

# ВОДЕНИ БИКОВИ И ВОДЕНЕ КРАВЕ У УСМЕНИМ ТРАДИЦИЈАМА СВЕТА II

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## Water-Bulls and Water-Cows in Oral Traditions of the World. Part 2

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In this number of *Folkloristika* we will be presenting the second (and the last) part of the thematic issue dedicated to water-bulls and water-cows in the oral tradition of the world. The first part contained four papers, dealing with the beliefs in water-bulls attested in Siberia (among Yakut, Khanty and Mansi peoples) and in the Balkans (Bulgaria and Serbia). They offered a deeper insight into the ethnographic materials recorded in these regions, accompanied with the scholarly analysis approached from different perspectives: folkloric, ethnologic, anthropologic, semiotic, comparative and dialectological. Questions have been opened regarding the interplay between the imagery concerning water-bulls and various water formations – whirlpools, lakes, springs, subterranean and other karst water-flows and forms, or certain weather phenomena, such as the frost – which entail ambivalent relation between the man and the element of water: in itself, it is vitally essential, but, at the same time, dealing with it can be extremely dangerous.

In this part of the issue, the same concerns can be perceived in the ethnographic materials collected in the Upper Karoo and the Olifants River Valley in South Africa, the north-west of Russia, the northern Mongolia and the south-west Serbia.

In the paper of José Manuel de Prada-Samper, the very essence of the water-bull imagery – present in a complex variety of narratives, beliefs and practices of the /Xam and their descendants in the areas of the Upper Karoo and the Olifants River Valley – is elucidated by a meticulous analysis of references, taken from a comprehensive corpus of sources. The oldest of them are the first ethnographic testimonies taken from the /Xam, collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as those from the Bleek & Lloyd's collection<sup>1</sup>; there

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<sup>1</sup> During the 1870s and 1880s, a German linguist Wilhelm Bleek (1827–1875) and his sister in law, Lucy Lloyd (1834–1914), collected about 12000 notebook pages of text (in /Xam and translated to English), taken from the /Xam Bushman informants who were imprisoned in Cape Town's Breakwater prison. The scholars photographed the informants and documented details from their lives and genealogies, took their measure-

are also others, recorded during the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, among them, unpublished materials which the author collected during his latest fieldwork in the area, some of them dated in March 2018. De Prada-Samper maintains a constant dialogue with the rest of scholars who have written about the topic (Roger Hewitt, Ansie Hoff, Sigrid Schmidt, David Lewis-Williams, Anne Solomon, among others), but he focuses on some overlooked aspects of the subject, which mainly concern the variability of the imagery related to the “water-creature” (the water-bull and the water-cow are some of its commonly attributed forms). The author convincingly illustrates that it is “an ontologically fluid, yet tangible, entity”, shaped in accordance to different life conditions (quantity and type of available water sources) and, at the same time, by the experience the community and the individuals had while dealing with the element of water, which is perceived as a living entity. The materials presented and analysed in this paper offer an almost inexhaustible pool of valuable data for further comparative research, while the insights reached by the author shed new light to certain elements of Khoisan tradition and beliefs regarding the water imagery.

In the paper of Mikhail Garder (Михаил Гардер), the author supplements his and other researchers’ studies of the motif of water-cows in the folklore of the Russian north-west (south Karelia, Vologda and the south of Arkhangelsk district), by presenting, comparing and commenting on the narratives about the water-cows – collected among the Russian population of the mentioned regions. He compares them to several others, from Karelian, Vepsian and Estonian folklore. Four of the narratives have been recorded in the last twenty years, and the rest of them were collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although the narrative models of the commented text vary, the common motifs present in all of them are the fat and milky cows which emerge out of deep water (and, in some cases, from the earth) and which can be retained for some time in the realm of men by separating one (or several) of them from the rest of the herd by using specific tricks. Unlike the almost identically described water-cows from the Welsh folklore – which are attributed to lake-fairies<sup>2</sup> – the water-cows from the Russian north-west do not appear in tales about the marriage with supernatural brides. According to some of the narratives from the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, they belong to the herds of *vodyanoy* (the master of a specific water

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ments, made word and phrase lists and collected narratives on folklore, beliefs, customs, everyday life and history, which are, since then, (one of) the most valuable sources for the research of the /Xam Bushman tradition. The latest edition: *Claim to the Country: The Archive of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd*. Ed. Pippa Skotnes. Athens, Johannesburg, Cape Town: Ohio University Press, Jacana, 2007. The collection is digitalized and can be consulted at: <http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/>.

<sup>2</sup> See: J. Wood (1992). The Fairy Bride Legend in Wales. *Folklore* 103/1(56–57): 60–61.

resource) – a detail which is absent from the most recent testimonies. Further parallels with the Welsh and Scottish legends can be observed in various elements, such as relating the origin of certain cattle breeds to the legendary water-cows, or the way the water-cows, or their offspring, are called (sometimes name by name) to return to the water from which they emerged<sup>3</sup> – the same motif is found in Serbian tradition, but related to the offspring the water-bulls have with domestic cows<sup>4</sup>.

Iulia Liakhova (Юлия Викторовна Ляхова) presents new unpublished materials recorded in Mongolia and Buryatia in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012, during a series of expeditions made by the author and the research group of the Center for Typology and Semiotics of Folklore of the Russian State University for the Humanities, to which Liakhova belongs. There are twelve transcribed texts in Mongolian, which are translated to Russian, compared, classified and supplemented with comments. The author notices several major types of narratives in which a water-bull (sometimes it is a yak) appears: the etiological legends about the origin of certain lakes, the narratives about the encounters between persons with a supernatural being and those with a central motif of the master of a lake/lakes. The water-bull is described as a huge white, grey or greyish dark-blue bull, which comes out of certain lakes to mate with domestic cows – the latter motif is present in the Balkan, Saxon, Welsh and Manx folklore too<sup>5</sup>, although the consequences of the mating differ: in Balkan and Manx folklore, they are negative (offspring die, or soon return to the water realm of their progenitor), while in Scottish, Welsh and Mongol, those calves are better than the ordinary ones and bring wealth to the owner. In certain Mongol narratives, the water-bull is identified with the *luu*-dragon – a creature related to thunder, since the thunder is believed to

<sup>3</sup> See: J. M. McKinley (1893). *Folklore of Scottish Lochs and Springs*. Glasgow: William Hodge & Co., 180–181; Wood 1992: 60–61.

<sup>4</sup> Љ. Раденковић (1998). Митолошки становници вода. Водени бик. *Даница* 6 (за 1999 год.): 257–270.

<sup>5</sup> See: G. Waldron (1744). *History and Description of the Isle of Man*. London: W. Bickerton, 85; J. Grimm (1883) *Teutonic Mythology*. Vol 2. London: George Bell & Sons, 491; J. Rhys (1901). *Celtic Folklore. Welsh and Manx*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 285; Раденковић 1998, 257–258; Љ. Трубарац Матић (2016а). Водени бик балканских и других светских традиција: порекло представе. *Гласник Етнографског института САНУ* 64(1): 171–173; Љ. Трубарац Матић (2016б). Балкански водени бик: типолошко одређење сагледано у контексту представа о воденим биковима у другим европским и светским традицијама. *Савремена српска фолклористика III*. Београд: Удружење фолклориста Србије, Универзитетска библиотека „Светозар Марковић“, Филозофски факултет Универзитета у Нишу, 258–260, 264; R. Malchev (2017). Processes of Cultural Adaptation of Natural Phenomena to the Traditional Models of Knowledge: The Case of the Demonological Entity Called the “Water bull” (Based on the Material from the Bulgarian Regions of Montana and Vratsa). *Folkloristika* 2(2): 63–83.

be caused by the collision of two *luu*-dragons. This feature sums the Mongol folklore among those, like the Khoisan and Serbian, in which the link of the water-bull with the thunder has been observed.<sup>6</sup> The elements which call for further comparing and analysis are not exhausted by the mentioned parallels, since there are many others to pay attention to.

In the paper of Nina Aksić some new materials relevant for the topic can be found: a pseudo-etiological narrative about the toponim of Ribariće with the motif of water-cow and an unpublished legend about a water-bull. The contribution gains in value if we bear in mind that this material is from the region of Novi Pazar and Pešter (southwest Serbia), where very few narratives on water-bulls and water-cows have been collected until now. The author compares the presented material with the previously published narratives from Raška and the ethnographically related areas of northern Montenegro, Metohija and western and central Kosovo, and tries to trace parallels and differences between them and to put them in a broader context of narratives on water-bulls collected in other parts of Serbia. A map of the south-west Serbian area in which the commented sources have been collected is added to the paper, which can be helpful for the future fieldwork in the region.

With these four commented papers, we will close the thematic issue dedicated to water-bulls and water-cows, hoping to have opened the door to an initial platform for future comparative research of the topic, which is yet to be built upon. As the editor of the issue, I do not want to miss the opportunity to express my most sincere gratitude to all the authors and the peer reviewers who, with their enthusiasm and expertise, have made this issue possible.

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<sup>6</sup> Apart from the De Prada-Samper's paper published in this issue, see: Трубарац Матић 2016a: 171–173; A. Hoff (1998). The Water Bull of the /Xam. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 53: 118.