

in the short-lived publication called *Remény* [Hope], edited by Imre Vahot (Vol. I, 1851, No. 6, pp. 334–336). István Fábrián was a locally famous bandit in Nagyszalonta, and in his note to the poems, Arany said that the second text had been dictated by Fábrián himself to a “town clerk” (i.e., town employee) after his capture, “as the communicator surely knows”. Katalin Olosz reasonably concludes that this might be referring to Arany himself, meaning that the “communicator” and the recording “town clerk” may have been the same person. Dictation-based notation, which the commentary emphasizes, makes Arany’s attempt comparable to one of the widely practiced but hard-to-define folklore collection methods of the era – after all, acquiring a text and retroactively writing it down from memory was one of the possible notation modes in the mid-19th century. Through the gesture of publishing, Arany made his direct connection to the outlaw ballads more apparent, even though there was virtually no trace of it in his oeuvre. The significance of Katalin Olosz’s edition is that the poem’s text itself and Arany’s commentary on it can finally be read simultaneously and in context – even the critical edition did not accomplish this. However, I did not find this little source information in the critical edition; Arany’s note (and only that) can exclusively be found in a rather obscure place, in the repository of the first volume of his correspondence: Arany János levelezése (1828–1851) [The Correspondence of János Arany (1828–1851)], ed. Györgyi Sáfrán – Gyula Bisztray – István Sándor, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975 (Arany János Összes Művei [The Complete Works of János Arany], vol. XV), 887. The poems themselves were not reproduced in the critical edition, though this, too, would not have been irrelevant. Therefore, they should be included in the forthcoming new critical edition, in my view at least in the appendix to the first volume of the poems.

Of course, these few remarks could hardly exhaust all of the abundant lessons of the Nagyszalonta ballad volume. Indeed, that was not my goal. I merely wanted to draw attention to a publication which is probably one of the most valuable achievements of the Arany Memorial Year, and which will provide new ideas for understanding the complex relationship between János Arany and the tradition of folklore for a very long time.

Pócs, Éva (ed.): *The Magical and Sacred Medical World*. 2019, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars. 525. ISBN 978-1-5275-2252-7

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The writings of the present volume are based on the papers of “The Magical and Sacred Medical World” conference organized by the Department of Ethnography of the University of Pécs in 2009. The aim of both the conference and the book was to give a more complete picture of the sacred and magical aspects of ethnomedicine. The subject areas of the studies embrace magical and religious concepts of health and illness, healing rituals, as well as divinities and places that carry a specific healing power. The authors examine the role these concepts play in society, religion and everyday life and their representations in folklore, art and literature; they adopt an interdisciplinary method,

applying the approaches of medicine, folklore and religious studies. The chronological horizon of the volume is wide; in addition to the modern research based on the authors' fieldwork, other studies are devoted to historical source materials from the antiquity to the modern age.

The volume is divided into four major thematic units dedicated to the issues of the disease, the healer, the healing divinity or saint, and the medicine. The studies of the first part place the focus on the different concepts of illness. The potential demonic cause behind a disease is what places the concepts of health and illness in a sacred context. The agent of this harmful influence can be a human being, a demon, or a dualistic being combining the qualities of both, e.g., a witch or a vampire.

Jean Riviere's study, "*Hag-riding*": *Demons of Desire or Symptoms of Disease?*, deals with the incubus demon causing nightmares (Mahr, mara) and the attitude with which this phenomenon was treated in the medical literature of early modern England. She presents the ways the concepts of demonic assault and mental illness coexisted and mutually influenced each other. Svetlana Tsonkova's writing, *Burnt without Fire*, examines a disease demon called *nezhit* that appears in medieval and modern Bulgarian charm texts. The *nezhit* and the narrative charms applied against him have close parallels in ancient oriental demons of the type of Lillith or Gello, but unlike them, the *nezhit* is a male figure. Laura Iancu (*World View, Religion and Disease in Magyarfalu*) summarizes the results of her fieldwork in a village in Moldova called Magyarfalu (Arini). She analyses the demonic entities called *rossz* (evil) and *nem tiszta* (not pure), which play a central role in the understanding of disease in this community. She describes the beliefs associated with these demons, the circumstances that make the evil influences especially strong, and the magico-religious efforts for healing. Katerina Dysa's study, *Magical Causes of Illnesses*, examines the beliefs related to diseases caused by witchcraft and to magical healings. While exploring source material from Ukraine and Poland, from the 17th and 18th centuries, she analyses the cases of performing *maleficium* and healing through the tensions and conflicts within these religious communities. Ádám Mézes' writing, *Georg Tallar and the 1753 Vampire Hunt*, focuses on the figure of the vampire as a cause of disease in the first half of the 18th century. A medical investigation was initiated by the Habsburg court in 1753 in reaction to the panic provoked by "vampire-attacks" among Rumanians and Serbs in the Bánát region. The leading physician, Georg Tallar, summarized his experiences in his work, *Visum Repertum*, a work that looked into the causes of the hysteria from the viewpoint of an intellectual of the Enlightenment. József Gagyí, in his study *She Condemned Me, so that I Die*, deals with the explanations given for diseases and their causes in the contemporary villages of Szekler Land. While alternative causations lived alongside each other, the community gave preference to a breach of taboo rather than an explanation of disease based on bewitchment.

The second part of the volume focuses on the person of the healer and his rituals, whether they be rural healers or elite clerical or lay healers. This part provides the broadest insight into its subject, embracing case studies from the oracle of Delphi to Vietnamese shamans and the healers of the post-Soviet region.

Christa Tucza's writing, *Divination by Spirits and Spirit Mediumship in the Middle Ages*, deals with divination in trance as practiced in ancient Greece and in medieval German literature. The terminology used for persons healing and prophesying in mediumic trance came partly from Old and Middle High German, and partly it was

based on ancient Greek and Latin loan words, e.g., *pythonissa*, *engastromythia*, *ventriloquism*. Ane Ohrvik's study, *Understanding Medical Knowledge and Practice*, examines Norwegian magical manuscripts from the 18th–19th centuries called Cyprian-books or Black-books that contain charms and practical instructions for healing, and she analyses the roles of the different types of healers. Madis Arukask's writing, *Talking to Vepsian tedai*, describes the life, beliefs and magical practice of a contemporary Vepsian seer. Gábor Vargyas (*Magic and Counter-magic and the Social Position of the Bru Shaman-sorcerer*) deals with the ambivalence of the character of the shaman in the Bru tribe of Vietnam. While the figure of the shaman usually appears in scholarship as a benevolent helper, the potentials for healing and harming inevitably coexist, forming an inherent part of the social functions of the shaman. Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi's writing, *The Quran, Spirits and Bioenergy: On Heligious healing in Uzbekistan*, presents the resurgence of religious healing in Uzbekistan in the post-Soviet era. This revival was a reaction to the collapse of the health care system of the former Soviet Union which made modern medicine unavailable for major segments of the population. The study provides a description of the activities of several traditional healers who combine the use of the Quran in their practice with the terminology of modern Russian parapsychology.

The next two writings focus on the practice of official exorcism in the Church, which is functionally analogous to folk healing methods and may have been intended to provide an appropriate replacement for them. Dániel Bárth's study, *Benedictions Serving Early Modern Benedictine Medicine*, analyses a still unpublished manuscript of the Pannonhalma Abbey in Hungary written in the 17th century. The texts of the manuscript were categorized as mixed blessings, exorcisms, blessings against malevolent charms, and healing rituals. In the last group, the blessings were combined with the methods of homeopathic magic. In his study, Bárth publishes and analyses these latter texts and attempts to identify their author. Tünde Komáromi, in her study *Exorcism in the Trinity-Sergius Lavra*, summarizes the results of her fieldwork in Russia and presents the exorcisms practiced in a monastery near Moscow, giving a detailed description of the rituals and the participating clerics, touching on the role of exorcism in contemporary popular orthodoxy.

The third part of the volume focuses on the gods and saints who can restore health or punish the violation of norms with illness. Mirjam Mencej's writing, *Mythical Beings Punishing the Breaking of Taboos on Spinning*, deals with the goddess-like transcendent beings widely known in Europe who punish the violation of certain taboos, especially the prohibition of spinning on certain days, with disease or even death. This group includes Lucia, Perchta, Holle, the *Friday women* of the Slavic peoples, and, to some extent, the Fates of classical Greece. Emanuela Timotin's study, *Divine Healers in Romanian Manuscript Charms*, analyses the role of the healing saints in the MS charm-texts of the 17th–19th centuries. The most popular saints were Saint Cyprian of Antioch, Saint Nicetas, Saint Cosmas and Damian, and the archangels. In her study *Dream Healing: The Nocturnal World of Healing and Bewitchment*, Éva Pócs examines the role of dreams in a broader, pan-European perspective, highlighting cases of dream-healing that takes place spontaneously, without preparatory rituals linked to certain sacred spots; then she addresses the forms of ritual incubation, where the healer can be a god, the dead, or the fairies; and finally she deals with the dream world appearing in the legal documents of witchcraft trials. Albená Georgieva's writing, *Miraculous Healing at Sacred Places*,

presents the incubations and other healing rituals practiced in Bulgarian churches and monasteries, describing the rituals themselves and the related narratives.

The fourth part of the volume, while giving a glimpse into the toolkit of sacred and spiritual healing, guides us through the millennia of European magic. Three studies take their themes from antiquity: Nora Zergi's writing, *An Attempt to Identify Homer's "Moly" as Mandrake*, gives an explanation for a famous passage in Homer, where the god Hermes gives a plant called *moly* to Odysseus to neutralize Circe's potion. Based on the symptoms and the botanically precise descriptions of both the *moly* and the potion, the author pulls them out of the realm of myth and identifies them with real drugs.

Anna Tóth's writing, *Telesma and Stoicheion: Magical Statues in Byzantium*, presents a belief wide-spread in the late antiquity in Byzantium whose origins date back to Neoplatonic philosophy. According to this magical theory based on authentic philosophy, certain rituals can bestow statues in public spaces with the power to defend entire cities from diseases or natural disasters.

Ildikó Csepregi's study, *Pork as a Wonder Drug, or Religious Taboo as Magical Medicine*, examines a specific motif of incubation dreams that can be found both in pagan and Christian sources of the late antiquity, namely the cases where a saint or a divinity prescribes pork as medicine. Occasionally, this cure forces a Jewish patient to convert to Christianity, but pork as medicine was already present in the cult of Asclepius, as an instance of the theme where purification was enabled by means of an impure material.

The last two writings bring us back to the present. Judit Kis-Halas's study, *Soldiers of Christ on Earth and in Heavenly Jerusalem*, deals with so-called psychotronics or spirit-surgery based on case studies from Baranya county, Hungary. She describes the methods of this popular esoteric healing method, as well as its characteristic mythology and soul-concept formed under the influence of theosophy, which bears some shamanistic traits in the form of a spiritual journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. The last study, *Integrating Ancient and Modern Healing Concepts in Tandem Hypnotherapy*, is the work of psychiatrists József Vas and Noémi Császár; it presents a form of therapeutic hypnosis, which utilizes certain archaic elements of spirituality for medical purposes.

It is impossible, of course, to exhaust every possible aspect of such a ubiquitous topic in a single volume. However, the heterogeneous and colorful material provides a representative cross-section of contemporary European research, and it can bring the reader closer to the crucial questions of folk medicine.