

ABSTRACTS

M.F. Albedil. The images of divine monkey in Hinduism

The article is devoted to the images of divine monkeys in Hinduism, main religion of India and Nepal. Hanuman is the most popular of them. Epic Ramayana presents a more dignified portrait of the monkey hero, stressing his dedication to Rama. For his devotees Hanuman is a perfect embodiment of both «shakti and bhakti», power and devotion. The cult of this divine monkey is one illustration of the interpenetration of Hinduism orientation in popular belief and practice.

Keywords: Hinduism, divine monkeys, Hanuman, Ramayana, bhakti, shakti.

Y.E. Berezkin. The theme of “difficult task” in folktales: regional distribution of the types of the personages and the estimated age of their areal spread

There are several types of the personages who suggests difficult tasks to the hero in folktales, and their areal distribution is analyzed in the paper. The king or chief is widespread across most of Eurasia and Africa but is rare in the East Asia. In the New World this figure is found in narratives recorded between Columbian Plateau, Southern Plains and New England but is absent in Nuclear America (a few Mexican and Peruvian cases of the 20th century are of European origin). The image of the folklore king/chief is not a direct match of the corresponding persons in social hierarchy but, as any elements of culture, it emerged under the influence of many factors, some of them chance and exceptional. Corresponding tales were probably brought to America from Asia ca. 12–14 000 cal. B.P. and the figure of the chief was initially related to the leaders of the community level. As about the supernatural opponents of the hero, the Sun, the Moon and the Thunder (that are mostly found across the same territories and interchangeable in particular narratives), other sky-dwellers and animals are examined. Playing the task-giver role, all these personages are found almost exclusively in the folklore of the Indo-Pacific part of Asia and in the New World being absent across most of Africa and Eurasia. Such a distribution that corresponds to the areal spread of many other folklore motifs and to the data of the geneticists and is probably related to the selection of two populations that were mostly isolated from each other till the end of the Last Glacial Maximum, the Continental Eurasian and the Indo-Pacific ones. In Asia the theme of the difficult tasks with participation of the correspondent protagonists had to be known before 15–20 000 cal. B.P.

Keywords: folklore, mythology, folklore personages, stratigraphy of folklore, difficult tasks, peopling of America.

Y.V. Vassilkov. A commentary to a motif in the flood myth: land-spotting birds

In my previously published papers (Vassilkov 2014 and Васильков 2016) it was demonstrated that the Near Eastern (Mesopotamian) and the Indian Flood myths share common unique sequence of motifs and must be genetically related. The only significant difference is that the motif of birds released by the protagonist from the ark and sent as scouts to find a dry land is totally absent from all Indian versions of the Flood myth. The aim of this paper is to prove that the Flood myth with the motif of land-spotting birds could be known to Indians at the time of the Indus Valley civilization. The paper contains a review of Indian and Classical written sources bearing on a particular navigational practice of Indian seafarers who used birds as pilots leading them to a dry land during a period of many centuries. Three images of a ship with two birds on it found at Mohenjo-daro in Sind, at the island of Failaka in the Persian Gulf and at Shuruppak (modern Fara) in southern Mesopotamia give us some grounds to suggest that the Flood myth was spreading along

the routes of the international sea trade in the north-western part of the Indian Ocean during third millennium BC.

Keywords: The Flood myth, Mesopotamia, Ancient India, Persian Gulf, practice of navigation, birds-pilots, international maritime trade, Indian Ocean, 3rd millennium BC.

S.S. Donchenko. The sea kingdom in Japanese fairy-tales

The article “The Sea kingdom in Japanese fairy-tales” talks about traditional views of the Japanese on the underwater world: characteristics of its time and space, as well as features of its dwellers are discussed. The main emphasis is put on analysis of a popular story about the journey of a fisherman named Urashima Taro to the palace of the Sea Dragon.

Keywords: Japan, folklore, fairy-tale, Japanese fairy-tale, underwater world, sea kingdom.

A.Yu. Korovkina. Jinn and their zoomorphic images in the folk culture of modern Tunisia

The article examines the topic of jinn in the traditional culture of modern Tunisia. According to the Tunisian notions jinn are the essential part of the world around. They can be inextricably connected with the certain items of inanimate nature. And they can also contact with people overmastering animals’ will or even take their shapes. The author traces the history of the transformation of polytheistic animistic ideas to the Islam obligatory belief in jinn. Its different manifestations including the practices of the so-called folk Islam are wide-spread in the Maghreb. The author poses the question of the role of these beliefs in the traditional culture of the region today.

The article analyses both the products of folklore and the author’s field research materials that are dedicated to the daily life of Tunisians.

Keywords: Tunisia, traditional culture, everyday culture, Tunisian folklore, jinn.

N.G. Krasnodembskaya, R.D. Senasinha. On the significance of animal characters in traditional views of Sri Lankans

In this article, the authors seek to determine what is, in the whole, the place and the role of animal characters in the cultural representations of the Sinhalese people. It turns out that some of the images appear as polysemantic symbols having meaning of various historical periods. Therefore, in respect of the same character, there are several lines of representations which coexist in some way in the minds of the informants. Thus, the symbolic load of animal images in Sinhalese culture may not always be straightforward, but sometimes difficult and even “multi-layered”.

Keywords: Sinhalese, Sri Lanka, animal symbols.

V.N. Mazurina. Garuda in the religious beliefs of Nepalese

This article discusses the figure of Garuda in the religious beliefs of Nepalese. Among iconographic forms one could distinguish three groups of images: a human figure with wings (king-Garuda), Garudasana and images of Garuda on torana. The last one, images on torana, places Garuda in the center, as Chhepu. Moreover, snakes are represented as sworn enemies of both characters. Thus some iconographic elements pull together these characters of the Nepalese Pantheon, Garuda and Chhepu.

Keywords: Nepal, Garuda, torana, iconography.

O.N. Merenkova, I.Y. Kotin. Squirrel or chipmunk? Zoomorphisms in Indian cultural space

The article covers mythical and other folklore themes related to squirrel in India. Two pieces of Indian applied art from the MAE collection are analysed in connection with the squirrels depicted in them.

Keywords: Indian palm squirrel, Ramayana, chetti, collections of MAE RAS.

M.A. Rodionov. Zoomorphic characters in the Quranic Universe: from a fly to the elephant

This paper addresses in brief some zoomorphic characters of the Islamic Universe mentioned in the Quran as they were perceived by the Prophet Muhammad's audience. Quranic texts pay special attention to little and weak creatures, a fly (22: 73), a gnat (2: 26), a spider (29: 41), ants (27: 18–19), bees (16: 68–69). Zoomorphic characters are edification for humans. Thus God's words He feeds human beings with milk which is in cattle's stomachs between 'excretion and blood' (*farth wa dam*) (16: 66) are traditionally implemented by the dwellers of Arabia to denote certain layers of the social hierarchy — *blood* for the noble tribesmen and *excretion* for the underprivileged.

Parables-examples, proverbs (sing. mathal) are numerous mentioned in the Quran, the fact gives basis for the assertion that moral stories with zoomorphic personages have been popular in Arabia much earlier than famous "Kalilah and Dimna" by Ibn al-Muqaffa' (VIII c. CE). Every *ayya* as minimal structural unit of the Quran manifests a sign of God's omnipotence. In order to activate suitable associations, it was unnecessary to reproduce the whole story for the audience; it was just enough to vocalize a key word: a fly or other little creatures, a cow, a dog, birds, apes and pigs, fishes, the elephant and even a mysterious underground beast (27: 82), — every word come home to the Prophet's generation. And the narrative of his night journey created a picturesque image of al-Buraq, a winged riding animal with a human face (fig. 1).

Keywords: cultural memory, oral tradition, zoomorphic characters, the Quranic universe, population of Arabia.

E.S. Soboleva. Cone-beast or pangolin

Stuffed scaly mammals — pangolins — were desirable exhibits for Kunstkammern and Wunderkammern since XVI century. Awesome appearance, habits, nocturnal life served as the basis of myths about the fantastic properties of these animals; pangolin image interpretation in rites and rituals became the topic of discussion among ethnozoologists. Skin and body parts of these rare animals are used in traditional zoomedicine of the peoples of South and Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: pangolin, Asia, Africa, Kunstkammer, traditional medicine.

L.A. Streltcova. Images of birds in the folklore of Kiranti people

The article is devoted to the collection of Kiranti tales. Kiranti people inhabit territory of the Eastern Himalayas. Their tales disclose different etiological myths which state the origin of different aspects of nature. Birds play very important role in the everyday life of Kiranti; traditionally year is divided into two parts based on the birds' migration. Images of birds are associated with the motives of ministry and mediation between heaven and earth, between worlds of people and demons. These images also relate to the motives of shape-shifting, death and resurrection.

Keywords: The Eastern Himalaya, Nepal, Kiranti people, tales, myths, birds.

E.G. Tsareva. Textile bestiary IV: reading woven chronicles

The article continues author's research in the field of textile practices of the people of Eurasia. In particular: identification of adaptive, communicative and other textile artifacts' qualities, and use of gained results as a mean of interpretation of textiles as a historical source. Central for this publication are two groups of interrelated themes. On the one side it traces conditions for the beginning of piled weaving as a phenomenon, and its development to local variants of looped and knotted structures. On the other side the author represents contemporary methods of examination and description of piled monuments as an instrument for their comprehensive study. Attached is a scheme of description of piled monuments and a glossary of used terms.

Keywords: Neolith, Bronze, looped and knotted weaving, implicit and explicit indicators, system of description, instrument of study.

M.I. Yosefi. Muallaqa of Antara as arabian bestiary

The article explores zoomorphisms in the muallaqa of Antara — one of the seven greatest poems of pre-Islamic Arabia. It aims at showing the use of animal images in poetry as an expression of creative techniques, features of artistic mind, and mentality peculiar for ancient masters. For this purpose, an exact literate translation of the poem into Russian was performed.

Keywords: Arabic poetry, pre-Islamic poetry, mu'allaqāt, 'Antara.