

# The Ritual Year Newsletter

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The-Ritual-Year

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## 1. LETTER FROM THE CHAIRS



Dear Members,

*The Ritual Year – 2016 is rapidly coming to its end with the climax of festivals and celebrations, giving way to the New Year celebrations for 2017. For our SIEF Working Group, this year has been another fruitful and fascinating one. It started in style with the 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference*

*(and a burning clavie) in Findhorn, Scotland, organized by Thomas McKean of the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Edinburgh, and proceeded through other conferences and Congress panels thematically connected with our topics which took place all over the world (Lithuania, Bulgaria, Russia, the USA, etc.), where the members of the group joyfully met, enjoyed each other's papers and company, and discussed a range of exciting new projects and publications.*

*The areas we are studying have demonstrated an incredibly fast complex development as new annual rituals have appeared, older rituals finding themselves restored and even fashionable once again. While many naturally involve invented features (like all festivals), most continue to allude to the archaic basis which represented for many members of the group a core interest, not least for our founder and the Honourable President Dr. Emily Lyle. We have also witnessed a radical change and development in the tools we use for our research. Our traditional fieldwork is regularly being enriched by the mighty Internet and an ever expanding range of digital resources which have turned out not only to be highly supportive (not least in the form of the gradual digitalization of archive resources). The internet can also be highly influential in terms of making information easily accessible, while helping to remind us of important dates*



and the respective customs associated with them. It can also serve as a means of educating. Over the last few years, Facebook, for example, has demonstrated its effective capacity to organize people that study and preserve local rituals, music, clothes, folklore texts, and oral history into new groups which can share information and ideas. Indeed, it might be said that Facebook has actually become a sort of calendar in its own right, celebrating, mourning and conveying blessings. Our Facebook page and the SIEF web site, for example, retain the memory of our own ritual years, serving also as a means of exchange of information and academic communication.

We hope that 2017 will give birth to an even greater range of inspiring conferences, projects and publications dealing with all the multifarious aspects of the ritual year in all of its forms.

With seasonal greetings to you all,

**Irina Sedakova and Terry Gunnell**

## **2. EVENTS OF THE RITUAL YEAR WORKING GROUP OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS**

### **2.1 The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Field Ethnography Symposium *MUDOR: Sacred Space in the Culture of the Peoples of the Ural-Volga Region*, 21-22 September 2016, Architectural and Ethnographic Museum-National Park, Ludorvay, Udmurt Republic, Russia, by Tatiana Minniyakhmetova**

In recent decades, Russian anthropologists and folklorists have been very active in producing combined studies of local and territorial cultures represented by different ethnic groups. These research efforts will lead to future scientific meetings to discuss various questions of the newly explored field materials and problems of perspective. An example of such a meeting is the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Field Ethnography Symposium, *MUDOR: Sacred Space in the Culture of the Peoples of the Ural-Volga Region*, which took place on 21-22 September 2016. The scientific event was organised at the Architectural and Ethnographic Museum-National Park Ludorvay, in Udmurtia, Russia. *Mudor* is the central sacred place of the domesticated space of Udmurts. Similar conceptions of sacred space exists among all ethnicities from the Volga-Ural region. The symposium was an excellent opportunity to ascertain the analogous features of the conception of a sacred centre and to clarify those traits which are seemingly connected with it, but symbolize and represent other values and meanings. The theoretical constructs that emerged from the presentations were based on empirical collections, as well as on calendric and family rituals and customs, and everyday situations.



Before the opening of the conference  
Photo: Archives of the Architectural and Ethnographic Museum-National Park Ludorvay



Inauguration of the exhibition item *Kuala*  
Photo: Elena Popova

The scientific symposium was accompanied by additional activities including: the inauguration of a new museum exhibition item – the sacred sanctuary *bydzhym kuala*; excursions in the national park; the traditional youth festival *palezyan* – picking rowan-berries; and, the tasting of Udmurt cuisine. Other events included the opening of two ethno-futuristic exhibitions: *I believe in the Sun in the morning* (by Vladimir Nagovizyn) and *Creation of the World* (by Anfim Khanykov, Evgenia Malzeva, Roman Postnikov).

The symposium was organized by two scholars from the Udmurt Institute for History, Language and Literature of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Nadezhda Shutova and Elena Popova, who have also been attending The Ritual Year Working Group meetings. Other scholars belonging to Volga-Ural regional institutions and other provinces of Russia (Izhevsk, Kazan, Samara, Perm, Ekaterinburg, Glazov, Kostroma, Novgorod, Sankt-Petersburg) and from abroad (Tartu, Paris, Turku, Wien, Innsbruck) took part in the symposium. Below, special attention is given to presentations made by members of The Ritual Year Working Group and by participants to the working group's conferences.

Sacred space as the main subject and object for discussion was represented from various points of view and brought to both common and extraordinary conclusions. Nadezhda Shutova's interests are centred on the sacred space of the Kama and Vyatka river basins from the end of 19th century to the present. Her long-term studies allowed her to reveal the main results of her work, as well as traditional and new methods of study. Shutova's analyses of field research revealed the growing interest of people in sacred places, sites and zones. The space of festivities and rituals in traditional and modern Chuvash culture was examined by Ekaterina Yagafova. It was observed that the space can change its entity according to ceremonial activities. Researching the sacred worship places of the Trans-Kama Udmurts, Eva Toulouze proposed specific identification rules for sacred places and norms of behaviour during ritual activities. Famous scholars as P.M. Bogaevskiy and I.N. Smirnov explored the indigenous peoples of Volga-Ural region back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; some of their collections are kept in the archives of the Ethnographic Museum of the Kazan University. Based on photographs taken by these scholars, Maria Vyatchina analysed the sacred space and connected notions in the Udmurtian worldview and the manner in which it developed to the present day. Tatiana Minniyakhmetova's research focused on some particular features of orientation in time and space. According to the different ethnic groups' worldviews, regions and borders do not have clear and distinct frontiers and demarcations, but they are always taken into account, as humans' activities and behaviours are meaningless without them. Ethnomusicologist Irina Nurieva presented a paper about the sound landscape of spring ritual ceremonies and showed how natural sounds intertwine with human behavioural sounds during the rites. Elena Popova studied the Bessermians. Under consideration were the sacred spaces of villages (their characteristics and functioning) which, still honoured today, shapes the modern historical and cultural landscape of these settlements. Yuri Perevozchikov examined the cult objects, protected by law, and the way they are represented in the confessional, ethnographical and legal framework. *Riddles of the real world in riddles* was the title of Tatiana Vladykina's paper, who showed the importance of details in "unriddling" the meaning of famous riddles. Tatiana Shklyayeva resumed of history of the Ludorvay museum. In total, 50 scholars participated in the symposium. The wide array of topics was extensive, but always related to the sacred space, being it through music, food and drinks, money, springs and water sources, ornamental motives and magic symbols, terminology of sacred objects in sacred space, and many others.

The proceedings are available in the *Yearbook of Finno-Ugric Studies*, vol. 10, issue 3, Izhevsk, 2016 (available at <http://finno-ugry.ru/files/1303172918.pdf>) and in the forthcoming issues 1 and 2, volume 11, 2017, as well as in the journal *Иднакар: Методы историко-культурной реконструкции*, no. 2 (31), 2016 (available at <http://elibrary.ru/contents.asp?issueid=1607634>).



Nadezhda Shutova and Elena Popova  
Photo: Tatiana Minniyakhmetova

## 2.2 The International Conference *Religion and Nation(alism): Entanglements, Tensions, Conflicts* (Tartu, Estonia, 10-11 November 2016), by Evy Johanne Håland



Recent developments throughout the world have shown that the connections between ethnic and religious identity have not been lost. Relationships between religion and nationalism are multifaceted and interactive and their dynamics are influenced by social and political conditions. The politisation of religion may support ethnic and national unity, whereas religion may lead to particular forms of political activism. The concurrence of ethnic and religious identity (or the lack of it) may result in nation building or the shaping of an ideology of the “chosen people”. Moreover, religious identities may offer possibilities for the formation of communities that cross national borders. Studying the role religion plays in these complex relationships offers insights into the formation, development or disintegration of certain groups and their choices, both in individual and public spheres.

The papers presented at the International Conference *Religion and Nation(alism): Entanglements, Tensions, Conflicts*, which took place in Tartu, Estonia, 10-11 November 2016, discussed connections between (ir)religion and nationalism or group identities from all over the world both in diachronic and contemporary perspectives. The first key speaker, Frank Korom (Boston University) started by comparing religious nationalism in India and Serbia. Other sessions focused on topics as *Religious and National Identities in Asia; Islam and Ideologies* and *Ethnic Boundaries and Religious Symbols*. The first evening ended with a reception at the University of Tartu Museum including medieval songs and music. The second evening ended with a conference diner at the University restaurant. This multidisciplinary event attracted participants from all over the world.

The conference was organized by the Estonian Society for the Study of Religions and the University of Tartu in partnership with the Estonian Literary Museum and the Tartu Nefa Group. Mare Kõiva, a Ritual Year member was among the conference organizers. Conference participants included Evy J. Håland and Bea Vidacs (member of the SIEF Ethnology of Religion Working Group).

The conference programme is available at:

[http://www.ut.ee/folk/files/Religion\\_and\\_Nationalism\\_programme.pdf](http://www.ut.ee/folk/files/Religion_and_Nationalism_programme.pdf)



Frank Korom giving his key note speech (top left), Mare Kõiva and Evy Håland (top right) and Evy Håland giving her paper

Photos: Aivo Põlluäär

The Archive of the Estonian Society for the Study of Religions, University of Tartu

### 2.3 Joint French speaking seminar IDEMEC-IMAF at the MMSH (Aix-en-Provence, France, 18 November 2016), by Irina Stahl



On 18 November 2016, Joao De Athayde and Laurent Sébastien Fournier organized a joint seminar Institute of African Worlds (IMAF) and Institute of Mediterranean, European and Comparative Ethnology (IDEMEC), at The Mediterranean House of Human Sciences (MMSH) in Aix-en-Provence (AMU). The topic of the half-day French speaking seminar was *Inventions et diffusions du style carnavalesque: Europe-Afrique-Amérique* [Inventions and diffusions of the carnivalesque style: Europe-Africa-America].

Laurent S. Fournier, senior lecturer at IDEMEC/AMU opened the seminar with a short speech about the carnival as a worldwide style, followed by Felipe Ferreira, professor at the State University in Rio de Janeiro, who talked about the invention of the modern carnival at Rio de Janeiro in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. João de Athayde, PhD student IMAF/AMU spoke about the circulation of the *caretos*, the masks. He was followed by Antonin Chabert, PhD student IDEMEC/AMU who talked about the Nice carnival between local models and international influences. The discussions were animated by professor Frédéric Saumade, from IDEMEC/AMU. The seminar programme and poster are available at: <http://www.idemec.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article1023&lang=fr>

### 2.4 The Annual Conference of CEES and The Annual 60<sup>th</sup> Kreutzwald Days Conference: *Oral and Written in Culture: Connections and Collisions* (Tartu, Estonia, 12-13 December 2016), by Ekaterina Anastasova

The international conference *Oral and written in culture: Connections and collisions* was held in the framework of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Estonian Literary Museum (CEES), coordinated by Mare Kõiva, and supported by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research and by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund.

The conference was dedicated to the problems of the written and oral, folklore and literature in a broad geographical and chronological range. Participants were from various research institutions in Estonia, Bulgaria, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, and Sweden. They presented papers in the larger research field – from medieval studies to the various forms of a contemporary folklore studies. Special attention was paid to ongoing and international cooperation projects. In addition, few newly edited books were presented.

The conference was attended by several representatives of the Ritual Year Working Group. One of the key-speakers was Terry Gunnell (University of Iceland), who presented the video-paper *Performance and Audience, Time and Space, Sound and Vision. The Uses of the Performance Studies Approach for the Study of Folklore Past and Present*. The lecture examined a number of theoretical and methodological problems, concerning the use of performance studies approach for the study of folklore.

Mare Kõiva considered the interesting problem of the study of dreams as a folk phenomenon, reflecting the relationship between the “great story” and its experience and interpretation. Ekaterina Anastasova introduced two significant cases of immigrants from Eastern Europe in Northern Europe (Estonia-Norway) and United States (Bulgaria). It turns out that the “national narrative” defines the migration model – circular mobility in the Estonian case, and immigration – in the Bulgarian one.

The interdisciplinary conference presented a number of research issues relevant to the European Research Area. They reflect a variety of theories, methodologies, archival and field research. One of the strong points of the conference was the diversity of languages, in which the reports were presented – English, German, Estonian and Russian.

The conference programme is available at: <https://folklore.ee/CEES/kava2016.pdf>

### 3. FUTURE EVENTS OF THE RITUAL YEAR WORKING GROUP

#### The Ritual Year Working Group panel at the 13<sup>th</sup> SIEF Congress:

**Sui06: Statics vs. Dynamics, Nature vs. Culture in the Dwelling-Connected Practices of the Ritual Year – welcoming announcement**, by Nina Vlaskina



On March 26–30, 2017, the 13th Congress of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) will be held in Göttingen (Germany) with the general topic: *Ways of Dwelling: Crisis – Craft - Creativity*. According to the congress organisers, 794 applications were received, and 85 panels, workshops and poster sessions were approved comprising 17 thematic streams.

The panel proposed by The Ritual Year Working Group to the next SIEF congress is **Sui06: Statics vs. Dynamics, Nature vs. Culture in the Dwelling-Connected Practices of the Ritual Year** (<http://www.nomadit.co.uk/sief/sief2017/panels.php5?PanelID=4996>). The panel is convened by Irina Sedakova and Nina Vlaskina, with Arūnas Vaicekauskas as a chair and Laurent Fournier as a discussant. The aim of this panel is to put forward the research data collected according to the classical ethnological approach and analysed in the paradigm of the binary opposition theory. Fifteen papers representing Austria, Croatia, France and Switzerland, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Turkey and Germany were accepted. The topics under discussion will cover the issues of:

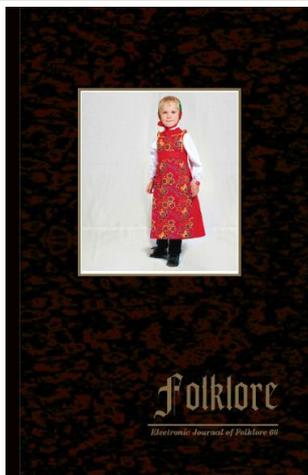
- symbolic functions of public spaces and festive activities performed in city squares and streets (Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik, Skaidrē Urbonienē, Irina Stahl, Vito Carrassi);
- the revealing of functions of a house in the festive and daily life of the rural inhabitants (Tatiana Minniyakhmetova);
- temporary dwellings constructed especially for an annual festival (Flore Muguet);
- the comparison between performing calendric and family rituals at home and outside it, in private and public areas (Žilvytis Šaknys, Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė, Guzel Stolyarova, Sergey Rychkov, Nadezhda Rychkova, Anamaria Iuga, Irina Sedakova);
- the diachronic analysis of the rural calendric processions (Milana Černelić, Nina Vlaskina);
- the influence that labour migration has on the content of the traditional feasts (Attila Mateffy);
- the analysis of the ancient Sumerian calendar (Vladimir Emelianov).

The panel is expected to last an entire day, with three allocated sessions, each of five presentations. The convenors of the Sui06 panel heartily welcome all our group members and other interested people to take part in the discussions.

### 4. PUBLICATIONS OF THE RITUAL YEAR WORKING GROUP

***Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, vol.66 - Folk Costume in the Ritual Year and Beyond: Heritage, Identity Marker, and Symbolic Object, Guest Editors: Irina Sedakova and Nina Vlaskina, Tartu, 2016, 207 p.**, by Irina Sedakova

The last volume of *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore*, edited by **Irina Sedakova** and **Nina Vlaskina** has just been published. The topic of this publication emerged from the panel organized by the two Russian scholars, on behalf of The Ritual Year Working Group, during the 12<sup>th</sup> SIEF Congress in Zagreb, Croatia (June 2015). This is the second time papers presented in a panel organized by The Ritual Year Working Group are being published in *Folklore*. The first time this occurred was in volume 60, 2015 (Guest Editors: Laurent S. Fournier and Irina Sedakova), dedicated to the problems of *Differentiation of the Ritual Year(s) in Time and Space*, theme of a previous panel organized at the 11<sup>th</sup> SIEF Congress in Tartu, Estonia, in June 2013 (<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol60/index.html>).



In the *Introduction* Irina Sedakova and Nina Vlaskina argue that folk clothes are one of the most topical and discussed subjects in historical and contemporary folklore studies, ethnology, and cultural anthropology. Traditional costumes and their separate parts remain an important aspect of preserving cultural heritage. They indicate the identity of people in many countries, especially if considering massive migrations. The multitude of meanings and functions of traditional national folk costumes, their semiotic value and possibility to denote gender, age and status (Pyotr Bogatyrev) are used in various spheres of life, such as folk-cultural, political, economic, and fashion events. One can witness the increased interest of society in folk costumes, both in the folk calendar and life-cycle celebrations, in the official and non-official festivals. Here the question of created and invented details in the authentic garments arises and accompanies the question of (re)invented

rituals. Interestingly, in conditions of varying degrees of preservation due to historical and socio-economic factors, women's authentic costumes are usually better preserved than men's, while festive costumes are better preserved and more symbolic than every-day costumes. The irreversible effect of industrialization on manufacturing, technological processes, priorities in the use of materials, unifying processes, and the loss of local diversity in some areas, is an important factor that needs further investigation.

The major topics and questions mentioned above represent the core of the research studies and other materials included in the volume. **Alexander Novik and Andrey Sobolev** describe and analyse the wedding costume of the Mrkovići Muslim ethno-local group in Montenegro. They consider folk costume as an important part of the tangible heritage and describe the historical changes of the elements of women's garments and their dialectal names. The authors reveal the transformation of the garments under the influence of Islamic fashion, at the early stage and under European fashion, at a later time. The diachronic approach to the study of traditional clothing also constitutes the basis of **Anamaria Iuga's** research. She analyses the festive costume from the Maramureş Region (Romania), identifying scenarios of cultural dynamics and influential factors. She also analyses the influence of the mass media on the unification of costumes, and how the surviving elements represent the local identity and the continuation of traditions, at the cost of losing the costume as a whole. The articles by **Marija Gačić and Urszula Wilk** consider how traditional garments are presented during contests, and how the assessment procedure and selection of the best costume are conducted. Marija Gačić analyses several beauty elections in traditional costumes in Croatia, and Urszula Wilk examines the specially sewn traditional festive clothes, worn by the participants of the annual feast *las Fallas* in Valencia (Spain). The unique diversity and the high degree of preservation of traditional garments in the Swedish parish of Boda (the county of Dalecarlia) are depicted in the article by **Britt Eklund and Katarina Ek-Nilsson**. The authors examine the conditions of the long-term preservation of traditions, stressing the equality of the parishioners with respect to property and social status, as well as the active use of the identity presentation function. They also explore the new contexts of the existence of this unique costume complex in modern conditions, while in other parts of the country the traditional costume has been lost. In the countryside, interest in traditional heritage has increased, and the sign function of costumes has moved to the forefront. In certain contexts, the costumes of the parish of Boda have started to represent Swedish folk costumes in general. **Irina Sedakova's** paper explores the traditional Slavic semiotic opposition of the bareness of a new-born child (as a sign of the lack of its social links) and its first clothes. Each piece of the baby's garments is seen as a bearer of symbolic meaning and is used in the ritual setting to facilitate the socialization of the baby, to guard it from evil spirits and illnesses, and to help it develop positive qualities.

Two articles in the volume analyse the dynamics of costumes in the enclaves of Russian Old Believers living outside their historical homeland, particularly in Romania and Turkey. **Cristina Clopot** examines the transformation of the traditional garments of Russian Old Believers (Lipovans) in Romania through the lens of identity representation. The author demonstrates the close connection between wearing the traditional costume and the value system and moral orientations of the society. The wedding dress of the Old Believers and the symbolic meaning of its elements are described in detail. **Nina Vlaskina** investigates the dynamics of the festive clothes of the other group of Russian

Old Believers settled in Turkey – the Cossacks, named after their leader, Ignat Nekrasov, who took them away from religious and political persecution. The author traces the history of the formation of their costume in its entirety, the influence of other ethnic groups, and the gradual narrowing of the costume's functions after their return to their homeland and the environment of ethnically related neighbours. She concentrates on the conditions and the stages of the loss of traditional garments and amply discusses its role as a representative of the group's heritage in the context of museum exhibitions, folk group performances, and souvenir production. **Milana Černelić** examines the role of costumes in the revival of the traditional rituals in a group of Bunjevci Croats in Serbia. Wearing traditional costumes has become mandatory for participation in celebrations during the Shrovetide period (*Prelo*), Pentecost Pageant, and the harvest festival (*Dužijanca*), while in other contexts, traditional costumes are rarely used today. **Rosa Isela Aguilar Montes de Oca** discusses the theme of inventing a costume and shows the connection between two opposing processes in the strengthening of local identity: activities aimed at the preservation and promotion of a common cultural heritage, on the one hand, and the invention of a new costume, as well as a search for new ways to draw attention to the local heritage, on the other hand.

In addition to the above presented articles, the volume also provides detailed information about the 11<sup>th</sup> conference of The Ritual Year Working Group held in Kazan, in June 2015, grace to the review signed by Irina Sedakova.

The 66<sup>th</sup> volume of *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore* is richly illustrated with pictures taken by the authors during their fieldwork and photos from museums and personal collections. The volume is published on paper, but it is also available online at: <https://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol66/>.

## 5. NEWS FROM AND ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

**Books by Tatiana Minniyakhmetova presented at the National Library of the Udmurt Republic, in Izhevsk (Russia)**, by Nadezhda Shutova

Three books written by **Tatiana Minniyakhmetova** were presented at the National Library of the Udmurt Republic in Izhevsk on 20 September 2016. The event was organized by Galina Sergeeva, head of the Department of National and Regional Literature and Bibliography.

Tatiana Minniyakhmetova's research is closely related to the Udmurt Trans-Kama diaspora group. In her studies, she thoroughly explores the folk calendar and the calendric rituals, which has led her to the conclusion that the Udmurt astronomical year is divided in half: the summer year and the winter year.

Particular attention is given to the semantic-structural aspects of the main calendric rites, to which she dedicates one of her studies. The authors also investigate family ceremonies and customs connected with giving birth and the socialization of new born, weddings, funerals and commemoration of the dead. A second area of interest for Tatiana Minniyakhmetova is the mythology. In her studies, she analyses several mythological characters of the Udmurts. A third area of interest for her represents the theoretical problems of the Finno-Ugric ethno-futurism and its developmental features. Tatiana Minniyakhmetova has herself collected authentic folklore and ethnographic material. She has conducted field-research for several decades and regularly organized expeditions. A large empirical database of various by now extinct culture and life aspects of the Udmurts have, grace to her, been preserved. She is author and co-author of seven books and approximately 200 articles.



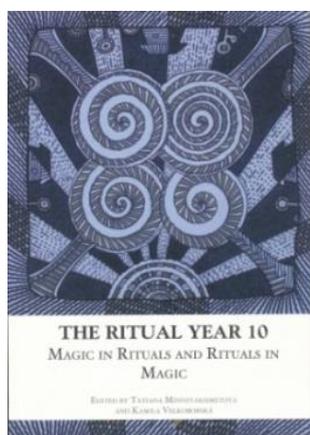
Tatiana Minniyakhmetova at the National Library of Udmurt Republic  
Photo: Anna Mishina

Amongst her most recent publications are the following volumes, that the author herself presented during the special event organised at the National Library of the Udmurt Republic:



1. *Путешествия к удмуртам и марицам. Письма Уно Хольмберга 1911 и 1913 гг.* *Matkat udmurttien ja marien luo. Uno Holmbergin kirjeitä vuosilta 1911 ja 1913* [Journeys to the Udmurts and the Mari. Correspondences by Uno Holmberg in 1911 and 1913]. Eds. Seppo Lallukka, Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, Ranus Sadikov. Серия «Финляндия в России». СПб: Европейский дом. 2014, 223 p. (in Russian and Finnish).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Finnish scholar Uno Holmberg travelled to the lands of the East Udmurts and the Mari. During his travels he kept a regular correspondence with two Finnish newspapers *Turun sanomat* and *Uusi aura*, who published his letters. These contained detailed descriptions of his encounters, including a rich ethnographic material. The volume edited by Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, et al., represents a collection of the letters signed by Uno Holmberg. These valuable old sources are this way made available for current research.



2. *The Ritual Year 10. Magic in Rituals and Rituals in Magic.* The Yearbook of the SIEF Working Group on the Ritual Year. General Editor: Emily Lyle; Editors for this Issue: Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, Kamila Velkoborská. Innsbruck, Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, 598 p.

This Yearbook of the SIEF Working Group on The Ritual Year is based on the presentations made at the working group's 10<sup>th</sup> conference, *Magic in Rituals and Rituals in Magic*, held between 25-28 September 2014, at the University of Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria. The organizers of the event were Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, Leander Petzoldt and Kamila Velkoborská. The variety of themes and cultures represented in this volume impressed the audience.



3. Tatyjana Minniyakhmetova. *Az ismeretlen ismerős. Tanulmányok a baskortosztáni udmurtok vallásáról* [The Unknown Well-known: Essays on the Religion of the Udmurts in Bashkortostan]. MTA BTK Néprajztudományi Intézet - PTE Néprajz-Kulturális Antropológia Tanszék, Pécs: L'Harmattan Publishing House. 2016, 194 p. (in Hungarian)

This volume is a result of the EU Project MTKD-CT-2004-014492. The project allowed Tatiana Minniyakhmetova to lecture, to engage in field-research as well as to publish her findings. In 2006 she lectured at the Department of Ethnography and Cultural Anthropology, University of Pécs (Hungary) and completed her book, which was recently translated into Hungarian. In the volume, the author examines various aspects of traditional and modern life of Udmurts from Bashkortostan, as cyclicity of time, space and orientation. Birth, death and the underworld are examined along with the ritual sacrifices and the traditional spiritual worldview, with special focus on supernatural forces, deities, and spirits. Matters referring to methodological problems and field-research are also discussed. Tatiana Minniyakhmetova displays a unique interdisciplinary approach in her study of various aspects of culture, which leads her to an in-depth analysis and hence to new and original ideas and conclusions.



## Lecture on Ancient and Modern Greek Festivals held by Evy Johanne Håland at the University of Bucharest, by Irina Stahl

At the initiative of the Centre of Compared History of Antic Societies (CICSA), on 17 October 2016, **Evy Johanne Håland** was invited to give a lecture at the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest (Romania).

The lecture referred to the Norwegian scholar's forthcoming two-volume book: *Greek Festivals, Modern and Ancient: A Comparison of Female and Male Values*, in press at Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Initially published in 2007, in Norwegian, the publication is based on the author's PhD thesis, now in an English translation. It is a multidisciplinary or rather a post-disciplinary, cross-period product of studies in ancient history combined with fieldwork and anthropological analysis of present-day Mediterranean societies. Centred

on the Greek values, the key topics of the book include whether peoples' beliefs and customs reflect one or several value-systems, and how these relate to men and women. The comparison is based on ancient and contemporary Greek religious festivals, upon which an analysis of the fertility cult in ancient and modern society is conducted. This is followed by an examination of modern and ancient value-systems, as expressed through the relationship between official religion and popular belief.

The Greek festivals are presented from a cyclical perspective, since they follow a ritual calendar within which celebrations are performed in connection with important periods of the agricultural year. Belief in fertility rituals is present in both ancient and modern societies, and these rituals are connected with women, who are their most competent performers. Their knowledge of fertility magic confers upon them the power to both promote and prevent fertility in society; an investigation of the relationship between women and fertility, and the cult's significance within the wider society, is therefore required. Fertility rituals are of focal importance in ancient and modern official festivals and rituals linked to life-cycle passages.

The fertility cult also plays an important role within the official male value-system. This is the standpoint from which the festivals and the society, which they reflect, have traditionally been considered. The absence of the female value-system leaves previous analyses one-sided and incomplete: a comprehensive analysis therefore requires inclusion of the female perspective. Hence, this study argues for the importance of changing our approach when working with ancient culture. Taking account of the female sphere in Greece provides us with a basis for considering the female part of society. However, by so doing, the official male perspective, which is similar to the Western male perspective generally applied within Greek studies, must be deconstructed. This study therefore locates two contradictory positions within ancient and modern sources, one connected with the female sphere, and the other with the male sphere. This means that there is not a one-way power or male dominance within Greek culture, but rather competing powers, related to men, women and their respective spheres. These two opposing value-systems are nonetheless both complementary and interdependent.

The lecture was richly illustrated by the speaker with pictures taken during fieldwork in Greece and from various other sources. At the end, many questions were addressed by the participants (mostly students), who showed a particular interest in the methodological approach.

Previous to her lecture, Evy Håland, who was not at her first visit to Bucharest, also presented a paper at the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the International Conference on Mythology and Folklore, organized by the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest.



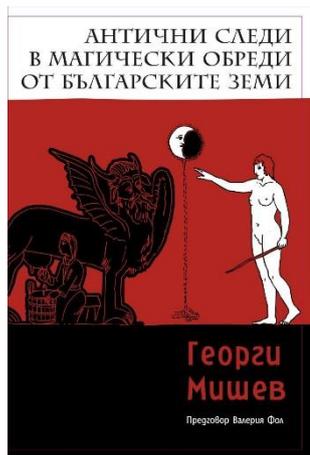


The Swedish ethnologist **Britt Eklund** from the Institute for Language and Folklore published a richly illustrated album on folk dress earlier this year: *Dräktalmanacka. Boda Socken, Dalarna*, Uppsala: Institutet för språk och folkminnen, 223 p.

In the *Introduction*, **Katarina Ek-Nilsson**, former chief of the Dialect and Folklore Archive in Uppsala, who, according to the author, helped revise the text and more importantly inspired this book, highlights the distinctive pattern of folk costumes from the various parishes in Dalarna region in Sweden. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Boda parish people disposed of a particularly great variety of clothes, illustrated in this book. Clear rules regulated the way to dress in particular circumstances, as well as in everyday life. The dress code followed the Lutheran church ritual year, taking into account the person's social status (according to the age, gender and marital status) and the seasons. Established over time by people themselves and changing with the times, these codes underline the importance of clothes as identity markers within a community.

Taking after the early 20<sup>th</sup> century dress calendars, the album carefully illustrated the various clothing items from Boda parish, indicating their specific name and the way they were supposed to be worn. The rich visual and textual information is due to written sources and objects kept in The Dialect and Folklore Archive, Institute for Language and Folklore and in the archive of Nordiska Museet. The association between the picture and the detailed textual description gives value to this album, making it unique. The book, written in Swedish, is available at:

<http://www.sprakochfolkminnen.se/download/18.5a7af053153e51c32cb24ee>



In May 2016, the book of **Georgi Mishev**, *Антични следи в магически обреди от българските земи* [*Ancient traces in magical rites from Bulgarian lands*], Sofia: Shambala books, 2016, 464 p. was released.

This work was previously translated, in part, in English and published under the title: *Thracian magic: past and present*, London: Avalonia, 2012, 338 p.

The English publication opened up the treasure trove of magical folklore and magical practices of the Balkan Peninsula to English speakers for the very first time. The author examines examples of present day magical practices in Bulgaria and the surrounding Balkan countries, tracing them to their roots in the ritual traditions of Thrace and the Mystery Cults of the ancient world. Evidence of the antiquity of these modern examples can be found in numerous

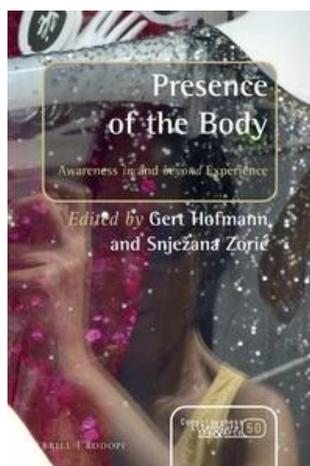
ancient literary sources, including the Hittite ritual texts, the Greek Magical Papyri, the Orphic Argonautica, the Derweni Papyrus, as well as in the writings of Homer, Plato, Strabo and others. Further clues are found in curse tablets and other archaeological finds. The transmission of the ancient mysteries through Orpheus, Musaeus, Eumolpus, Zalmoxis, Rhesus, the Thracian Prophetess of Dionysos and the nymph Thrake are considered, one by one in order to show the distinctive flavour found in the practices of the region. The diversity of subject matter and the depth of its exploration

are attested to in this volume by the discourses on the ways in which secret knowledge was preserved and the roles of both the Healer and the Magician in Bulgarian traditional culture. The final chapter of the book, *Concepts of The Goddess*, examines the importance and the survival of the Great Goddess in the practices and beliefs of the region. Here the reader is introduced to the roles of goddesses such as Hekate, Artemis and Bendis, as well as to the Mother of the Sun, the Mountain Mother, the Virgin Mistress of Fire and the She-Wolf. Moreover, both the continued existence and re-emergence of the Great Goddess in the form of Christian saints, such as the Mother of God, Fiery Marina, Petka and Nedelya are investigated alongside the Samodivi forest spirits which combine the characteristics of both nymphs and ancient



goddesses. From divination to healing, initiation to fertility spells, curses to protection from the evil eye and other malefic influences, this book embraces and reveals the scope of a living tradition with its roots deep in the ancient world. The book of G. Mishev is much more than a description of Bulgarian traditional practices. It offers deep insights into magic and belief in the Balkan region and its continuity and adaptation throughout time.

“One writes about magical practice most commonly either from the position of a scholar or from the position of a practitioner. The book, which G. Mishev offers us, leads the reader into the secrets of the magical with the dignity of a descendant and carrier of millennial traditions, preserved in the South-eastern European area, and with the passion of an explorer, rushing towards the light of knowledge” (Prof. Dr. Valeria Fol).



**Snježana Zorić** (University of Zadar) has recently edited, together with **Gert Hofmann** (National University of Ireland, Cork) the volume *Presence of the Body. Awareness in and beyond Experience*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, Rodopi, 2016, 272 p.

The interdisciplinary volume reunites several texts with regard to the impact of the body on human awareness in the field of art, writing, meditative practice, and performance. The dialogue between theory and practice amongst the various chapters benefited from the neuro-systematic integration of “embodied” knowledge in the cognitive sciences, by exploring the *presence* and *experience* character of the body-awareness relationship.

Snježana Zorić has recently joined the faculty of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea, in order to continue her research on Korean and other Asian cultures. Her interests involve Korean Buddhism, its philosophy, and artistic expressions, such as in rituals and architecture, and new strategies to kindle the interest of Koreans and foreigners to experience a Buddhist way of living.



**Tatiana Voldina**, lead researcher at the Ob-Ugric Institute of Applied Research and Development in Khanty-Mansiysk (Russia) has recently published: «Долгой жизни вековечный танец»: реинкарнация в контексте мифоритуальных традиций обских угров [*The Eternal Dance of the Long Life: The reincarnation in the context of mythological and ritual traditions of the Ob-Ugrians*], part I, Tyumen: Format, 2016, 206 p.

The volume is the first part of a larger study which refers to the reincarnation of the soul and its various manifestations in the culture of the Ob-Ugric peoples, based on original collected field data and other existing sources. The book, which comes with an English abstract (pp.165-168), can be accessed at:

<https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://ouipiir.ru/sites/default/files/docs/1083-2018.pdf>, deals with the system of ideas revealing the mythos-ritual traditions of the Ob-Ugric peoples related to reincarnation.

## 6. CALL FOR PAPERS AND OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Department of Ethnology and Anthropology (Lithuanian Institute of History), Balkan Ethnology Department (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), International Society for Balkan and Baltic Studies announces the international conference ***Balkan and Baltic States in United Europe: History, Religion, and Culture*** (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). The conference will be take place at the Lithuanian Institute of History in Vilnius.

In the organizing committee, among others, you will find our colleagues Ekaterina Anastasova and Žilvytis Šaknys. The **deadline for submission of papers: 1 February 2017**.

Those interested are asked to send the title of their paper, an abstract (no more than 500 words), their name, academic degree and affiliation to [konferencija100@gmail.com](mailto:konferencija100@gmail.com). For further information access: <http://www.istorija.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BB-2017-CONFERENCIVILNIUS-en.pdf>

The 34<sup>th</sup> International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR/SISR) conference ***Religion, Cooperation and Conflict in Diverse Societies*** will take place 4-7 July 2017 at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. **Paper proposals** no larger than 250 words, in both English and French, **will be accepted until 10 January 2017**. For more information access: <https://wp.unil.ch/issr2017conference>

The ISA-RC22 News and Events blog: [www.isa-rc22.org/news-events/](http://www.isa-rc22.org/news-events/) is a very useful platform of information for all those interested in religious studies. The blog provides numerous interesting information (conferences, calls for papers, job opportunities, book announcements etc.) and also allows posting. For those interested, there is an option to subscribe to the posts and receive a weekly digest.

The Research Committee on the Sociology of Religion (RC22) is a section within the International Sociological Association (ISA) tasked with the advancing theory and research in the sociology of religion, in the context of world sociology.

The ISA-RC22 News and Events blog is taken up by the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR/SISR) blog: <https://www.sisr-issr.org/en/newsletter/>.

## 7. ERRATUM

In The Ritual Year Newsletter No.2 (July 2016), one of the articles reviewed the international conference *Festivals and Rituals in the Urals-Volga Region: Traditions and Innovations in Contemporary Culture*, which had taken place on 23–25 June 2016, in Samara (Russia). A volume of proceedings *Праздники и обряды в Урало-Поволжье: традиции и новации в современной культуре* [Festivals and Rituals in the Urals-Volga Region: Traditions and Innovations in Contemporary Culture]. Самара [Samara] 2016, 214 p. was published with the occasion. The Newsletter failed to mention the contribution of Valeria Bondareva who completed the English translations for this publication.

## 8. MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The Ritual Year Working Group currently includes 70 members. Consistent with SIEF regulations, we can only include in this number those members who are SIEF-affiliated. However, it should be stressed that we consider all of you who are non-SIEF-affiliated as associated members and we are glad to address all of you through this Newsletter. The list of our members, together with their email addresses, can be found on our SIEF web page: <http://www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/index.shtml>.

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