

ВОДЕНИ БИКОВИ И ВОДЕНЕ КРАВЕ У УСМЕНИМ ТРАДИЦИЈАМА СВЕТА

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Уводник

Water-Bulls and Water-Cows in Oral Traditions of the World

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Beliefs in water-bulls and water-cows have been ethnographically attested in a relatively limited number of traditions scattered throughout the world. So far, they have been mostly studied from a closed, national, ethnic or regional perspective, within mutually isolated circles of scholars researching one specific tradition. The results of their work remained locked among each one of these circles, inaccessible for a broader number of researchers interested in the same topic. There have been several reasons for that situation. Firstly, there were linguistic boundaries – ethnographic materials collected in different autochthonous languages of Europe, Siberia, Patagonia and Africa were traditionally studied within separate (usually national) ethnological and folkloristic circles, whose scholarly production, although written mainly in just several languages (English, Spanish, Russian, Bulgarian and Serbian), has been difficult to reach. Secondly, the pre-internet era did not favor enough the information exchange which would end the ignorance about the existence of the similar object of studies within other world's traditions – we simply did not know about each other. Therefore, there was no mutual dialogue, wider scholarly discussion, nor deeper comparative insights. Our desire is to change this situation by providing a framework for tracing the initial platform for future comparative studies of the topic, which could inspire further research both on local and on international level.

Seen from the perspective of Serbian and Balkan folklore studies, the opening of a broader scholarly dialogue within an international context might be revealing for deeper understanding of the origins, typology, functions and other aspects of the daemon called the water-bull in the Bulgarian and Serbian folklore. Till recently, it has been assumed as a kind of “Balkan curiosity”, due to the inexistence of ethnographical testimonies about beliefs in water bulls found in other Slavic traditions and it was studied almost exclusively in the Balkan context¹ – although the first short remarks about

¹ For better insights in the studies about the Balkanic water-bulls in a strictly Balkanic context, see: П. Вучковић, А. Јовановић (1986). Легенда о воденом бику – покушај ар-

its similarities (in some aspects) with certain daemons from the Mongolian and Yakut traditions appeared almost thirty years ago in the studies of Prof. Ljubinko Radenković.² We consider that the time is ripe to make some steps further in the direction of comparative research within a broader non-Slavic context.³

Although the topic might seem peripheral, it actually touches – directly or indirectly – numerous questions related not only to bull, cow and water symbolism and imaginary in folklore and folk demonology, but also in religion (especially in its historic dimension) and the very origins and inner logics of complex ideas and practices born from the interaction in the *man : animal* and the *man : nature* relations. Thus, the imaginary related to nether-world creatures called the water-bull and the water-cow and to their interaction with people, domestic cattle and economy raises questions of mystical relationship between man and nature in all its untamable strength and frightening beauty. It can be approached from different perspectives: folkloristic, anthropological, ethnographical, ethnological, linguistic, philological, historical, archeological, psychological and others, both in synchronic and diachronic dimensions.

In the first part of this thematic issue – the second will appear in the next number of *Folkloristika* – there have been brought into focus the narratives and beliefs in water-bulls documented among several Siberian peoples (Khanty and Mansi of Ob-Ugric and Yakuts of Turkic group) and those recorded in the Balkans (Bulgarian and Serbian tradition). Semyon Makarov (Семён Макаров) starts from a comprehensive corpus of ethnographic testimonies (collected from the 19th century till the present day) in order to dis-

хеолошке интерпретације фолклорне грађе, *Гласник српског археолошког друштва* III(3), 44–49; Љ. Раденковић (1998а). Митолошки становници вода. Водени бик, *Даница* 6, 257–270; Л. Раденкович (1998b). Водяной бык в преданиях балканских славян, *Полутропов. К 70-летию Владимира Николаевича Топорова*, Москва: Российская Академия наук – Институт славяноведения, 439–446; Љ. Раденковић (2001). Водени бик, *Словенска митологија – енциклопедијски речник*. Ред. С. М. Толстој, Љ. Раденковић. Београд: ZEPTEK BOOK WORLD, 88–90; С. Ђорђевић Белић (2013). Власински водени бик. Фолклорни текст, ритуална пракса и замишљање заједнице, *Aquatica*. Посебна издања САНУ, књ. 122, Београд: Балканолошки институт САНУ, 103–130; Д. Крстић (2014). Легенда о воденом бику, *Развитак* 53(245–246), 169–176.

² See the footnote 1 for: Раденковић 1998а: 260; 1998b: 440; 2001: 88.

³ In that respect, see: Ђ. Трубарац Матић (2016а). Водени бик балканских и других светских традиција: порекло представе. *Гласник Етнографског института САНУ* 64(1), 163–177; Ђ. Трубарац Матић (2016b). 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. 253–269.

cuss the possible common source of two similar water creatures of the Yakut demonology: the “water-bull” and the “bull-of-cold”. The semantic analysis of their numerous overlapping attributes (aquatic nature, dwelling places, time of activity, physical appearance etc.), which the author observes within a broader context of Yakut tradition (epics, songs, rituals), reveals it highly probable. A wider comparative perspective backs up this Makarov’s hypothesis, since there are other traditions in which the water-bulls are closely related to weather phenomena: they can be the announcers of cold winter (Mapuche), masters of weather/rain/storm (Mapuche, Khoisan), or those who punish with thunder (Khoisan, Serbian).⁴

The paper of Tatyana Voldina (Татьяна Волдина) presents the most comprehensive and updated presentation of ethnographic materials about the beliefs and practices related to different aquatic daemons of Khanty and Mansi peoples. Among them, there are presented materials about the *wəs/mǫw xor* (‘earthly bull/mammoth’) an aquatic creature associated to bulls and mammoths at the same time – but also to the pike-fish and the emblematic totemic animals of the Ob-Ugrians as bear and moose. In spite of its name, it is imagined to live in whirlpools and deep parts of lakes and rivers. Further research may reveal if it bears a real link to the water-bulls of other regions of the world, or it is just one of many zoomorphic shapes of the Ob-Ugrian “Master of the Waters” – which seems to be similar to the malevolent aquatic Slavic *vodyanoy* – whose basic function is drowning.

In the paper of Suzana Djordjević Pejović and Bojan Ristić, recently collected and unpublished field material with three testimonies about the water-bull from the village of Lokva (Knjaževac municipality, Serbia) has been presented. The authors analyze the narratives from the folkloristic and the dialectological perspective – focusing on their content, variability and structural features within the framework of the basic model of narratives about the water-bulls collected in Serbia and, at the same time, on their phonetic, morphologic and lexical characteristics.

Rossen Rossenov Malchev (Росен Росенов Малчев) presents the ethnographic material with testimonies about the water-bull from the Bulgarian north-west regions of Montana and Vratsa – which he considers closest and most informative in regard to the basic narrative plot attested in Bulgaria. With the aim to define the key typological and functional features of the water-bull of these regions, the author compares the narratives from the select-

⁴ For the Mapuche sources see: César A. Fernández (ed.) (1995). *Cuentan los mapuches*. Antología. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nuevo Siglo: 44–45, 70. For the Khoisan sources, see: Ansie Hoff (1998). The Water Bull of the /Xam. *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 53: 109–124. For the comparative analysis of Mapuche, Khoisan and Serbian materials see: Трубарац Матић 2016а: 167–173.

ed corpus, relying at the same time on the observations of Prof. Radenković. An attractive hypothesis about the link between the imaginary related to water-bulls and karst hydrology phenomena is proposed. The argumentation is based on the geographical map of places mentioned in the narratives, especially those linked to the appearance and disappearance of the water flows believed to be controlled by water-bulls. As the Bulgarian narratives clearly belong to the same family as the Serbian ones, they bear a special significance for further comparative analysis and composite reconstructions of the common narrative proto-model.

This is the first part of the thematic issue dedicated to the topic of water-bulls and water-cows. The second one – which will appear in the next number of *Folkloristika* – will open access to updated studies and scholarly analysis of ethnographic and folkloric materials from other world's traditions, presented and discussed within their original traditional context. Bearing in mind the state of the question and the complexity of the topic, we hope that – with the publication of both parts of the thematic issue – our modest goal would be accomplished and that an initial research platform with updated studies of ethnographic and folkloric data would be at the disposal of a broader community of researchers interested in the topic.

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