

Abstract

This paper aims to compare the motif of board game or dice game in three Indo-European mythologies – Hinduism, Celtic and Old Norse – also dealing with heroic texts. The main sources for Hinduism are namely the dicing episode from Book 2 of Mahābhārata and the myth of dicing game of Śiva and Pārvatī and its consequences. In Celtic mythology it is game of Étaín from Tochmarc Étaíne and in Old Norse religion the Eddic poem Völuspá. In addition to these key myths, this paper will also use minor mentions in more texts from these religions, especially in more modest European material. The subject of this thesis is the inquiry into inner structure of myths, as a game is often placed in the center of the narrative. It will focus on the meaning of those episodes and their position in the symbolic system of each culture and the relations of these symbols in particular myths. In the next step, I shall attempt to compare these meanings against each other to see whether some meaningful parallels can be found. This thesis will not be of archaeological or historical focus, nor will it deal with ritual or performative studies.