

SACRIFICE, ORDEAL, DIVINATION

International conference
at the Pécs Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Pécs,
Hungary
(Magyar Tudományos Akadémia PAB Székház, 7624 Pécs, Jurisics u.
44.)
Friday 12th–Sunday 14th December, 2014



ABSTRACTS

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Benga, Ileana
București

Divinatory practices within Romanian ethnographic areas: availability, trustworthiness and great expectations

Ethnological literature is abundant in discussions of the role of the (more or less) privileged elites of technicians, as bearers of the magical-religious paradigm, specifically assigned to every certain society. Therefore, a great deal of effort in ethnography is devoted to portraying these extraordinary characters, as well as their job and the kind of local needs they used to meet by means of their technology. To us, they stand for test-wells for the local institutions of yore, when practices following magical principles would have presumably ruled the spiritual drives of the population organised around them. Because, if dating the age of such institutions of the past, as well as their diffusion and importation etc. remains a pertinent question to the historian of religion, to us enduring field-workers the salient question is: how did/do the locals *live*, by means of personal experience, the practices virtually dictated by the respective 'institution', when they appeal to them? This can happen in person, as self-made technicians pursue their trade, or through the mediation of an acknowledged technician. Divination is a perfect field to testify beliefs of this kind. My prior experience in the field opened important gates in the following directions, suggesting divination was always about a form of future: (a) divination on the afterlife of the departed, leading mainly to the practices of alms exchange; (b) divination on the odds of an ill person's recovery and health – be it of mundane or of magic or mythical etiology; (c) divination concerning the coming year, including whatever of importance it has in store for the people, such as bad weather – good weather, rainy months (favourable weather for agriculture) or draught; the possibility of getting married in the coming year; or simply the chances of surviving the coming year or departing. The archival and the published material that I have accessed (from the folklore collections of the past 150 years of quasi-institutionalized national ethnology) has shown all these categories to stand even though the elaboration of my category (a) is based entirely on experience in the field. At any rate, the only field I can make use of in understanding the actual role that divinatory practices play in the systems of beliefs of both individuals and communities is the living field. My paper aims at tackling this individual drive and trust in the relevance of divinatory practices (addressing a couple of examples extracted from direct field research), ground it in what the anthropological and historical-religious literature states about the institutions these practices emulate, and, last, but very importantly, try to distinguish the nowadays frail boundary between the professionalized divination technicians and the diffuse layer where every person as long as s/he belongs to the local system of beliefs (or: has internalized the local system of beliefs) is capable of pursuing divinatory practices successfully as demanded by momentary interest.

Bever, Edward
Old Westbury, NY, USA

Scrying and the “Sieve and Shears”: Sociocultural roles and neurophysiological bases of traditional divinatory techniques

This paper will focus on cases involving divination by scrying and the use of the “sieve and shears” in early modern Württemberg. The cases are known from trial records in the Duchy's central judicial archive for criminal matters, which included investigations of witchcraft and magic. The paper will explore the social and cultural roles of these divinatory techniques that the cases reveal. Since these techniques were widely practiced beyond Württemberg, the paper will take care to place them the larger context of what is known about their use elsewhere in Europe. Further, the paper will discuss the neurophysiological bases of these practices. Scrying involved staring at a reflective surface until an image thought to answer a question like who had stolen money was seen. The “sieve and shears” involved balancing a sieve on the point of a pair of shears held in the hands, reciting the names of suspects, and noting when the sieve began to rotate, on the assumption that this indicated that the guilty party had just been named. Therefore, the neurophysiology of visual perception and hallucination will be discussed in connection with scrying, while a similar investigation of the ideomotor effect will be

applied to the “sieve and shears.” In addition, though, issues of subliminal awareness and communication and the physiology of lying and deceit will be considered, to probe the possible sources of unconscious knowledge that, the paper will argue, the divinatory techniques could manifest. The ultimate goal of the paper will be not only to raise awareness of the neuropsychological dimension of divinatory practices, but also to show how they relate to the social and cultural issues that are historians’ more general concerns.

Csepregi, Ildikó
Budapest

What people brought to the sanctuary. Uses and functions of sacrificial animals and votive offerings in Ancient Greece and Early Byzantium

In my paper I would like to outline the variety of sacrificial and votive animals and objects that worshippers used to bring to the sanctuary, especially in the context of healing. Aware that I am embarking on a vast and well-researched subject (Kötting: *Peregrinatio religiosa*, Rouse: *Greek Votive Offerings* or Van Straten, ‘Gifts for the Gods’) I would like to concentrate on two particular issues after giving an overview of these gifts.

1. The nature of the sacrifice and the objects involved was greatly influenced by the fact that there used to be a great number of people staying in and around these sanctuaries, often for a long time. Moreover, being sick, they were in a bad physical condition and low in spirits, enduring pain and hopelessness.
2. I would like to highlight how these animals and objects brought to the sanctuary entered the miracle stories and shaped the events of the miracle cures, as well as the narratives.

Dyekiss, Virág
Budapest

“This child is not my part – says Mother Water.” Human sacrifice in the folklore of the Siberian Nganasans

Amongst the Nganasan people of Northern Siberia, human sacrifice used to play an important role in keeping contact with the deity. Most commonly they would sacrifice a domestic reindeer or a dog; for deities living in the underworld or under water or underground the right offering was a dog, while for deities of the upper world it was a domestic reindeer often a white animal. The animal was usually killed by strangling and then either thrown in the water or stuck on a post, depending on the locus of the deity. This offering was seen as the rightful gift to the deity and was performed from time to time.

At the same time, the Nganasan also used a different type of sacrifice where the animal was not killed, instead the symbol of the deity was cut into its skin. From this time on they saw this reindeer as the property of the supernatural being, therefore it was not harnessed and not killed for their own purposes. This manner of sacrifice was not tied in with ritual occasions – it was of an occasional character and used on the occasion of minor misfortunes. In my paper I describe in detail the human sacrifices performed in Nganasan folklore texts and the sacrifices substituting humans. There is no evidence to prove that they ever did perform human sacrifice in the past, nor can this be ruled out as a possibility. Ritual murder is committed in practically all instances by a ‘stranger’ – a person from outside the given community, coming from another mythical or genuine people. In cases like this the person selected for sacrifice somehow escapes with the help of the gods who do not accept the sacrifice. We also find stories where the deity actually demands the life of a person for the sake of the community and the shaman does actually perform the sacrifice but the husband of the woman they kill eventually brings his wife back. We can see that in stories about human sacrifice the victim usually somehow survives the event.

Deaths where the body cannot be retrieved (people drowned in water or lost in snowstorms) were seen by the Nganasan as if one of the deities had summoned the deceased. In cases like this they would try to redeem the life by offering sacrifices, requesting the deity to accept an animal in exchange for a

human, or at least for the body. Substitutive sacrifices of this kind included the sacrifice or reindeer performed when sudden illness attacked a woman in labour.

Galić Kakkonen, Gordana and Vrbat, Maja
Split, Croatia

The Witch from Grich – witchcraft, witch trials and popular literature

Marija Jurić Zagorka was a Croatian journalist and writer (1873-1957), an author of numerous historical novels known for their thrilling plots. In her best-known novel series ‘The Witch from Grich’, Zagorka addresses the subject of the witch trials in northern Croatia in the 18th century. She wrote about this notorious chapter in Croatian history at the suggestion of Bishop Strossmayer. Zagorka created an appealing and compelling plot that attracted especially the female public to read Croatian rather than German literature. Therefore, her novels fulfilled a dual function of being both didactic and entertaining.

While most of the characters introduced in her historical novels were fictional, at the same time Zagorka was keen to recreate historical periods authentically. Thus, while working on her novelistic cycle, which is the subject of this analysis, she engaged in thorough research at archives and into other historical material. Based on these sources she was able to offer fairly realistic descriptions of the processes that were used against alleged witches, the phenomena of witchcraft and sorcery, superstition and other notorious details about the dark era which lasted in Croatia, as well as in the rest of Europe, from the Middle Ages until the mid-18th century. Although, like other authors of historical fiction, she quite legitimately adjusted the historical events to the laws of narration, she sought to remain committed to the authentic sources. In this paper, the authors analyze various sources related to witches, witchcraft and witch trials both in Croatia and in wider European context. The aim of the present paper is to gauge the extent to which Zagorka’s novel series ‘The Witch from Grich’ is based on historical facts and the ways in which they are related to fictional elements in her work.

Gyimesi, Júlia
Budapest

Divination in Hungarian Spiritualism

Special attention has been focused recently on the cultural and scientific significance of certain branches of neo-occultism, such as spiritualism. As has been pointed out, spiritualism developed in connection with certain fields of contemporary science and art. Trance-like states of the mediums have led to the occurrence of several seemingly supernatural phenomena, such as table-turning, communication with the deceased or divination – all of which made a stir at that time. Psyche researchers, early parapsychologists and the representatives of meta-psychics conducted remarkable experiments with spiritualistic mediums. As a result, valuable theories were born on spiritual occurrences. According to these, certain, as yet unknown, capacities of the personality were responsible for supernatural phenomena such as divination.

By 1853 spiritualism, had spread to Hungary, similarly to other European countries,. Spiritual and related phenomena became popular issues in the press, and they soon began to influence prominent representatives of Hungarian cultural life. Spiritualist circles were founded for the purpose of investigating spiritual occurrences. Several spiritualist mediums gained fame thanks to their extraordinary capacities, such as soothsaying. The aim of this paper is to outline the evolution of Hungarian spiritualism by focusing on the most famous mediums, their capacity for divination and the scientific (psychological, meta-psychic and parapsychological) interpretations of divination of the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

Gyöngyössi, Orsolya
Szeged, Hungary

From sacrificial practice to practical solutions. Parish priests in times of danger to the community

The religious world view of the Hungarian people attributes priests a sacral power which enables them to ward off real dangers threatening the community. The belief in the extraordinary abilities of priests can be traced back to the Old Testament story of the high priest Aaron who, with his prayer, saved his people from destructive fire (Num. 4.16,42-48). It is based on the notion that catastrophes are never the result of pure chance: through them the Omnipotent expresses his displeasure, demands penitence, and warns the community of the need for spiritual purification. Who else would be capable of winning appeasement than the spiritual leader of the community? In my paper I examine a threatening existential crisis where the parish priests of Csongrád used their sacral power and prestige to protect the flock from such real dangers as epidemics, violence or natural disaster. They usually used the variations of penitential sacrifice to conciliate God (e.g. holy procession, vow, offertory etc.). In the second half of the 19th century entirely new, secular features were added to this 'protective' role. However, these changes also indicated the emergence of a radically new image of the priest.

Gyórfy, Eszter
Pécs, Hungary

Soul sacrifice. The devil as familiar spirit in the Ghimeş region (Romania)

According to local beliefs in Ghimeş, the devil and its temptations might appear in numerous shapes and situations during one's life. Probably the most typical of these forms is what is called *paratika* – a kind of devil that serves people as a familiar spirit. This supernatural attendant appears both in local/etiological legends referring to 'old times' and recent belief narratives connected to present inhabitants of these villages – the two different types of narratives used in my analysis.

After shortly reviewing its historical antecedents and recent parallels in European and Hungarian folklore, my paper presents the characteristics and beliefs of this rather ambivalent supernatural being, focusing on the aspect of sacrificing human soul for the familiar. The *paratika* helps its owner with his labour and evil practices and makes him/her rich and lucky but in exchange it requires regular care and in most cases also stakes a claim on human soul(s) – either that of its keeper or some family members'. By presenting some concrete examples I would like to show the role of this idea in the everyday life and mentality of some rural communities, arguing that 'soul sacrifice' in this context is something similar to witchcraft ideas as it provides a framework to explain the occurrence of unexpected and inexplicable misfortunes such as physical or mental sickness or death.

Hnaraki, Maria
Philadelphia, USA

To sacrifice or not to sacrifice?: Super heroes and walled-up women performed

The central thread of this presentation is the meaning of sacrifice and its literary, theatrical, music and dance transformations, in other words, sacrifice in daily life as both “Logos” and “Event.” The centripetal force is the Greek folk song regarding the establishment of a bridge via human sacrifice “The Bridge of Arta” and radii of the circle the first opera by Manolis Kalomiris *The Masterbuilder*, which is based on the theatrical play by Nikos Kazantzakis *The Sacrifice*, as well as the soundtrack of the movie *Iphigenia* by Mikis Theodorakis and the choreodrama *Iphigenia at the Bridge of Arta* by George Koumendakis.

The goal is to examine the ideology of the play, the opera, the film and the choreodrama, the similarities but also their differences, specifically because of the various means of expression in use. Driving force is the comparative study in the aforementioned stories of a) the roles’ conflict, b) the embodiment of the folk myth elements and the ancient, “Euripidian” tragedy and c) their contemporary, timely, bridging dimensions. Is the emphasis, after all, on the tragic, Nietzschean, “superhero,” on the Christian self-sacrifice or on the female heroine? Is it a variation of Iphigenia, of Smaragda, of Greece, or of the “homo erectus” being?

Hutcheson, Cory Thomas
Antioch, Tennessee, USA

Bewitched, bothered, & bewildered: Making sense of magical characters in the Bible

Biblical stories are often rife with the magical, mystical, or miraculous. From the appearance of Balaam’s talking ass in Numbers to the use of Paul’s handkerchief to heal the sick in the Book of Acts, the supernatural elements of biblical narrative provide interest, but also inform a reader about a cosmology imbued with phenomenal power, accessible to those who know how to use it. The use of biblical magic augments one’s understanding of certain characters—why does the holy prophet Elisha summon two she-bears to slaughter children, for instance, and yet Moses is condemned for drawing water from a rock to save his people. The taboos and guidelines surrounding performed magic—particularly divination, which can range from the approved casting of lots by sanctioned priests to the illicit necromancy of the medium of Endor—reveal a great deal of information about the cosmology of Old and New Testament cultures. Understanding the characters shaped by magical practices within biblical narrative provides a structure for understanding the cosmology of derivative cultures as well. Drawing upon careful analysis of character and text as well as scholarship on biblical magic by Gideon Bohak, Joshua Trachtenberg, and most extensively Shawna Dolansky, “Bewitched, Bothered, & Bewildered: Making Sense of Magical Characters in the Bible” foregrounds the practices which prove controversial in vernacular religious expression—magic and divination—with a new emphasis on the people who use those practices, the heroic sorcerers (and a sorceress) of the Bible.

Jiga Iliescu, Laura
Bucharest

Sharing *bibliomancy*: the priest, the witch and the physician, between divination, medical forecasting, and therapeutic miracles

The ritual we deal with here is represented by what is referred to as *opening the book/Book*, namely the devotional performance of reading aloud a formalized text (which consists in verbal and/or figurative items) practised for therapeutic and divination purposes. Our arena of investigation, quite a large one, is represented by the South-East European lay and clerical (including monastic) milieus. Special interest is paid to Romania where the practice is still in use in more or less visible, diverse and dynamic forms. The ritual has caught the attention of some scholars, but there still are many blank areas which need more investigation, concerning both the preindustrial and the contemporary hypostases of the ritual.

My intention is to provide new data concerning the textualisation techniques of reading and listening; meaning formalized gestures with actors involved both in the ritual and in the creative process of narrating the ritual, together with the channels of delivering such structures.

Finally, I am interested in the ways in which people position themselves vis a vis phenomena connected to miracle, divination and medical prediction.

I'll pay special attention to the particular case of the Derwent Monastery and St. Andrew's Cave (both in Dobrogea, Romania) – including the related monks, visited by Christians and Muslims alike.

Kis-Halas, Judit
Pécs, Hungary

A contemporary healing ritual in South Western Hungary and Northern Croatia

'Wax casting' is a ritual where molten bees wax (or sometimes a consecrated stearin candle) is poured into a bowl of cold water. The solidified wax takes then the shape of a pancake, and is supposed to reveal facts about disease, its origin and the required cure. The patient then drinks from, or is washed with the water used in the procedure, and is also smoked by the vapour of molten wax, or of hot charcoals thrown into the water. Word magic plays an important role in the ritual: while melting and pouring the wax, the healer recites prayers and / or charms, silently or out loud.

There is a great variety of diseases divined of and cured by wax casting. Yet, the majority of them are attributed to evil supernatural beings (like the devil, fairies, witches, demons of diseases, etc.) or to the occult harmful activity of human agency (=bewitchment). The most common maladies are the fright disease (*ijedtség*), the evil eye, epilepsy, possession and different mental disorders.

If we apply a historical perspective to considering the structure, function and implication of the ritual of divination by casting wax/led, the most outstanding feature seems to be its stability: the technique and purposes have not really changed in the past more than 300 years.

The method of casting or pouring a heavier liquid (often produced from molten metals such as led) into a bowl containing a lighter fluid (*lekanomantia*) belongs to the extended family of divining by water (*hydromantia*).

My paper is based on my recent fieldwork experiences in Northern Croatia (Osijek and its vicinity) and in South West Hungary (Pécs and Siklós and their vicinity). The more than 900 data from the folk belief archive indicate that casting wax or led has been widely known and applied in Hungary even in the 20th and 21st centuries. The earliest historical data originate from 18th century records of witchcraft trials. I have studied the relevant thematic groups of the healer, the wise man, the holy man, the witch, bewitchment and divination at the Folk Belief Archives of Pécs University.

Klaniczay, Gábor
Budapest

Sacrifice in medieval Christianity

This paper intends to offer a general reflection on the place of sacrifice - this central manifestation of religious life - in the history of Christianity, which - by its fundamental tenets - was opposed to sacrifice as such. I will start with the consideration of the Old Testament episodes of the divinely required - but then refused - sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, and Moses repudiating the sacrifice to the Golden calf. Then reflect on the sacrifice of Christ undergoing a painful passion, becoming the sacrificial lamb of God for the redemption of humanity from the Original Sin. This sacrifice, as represented in the Last Supper, became a central element of the Mass, the Eucharistic communion. The contradictory sacrificial nature of this rite came fore in the pagan accusations of Black Mass or similar writings by Church Fathers against heretics. Medieval debates around Corpus Christi and proving miracles for transubstantiation (Mass of S. Gregory, bleeding hosts) will be the first set of data to be considered. Another manifestation of the reflection on Christ's sacrifice was the imitation of his bodily sufferings with martyrdom, self-sacrifice, painful asceticism, stigmatization, which ultimately became a claim for the sacrificial redeeming function. Finally, fears that the host would be „desecrated“ by heretics, Jews, witches, and the body of Christ would thus become the object of an „un-Christian“ sacrifice would be the last issue I would consider, analyzing some famous cases, such as the 1465 accusations against the Jews in Urbino, represented in painting by Uccello.

Komáromi, Tünde
Pécs

**Fasting as a sacrifice in different ethnic and religious contexts in Nicula and its surroundings
(Transylvania)**

Fasting plays a wide range of different roles within the traditional religious culture of Transylvania. If we consider the prevalence and severity of fasting and the number of persons pursuing it, this role is clearly most significant among Romanian Orthodox Christians. It plays a somewhat less emphatic role among Catholic believers, while among the historical protestant churches its prevalence can fairly be termed sporadic (e.g. fasting on Good Friday). Adherence to fasts prescribed by the church would in itself constitute an interesting field of research, but this is not what I would like to discuss in my papers but a phenomenon known all over Transylvania and pertaining mostly to the category of popular religiosity – this is the type of fasting which is not prescribed but is a votive act serving a particular purpose and offered as a kind of sacrifice. Fasting of this kind can be practised by religious persons of any persuasion; and in my experience these fasts are usually associated with certain types of personal problems and the semi-official services of priests and monk-priests of the Orthodox church. My paper is based on the experiences of field work carried out at Füzesmikola and its vicinity. During my research I take into consideration the results of other researchers working in Transylvania, as well as those of my own earlier field work in Aranyosszék. I attempt to present and analyse these instances of fasting in the richest possible context.

Kuperjanov, Andres
Tartu

Predicting weather, agriculture and fate. Ethnoastronomy and divination

Archaeoastronomy describes a section of studies concerning celestial constellations and their reflections in the society. It does not intend to focus narrowly on archaeological studies or on prehistory, but will provide a bridge among scholars who examine astronomy in its varied cultural contexts. A synonym to archaeoastronomy is ethnoastronomy, concerning the study of the influences of celestial phenomena on the community hundreds of years ago and today. Ethnoastronomy is an influential part of studies dedicated to the history of astronomy. All these disciplines are interconnected and form the area of Cultural (or Social) Astronomy.

Long processes (lasting more 1000 years), requiring that we take into account the lunisolar precession, are common in ethno- and archaeoastronomy. Taking the long view, the changes in the shape of a constellation that are due to the stars' own movement also become significant. For example, the constellation of Swan changes only a little, but Ursa Major becomes quite disfigured. The reason for this is the relatively short distances between the stars forming Ursa Major: they all lie within 100 lightyears of each other. There is reason to believe that the movement of the stars making up Ursa Major has been observed over thousands of years. An example would be the belief (widely spread) that an omen of the end of the world is related to the stars of Ursa Major dispersing, and looking for the seventh, missing, star of the Wain (Est. sõel 'Sieve') among stars of Ursa Major.

To tell the time of the day (or night), the most useful constellations are Big and Little Dipper, the Orion and the Wain. The North Star is the centre of the clock and due to its immobility an important landmark. The best known time teller is the Wain, also used for fortune telling and meteorological forecasts. The Orion was the winter-time time-telling constellation and provider of omens. Celestial bodies are also predictors of human fate. The majority of Estonian folk divination are related to the lunisolar system, but also to, among other signs, phases of the moon.

The presentation is based on materials from the manuscripts of the Estonian Folklore Archives, digitised and analysed by the author, and touches upon divination with the help of stars and constellations.

Mencej, Mirjam
Ljubljana

Fortune-tellers as counter-witches

The present paper describes fortune-tellers in a region of Eastern Slovenia. My research has been based on field-work carried out in 2000-2001 and in 2014. The basic role of fortune-tellers, apart from telling the future, was to identify witches, curb their evil doings and give patients a remedy against illness caused by witchcraft. I discuss the reasons that customarily induce people to pay a visit to a fortune-teller, the techniques they use, the phases of their procedure, payment, people's attitudes toward them, as well as their gender and location. I also place the role of the fortune-teller in the wider context of witchcraft beliefs in the region.

Minniyakhmetova, Tatiana
Innsbruck, Austria

Sacrifices and Sacrificing: Functions and their Motives.

Sacrifices, sacrificial rituals and customs of offerings and libations occupy an important place in the religious systems of the heathens in the Volga-Ural region of Russia. These ethnic religions have been preserved as an oral tradition; they have survived up till now owing to solidly maintained ritual practices. Ritual is a reflection of world views and it is a very well organized event which retains its goals and structure through time while admitting some innovation at all times. Although ritual ceremonies include a whole range of different activities, sacrifice and the act of sacrificing themselves fulfil a number of functions. Sacrifice is a way of communicating with spirits and the gods; it is some kind payment and compensation for requests and a sign of gratitude for the results; it is used to escape or remove indebtedness; it is a promise and its realization; it is used as a probation period and an ordeal; a warning of the unnecessary; an entreaty, an appeal, a form of blandishment to the desired and a blessing; it is a form of observing norms and regulations, a sign of compliance and of observance of norms and limits, etc. In general it can be defined as religious principles and standards. These functions could be chosen in different ways and serve different standards of behaviour and solutions, but a definite standard meant a definite choice of such functions.

These beliefs had been examined by many scholars as surviving remnants and vestiges of former barbaric or savage peoples, but rarely have they been shown up as functions of religious faith or religion. I propose to consider these ethnic beliefs as religions referring to the apprehension and realization by believers. These religions connected people to an order of existence, and they are something eminently social that also supports their cultural systems in a definitive framework.

Neagota, Bogdan
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The *Healing Gurban* at the Rudars from the Vâlcea region (România). Anthropological and Historical-Religious Aspects

The *Gurban* is a ritual function which combines at least two cultural strata: ecstatic experiences, circumscribing a folkloric daemonic complex (*Sfintele / the Saintly Fairies*), attested within the Romanian rural world until recently, and the ritual of the *Kurban*, from the Islamic cultural area (*Kurban Bayram*), the latter having changed, thus, its divine addressee, from Allah, to the *Sfinte / 'The Saintly Fairies'* (pathogenic and iatric demons, at the same time). The *Gurbanul de sănătate / 'Healing Gurban'*, expression of the religious creativity of the Rudars, is the result of permuting heterogeneous cultural forms and practices, inside a syntax and a cultural semantics of their own. Read in a historical key, the *Gurban* represents a drill-hole as well, important for reconstructing the long history of the Rudars: their areas of origin, the itineraries of their Balkan migration and their sharing a habitat with the Muslims, all the way to their return North of the Danube.

This paper tackles, at the same time, the magical-religious ideology behind the *Gurban*, and its corresponding sacrificial ritual (sacrificing a lamb in order to restore health damaged by the *Sfinte / Saintly Fairies*) performed, within the communities of Rudars from Oltenia, on different calendric dates (St. George on the New Style i.e. Gregorian calendar / *Sfântu Gheorghe Nou* – 23 April, St. George on the Old Style i.e. Julian calendar / *Sfântu Gheorghe Vechi* – 6 mai) and on Ascension / *Înălțarea*. At the root of our analyses lies team-researched fieldwork carried out within three rural communities of Rudars from the Vâlcea region along the past three years.

Title of the proposed films:

The Healing Gurban / Gurbanul de vindecare among the Rudars of Vâlcea (România). A sequence of three short documentaries dedicated to the Rudars belonging to three rural Rudar communities from Vâlcea (70 min in total).

Authors of the video documentaries: Bogdan Neagota (Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca), Ileana Benga (Academia Română, Cluj-Napoca), Adela Ambrușan and Vasile Mathe (Orma Sodalitas Anthropologica, Cluj-Napoca)

Obadia, Lionel
Lyon, France

Sacrifice and the politics of distinctiveness in the religious landscape of the Shamanic Himalayas

Animal sacrifice is nowadays a recurrent but not widespread practice among the shamanic groups of the Nepalese Himalayas. Yet, the dominant Hindu majority and the Buddhist minorities, surroundings these ancient but *vivace* expressions of shamanism, have renounced ritual animal killing centuries ago, and to this day consider sacrifice as an outrageous feature of the ‘uncivilized’ cults. The issue of blood spilling in liturgical activities therefore traces a frontier between ‘high’ and ‘low’ forms of religion in the Himalayas. It shapes a complex system of cosmology in which we find a coexistence of ‘non-harming’ and sacrificial modes of communication with the Gods and the spirits (respectively), depending on which religious traditions are concerned (Hinduism, Buddhism, Shamanism). Sacrifice is finally and above all at the very heart of interreligious tensions between Ancient (shamanic) and more recently established (Buddhist) institutions, and even between sacrificial and non-sacrificial shamanic groups in Nepal. Based upon ethnographic data and historical analysis, this paper aims to unveil the forms of sacrifice and the underlying logic of endorsement or rejection of this practice among the shamanic practitioners, as well as among other religious traditions, and the role played by sacrifice in specifying the *location* of shamanism in the competitive religious field of the Himalayan borderland.

Pasarić, Maja
Zagreb

The rooster as sacrificial animal

Beliefs about animals and their ritualistic-customary practices are deeply embedded in different segments of Croatian folk culture. Animals play an important part in everyday, annual and lifecycle customs through rituals and other practices where they sometimes take on the role of sacrificial animal. In Croatian traditional culture the rooster stands out as an important sacrificial animal. Some data even speak of a practice pursued in certain places of slaughtering a rooster (as a posthumous animal sacrifice) as the body of a deceased person is carried out of the house and taken to the cemetery. The body of the animal was then placed under the coffin. In ethnological literature this practice was explained as a kind of compensation or a gift to the deceased, while the symbolism of it was thought to indicate a link with the fertility cult, since the rooster and the hen are mythical beings of fertility in Croatian lore.

Besides marking the transformation of the physical and symbolical space, the sacrificial animal can be used to either question or dissolve the difference between humans and animals, as well as between life and death.

Peti, Lehel
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Leadership Authority, Divination and the Messages of the Holy Spirit in a Moldavian Pentecostal Network

The paper aims to describe the relationship between leadership authority and ritual practices (with particular reference to divination practices) in the Eastern part of Romania in three neighbouring communities with completely different socio-cultural features (a Moldavian Csángó community with a Roman Catholic majority, an Orthodox Romanian and a Gypsy community). Based on fieldwork in this Pentecostal network, the author analyses the ritual practices of group meetings: the ritual conditions and functions of divination, prophecy and other forms of communication with the Holy Spirit.

The paper emphasizes that due to the strict authority of the leaders in the closely related communities there is a great variety regarding the interpretation of the Bible and religious manifestations. The author proposes that the practice of prediction – which they consider a gift from the Holy Spirit – differs from people to people in concordance with their position in the community’s network and is used according to their purposes. He also describes that in the Romanian orthodox and Roma communities religious practice is expressed in a very ecstatic way and ‘direct communication techniques with the Holy Spirit’ plays a greater role than in Moldavian Csángó communities. For example, in the Roma communities we

even encounter instances of exorcism; during the religious gatherings a whole line of ecstatic behaviours is accepted practice such as crying, wide intonations, screaming or loud individual singing. The capacity of prophecy is linked to specialized roles which are performed by a member of the community, even in the shape of being provided as a regular service. The creator of the religious network in the village is a charismatic orthodox priest who legitimizes his authority by visions and the capability of seeing the future. He works as a magical specialist in everyday life: he gives advice and offers prophecies to those who turn to him. The author also comments on the form and function of these actions relying on observations and discussions with a pastor who, by the way, also reveals a 'secret' about the author's life.

The author argues that the different divination techniques play an important role in the Pentecostal network regarding the control mechanisms and are at the root of the leader's authority.

Petrović, Sonja
Belgrade

Sin and sacrifice in the contemporary folklore of Serbia

This paper discusses certain forms of connection between concepts of sin and sacrifice that may be found in narratives recorded in contemporary folklore fieldwork in Serbia.

Explanations of certain misfortunes, deaths and illnesses are often related to the concepts of sin and sacrifice. Sin is regarded as the cause that had provoked misfortune and in some cases different forms of sacrifice are required as a remedy, redemption, or to restore the balance. Several examples of narratives will be analysed that can illustrate this relation, primarily on the material gathered in the field in the past decade, but the continuity of this process will also be considered by referring to older records.

Our attention will be focused on the narratives that concern the experience of sin and the endeavours to overcome the consequences of sin by sacrificial rituals (vows, fasting, silence, alms, offerings, religious rituals etc.). Narratives about communication with 'the other side', which are very widespread in Serbia, offer accounts of encounters with different types of apparitions that can take the form of animals, demonic and mythical beings, human figures, even objects (e.g. a haystack), as well as communication through mediums, dreams and visions. If such encounters are experienced and interpreted as evil omens or predictions, they are usually connected to the real or imaginary sin of the narrator or somebody close to him/her. Similar to these are the narratives about families cursed and damned, as well as about desacralized spaces (wells, trees, houses...). The curse occurred because of voluntary or involuntary sin and it could be transferred through generations. In some accounts about communication with ancestors or spirits and in narratives of mediums and soothsayers, concepts of sin and sacrifice are also present. In my analysis of these narratives I argue that sin can be regarded not only as a religious, but also a social concept where sacrificial and other religious rituals act as forms of social control aimed to arrange preferred relations among people in society and relations toward the sacred and supernatural powers.

Pócs, Éva
Pécs, Hungary

Divination and ordeal within witchcraft – forms and functions

In my paper I merely tangentially touch on the ordeal procedures intended to prove culpability which pertain to the legal mechanisms of witchcraft; the real emphasis is on popular witchcraft, and on the acts of divination and ordeal practised by the village micro-communities within their own sphere of competence. These have been known in areas populated by Hungarians since the Middle Ages and have

survived in certain more traditional areas to this day; in other parts their memory has been preserved in folklore narratives.

Both early modern and contemporary data allow us to conclude that there existed more than one system of witchcraft, each containing its own diverging forms and contexts of divination and ordeal. The goal of this function is identical in each system: to identify the fact of the bewitching and/or the person of the witch. These etic systems do not appear as pure and independent categories, but they are very useful for examining the social and religious context of divination and ordeal.

1. Within the system of village or neighbourhood witchcraft of the suspect/scapegoat type finding the cause of the trouble, identifying the witch and correcting the bewitchment served to restore the order of society. Besides the witch and the injured person this also assumed a witchfinder and a healer (the latter two often being one and the same person). The wide range of divinatory practices were methods used to summon the witch as a known member of the community to the house and that way force her to do healing.

2. The witch as a human perpetrator of harm was surrounded by a rich set of local beliefs – accordingly the witch is a double being which also has a demonic formal variant. Closely intertwined with the ‘human’ system of village witchcraft, as one of the ideologies keeping the system in operation, there existed the system of the demonic or night witch for explaining misfortune. Its characteristic marks included night assaults by demons occurring in dreams and visions. Methods of divination and ordeal adequate to the figure of the ‘night witch’ were based on the visionary and dream techniques of supernatural communication. Dreams and visions can be the scene not only of acts of the bewitchment of healing and of spirit battles of harmful and healing persons, but also of identifying the witch. In instances like this, the witchfinder is usually a Christian saint or the Virgin Mary who, similarly to the healing saints of incubation dreams, is not only a healer but can also tell people who had caused the trouble. This supernatural sphere of witchcraft was closely related to the ‘daylight’ system based on genuine conflicts in the neighbourhood or family. Related dreams had a normative and legitimising function within the life of village communities.

3. The most prominent characteristic of the witch who became demonised during the witchcraft trials of the early modern period is his/her relation with the Christian devil, which is how the clergy and the priesthood became implicated in witchcraft. On the level of village witchcraft this appears in the methods of ordeal in connection with priests and the church, such as instruments of witch identification taken to the church on Christian holidays (e.g. St. Lucy’s stool; or beliefs about the priest recognising the witch in the Eucharist). The role of the priesthood and the church, however, could also appear as specific healing or aversion of harm, as well as in the role of the witchfinder. Recently this has mostly happened in areas of Orthodox dominance where priests and monks still act, occasionally, in roles of this kind, as enemies of the devil. Witchfinder methods of an ordeal nature correspond to all of this. Besides frequently applied book or mirror divination, we also know of cursing masses being served, similar to the *clamor* known from medieval Western Europe. This strikes the sinner and thus reveals the identity of the harm-doer. This way, the village system of witchcraft was overlaid with the system of divine sanctions around transgressing community norms. Transgressors become scapegoats and sacrifices not within the normal daily communication system of the community, because curse by the priest posits the maleficium an act of divine punishment and that way actually legitimises it.

Radulović, Nemanja
Belgrade

Sacrifice to the Fates in Serbian Folk Religion

Rituals concerning the fates (moirai, parcae) were the subject of Brednich’s comprehensive FFC monograph written in 1961. In this paper I would like to contribute further data about the Serbian region, paying special attention to the previously under-researched elements. After the birth of a child (usually on the third night), people prepare the welcoming ritual for the three fates who then decry child’s destiny. It includes ritual cleansing, food offering and lights. There is also an interesting custom of outwitting the fates by giving them a false impression that the child is absent from the house (an obvious mark of these figures being perceived as dangerous). Sacrifices offered to the fates are very often merged

with attempts to read their decision or to influence it. Sacrifice and divination are thus intertwined in practice. On the other hand, this ritual, too, can be regarded as an example of a liminal process, where the child finally becomes integrated into the family. In this sense it is a practice particular to a feminine area of activity in traditional society and can be analysed as part of female folklore. It is probable that even in Pre-Christian religion this was part of the cult of the family, linked with that of ancestors, fostered by women and not part of 'official' Paganism.

Rivière, Janine
Toronto

Dream divination in early modern England

The belief that dreams were predictive and, if correctly interpreted, could offer glimpses of the future of dreamers and their families, was persistent in English culture throughout the early modern period in spite of the rise of the new science and of rational thought. While some religious writers condemned the practice, evidence for belief in predictive dreams can be found in the private records of men's and women's diaries and memoirs as well as in the continued market for dreambooks, fortune-telling books, books of knowledge, courtesy books and courtship manuals that contained sections of oneiromancy circulating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In addition to this, divination specialists also operated in the marketplaces of London and villages of the countryside.

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the practice and theories of dream divination in the period, I will focus on a close reading of two of the earliest known English dream interpretation manuals, Thomas Hill's lengthy dream treatise *The moste pleasaunte arte of the interpretacion of dreames* (1576), and to a lesser extent his shorter dreambook *A little treatise of the interpretation of dreams* (1567). In the history of dreams in early modern England Hill's dreambooks are significant as the first surviving vernacular works that offered a sophisticated manual of dream divination for lay audiences. Emerging from the trade in lay scientific works in the mid- to late sixteenth century, Hill's dreambooks pioneered a model that combined the specialized learned oneirocritic knowledge of classical authors with more simplified popular techniques of dream interpretation. While historians have briefly mentioned Hill's larger dream treatise, to date no extensive studies have been made of both texts. As such, a close study of Hill's dreambooks offers us important insight into both the emergent and evolving early modern practice of oneiromancy and the way that dream divination in the seventeenth century fused learned and popular knowledge. Finally, I will suggest in this paper that the evidence of a continuing practice of dream divination in England throughout the early modern period, well into the eighteenth century, complicates ideas about the decline of magical worldviews and the "disenchantment of the world."

Sawden, Kari
Newfoundland

Reading the body: Intersections of divination, body, and gender

The multivalent nature of divination has ensured its continuing presence across academic disciplines. This diversity, however, is often narrowed when addressing contemporary North American practices to its situation within neo-paganism and Wicca. This paper considers these acts not within the framework of any specific beliefs but through the tools selected.

Concentrating on palmistry, or chiromancy, in twenty-first century Canada, I seek to understand the relationship between divination and the body. Focusing on a few practitioners, all of whom are women,

I explore how it influences individual understandings of the self and in what ways social constructs of gender and body intersect with this personal identity.

Through my interviews with palm readers, I examine how they reconcile the idea of “using” the body with a history of women’s bodies as sites of domination, sources of guilt, and part of commercial transactions. Questions of control and power are reframed through considering the relationship between the practitioner, who reads the body, and the querent, who inhabits it.

Furthermore, I engage with the diviner as translator as she finds ways to render flesh into words. Reflections upon the published writings of other practitioners and scholars contextualise these acts; however, the primacy of the individual experience and voice remains at the core of this paper. Each body is perceived and interpreted differently. Looking to specific practitioners of chiromancy, I argue that these acts provide a medium through which constructs of identity are formed, discussed, and challenged. By recognising the body not only as a site of conversation but also as a participant in it, diviners reimagine what it means to be truly embodied.

Šešo, Luka
Zagreb

For Lust, Wealth and Immortality. Divination in 19th Century Istria

At the end of the 19th century the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences (today the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences) launched an ethnological project with the goal of collecting data on folklore and popular customs. Priests, school teachers and wealthy farmers were encouraged to write down everything important for understanding the contemporary life of Croatian peasants at the turn of the century. Within an abundant wealth of collected material, many data referred to the popular praxis of divination, foreseeing and sorcery. This unquestionable plenitude of recorded information on broad magical praxis still needs to be thoroughly studied and summarized from various research aspects. Therefore in this paper I will focus on one manuscript from Istria (a peninsula in Croatia) written by Stjepan Žiža, school teacher from Rovinjsko Selo (a village in Istria) in 1896. The large part of Žiža’s work is related to superstitions or supernatural elements among the local people. But, in the vast multitude of his recordings, partly on divination, he minutely described the actions people undertook in order to seek lust, wealth and immortality. In this paper I will present Žiža’s recordings on divination and the reasons that people need for using an entire set of magical practices to provide them material benefits.

Spät, Eszter
Budapest

Inter-faith practices of beseeching the supernatural in northern Iraq

Religious affiliation still plays an important role in social organization in Northern Iraq, where Muslims, Christians, Yezidis, Kakais and Shabaks constitute separate communities. However, rituals seeking help from the supernatural against troubles, whether physical, mental or social, traditionally cut through the boundaries between different faiths. Not only do the different religions share a number of similar ‘healing and helping’ rituals, clearly showing cross-cultural influences, but members of one faith may

even look for remedy in the healing traditions of another faith, despite the various tensions characterizing the relationship between the different groups.

The most common form of seeking divine help is recourse to saints/holy beings and the sacred places associated with them. All these sacred places have their own rituals observed by visitors whether they come specifically to seek help, as part of the annual festival cycle or, as often these days, just on a weekend outing. Rituals of this kind may be simple acts such as circum-ambulating a grave or some other sacred spot, offering a prayer, leaving a symbolic banknote, kissing the doorpost or becoming anointed with soil. Other rituals, usually aimed at having one's wishes fulfilled, take the form of amusing plays, even eliciting laughter among the pilgrims (throwing scarves, sticking stones to a wall, touching a spot with closed eyes, and so on.) However, in the case of more serious requests, when a pilgrimage is undertaken specifically to secure divine help (most often for infertility, or severe mental and physical illness), pilgrims have to meet more exacting demands. These may range from acts requiring considerable financial sacrifice (monetary gifts, animal sacrifice or distribution of food, sometimes on an annual basis) to rituals of serious physical exertion (reaching the sacred place on foot, incubation, often in chains, or beatings).

While most sufferers have their own preferred sacred places to visit, if these fail them, they may resort to visiting the sacred places (or religious experts) of another faith. In this case they may rely on advice from friends and acquaintances, but often some form of divination is involved. This may mean advice from seers communicating with the supernatural, or the inspiration of visionary dreams, where the sufferer sees a saint/holy being and/or sacred place. Dreams are attributed great importance, and may be seen not only as clues to the afflicted concerning their cure, but also as warnings of divine displeasure and imminent catastrophe (to be forestalled by a special ritual meal) or as a sign of divine protection (prompting pilgrimage and the offering of gifts.)

Stojanović, Lidija
Skopje

An interpretation of ritual feasts in folk songs from the Balkans

The aim of this investigation is to present the transformation of primordial human sacrifice in Balkan folk songs of the *Sinful hero* (metaphorically called the Thyest feast), its conviction and the appearance of various types of sacrificial substitutions (ritual feasts, e.g. toast) in accordance with the requirements of Christian religious morality. In the poem devoted to *The Sinful Hero*, the protagonist forces parents to bake and eat their own child.

The paper thus investigates the Balkan variants of the song devoted to *The Sinful Hero*, where the primordial type of sacrifice, associated with the Moloch, is condemned. It could be associated with the profanisation of the Tophet (The second Book of Kings, 23:10). In such cases we reveal and research the ritualistic relationship of man and religion, sin, punishment and above all the sacred; investigating sacrifice and violence in pagan and Christian religion (Girard, Dundes). The interaction between sin, punishment and repentance, or the *metanoia*, in typified songs about the *sinful heroes*, may be defined as Christian morality texts.

Tausiet, María
Madrid

Love renounced & clairvoyance. From religious motif to popular culture and cinema

The contrast between (ritual) external sacrifice and (spiritual) internal sacrifice is a key aspect of all religions. Internal sacrifice, or *ascesis*, understood as renunciation – not so much of material possessions as of specific emotional needs and inclinations – became a characteristic *leitmotif* of both Hinduism and Christian mysticism. According to its advocates, renouncing worldly love resulted in a clear-sightedness or keenness of perception that was often associated with the gift of prophecy or divination.

In the early modern era, this religious motif, albeit in an inverted version, became another facet of the myth of witchcraft. It was widely believed that witches had no capacity for emotion, as demonstrated by their inability to shed tears. From its mystical origins, this theme developed over the centuries to the point of informing the portrayal of witchcraft in popular culture as, for example, in two Hollywood films of the 1940s and 50s whose female leads find that when they fall in love they must also renounce their magical powers.

Tóth, Anna Judit
Budapest

Low-prestige forms of divination in ancient Greece

It is hard to define what religious normativity meant for ancient Greek society. Some statements and deeds were regarded as blasphemous, certain practices as superstitious, but their assessment was subjective. In the field of divination we can distinguish many strata: some forms were highly esteemed, others were seen as superstitious or even illegal. Most of the low-prestige forms are hardly attested in written sources, since the educated authors did not condescend even to deprecate them: e.g. divination by stones, bones or grains of barley, oracles of the Nymphs or many forms of omens in everyday life. Some of these are first mentioned by Christian authors as remnants of paganism. However, surprisingly, in classical Greek religion low prestige divination enjoyed a special rank and respect, which is also confirmed by myths. The Homeric hymn of Hermes clears the territories of Apollo and Hermes, and Apollo shares some methods of divination, which are connected to the nymphs or working by lot, with his younger brother Hermes.

Tuczay, Christa
Vienna

From antique hydromancy to crystal-gazing

Scrying, also known as crystal gazing or crystallomancy is a form of divination in which the practice of prolonged staring at a translucent or shining object enables the practitioner to see moving pictures within the object. It is one of the simplest and most widely used techniques to induce a mental state receptive to supernormal phenomena. Scrying employs several different methods, including *catoptromancy*, where the speculum is a mirror. This method was known in the fifth century C.E. Later references to catoptromancy are sparse, when other methods of scrying came into fashion. It was known, however, to Iamblichos as an alternative to *hydromancy* (divination by seeing what certain things do in water) and it was allegedly used in 193 C.E. by the Emperor Didius Julianus to ascertain his future. The alternative and in later times more frequently mentioned method, which ancient authors indifferently call *lecanomancy* (dropping precious stones into water and listening for acoustic manifestations like whistles etc.) or *hydromancy*, used a simple vessel of water with or without the addition of a film of oil as the speculum. This technique was borrowed allegedly from Persia according to ancient Middle Eastern writers. Isidore of Seville describes an instance of a holy woman whom he knew who would pour clean water into a glass goblet and see phantasms of coming events in the water. According to Isidore, the predictions she made from her visions regularly came to pass. Where scrying was done by proxy both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages, a boy or a team of boys below the age of puberty almost invariably served as the intermediary.

The purpose of the rite was most often precognition, either by direct vision, or by inducing a god or daemon to appear in the speculum and answer questions. For this reason, scrying has been practiced under the auspices of religion. Although discerning the future is the purpose most often given for scrying, the activity has also been used to find lost objects or missing persons and to track down criminals.

The medieval anthologist of magic, Johann Hartlieb, describes the various techniques in his *puoch aller verpoten kunst* (*Book of All Forbidden Arts*). Roger Bacon (1214-1294), known throughout his life for his magical practices, was vilified as a scryer and magician even after his death. The Renaissance

magician Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535) also used magical mirrors in his occult practices. Michel de Nostredame (1503-1556), generally known as Nostradamus, used scrying to reveal to Catherine de Medici of France the future of the French kings.

Voigt, Vilmos
Budapest

A book of ordeal (between 1208 and 1235) in Hungary

Within the history of the everyday religion of Hungarian-speaking areas, ordeal texts from the chapter of Nagyvárád occupy important place. Since the printing of the judgement documents (*Ritus Explorandae Veritatis* – Kolozsvár, 1550) there have been several later editions with notes and commentaries, as well as studies devoted to the rich material of culture history mirrored in the former. Most recently, comparative studies stressed the fact that the Hungarian hot fire trials coincide with the 'last' epoch of ordeals in Europe, when the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) replaced ordeals by compurgation. Documents have survived about 389 trials, mostly about the debates of the land-owners, reflecting complicated hereditary relations. The collection in its recently known form does not follow any topical, historical or geographic order. The texts are written in Latin, with many family names and place names in Hungarian. Judging by these data, the Nagyvárád trials cover a vast area of the Central and Eastern part of the Hungarian Kingdom. After 1215 when ordeals conducted by the church were suspended, both the Hungary Royal Chancellery and the county archives became entitled to discuss lawsuits and guard their legal documents.

The paper discusses the main ideas behind the ordeal texts: who would commission and ordeal procedure and why? The names involved also allow us to trace some of the ethnic and social stratification of the accused persons.

Warner, Elizabeth
Durham, United Kingdom

The role of food offerings in communicating with and propitiating the dead in contemporary rural North Russia.

This paper is mainly based on fieldwork conducted in July 2013 in the Leshukonskii region of Arkhangel'sk *oblast'*, in particular in three villages –Vozhgora, Rodoma and Pustynya.

In North Russia today the ancient cult of the dead or more specifically the cult of ancestors still plays a significant role. It regulates relationships between the living and the dead. It ensures the continuity of family and kinship values and traditions. It acts as a cohesive element in rural communities. It's most obvious manifestation is in the form of funeral and memorial ritual, an integral and constant feature of which is the feeding of the dead. Feeding begins even before the funeral and thereafter remains a continuous part of behaviour and belief patterns. Important aspects of feeding may be observed at the post-funeral meal, at home during the forty-day period between a death and the soul's final departure, or at the cemetery on numerous commemorative occasions. Others aspects are reflected in dreams and in such social practices as the giving of alms. In this paper I shall concentrate not only on the times when feeding takes place but more specifically on the variety of methods, physical and metaphysical, by which sustenance is provided. My aim is to show that among the semantic codes of funeral ritual food offerings clearly play a crucial, even dominant role in maintaining a link between this world and the world beyond the grave, ensuring the goodwill of the dead and restoring the natural equilibrium destroyed by death.

Wiśniewski, Robert
Warsaw

Pagans, Jews, Christians and sacred book divination in Late Antiquity

The present paper will deal with the origin of a well-known divinatory method which consisted in opening a sacred book at a random place. This practice is attested for the first time in Late Antiquity in pagan, Jewish, and Christian milieus. Its three versions were based on a similar conception of the divine power dwelling in a sacred book and this analogy is often taken as a proof of a direct relationship between the three practices. Yet, the existence of the parallel do not imply a direct connection and I will argue that close examination of the technical details of the consultation suggests that in fact the three practices developed independently. I will also suggest that it is possible to find out, on the basis of textual and papyrological evidence, which of the three religious groups was the first to start practicing book divination.

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Czégényi Dóra Andrea
Kolozsvár

„Megér egy misét?” Egyházi rítusok és mágikus szokásgyakorlatok a romániai magyarság körében

Előadásomban azon egyházi rítusok és mágikus szokásgyakorlatok ismertetésére és értelmezésére vállalkozom, amelyek az erdélyi ortodox lelkészek alakja köré kiépült hiedelemképzetkből körvonalazódnak. Mondanivalómat, egyrészt az eddig nyomtatásban megjelent, illetve az archivált kéziratokban szétszórtan fellelhető néprajzi adatokra, másrészt saját gyűjtési eredményeimre alapozom.

A *román papok* tevékenysége az intézményesítetlen (népi) és a tanult, rituális mágia intézményesített formája közötti átmenetet tükrözi. Kontextus- és szerepfüggő praxisukból a divináció, az áldozat és az istenítélet jelenkori formáinak korrelatív megnyilvánulásait tárgyalom. A bűnösöknek, tolvajoknak, vagy a rontás okozójának beazonosítására, illetve a bizonytalan jövő kifürkészésére alkalmasnak vélt divinációs eszköztár (pl. könyv, gyertya, ólom, tükör, víz) szinoptikus áttekintésén túl a *könyvnyitás* rituáléját módszerként nyomatékosítanám. Ezt, ugyanakkor a böjt, valamint az ima- és miseszolgálat vernakuláris változatának mágiához rendelt ambivalens megnyilvánulásait (*fekete böjt, fekete mise*) egy-egy sajátos krízisrítus alkalmával igénybe vett vallásos-mágikus eljárásként példázom, így a konferencia által tematizált rítusrendszerek intermodalitását visszaigazoló (rész)aktusokként értekezem róluk.

Fábián Gabriella
Szeged

Az engesztelő áldozat megnyilvánulási formái a székelyföldi római katolikus közösségekben

Az 1980-as évek végén magyarországi szorgalmazásra Székelyföldön terjedni kezd egy újfajta engesztelés, amely a 19-20. század folyamán megszorodó magánkinyilatkoztatásokban megfogalmazott természetfölötti üzenetekre épülő szerteágazó imádkozási gyakorlat. Egyes típusai magyar látnokoktól származó sajátosságokkal egészülnek ki, több esetben is találkozva azzal a szemlélettel, amely az engesztelést a magyar nép kiváltságos feladatának tekinti. A sokszínű imagyakorlat közös vonása, hogy az emberiség bűneinek jóvátétele érdekében gyakorolják, és általában a hét vagy a hónap valamelyik napjához kapcsolják. Az előadás a székelyföldi engesztelés néhány típusának a bemutatására vállalkozna, nagyobb hangsúlyt fektetve olyan példák elemzésére, amelyek

egyedinek tekinthetők az említett területen. Példaként említhető egy olyan marosvásárhelyi kisközösség, amelynek tagjai más-más felekezethez (ortodox, görög katolikus, római katolikus) és nemzetiséghez (román, magyar) való tartozásukkal és közös imádságuk saját anyanyelvükön való megszólaltatásával próbálják elérni a minél hatásosabb engesztelő áldozatot.

Iancu Laura
Budapest

Az isteni ítélet és a bűnhődés formái

A moldvai katolikus közösségek vallásosságában feltűnő jelenség az ószövetségi (büntető, bosszúálló, ítélő stb.) istenkép fennmaradása és/vagy elterjedése, ami részben a helyi egyház társadalom- és erkölcsformáló hatásával, részben pedig a földműveléssel foglalkozó közösségek sajátos (archaikus) tudatával magyarázható. E kettősség lehet az oka annak is, hogy ebben a vallásosságában az *istenítélet* (képzete, tana, módszere) nemcsak a keresztény tanok révén, hanem a természetben megnyilvánuló erők formájában is megnyilvánul, jelen van. A tágabban értelmezett istenítélet, azaz az igazak és az ártatlanok pártján álló, az igazságot felfedő Isten-hit, egy olyan normatív képzet, amit a helyi közösségekben megélt történések és az azokból keletkezett narratívák hagyományozódása tesz élő gyakorlattá.

Előadásomban azokat a kontextusokat, helyzeteket (ígéret, eskü, átok, bűn stb.) igyekszem bemutatni, ahol az isteni ítélet megnyilvánul, választ keresve azokra a kérdésekre is, hogy milyen (helyi) egyházi- és vallástörténeti valamint szociokulturális okai vannak/lehetnek az istenítélethez való folyamodásnak, az isteni ítélet megnyilvánulásnak, milyen formái s végül milyen következményei vannak az ítéletnek az érintettek életében.

Keszeg Vilmos
Kolozsvár

Istenítélet a mindennapi életben

Az előadás tartalmi kivonata: Az istenítélet a szakirodalomban (s talán a konferencia felhívásban is) tudakozódási ritusként értelmeződik. Gyűjtéshelyzetben folytatott beszélgetéseim alapján az a gyanúm, hogy a vallásos meggyőződésű ember bizonyos bekövetkezett eseményeket szintén istenítéletként, a transzcendencia részéről érkező jelként vagy büntetésként értelmez. Nem gondoltam át a témát, és nem lapoztam át a gyűjtéseimet, de ilyen példák jutnak eszembe.

A toronygombiratokban kiemelt jelentőséget tulajdonítanak annak, hogy karácsonykor (!) villámütés gyűjtja fel a templomot, vagy hogy épp vallásos ünnepen (húsvét) gyúl ki a templom.

Több esetről tudok, hogy az úrvacsorai kenyér vagy bor miatt valaki tikkadozni kezdett, s a jelenlévők ezt a személyt bűnös voltára vezették vissza.

Az előadás az istenítélet terminust bővítené, gyűjtött példák alapján: a szakirodalomban (és a törvénykezési, vallási gyakorlatban?) rituális (szertartásossá vált) tudakozódási szertartásként kanonizálódott az istenítélet. De vajon az utóbbi évszázadokban az individuális/csoportos vallásos életben nem istenítéletként értelmeződnek-e az elszenvedett károk, a váratlan örömhelyzetek? Rítus-e vagy mindennapi vallásos kapcsolattartási forma az istenítélet? (A vallásos ember a bekövetkező eseményt istenítéletként értelmezi, ami a nem vallásos ember számára a véletlennek minősül.) Mi az istenítélet: rítus, előjel, büntetés?

Oláh János
Budapest

Egy “Széfer lekáh tov” induktív divinációiból

Az általam elemezni, nagy vonalakban ismertetni kívánt “Széfer lekáh tov” című könyvecskét az 1930-as évek végén adta ki Goldstein M. orthodox rabbi. A szerző magánkiadásában megjelent 48 oldalas könyvecske egyik alcíme: “Hosszú és boldog élet, jó nemzedék, gondtalan élet titka (...) a hit erősítése

céljául”. Goldstein rabbi tanácsai megjelenhettek volna akár 100-200 évvel, avagy még régebben is, hiszen szinte mindenhol a Talmud szövegére hivatkozik és annak segítségével “jósolja” meg a majdan bekövetkező eseményeket, avagy indokolja a már bekövetkezetteket. E könyvecskében megtaláljuk az akkori, és az azt megelőző kor zsidó népi, falusi induktív divinációs gyakorlatának egy részét, amely szigorúan a hagyomány talaján áll, a hagyományos irodalomból következik, az a forrása.

Tomcsányi László
Budapest

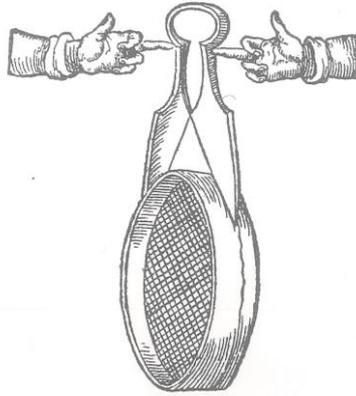
A divináció XXI. századi paradigmái

Kutatási területem a sámánizmus jelenkori működése. Történész diplomám témája a sámánná válás, a beavatási álmok témaköréhez kapcsolódott. Lehetőségem volt személyes interjúk készítésére, melyben a beavatási álmok szimbólumrendszerét vizsgáltam. Ebből a kutatási vonalból kiindulva a rítusokat végző mágikus-vallásos szakemberek jóssá válásának közösségi és egyéni indítékait, az őket övező hiedelmeket tudom kutatni.

Kutatásomat előzetes kapcsolati hálónak köszönhetően, országos szinten több régióban tudom végezni (Budapest, Győr, Moson, Sopron, valamint Csongrád megye). Előadásom tematikájának vázát személyes megkeresések és mélyinterjúk alkotják, melyekben a divinációt gyakorló személyek személyes motivációját, a hivatás tudatát és a megszerzett képességek megjelenési formáit tudom mélyrehatóan tanulmányozni. Három fő témakör köré szervezem ezt a tanulmányt.

- A gyermekkor meghatározó élményei, melyek a közösségben való kiemelkedett szerephez vezettek.
- A mágikus rítusok gyakorlata, azok mai megjelenési formái.
- A közösségben betöltött szerep és a társadalomra tett impulzív hatások.

A kutatás célja ezek mellett a sámánná válással párhuzamos jók képességek, jók álmok vizsgálata, valamint a divinációt gyakorló személyek hiedelemvilágának, hitrendszerének feltárása.



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