

# The Typological and Specific Analysis of the Eagle Cult in German and Uzbek Folklore

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## Abstract

The Eagle cult has long been present and represents a universal character of strength, power, governance, magnificence, nobility, fertility, and eternity, which differ in their culture and beliefs among various nations. Based on these characteristics, the Eagle is often referred to as the king of all birds. In ancient Greek mythology, the Eagle, referred to as "aetos" in Greek and "aquila" in Latin, was chosen as a symbol of war and victory by Zeus [1;308]. In Hindu mythology, the Eagle is considered the conqueror of all demons. In heraldry, the Eagle is depicted as a national emblem. The Persians also chose it as a military symbol. In German folklore, the Eagle is portrayed as a symbol of eternity, perched on top of the tree of life.

**Key words:** typological, specific analysis, persians, german

## Introduction

The Eagle cult has long been present and represents a universal character of strength, power, governance, magnificence, nobility, fertility, and eternity, which differ in their culture and beliefs among various nations. Based on these characteristics, the Eagle is often referred to as the king of all birds. In ancient Greek mythology, the Eagle, referred to as "aetos" in Greek and "aquila" in Latin, was chosen as a symbol of war and victory by Zeus [1;308]. In Hindu mythology, the Eagle is considered the conqueror of all demons. In heraldry, the Eagle is depicted as a national emblem. The

Persians also chose it as a military symbol. In German folklore, the Eagle is portrayed as a symbol of eternity, perched on top of the tree of life.

In linguistic expressions, the Eagle's qualities or its keen eyes are often associated with its strength and superiority over other birds. People have attributed the Eagle's ability to soar high above all other birds in the sky to its divine nature.

According to the Greek poet Homer, the Eagle was considered a symbol of victory, perched on the arm of a hero. It was also the companion and messenger of the Olympian gods. When the Olympian gods needed a loyal companion, Zeus would send the Eagle or transform into a Eagle himself. In another myth, an enraged Zeus transformed into a Eagle and tore out the liver of Prometheus, who had given fire to humans.

The Eagle is a predatory bird. It is also referred to as a hunting bird. Although it is a predatory bird, in the folklore, traditions, and epics of the people, it is often depicted as a loyal companion to the epic hero, embodying bravery, courage, and magnificence. However, in some cases, the mythical predatory bird, the Griffin, which is associated with fear, is also mentioned alongside the Eagle.

The majestic appearance and high-flying ability of the Eagle have inspired the creation of mythical bird characters such as Qaenus, Humo, and Semurg. They are also often used as symbols of the epic hero and his companion.

In the work "Die Bücher der Chronika der drei Schwestern" ("The Books of the Chronicles of the Three Sisters") from the collection "Nemis xalq ertaklari" ("German Folklore") by the German writer, literary critic, philologist, and pedagogue Johann Karl August Musäus, the image of a prince who transformed into an Eagle is depicted.

This story is translated into Russian as "Reynald Wunderkind." It tells the tale of Prince Radbor's three sons, Singlis, Xildegard, and Reynald Wunderkind, embarking on a journey to rescue Singlis from the clutches of the sorcerer Sornbok. However, the sorcerer enchants them, turning Singlis into a majestic eagle, Xildegard into a fearsome lion, and Reynald Wunderkind into a giant fish. In their transformed states, they face various perilous adventures, linked together by the overarching narrative of their heroic exploits. Each of the brothers' individual quests adds a unique dimension to the story.

As the events unfold, a wise count, not realizing the interconnectedness of these incidents, gets involved and ends up with the task of breaking a curse by ascending a tower. Consequently, the count becomes a captive to the enchanted three brothers and is forced to give them his daughters in marriage.

Initially, the count climbs the tower and encounters the lion, Xildegard, under a magical tree. The lion advises the count to refrain from harming the sacred tree and emphasizes the necessity of compensating it for its life. When the lion reveals that he can speak in human language, the count realizes his enchantment and asks for guidance, to which the lion suggests seeking help from the giant fish, Reynald Wunderkind. In return for the favor, the fish requests the count's eldest daughter, Vulfild, as his wife and disappears into the enchanted realms.

Unaware of the consequences, the count embarks on another journey to the tower, where he encounters the captive prince, Reynald Wunderkind, transformed into an eagle. This time, he is compelled to give away his second daughter, Adelgeyde, as a bride to the eagle. On the third occasion, during the fish's spawning, the count's youngest daughter, Bertane, is offered as a bride to the majestic fish in exchange for a substantial sum of money.

In German folklore, such events are predominantly associated with enchantments. These tales are closely connected to the German landscape. Even in Johann Karl August Musäus' "Die Bücher der Chronika der drei Schwestern" ("The Books of the Chronicles of the Three Sisters"), stories unfold within enchanted realms. Enchanted princes also find refuge in these realms.

Throughout the story, the eagle character represents arrogance, splendor, and bravery, alongside qualities of humanity, compassion, family values, and brotherhood. These traits are also exemplified by the enchanted prince Edgard, who falls deeply in love with the beautiful Adelgeyde, despite her true form. Additionally, the story features another bird character, the owl Lochin, who plays a helpful role in assisting Reynald Wunderkind's father in his journey. The utilization of owls during the journey signifies vital practical principles.

In the Uzbek folklore, the image of the Griffin is depicted in the form of a mythical bird, that is, a bird-dog. According to the belief of Turkish people, "when an eagle lays eggs, it lays two eggs at once. One of those eggs hatches a small bird with lightning-like feathers. It is the eagle that moves the fastest and protects the nest firmly. The second egg hatches a chick. It becomes the end of its brood" [4; 359]. According to the opinion of the Uzbek folklorist M. Juraev, based on the mythological beliefs of ancient Turks, the word "baroq" is an extraordinary name, that is, the name of the dog-bird born from the eagle's egg [5; 56-66].

"Zaunkönig" [7;71-74] is translated as "King of the Birds" [3;124-128]. In the tale, the birds decide to choose their king and the events that took place during this process are described. "However, it was decided that the king should be the one who could fly the highest" [7; 71]. It was decided that whoever could fly the highest among the birds would become the king [3;124]. The image of the eagle as a symbol of soaring, pride, majesty, and power unique to the eagle is conveyed in the tale as the image of the king of birds. In general, it is noted that in the folklore of different nations, including German and Uzbek folklore, the image of the eagle is given based on its natural characteristics, which indicates their similarity.

In "Schneeweißchen und Rosenrot" [8;102-109], the symbol of the eagle is represented as a nocturnal creature, fighting against darkness and evil, appearing in the form of a celestial bird. The golden eagle's wingspan is described as overshadowing the dwarf, and it is stated that his singing chases away the darkness. However, the two sisters unwittingly help the dwarf, who is actually a human (gnome), escape the darkness beneath the earth. Eventually, the sisters save the dwarf from the darkness ruling underground without knowing the true nature of the gnome and assist him.

In the Uzbek folk song "Eaglelar" [1;129-132], special attention is given to the image of eagles. In this tale, it is not an ordinary eagle, but rather the king of eagles that is talked about. It is said: "In a certain mountain, there lived a prince, a moon, a fox, and an eagle. The eagle is the king of all eagles in the world. The moon is also the king of all moons in the world. The fox is the king of all foxes in the world" [1;129].

In the evening, the coexistence of the eagle and the princess is intriguing. Certainly, this has its own influence on the ancient totemistic perceptions and cultural beliefs of humans.

The eagle is depicted as a powerful and brave bird in the animal kingdom, hence it is designated as the guardian in the role of a knight in the evening. On the other hand, the princess is mostly described as gentle and delicate, embodying the characteristics of a deer in the evening. The proud eagle, symbolizing the ruler of the sky and the king of birds, is presented in the story as the

leader of the eagle flock that protects the princess. "The princess lowered her head, and the eagles gathered from all over the world, forming a circle. The deer also lowered its head, and all the deer gathered, standing in one direction. The eagle, on the other hand, soared high above, surpassing the mountain peaks and hovering in the sky. At that moment, he showed the eagles and deer to the king and the vizier, saying, 'Let us start the battle,'" [1; 132]. The fact that the princess is accompanied by the eagle leader in the evening, leading to her victory, undoubtedly relates to the people's belief in this bird as an undefeated, always victorious, and symbol of state sovereignty.

It is known that in the evenings, whether the main protagonist is a king or a simple human, it is often depicted that when they take to the heavens, a bird of prey becomes their companion. This can be observed in the example of the Uzbek folk tale "The Bird of Fortune." In it, the story narrates the loyalty of the bird that always accompanies the king, even in the sky. Such events occur frequently.

In this context, it is worth noting that in the evenings, the choice of an epic location that becomes the setting for the events in the epics is influenced by the natural geographical boundaries of each nation. For example, the desert motif is rarely found in Uzbek epics, while it is prevalent in German epics. However, the mountain motif is present in both Uzbek and German epics. It is only that in Uzbek epics, the mountains are more often located in the steppe zone, while in German epics, they are described as towering mountains.

In the Uzbek folk epic "The Bird of Fortune," the bird halts on one leg beside the king in the evening, with its wings spread wide and with pride and dignity. The water in the river, which stands still on one side of the bird, tempts the king to drink. However, when the king reaches out to grab the water with his hand, the bird quickly splashes the water away. Although the king becomes frustrated, he patiently fills his hand with water again. But when he tries to drink it this time, the bird also throws this water away. The irritated king, without thinking, strikes the bird's head with his sword. However, at that moment, he notices that the water in his hand contains deadly poison from the snake's mouth that was hidden in the bird's beak. The king becomes remorseful for his anger.

In every culture, there is a belief that "Birds are our allies." The above-mentioned evening story presents a unique literary interpretation of this belief.

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