

## Abstracts

### **PRIIT ROHTMETS. The Academic Oriental Society 1935–1944**

The article provides a comprehensive overview of the activities of the Academic Oriental Society in the 1930s–1940s and revises the views expressed in some earlier treatments.

The Oriental Society was founded in December 1935 by the intellectuals of the younger generation who had received their education at the University of Tartu of the Republic of Estonia. To achieve its goals — to promote research in Oriental studies, to unite persons interested in the subject and to procure literature — the Society organised research paper presentation meetings and issued a series of publications. The activities of the Society were closely related with the university library — many of its staff were members of the Society, the university library housed the library of the Society, and the meetings of the Society were held on the premises of the library.

The membership of the Society, which grew from 14 to 30 during its five years of activity, included more academics than the memberships of other specialised societies. According to the Society's statutes, one could also become its supporting member. Their number was nearly one third of the whole membership.

Research paper presentation meetings were initially held more frequently, but from 1937, there were two longer meetings a year. The question about issuing the series of publications *Writings of the Academic Oriental Society (Scripta Academiae Societatis Orientalis)* arose for the first time in 1937. Although earlier studies have claimed that the Society also wanted to publish a yearbook, the board of the society actually concentrated on publishing a collection of articles only. Before World War II reached Estonia, only one issue could be published; the second was being prepared, but its publication was hindered by the Soviet occupation, which began in 1940. The activity of the Society did not end in 1940, although it was fragmentary during World War II. During the German occupation, the leaders of the Society attempted to continue its activity, but it was conclusively ended by the Soviet occupation that began again in 1944. The activity of the Society could not be resumed, as several of its leaders had fallen victim to repressions. A new attempt to start Oriental studies again was made in 1955 when a Centre for Oriental Studies was founded at Tartu State University.

### **TARMO KULMAR. Section of Oriental Studies at the Students Research Society of Tartu State University from 1971–1977**

At the Centre for Oriental Studies, founded at Tartu State University in 1956, Oriental languages could be studied under the supervision of linguist Pent Nurmekund

(1906–1996) and, from 1968, Buddhologist Linnart Mäll (1938–2010). The popular lectures on Buddhism by L. Mäll, a lecturer at the Department of History, led to the foundation of the Oriental Studies Section at the Students Research Society.

The Section of Oriental Studies was founded on 21 April 1971 and operated until the spring of 1977. It was headed successively by students Harri Roots, Mart Helme, Tarmo Kulmar and Rein Helme.

In total, the Section of Oriental Studies had 28 members. It organised 51 events where 110 presentations were made (58 of them by students). According to the lists of attendees, the total number of listeners was 1135. The fourteen presentations made at Students Research Society conferences at other universities of the USSR won high praise.

The greatest number of presentations concerned Buddhism and ancient history of several Oriental countries. The most prolific presenters were Maret Kark (research interest — Tibet), Harri Roots (Tibet and China), Mart Helme (India and Japan), Rein Helme (military history of Oriental countries), Maie Kark (Eastern-Western cultural relations), Henn Käärrik (Mongolia and Carthage) and Tarmo Kulmar (Mexico and Peru). Publication of students' research presentations was not possible in these years.

The most active academic years were 1971/1972 and 1972/1973. As the studies of Buddhism in the USSR, including the activities of L. Mäll, the academic supervisor of the Section, were closely watched by the KGB, the work of the Section gradually petered out, and its membership decreased, until all the members of the section had graduated from the university by spring 1977.

The members of the Section were engaged in serious studies and research. Due to the strictness of the supervisor, the level of the presentations was evenly high. As a result of the activities of the Section, freethinking Estonian intellectuals developed a permanent interest in Oriental culture and Buddhism.

The study is based on the archive materials stored at the Centre for Oriental Studies at the University of Tartu.

### **GAO JINGYI. Chinese loanwords in Estonian**

The paper deals with Chinese loanwords in Estonian. As a result, a list of ninety Chinese loanwords in Estonian is given with elaborated descriptions of Chinese etymology. In addition, statistics is given about the source of the wording of the Chinese loanword, the source of its pronunciation and the intermediary language.

### **JAAN PUHVEL. Spikes of the harrow in Hittite metaphors**

Defiance of the notion of non-being, with particular reference to lethal annihilation, has preoccupied mankind from the earliest. An example from the second millennium BCE is a Hittite ritual phrase exorcizing pestilence, 'shake spikes

from harrow<sup>7</sup>, implying symbolic riddance of the “stings” of the ravages of plague, being thus a figurative “defanging of death”. Such an agricultural metaphor is in line with widespread similar notions, such as “sowing” of plague.

**PEETER ESPAK. On the time of writing  
hitherto undated Sumerian myths**

The paper tries to point out some similarities in the myths *Enki and the World Order*, *Enki's Journey to Nippur* and *Enki and Inanna*, which seem to reflect the material or ideology also present in the Isin era royal poetry. The objective is not to claim that all the mythological ideas present in the analysed texts had to be created in the Isin period. Most of the mythological motives echoed in all the Sumerian myths probably have their ancient origins going back to the mythology of the Early Dynastic period. The major Sumerian myths are all full of ancient mythological motives which were accessible through written records as well as by their presence in oral folklore or story-telling. However, it is reasonable to suggest that, in addition to the city laments, several Sumerian myths also might have originated from the mythological thinking of the Isin period. Some similarities between the Isin era hymns and Sumerian myths, such as *Enki and the World Order*, *Enki's Journey to Nippur*, and *Enki and Inanna*, will be taken into consideration. It is concluded by using textual parallels that it is strongly possible that they might be Isin period texts. The age and provenance of the mythological ideas, however, is not determinable with certainty.

**ANDREAS JOHANDI. King Ammī-ditāna's hymn to Ishtar**

The article presents a hymn to goddess Ishtar by King Ammī-ditāna who belonged to the Old Babylonian dynasty. Ishtar was the Mesopotamian goddess of love, war and fertility of Semitic origin. Gradually her role merged with the role of the earlier Sumerian goddess Inanna. One of Ishtar's roles was being the godly embodiment of the planet Venus. She was the most significant Mesopotamian goddess of all times. King Ammī-ditāna who dedicated this hymn to Ishtar was a descendant of the powerful ruler Hammurabi in the Old Babylonian dynasty. The hymn consists of 14 strophes, the first ten of which glorify Ishtar. The four following ones deal with King Ammī-ditāna and describe the special relations between him and Ishtar, according to which the King was chosen by gods, “the love of their hearts”. Ammī-ditāna proves his competence as the “right” king who periodically makes rich offerings to gods. Ishtar, in her turn, grants the King a long life and the universal royal power over the cosmos. Thus, the hymn can also be interpreted as King Ammī-ditāna's self-legitimation. Along with Ishtar, the godly characters in the hymn include the Mesopotamian god of the heaven An, and the god of wisdom and water Ea.

**MARTTI KALDA. Pillars of Delhi:  
Relocating Monuments in Ancient India**

Three pillars with ancient epigraphy are standing in the territory of New Delhi, the capital city of the Republic of India. Two of them are made of stone and were erected by the praised king Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin Asoka (ruled from 274/268–234/232 BC) of the Maurya Dynasty (4th–2nd century BC). The third, the iron pillar of Delhi, was most likely made to celebrate the most famous ruler, Candragupta II Vikramāditya (reigned from 375/380–413/415) of the Gupta Dynasty (4th–6th century).

The iron pillar was most likely carried to the city by Sultan Šams ad-Dīn Iltutmīš (in power 1211–1236), the ruler of the Sultanate of Delhi (1206–1526). Aśoka's stone pillars were brought there by Sultan Firūz Šāh Tuġlaq (in power 1351–1388). The first of the two Muslim kings placed the metal pole (celebrating a Hindu king) into his mosque, the second sultan had stone pillars (with the texts by a pious Buddhist emperor) to be raised on the premises of his palace complex and the hunting grounds.

The article examines the backgrounds of this quirky historical, cultural and spatial situation. We are trying to find out why the columns of Delhi have, despite contradictory endorsements, proved phenomena that surpass the ages. Which monuments are not losing their relevance despite continuous changes in space, time, religion, and historical situation? The research tools have been provided by Régis Debray in his *Transmitting Culture* by the methodology called *Mediology*. The article analyses the communication tools of the Indian civilization and mediation of culture in Ancient India.

**ERKI LIND. Bodily religious aims in *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā***

Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā is one of the earliest and most prominent treatises on Haṭha Yoga. The text, written by Svātmārāma, dates from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and is composed as a manual for practicing *Haṭha Yoga*. *Haṭha Yoga* techniques are mostly bodily. Therefore, I argue that the human body in *Haṭha Yoga* can be more than just a tool in achieving religious goals. There are a number of body-related religious goals enunciated in *Haṭha Yoga* texts, including the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*.

The following categories of body-related religious goals can be found in *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*: health, beauty and youth; ritual purity; magical powers (Siddhi); overcoming death; and becoming god-like. And finally, liberation (*mukti*) can also be interpreted as something happening *with* or *in* the body and not *from* the body. Some of these goals presuppose the existence of others: the Yogi must have a healthy and pure body in order to become a liberated divine being.

**HELEN GERŠMAN. Abū Nuwās' wine poetry**

Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī<sup>?</sup> (747/762–813/815) lived and flourished in the Abbasid era during the so-called renewal *badī'* period in Arabic literature. He was of half-

Persian and half-Arab origin but received classical education in the towns of Basra and Kufa. After that, he moved to Baghdad where he became a court poet to Caliph Hārūn ar-Rašīd (ruled 786–809) and his son. Abū Nuwās gained popularity with his wine poetry (*hamriyya*), but later in life, he also wrote some very nice examples of ascetic poetry (*zuhdiyya*). As a court poet, he produced panegyrics dedicated to the rulers of the Islamic world. He is also considered the reviver of hunting poetry (*tardiyya*), which can be found under separate category in his *Dīwān* for the very first time. The wine song translated in this article has been taken from his *Dīwān*. Its poetic meter is *kāmil*. It consists of 25 *bayts* and follows the structure of the classical ode *qaṣīda*, although in a twisted and curious way, thus being an illustrative example of new and astonishing creativity of the *badīʿ* period.

### VLADIMIR SAZONOV. **Following Nebuchadnezzar: Saddam Hussein and ancient Near Eastern despots**

The current article deals with this part of S. Hussein's propaganda which was related to his interests in Ancient Near Eastern history, especially in ancient despotic kings such as Nebuchadnezzar II, the medieval caliph Harun ar-Rashid (786–809) and Saladin (1174–1193), the conqueror of Jerusalem, who was victorious over crusaders. Hussein (ruled 1979–2003) saw these despots as examples for himself, and he wanted to become as powerful as, for example, King Nebuchadnezzar II who established the Babylonian Empire, deported the Jewish people from Palestine in 586 BCE and destroyed Jerusalem.

The growth of power and the expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire from the 9<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and the Babylonian Empire in the late 7<sup>th</sup> and in 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE were directly connected to the new political and ideological programme of ambitious kings. The aim of these kings' geopolitical ambitions was splendidly reflected in their royal inscriptions that listed, among other feats, their military campaigns, which were often accompanied by terror (mass killing of people, deportation). Mesopotamian kings were the first rulers in the history who began to use these as a part of the regular state policy; they used genocide the first time in history. Hussein also used genocide as a method of his terror policy. This was, in Hussein's opinion, a good example, and he tried to resemble Nebuchadnezzar II or Saladin. For propagandistic purposes, Saddam often portrayed himself on posters, etc., as a very powerful warrior in the clothes of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II; he often had himself depicted together with his "great teachers" (Nebuchadnezzar II, etc).

Hussein used great historical personalities from the past of Iraq for propagandistic purposes, as he wanted to create an idea about himself as a legitimate ruler who is a successor of powerful ancient kings and medieval caliphs, who is a strong, invincible man, a guarantor of prosperity for his land and a leader of the whole Arabic world, a successful general, etc.

HOLGER MÖLDER, VLADIMIR SAZONOV

### **Syria — the consecutive religious war in the Middle East?**

The present study examines the consequences of the civil war and rising religious extremism in Syria. The Syrian civil war is not only a political fight between different ideological and political interest groups, but, for Sunni extremists with their growing religious fanaticism, it is also a holy war with the final goal of establishing an Islamic caliphate. Religious fanaticism and holy wars have had a very long tradition in the Middle East where, starting from Ancient Mesopotamia, divine and holy wars have always been strongly related to their religious background (especially theology of war) and state ideology at least since the III millennium BCE. Syria has always been a multiethnic and multireligious territory with Arabs, Kurds, Sunnis, Shias (Alawites), Druzes, Christians and other ethnic and cultural identities living together for centuries. Fundamentalist movements (Salafism, Wahhabism, etc) desire to go back to the roots of their religion in the 7th century AD when Muhammad and his followers created the first Islamic Caliphate. The most radical movement within Salafism is Jihadism. The spread of the Islamic faith from its original lands on the Arabian Peninsula to East Asia, Africa and Europe has made it a world religion. The civil war in Syria has gathered Sunni extremists from all over the world to fight for their beliefs, as it occurred 35 years ago in the Afghanistan war. The Jihadist movements *Jabhat al-Nusra* and the Islamic State (IS) have a strong influence among Syrian Sunnites fighting against the regime of the authoritarian president Bashar al-Assad and the BAATH Party. The IS has also expanded its activities to Iraq, proclaimed an Islamic Caliphate in Syria and Iraq and holds large territories under its control. There is a real threat for further enlargement of the Jihadist insurgency to the neighbouring areas if the Caliphate strengthens its positions in Syria.

### **VIKTOR KORROVITS. Mythological cosmology**

The article seeks an answer to the question whether present-day cosmology is an exact science the conclusions of which can be fully trusted or is it mythology.

Cosmology has been considered an exact science since the time when the laws of physics were taken into use to calculate the trajectories of the planets. Deviations in the trajectories led to the discovery of distant planets like Neptune and Pluto. The conclusion was made that astrophysics is able to describe stellar systems as well as the whole universe. The model of the expanding universe became the predominant hypothesis in cosmology. In the 1970s, however, in order to achieve at least a somewhat coherent model, it was necessary to suppose that the universe contains dark matter, which is invisible and is located in the vicinity of stars. Later, dark energy was needed for the same purpose. Now the universe seems to contain 96% of the dark component; stars and galaxies constitute only 0.04%; the rest is gaseous fog.

It is obvious that none of the exact sciences can have 96% of the dark component. The renowned Estonian orientalist Linnart Mäll spoke about cosmology as mythology as early as in 2004. The change of cosmology into mythology was caused by the absolutisation of correct calculation methods. To harmonise the calculation results with the reality, an ever-increasing amount of the dark and unknown was introduced.

In the nearest future, present-day cosmology has to ascertain to which extent its computation methods are reliable and its conclusions scientific.

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