. Nixiam robbed human of food, raped human girls, and killed them. Humans ultimately killed Nixiam, leading to a series of events that caused floods.

In these two flood myths, the violence of Pulang triggered the violence of humans: humans used a violent way, such as fighting or killing, to stop the Pualng. It should be emphasized that, even though the purpose of the humans to use violence was to survive, the result of violence was still death. Just like the shaman of Kochin family, Li Zicai, said: If humans didn't kill Nixiam, it wouldn't lead to flood. The contradiction between the purpose of the violence and its consequences leads to the morality of human beings.

From the above, we can see that violence is regarded as the source of disasters, and no matter what the reason for violence, it will inevitably lead to an unfortunate ending, and the expression of violence is also negative. This attitude towards "violence" implies a value judgment on violence, and this value judgment points to a morality selected by the group. This kind of morality is related to the life of the individual, and also related to the survival of the group. The above two sacred narratives and their variants are still being told in the traditional rituals of the Drung people. During the telling, the morality selected by group manifests again and again, and becomes the principle that governs individual behavior. Just as Luc Brisson said: "(Myth)shapes the behavior of each individual according to the rules commonly accepted by the group".* Therefore, it is morality speaks when myth speaks.

* Luc Brisson, Plato: Words and Myths. Translated by Chen Ningxin, East China Normal University Press,2020.

THE DEVIL WHO USED TO BE A GOD: LIMPING BETWEEN THE IRISH AND SERBIAN MYTHOLOGICAL REALM

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The insufficient academic discourse regarding the deep-rooted connection between Celtic and Slavic mythology seems to be an out-of-bounds area amongst numerous scholars who are using the comparative approach in the research of the Indo-European belief system. As a result, an entrenched paradigm about weak, almost non-existent contacts between two of the three biggest 'barbarian' populations of the Old European North is statically omnipresent in scientific circles. Luckily, some intertwined Irish and Serbian folktales survived the Christian eradication with the religion of its predecessors. Ironically, Christian texts in Ireland preserved a memory of Chrom Dubh, an archenemy of Saint Patrick; and in the same manner, Serbian medieval chronicles give us a precious insight into Saint Sava's confrontation with an alike opponent named Hromi Daba. Besides quite a similar designation, both figures are represented as a demonic foe, an incarnation of the Devil himself, whose worship was ended by a Christian saint. Literal violence, vilification, and the sign of equation with the Lord's supreme adversary by the Church's foretellers may point to the suppressed role of a once high-ranked deity, cruelly banished into the scarce pages of the overlooked manuscripts. Henceforth, by questioning Joseph Cambell's monomyth and by using Oliver Freiberger's balanced method, this paperwork endeavors to rehabilitate the unjustifiably prosecuted limping daemon – carefully examining accusations from the courtrooms of history.