

forms of Hungarian soul beliefs. Analyzing contemporary data about the visionary cult built around the seely whites, Julian Goodare concludes that the previous taxonomy describing early modern Scottish cosmology is inaccurate.

In connection with the belief systems and mythological reconstructions described with the help of archival and historical sources, the question of authenticity arises: what is the historical reality to which they can be related? Have such systems ever existed, or were they created by the classifying approaches of researchers? Willem de Blécourt attempts to answer these questions by presenting notions regarding the so-called double through two 20<sup>th</sup> century Dutch myth collections. Gordana Galić-Kakkonen expresses similar doubts regarding a late medieval literary travel diary when she questions whether medieval readers perceived the distinction between reality and fiction similarly to readers today. Nonetheless, several of the authors in the volume do indeed interpret their own data within the reconstructed mythological systems, be they historical or the results of contemporary research. In this regard, the most conclusive is Mirjam Mencej's study on circular movement as a universal trance technique. The dilemma of the knowability of reality mediated through narrative also comes up. C. W. von Sydow imagined the structural-morphological development of the legend as an evolutionary process from *dite* to *fabulat*. How faithfully are the original experiences conveyed in texts collected in folklore archives? Kaarina Koski's study based on 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century Finnish legends illustrates well that texts deemed unmanageable and chaotic by earlier research, when placed in the proper historical perspective, can provide valuable data about the interplay between folk ideas and Lutheran teachings that coexist in the same community. Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj utilizes Finnish archival texts in a recently collected interpretation of dream narratives.

A fundamental objective of the conference series serving as the basis for this volume was to connect Hungarian research with international scholarship. In terms of her oeuvre to date, the organizer Éva Pócs is exemplary. Her research project funded by the European Research Council proves that even by international standards she produces extremely valuable and important work. The English translation of the book is also made possible under this project.

---

*Shaman* 24 (1-2) (2016)

---

*Csaba Mészáros*

Institute of Ethnology, RCH, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

The International Society for Academic Research on Shamanism dedicated the entire 24<sup>th</sup> volume (with two issues) of the journal "Shaman" to honour professor Vilmos Voigt, a leading Hungarian scholar on Eurasian shamanism. Vilmos Voigt, in addition to being an outstanding researcher of comparative religious studies, is the author of more than one hundred articles on shamanism and closely related topics. He is also currently a member of the editorial board of the journal.

Until his retirement, Voigt Vilmos lectured at the Department of Folklore Studies on the

Faculty of Humanities at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. For nearly three decades (since 1979), he was the chair of the department and the head of the Institute of Ethnography at the university. In 2010, he became Professor Emeritus. Despite his retirement, he continues to be active in publishing articles, attending conferences and lecturing.

The articles in the current volume of *Shaman*, in honour of the 75-year-old Vilmos Voigt, reflect on his diversified research interest. Among many other topics, he is a renowned expert on Siberian shamanic practices, the philology of folklore texts, the phenomenology of religion, the literature of Finno-Ugric peoples and semiotics. The fifteen articles cover a wide range of research topics encompassing a large spatial and temporal framework. The reader is invited on an exciting journey starting from 10<sup>th</sup> century Norse mythology to contemporary voodoo practices in Togo. Despite this extensive scope in terms of temporal and geographical frame, the majority of the articles focus on 20<sup>th</sup> century shamanic practices and indigenous worldviews in Northern-Eurasia, illustrating why Siberia has always occupied an eminent position in academic discourses on shamanism.

Research work on shamanism usually faces two interrelated epistemological problems. Firstly, is the methodology of religious studies and anthropological fieldwork appropriate for providing outsiders with insight on such a subtle phenomenon as religious experience? Can ethnographic descriptions based on a rationalist academic discourse be thick enough to allow outsiders/non-believers to give a precise account on ecstasy, trance or on the meaning of rituals? Secondly, are academic discourse and its objectivist view on religious practices suited to transmit the essence of shamanic experience?

Vilmos Voigt's oeuvre and the articles published in this recent volume of *Shaman* address and answer these two interrelated questions in a classic manner. Although the epistemological problems raised above cannot be easily resolved and settled reassuringly (if they can be at all), anthropologists, folklorists and philologists can endow us with the rich social, economic, cultural and linguistic contexts of shamanic practices and worldview. These contexts may not directly explain what religious experience is, but they do illuminate the embeddedness of religious/shamanic practices.

An excellent example of this approach is György Kara's contribution to this present volume. While interpreting an Ekhirit Buryat shamanist song, an invocation recorded in 1932, the author adds to the article 110 endnotes on fifteen pages in order to help readers "recall the spirit of an early twentieth century Buryat shamanist invocation" (p. 27.). In a very similar manner, Clive Tolley offers a meticulous study on the possibly related notions of *Vétt* (lid, shield) and *Vitt* (charm) in old Norse and its relation to the Scottish *Wecht* (winnowing drum) and Saami shaman drums, shedding light on the possible links between various Nordic cultures. While giving several possible answers to the question raised, the author creatively combines a "panoply of uncertainties" and provides the reader with lots of tiny details on Norse philology. In a similar manner, Virág Dyekiss also relies on a philological approach when analysing Nganasan prose narratives on historical shamans.

The articles in the journal do not merely raise philological questions relying on the analysis of texts. Art Leete and Juha Pentikäinen (working with written sources) follow a diachronic approach by scrutinizing the reliability of dissimilar (academic, fictional, archival, oral) sources on shamanism. Based on fieldwork in addition to historical context, a number of authors describe the highly varying social background of today's shamanic and neoshamanic practices (Montgomery, Subramaniam and Edo, Valk, Wettstein,

Yamada). Maurizio Ali's article, using a delicate personal tone, cites and reflects on excerpts from his fieldwork diary, drawing the reader's attention to the complexity of transferring personal experiences on shamanic rituals to academic discourses.

---

NAGYNÉ BATÁRI, Zsuzsanna: *Tájegység születik: Szabadtéri kiállítások rendezésének kérdései az Észak-magyarországi falu tájegység esettanulmánya alapján* [An exhibition is born. Questions of preparing open air exhibitions based on the case study of the Northern Hungarian village regional unit]. 2014, Szentendre: Skanzen, 459.

---

*Katalin Vargha*

Institute of Ethnology, RCH, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

This volume is an introduction to open air museology at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on a case study on the preparation of the Northern Hungarian Village regional unit, opened in 2010, and to date the newest unit of the Hungarian Open Air Museum. Zsuzsanna Batári, curator of this regional unit, discusses various theoretical and methodological questions specific to contemporary open air museology based on this case study, guiding us through all stages of planning and the actual realization of the exhibition in question.

In the opening chapters, Batári outlines the changing environment and expectations that open air museums face. At the core of these lie the notion of the anthropologized museum. It is no longer sufficient to present rural architecture and interiors; museologists must now apply various methods to 'make them come alive'. Interactivity, sustainability and edutainment are a few of the keywords that new museology has to address. After the introduction, the preparation of the exhibition is discussed in six chapters, starting from the drawing of the concept, and finishing with interpretive methods complementing the finished exhibition.

The first chapter discusses the drawing (and redrawing) of the concept of a regional unit. It includes a detailed description of all the buildings and other elements of settlement that comprise the North Hungarian regional unit (the manor, cave dwellings, a common yard with three dwellings, a gentry yard, a small chapel etc.), also touching upon elements from the original concept which had been omitted in the meantime. The next chapter focuses on the detailed preparation of the concept of a regional unit. It reflects on the possibilities and difficulties of selecting houses and outbuildings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This chapter also touches upon the criteria of authenticity and the possibility of creating an authentic copy or reconstruction if the original building cannot be moved for some reason.

The third chapter deals with various methods and sources of ethnographic research needed for planning an exhibition. The author emphasizes the considerable change this process has undergone during the past decades and the vast amount of new sources available for research, including digital databases of ethnographic articles and archive photographs. The subsequent chapter focuses on different aspects of collecting objects for the museum. Methods of collection have also changed, but the most interesting segments reflect on specific practical and theoretical issues. One example could be the