



TEMENOS

NORDIC JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Temenos Vol. 57 No. 2 (2021), 147–9

DOI: 10.33356/temenos.112114

Editorial Note

What does Temenos – the Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion – mean to you? As we take on the task as editors of Temenos, we, the new editors – Minna Opas and Sofia Sjö – have had reason to reflect on this question. Neither of us accepted the task of editor without some hesitation. This hesitation is partly linked to the role Temenos has played for us – it is an important outlet for Nordic research and an essential forum in which Nordic scholars come together. As scholars, we want to ensure the journal continues to fulfil its purpose. Our hesitation is also linked to the question of what we have to offer. How can we guarantee the continued high quality of the journal in the future? How and in which direction should we develop it?

Fortunately, we are not alone in this process or with these questions. Temenos has a fantastic editorial board and editorial team, with many active readers and contributors. We hope we can continue the dialogue with all of you. If you wish to contribute to the journal or have ideas for thematic issues, please let us know. Similarly, if you have any thoughts on new sections, topics, or areas of discussion with which Temenos might engage, do contact us. Although we have a great deal of expertise in the study of religion, it is you, the readers and contributors, who really make this journal what it is. We hope we can continue developing Temenos with you!

This issue not only has two new editors; we also have a new book review editor. We welcome Alexandra Bergholm to the team! If there is a book you want to review, or if you have a book coming out that you would like reviewed, please get in touch with Alexandra! Copyeditor Pekka Tolonen, Editorial Secretary Malin Fredriksson, and Language Editor Rupert Moreton will continue their work in the editorial team. We look forward to working with you!

We start this issue by returning to the conversation started in the previous issue. An editorial mistake meant that Ruth Illman's and Mercédesz Czimbalmos's response to Margit Warburg's comment on their article in Temenos 56/2 is published in this issue instead of the previous one. Måns Broo sends his apologies for this glitch in the editorial process. However, this discussion is just as interesting and current now as then, for it highlights

the challenging question of what is novel in research, and how we engage with previous investigations and fields unfamiliar to us.

This response is followed by four articles. We begin with Sonja Hukantaival's study, which explores the international aspects of Finnish folk magic. Hukantaival has compared objects in two Finnish museums with objects from Nordiska museet in Sweden and the Pitt Rivers Museum in the UK to reveal resemblances and differences in the collections. Many similarities are identified which can at least partly be explained by the historical networks between people, but one can also find variations in practices and beliefs. These variations highlight the dynamic nature of folk magic traditions. Nor must one forget the role museums' collection and curation policies play. The varied formation processes of European museum collections make comparisons between them difficult, but the connections found by Hukantaival are still noteworthy.

In the following article Tero Pasanen explores the Spiritism board, *Yhteyslauta*, designed in the mid-1970s by the Finnish occultist and neo-Nazi Pekka Siitoin. The board represents an unexplored occult subchapter of Finnish gaming culture and the Finnish esoteric tradition. *Yhteyslauta's* game-like elements are introduced, and the game is related to other similar games. Pasanen also introduces Pekka Siitoin and his thinking, and studies the themes and images of the board, situating them in the context of Siitoin's vernacular esoteric doctrine and cosmogony. *Yhteyslauta* can be interpreted as an introductory tool for acquiring the knowledge required to gain spiritual ordination. However, Siitoin never disclosed whether *Yhteyslauta* was used as a medium in his alleged meetings with Christ, Lucifer, and Satan-Moloch.

Encounters with spirits are also the focus of the third article in this issue of *Temenos*. Southwest Finnish folklore, recorded in the early twentieth century, contains many legends about local spirits. They are part of belief systems expressing social norms and regulations. Many of the legends include information that helps locate the places where spirits have been said to appear. John Björkman studies those locations in his article, exploring their place in the structure of village society, using historic village maps. The results shed new light on the nature of borders and boundaries in folklore and vernacular belief, as well as on the view of the social meaning of local spirits.

The fourth article, written by Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen and Kirstine Helboe Johansen, studies how Christmas in schools and public service media for children involves negotiation and renewal of Christian cultural heritage. The studied cases, from Norway and Denmark, illustrate how the

institutions involved seek to realize community. Community is approached differently in different settings; it is either understood restoratively as a process in which children become part of an existing societal community or constructively, as establishing an inclusive community across cultural and religious divides. The writers show how activities associated with Christianity are generally framed in a language of 'museumification', not as part of a living religious practice. Whereas Islam is positioned as a 'religious other', Christianity – understood as culture – facilitates creative heritage making, establishing community across religious divides.

Together, the articles in this volume highlight many current topics for the study of religion in the Nordic countries and beyond. Esotericism and aspects of magic and the belief in spirits are very much on the agenda, but so is exploring the networks and places shaping beliefs and practices. Christian cultural heritage in turn ties research on politics, migration, and education in both Nordic and broader European perspectives together.

We hope you will enjoy this issue!

Sofia Sjö and Minna Opas

