

SUMMARIA

Jaan Lahe, *Roman Mithras, Mithra of Commagene, and Miuro in the Kushan Empire – a Study in Comparative iconography*

Although the god Mithra, with its name variations, is known in different Indo-European religions, we have no basis to talk about a single Mithra religion that spread from Spain to Central Asia and India. The functions and traits characteristics of this god also vary in spatially close religions. However, there are amazing similarities coincidences in depicting the god in different religions. These are related to several iconographic details.

It is known that the oldest images of Mithra (one fully recognisable sculpture and several reliefs) originate from the territory of the Kingdom of Commagene, located in Asia Minor, and have been dated to the 1st century BC. These depict Mithra wearing a tiara or a Phrygian cap, decorated with stars, and shaking hands with King Antiochus I. The god's Persian-inspired attire (long trousers, coat thrown over the shoulders) resembles that of the king and the hand shake refers to friendship between the god and the king. The god's head is surrounded by a halo which emphasises his solar nature, which is also emphasised by identifying him with Apollon in the inscriptions of Commagene.

The Kushan Empire, which included large swathes of territory in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and India, is separated from the Kingdom of Commagene by a relatively large area. However, images of Mithra have been found from the territory of Kushan (here called Miuro or Mirro), the iconographic details of which are surprisingly similar to those of the Mithra images found in the territory of the Kingdom of Commagene. The findings are gold coins from the reign of emperors Kanishka the Great and Huvishka, who ruled in the 1st and 2nd century BC. In addition, several reliefs from the same era have been found, depicting the king with different gods. The coins found in the Kushan Empire also depict Mithra with a cloak on his shoulders and wearing long trousers, his head surrounded with a halo. Some coins from the reign of Kanishka have the god's name, Mithra, replaced with the Greek version, Helios. The Kushan reliefs depict the god Mithra shaking hands with the king, and his clothes resemble that of the king.

The Mithra cult that spread in the Roman Empire included different ways of depicting the god, but is notable that several important iconographic details,

which we are able to see in the Roman Empire, Kingdom of Commagene, and Kushan Empire, overlap. We cannot prove that the Roman Mithra cult was an imported cult from the Kingdom of Commagene or the Kushan Empire, but the overlapping of the listed iconographic details is hardly incidental. In both the Kingdom of Commagene and the Kushan Empire, the cultural spaces of Greece and Iran met. It was within this syncretic cultural space that the iconography developed, the elements of which can be seen in the iconography of the Mithra cult in the Roman Empire. Thus, the researchers of the iconography of the Mithra cult should also study the iconography of the cultures beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. However, one may ask whether and to what extent these have directly influenced the iconography of the Roman Mithra cult, but it is a fact that all the previously mentioned monuments originate, broadly speaking, from the same era and from areas that had close contact with each other.

Peeter Espak, *One Possible Interpretation of the Structure of the Early Sumerian Pantheon*

The paper tries to analyse some aspects of Early Dynastic Sumerian pantheon structure mostly based on the god-lists from Abu Salabikh and Fara. The primeval universe before the separation of An and Ki was seen as an embryonic entity containing different divine powers symbolized in the male-female pairs en-ki / nin-ki and en-an / nin-an – primeval creatures present in later female earth and male sky. Several other divine powers existed in this primeval universe including the god Enlil and his spouse. Adding them as the second pair testifies that both god-lists are stemming already from the mythology seeing Enlil as the main deity of kingship and the “high god”. The ordering of the Abu Salabikh list does not differ much from the creation myths of Ukg. 15 and the Barton Cylinder when to consider the interpretation of the divine names ‘Lord / Lady Heaven’ for en-an / nin-an correct.

Vladimir Sazonov, *Universalistic Ambitions, Deification and Claims of Divine Origin of Mesopotamian Rulers: the Lagaš II Dynasty*

No doubt, the concept of universalistic claims and assertions for divine origin by the Mesopotamian rulers can be traced back to Early Dynastic Lagaš (25th–24th centuries BC). After Early Dynastic Lagaš was conquered by

Sargon of Akkad, the new possibility for universalistic claims and assertions for divine origin for the rulers of Lagaš opened again after fall of the Empire of Akkad (c. 2154 BC), when the city-state of Lagaš became independent.

Rulers of II Dynasty of Lagaš (Ur-Bau, Gudea) re-introduced the idea of the divine origin of a ruler and this idea of divine origin of a ruler culminated during the reign of Gudea (22nd century BC), who was the most significant and powerful ruler of II Dynasty Lagaš. Gudea claimed not only divine origin for himself, he also proclaimed that he was the *sun-god Utu of his people who rose over his own city* and he re-introduced universalistic expressions and epithets for his gods, which were used in Lagaš first in the times of Early Dynastic period by E-anatum and some of his successors.

It seems that Gudea was the first ruler in the Sumero-Akkadian world who introduced the idea of solar kingship, promoted the new concept that a king is a “sun-god”, a phenomenon which was later used by several kings of Ur III Dynasty (2112–2004 BC) like Šulgi and Amar-Su’ena, and then later by several Assyrian and Babylonian kings of II-I millennia.

Anu Pöldsam, *Prayer for rain by Elijah and by Honi the Circle-Maker. Two ends of the same concept in the light of Lazar Gulkowitsch’ ideas.*

The article focuses on the special charisma of the prayer for rain in Judaism and its connection to the concept of Hasid exemplified by two stories that illustrate the charisma of praying for rain. In the centre of these stories stand Elijah and Honi the Circle-Maker, both possessing the gift of their prayers for rain being heard regardless of their way of praying. In the framework of Lazar Gulkowitsch’ (1898–1941) research on Hasidism and history of ideas these two characters, a prophet and a miracle-worker, can be seen in connection to prayer as two ends of the same concept, that of Hasid. The article follows Gulkowitsch’ elaboration of the special disposition of the attributes of the Hasid, its connection to prayer, miracles and attributes of Prophets.

Randar Tasmuth, *Paul’s Hermeneutical Art in Explaining the New Creation*

In order to understand Paul we have to comprehend the Jewish paradigm of hermeneutics. Paul seems to presuppose that his readers knew Scripture too and while building his exposition of the new creation on Biblical creation narratives he felt no need to explain it in detail.

The tradition alone does not explain the ideas of Paul, but one is fortunate to find in his epistles autobiographical elements. He builds his case on his encounter with Christ that forced him to abandon his “former way of life in Judaism”. It appeared to have been a transformative encounter of pivotal significance. Paul recognised that it is only total fellowship in Christ, a shared destiny with him that matters and effects changes in human life. Paul expresses his personal commitment to Christ by stating that he now feels himself as having been crucified with Christ. On this basis the terms like transformation, metamorphosis, becoming another, becoming a new man, and new creation become far more understandable.

The new creation applies to the community as well as to the individual. Participation in Christ is corporate and the renewed image of Christ in individual human beings means the appearance of a new humanity who lives by the Spirit and walks by the Spirit.

Paul finalises his hermeneutical construction in Rom 8:29–30 with the hope for a change for the whole of creation. His eschatological point of view is not easy to explain. On one hand, on an individual and ecclesial basis, the outer nature of humans is wasting away. At the same time the inner nature – new creation – is being renewed day by day. On the other hand, resurrection of human beings is still ahead and creation is waiting to be set free from its bondage. New creation is at the same time an ongoing process and an event in the future.

It is highly probable that Paul looked at the new creation through Christ as the lens. Christ is the agent of the new creation and thus the source of Paul’s views on the new creation.

Christopher Degelmann, *Depositio barbae* Das kaiserzeitliche Bartfest als Initiationsritus

Both Tacitus and Suetonius report concordantly that during his ostentatious initiation into adulthood the young emperor Nero performed a strange ritual: At the age of 21 (59 AD), he shaved off his beard entirely, put the hairs into a little case and afterwards brought them up to the Capitol in order to dedicate them to the divine trinity of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva.

Between 13 and 18, boys, just like senators, used to wear the *toga praetexta*. After this period though, all adolescents put down their *praetexta* and exchanged it for a white toga. This *toga pura* or *libera* signified the free-born, male Roman and revealed the legal, sexual and socio-cultural status

the young man had attained. This first ritual admission into the realm of adulthood gained increasing attention within classical scholarship which became more sensitive to issues concerning the history of the body and gender and thus particularly interested in the strategies of distinction, staging and conservation of status during the acceptance of the toga for men (*togam virilem sumere*).

However, the so-called *barbatoria*, which Nero performed on himself at a considerably advanced age (as indicated above), has only been treated rather incidentally in scholarship so far. Nevertheless, the growing, shaving and maintaining of a beard provided at the time important information about the intersectional identity of a person which had to be either preserved or negated under the influence of rumour. This contribution will compile the few known “realia” concerning the Roman beard-festival of the early imperial period which will then contribute to an typical reconstruction of the ritual. The main focus lies on the ritual’s religious implications. On this basis, the contribution will shed light on the function and importance of the *barbatoria* in the life cycle of young Romans as well as on the political dimension of its instrumentalisation. It will be shown that this second phase of the initiation process which took place after the toga-celebration served to create a religiously and ritually mature citizen by having him perform a sacrifice whereas the former act of *togam virilem sumere* simply symbolised his passage into public life.