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# REVIEW IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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KÁROLI GÁSPÁR UNIVERSITY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH

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## PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

In 2015 we recognized the necessity to launch an English-language edition of our journal in publication for 11 years. Our decision was heavily influenced by the tendency of several Hungarian journals to release an English version. Some years ago we published *Science of Religion in Hungary* (Budapest, 2011), however, it was a special issue in English for the participants of the International Association for the History of Religions conference held in Budapest. We have recently become aware that an increasing number of contributions and studies in English worth publishing are submitted by scholars of religious science year by year. Thus it seems evident that we join the wide-ranging international project of religious science research. Some studies published in this issue are based on contributions to different conferences, while other can be seen as papers suitable for such occasions.

The English-language edition of the journal is a forum for Hungarian scholars who intend to focus on mainstream religious science. At the same time it is also a forum for international authors, thereby facilitating the exchange of ideas and, perhaps, scholarly discussions about important issues in the field.

For the time being we are planning to publish an English-language edition annually. Since each issue in English will contain papers written in that year, they will serve as a supplement without separate units, offering a yearly survey or summary of Hungarian scholarship in this discipline. The issues are planned to be released at the end of the year in question.

We hope that the *Review in Religious Studies*, in its 12th year of publication in 2016, will still meet the readers' expectations and it will attract more and more readers in the future, thanks to the English-language editions. On the whole, our aim is to facilitate the participation of scholars in the international research conducted in the field.

20 December 2015

*Prof. Péter S. Szabó*  
Editor-in-Chief



# NEW PERSPECTIVES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

BALÁZS MEZEI

## INTRODUCTION: GREAT CHAPTERS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

The study of religion has a fairly long history. Depending on how we define “religion,” we may set the beginning of the study of religion around the time when philosophy emerged. Philosophy, as Plato defined it, was meant to practice “service to the god,” that is to investigate problems of what we call religion today.<sup>1</sup> However, the Greeks did not possess a word that can be faithfully translated as “religion.” We needed the Latin notion of “religio” to synthesize various earlier meanings related to religion. In other words, before the fulfilment of some linguistic and semantic presuppositions, the study of religion in the proper sense could not begin. It was the achievement of Christianity that a synthetic meaning of religion emerged in the Latin West; and it was the consequence of various theological endeavors to find a good definition of religion which led to the attempts to create the study of religion in a more proper sense.

In particular, the beginnings of the study of religion reach back to the emergence of the notion of religion only loosely bound to Christianity. There is a parallelism between the appearance of the study of religion on the one hand and the spectacular change in the logical place of the term “religion” on the other hand. The more “religion” lost its strict identity with Christianity during the 16th–17th centuries, the more it became a general term, a genus, on the basis of which a number of species could be defined: Judaism, Islam, natural religion – and among these Christianity itself.

Yet the scientific study of religion presupposes the proper development of another term, that of science. While the study of religion belonged to theology for many centuries, the great geographical discoveries made it possible to treat the problem of religion in a historical perspective. This perspective was closely linked to the emerging modern notion of nature. Just as nature acquired a status independent of grace, it had at the same time a historical character as well. “History” appears here

<sup>1</sup> See Socrates’ Apology, 23b, 30a, in Plato, *The Complete Works*, Ed. by John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), p. 22 and 28.

as an alternative to the transcendent origin or direct divine intervention, because what evolves historically may be considered separately from the transcendent order. Thus Hume was able to write a lengthy work on “the natural history of religion” in which the questions of faith were neglected and only a certain development of a supposed “natural religion” was considered.<sup>2</sup> Kant, Fichte, Schelling or Hegel, among other influential philosophers of the 19th century, developed a philosophical, in this sense “scientific,” study of religion. This development announced the subsequent flourishing of the study of religion in a more specialized sense.

The great paradigms of modern and contemporary science have surfaced in the study of religion in a number of ways. During the 18th and 19th centuries, various approaches were developed, such as the history, the psychology, the sociology, the phenomenology, or the hermeneutics of religion.<sup>3</sup> These paradigms usually followed some characteristic scientific schools of the period. For instance, when sociology was outlined in the works of Émile Durkheim,<sup>4</sup> the sociology of religion emerged as a new form of scholarship. We can observe similar phenomena with respect to other areas of research. On this basis, a general rule may be formulated which runs as follows: in the modern and contemporary study of religion it was not a *sui generis* understanding of religion which determined the corresponding methodology. Rather, methodologies developed with respect to other areas of investigation have been applied to the study of religion in a more or less consistent fashion.<sup>5</sup>

Today, we witness new efforts to use scientific results in the study of religion. My task here will be to consider and evaluate briefly these efforts. I shall argue that, these efforts notwithstanding, the study of religion still exhibits a certain resistance to being fully exhausted by certain scientific paradigms, while these paradigms are important for reaching a better understanding of the mysterious phenomenon we call religion.

## PARADIGMS AND MISTAKES

According to Jaques Wardenburg, there have been two main periods in the study of religion: the classical period reaching to 1945, and the period thereafter embracing

<sup>2</sup> David Hume, *A Dissertation on the Passions: The Natural History of Religion*, Oxford, Clarendon Press; New York, Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Kerber (Hrsg.), *Der Begriff der Religion*, München, Kindt, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Émile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, le système totémique en Australie*, 5. éd, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> Peter B. Clarke – Peter Byrne, *Religion Defined and Explained*, London, The Macmillan Press, 1993.



the present.<sup>6</sup> In the classical period, the most influential paradigm in the study of religion was offered by the historical school. Nevertheless, “historical paradigm” may have different meanings. We can label not only a simple narrative of a given positive religion historical, but an overall theory of the evolution of religions as well. “Historicism,” on the other hand, can denote the efforts to exclude any reference to the presence and efficacy of *sui generis* logical structures in the development of religions. A balanced historical approach would be one which allows the secondary importance of logical structures in religion yet maintains the prime importance of the empirical study of positive, i. e. historically accessible, religious forms.

In addition to the historical approach, we can list a number of further paradigms in the study of religion, which imply in some way the historical dimension of religions yet their emphasis lays somewhere else.<sup>7</sup> In these paradigms, religion is considered as an expression of sociological, psychological, anthropological, or economic states of affairs. That is to say, while in the historical paradigm the unique nature of religious phenomena is maintained to some extent, in other paradigms “religion” is not considered to be a *sui generis* realm; religion is seen merely as a secondary expression of processes the nature of which has little to do with religion. Whatever is called religion in these approaches, it is merely a moment, a part, or perhaps only an epiphenomenon of underlying processes of some fundamental realms of social reality.

The emergence of the phenomenology of religion at the end of the 19th century signaled the advance of a promising new approach to the study of religion. In this paradigm, religious phenomena are recognized as moments of a *sui generis* terrain. Religion is not only of its own kind, but it is at the same time the central phenomenon of human existence. This notion of religion is expressed essentially in Rudolf Otto’s notion of the holy.<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Heiler’s groundbreaking understanding of prayer as the central phenomenon of all religious forms, or Mircea Eliade’s term of the sacred as a similarly central category, are based on the fundamental work of Otto.<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> These experts and their works point out that, in what we call the phenomenology of religion, the historical approach is strongly present. Religious phenomena are conceived first by rigorously historical means, so that their form, type, or essence – the *sui generis* religious phenomenon – can be grasped. The

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Wardenburg, *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Vols 1-2., Berlin, New York, Amsterdam, Mouton, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Woodhead – Paul Heelas, *Religion in Modern Times, An Interpretive Anthology*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige*, München, C. H. Beck, 1987.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Heiler, *Das Gebet, Eine religionsgeschichtliche und religionspsychologische Untersuchung*. München, Reinhardt, 1918.

<sup>10</sup> Mircea Eliade et al. (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York, N.Y., Macmillan, 1987.

hermeneutics of religion, as suggested by Eliade in his later career,<sup>11</sup> is a further development of the phenomenological paradigm. Eliade and his followers understood religion as the methodologically central notion in the cultural interpretation of fundamental human phenomena.

When I speak of mistakes in the various paradigms in the study of religion, I refer to two important criteria. First, the basic mistake I identify here consists in the *reductive nature* of the paradigms I mentioned.<sup>12</sup> The abundance and variety of religious phenomena throughout the history of mankind suggest that what we face here is not a secondary phenomenon or an epiphenomenon of more fundamental biological or cultural processes. Let me refer here to Richard Dawkins's view as one representing a fundamentally reductive interpretation. As Dawkins claims, religion is not only a placebo, but it is directly detrimental to the development of culture and science.<sup>13</sup> However, human history is so much imbued with religious phenomena that the emergence of modernity as something fundamentally anti-religious seems, on this basis, counterintuitive. If this view is counterintuitive, we may still be skeptical about the alternative view which holds that religion is the driving force of human development. If not a driving force, religion is certainly present in a positive fashion in our history. Thus a reductive approach to religion would be an obstacle to the understanding of this phenomenon. Inasmuch as the paradigms I mentioned are reductive, they are incapable of deciphering the mystery of religion in the proper sense.

There are also specific mistakes in the particular paradigms. The historical paradigm is defective, inasmuch as it disregards the logical side of religious phenomena. By "logical side" I mean the structurally constant characteristics of religious phenomena, for instance the ones described by Gerardus van der Leeuw.<sup>14</sup> The sociology of religion disregards the fact, central in most religious formations, that transcendence cannot be fully explained by reducing it to social, psychological, political, or economic usefulness. The heart of religion is a reference pointing to a referent radically different from the reference itself. The psychology of religion can be of different kinds – from an extremely reductive sort, such as the Freudian theory, to the more complex approach of C. G. Jung.<sup>15 16</sup> These approaches, however,

<sup>11</sup> Mircea Eliade, *What is Religion?*, Edinburgh and New York, T and T. Clark, Seabury Press, 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Clarke – Byrne, *Religion Defined and Explained*.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion*, Tübingen, Mohr (Siebeck), 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Die Zukunft einer Illusion*, Leipzig, Wien und Zürich, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1927.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, Chicago, Ferguson, 1964.

can lead to genuine results only in so far as their methodologies allow the existence of a *sui generis* religious phenomenon.

During the 1960's Mircea Eliade offered an overview of the important paradigms in the study of religion from the turn of the 19th century to the last decades of the 20th century. Eliade emphatically refers to 1912 as the most important year when Emile Durkheim published the *Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* and Wilhelm Schmidt finished the first volume of his monumental work, *Ursprung der Gottesidee*, which was to be completed only forty years later with vols. XI and XII appearing posthumously in 1954 and 1955. In the same year, Raffaele Pettazzoni brought out his first important monograph, *La religion primitive in Sardegna*, and C. G. Jung published *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*. Sigmund Freud was correcting the proofs of *Totem und Tabu*, to be issued in book form the following year.<sup>17</sup>

For Eliade, historical, sociological, psychological, social-anthropological, mythological and ritual schools are the important paradigms in the study of religion. Eliade adds a special emphasis to Wilhelm Schmidt's monumental work,<sup>18</sup> Pettazzoni's "general science of religion,"<sup>19</sup> and Georges Dumézil's theory of the Indo-European religions.<sup>20</sup> Concerning Schmidt's paradigm, Eliade seems to accept that, deep in religious phenomena, a certain notion of a higher source of religion can be found, a source which surfaced even in the most ancient times in the form of a monotheistic or henotheistic conception. With respect to Pettazzoni's approach, Eliade emphasizes the strict historical methodology which also Eliade himself followed. Dumézil's methodology is again relatively close to Eliade's understanding, because Dumézil stresses the importance of the common theoretical structure behind various historical developments among Indo-European religions. In Eliade's view, the phenomenology of religion, as represented by van der Leeuw or Otto, is also decisively important for the study of religion.

Accordingly, the question of the origin of religion cannot be answered merely in historical terms. There is a historically evolving yet phenomenologically manifest structure of religions which point to the occurrence, central to any religion, of a hierophany or theophany, as Eliade terms it. The emergence of a reality radically distinct from what is known to the given community is the source of religion. Theophanies are varied yet they communicate a higher form of life and being, a higher level of existence, as a fact and an obligation at the same time. This "primordial revelation," as Eliade calls this source, constitutes the origin of all religious forms. Yet there are historical developments and an exchange of ideas and practices

<sup>17</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Quest*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1969, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Wilhelm Schmidt, *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee, Eine historisch-kritische und positive Studie*, 1–12, Münster, Aschendorff, 1912–1955.

<sup>19</sup> Raffaele Pettazzoni, *Essays on the history of religions*, trans. H. J. Rose, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1967.

<sup>20</sup> Georges Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée I, II, III*, Paris, Gallimard, 1995.

among religions. Thus the study of religion is supposed to move zigzag in order to develop the proper balance between a phenomenology and a history of religion. In this way, which Eliade terms “total hermeneutics,” we are able to develop the study of religion which is the central discipline in the entire realm of the humanities.

A criticism of Eliade’s “total hermeneutics” can be developed from three aspects. First, the historical approach can criticize the total character of this hermeneutics as the residue of an underlying, yet inexplicit philosophy of religion. Second, Eliade’s approach does not make explicit the naturalness of religious ideas and thus confuses a quasi-mystical theory of theophanies with the exploration of the natural sources of religion in the human brain. Third, a philosophical criticism can be developed by pointing out that the basic terms Eliade applies are philosophical and are thus derived from a merely conceptual thinking. His types are not properly developed in the empirical sense and the often purely logical status of his ideas is not clarified sufficiently.

## THE MEME HYPOTHESIS

Before going over to the discussion of the role and importance of the theory of memes in the study of religion, let me point out the theoretical place of such a theory. The classical approaches to the study of religion focused especially on documents, archeological facts, rituals, artistic monuments, and their comparative interpretations. In contradistinction to these approaches, the phenomenological paradigms emphasize the existence of a quasi-Platonic universe of religious phenomena, a universe to be discovered by means of a specific philosophical methodology, such as observation, intuition, and hermeneutical analysis. Some paradigms, such as that of Eliade, combined the two approaches to a certain extent, maintaining however the latent yet decisive role of a philosophical and phenomenological understanding of religion. The strictly historical approaches rejected the plausibility of a phenomenological approach and insisted at the meticulous historical-empirical investigation of facts and their direct implications.

In the century-long debate between these approaches, the idea of a theory of memes appears to open a new possibility. The theory of memes is not based on humanistic and historical investigations, neither is it apparently bound to a certain *a priori* philosophical structure. Parallel to the theory of genes, the theory of memes proposes a new understanding of the mechanism of cultural transmission. That is to say, the theory of memes is not so much about the *contents* of religious phenomena as rather about the *ways* such contents are transferred from one individual or one generation to the other. If there is an idea of God, the theory of memes explains the mechanism in which this idea – understood as a meme – is transmitted.

What is a meme? The Oxford English Dictionary offers the following definition: “meme (mi:m), n. biol. (shortened from *mimeme* ... that which is imitated, after GENE n.) An element of a culture that may be considered to be passed on by non-genetic means, esp. imitation”.<sup>21</sup> In Susan Blackmore’s words:

“The term meme was coined by Richard Dawkins, Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*. As examples he suggested ‘tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches.’ Memes are habits, skills, songs, stories, or any other kind of information that is copied from person to person. Memes, like genes, are replicators. That is, they are information that is copied with variation and selection. Because only some of the variants survive, memes (and hence human cultures) evolve. Memes are copied by imitation, teaching and other methods, and they compete for space in our memories and for the chance to be copied again. Large groups of memes that are copied and passed on together are called co-adapted meme complexes, or memplexes.”<sup>22</sup>

As to the significance of memetics for the theory of religion, already Dawkins suggests that some religious ideas, such as eternal damnation or salvation, has a “copy me” feature, which ensures the transmitting of the idea from one individual to the other or from one generation to the next one. The efficiency of a meme can be measured by its success of being passed on throughout the centuries. In this sense, religious memes are the most successful ones in our known history. The notion of a god is perhaps the oldest idea we have in culture, and still the most popular one – in its variety of forms and contents.

Individual religious memes, according to Dawkins and Blackmore, form memplexes, structured collection of memes, such as the world religions, or lower level ideological forms, such as fashion in a certain time span. The survival ability of memes is infused into the memplexes, though the latter’s survival power must be of a different kind. For instance, the cult of Mithras during the first centuries of our epoch contained a number of features that were to play an important role in Christianity as well, such as the iconographical and theological identification of Mithras with the Sun. Yet the cult of Mithras vanished after two centuries of flourishing, while Christianity proved to be successful for more than two millennia. This difference between the two forms suggests that memplexes have higher

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Susan Blackmore in *Evolution and Memes: The human brain as a selective imitation device*. Originally appeared in *Cybernetics and Systems*, Vol 32:1, 225-255. Philadelphia, PA.: Taylor and Francis, 2001. Cf. also Susan J. Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, Oxford [England], New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.susanblackmore.co.uk/memetics/about%20memes.htm> Accessed 13.06.2016.

level capabilities than individual memes. The survival value of memplexes is similar to the survival value of individual memes, but there are additional factors resulting in a different value.

This leads us to the question whether the survival value of individual religious memes and memplexes can be clearly measured and established. Now there is a lot of confusion in this respect resulting from the works of the first authors writing on memes. In Dawkins's arguments, we find the following ambiguity: On the one hand, Dawkins tries to identify religious memes with a certain capacity of being useful for individuals and communities. Usefulness means here the capacity of physical survival. Psychological advantages count inasmuch as they help physical survival. On the other hand, Dawkins and his followers have to face the fact that religious formations contain features obviously lacking a survival value, such as the propensity of religions to form artistic beauty or carry out ascetic practices. Take for instance the fairly general phenomenon of prayer in its variety of forms: in order that the prayer as a meme can survive, it is supposed to be useful in ways pointing far beyond the mere realm of a placebo effect. Religious memes can be distinguished from other cultural memes just by the former's characteristic of lacking *prima facie* usefulness. Yet religions not only survived but even determined the history of mankind from its beginnings until and even beyond the emergence of Western modernity.

Without giving a detailed analysis of other problems affecting the theory of memes, let me examine the problem I wish to identify as the central one here. This problem is the obvious tension between an understanding of memes as mere replicators and as content type units of cultural evolution. The tension consists in this that if memes are replicators of useful cultural solutions, then they are not about a *what* but about a *how*; yet the distinctive feature of religious ideas and forms is precisely their striking distance from common sense practical solutions. To mention again the example of prayer: in a number of everyday situations, prayer does not seem to be able to help in an average sense. In killing an animal, winning a battle, finding drinking water, or finding the shelter in a storm, the attitude characteristic of prayer may be an obvious obstacle. In spite of this obvious state of affairs, prayer is the most widespread religious behavior in most forms of religion.

Thus, in order to understand the function of memes and memplexes it is not enough to analyze their common sense survival value. We need to be able to find a way to a content type analysis. Contents – such as the specific beliefs and their dogmatic building in religious forms – contribute to the ability of spreading, being copied, and thus to the historical survival of certain religious forms. Just to mention another example: Muslim theology is apparently simpler and perhaps more conceivable than Christian theology. In Islam we find the clear notion of one God, and this notion lacks the mystical ambiguities present in a Trinitarian

theology. Yet Islam, while very successful on a historical scale, has not been able to fully overcome Christianity. From the perspective of utility, Islam appears to have a higher survival value than Christianity. Yet even in Africa, Christianity successfully defends its position against Islam in a number of countries.

Thus a content type analysis and its proper methodology need to be added to the theory of memes if we want to rescue this theory from trivial contradictions. We need a *theological memetics* in order to decide about the reasons of the survival of certain religious forms. A theological memetics needs to be built on comparative religion, that is to say on the results of the classical approaches to the study of religion. In this respect I stress the importance of the notion of God. Just as the practice of prayer is universal in religions, so the notion of a God or some understanding of the absolute is the generally acknowledged center of religious beliefs. Primitive versions of God, such as animism or manism, raise the same problem: we need to answer the question of the origin of religion, not in its common sense forms of practical utility, but more importantly in its characteristic distance from any apparent usefulness.

In this respect, the scientific study of religion needs the assistance not only of comparative religion and comparative theology, but the philosophy of religion as well. By philosophy of religion I mean not only the analytical approach to particular questions on the fringes of theology – such as the existence and attributes of God – but rather a philosophy raising the question of the meaning of divinity in human thought. Let me mention again Rudolf Otto, whose analysis of the holy throws light on the notion of God. For Otto, God in its explicit form is derivative of an idea of the human mind, an idea he terms the holy. In Otto's interpretation the holy is a Kantian idea of the mind, the content of which can be described by exploring its moments. This philosophical approach is not merely a conceptual analysis but an analysis of a *sui generis* religious experience as well.

I consider the merit of the theory of memes that it offers an approach to the problem of religion different from the classical approaches. However, I need to emphasize that this approach is viable if and only if it takes into consideration the most important results of the classical approaches – the historical ones and the philosophical and phenomenological results at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> I offer a kind of philosophical theology in my forthcoming *Radical Revelation: A Philosophical Approach* (Bloomsbury, 2017) where I offer a thoroughgoing content type analysis of various religious notions.

## THE POSSIBLE WORLDS OF RELIGION

I conceive the importance of a further approach to the study of religion, the Possible Worlds Theory, in the context of the above approaches. Possible worlds are ontological complexes close to the actual world in a certain respect. Possible worlds, moreover, have a consistency similar to the actual world, or perhaps even more so: in some worlds, the structures of necessity, known from our actual world, are of a stricter kind. Thus there is a world in which contingency is reduced to a state close to zero, that is such a world is very close to being necessary.

As to the development of the precise methodology of possible worlds semantics in the study of religion, we still need some time until research offers convincing arguments. An important author to be mentioned here is Sir Karl Popper, who developed the theory of what he termed “World 3,” the realm of values.<sup>24</sup> Here I need to make a distinction between applying possible worlds semantics to some religious questions, such as the existence of God – as among others Alvin Plantinga<sup>25</sup> or Steven Weinberg<sup>26</sup> did – and applying possible worlds semantics to the *sui generis* religious phenomenon itself. The two perspectives are close to one another, yet it is the latter I wish to emphasize here. There are possible religious worlds as variations of positive religions. I suggest that such a methodology can be fruitful in a number of ways. First, possible worlds semantics helps us develop conceptual variations of religious memes and memplexes. We can start with a positive occurrence of a meme or a memplex in a historically existing positive religion and establish in a meticulous procedure the possible variations of such a phenomenon. Second, we can check the occurrence of some of these variations in positive religions known to us from research and description. Third, we are able, by applying possible worlds semantics, to see the logical relationship between various religious phenomena and their ramifications. Lastly and more importantly, by applying this method, we presuppose and discover at the same time the *sui generis universe of religion* in which a mathematically infinite number of religious worlds are possible. The total universe of religion is the world which contains all possible versions of religious facts, structures and contents.

I emphasize that the intellectual, moral, or historical value of a religious meme or memplex, or even a religious world, is not decided by merely establishing their actual existence. There are a lot of possible religious worlds existing paral-

<sup>24</sup> Karl R. Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography*, La Salle, Ill., Open Court, 1976.

<sup>25</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1974.

<sup>26</sup> Steven Weinberg, *Living in the Multiverse*, in B. L. Gordon – W. A. Dembski (eds), *The Nature of Nature, Examining the Role of Naturalism in Science*, Wilmington, Delaware, ISI, 2011, 547 – 557.



lel to each other, but their amplitude of reality varies. To express this notion in a different way, let me use the words contingency and necessity. Possible worlds display a certain proportion of necessity and contingency. In some possible worlds, contingent features are stronger, while in other worlds we find a more robust presence of necessity. Contingency and necessity express the level of coherence; the more coherent a world is, the more necessity it contains in its structures and contents; and the less coherence a world possesses, the more contingency it has in its structures and contents. This approach helps us answer the intriguing question as to the truth value of certain states of affairs existing parallel to one another in our universe of religion. In the religious universe, truth value can be decided on the basis of coherence, contingency, and necessity.

The use of possible worlds semantics in the study of religion is at its beginnings. In contradistinction to the merely historical approach to religion and the phenomenology of religion, the possible worlds theory of religion locates the methodological problem of the study of religion in the realm of a strong scientific theory. It remains an open question what sort of ontological status certain complexes of religious propositions possess. I do not wish to answer this question here; suffice it to say that positive religions, such as Christianity or Islam, are contingent exemplifications of a possible form of religion. These versions ideally point to an ultimate, strictly necessary religion. This religion we may *not* know in its precise structures and contents; yet positive religions and their variations point to its existence and even to some of its contents.

Let me explain the idea of the possible worlds theory of religion by using again the example of prayer. I define prayer as an act of will to realize a certain state of affairs, which is not available by common sense means. The state of affairs we aim at in prayer is not something illogical, impossible, or absurd; yet it cannot be reached by everyday means, and so prayer is used to effect such a state of affairs – for instance, the recovery from an apparently fatal illness. The act of will can range from slightly articulate (such as a desire or wish) to the kind of petition which clearly aims at the realization of the act of will. Realization of an aim can vary again from petty everyday matters to an ultimate change in the status of the universe, as it were. The mode of realization can again be very different, beginning from simple petitions to the decision of self-sacrifice. If there are certain positive modes of prayer, there are possible modes; and if there are religions characterized by the predominance of a certain positive kind of prayer, there are possible religions characterized by possible modes of prayer. Petitionary prayer is perhaps the most common form of prayer present in possible religious worlds; but there are modes of prayer the typical expression of which is closer to a command than to a petition. Finally, a prayer is made possible by the characteristic distance between possibility and actuality in a given

situation; but to every such world there belongs a world in which this distance approximates zero.<sup>27</sup>

## QUANTUM RELIGION

The theory of possible worlds is related to another realm in contemporary science, that of certain consequences of quantum theory. Quantum theory is a theory about physics, but its implications contain claims about fundamental epistemological and ontological issues. Some of these issues concern our subject matter. Yet in its technical details, quantum theory is still quite far away from the problems of religious studies. Thus we need to be cautious when we speak about the possible application of some of the suggestions of quantum theory to the study of religion; a precise clarification is needed as to the specific claims and their relation to our subject matter.

The study of religion, however, is the study of the ultimate horizon of human beings. This horizon can be investigated in a number of ways and it appears to be important to face the implications of one of the most significant developments in contemporary science. By keeping ourselves among the confines of the least controversial claims of quantum theory, we can minimize the distrust raised by a number of mystery-mongering attempts on this field. By considering some of the best scholars of quantum theory, such as B. d’Espagnat<sup>28</sup> or Stephen M. Barr,<sup>29</sup> we may recognize that the implications of quantum theory entail claims of religious nature – claims about God, the creation of the world, or the nature of our existence.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Possible worlds semantics in the study of religion may make use of literary and similar sort of products dealing with religious phenomena. For instance, popular film series, such as the *Game of Thrones*, apply a low level possible worlds analysis of religious phenomena when they use free variations of empirically known phenomena. Of course, in a literary context the interpretation of such phenomena may become one-sided and even arbitrary. Yet the very idea of considering empirical religious phenomena as possible examples of a freely variable religious essence, such as the essence of sacrifice or prayer, show a way we can follow on a much higher methodological level and in a strict scholarly sense to conceive the core of such phenomena.

<sup>28</sup> Bernard d’Espagnat, *The Quantum Theory and Reality*, *Scientific American*, Vol. 241, 1979, 158–181.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

<sup>30</sup> See also W. Schommers (ed.), *Quantum Theory and Pictures of Reality: Foundations, Interpretations, and New Aspects*, With contributions by B. d’Espagnat ... [et al.], Berlin; New York, Springer-Verlag, 1989.

These claims, however, need to be converted into claims about the scholarly study of religion. It seems that this task is far from being impossible. Quantum theory has implications pointing to a number of propositions commonsensical in many positive religions. The study of religion is not only the study of some positive forms of religion, but also the study of possible forms, probable forms, and their structures in the mind. Quantum theory is about such structures and their possible and probable forms entailing propositions about the ultimate horizon of knowledge and reality, which religion is most importantly concerned with. In my view, therefore, the relevance of at least some implications of quantum theory is quite obvious for the study of religion. While this relevance concerns in the first instance general epistemological and ontological questions, some further considerations show that questions of contents – such as existence of God, the human mind's nature etc. – are also referred to in this context.

Important questions are raised by quantum theory especially with respect to the following implications:

- Local or ever-day knowledge of reality cannot be paradigmatic for a more encompassing notion of reality; the notions of space and time included;
- The physical world is not causally closed;
- The human mind has a central role in the universe (in determining what is real);
- Human minds form in some way a continuum, which is demonstrated by the phenomenon of quantum entanglement.

Specific questions are raised by quantum theory especially in the following points:

- Fundamental problems in religion, such as the existence of God or the problem of creation, can be highlighted by using the semantics of quantum theory;
- Some interpretations of quantum theory, such as the Many Worlds Theory, open the possibility of studying religious phenomena as versions of a really existing whole of relevant entities;
- The probabilism of quantum theory shows a further possibility in the study of religion, a prospect close to the possible worlds semantics. We are able to identify probable structures of religious nature by spelling out the implications of fundamental religious ideas.

Let me focus here only on two points from the list above. Locality is among the premises of common-sense realism that cannot be upheld in the light of some important clarifications of the foundations of quantum theory. According to Bernard

d’Espagnat, “local theories of reality” [...] “are most certainly in error.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, local theories are based on three assumptions or premises that must be accepted without proof. One is realism, the doctrine that regularities in observed phenomena are caused by some physical reality whose existence is independent of human observers. The second premise holds that inductive inference is a valid mode of reasoning and can be applied freely, so that legitimate conclusions can be drawn from consistent observations. The third premise is called Einstein separability or Einstein locality, and it states that no influence of any kind can propagate faster than the speed of light. The three premises, which are often assumed to have the status of well-established or even self-evident truths, form the basis of what I shall call local realistic theories of nature.<sup>32</sup>

However, in quantum theory local theories of nature proved to be false, or, as the Bell theorem formulates it, “No physical theory of local hidden variables can ever reproduce all of the predictions of quantum mechanics.”<sup>33</sup> It follows that “local realism,” or any variation of it, does not correspond to the best theory we have at hand. Reality as conceived by our perceptions, on this view, is deeply incongruous with the reality offered by quantum theory.

Religious ideas often appear extravagant, irrational, or even horrendous to enlightened, rational people with local realist views. Cargo cults are good examples of the neglect of the obvious, rational explanation of the origin of material wealth and substituting it by an ultimate explanation of ancestor deities as source of the cargo.<sup>34</sup> The rational explanation of the cargo appearing in a port of a distant, uncivilized island is obvious for all having the necessary knowledge of the real origin of the cargo and the modern means of transportation. Yet even if this origin was explained to native people, they kept their belief in the supernatural origin of the material goods arrived at the port. We may say, however, that what aboriginal human beings in this case did with their cargo theory was actually a primitive version of a non-local theory of the origin of material goods. In this version, the concepts are understood always in the framework of a non-local understanding of reality and knowledge.

We may ask: was the non-local theory of the original cargo cult believers false? Commonsensically it was certainly false because all the materials arriving at the port of the Fiji-islands had a commercial origin which the local inhabitants did not know. On the other hand, the indigenous people—in the so many forms of the cargo cult—were not interested in the commercial networks supplying the material

<sup>31</sup> D’Espagnat, *The Quantum Theory*, 158.

<sup>32</sup> D’Espagnat, *The Quantum Theory*, 158.

<sup>33</sup> C.B. Parker, *McGraw-Hill Encyclopaedia of Physics*, 2nd ed., McGraw-Hill, 1994, 542.

<sup>34</sup> Holger Jebens (ed.), *Cargo, Cult, and Culture Critique*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

goods. They were interested in a transcendental origin of material well-fare and its relationship to the social order of their society. Even more they were interested in the possibility of a total moral and social renewal which leads to a continuous material well-being. This millenarian aspect of the cargo cult makes it obvious that it focused on the ultimate conditions of possibility of well-being and recognized them in the form of a moral imperative for the society. That is to say, their theory of the cargo was ultimately a non-local theory of material well-being, a theory assuming sometimes extreme religious forms.

The other example I mention here is the role of probability in religious studies. Quantum theory describes reality as sets of probabilities referring to an underlying foundation, which some scientists, for instance d’Espagnat, tends to see as closely related to the notion of God. The work of Richard Swinburne of Oxford offers the perfect example how probabilistic thinking can be applied to the study of religion.<sup>35</sup> By accepting the probability of a religious proposition (an idea, a notion of characteristic religious contents), we are able to construe, on the basis of the probability calculus, a great number of further propositions. The system of such probabilistic propositions constitutes the main body of a given religion. We can nevertheless take another proposition and deduce from it different propositions of some probability, and construe in this way a different body of religious notions. It can be demonstrated that positive religions have structures similar to, or perhaps even identical with, the structures of probabilistic propositions. This shows that probability semantics (and in some cases even the probability calculus) can be meaningfully used in the study of religion.

Probability semantics offers a way to construe probable variations of religious propositions in a way which results in an overarching religious form. This form does not need to correspond to the perceptions of our local realism or everyday sense of reality. Positive religions may fit in with such a probable form to some extent. Perhaps we may even say that probable religious forms constitute the basis on which positive religious phenomena can be considered as belonging to a consistent whole.

At this point we may realize that religious forms and contents are not fully *ad libitum* creations of the history of culture. Rather, they fit in with a possible whole which can be described in two fundamental ways: First, it can be described in the way the phenomenology of religion developed its descriptions, that is, by using ideal types as the focal expressions of the universe of religion. These types are derived from positive forms of religions given in verifiable descriptions. Yet the types are already higher level wholes; and it would be a mistake to consider them as results of induction. The way of induction, such as beginning with a concrete religious form, is the way to the understanding of the general religious form of which the

<sup>35</sup> Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991.

instance we began with derives. Phenomenology is not about the creation but rather the discovery of such forms and their belonging to the network of forms of religious nature, that is, the network of a religious universe.

The other way does not start with empirical religious forms, but rather possible forms given in our imagination. Imagination has a central importance in our everyday epistemology; and for Kant and Husserl, imagination is the faculty by which the cognitive system is kept in motion in arriving at its insights. The concretely conceived instance is always an instance of an infinite number of variants which can also be conceived to some extent by using our imagination. To put it differently, we cannot conceive the concrete without the network of the possible which is presented to us by our imagination. The method of using imagination as the mapping out the field of variations is central to grasping the essence of the phenomena. In a theory of religion, we can similarly use the method of imagination, that is, the mapping out of the possible variations of a certain instance so that the essence of a religious instance may be better understood. In this way, the realm of the religious universe can be better conceived and its aspects, essences, forms and possibilities better described. It is due to the consequences of quantum theory that the imaginative forms can be indeed conceived as not baseless ideas but rather as moments of an original whole, in which we find ourselves when we think about religion.

## SUMMARY

If the study of religion is to be further developed, it has to enhance its methodology in various ways. As opposed to the traditional historicist methods, phenomenological approaches offer a broader possibility of research by establishing formal structures of religious reality. The nature of these structures, however, remain ambiguous as the methodologies followed by Otto, van der Leeuw, Heiler, or even Eliade do not distinguish between inductive and deductive models of research. The theory of memes and memplexes appears as a biologically based top-bottom theory contributing to the better understanding of the survival of fundamental religious ideas. Still, the theory of memes owes us the answers to a great number of disquieting questions about the origin of the content of memes and the reason why religious notions survived thousands of years. The fundamental meme, that of a God, points to the greatest difficulty in the theory. In order that the God-meme can survive, it must appear at a certain point, and the explanation of the origin of such a meme is beyond the horizon of the theory.

The methodology based on possible worlds semantics has the promise to develop a logically secure foundation of our catalogue of religious notions and their implications. The problem here consists in the weak connection to phenomena of

positive religion. Quantum research, however, may solve this problem. Quantum religion seems to be able to consider the universe of religion as an open universe, and the role of the observer as the very source of the existence and content of this universe. This universe contains the history of positive religions as basic patterns of predictions. The method of imagination is important here because it turns out that such a method is not about creating baseless ideas but rather about the possible forms considered, in imagination, real; and through this consideration we can get closer to the mapping out of the universe of religion as a whole.

The question as to the possibility of the renewing of the study of religion is not yet decisively answered. Eliade proposed his total hermeneutics of religion as the new framework of the human sciences. Today, we are no longer so ambitious; religion is indeed an important topic in scholarly discussions, but the meanings attached to this ancient term are less and less intriguing. Yet if the study of religion can be successfully situated in the realm of cutting edge research of contemporary science, we may be able to speak again about the paramount importance of the study of religion. But even in this case, I believe that religion as a *sui generis* phenomenon cannot be exhausted entirely; an inexplicable core remains with us as the sign of the limits of our knowledge of the reality of religion.

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# A STUDY OF RELIGIOUS ETHICS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this article is to investigate Donghak or *Eastern Learning* in the context of religious conflicts to find the significance of religious ethical implication. Although Donghak was the historical product of the 19th century, it still casts the implications of pluralism through the harmonious coexistence among religious traditions in a multicultural society in the 21st century. As William Schweiker explained “religious ethic presents an exciting vision of moral inquiry engaged with the fantastic resources of the world’s religions, open to other fields of reflection on the human adventure, and dedicated to understanding and addressing moral challenges and possibilities emergent in our global times.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, diverse religious traditions of the world can be rich sources of inspiration for addressing modern contemporary moral challenges and ethical issues that we are facing now.

The term “multicultural” refers to the confluence of three or more coexisting and un-integrated cultures. In multicultural tensions and conflicts, the ethical code of *Golden Rule* 黄金律 requires an understanding of other cultures. A pluralistic approach based on *Golden Rule* to religious ethics is related to the transversal correlation between transcendence and immanence. The pluralistic approach to religious ethics is often defined as dynamic relationship among religions or a cultivation of global citizenship for the establishment of peace.

A world of numerous religious traditions for the transcendence and immanence has inspired renewed interest in substantive religious ethical standards. The pluralism, however, is different from multiculturalism; it claims not only equality in the

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<sup>4</sup> William Schweiker (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, 14.

mosaic of cultures but also transversal interaction, transformation and enrichment through mutual fecundation.

It goes beyond a simple acceptance or recognition of multiplicity of culture or religion. On one hand, morality and ethics are intrinsic to a particular social norm, cultural tradition, and religious belief, as seen in the following statement: “Our moral and religious convictions are inevitably filtered through taken-for-granted beliefs that reside in familiar social practices.”<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, when we live in a multicultural society or religiously diverse environment as we do in the 21st century, we need a new way of thinking about a pluralistic perspective for understanding human beings and transversal ways of life including morality and ethics.

The pluralistic approach stands “between unrelated plurality and a monolithic unity.”<sup>6</sup> It implies that pluralism does not mean a simple acceptance of plurality or diversity in recognizing the fact that there is more than one culture or one religion in the world, namely, plurality. Although this recognition is an important step toward a pluralistic approach, however, it is not yet pluralism. Pluralism, according to Panikkar, goes beyond a mere tolerance of others or recognition of co-existence. On the other hand, it does not seek a common denominator among all different cultures and religions, namely, unity. Rather, pluralism is a way of *understanding* other cultures and religions not to reduce them into one’s own categories but to be enriched by others through mutual fecundation or cross-fertilization. In this respect, Panikkar’s pluralism is neither a simple recognition of plurality nor a universalism to seek a monolithic unity.<sup>7</sup>

In a multicultural society, we need a pluralistic approach to bridge the gulf of mutual ignorance and misunderstanding between cultures. The point is to recognize the transversal diversity in a pluralistic society beyond the walls of ethnicity, religion, language, and ideology for the prosperity of humankind. The cross-cultural method is to find rich insights in the intersection of culture.

It is needed for the transversal foundation of a multicultural society because “trust is not a commodity so easily assumed in an environment where people must interact with others different from themselves.”<sup>8</sup> According to Panikkar’s multi-religious experience, truth is related to the pluralistic approach as the “rules of the

<sup>5</sup> Thomas W. Ogletree, Agents and Moral Formation, in W. Schweiker (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, 2007, 42.

<sup>6</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *The Intra-religious Dialogue*, New York, Paulist Press, 1999, 10.

<sup>7</sup> . Young-Chan, Ro, Relativism, Universalism, and Pluralism in the Age of Globalization: A Reflection on Raimon Panikkar’s Approach, in P. C. Phan – J. S. Ray (eds), *Understanding Religious Pluralism: Perspectives from Religious Studies and Theology*, Eugene, Oregon, Pickwick Publications, 2014, 305–307.

<sup>8</sup> Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church*, San Francisco, JosseyBass/John Wiley, 2007, 84.

game” for interreligious dialogue and intercultural encounters. “Truth is constituted by the total *relationship* of things, because things *are* insofar as they are in *relation* to each other.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, “truth” or “reality” is not to be defined or confined within a single entity but to be manifested in the dynamic and organic “relationship” such as the transversal relationship of human beings to God, the universe, and other human beings.

Panikkar’s adventurous proposal for the meeting of religion is introduced via the elucidation of his “cosmotheandric vision” of reality—what he calls “the radical trinity” of cosmic matter, human consciousness and divine freedom. “Cosmology, anthropology, and ontology offer us the three principal horizons in which the divine appears.”<sup>10</sup> The rules of the game in the religious encounter of Panikkar have contributed to contemporary thinking of the pluralistic perspective.<sup>11</sup>

Although Donghak may not be the best representation of Pannikar’s idea of religious pluralism, it does manifest one of the Korean examples of manifesting pluralistic religiosity and spirituality. It is considered to be important to understand one of manifestations of Korean spirituality and its ethical implications through the Donghak movement. When Catholicism as *Western Learning* 西學 came in the late *Joseon* 朝鮮, the *Western Learning* emphasized on equality of humankind but refusing traditional sacrifice in the beginning. Choe Je-u thought it was necessary to make a new and transversal religion stating human dignity and equality in Korea’s modern society.

Choe Je-u had founded Donghak in this background compared with Western Learning in the plural religious situation such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Dangun Sundo (檀君仙道), and Catholicism. Donghak’s central ideas are based on the concept of *gi* (氣) or “vital energy” found in *gihwa* 氣化 (external manifestation of the vital energy as a phenomenon) and in *jigi* 至氣 (internalization of the ultimate energy as reality). Applying these ideas, we shall discuss the pluralistic dimension of Donghak and explore its pluralistic perspective.

Our assumption is that Donghak has a “cosmotheandric” *vision intertwining of the “cosmic,” the “human,” and the “divine”* of the whole. It has “cosmotheandric” horizons of reality; horizons in the cosmological, anthropological and ontological dimensions. “The cosmotheandric ‘structure’ of reality is neither a monarchic constitution laid down by a supreme God nor an anarchic disorder of the very

<sup>9</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *Religious Pluralism: the Metaphysical Challenge*, in L. S. Rouner (ed.), *Religious Pluralism*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, 113.

<sup>10</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *The Experience of God, Icons of the Mystery*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2006, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Panikkar, *The Intra-religious Dialogue*, 61.

order of the real.”<sup>12</sup> In this respect, “reality” or “truth” is in neither the rigid order of hierarchy nor in a chaotic disintegration but in transversal relationship and a dynamic interaction among the human, the divine and the universe.

If mystical experience were an objective intuition, the mystical experience of the divine as found in Donghak could be examined from the perspective of the pluralistic hypothesis. The scope of responsibility in a multicultural society requires us to search for this experience at a deeper level. We may discover this mystical experience of the divine in the light of the history of human civilizations, and especially in the modern Korean experience. Furthermore, the religious ethical issue is neither a mere religious issue, nor simply an ethical practice, but a fundamentally “cosmotheandric horizon” of reality. We intend here to explore Choe Je-u’s (1824–1864) understanding of the universe through his explanations of *Donghak* 東學, most notably as found in his two seminal essays, *Donggyeong daejeon* 東經大全 (Treatise on the Way of the East)<sup>13</sup> and *Yongdam yusa* 龍膽遺詞 (Hymns from Yongdam)<sup>14</sup>.

There is no general key to unlocking the meaning of these mystical texts. The intent of mystical texts is to transmit a specific single therapy for the human malady, and the religious pluralism needs to experience the new innocence. Here, silence commences, silence which is the answer to the question pursued in the dialogue. This kind of respondent silence is the fruit of a dialogue in which the parties begin to have a fresh awareness of the presence of *jigi* 至氣.

Donghak was founded in 1860 by Choe Je-u 崔濟愚 (pen name Su-un 水雲) to cope with *Western Learning*. Choe’s thoughts of Donghak to create a new world were based on his personal religious experience of God on April 5, 1860. Following this, Choe attempted to transform his spiritual experience into a system of religious ethics. In June 1861, based on his spiritual experience, he composed incantations. These incantations are not only tools of wishing magical effects but also concrete ways to fulfill transversal happiness. In this context, we can find that “Donghak takes as its focus the public-common happiness based on the Golden Rule in order to establish a harmonious balance between the public and the private by evoking the moral imagination through reciting incantations.”<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Choe

<sup>12</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being, The Unbroken Trinity*, New York, Orbis Books, 2010, 277.

<sup>13</sup> Choe, Je-u, *Donggyeong daejeon* [Treatise on the Way of the East], in *Cheondogyo Gyeongjeon* [Cheondogyo Canon], Seoul, Cheondogyo Central Headquarters, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Choe, Je-u, *Yongdamyusa* [Hymns from Yongdam], in *Cheondogyo Gyeongjeon* [Cheondogyo Canon], Seoul, Cheondogyo Central Headquarters, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Yong-Hwan Kim, *Dodeokjeok sangsangnyeok-gwa Donghak-ui gonggong haengbok* [Moral Imagination and Donghak’s Public Common Happiness], Seoul, Mosineun saramdeul, 2012, 275.

Je-u used several methods to share his mystical experience with his followers. He began to propagate his *sicheonju* 侍天主 (serving God). *Sicheonju* is one of the most important concepts in Donghak's religious ethical system of thought.

According to *Donggyeong daejeon* 東經大全<sup>16</sup>, we can find several meanings of his *sicheonju* 侍天主. It means that everyone serves God within her / his mind. *Cheonju* 天主 as God means Heaven or *Haneulnim*. Don Baker introduced this traditional Korean name for God. It was called *Samsin* 三神 including *Hwanin* 桓因, *Hwanung* 桓雄 and *Dangun* 檀君 from the initial Korean religion or *Sangje* 上帝. It is a different meaning of *Cheonju* 天主 in *Western Learning*.

Donghak's transcendental immanence of *sicheonju* 侍天主 can be practiced in everyday life as *sain yeocheon* (serving humans as one serves God). It means, "Everyone serves humans manifested in the Korean name of God, *Haneulnim*, in which a human being has equal dignity as transversal subject."<sup>17</sup> If a human being could communicate with a neighbour in *Heavenly way* through the public-common dimension, the "posterior the dawn of civilization 後天開闢 would be opened."<sup>18</sup>

## RELIGIOUS ETHICS IN THE PLURALISTIC APPROACH

The pluralistic approach in religious ethics is based on the idea that all religions are historically conditioned in forms of understanding. It challenges the assertion that a mode of limited cognitive and reciprocal equality exists between the faiths. It starts with a set of questions about different religious traditions in the context of shared faiths and behaviors. The pluralistic hypothesis is connected with Keith Ward's discussion of it in his work, *Religion and Revelation*, where he sets forth "what he thinks shows that this does not form a logically sound argument."<sup>19</sup>

We can live religiously with a different cosmological dimension, if one of them seems to people to be obviously true or the other obviously false. This is because we were raised in one culture rather than another. "The pluralistic hypothesis in ontological realism can be further placed by comparing it with the relativistic response to the fact of religious diversity."<sup>20</sup> It opens a free future that no deduc-

<sup>16</sup> Yong-Hwan Kim, *Dodeokjeok sangsangnyeok-gwa Donghak-ui gonggong haengbok* [Moral Imagination and Donghak's Public Common Happiness], Seoul, Mosineun saramdeul, 2012, 275.

<sup>17</sup> Je-u Choe, *Donggyeong daejeon* [Treatise on the Way of the East], 94–97.

<sup>18</sup> Yong-Hwan Kim, *Dodeokjeok sangsangnyeok-gwa Donghak-ui gonggong haengbok* [Moral Imagination and Donghak's Public Common Happiness], 257.

<sup>19</sup> Yong-Hwan Kim, *Dodeokjeok sangsangnyeok-gwa Donghak-ui gonggong haengbok* [Moral Imagination and Donghak's Public Common Happiness], 110–112.

<sup>20</sup> Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation: A Theology of Revelation in the World's Religions*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, 209.

tive thinking power can ever fathom. Religions reveal to us different facts of truth because truth itself is multifaceted.

From the perspective of the pluralistic hypothesis, “a system, once chosen, limits the alternatives possible within it, but an alternative system may be possible.”<sup>21</sup> There can be a plurality of such possible structures. Pluralism goes beyond a simple recognition of a plurality of possible structures or an acknowledgement of otherness and recognition of ontological diversity. Rather it pursues a mutual understanding and transversal interaction without reducing into common core or uniformity. To understand the worldview of another is to enter with empathetic interest and concern what is, for him or her matter of life and death, a matter of heart and will, not just of intellectual apprehension.

In order to remain meaningful and normative for life within the pluralistic global community, religious ethics must be transversally reformed. Religious and moral self-evaluation must be continually undertaken in order to remain relevant and sensitive to world religions, cultures, and gender issues. As the Parliament of the World’s Religions has declared, “By a Global ethic, we mean a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes.”<sup>22</sup>

This moral and religious duty must be both lovingly and unfailingly accomplished in order for all religious people of the world to coexist harmoniously and peacefully within the inclusive context of the diverse global cultures and human needs of this new millennium. Religious ethics must also be continually reconsidered and reformulated within the transversal global context. Traditional values and religious ethics must be reformulated and restated within the transversal context of current language and scientific knowledge, with openness to diversity and mutual understanding beyond mere tolerance. The religious ethical formulations of the first and second millennia are outdated and irrelevant for the intellectually open, spiritually and religiously sophisticated men and women of today.

God’s special revelation did not cease with Abraham, Moses, or Jesus Christ. Nor did it cease with the Church’s canonization of the scriptures as God’s “revealed,” “spoken” and “written” word as *Logos*. God also still speaks his or her creative and redemptive word as the *Logos* of life, order, guidance, knowledge, truth, salvation and peace in every generation and in every place within the cosmos. This is intertwined and inseparable, and the triple dimensional divine process of life takes place simultaneously.

Ultimately, according to this global, morally inclusive, spiritual, religious, and theological discourse and reformulation of religious ethics, God’s unconditional

<sup>21</sup> Peter Byrne, *Prolegomena to Religious Pluralism: Reference and Realism in Religion*, London, Macmillan Press, 1995, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Sandra B. Rosenthal, *Charles Peirce’s Pragmatic Pluralism*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1998, 8.

love and redemptive grace, in both creation and redemption, are inseparable and universal in scope. Therefore, no race, ethnic group, gender or class of people is ever disqualified and excluded from God's own transversal free activities of unconditional love and unmerited grace. These inclusive, universal, unconditional, divine activities of love and grace are manifested in God's processes as manifest in nature.

It is creation through evolution and reproduction; sustenance of life, provision of cosmic order to restrain chaos, redemption or restoration to wholeness, peace, happiness, and citizenship within God's Kingdom. Human salvation depends upon redemption for wrongdoing. "On the question of what belonging to a religion has to do with being saved, there are pluralists who think that all religions are equally effective in bringing salvation about."<sup>23</sup>

Hick's high valuation of the Golden Rule bears scrutiny given the critical importance he assigns to it as the primary indicator of reality-centeredness and "the basic norm by which we can make moral judgments in the sphere of religion."<sup>24</sup> Hick is positing the Real as the ground of all value on the basis of human experience, not on the basis of anything intrinsic to the Real itself. It seems that Hick's Real is a candidate for the ground of all moral values.

Golden Rule reasoning is represented in the following model. "Treat others as you want others to treat you. You want others to treat you with appropriate sympathy, respect, and so on. Therefore, treat others with appropriate sympathy respect, and so on."<sup>25</sup> Maturity in religious ethical reasoning enables one to include insight into what one ought rightly to desire oneself. It is more useful to elaborate transversal thinking and practical in a multicultural society.

The Golden Rule engages the agent in a transition from the intuitive to the reflective stages of the process leading to insight. In summary, in order that the Golden Rule would work reliably in the pluralistic hypothesis, we have to assume that "the agent has a normal capacity for sympathetic consideration for others' feeling and a reasonable sense of personal dignity."<sup>26</sup> As diverse and heterogeneous as is the pluralistic hypothesis in ontological realism, involving a wide variety of religious traditions. Its relevance presupposes the presence of a discordant viewpoint. Along with tolerance, dialogue is one of the most prominent ideas associated with religious pluralism. As Leonard Swidler said, "Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary

<sup>23</sup> Hans Küng – Karl-Josef Kuschel (eds), *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*, New York, Continuum, 1993, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Paul J. Griffiths, *Problems of Religious Diversity*, Malden, Blackwell Publishers, 2001, 142.

<sup>25</sup> John Hicks, *An Interpretation of Religion*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989, 326.

<sup>26</sup> Jacob Newsner (ed.), *The Golden Rule*, New York, Continuum, 2008, 94.

purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow.”<sup>27</sup>

Dialogue is an exchange of central beliefs and practices in a spirit of good will, with mutually agreeable purpose, which could be the attainment of interpersonal harmony. The Reciprocal Principle takes the engagement with the other; its metaphysics directly motivates this recognition, driving into consonance with reality. The Modes of relationship with the other can be classified into five types: *homogenization* to overcome the other, *exclusion* not to recognize the other, *tolerance* to simply acknowledge the other, *multiplism* to seek affinity with the other in cultural diversity, *pluralism* to learn from each other to engage in a mutual fecundation.

In reality, pluralism does not seek affinity with the other in religious diversity. Finding affinity within the existing diverse religious traditions is not the main goal of pluralism. Nor does pluralism seek a simple tolerance and co-existence of diverse religious traditions. Nor does it try to create a common and transversal “language” among different religions and cultures. Pluralism is rather a way of engaging in a dialogue to expound mutual enrichment or cross-fertilization as Raimon Panikkar advocates. This article is an attempt to discover the dimension of this kind of pluralism in Donghak.

## DONGHAK’S VISION AND PLURALISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Donghak was born out of the pluralistic culture of the late *Joseon* dynasty (1392–1910) that already featured such religions as Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Catholic Christianity. Choe knew that Christianity’s ethical code is based on God’s redemptive power in the formation of human civilization. He also recognized that Buddhism’s ethical code demanded karmic retribution for the promise of providence. He also introduced a personal God from Catholicism.

He understood Confucianism’s ethical code as a holistic moral perspective for the maintenance of benevolent relationships. He also admitted that Daoism’s ethical code required an appropriate mix of particular energy circulation and universal energy circulation. But Choe Je-u’s new and transversal doctrine basically fused a mixture of precepts taken from Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, *Dangun Sundo* 檀君仙道 and Catholicism.

Choe incorporated such practices as the worship of deities and the chanting of magical formulas, elements that were readily familiar and understood by the various layers including peasantry. Choe Si-hyeong 崔時亨 (1829–1898; pen name Haewol 海月) as a commoner, Donghak’s second patriarch, properly appeared

<sup>27</sup> John Hick, *Arguments for the existence of God*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1971, 59.



on the scene to propagate Choe's message with very creative tone based on his own ideas. Despite great difficulties, Choe Si-hyeong compiled and systemized Donghak's religious tenets as a message of salvation to farmers in distress. Two heterodox and potentially subversive religions—Donghak and Catholicism—were then taking root in *Joseon*.

Before the close of the century, the Donghak movement emerged in the form of a large-scale, peasant-driven rebellion. In this context, although Choe Si-hyeong had not felt any aversion to Catholicism, he recognized that the ethical imperative was necessary to deliver people from their sufferings under the *Joseon* dynasty. In his *Treatise on the Way of the East* (*Donggyeong daejeon*), Choe Je-u explained the notion of the “experience of serving God” (*sicheonju* 侍天主). Especially important in the idea of *sicheonju* is the word *si* 侍 (serving), noting how the Chinese character denoted a religious experience: “Jigi geumji wonwi daegang sicheonju johwajeong yeongse bulmang mansaji.”<sup>28</sup> This incantation, composed by Choe Je-u, can be translated as “Ultimate Energy being all around me, I pray that I feel that energy within me here and now. Recognizing that the Lord of Heaven is within me, I will be transformed. Constantly aware of that divine presence within, I will become attuned to all that is going on around me.”<sup>29</sup>

In reciting this incantation, believers are praying that they will be filled with the animating energy so that they may feel God's presence within them and will be moved to activate energy in harmony with God's creation. When chanting this incantation, Donghak believers could actually feel the divine energy enter their bodies and experienced ecstasy with God.

The mind is supposed to move God-directed behavior. It is in the love of “ultimate energy” that this non-dualist relationship appears most. The “High in the immanence” of ultimate energy is neither the “I” nor the “non-I” that would permit a synthesis. In Donghak, the love discovers God as “High in the immanence.” The experience of God is the experience of “Thou of ultimate energy.” Choe Je-u explained his experience of God through such notions as *jigi* (internalization of the ultimate energy as reality), *gihwa* (externalization of the vital energy as a phenomenon) and *osim jeuk yeosim* 吾心即汝心 (my mind is your mind).<sup>30</sup> The nature of this unity is “not an annihilation of the ego, leaving no residue.”<sup>31</sup> This feature of the “cosmotheandric” vision of *sicheonju* is rather based on the relationship between God (*cheonju*, 天主) and human being. In his spiritual experience, Choe

<sup>28</sup> Leonard Swidler, The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 20–21 (1983), 57.

<sup>29</sup> Je-u Choe, *Donggyeong daejeon* [Treatise on the Way of the East], 70.

<sup>30</sup> Je-u Choe, *Donggyeong daejeon* [Treatise on the Way of the East], 28.

<sup>31</sup> Leslie A. Stein, *Becoming Whole: Jung's Equation for Realizing God*, New York, Helios Press, 2012, 155.

Je-u asked God, “Why is this so?” God answered, “My Mind is your mind. Everyone knows Heaven and earth. But they do not know the Spirit. I am Spirit itself.”<sup>32</sup>

After this spiritual experience, Choe said, “Believe in God, not in me. God is within you. Why do you search far away though God is close by and with you?”<sup>33</sup> Choe Je-u introduced his experience of “serving” (*si* 侍) with three dimensions: “*nae yu sill yeong*” 內有神靈 (the spirit of God within me), “*oe yu gihwa*” 外有氣化 (the manifestation of the vital energy outside of me), and “*gakji bui*” 各知不移 (irreducible awakening of Himself).

We see here that Choe Je-u experienced “reality” in a way that he could related to personal form of divine such as *Sangje* 上帝 and impersonal energy such as *jigi*. In this way, Choe Je-u’s mystical experience was structured in a Trinitarian way or “cosmotheandric” in Panikkar’s term. This means that Choe Je-u’s experience was not dualistically formulated in an “either/or” logic. In other words, Choe Je-u’s experience shows a mystical unity between personal God, *Sangje*, and impersonal “ultimate energy” as *jigi*; between “Heavenly Lord” and earthly human.

Thus, for him “reality” was experienced in a “cosmotheandric” way which is profoundly Trinitarian way, not dualistic way. However, this unity does not mean to reduce any of these elements such as a transcendental personal god, impersonal “ultimate energy” and the human into any other elements. Rather all these elements, the divine, the impersonal material energy in nature, and the human dimension should maintain its unique places without losing its unique aspects into one melting pot. “Only by denying duality, without reducing everything to unity, are we able consciously to approach it.”<sup>34</sup>

In the multi-religious society, mutual interaction and fecundation from different religious traditions are critical. It is difficult for the faithful of one religion to accept alternate religious beliefs, especially since “ultimate reality” is the basis of all religious faiths. In this sense, several religious pluralists suggest ultimate reality as a hypothesis and a common ground for “intra-religious” dialogue. In Christian theism there is tension between God’s omniscience and omnipotence on the one hand and human free will and evil in the world on the other.

This is a typical theological issue pertained in the Christian tradition. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the complex theological and philosophical issues involved in the controversy regarding the omniscient God and human free will, and the problem of evil. The point is that a dualistic approach based on the logical mind of “either or” is not adequate in resolving this issue.

From the viewpoint of Donghak theism, the Heavenly Lord is transcendental

<sup>32</sup> Je-u Choe, *Donggyeong daejeon* [Treatise on the Way of the East], 18.

<sup>33</sup> Je-u Choe, *Donggyeong daejeon* [Treatise on the Way of the East], 143.

<sup>34</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *The Experience of God, Icons of the Mystery*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2006, 66.

immanence. In Christianity, God begins from the consciousness of the differences between God and human beings. In Donghak, God, human beings and nature are transversal manifestations of the singular *gi* 氣 as manifestations of cosmic energy. The cosmotheandric vision has become the central Trinitarian term.

Panikkar expands the term “theandric,” deriving from the Early Christian Church’s Christological debate, to include the cosmos and holds the triad God-Man-World (Panikkar uses “Man” to denote both man and woman) as the basic experience lying at the heart of any religion. For Christianity, this qualitative dimension of faith and theology point to identity and coherence in view of the triune God who has joined Himself to the world in creation, in Jesus’s human form as son of God, and in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. An ontological support for the “vision of reality is the vision that Reality has in ourselves; this is the way things become real.”<sup>35</sup>

Panikkar and Knitter add “the material cosmos, humanity, and the divine make up oneness-in-difference. In and through our differences we humans are our fellow human beings.”<sup>36</sup> The divine personage of the Trinity is the same truth behind the diversity that exists among God manifesting in different religions. Panikkar showed parallels between the Holy Spirit and Atman as immanent deities. For Christians, Christ is the Mystery in the sense that to see Christ is to reach the Mystery. Panikkar stressed co-risen with Christ, “The mystical experience of Jesus Christ leads us to assert that mysticism overcomes strict monotheism, but also that Christ is not a monopoly of Christians.”<sup>37</sup>

For Panikkar, Christ stands as the symbol of the full human, divine, and cosmic reality which he terms the mystery. Other religions have assigned to this symbol, such as Krishna. These are manifestations of the *Unknown Christ*, living and expressing themselves within their own traditions as aspects of *the indivisible mystery*. In the stream of history, there is the possibility that Donghak had developed externalization of the vital energy as a phenomenon to awaken fully the experience of Life as energy. “Blessed are the poor in spirit” in Christianity can be communicated with “*gihwa*” of Donghak towards a holistic focusing on the “ultimate reality”.

Although in Christian theism, it is very difficult to explain why there is so much evil and pain in the world despite God’s omniscience and omnipotence, in Donghak, there are not any serious tensions between God’s omnipotence and human free will due to sharing together a common faith and destiny between God and human beings. In other words, why are humans’ finite and incomplete

<sup>35</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *Mysticism and Spirituality*, New York, Orbis Books, 2014, 45.

<sup>36</sup> Raimon Panikkar – Paul F. Knitter (eds), *Pluralism and Oppression: Theology in World Perspective*, Lanham, MD, University Press of America, 1991, xii.

<sup>37</sup> Panikkar, *Mysticism and Spirituality*, 242.

beings even though God and humans constitute different moments of the singular *gi*? Our presentation of the Donghak vision does not invalidate other visions. It is in God that we have life, and move, and have our being. To live in God is to have communion with him; it is to recognize ourselves as living in God. We live with him, and through him. We are moved by God. God also carries us with him. God is the “empty” that permits us to move.

On May 10, 1864, Choe Je-u was executed on a cross during interrogation on *Daegu*'s execution grounds. His suffering and death by his head displayed in public serves as a sort of existential awakening to a deeper dimension of new and transversal innocence within us. “What made government so hostile to Choe and his Donghak were the Catholic elements, such as the focus on one God, which he added to traditional Korean spirituality.”<sup>38</sup> Death is dominant in all its aspects, and undeniably the point at which we encounter its mysterious meaning of death.

Therefore, Choe Je-u requested that the followers of Donghak practice with a non-dual heart and strengthen the mind and spirit in the right way, with sincerity, honor and faith. Through *jigi* 至氣, he claimed that human beings have a relationship with God, which is connected with all other things in the universe by *gihwa* 氣化. This life as energy, movement, and being of oneself in God constitutes the true experience of God in Donghak. Each of us is a participant, an image, a mysterious representation of God. In this process of revelation, we must take into account two elements that appear in the expressions *all* and *in all*.

If God is all in all things, we again end up with the non-dualist vision in cosmology. Cosmology, in this respect, is no longer an intellectual and scholarly study of the cosmos as an *object*, but a form of human *subjective* self-understanding in relationship with the cosmos. Ethics basically involves leading life in an upright manner and making the right decisions on moral issues. In Buddhism, there is no God, so it is up to human beings themselves to perform the right action and to make this world a better place. Buddhism considers a behaviour ethical only if it does not cause harm to oneself or another.

It is also noteworthy that in Buddhism, ethical behaviour is necessary not only because it is based on right but also because it is the means of attaining enlightenment. For Buddhists, the Five Precepts form the foundation of ethical behaviour. These Five Precepts are: I undertake to observe the precept of abstaining from killing; I undertake to observe the precept of abstaining from stealing; I undertake to observe the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct; I undertake to observe the precept of abstaining from telling lies; and I undertake to observe the precept of abstaining from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness. In addition to these, the Theravada Buddhists also observe three more precepts on

<sup>38</sup> Donal Baker, *Korean Spirituality*, Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2008, 81.

holy occasions. Buddhist enlightenment is a sudden awakening, and it has been immersed in the *Vairocana Buddha*.

There are two types of prayer: there is the praise from one who adores, a kind of thanks from one who finds himself saved; and secondly, there is the cry of human alarm from all those who suffer injustice or pain. These two are necessary and inseparable. In the Donghak context, the two are inner energy and outer energy. “Transformation of the dynamic energy” could be said to be the language of Heaven as the Ultimate One in the metaphysical and ontological dimension. “Being,” rather than the passive energy of the material itself, can be faithful to the non-dual reciprocal relationship.

“Being” is the spiritual presence of personality characteristics because the miracle of the human body by the presence of mind in the universe should have harmony, peace, prosperity, intelligence, prophecy, and healing functions. Characteristics of the shape of the religious experience can be understood as the concept of transcendent immanence. The intrinsic dynamics of transcendent experience can be possible through immanent experience. It is accompanied by ecstasy of the mind through the experience of transcendental reality. By this assumption, God’s omniscience and omnipotence are secured, but human free will is weakened; we are mere puppets on the stage of God’s will.

Moreover, if we accept this assumption, then humans have no responsibility for the evil in the world; evil exists because God included evil in his design. This would also mean that humans do not need to live ethically because everything is predetermined by God’s will. On the other hand, if we accept the opposite assumption, that God is not involved in the processes of the universe and that living things, including humankind, are living according to free will, then that would mean nothing is predetermined and humans can determine their own ways of living and take full responsibility.

Even if evil prevails in the world, and the universe is collapsing, all God can do is watch it happen and not be involved in the world. Humans can be open toward the totality of life. This religious phenomenon in Donghak is *nae yu sin ryeong* 內有神靈 (the spirit of God within me) and *oe yu gihwa* 外有氣化 (the manifestation of cosmic energy outside of me). “As Divinity appeared linked to the world, the functions as exercised by divinity and the links have been brought together in the different cosmologic pole of the world.”<sup>39</sup> In the concept of *jigi* as ultimate energy reality, Choe Je-u did not separate God from the universe and the human. Rather, he tried to explain that human life is linked with the universe and God.

<sup>39</sup> Young Woon Ko, *The Beauty of Balance: a Theological Inquiry into Paradox*, Lanham, MD, University Press of America, 2010, 69.

He advocated that all things in the universe had been connected through the sacred energy and had evolved as if one circle engaged in continuous reverence. We can say the *sicheonju* experience is the third characteristic of the irreducible experience. It cannot be transferred to another one's experience as unique experience. The Cosmos, God, and human beings cannot be separated nor confused, as expressed in *buryeon giyeon* 不然其然 (not being so, yet being so). It is an important aspect of Donghak thought in terms of both epistemological and ontological logic. The concept of "not being so, yet being so" of *buryeon giyeon* suggests the process of enlightenment through the experience of *Tathata* 眞如 or personal God.

This is related to the relegation of God to a sphere of transcendence and the most privileged place for the "serving God" (*sicheonju*) as the greatest phrase explaining the ethics of the Donghak tradition. According to the view of Haewol 海月 (the pen name of Choe Si-hyeong), rice is a solid spiritual energy created by nature and human beings are the most outstanding spiritual energy among all the creatures of the universe. Human beings, who are the most outstanding manifestation of energy, eat the essential energy of the universe such as rice. As Haewol expressed it, "*Haneulnim* eats *Haneulnim*" (God eats God).<sup>40</sup>

Donghak's religious ethics lies in a spiritual respect for life based on a non-dual reciprocal relationship with God. Donghak has an affinity to Confucianism's cosmology. It is also focused on the non-dual relationship between *yin* 陰 (*eum* in Korean language) and *yang* 陽. Thus, Choe Je-u concluded that "heaven and earth are the spirits of *yin* and *yang*. What is the use of studying Confucian scriptures?"<sup>41</sup> It is the original and vital energy of all things in the universe. This concept allows us to create and dramatically explore possible alternatives beyond the knowledge of the actual. If so, how does the concept of *jigi* work in the "cosmotheandric vision" as the ultimate energy of God?

The word "cosmotheandric" is the compound of "cosmos," "theos" and "anthropos." These three are linked in Donghak as a cosmotheandric vision for the realization. "Now the cosmotheandric insight does not displace the center from Man to God. It eliminates the center altogether."<sup>42</sup> Here, we see that the notion of "center" is no longer defined in terms of a specific "space," "locality" or an entity as found in the statement: "human being is the center and measure of all beings" in the relativism of Protagoras.

The concept of cosmological means "to think of the universe not from the human-centered, but the anthropocentric perspective."<sup>43</sup> The natural order is a

<sup>40</sup> Si-hyeong Choe, Sudobeop, Haewol sinsa beopseol, in *Cheondogyo Gyeongjeon* [Cheondogyo Canon], Seoul, Cheondogyo Central Headquarters, 2000, 364.

<sup>41</sup> Je-u Choe, *Yongdamyusa* [Hymns from Yongdam], 143.

<sup>42</sup> Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being*, 303.

<sup>43</sup> Young Woon Ko, *The Beauty of Balance*, 116.

symbol of God's work as a cosmic vision. From time immemorial, spring and autumn arrive alternately and the circulation of the four seasons never changes its natural order. Divinity is perceived as the real symbol in which the perfection of human beings culminates. Divinity is not so much the fruit of reflection on the cosmos or an experience of its divine nature as it is the culminating summit of the consciousness we have of ourselves.

First, cosmologically, the respect for nature in Donghak can be seen as respect for the physical world; this is termed *gyeongmul* 敬物. To honor humans as a personal manifestation of God is termed *gyeongin* 敬人, and the very spiritual honoring of God himself is called *gyeongsin* 敬神. Together, these three aspects are called *samgyeong* 三敬 in Donghak as a cosmological vision of their mutual affinity.

Like the Holy Trinity, these three aspects are inseparably connected. Divinity is the plentitude of the human heart, the real destiny of humanity, and the complete realization of what we really are. "Intercourse between Heaven and Earth bears all creatures."<sup>44</sup> We have a clear heart to keep the divine experience cosmologically between the inner *jigi* 至氣 and outer *gihwa* 氣化.

Secondly, from the perspective of "theandric" vision, human beings have a close inner-relationship with God, as cosmic beings that are connected with all other things in the universe through *gihwa*. Through these relationships, human beings and God are related in personal identity. All things can achieve their destiny by inner *jigi* or outer *gihwa*. "Habits of negotiation and conflict management, a talent for coalition building, and the ability to work with other civic actors outside are more likely to come out of inner relationships with God than more family-style worship communities."<sup>45</sup> Taking the concept of God first, this becomes concrete as the range of specific deities to which the histories of religion bear witness.<sup>46</sup>

As a human being is considered as "serving God" (侍天主), "nourished by God" (養天主), and "embodying God" (體天主), humans can be served as serving God during this process. Choe Je-u's spiritual experience was passed on to Choe Si-hyeong in the context of *sain yeocheon* 事人如天 (serving humans as one serves God) as a practical ethical code for everyday life.

Here, we see an illustration how a reciprocal nature of human relationship with God. "Serving God" and "nourished by God" are not two separated affairs but they are integral part of each other – a clear example of non-dualistic and non-monistic, neither two nor one, relationship. By the same token value, "serving

<sup>44</sup> Raimon Panikkar, *The Cosmotheandric Experience: Emerging Religious Consciousness*, New York, Orbis Books, 1993, 137.

<sup>45</sup> Michael W. Folly – Dean R. Hoge, *Religion and the New Immigrants: How Faith Communities Form our Newest Citizens*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 178.

<sup>46</sup> John Hick, *Classical and Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, 1990, 429.

humans” and “serving Heaven or God” are not two separate duties but they are the integral parts of each other.

Third, all things in the universe based on the ontological vision can be changed to reject dualism. God is the universe of nature. Nature cannot be set as “wholly other,” because there is no dualism between Nature and God. Karl Rahner built his whole theological anthropology on the orientation to the “absolute horizon” of “Transcendence.”

This is similar to the way that Mahayanists in Buddhism assert “the non-duality of *Form* 形相 and *Emptiness* 空性.”<sup>47</sup> The holistic thinking of the twenty-first century, such as in the implicit transcendent immanence of Donghak, can serve to overcome the separation that derives from an egoistic view of the human mind as *gakja wisim* 各自爲心 (separate egoistic mind for oneself) from *donggui ilche* 同歸一體 (reverting to the same body).

According to the Donghak vision, all things come from God and revert back to God; this has become the ontological vision of Donghak. Donghak superseded traditional Eastern philosophies and regarded the world as harmonious, a place in which the sacred is manifested as inner *jigi* or outer *gihwa*. At last, it is said to be transversal connected between inner *jigi* and personal God.

Now we can say that inner *jigi* or outer *gihwa* have the ontological dimension of God. Donghak emphasizes the spirituality of this cosmic energy. This energy acts such as an intervention and order in connection with all things in the universe. The culmination of human consciousness is the place of immanent divinity. The dominant trait of divinity can be manifested in a transversal affinity with the other as transcendental immanence in an ontological dimension.

## RECIPROCAL NON-DUAL PRACTICE IN DONGHAK

God in Donghak is different from God as transcendent reality as understood in traditional Western theism, wherein God influences the world but not vice versa. “This view of God has difficulty in explaining the problem of chaos and evil in the world.”<sup>48</sup> Donghak can be said to pursue a different model of God from traditional Western theism. The divine reality always exists in a dynamic relationship with the human mind and nature.

This mutual interaction and corelationship can be possible in this organic *yin-yang* unity as a non-dual attitude of reciprocity in Donghak practice. Thus,

<sup>47</sup> Norbert Hintersteiner (ed.), *Thinking the Divine in Inter-religious Encounter*, New York, Rodopi, 2007, 291.

<sup>48</sup> John Hick, *God has many Names*, Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1982, 107.



everyone is worthy of the respect by one another and all sorts of discriminations would disappear in the world. For example, Choe Je-u liberated his two slave girls. He adopted one as his daughter and made the other his daughter-in-law. Such a practice was very radical. Also, this is the main idea behind the *sicheonju* thought of Donghak. “*Sicheonju*” implies waiting for God with all one’s heart and transferring our heart to God’s mind.

These ideas were solidified by Choe Je-u’s successor, *Haewol* 海月 Choe Si-hyeong. Despite severe repression of adjustment from *Chosun* 朝鮮 government, he contributed to Donghak’s development to grow significantly over the missionary activities and organization maintenance. He preached *sain yeocheon* 事人如天 (serving humans as one serves God) with *mulmulcheon* 物物天 (all things contain God) and *sasacheon* 事事天 (all events contain God).<sup>49</sup> So the human being is the highest reference. If everyone practices *sicheonju*, it means everyone serves God with all their hearts. According to this non-dual reciprocal practice, everyone is equal, worthy of dignity and the respect of others. In this global multicultural society, we can recover our human dignity.

This is also the outcome of the non-dual relationship of Donghak’s reciprocal practice as a new ethics. In other words, to respect others in society is to respect God. The concept of inner *jigi* or outer *gihwa* carries very significant meaning in the explanation of the experience of God. It means that every place is propitious for experiencing God. God is Life within and without. Experiencing God as inner *jigi* or outer *gihwa* is transcendental immanence. To feel oneself alive in Donghak is to feel alive with eternal life. God can be found in the transcendental immanence: it is the experience of inner Life as *jigi* 至氣 and participation in the outer experience as *gihwa*.

These reciprocal relationships were summarized in the expression “*insicheon*” 人是天 (humans are God) of Choe Si-hyeong.<sup>50</sup> In Donghak, the culmination of human development is the experience of transcendental immanence. The place of divinity is that of a supernatural being of Life. Here the dominant trait of divinity is the non-dual relationship between immanence and transcendence.

In the ethic religious dimension, Donghak succeeded *Dangun Seondo* 檀君仙道 (Dangun divine immortal of Dao). Donghak’s God is rooted in *Haneulnim*, as the Supreme God of *Dangun Seondo*. Heaven wished to spread *Hongik ingan* 弘益人間 (benefit all human beings). It can bestow a vital energy to all things in the universe, including not only humans but also God. Donghak’s ethical norms are based in a religious spirit. Its slogans for social practice include *boguk anmin*

<sup>49</sup> Si-hyeong Choe, *Sudobeop Haewol sinsa beopseol*, 364.

<sup>50</sup> Si-hyeong Choe, *Sudobeop, Haewol sinsa beopseol*, 337.

輔國安民 (protect the nation and care for the people) and *gwangje changsaeng* 廣濟蒼生 (save the suffering creatures of the world).

The virtue of Donghak in terms of public welfare can be found in its call to serve God through service to humans. The practical aims of Donghak spirituality form the bridge between the public and the private. The Donghak revolution cannot be separated from the Donghak spirit. God as *Haneulnim* is also found in cooking or in a soup of everyday. We experience God within ourselves or between things and ourselves. We encounter God in multiple relationships in its natural manifestations.

Our contingency is human and divine. Nor can we experience an exclusively transcendent God as outer *gihwa*. Instead, we meet God as Life in a non-dual relationship, in which we discover a “cosmotheandric vision” of Donghak. In the practice of Donghak, divinity is neither separate from the rest of reality nor totally identical with it. God in Donghak is neither the same as monism nor the other, as dualism.

God is one pole of reality, such as inner *jigi* as ultimate energy, and a constitutive pole, or as the outer *gihwa* as manifestation of energy. It is transcendent but immanent in the world, infinite but delimited in things. Our experience of God is the divine self-consciousness in which we participate as we become *Donghak* human beings. This divinization is manifested in the practice of *seonggyeongsin* 誠敬信 (sincerity-respect-faith). Donghak practice as sincerity-respect-faith is the spirit of a new dimension beyond reason, beyond emotion, and in reality, which can show its effects in the profound manner of human non-dual activity in the dimension of the emptiness. This sense of renunciation of a non-dual attitude of holy indifference, the *muwi* 無爲 (non-action) spirit of Donghak, called *muwi daedo* 無爲大道 (Great Dao of non-action).

The practice of silence is enough to permit hearing this “great Dao of non-action.” In this sense, the experience of God coincides with the fact of seeing God in all things as *mulmulcheon* 物物天 and in all events as *sasacheon* 事事天. The experience of God is the experience of the vision of reality as the great Dao in Donghak. The necessary precondition is a pure heart and the practice of *seonggyeongsin*. And paradoxically, it is the experience of contingency; we merely touch at a point in the infinite of the “great Dao of non-action.”

During the period of Choe Je-u’s activities, the *Joseon* government was being devastated by greedy and corrupt officials. Externally, it was threatened by Western imperialist powers and invasion from neighbouring Japan. The Donghak revolutionary movement was connected with the Donghak religious spirit. So we can say that the power of anti-foreign social sentiment and the national independence movement were manifested in the Donghak peasant revolution of 1894. The non-dual relationship attitude between religious thought and social revolution succeeded in

the March First Independence Movement of 1919 as a patriotic social movement to save the Korean people from Japanese imperialism.

The pole is nothing in itself. It exists only in its polarity, in its relationship with the other. God in Donghak focuses on the mutual dynamic relationship. We can find this relationship as an intimate inner and outer relationship with all as a non-dual ethical attitude. Morality is no longer something external, but something that arises from a participation in God's vision of us and of the world. "The motivation for moral behaviour would thence be the quiet voice of God within us drawing us to goodness rather than a code of goodness intellectually perceived."<sup>51</sup> This discovery of the non-dual attitude of reciprocity gives us a new foundation for universal ethics in religious diversity.

## CONCLUSION

In a multicultural society, we can experience a lot of religious traditions. The fact of religious diversity suggests the epistemic confidence with which religious assents are discriminated from one another by the extent to which they seem to be non-negotiable or incapable of change. The religious effect on culture can be seen in a plurality of phenomena, to include nationalism, Orientalism, and imperialism.

The purpose of this article was to locate an imperative ethics, such as the Golden rule, within religious diversity. A new religion from the late *Joseon* dynasty, Donghak shows us a cosmotheandric vision and a non-dual practice of the reciprocity. Donghak's cosmotheandric vision has a reciprocal understanding of God while also providing an opportunity for dialogue and transversal affinity. This pluralistic approach based on the ethics of reciprocity can lead to the establishment of a community of religions.

If religions are able to move in this direction, they will be in a unique position to encourage and cultivate in humanity a number of universal spiritual attitudes and values that can deepen humanity's common faith toward transcendental immanence. What can be discovered in Donghak's pluralism was its *sicheonju* thought as practiced in the notion of *sain yeocheon* (serving humans as one serves God). In Donghak, it is a non-dual norm of religious ethics. It could be said ontologically to be related to the pluralistic hypothesis in religious ethics.

Donghak's religious ethics can be pursued from pluralism among different religious traditions. Christian ethics focus on God as redeemer and the Christian moral life stands in some sort of *Haewol's* concept of "treating other human beings

<sup>51</sup> Christopher O'Donnell, Listening to God Within, in D. J. Billy – D. L. Orsuto (eds), *Spirituality and Morality: Integrating Prayer and Action*, New York, Paulist Press, 1996, 77.

as God” was fashioned as a more ethically oriented and practical guiding principle for living a dedicated daily life. In its egalitarian emphasis on human nature, it was radically revolutionary. The experience of God in Donghak is the new innocence of a non-dual relationship with our energies as inner *jigi* and outer *gihwa*. The Great Transformation would unfold through a dynamic interaction and mutual fecundation with others.

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# STUDIES ON URALIC SHAMANS

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

## INTRODUCTION

Reconstructing the ancient shamanism of the Uralic peoples is a fairly difficult task – partly because one immediately faces the question of whether it is an original state that used to exist in the distant past – some thousands of years ago – or the conditions of the recent past– say, the last one hundred years – that one wants to reconstruct. In this latter case, when trying to reconstruct some sort of system, one has to rely on the data – as recorded in the recent, 19th and 20th–century ethnographic descriptions – of the various Uralic peoples, the Samoyeds and the Ob-Ugrians. In the first case, we have the rather scant and rare data of Uralic linguistics – possibly those pertaining to a common Siberian terminology.<sup>12</sup> While, in the second case, we already possess some concrete descriptions, too, of the local shamans of the various peoples and their ceremonies. The local variants of ethnic shamanhoods have, or may have, common features which used to be (or could have been) elements of a common Uralic shamanism of long ago. We must realize that to try and prove this assumption would be a highly dubious enterprise, since, on the one hand, these correspondences are highly generalized (e.g. animism, ancestor worship, bear cult) and they are widespread far beyond the area of the Uralic peoples, often – outside the northern Siberian peoples – also among the North American Indians. I would not like to fall into the error of Mircea Eliade, who found the general features of Siberian shamanism everywhere round the globe, which makes his model “shamanism: an archaic technique of ecstasy” too inclusive, and consequently somewhat empty.

The alternative is the method whereby try to collect and arrange typologically the data available. Here, the volumes of the international project *Encyclopaedia of Uralic Mythologies* (Editor: Anna-Leena Siikala – Mihály Hoppál – V. V. Napolskih) – which has been running for over 15 years (see chapter 2 in the present volume) – will be a great help. Each monograph focussing on the mythology of a particular

<sup>1</sup> J. Janhunen, Siberian Shamanistic Terminology, in I. Lehtinen (ed.), *Traces of the Central Asian Culture in the North*, Helsinki, Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seure, 1986, 97–117.

<sup>2</sup> J. Janhunen, The Eurasian Shaman: Linguistic Perspectives, in J. Pentikäinen – Simoncsics, P. (eds.), *Shamanhood: an Endangered Language*, Oslo, Novus forlag, 2005, 17–18.

Finno-Ugric (Uralic) people will devote a chapter to the characteristics of local shamanism. A comparative – or, even more, a contrastive – study of these data could provide fresh insights. Until these volumes appear, it is worth reviewing the monographic literature already published, since this material is fairly rich. Therefore, this is what we will attempt in the first part of our study, as the old European publications are known to relatively few people. In the second part of this chapter, then, we will discuss the most recent studies of shamanism of the Uralic peoples.

What we can ultimately assume is that the spiritual culture of Siberian (northern Eurasian) peoples – and so their shamanhood, too – has retained many archaic elements, just as a refrigerator conserves, in the cold, the food it holds.

## FROM THE HISTORY OF STUDIES

Science-historical surveys – by the nature of things – can never be perfect; there will always be something missing from them, as day in day out new researches add to the preexistent material. For instance, Åke Hultrantz<sup>3</sup> has added a whole host of new historical data to our knowledge of the early history of research into shamanism (as it happens, apropos of the Sámi data) – data that are relevant to an understanding of Uralic shamanism, too. Indeed, the work of the Swedish scholar is the standard regarding the study of the details of arctic shamanism and of the place it holds in the history of religion.<sup>456</sup>

The study of shamanism has an especially old tradition among scholars of Finno-Ugric comparative cultural.<sup>78 9</sup> It might be worthwhile to remind the reader that K. F. Karjalainen devoted the closing chapter of the last volume of his three-volume monograph to a review of Finno-Ugrian shamanism. Characteristically, the chapter bears the title *Die Zauberer (The Magician)*. The Hungarian scholar Géza Róheim, the founder of psychoanalytic anthropology, devoted an interesting chapter to the question of Ob-Ugrian shamanism in his study *Hungarian and Vogul*

<sup>3</sup> Åke Hultrantz, On the History of Research in Shamanism, in J. Pentikäinen et alii (eds.), *Shamans*, Tampere, Tampere Museums, 1998, 51–70.

<sup>4</sup> Åke Hultrantz, A Definition of Shamanism, *Temenos* 9 (1973), 25–37.

<sup>5</sup> Åke Hultrantz, Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978, 27–58.

<sup>6</sup> Åke Hultrantz, Arctic Religions: An Overview, in M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1, New York, Macmillan, 1987, 393–400.

<sup>7</sup> M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia: A Study of Social Anthropology*, Oxford, 1914.

<sup>8</sup> K. F. Karjalainen, *Die Religion der Jugra-Völker*, III, Helsinki – Porvoo, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, *Scandinavian and Finnish Lapps*, Leiden, 1927, 245–331.

<sup>9</sup> U. Holmberg (Harva), Finno-Ugric, Siberian Mythology, in C. J. A. MacCulloch (ed.), *Mythology of All Races*, IV, Chapter XXI, Boston, 1927, 496–623.

*Mythology* (1954). Another study on this subject was written by Vilmos Diószegi, who explored the remnants of shamanism in recent Hungarian folk beliefs in *A sámánhit emlékei a magyar népi műveltségben*.<sup>10</sup> Later he wrote a book on the pre-Christian belief system of Hungarians.<sup>11</sup> Diószegi edited several volumes of outstanding value, which are worth discussing in some detail.

One of the first basic collection of essays on Siberian shamanism was compiled and edited by Vilmos Diószegi. An interesting historical aspect of the original edition was that when it appeared in 1963 as *Glaubenwelt und Folklore der Sibirischen Völker*,<sup>12</sup> followed five years later by the English version, *Popular Beliefs and Folklore Tradition in Siberia*,<sup>13</sup> the book was dedicated to the memory of Antal Reguly (1819–1858). This was presumably because the monograph entitled *A vogul föld és nép (The Vogul Land and People)* compiled by Pál Hunfalvy and based on the material of Reguly who died at an early age, had appeared in 1864. However, the appearance of a recent edition<sup>14</sup> also coincides with an anniversary of Hungarian research on Siberia: it was one hundred and fifty years ago that the 19th century Hungarian traveller and ethnographer visited the land of the Voguls (Mansi) and Ostyaks (Khanty). He published the results of his research trip in 1846 in St. Petersburg, in a book in German entitled: *Ethnographisch-geographische Karte des nördlichen Uralgebietes, entworfen auf einer Reise in den Jahren 1844 und 1845 von Anton Reguly*. It is quite fitting to dedicate the shorter selection to his memory since Reguly wished to throw light on the origin of the Hungarian people with his research.

We must also mention that the editor of the original publication, Vilmos Diószegi (1923–1972) died many years ago. A few years after the English edition he was working on another volume with a similar theme – *Shamanism in Siberia*<sup>15</sup> – when he passed away unexpectedly. It was in fact this work that made Diószegi a leading internationally recognized figure of Siberian studies. All the more so since he provided the possibility for Russian colleagues to publish in a foreign language. In those years shamanism (and mythology) were practically taboo subjects in what

<sup>10</sup> Diószegi, Vilmos, *A sámánhit emlékei a magyar népi műveltségben* [Traces of Shamanism in Hungarian Folk Beliefs], Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958.

<sup>11</sup> Diószegi, Vilmos, *A pogány magyarok hitvilága* [Religious Beliefs of the Pagan Hungarians], Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1967.

<sup>12</sup> Diószegi, Vilmos (ed.), *Glaubenwelt und Folklore der sibirischen Völker*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963.

<sup>13</sup> Diószegi, Vilmos (ed.), *Popular Beliefs and Folklore Tradition in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968.

<sup>14</sup> Diószegi, Vilmos – Hoppál, Mihály (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, Reprint, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Diószegi, Vilmos – Hoppál, Mihály (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978.



was then still the Soviet Union. As the Russian colleagues recall, this book was regarded as a breakthrough; it was of historical significance since it built a bridge between the scholars of East and West.

Béla Gunda (1911–1994), the professor from Debrecen, head of the Department of Ethnography and teacher of the author of the present book, who has since also died. As professor, he first drew the present author's attention to research on folk belief and in particular to folk healing and more specifically, research on shamanism. It seems likely that the Magyars who settled in the Carpathian Basin preserved their old beliefs (before 896 AD and for many centuries after). Researchers consider that many elements of the ancient belief system coincided with the legacy of shamanism brought from Asia, Diószegi also reached this conclusion.<sup>16</sup>

Not only the ethnology professor from Debrecen, Béla Gunda has died since the appearance of the first edition, but also two outstanding linguists who contributed to the volume: János Balázs and László Gáldi, both professors at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Balázs analysed the shamanistic meaning contents of variants formed from the Hungarian verb *rejt* “to hide, to conceal” and showed, for example, that the word *révülés* is the expression used in Hungarian for trance. The essay,<sup>17</sup> reflecting amazingly broad erudition, presented in detail all the relevant Ob-Ugrian data and went even further to show the findings of historical investigations. His essay is one of the best writings of Hungarian shamanism research – as is so often the case – it has been undeservedly forgotten by the present generation of researchers.

Professor László Gáldi analysed the rhythm of the shaman songs found in M. A. Castrén's manuscript collection dating from 1842 and recorded on wax cylinders by Kai Donner in 1914. Such textual analyses of shaman songs are still rare. Two good examples can be found in *Shamanism in Siberia*, both the work of Hungarian authors: Péter Hajdú<sup>18</sup> and Péter Simoncsics.<sup>19</sup>

Still with the Hungarian authors, Péter Hajdú, a linguist and expert in Uralic languages; distinguished three groups of Samoyed shamans.<sup>20</sup> The first group comprises those who are able to communicate with the spirits and work miracles. The second consists of the healing and prophesying shamans and the third group

<sup>16</sup> Diószegi, *A sámánhit emlékei* [Traces of Shamanism], 1958.

<sup>17</sup> Balázs, János, The Hungarian Shaman's Technique of Trance Induction, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Folk Beliefs and Shamanistic Traditions in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1996, 26–48.

<sup>18</sup> Hajdú, Péter, The Nenets Shaman Song and Its Text, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, (Selected reprint), Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978, 355–372.

<sup>19</sup> Simoncsics, Péter, The Structure of a Nenets Magic Chant, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, (Selected reprints), Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1996, 52–67.

<sup>20</sup> Hajdú, Péter, The Classification of Samoyed Shamans, in Diószegi, V. (ed.), *Popular Beliefs and Folklore Traditions in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968, 147–173.

is formed of shamans who heal simpler illnesses, interpret and explain dreams. His very thorough study contains a large collection of dialect words which show that a distinction was made not only between the stronger and weaker shamans, but also between those who were active at night by firelight and those who worked in the daylight, without fire; the old great shamans also had permanent assistants. Only the strongest shamans were entitled to wear the shaman's cap, just as there were shamans who worked with a drum and others who did not. Hajdú compiled a very interesting table listing the terminology used for shamans in the Nenets, Enets, Nganasan, Selkup and Kamas languages.<sup>21</sup>

A. A. Popov was one of the classic figures of Russian ethnography who lived and collected among the Nganasans of the Taimyr peninsula in the 1930's. His manuscripts were published posthumously in 1984 by his colleagues in what was then still the Leningrad Institute of Ethnography. That slim volume contains a separate chapter on shamanism (under the title of "*shamanstvo*" = shamanhood;<sup>22</sup> it is worth noting that the expression *shamanhood* has recently appeared in the literature in English, too.<sup>23,24</sup> The annotation by Popov published records the initiatory visions of a famous Nganasan shaman, recounting how he received the shaman power in a dream when he felt (in his dream) that he was taken to pieces and forged on an anvil to be made a shaman. The shaman recounted that only a person who had shamans among his ancestors from whom he could inherit this gift could be a shaman. The text is one of the few authentic Siberian texts on how a person became a shaman, and for this reason has been widely quoted – on the basis of the English translation – as well as for the fact that it refers to such details as the making of the shaman's cloak and its symbolism, and the making of the drum.<sup>25</sup>

In the year of 1978 the excellent monograph by the Finnish researcher, Anna-Leena Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* was published.<sup>26</sup> This work presented a vast body of material and examined the main laws of the ecstasy technique of the Siberian shaman. It drew on modern social psychology for an understanding of the role played by the shaman, and on the findings of modern hypnosis research for an insight into the trance state. The work on Lapp shaman-

<sup>21</sup> Hajdú, Péter, *The Classification of Samoyed Shamans*, 165.

<sup>22</sup> А. А. Попов, *Нганасаны-Социальное устройство и верования*, Ред. Грачева, Г. Н. – Таксами, Ч. М., Ленинград, Наука, 1984, 93–143.

<sup>23</sup> Pentikäinen, *Shamans*, 1998.

<sup>24</sup> Pentikäinen, J. – Simoncsics, P. (eds.), *Shamanhood: an Endangered Language*, Oslo, Novus forlag, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> А. А. Попов, How Sereptie Djaruoskin of the Nganasans (Tavgi Samoyeds) Became a Shaman, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1996, 61–69.

<sup>26</sup> Anna-Leena Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman*, Helsinki, FF Communications 220, 1978.

ism written by Louise Bäckman and Åke Hultkrantz also appeared in 1978, in the series of publications issued by the Department of Comparative Religion of the University of Stockholm. This volume contains Hultkrantz's theoretical article on the ecological and phenomenological approach to shamanism, set out as a programme.<sup>27</sup>

One of the symposiums of the World Congress of Anthropologists held in Zagreb in 1988 examined the phenomena of shamanism. Close to fifty papers were read and forty of these were published in 1989 as the first two volumes of the ISTOR Books by the American foundation International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research and the Ethnology Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.<sup>28</sup> These studies covered an exceptionally wide spectrum and so reflected the state of research and the direction of enquiry at that time. The conference was of historical significance as the first occasion after the Cold War years bringing together researchers and representatives of peoples among whom shamanism is still a living tradition. The participants include Yakut and Nanai researchers from the Soviet Union, a South Korean and several Chinese scholars. Claude Lévi-Strauss referred to the importance of this fact in the letter he wrote to one of the editors expressing praise for the volume. The final session of the symposium was also a historical event: the establishment of the ISSR (International Society for Shamanistic Research) was announced.<sup>29</sup>

Mihály Hoppál in his historical overview approaches the “changing image of the Eurasian shamans”. More than a dozen pictures illustrate his essay. These illustrations, lithographs from the 18th–19th centuries, and photographs from the beginning of the 20th century, can be considered as the most valuable pictorial sources for the study of Siberian shamanism.<sup>30 31</sup>

Juha Pentikäinen approaches shamanism from a comparative aspect, and analyzes the so-called “shamanic poems” of the Kalevala and their Northern Eurasian background. He begins by dispelling the myth of the only authentic Kalevala, i.e., the New Kalevala, which is read by Finnish schoolchildren and was translated into 40 languages. Pentikäinen<sup>32</sup> argues that Old Kalevala is as authentic as the new

<sup>27</sup> See also Åke Hultkrantz, *Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism*, 1978.

<sup>28</sup> Hoppál, M. – O. von Sadvoszky (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, Los Angeles, Fullerton, International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, 1989.

<sup>29</sup> Hoppál, Mihály et al (eds.), *Shamans Unbound*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Hoppál, Mihály, Changing Image of the Eurasian Shaman, in Hoppál, M. – Sadvoszky, O. (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, I, Budapest, Los Angeles, Fullerton, ISTOR Books, 1989, 74–90.

<sup>31</sup> See also Hoppál, Mihály, *Schamanen und Schamanismus*, Augsburg, Pattloch, 1994, (in Japanese Tokyo, Seidosha, 1998.)

<sup>32</sup> J. Pentikäinen, The Shamanic Poems of the Kalevala and their Northern-Eurasian background, in Hoppál, M. – Sadvoszky, O. (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, 1, Budapest, Los Angeles, Fullerton, 1989, 97–102.

one, since it is more folklore-based than the New Kalevala, which Elias Lönnrot created more as an artist-poet. In Pentikäinen's opinion, the Old Kalevala is more exciting, as far as its plot is concerned. It is shorter, and as an epic not as dull as the new version which contains more incantations, wedding runes, and many repetitious episodes, which do not belong to the pattern of the epic in the way the Finnish people understand it.

Saami shamanism is seen as a specific conceptual complex. It enables ritual communication with the supernatural, in particular to overcome an unbalanced situation within the individual, the group, or the world at large. This takes place symbolically in the person of the shaman, by means of rituals dramatization in the shamanic ceremony as it is outlined by Erich Kasten in his paper. He analyzes symbolism in Saami shamanism from a diachronic point of view.<sup>33</sup>

Certain symbolic variations can be explained as ongoing modifications of its basic conceptual theme in response to significant changes within the Saami ecosystem in its broadest sense. Among these, the impact of the Black Death and the shifting traits of Saami shamanism during culture contact are the most important. As both the cultural context and the respective historical situation become more clearly identified, the uniqueness of Saami shamanism may be better understood in its own historical complexity. Kasten emphasizes that the symbolic approach in the study of religious phenomena such as shamanism requires a diachronic perspective as well.

Bo Sommarström, who worked for the Ethnografiska Museet in Stockholm until his recent retirement, provides a tentative analysis of how cosmological concepts and their pictorial representations may be related to perception processes in non-ordinary states of consciousness. As the Saami drums used for divination are in most cases copiously painted with figures on the drumhead, a question arises as to whether this is mainly for facilitating the comprehension of the client, or is of real importance for the act of divination carried out by the shaman in a state of light trance. A "split holographic vision" would perhaps be a plausible explanation.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting to note here that, quite independently from the Swedish scholar a few years earlier, a Hungarian also came to a conclusion similar to that of Sommarström. Having compared a Eurasian myth and the nocturnal sight of the northern sky with the pictographic design of a Selkup shaman's drum, Marcell

<sup>33</sup> E. Kasten, Saami Shamanism from a Diachronic Point of View, in Hoppál, M. – Sadovszky, O (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, Budapest, Los Angeles, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989, 115–124.

<sup>34</sup> B. Sommarström, The Saami Shaman's Drum and the Holographic Paradigm Discussion, in Hoppál, M. – Sadovszky, O. (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, I, Budapest, Los Angeles, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989, 125–144.

Jankovics on the basis of analogies came to the conclusion that this particular drum bears cosmological knowledge, i.e., it is a “star-map.”<sup>35</sup>

Besides unraveling the meaning of the texts, a highly important task for research in the future, scholars must look to the examination of objects. This was one of the goals, which the Hungarian scholar of shamanism Vilmos Diószegi had set for himself. He was investigating the world of objects of Siberian shamanism. Unfortunately, cruel fate prevented him from accomplishing that work. Even if slowly, the Soviet colleagues have nevertheless begun processing their unusually rich records. It should be noted that the ethnographical collection of Lenigrad’s Kunstkammer is deservedly world-famous because of the unique objects kept there it includes rare shamanic objects from the peoples of Siberia and North America.<sup>36</sup>

Juha Janhunen, a linguist and professor at Helsinki University, collected various shamanistic notions connected with some puzzling creatures in Siberian wildlife, i.e., the flying squirrel (*Ptoremy volans* L.). Because it moves by night, and mainly because it is capable of flying, this small animal has long since been associated in the folklore of Siberian peoples with shamanhood, as the shaman’s helping animal. In the second part of his paper<sup>37</sup> he examines through the etymology of Siberian appellations of this curious squirrel species. An analysis of these appellations reveals that the small animal also at some point in the past, may have been the helping animal of the shaman. His writing is a good example of how a minute data can be placed in a broader perspective.

A senior researcher of the Ethnological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Zoya Sokolova, who has been making trips to the Ob-Ugrians for over three decades, has collected data relating to shamanism primarily from older literature. She compared these data with her own records and concludes that, by the end of the sixties, the shamans had disappeared from the life of the Voguls and Ostyaks inhabiting the Ob region.<sup>38</sup>

Galina Gračeva gives a detailed description of the wooden masks collected among the Nganasans and the Enets. She carried out extensive field research to gather information about their use. It turns out that shamans used to cover their faces with these masks during certain specific seances. The comparison of the masks with wooden idols and with the Yukagir tradition of treating the dead,

<sup>35</sup> Jankovics, Marcell, *Cosmic Models and Siberian Shaman Drums*, in Hoppál, M. (ed.), *Shamanism in Eurasia*, I, Göttingen, Herodot, 1984, 149–173.

<sup>36</sup> See their catalogue J. Pentikäinen et alii (eds.), *Shamans*, Tampere, Tampere Museums, 1998.

<sup>37</sup> Juha Janhunen, *On the Role of the Flying Squirrel in Siberian Shamanism*, in Hoppál, M. – Sadovszky, O. (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, I, Budapest, Los Angeles, Fullerton, ISTOR Books, 1989, 184–190.

<sup>38</sup> Z. P. Sokolova, *A Survey of the Ob-Ugrian Shamanism*, in Hoppál, M. – Sadovszky, O. (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, Budapest, Los Angeles, Fullerton, ISTOR, 1989, 155–164.

together with certain iconographic features of the masks themselves, makes it possible to suggest that the masks represent the dead ancestors of the male or female shamans.<sup>39</sup> The recent data illustrate that the works were widely known as shamanistic idols, or masks, not only among the Evenks and Buryats, but also in the North-Eastern regions of the Yenisei River.

Otto von Sadvoszky, was linguist at California State University, presents linguistic evidence for the Siberian origin of Central California Indian shamanism. He discusses various terms denoting shamans' activities. Sadvoszky compares the California Penutian forms, as he has done in other publications in the past decades, with the equivalent linguistic forms in Finno-Ugrian. The cognates of these shamanistic terms further reveal the closest relationship to the Ob-Ugrian (Vogul and Ostyak) languages and shamanism.<sup>40 41</sup>

Russian and Siberian scholars of shamanism unanimously agree that the appearance in 1978 of *Shamanism in Siberia* represented a turning point in the evaluation of Siberian shamanism in Russia. This was still long before the period of "glasnost", when "shaman" was a taboo word belonging in the category of politically and ideologically non-existent things since it was related to the ethnic and religious traditions of the small ethnic groups of Siberia. The publication of the volume in Budapest, by Akadémiai Kiadó (Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences), in a friendly socialist state, gave the colleagues in Russia a point of reference that could be cited. Even so, it was not for a good three years, at the end of 1981, that the first collection of studies on Siberian shamanism could appear. It was edited by I. S. Vdovin and bore a very misleading title, or perhaps one that was intended as a camouflage,<sup>42</sup> promising a study of the "social consciousness of the Siberian indigenous peoples". The Russian work appeared in a very limited edition (it was printed in only 1950 copies) and *Shamanism in Siberia*, out of print for years, has become a rare book, too, so, it has been decided to republish it.

In the new edition the most frequently cited and now classical study by Åke Hultrantz: "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism" has been placed at the beginning of the new selection since it has lost nothing of its timeliness

<sup>39</sup> G. N. Gračeva, Nganasan and Enets Shamans' Wooden Masks, in Hoppál, M. – Sadvoszky, O. (ed.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, I, Budapest, Los Angeles, Fullerton, ISTOR Books 1–2, 1989, 145–153.

<sup>40</sup> O. J. von Sadvoszky, Linguistic Evidence for the Siberian Origin of the Central California Indian Shamanism, in Hoppál, M. – Sadvoszky, O. (eds.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, I, Budapest, Los Angeles, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989, 165–184.

<sup>41</sup> For a more detailed treatment see O. J. von Sadvoszky, *The Discovery of California, A Cal-Ugrian Comparative Study*, Budapest, Los Angeles, Akadémiai Kiadó, ISTOR Books 3, 1996.

<sup>42</sup> I. S. Vdovin, (ред.) *Проблемы истории общественного сознания аборигенов Сибири (по материалам второй половины XIX – начала XX в.)*, Ленинград, Наука, 1981.

and because it gives an excellent summing up of the main component elements of Siberian shamanism and the principal social functions of the shamans. To cite Hultkrantz: “The central idea of shamanism is to establish means of contact with the supernatural world by the ecstatic experience of a professional and inspired intermediary, the shaman. There are thus four important constituents of shamanism: the ideological premise, or the supernatural world and the contacts with it; the shaman as the actor on behalf of a human group; the inspiration granted him by helping spirits; and the extraordinary, ecstatic experiences of the shaman.”<sup>43</sup> It seems to us that such a clear definition of shamanism is in its way just as classical as the Swedish scholar’s entire *œuvre* (see the special issues of *Shaman* vol. 13 and 14 which were published for his 85th birthday).

Having given the reasons why only some articles have been reviewed here because they are of importance first of all because they report new, previously unknown data, generally on the basis of then fairly recent fieldwork.

Her colleague, L. V. Khomich, classified the Nenets shamans on the basis of data collected between 1953 and 1964. (She too published a much more detailed Russian version in Vdovin’s volume in 1981.) She considers that there are three main types of Nenets shamans; the first is the “strong shaman” (*viđutana*) who heals and prophesies and communicates with the spirits of the underworld. The second (*janjaŋi tadebja*) is able to find the lost order, belongs to the earthly world and shamanises at night. The shaman belonging to the third kind (*sambana*) designates the place of the dead and his main task is purification. Shamans can also be distinguished according to whether they used a drum or not.<sup>44 45</sup>

In a doctoral dissertation written in the early seventies, Péter Simoncsics examined the poetic characteristics of the Nenets shaman songs. There are very few studies based on textual analysis in the literature on Siberian shamanism. The Hungarian researcher made an exemplary analysis of the magic chant (*sāmpadabc*) of a shaman recorded in 1842 by M. A. Castrén. The author concluded that the symmetry and parallelism identified on the levels of phonology, syntax and motifs serve mainly for visualisation of the text and, we could add, in the final analysis for its memorisation.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Åke Hultkrantz, Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978, 30.

<sup>44</sup> L. V. Khomich, Шаманы у ненцев, in Вдовин, В. В. (ред.), *Проблемы истории общественного сознания аборигенов Сибири*, 1981, 5–41.

<sup>45</sup> L. V. Khomich, A Classification of Nenets Shamanism, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia* (Selected reprints), Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, Bibliotheca Shamanistica, 1996, 43–51. 2.)

<sup>46</sup> Simoncsics, Péter, The Structure of a Nenets Magic Chant, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, (Selected reprints), Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1996, 52–67.

In 1996 Aulis Joki wrote about Selkup shamanism among the Samoyed peoples of Northern-Siberia, giving much factual material and also drawing on collections made by Kai Donner in the early years of the century (1911–1913) and texts recorded in his diary. The article is illustrated with photographs of Selkup shaman objects in the Helsinki Kansallismuseo B. O. Dolgikh collected in 1938 among the Nganasan living on the Taimyr peninsula. His article in this volume, which is actually an excellent communication of data, not only describes the typology of the Nganasan shamans, but also gives the terminology related to the drum and costume. The greatest strength of the paper is that after a careful analysis of the details, the author concludes it is clear from the shaman costume that the Nganasan people consist of two ethnic components: one is the small Uralic ethnic group, the Nganasan and the other the Dolgan. (DOLGIKH 1996).Nincs ilyen tétel a bibliográfiában.

We now know that G. N. Gračeva (1934–1993) was one of the outstanding figures of research on Siberian shamanism. She died in 1993 in tragic circumstances on a field trip.<sup>47</sup> She devoted practically her entire life to the ethnographic study of a small Siberian ethnic group, the Nganasans. In particular, she was especially interested in the famous shaman clan, the Ngamtusuo. She also wrote a number of studies on the traditional world view of the Nganasan, and each of these contains a few important details on shamanism.<sup>48,49</sup>

In one of them she describes the shaman's cloak which was worn by the shaman to help him communicate with the upper world and the sleeves symbolise bird's wings. It is interesting to note the series of dual oppositions: the garment is divided into two halves (left and right), one side coloured black and the other red as symbols of winter and darkness opposed to the sun, light and spring.<sup>50</sup>

There are strong tendencies among scholars to study shamanism from a historical point of view. Carla Corradi Musi reviews some relatively unknown sources on the historical development of Ural-Altai shamanism that can be found in the written accounts given by a few travellers who visited the areas adjoining the river Ob in the 18th and 19th centuries. The details from the travellers' personal observations relate to several traits of shamanism such as archaic animism, the cult of trees, idol worship, the conception of death as rebirth, the role of the shaman as well as the modes of shamanic rituals.

<sup>47</sup> A. M. Reshetov, In Memoriam G. N. Gracheva, *Shaman* 2, 1, 1994, 79–85.

<sup>48</sup> G. N. Gračeva, A Nganasan Shaman Costume, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978, 315–323.

<sup>49</sup> G. N. Gračeva, Nganasan and Enets Shamans' Wooden Masks, in Hoppál, M. – Sadovszky, O. (ed.), *Shamanism: Past and Present*, I, Budapest, Los Angeles, Fullerton, ISTOR Books 1–2, 1989, 145–153.

<sup>50</sup> G. N. Gračeva, A Nganasan Shaman Costume, in Diószegi, V. – Hoppál, M. (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia*, Selected Reprints, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1996, 79–87.



Carla Corradi Musi is senior lecturer at the University of Bologna, where she teaches Finno-Ugric philology. Since the mid-1970s she has published over eighty extensive studies, among them a number of books giving brief descriptions of the history and culture of various Finno-Ugric peoples (those of the Volga, the Perm, the Baltic and the Finnish nations). She has regularly participated in conferences on Hungarian and Finno-Ugric studies where she has always presented interesting and previously unresearched topics. In the last decade she has frequently touched on the problems of shamanism. Her volume is a collection of the English translations of some studies, most of which were originally published in Italian. The activity of Carla Corradi Musi has acted as a bridge between East and West (CORRADI MUSI 1997).

The first short piece connects the problem of the Finno-Ugric double soul with shamanism. The author's initial idea is that the idea of the double soul is a basis for the motif of the soul journey which plays a central role in Siberian shamanism. The following study examines the meanings of two important symbols in Eurasian shamanism, that of fire and of water. Fire is the symbol of power while water is the instrument of initiation, of shamanic rebirth in shamanic rituals. The basic idea of the third study is that Finno-Ugric shamanism and European mediaeval magic may be compared at a number of points. Indeed, this has also been suggested by Carlo Ginzburg and also, some years earlier by the Hungarian scholars (Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs) and promises to become an interesting trend of research for the future. The author of the book provides a quantity of new data which suggest diverse fields of research requiring many years of hard work. Among these, for example, is the connection between the Sampo (the magic mill of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*) and the Grail. The parallels between the blacksmith and the shaman would deserve a complete book to compare the vast range of literature on the subject.

In her study on tree worship, which is one of the longest, the author lists a number of facts which confirm her thesis according to which some beliefs, symbols and mythological motifs can be related to the mythical-ritual scenario of the Siberian and Finno-Ugric shamanic area.

In another chapter, writing about Western-European animism, Corradi Musi compares several creatures of the natural world, in the shamanic area and in the area of animism in Western Europe. The author states: "it is clear, however, that Western- and Eastern-Europe were, from the most distant past, much closer to each other than could be imagined at first sight". One of the proofs of this might be that cultural elements, myths and beliefs spread along the trade routes of Baltic amber.

In the essays which constitute the backbone of the volume, the author uses old sources to quote data which refer to the Finno-Ugric. Some of these have long been known to researchers, others, especially those which were written in Latin and

Italian, were hardly known to the wider public. Thus it is due to Professor Corradi Musi of Bologna that international research can now gain access to them, since this is the first time they have appeared in English. She quotes interesting data from 13th century chronicles written in Latin.

In another piece she refers to important data from the historical writing of Olaus Magnus (*Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*) which, as early as the 16th century, demonstrates a number of parallel features in the belief systems of European and Siberian peoples.

One of the most valuable chapters in this book is the one which describes an early 19th century work of 'encyclopaedic ethnology', Giulio Ferrario's *Il costume antico e moderno*, more precisely those parts of it which refer to Finno-Ugric peoples. Research has not yet taken advantage of these early data, even though they contain a quantity of excellent observations. Thus Ferrario noticed the sharp distinction made between male and female idols and, generally, between ritual roles, among the Ostyaks, and the special veneration granted to holy trees. The description of the reindeer sacrifice by this 19th century ethnographer is so realistic that one wonders how this was possible if not from personal experience.

In her next essay the author surveys two other 19th century publications, involving a good deal of useful data regarding Siberian shamanism. F. de Lanoye published a book in Paris in 1868 in which he describes the observations made by Éva Félinska, a lady of the Ukrainian nobility and by the famous Finnish researcher, Matias Aleksanteri Castrén among the Ob-Ugrians. The other book contains a travel account by Stephen Sommier which was published in 1883. In this he describes a summer's journey during which he visited the Ostyaks, the Samoyeds, the Zyryans, the Tartars, the Kirgiz and the Bashkir. If we consider the obstacles that need to be overcome for a journey like that even in our day, it appears an almost incredible achievement for a hundred years ago. (CORRADI MUSI 1997:79–85).

The volume is concluded by two essays in which the author has collected all the data that refer to elements which can be compared in the shamanism of certain Finno-Ugric (particularly Ob-Ugrian) peoples and of North American Indians. It must be noted that this is a ground-breaking phenomenon in comparative studies and many might find its conclusions too daring but in fact Corradi is not alone in her ambitions since many people today are already working on this topic (see von Sadovszky's (1996) comprehensive work on this subject).

Even more conspicuous are parallels between the Finno-Ugric and the North-American Indians in terms of their folklore relating to death and nature. Corradi Musi finds a number of examples in this area, too. Thus, for example, both groups imagine the other world, the kingdom of the dead to be on the far side of water. It is worth mentioning the infinite calm with which both the Ob-Ugrians of Siberia and the North-American Indians face death: this is an important mark of both

cultures. It is characteristic of both peoples and their culture that man is believed to have two souls and that the custom of double burial was also practised in both places, in spite of the great geographic distance separating them.

Carla Corradi Musi's writings (1997) are examples of the possibilities inherent in *comparative* research in the traditional sense, but they also serve as a warning that *contrastive* studies must also gain ground in the future.

The first variant of this article had been published ten years ago and since then several new books and studies were written about the shamans of the Uralic people. I have been researching this topic for a long time permanently and my opinion is that despite the increasing number of new books on shamanism only a few of them provide genuine insights, the majority refers to the earlier ones again and again. An outstanding exception among the different popularizing works is a book by Ronald Hutton with the title *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (2001). In part one the author gives an interesting historical overview on how the picture about Siberia and Siberian people has changed through the writings of travellers and later researchers. The author quotes a detailed description of a shaman ritual supposedly among the Nenets people that was recorded by an English traveller, Richard Johnson, on the first day of the year 1557.<sup>51</sup> Part two is about the shamans' activities, initiation, equipment, rituals and performances. In the last part of the book the author gives a description about the present situation of the Siberian shamans.

Another excellent work, called *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and the Western Imagination*, that was written by the Russian scholar Andrei A. Znamenski, deals with this topic on over 400 pages from the Enlightenment up to the present times. The development of the metaphor – „*the Shaman as spiritual healer*“ – can be traced from the data of the first travelogues to the pseudo shamans of today (in Sakha [Yakutia] Republic and Tuva), who preen themselves in the role of the well-intentioned healer. The main value of this book amongst many (see the review by Vilmos Voigt<sup>52</sup>) is that it makes the not so well known data of the Russian studies on this topic available to western readers as well. Moreover, as an emigrant to the USA, Znamenski got extremely fast acquainted with the American Neo-Shamanism, and in this way his book can be regarded as an Eliade-like summary of the topic. Unfortunately, similarly to Hutton, he also uses the term „Western Imagination“ in the title of his book that suggests that the culture of the shamans is a kind of European-made idea, such as the concept of ethnic identity, nation and cultural tradition.

<sup>51</sup> Ronald Hutton, *Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination*, London, New York, Hambledon and London, 2001, 30-39.

<sup>52</sup> Voigt, Vilmos, Review, Andrei A. Znamenski, *The Beauty of the Primitive, Shaman*, 17, 1-2, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, 205-218.

One of the latest books, *An Introduction to Shamanism*, dismisses the dogma that treats shamanism as a primitive religion right in the introduction.<sup>53</sup> Listing the archeological data is an interesting and new approach to the evolution of shamanism (see chapter 3.), such as the derivation of the shamans' ecstasy from music (see chapter 9. „music and etheogens”). Thomas A. DuBois professor of folklore, religious and Scandinavian studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, used not only Asian examples of shamanism in his book but both American and Asian phenomena. The last chapter deals with the persecution and oppression of the shamans, as well as, the rebirth of the shamanic tradition and the development of new forms of shamanism within new cultural and global context.

*Shamanism: a Reader*, edited by Graham Harvey, is an excellent collection that complements well the monographies mentioned above and also provides a unique overview of modern understanding of shamanism.<sup>54</sup>

It is important to note that during the last two centuries several essential international conferences were organised by the International Society for Shamanistic Research (ISSR). This society gathers those researchers who work on the field of Shamanism. ISSR was founded in 1988 and since then has organised nine international conferences (on the history of the first twenty years of ISSR see Hoppál 2008). Most of the lectures of these conferences have been published either in the official journal of the Society (*Shaman*) or in the *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* that has been being published regularly since 1993. (There are two volumes from the past years that contain several good studies<sup>55 56</sup>). Selected studies of the last ISSR conference held in Alaska were published in the 18th volume of *Shaman*, the official Journal of ISSR (spring 2010).

An important book that shows new directions, *Shamanhood*, has been published and already the title indicates the editors' intention to introduce a fresh concept instead of the empty shamanism. „Shamanhood is closer to the self-perception of the shamans themselves, since they do not see shamanism as a 'religion'... but rather is suggested in order to emphasise the anti-dogmatic nature of the phenomenon in its ecological and cultural milieu.”<sup>57</sup> The head of the Finno-Ugric Department of the University of Bologna organised a conference in 2006 among the medieval

<sup>53</sup> Th. A. DuBois, *An Introduction to Shamanism*, Cambridge, University Press, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Graham Harvey (ed.), *Shamanism: A Reader*, London, New York, Routledge, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Hoppál, Mihály-Kósa, Gábor (eds.), Rediscovery of Shamanic Heritage, *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* vol. 11, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2003.

<sup>56</sup> Hoppál, Mihály et alii (eds.), *Shamans Unbound*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2008.

<sup>57</sup> J. Pentikäinen. – Simoncsics, P. (eds.), *Shamanhood: an Endangered Language*, Oslo, Novus forlag, 2005, 7.

walls of the ancient university, about *Symbols and Myths of Shamanic Traditions* (in Italian<sup>58</sup>).

It is a well noticeable tendency nowadays that conferences, as well as, the authors of monographies concentrate on certain, narrower aspects of the field. For example, Anna-Leena Siikala analysed Finnish folklore texts (such as incantations) and the mythic and poetical images of the Kalevala.<sup>59</sup> With the help of these texts Siikala has reconstructed a whole mythical and shamanic imagery. A young English researcher did the same basically in his two-volume book (almost 900 pages), *Shamanism in Norse Myth and Magic*.<sup>60</sup> The work of Clive Tolley is one of the best work in of shamanic research,<sup>61</sup> in which he analysed the most important elements of Eurasian shaman folklore (such as the world pillar, the mountain, the mill, the tree, cosmography, the smith, the bear, etc.) and the shamanistic imageries, from texts written in several different languages from ancient-Icelandic to the Finnish Kalevala.

Since the year 2000 the present author has published several books on Eurasian shamans. Already in his earlier monographies his aim was to present a characteristic visual image of Siberian shaman culture.<sup>62</sup> The novelty of these books is that he enlists the local features of shamanhood and presents the symbolic phenomena of the shamans' material world, illustrated with a lot of pictures. (These books have been published not only in Hungarian but also in German, Finnish, Estonian, Japanese, Chinese and Polish.) The theoretical works of the author have been published also in English in several volumes.

<sup>58</sup> C. Corradi Musi (ed.), *Simboli e miti della tradizione sciamanica*, Bologna, Università di Bologna, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> Anna-Leena Siikala, *Mythic Images and Shamanism: A Perspective on Kalevala Poetry*, Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Clive Tolley, *Shamanism in North Myth and Magic*, 1–2, Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, FFCcommunications. XCLIV, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Voigt Vilmos, Review: Clive Tolley: Shamanism in North Myth and Magic, Helsinki, 2009. *Shaman* 18, 1–2, 2010, 204–210.

<sup>62</sup> Hoppál, Mihály, *Das Buch der Schamanen: Europa und Asien*, München, Ullstein, 2002.

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# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE SOUL: ZEN BUDDHISM

JAMES L. FREDERICKS<sup>1</sup>

The Zen School of Mahayana Buddhism originated in China in the sixth century and was eventually brought to Korea, Vietnam and Japan. In the twentieth century, the Zen School was planted in Europe and North America. According to its own tenants, the focus of this form of Buddhism is meditation, not doctrine or devotion. This emphasis is evident from the word *Zen* itself, the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word *Ch'an* 禪, which in turn was derived from *dhyāna*, the Sanskrit term for meditation. In *Zen*, the emphasis may be on meditation, but this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that it has always been deeply connected to folk religion, politics, and various cultural practices of East Asia. In Japan, Zen has made a significant contribution to the development of several art-forms and martial arts. Since the end of the Second World War, Japanese Zen has been the face of Buddhism in the West, although the Buddhism of Tibet has become increasingly prominent since the 1980's. This long and convoluted history suggests that the academic study of Zen entails a number of significant problems which need to be mentioned at the outset.

First, the study of Zen has been distorted by what Bernard Faure criticizes as "reverse orientalism." Edward Said famously defined orientalism as discourse which constructs the "Orient" as irrational, obscurantist and incapable of speaking for itself. In Said's view, orientalist discourse is not a misrepresentation so much as a representation with a political purpose – the establishment of the cultural hegemony of the West over subaltern peoples in the age of colonialism. In contrast, according to Faure, much twentieth century discourse about Zen has tended to reverse this process by mystifying Zen into the West's idealized "Other." For example, Japanese proponents of Zen and their Western disciples have sometimes presented Zen as a panacea for the West's "spiritual crisis" and an antidote to its nihilism. Zen is rooted in the essence of the "spiritual East" in contrast to the alleged materialism of the West. Zen was presented as being without doctrine and rooted in a unique religious experience which, by definition, is not subject to study by the objectify-

<sup>1</sup> Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. Refereed by Christopher K. Chapple.

ing methods of modern research. Arguments such as these have contributed in no small way to the mystification of Zen.<sup>2 3</sup>

A second problem has to do with the historical unreliability of the primary texts pertinent to the study of Zen, especially in the early history of the Zen (Ch'an) movement in China. The root of this problem is not simply a lack of interest in historical accuracy on the part of Chinese monks. Rather, the problem lies in the fact that the texts distort history because they are often polemical and sectarian in nature. The "transmission of the lamp" literature offers an obvious example. In Chinese Ch'an monastic communities, religious authority was established by means of fictional accounts of the passing on of the "enlightened mind" from master to disciple in an unbroken line from the Buddha, through a succession of Indian and then Chinese patriarchs, down to the present teacher. The polemical and sectarian nature of these texts means that assessing their value as historical documents requires much caution.<sup>4 5</sup>

A third problem endemic to the study of Zen is specific to the theme of this essay, the Zen Buddhist view of the "self" or "soul." In Buddhist tradition, "soul" is not a prominent category. More accurately, one might say that Buddhists discuss the notion of a soul only as an opportunity to deny its existence. From its beginnings in India, Buddhism has denied the existence of a soul (*ātman*) that is subject to reincarnation over many lifetimes. Any suggestion of an implicit notion of a soul or of Buddhist enlightenment as a realization of the "true self" quickly leads into the briar-patch of Buddhist sectarian controversies about the nature of human subjectivity. For example, an important early Buddhist text, the story of Melinda's Chariot, rejects any speculation about even a subtle soul or self that finds liberation from the karmic law of rebirth. In general, therefore, Buddhism should be understood as an outright rejection of the notion of an eternal, permanent, substantive soul, attachment to which is to be regarded as a defilement and an illusion. To the extent that Zen likewise rejects any notion of an enduring soul, it can be included among mainstream Buddhist sects. In this respect, Zen (and Buddhism more generally) must be seen as unusual when compared with the teachings of other religions as studied within the purview of the phenomenology of religion. Yet, precisely because Buddhism is unusual in this regard, the status of the self, the nature of finite subjectivity and the character of individual personhood has always been a central concern for Buddhists. Much of Buddhist tradition has

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Faure, *Ch'an Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1993, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, NY, Vintage Book, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> John McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1986, 1-12.

<sup>5</sup> Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 3-5.

been given over to the intensive examination of the notion of a self as an illusion that must be renounced in the quest for enlightenment. In this respect as well, Zen must be seen as mainstream Buddhism. The focus of this essay, therefore, will be to examine various ways in which Zen speaks about the illusion of the soul and the overcoming of this illusion.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

According to traditional accounts, Ch'an was brought to China from the "West" (India) by a monk named Bodhidharma (d. 532?). Even though there exists an abundance of literature about the activities of this monk materials dealing with his career are historically unreliable. The legend of Bodhidharma was constructed in tandem with the development of the Ch'an school in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>6</sup> In all likelihood, Bodhidharma arrived in China around 479, a missionary from India with the aim of teaching meditation. The legend reveals much about how the early Ch'an monks understood themselves vis-à-vis the more established Chinese schools. According to the legend, Bodhidharma emphasized seated meditation and criticized the other schools both for their slack monastic discipline and their entanglement with the Imperial government. He is said to have spent nine years meditating outside the gate of one of the established monasteries. According to Huik'o (487–593), Bodhidharma's chief disciple, Bodhidharma practiced a form of meditation called *pi-kuan* (wall-gazing), which he distinguished from the traditional stages of meditation in India as well as the "steady-gazing" technique of the T'ien T'ai school.<sup>7</sup> After Bodhidharma, there was a gradual shift from itinerancy to a more settled life in monasteries in South Central China. The legend of Bodhidharma also figures centrally in the construction of monastic authority within the Ch'an movement. In the "transmission of the lamp" chronicles, Bodhidharma is recognized as the twenty-ninth Indian patriarch and the first Chinese patriarch. As such, his teaching authority rested on the transmission of the mind of enlightenment back twenty-nine generations to the historical Buddha in India. Bodhidharma continues this lineage by making Huik'o his "dharma heir" and thus the second Chinese patriarch.

The history of the sixth patriarch, Hui-neng (638–713), is mired in sectarian polemics, but crucial in the emergence of the orthodox Ch'an teaching on enlightenment. In 730, the monk Shen-hui began to criticize what he called the

<sup>6</sup> McRae, *The Northern School*, 15–19.

<sup>7</sup> Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History – India and China*, New York, MacMillan, 1988, 96.

<sup>8</sup> Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki no Zen shi*, Tokyo, Chikuma Shobō, 1971, 14.

“Northern School” and its alleged view that enlightenment comes gradually, as a product resulting from the sustained practice of meditation. According to the monk Shen-hui, only sudden enlightenment is the authentic teaching of the patriarchs going all the way back to the Buddha. If enlightenment comes gradually, then, meditation must be a means to a desired end. This would not be in keeping with Mahayana Buddhist claim that even the desire for enlightenment must be abandoned in order to achieve the “perfection of wisdom.” Shen-hui also claimed that the orthodox teaching about enlightenment had been preserved by the “Southern School” which recognized the legitimacy of Shen-hui’s own teacher, Hui-neng, as the rightful sixth patriarch.

The established scholarly view of this controversy over succession and doctrine has been that the Northern School and the teaching of gradual enlightenment eventually died out after being replaced by the Southern School and its teaching of sudden enlightenment. The translation of the manuscripts discovered in the caves at Tun-huang over the last several decades, however, has made necessary a revision of this standard view. Today, most scholars would agree that the Northern/Southern division was largely the self-serving fabrication of Shen-hui and that there was, in fact, no Northern School that held to the view that enlightenment comes gradually. Those singled out by Shen-hui as members of the Northern School never understood themselves as “Northerners” or held to a gradualist understanding of enlightenment. If anything, they identified themselves as the “East Mountain School” and practiced forms of meditation that went back to Bodhidharma. The driving issue behind this controversy was not actual differences over doctrine (gradual or sudden) but the need to establish religious authority within the Ch’an movement by means of fabricated lineages. By promoting Hui-neng as the Sixth Patriarch, Shen-hui was promoting his own authority within the Ch’an community.<sup>9 10</sup>

Lin-chi (810?–866) is the leading figure of the Ch’an movement in the ninth century (Tang Dynasty). The numerous hagiographic accounts of his career and compendia of his “collected sayings” are indicative of the Sinification of Buddhism in China.<sup>11</sup> A text, known in Japanese as the *Rinzairoku*, or “Collected Sayings of Lin-chi,” has become a standard work for both Ch’an and Zen.<sup>12</sup> According to the *Rinzairoku*, Lin-chi was a brilliant young monk who excelled in practicing the monastic rule and the study of the scriptures. Later, he underwent a religious crisis which caused him to set off as a homeless mendicant practicing non-attachment. Lin-chi was suddenly enlightened after hearing an off-hand remark and receiving multiple blows from various teachers. Eventually, Lin-chi became abbot of his own

<sup>9</sup> Yanagida Seizan, *Shoki Zenshū Shiso no Kenkyū*, Kyoto, Hozokan, 1967.

<sup>10</sup> McRae, *The Northern School*, 1986.

<sup>11</sup> Yanagida Seizan, *The Life of Lin-chi I-hsüan*, *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. 5, 1972, 70.

<sup>12</sup> Yanagida Seizan, *Rinzairoku*, Kyoto, Kichūdō, 1961.

monastery, attracting many disciples. The Lin-chi lineage flourished during the Sung Dynasty (960–1279) which saw the production of many hagiographic accounts of the founder's life, the most prominent of which is the *Rinzairoku*. During the Sung dynasty, the “House of Lin-chi” took its place alongside four other prominent Ch’an lineages in forming what was known as the “Five Houses”: Tsao-tung, Yun-men, Kuei-yang, Fa-yen and Lin-chi. Sung Dynasty China would also witness the arrival of monks from Japan who would establish two of these lineages, the Lin-chi (Rinzai) and Tsao-tung (Sōtō) in their home country.

### ZEN BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

The Ch’an tradition in China eventually was established in Japan and set down deep roots there. While the historical materials in Japan are generally later and more reliable than those in China, any study of Zen in Japan confronts the researcher with a number of problems. One problem which must be kept in mind is the tendency to think of Zen in Japan as the fulfillment of Ch’an. In this respect, the study of Zen has sometimes been incorporated into a hegemonic ideology of Japanese culture as the flower that has bloomed from the seed first planted in China. This view is sometimes accompanied by the claim that Japanese Zen is the purest form and highest expression of Buddhism itself as well as the “essence” of Japanese culture. These ideological reefs are all the more difficult to navigate given the fact that Zen Buddhism in Japan continued to develop problems endemic to Chinese Ch’an and was marked deeply by its engagement with Japanese culture. The Japanese monks stressed some elements that were underdeveloped in China and added elements taken from an indigenously Japanese religiosity as well.<sup>13</sup>

Historical accounts of the Zen tradition in Japan often begin with Eisai in the late twelfth century. In fact, the monk Dōshō (628–670), while in China studying Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy, practiced Zen meditation with a disciple of Huik’o, the second Patriarch, and brought this meditation practice back to Japan. Saichō, the founder of the Tendai School in Japan, had been exposed to Ch’an practice while in China, even though speaking of “Tendai Zen” in Japan would be a mistake.<sup>14</sup> Better to say that the Zen tradition is present but dormant in Japan’s Heian Period (794–1192), which was dominated by the academic and ritual interests of the Shingon and Tendai Schools. This period of dormancy came to an end during the Kamakura Period (1185–1333), a time of social and religious transition for Japan in which new schools of Buddhism were founded and eventually gave shape to an

<sup>13</sup> Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 52–125.

<sup>14</sup> Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, 6.

indigenously Japanese Buddhism.<sup>15</sup> The Pure Land Buddhism of Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262) and the Lotus School of Nichiren (1222–1282) appealed to the common people. Zen Buddhism, in contrast, came to appeal to the rising warrior class.

The founder of the Lin-chi (Japanese: Rinzai) tradition in Japan is Myōan Eisai. After studies of Tendai scholasticism on Mount Hiei, Eisai took the unusual step of going to Sung Dynasty China for further studies in esoteric Buddhism. There, he was exposed to Ch’an. Some twenty years later, he returned to China and practiced Ch’an meditation there, becoming dhārma heir to Hsü-an, a Lin-chi monk. Eisai preached Zen after returning to Japan, establishing monasteries of strict observance focused on Zen practices, including Shōfukuji in Kyūshū, the first Zen monastery in Japan. In this, Eisai enjoyed the patronage of the powerful Minamoto clan. Although these efforts met resistance from the Tendai establishment on Mount Hiei, Eisai gathered around him many disciples and built successful monastic institutions. Late in life, Eisai shifted his energies back to the practice of Tendai esoteric rites.<sup>16</sup>

The Rinzai school has not been the only Zen lineage influential in Japan. The Sōtō school, also with roots in the Kamakura Period, remains a major denomination within the Japanese Zen movement to this day. This brings us to the life of Dōgen (1200–1253), the founder of the Sōtō school in Japan and one of the most important thinkers in the entire history of Japan.<sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup> Dōgen was orphaned at the age of seven, an event that left the boy with a Buddhist sense of the impermanence (*mujō* 無常) of all things. Despite family objections, Dōgen became a Tendai monk, enrolling in the usual course of studies at Mt. Hiei. Eventually, Dōgen’s life as a monk underwent a crisis, which called into question the efficacy of the elaborate rituals and rigorous academic studies of the Tendai sect. Dōgen is said to have spoken to Eisai regarding his crisis of faith, although this cannot be confirmed. He certainly studied in Zen monasteries founded by Eisai, and like Eisai, Dōgen went to China. There, he practiced Ch’an in several different monasteries before coming under the tutelage of Ju-ching (1163–1228), the abbot of Mt. T’ien-t’ung and lead teacher of the House of Ts’ao-tung (Japanese: Sōtō). Ju-ching had established a community of strict observance, very focused on seated meditation. Furthermore, Ju-ching was not interested in the politics of the imperial court. Dōgen would inherit all of these commitments from his master. Dōgen was enlightened during a summer retreat. When a monk had fallen asleep during meditation, Ju-ching addressed

<sup>15</sup> Fumihiko Sueki, *Kamakura Bukkyō Keiseiron*, Kyoto, Hōzōkan, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, 21–49.

<sup>17</sup> Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History – Japan*, New York, MacMillan, 1988, 51–119.

<sup>18</sup> Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen: Mystical Realist*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1975.

the monk, saying, “in Ch’an, body and mind are molting away. Why then do you sleep?” Dōgen was suddenly enlightened.

Dōgen returned to Japan and established Kōshō-ji, a monastery near Kyoto. At the height of his career and having attracted a large number of monks and lay disciples, Dōgen began to compose essays based on his Japanese-language lectures that eventually would be collected as the *Shōbōgenzō* (“The Treasury of the Eye of the True Dhārma”). In July of 1243, however, Dōgen relocated his community to the region of Echizen, on Japan’s inhospitable north coast and began the construction of Eihei-ji temple. There is no fully satisfactory explanation for this move away from the capital. Possibly Dogen was motivated by the rise of Rinzai influence in both Kyoto and Kamakura (the center of military power). At Echizen, Dōgen seems to have gone into creative decline and may have been depressed. Certainly his writings of this period are marked with strident criticisms of Rinzai Zen.<sup>19</sup> Dōgen died on 28 August, 1253.

After the Kamakura Period, both Rinzai and Sōtō Zen continued to flourish. The Rinzai sect adopted the Sung Chinese method for organizing temples into hierarchies of subsidiary-temples, with major centers in Kyoto and Kamakura. Prominent monks became important state functionaries. The monk Musō (1275–1351), for example, was awarded the title “national teacher” for his services to the Emperor. Ikkyū (d. 1481) was a great poet and itinerant monk who brought Zen wisdom to social classes beyond the samurai. After a dispute over the rightful third successor to Dōgen, Eihei-ji was eventually destroyed during the Onin War and rebuilt, enjoying imperial patronage after 1500. In contrast to Rinzai institutions, Sōtō monasteries tended to be rural and oriented to the religious needs of common people. Starting in the fourteenth century, Zen has been an inspiration for many of Japan’s most distinctive cultural achievements in architecture, landscaping, Noh theater, calligraphy, ink-painting, poetry and the tea ceremony.

In the Edo Period (1600–1868), all Buddhist institutions came under strict control of the Tokugawa Shogunate which imposed a centralized, hierarchical organization over temples and brought an end to the military power of temples like Mt. Hiei. All families were required to register at their local temple. The Rinzai monk Hakuin (1685–1768) must be included among the most important Buddhist monks of the Edo period.<sup>20</sup> Since Hakuin, almost all Rinzai monks have practiced “Hakuin Zen” in some form or another. After becoming a monk at the age of fifteen, Hakuin developed deep doubts about the efficacy of Buddhist practice and became

<sup>19</sup> Carl Bielefeldt cautions that Dōgen’s criticisms of Rinzai have been filtered through subsequent Sōtō polemics regarding the superiority and uniqueness of Dōgen teachings. See Carl Bielefeldt, *Recarving the Dragon: History and Dogma in the Study of Dogen*, in W. LaFleur (ed.), *Dōgen Studies*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1985, 21–53.

<sup>20</sup> Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History – Japan*, 367–400.

an itinerant monk, devoting his energies to the *kōan*, a practice in which the mind is gradually brought into a crisis by concentration on a paradoxical story. Hakuin focused on the *kōan mu*, the famous opening case of the *Mumonkan*. In a monastery near Niigata, Hakuin entered into what he called “the great doubt.” Later, he would write of this experience, “It was as though I were frozen solid in the midst of an ice sheet extending tens of thousands of miles.” Some time later, hearing a temple bell, Hakuin was suddenly plunged into an ecstasy which he mistook as a definitive awakening. “My pride soared up like a majestic mountain,” he would note some 40 years later. The Zen master Shōju Rōjin, recognizing the superficiality of this ecstasy, ridiculed Hakuin as a “poor, hole-dwelling devil.” Begging for alms in a village, Hakuin was severely beaten by a housewife. After regaining consciousness, he realized that he had finally become fully awakened. Still later, Hakuin suffered a nervous breakdown and was healed of his mental affliction by means of a psychological treatment by a Buddhist hermit. More enlightenment experiences followed this. His fame would eventually become nationwide.

In the Meiji Period (1868–1912), Buddhist institutions lost their state support and had to adjust to a popular reaction against Buddhism after 200 years of privilege. The Meiji government would eventually make celibacy optional. The Rinzai and Sōtō sects responded to the advent of Western educational methods by founding what are today called Hanazono University (Rinzai) and Komazawa University (Sōtō). Zen intellectuals also began to embrace Western methods for the study of Buddhism. Kimura Taiken (1881–1930) studied with C.A.F. Rhys-Davids in London and returned to join the faculty at Tokyo Imperial University. He was succeeded there by Ui Hakju (1882–1963), an internationally respected historian of Zen. Kyoto Imperial University became the center for a philosophical movement with roots in Zen Buddhism, the “Kyoto School.” Figures associated with this movement include Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945), Hisamatsu Shin’ichi (1889–1980) and Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990).<sup>21</sup> D.T. Suzuki, a Rinzai lay practitioner, was instrumental as a missionary of Zen in the United States and Europe.

## ZEN DISCOURSE ON THE SOUL

Any inquiry into Zen Buddhism’s conception of the “soul” or the “self” must come to terms with the fact that Buddhism, in all its various forms, denies the existence of an eternal soul or enduring substance that transcends changing appearances. The Sanskrit term for this substantive soul is *ātman*. The Buddha taught that all

<sup>21</sup> James Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2001.



phenomena were *anātman*, or without enduring substance, self or soul. The early Buddhist scriptures contain an abundance of passages that deny the existence of a soul outright. In addition, there is a famous account of the encounter between the Buddha and a wandering ascetic named Vaccagota in which the Buddha's view of this question is more dialectical. The ascetic asks the Buddha if the soul exists. The Buddha responds with silence. Subsequently, the ascetic asks the Buddha if the soul does not exist. Likewise, the Buddha responds with silence. Buddhist tradition interprets the Buddha's silence as an indication that the philosophical problem of the soul's existence or non-existence was a "question that does not lead to edification."<sup>22</sup> Monks were advised to avoid philosophical speculation regarding the existence and the non-existence of a soul as a distraction from the proper religious quest of bringing suffering to an end through the renunciation of attachment. Thus the "silence of the Buddha" is not interpreted as the Buddha's ambivalence or agnosticism about the existence of a soul. Rather, it is interpreted as a repudiation of the quest to realize an eternal soul, even as a philosophical question, let alone a religious quest. For Buddhists, therefore, belief in the existence of a substantial soul that exists eternally beyond appearances is an illusion or "false view" which is constructed by desire and lies at the core of suffering. This illusion is a deeply rooted defilement (*klesa*) which must be overcome in order to find release from suffering.

Early Buddhists constructed logical arguments to justify their rejection of *ātman*. In a body of philosophical works which became known as *Abhidharma*, Indian Buddhists expounded a philosophical doctrine of causality in which phenomena are recognized as radically contingent, arising only as a result of external factors. Since all phenomena function mutually as the cause of all other phenomena, this doctrine is known as "dependent co-arising" (*pratītya samutpāda*). Phenomena are impermanent constructions of composite parts that arise, subsist for a time and then cease to exist depending on conditioning factors. The doctrine of dependent co-arising applies to all phenomena, including sentient beings (gods, angels, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts and the denizens of hell), who suffer as a result of attachments generated by their "false view" of phenomena as enduring substances when in fact everything is impermanent (*anitya*). Of all false views, perhaps the most deeply ingrained within us is that of being a self or soul. In fact, sentient beings have no higher self. Belief in a soul, whether it be the common sense belief in an identity that endures over time or mystical affirmations about the union of the soul with ultimate reality, is a deeply entrenched illusion, which, like everything else, arises and ceases in accordance with the principle of dependent co-arising. Buddhist teachings on the absence of *ātman*, therefore, can be contrasted with

<sup>22</sup> See the Lesser Mālunkyāputta Sutta, Sutta 63 of the Majjhima-Nikāya.

Greek notions of the soul as an eternal substance or essence that transcends appearances (as in neo-Platonism). The Buddhist view must also be contrasted with the certain Hindu teachings regarding the ultimate identity of *ātman* and *Brahman*, as in the Advaita Vedānta philosophical system. The consistent Buddhist view has been that there is no eternal soul, even though the generic Indian belief in karmic rebirth into *samsāra* was not rejected.

From its inception, Buddhism has declined to affirm the existence of a soul. For this very reason, the illusion of selfhood and the nature of personhood have been central concerns for Buddhists. Over the centuries, the Buddhist tradition has produced an elaborate discourse regarding the absence of a substantial self that is related in complex ways with Buddhist monastic practices, such as meditation, and Buddhist speculation regarding the nature of enlightenment. The Zen sect is no exception to this rule. Since Zen subscribes fully to the early Buddhist teaching regarding the absence of a soul, the Zen tradition, in China as well as in Japan, has produced its own discourse regarding the illusion of selfhood and the nature of personhood that reflects its belief in the non-existence of a soul. Several texts can be singled out in this regard as exemplary, including a poem attributed to Bodhidharma and various passages from Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*.

## THE BODHIDHARMA TEXT

As noted above, the Bodhidharma legend took shape in tandem with the formation of the Ch'an school in China as it set itself apart from the more established schools of Buddhism in the eighth and ninth centuries. Central to the legend is the following poem attributed to Bodhidharma himself, which appears in various accounts of his career as an apostle of Ch'an and China's first Patriarch. Bodhidharma spoke of Ch'an as follows:

A special transmission outside the scriptures  
 Not founded upon words or letters;  
 By pointing directly to [one's] mind  
 It lets one see into [one's own true] nature and [thus] attain Buddhahood.<sup>23</sup>

The question of whether or not this poem accurately reflects the preaching of the historical Bodhidharma is rendered relatively insignificant by the fact that, for later generations of Ch'an and Zen Buddhists in Japan as well as in China, these

<sup>23</sup> Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History – Japan*, 85–90.

four lines have captured all the basic elements of the Ch'an/Zen tradition.<sup>24</sup> The poem is particularly noteworthy because, in capturing the spirit of Ch'an, our "true nature" is related to enlightenment ("attaining Buddhahood") by drawing attention to our subjectivity ("one's mind").

The first line notes that Ch'an passes on a truth that is "outside the scriptures." This should not be taken as an indication that Ch'an is an esoteric religion. Bodhidharma is not teaching that, in Ch'an, secret teachings are passed down from master to disciple to form an alternative to the exoteric teachings found in the Buddhist scriptures. Esotericism is a prominent feature of Tibetan Buddhism. Esoteric forms of Buddhism are also found in various sects in China and Japan. Examples can also be cited in which esoteric forms of Buddhism have been amalgamated with Zen practice. To give but one instance, Eisai, the founder of the Rinzai tradition in Japan, was engaged in esoteric practices both as a young monk and, probably, at the end of his life. However, the Ch'an notion of "the transmission of the lamp," at least when strictly understood, is not a matter of a neophyte undergoing initiation as a prelude to the "special transmission" of secret teachings not available in the Buddhist scriptures. Instead, the "transmission" of which Bodhidharma speaks, entails the passing on of the enlightened mind from master to disciple in a lineage that goes back to Siddhartha Gautama. Perhaps the phrase "passing on" itself is misleading. In Ch'an and Zen, enlightenment happens suddenly, not by means of meditation or instruction. The fact of enlightenment is then recognized by the master in the disciple. When Dogen returned from China, for example, he did not return with a new scripture for study or a devotional ritual for practice. Instead, Dogen is remembered within the Sōtō sect for bringing back to Japan the enlightened mind of the Buddha which happened to him suddenly while in China. Moreover, because monastic authority within the Ch'an community was based on transmissions of the enlightened mind "outside the scriptures," Ch'an Buddhists produced elaborate and historically unreliable accounts of the "transmission of the lamp" by means of which sometimes competing monastic institutions established hegemony.

The second line builds on the first. The passing on of the mind of enlightenment is "outside the scriptures" because it is "not founded on words or letters." Ultimately, Ch'an is not about the academic study of Buddhist scriptures and their elaboration in commentaries. In Ch'an, the focus is on meditation, not philosophical speculation or the exposition of doctrinal problems. In this respect, the Ch'an tradition must be contrasted with more academic forms of Buddhism, like the T'ien T'ai and Hua-yen schools in China and more devotional schools, like the Pure Land and Nichiren schools in Japan. Moreover, the fact that it is "not founded on

<sup>24</sup> Seizan, *Shoki no Zen shi*, 228–278.

words or letters,” but rather a “special transmission outside the scriptures,” helps to explain why modern Zen, as it was promoted in the West by missionaries and academicians like D.T. Suzuki and Masao Abe, has had to defend itself against charges of anti-intellectualism, chauvinism and irrationalism.<sup>25 26 27</sup> The fact that Zen is not founded on words or letters also helps to explain why, in Japan, the Zen movement has been such a fecund source of inspiration for art forms as diverse as the tea ceremony and Noh drama and martial arts like kendo (swordsmanship). Zen is about intuitions that are more amenable to artistic expression than philosophical exposition.

The third line of Bodhidharma’s poem speaks of “pointing directly to one’s mind.” Ch’an is not a devotional form of Buddhism that calls for faith in an external savior Buddha, such as Amida Buddha in the Pure Land sect. Ch’an does not even direct the practitioner’s attention to Śākyamuni Buddha (the historical Buddha) as a model to be emulated, let alone an object of devotional practice. In the *Mumonkan* collection of *kōans*, Lin-chi is famous for demanding that, “if you meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha.” The point of this famous directive is not simply a critique of devotional religion. Neither should it be construed as nihilism. Ch’an directs the practitioner away from a transcendent object of devotion only in order to focus attention on the problematic nature of subjectivity. “Pointing directly to one’s mind” is Ch’an’s way of raising the question of the nature of personhood in light of the complete absence of a substantial soul or enduring self. This leads us to the final line of Bodhidharma’s poem.

“Pointing directly to one’s mind” allows one “to see into one’s own true nature” (Japanese: *kenshō* 見性). In doing so, one attains Buddhahood. *Kenshō*, therefore, is central to a proper understanding of the relationship Ch’an forges between personhood properly understood (“one’s true nature”) and the religious metanoia (“becoming a Buddha”) that Buddhism understands as “awakening” to the absence of a soul. What is the true nature of the human person that is manifest in becoming enlightened? What is that subjectivity to which we awaken when we realize our true nature as radically lacking in eternal substance? What is the fate of our finite subjectivity in this whole process? If attaining Buddhahood by means of *kenshō* does not lead to the realization of an eternal, self-subsistent soul, what does enlightenment lead to? Moreover, if *kenshō* does not confirm the commonsense notion of a person as an independent “self” with an identity that persists over time, what is this “true nature” that is seen in becoming a Buddha?

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Koestler, *The Lotus and the Robot*, NY, Harper-Collins, 1960.

<sup>26</sup> Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, esp. 52–88.

<sup>27</sup> Donald Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha: A Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995.

## DŌGEN: THE PRIMORDIAL PERSON

Dōgen Zenji (1200–1253), the founder of the Sōtō Zen sect in Japan, is “the greatest original thinker that Japan produced until modern times...” according to Heinrich Dumoulin, the respected historian of Zen.<sup>28</sup> Among his most important writings is the collection of essays entitled *Shōbōgenzō* (“Treasury of the True Dhārma Eye”). This is a very difficult text written “at the outermost edge of human communication,” according to the Zen teacher Robert Aiken,<sup>29</sup> yet extremely influential on the Zen movement even beyond the confines of the Sōtō sect.<sup>30</sup> In a fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* entitled “Genjō-kōan,” Dōgen reflects at some length on the problematic nature of personhood in light of the absence of a soul. The fact that Dōgen links the realization of our authentic personhood with the process of awakening is noteworthy. Within the Genjō-kōan fascicle, the following passage, translated by Thomas Kasulis, is noteworthy in this regard.

To model yourself after the way of the Buddhas is to model yourself after yourself. To model yourself after yourself is to forget yourself. To forget yourself is to be authenticated by all things. To be authenticated by all things is to effect the molting of body-mind, both yours and others’. The distinguishing marks of enlightenment dissolve and [the molting of body-mind] causes the dissolving distinguishing marks of enlightenment to emerge continuously. At first, when you *seek* the truth, you have distanced yourself from its domain. Finally, when the truth is correctly transmitted to you, you are immediately the primordial person.<sup>31</sup>

This important passage from the Genjō-kōan fascicle may be taken as an elaboration on the poem attributed to Bodhidhārma, although Dōgen did not intend to do so. Both the Dōgen text and the Bodhidharma poem forge links between what it means, most radically, to be a person, on the one hand, and the religious metanoia Zen Buddhists speaks of variously as *kaku* 覺 (awakening) or *satori* 悟 (enlightenment). The parallels between these two classic Zen texts are by no means obvious. For example, where the Bodhidharma poem speaks of “seeing into one’s nature” (*kenshō*), Dogen makes reference to “forgetting the self” and being “authenticated by all things.” Where the Bodhidharma poem speaks of “attaining

<sup>28</sup> Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History – Japan*, 102.

<sup>29</sup> See Aiken’s Foreword, in Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen: Mystical Realist*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1975, ix.

<sup>30</sup> Modern studies of Dogen began in 1924 with Watsuji Tetsuro’s landmark essay, Shamon Dōgen (Dōgen the Monk). This essay is reprinted as a chapter in Watsuji’s *Nihon Seishinshi Kenkyū* (Studies in History of Japanese Spirituality), which now can be found in Abe Yoshishige et al. (eds), *Watsuji Tetsuro Zenshu*, Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1977, Vol. 4, 156–246.

<sup>31</sup> *Dōgen Zenshi Zenshū*, Okūbō Dōshū ed., 2 Vols. Chikuma Shobo, 1969–1970, Vol 1, 7–8., Thomas Kasulis (trans.), *Zen Action, Zen Person*, Honolulu, University of Hawai’i Press, 1981, 87.

Buddhahood,” Dōgen speaks of being “immediately the primordial person.” To clarify the connection Zen makes between personhood and enlightenment, several observations are in order.

First, in keeping with the understanding of Zen in the Bodhidharma poem, Dōgen observes that, to follow the way of the Buddhas, one should not place one’s faith in an external savior Buddha. Dōgen’s directive may be in keeping with the spirit of Bodhidharma’s poem, but is surprising given the fact that the notion of a savior Buddha is a distinguishing characteristic of Mahayana Buddhism, within which Zen is a sect. From the beginning of the Mahayana movement in India and continuing in China and Japan, popular devotional cults came to be associated with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas such as Kannon (Chinese: Guan-yin), Amida, and Jizō. Instead of modeling oneself after one of these Buddhas, however, Dōgen advises his students “to model yourself after yourself.” The Japanese verb *narau* 習う, here translated by Kasulis as “to model,” normally means “to study” or “to learn.” In this context, however, the verb carries with it the sense of being personally transformed by submitting to a discipline, such as the practice of a martial art, the tea ceremony or a monastic rule. Zen is not based on an encounter in faith with a transcendent Other, whether this be construed as the Hebrew God or a savior Buddha in the various devotional forms of Mahayana Buddhism. Neither is Zen based on a religious intuition into a transcendent effulgence like the One in neo-Platonism or the *Plenum* in the various Gnostic systems. Instead, the path to enlightenment leads the practitioner to an encounter with our ordinary sense of being a finite, embodied subject. The model to be emulated is simply the true nature of our finite personhood. This leads to a second observation.

For Dōgen, “to model yourself after yourself” requires one “to forget” this ordinary self. This language may reflect the influence Daoist thought exerted on Buddhism after its arrival in China from India. From Daoism, Zen Buddhists learned of an unselfconscious spontaneity (Chinese: *wu-wei* 無爲) in which egocentric self-awareness is abandoned in order to achieve harmony with the Way (*Dao* 道). The “Way” in question here is the way in which reality effortlessly unfolds. Whether or not there is Daoist influence here, at the very least the forgetfulness-of-self which Dōgen calls for can be construed as a Chinese Buddhist iteration of the early Buddhist teaching of *anātman*, the absence of a permanent, substantial soul. As noted above, modeling oneself after the way of the Buddhas in the quest for enlightenment requires us to model ourselves after ourselves, not an external object of faith. But since, under examination, the “self” that we encounter is really an illusion that arises, like everything else, by means of dependent co-arising, “to model yourself after yourself” leads to insight into the radical impermanence of this illusory self. “Forgetting the self,” therefore, means renouncing all ego-attachments to any notion of a permanent self or soul.

Third, two mistaken interpretations of “forgetting the self” need to be identified and ruled out. “Forgetting the self” does not lead to a mystical unity with a transcendent divinity as in various forms of Christian and Hindu belief. Dōgen is not talking about an apophatic *itinerarium mentis ad deum* or the annihilation of the ego in which *ātman* is realized as *Brahman* itself as construed in the Advaita Vedānta philosophy of Hinduism. Nihilistic alternatives to the notion of a substantive “true self” or soul must be excluded as well. Dōgen does not suggest that “forgetting the self” leads to the sheer annihilation of personal existence. Instead, he claims that the forgetting of the illusory self leads to being “authenticated by all things.” The term “authentication” (*shō* 證) is much favored by Dōgen in situations where other Buddhist teachers use more familiar terms like awakening (*kaku* 覺) or enlightenment (*satori* 悟り). Depending on context, *shō* can mean the “manifestation” of a truth, or “to bear witness” to a truth or “to realize” a truth existentially, not merely cognitively. To forget the ordinary, egocentric self is to have the truth of our existence “authenticated,” or “witnessed,” or “realized” by the flux and flow of all things in their impermanence.

Fourth, Dōgen goes on to explain the meaning of being “authenticated by all things” by referring to the strange expression associated with his own account of becoming enlightened in China, the “molting of body-mind” (*shinjin-datsuraku* 体心脱落). In China, Dōgen was enlightened when his master turned to a sleeping monk as said, “in Zen, body and mind are molting away – why, then, do you sleep?” “Body-mind” (*shinjin*) refers to the illusion of being an embodied subject facing a world of objects, the ordinary experience of being a self. Descartes captured something similar in his attempt to work out the logical structure implicit in the body/mind duality where he makes a distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. The word Kasulis translates here as “molting” (*datsuraku*) is more commonly translated into English as “dropping off” or “casting off.” Kasulis prefers “molting” because it suggests an on-going process, not a single, decisive event.<sup>32</sup> Dōgen is teaching that to become enlightened by being “authenticated by all things” is a continuous process (“molting”) in which the illusion of being a discrete, substantial self located within a world of objects (“body-mind”) is constantly being cast off. For this reason, the “distinguishing marks of enlightenment” continuously arise and cease only to arise again as reality continuously unfolds in its impermanence and spontaneity. Therefore, awakening to the insubstantiality of the self (“being authenticated”) is to become a “self” that takes the form of reality itself as it is continually arising and ceasing in the present moment.

Fifth, Dōgen notes that “when you seek the truth, you have distanced yourself from its domain.” Then, he goes on to note that “when the truth is correctly

<sup>32</sup> Kasulis, *Zen Action – Zen Person*, 91.

transmitted to you, you are immediately the primordial person.” The term here translated as “the truth” is *hō* 法, which has a multitude of connotations within Buddhism. The term most commonly means the truth of the Buddha’s teachings. Depending on context, the term might also be translated as a phenomenon or event and even as “ultimate reality” (although with important qualifications which I will note in the following section). “Seeking the truth,” for Dōgen, means to distort the original purity and immediacy of reality by factoring it into a subject facing an object. Thus, in every cognitive act in which the world is objectified, there is also the construction of an illusory self that is the subjective side of this cognitive act. In this dualism of subject and object (*shinjin*), the pristine purity of reality continuously recedes from the ego’s grasp. The passion-driven self that operates in the world in terms of what Buddhists call “false views” (*mōken* 妄見) finds itself alienated from the “domain” of reality as it actually arises and ceases in its impermanence.

Sixth, Dōgen notes that the “forgetting” of the illusory self leads “immediately” to the arising of a personhood more radical than the ordinary subjective self, what Kasulis translates as “the primordial person.” This translation is in need of some explanation and defense. The original Japanese text reads *honbun-nin* 本分人, literally, “original share person.” Although *honbun-nin* is a technical term that Japanese Buddhism inherited from the continental Buddhist tradition, the notion of an “original share person” figures in a debate among Buddhists (not only Zen Buddhists) that goes all the way back to India. The controversy centered on the universality of enlightenment, or at least the possibility of enlightenment. In Indian Buddhism an *icchantika* (Japanese: *issendai* 一闍提) was a sentient being afflicted with the deepest of karmic defilements. Some claimed that such beings would never attain enlightenment, even after innumerable rebirths. Other Buddhists rejected this doctrine, claiming that all sentient beings originally have a share in the enlightenment which is the nature of all the Buddhas. A *honbun-nin*, therefore, is a person who “originally” or “primordially” enjoys a share in the infinite storehouse of merit that is the bounty of the savior Buddhas. The Lankavatara Sutra, a text that has been highly influential in the Ch’an and Zen traditions, teaches that no sentient being will be abandoned by the compassionate Buddhas. The possibility of enlightenment is universal. By Dōgen’s time, the notion that some sentient beings are permanently incapable of enlightenment had been widely repudiated in favor of soteriological universalism. All sentient beings, without exception, possess an “original share” in the Buddha’s enlightenment.

Dōgen takes this view a step farther. In this passage from Genjō-kōan, *honbun-nin* does not merely imply that all sentient beings have a potential for eventual enlightenment. In Dōgen’s understanding, primordially all sentient beings are of the same nature as the Buddhas themselves, i.e. utterly free of enduring substance.



Since all sentient beings share in the enlightened subjectivity of the Buddhas by being completely free of substance, self or soul, no sentient being can be said to be *essentially* incapable of becoming fully enlightened. Therefore for Dōgen, the enlightened mind exists primordially or “originally” even as the mind of ignorance constructs the illusion of being a substantial self. For this reason, Kasulis translates *honbun-nin*, somewhat daringly, as “the primordial person.” Tanahashi translates it as “your original self.”<sup>33</sup> Nishijima translates it as “a human being in his own true place.”<sup>34</sup> Cooke translates it as “the Original Man.”<sup>35</sup> Nishiyama and Stevens translate it as “one’s real self.”<sup>36</sup> In doing so, Kasulis does not wish to imply that there is a subtle soul or higher self that transcends the ego as its ground. Dōgen himself rules out this possibility in the Busshō fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*.<sup>37</sup> Rather, he means that the ordinary sense of being a self, as it is continuously being constructed by karmic attachments, covers over and distorts a more radical personhood that is “authenticated” (*shō*) by the advance of all things in the “molting” of the illusory self.

Therefore, primordial personhood, as opposed to passion-driven egocentric personhood, has to do with a subjectivity that takes shape continuously by the unhindered arising of reality as it is in itself and in its utter spontaneity and impermanence. The mind of ignorance arises in the process of distorting this spontaneity and impermanence by imposing our attachments onto reality. This is what Dōgen means when he writes: “At first, when you *seek* the truth, you have distanced yourself from its domain” and “Finally, when the truth is correctly transmitted to you, you are immediately the primordial person.” When the ego-confined illusory self continuously “molts” away, the flow of reality is able to arise in its unhindered spontaneity to form an “authenticated” subjectivity, the *honbun-nin*. Dōgen makes the same point in another passage of the Genjō-kōan fascicle, where he makes the following observation.

Conveying the self to the myriad things to authenticate them is delusion.  
The myriad things advancing to authenticate the self is enlightenment.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Kazuaki Tanahashi, *Enlightenment Unfolds*, Boston, Shambala, 2000, 35–39.

<sup>34</sup> Gudo Wafu Nishijima, *Understanding the Shobogenzo*, Windbell Publications, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> Francis Cooke, *Sounds of Valley Streams*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1989, 65–69.

<sup>36</sup> Kosen Nishiyama – John Stevens, 1975, www.thezensite.com.

<sup>37</sup> Dōgen goes out of his way to reject the Senika heresy (*senni gedō*), a controversy within Buddhism that goes back to the historical Buddha himself. Sennika taught the existence of a subtle “higher self” or “true self” beyond the empirical ego. The primordial person is not to be essentialized into an eternal, substantial soul. See *The Heart of Dōgen’s Shōbōgenzō*, 63 and Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights*, 264.

<sup>38</sup> *Shōbōgenzō: Buddha-nature*, trans. Norman Waddell – Abe Masao in *The Eastern Buddhist*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, October, 1975, 102.

In our normal mode of being a person, reality is sundered by subject/object dualism. The working of desire and attachment construct an illusory sense of being a subject separated from a world of objects. Then, this illusory self imposes its own subjective categories, predilections and prejudgments onto phenomena. This dualistic subjectivity is what Dōgen means by “conveying the self to the myriad things to authenticate them.” Enlightenment is the reversal of this process. The unhindered flow of phenomena arises spontaneously and without the distortions of ego-driven passions to constitute a subjectivity that is as impermanent and spontaneous as reality itself. Dōgen actually speaks of enlightenment by evoking the notion of an authenticated “self.” Like the phrase “primordial person,” Dōgen’s use of the term “self” is highly analogical. This authenticated self is the primordial personhood that arises when the illusory self is forgotten and reality as it is in its pristine spontaneity is allowed to arise unhindered. This “self” is not to be taken as a soul or substance.

If the primordial person is not to be taken as a substance or soul, then what is it? What is this “self” that arises in the forgetting of the illusory self and in the advancing of the myriad things? Dōgen relates the authenticated subjectivity of the primordial person with the unhindered flow of reality itself as impermanent and utterly without substance. The primordial self, therefore, cannot be understood apart from an appreciation of Dōgen’s understanding of the ultimate character of reality as empty and without substance, what Mahayana Buddhism calls the Buddha-nature.

## DŌGEN ON THE BUDDHA-NATURE

Dōgen devotes an entire fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* to a discussion of the Buddha-nature (*bussō* 佛性). His treatment of this topic must be counted among the most philosophically demanding of all his writings and integral to his understanding of our primordial personhood.<sup>39</sup> The doctrine of the Buddha-nature is featured prominently in the Nirvana Sutra, a text that was central in the preaching of Hui-neng, the sixth Ch’an Patriarch, and in Dōgen’s own thinking. The notion of a “nature” (*shō* 性) inserts itself into Zen discourse as part of several important technical terms in Buddhist doctrine: *honshō* 本性 (original nature), *chieshō* 智性 (wisdom nature), and as we have already seen, *kenshō* 見性 (seeing into one’s own nature”). None of these terms are intelligible apart from a nuanced understanding of the Buddha-nature teaching. To the extent that both the Bodhidharma poem

<sup>39</sup> For an extensive philosophical treatment of Dogen’s view of the Buddha-nature, see Masao Abe, *A Study of Dogen: His Philosophy and Religion*, Steven Heine (ed.), Albany, SUNY Press, 1992.

and Dōgen's Genjō-kōan text establish links between seeing into one's own nature and the realization of Buddhahood, the doctrine of the Buddha-nature is a necessary component in a proper understanding of the subjectivity of enlightenment.

In the Buddha-nature fascicle, Dōgen states repeatedly that the ultimate reality of all things is nothing other than the impermanence (*mujō* 無常) of all phenomena. Early Buddhism included impermanence as one of the marks of all things that exist. This is because there is nothing at all that exists of itself (*swabhāva*). In keeping with the doctrine of dependent co-arising, all things are contingent and therefore impermanent. In the Buddha-nature fascicle, Dōgen writes:

For that reason, the very impermanence of grass and tree, thicket and forest is the Buddha-nature. The very impermanence of people and things, body and mind is the Buddha-nature. Lands and nations, mountains and rivers are impermanent because they are Buddha-nature. Supreme, complete enlightenment, because it is the Buddha-nature, is impermanent. Great nirvana, because it is impermanent, is the Buddha-nature.<sup>40</sup>

The ultimate reality of all things is not to be found transcendentally beyond the world of change, as in "the One" of neo-Platonism or in *Brahman*, the metaphysical ultimate in the Hindu Sāṃkhya philosophical system. Rather, the true nature of all phenomena is found in their "very impermanence" itself. The impermanence of all things is the Buddha-nature and all phenomena are the Buddha-nature because they are impermanent. In the Buddha-nature fascicle, Dōgen does not merely claim that grasses, trees, people, things and the mind *have* the Buddha-nature. Instead, his claim is that all these things *are* the Buddha-nature by virtue of their impermanence.<sup>41</sup> Not even "supreme and complete enlightenment" can be excluded from the realm of impermanence. Nirvana is the Buddha-nature because, like "grass and tree, thicket and forest," it is impermanent. All this can be taken as a Mahayana Buddhist elaboration on early Buddhist teaching. In the early teachings, all phenomena are *anātman*, i.e. lacking an enduring essence, soul or self. Therefore, nothing has "self-existence" (*swabhāva*); all phenomena arise only in relationship to all other phenomena in keeping with the principle of dependent co-arising. This means that all phenomena are not only without substance, they are also impermanent. Dōgen refuses to exclude even nirvana ("supreme and complete

<sup>40</sup> *The Heart of Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*, trans. Norman Waddell – Masao Abe, Albany, SUNY, 2002, 76–77.

<sup>41</sup> In the Busshō fascicle, Dōgen makes this point by means of a strategic misreading of the Chinese text of the Nirvana Sutra. The most appropriate reading of the text would be, "all things have the Buddha-nature." Dōgen interprets the same characters to mean, "the whole of being is the Buddha-nature." This reading is implausible, but central to Dōgen's overall point. For a detailed discussion of this matter, see Masao Abe, *A Study of Dogen*, 35.

enlightenment”) from this rule. His position is entirely in keeping with his remarks about enlightenment in the Genjō-kōan, where he notes that the “distinguishing marks” of enlightenment are continually molting away and arising anew. Thus he makes frequent use of the phrase *mujō-busshō* 無常佛性, the “impermanence of the Buddha-nature.” The ultimate reality of all things, therefore, is nothing more than their sheer impermanence.

Therefore, Dōgen does not construe the Buddha-nature as a permanent and unchanging ground of changing appearances. The Buddha-nature is not an ontological substratum that provides an eternal, substantial foundation from which phenomena arise and to which they return. Therefore, the Buddha-nature must be placed in contrast to much of Greek metaphysics. The Buddha-nature, for example, cannot be compared with Aristotle’s *hypokeimenon* (the universal substrate) or with Plotinus’ *Monad* (the “One”), the source from which the many emanate. Dōgen makes this point in various places within the *Shōbōgenzō* anthology: the Buddha-nature is not to be likened to the *Dao* [道] that lies at the core of reality as the source of changing appearances,<sup>42</sup> and enlightenment is not to be thought of as a return to a permanence that transcends the world of change.<sup>43</sup> The Buddha-nature is not a substance that is metaphysically prior to changing accidents. The ultimate reality of all things is simply their impermanence and insubstantiality and nothing more. Neither is the Buddha-nature to be taken in the German mystical/metaphysical sense of a *Grund*. The Buddha-nature is not the ground, the foundation or the cause of anything. Instead, the Buddha-nature is nothing other than the continuous arising and ceasing of phenomena themselves as they are caused by all other phenomena, all of which are themselves contingent in accordance with the principle of dependent co-arising. For this reason, Dōgen repeatedly claims that “all things are ultimate reality.”

Dōgen, and Zen Buddhists more generally, speak of the Buddha-nature using the Mahayana Buddhist logic of emptiness (Sanskrit *śūnyatā*, Japanese *kū* 空). The Buddha-nature refers to the fact that all phenomena are “empty” of enduring substance. Since there is nothing at all that is eternal, existing as its own cause, attachment to anything inevitably leads to suffering. By this very fact, therefore, the path to liberation from suffering lies in non-attachment. The logic of emptiness also implies that nothing has any metaphysical priority over any other thing. There is nothing that can be recognized as eternal or transcendent or the ground of appearances or the source of reality. Nothing can be said to be ontologically prior to any other thing. There are only the empty appearances themselves arising and ceasing in their sheer impermanence. The principle of emptiness applies to the

<sup>42</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Sokushi Zebutsu fascicle.

<sup>43</sup> *Shōbōgenzō*, Bendowa fascicle.

Buddha-nature as well. Like everything else, the Buddha-nature is also empty of self-subsistence: it is neither its own cause nor the cause of anything else. Instead, in accordance with the principle of dependent co-arising, all things cause all other things to exist. The Buddha-nature has no transcendent metaphysical existence beyond the impermanence of the world. As such, the Buddha-nature is neither a transcendent realm into which the soul enters after death nor a transcendent state of bliss that provides an escape from the world of changing appearances. In fact, the logic of emptiness demands that we recognize that, ultimately, the Buddha-nature and the world of impermanence are not two different realms. With this in mind, even as Dōgen affirms the reality of Buddha-nature (*u-busshō* 有佛性) as the ultimate reality of impermanence, he also insists that, properly speaking, Buddha-nature must be thought of as “no-Buddha-nature” (*mu-busshō* 無佛性). “No-Buddha-nature” should not be taken as a simple denial of the existence of any ultimate reality. Rather, this term is Dōgen’s way of affirming that the Buddha-nature, rightly conceived, is empty of substance and not a transcendent substratum that functions as a metaphysical ground for the arising and ceasing of phenomena. This is necessary in order to affirm that the Buddha-nature has no existence apart from the sheer impermanence and insubstantiality of all phenomena.<sup>44</sup>

If the phenomenal realm is not grounded in a metaphysical substratum, how does Zen Buddhism account for the flow of appearances? In a fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* entitled “Being-Time” (Uji), Dōgen refers to an important principle in Mayahana Buddhism: the unhindered interpenetration of all phenomena (*jiji muge* 事事無碍).<sup>45</sup> Dōgen has taken this teaching from Hua-yen Buddhism, a Chinese school that provided a sophisticated theory of causality and a Buddhist cosmology for the more practice-oriented schools like the Zen sect. Early Buddhism taught that all things cause all other things to arise. The Hua-yen school took this teaching a step farther by arguing that all phenomena are perfectly interrelated and interpenetrating. Since all phenomena are empty of substance, all phenomena (*jiji*) are not only causally interrelated, they also interpenetrate one another without hinderance or obstacle (*muge*). In this Chinese Buddhist vision of reality, infinite relatedness and mutuality replace the notion of a universe of self-contained substances which exist in themselves before they exist in relationship

<sup>44</sup> In making his point, Dōgen is once again purposely misreading a Chinese text, in this case, the teaching of the fourth Ch’an patriarch. The patriarch taught his disciple that “you have no Buddha-nature” (*mu-busshō* 無佛性). Dōgen interprets the Chinese characters as “you are no-Buddha-nature.” See the translation and commentary in Waddell – Abe, *The Heart of the Shōbōgenzō*, 71. See also Dumoulin, *Zen Enlightenment*, 106–7, and Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen: Mystical Realist*, 126–8.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Cleary translates *jiji muge* as “the mutual noninterference of things.” Thomas Cleary (trans.), *Shōbōgenzō*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1986, 104.

with other things. The universe constitutes a radical intimacy in which nothing is alien, isolated, self-contained, discrete or autonomous.<sup>46</sup> The Buddha-nature is this perfectly unhindered interpenetration and relatedness of all phenomena. But by appealing to the Hua-yen teaching, Dōgen does not wish to imply that the Buddha-nature is an undifferentiated totality in which all particularity is sublated into a whole that transcends the parts. This possibility is over-ruled by the fact that Buddha-nature is not a ground or substratum that precedes the concreteness of particular phenomena as their source. Dōgen makes this clear by declaring that the unhindered interpenetration of all phenomena (*jiji muge*) is inseparable from the unique individuality of all things (*sōsoku-sōnyū*).<sup>47</sup> The particularity of a phenomenon is preserved only to the extent that it is opened-up into and dynamically related to all other things. Self-subsistent individuality and autonomy are illusory. Ultimately, to exist is to be infinitely related.

## PRIMORDIAL PERSONHOOD AND BUDDHA-NATURE

With these comments as background, Dōgen's notion of primordial personhood and its relationship with religious and metaphysical notions of a soul can be discussed in more detail. Primordial personhood, as understood by Dōgen, is clearly not a person in the ordinary psychological sense of an individual subject surrounded by a world of objects. The awakened subjectivity that arises in the molting of body-mind is not the finite ego or the common-sense intuition into subjectivity as an identity that is continuous over time. Neither can the primordial person be identified with philosophical elaborations on this intuition, such as Descartes's *cogito* or Husserl's transcendental ego. Moreover, Dōgen's primordial person is in keeping with the early Buddhist rejection of an eternal *ātman* that transmigrates through various bodies by means of karmic rebirth. For Dōgen, there is no "higher self" or soul that exists beyond the world of impermanent phenomena. In addition, Dōgen's views can be placed in contrast with those of the neo-Platonist philosophers and their Christian theological disciples who argued for the soul's return to God. Instead, Dōgen associates the authentication of personhood, in its true, primordial form, with the local and temporary realization the Buddha-nature as the true character of all phenomena. Our true status as persons, understood most radically, is simply the functioning of the Buddha-nature at a specific time and place. As such, personhood is a manifestation (*shō*) of the utterly spontaneous and impermanent arising

<sup>46</sup> Francis Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*, University Park, PN, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977, *passim*, especially 36.

<sup>47</sup> Hee-jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen: Mystical Realist*, 139–140.

and ceasing of all phenomena and their complete interpenetration, unhindered by any trace of self-subsistence (*jiji-muge*). Thus, our true status as persons is authenticated (*shō*) by the abandonment of the illusion of being an autonomous substance (“forgetting the self”) and the arising of a primordial personhood that is constituted by the utter impermanence of the Buddha-nature itself.

In his fascicle on the Buddha-nature, Dōgen makes yet another important observation that needs to be noted here. Awakening to primordial personhood means to have cast off the false view of the self as an autonomous center of subjectivity and the illusion of existence as a substance. Dōgen, however, never suggests that this process entails the annihilation of personal existence and finite subjectivity. On the contrary, Dōgen conceives of our primordial personhood as becoming “particular.” In the fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* that he devotes to the Buddha-nature, Dōgen states that, “Those of us who now particularize ourselves in myriad forms and thereby liberate ourselves – we expound the Dhārma by our particularizations.” And then he goes on to note, “Such is the Buddha Nature.”<sup>48</sup> The authentication of our primordial personhood in the unhindered flux and flow of the “myriad forms” entails not the obliteration of an existence that is finite, concrete, specific, temporal and located. Awakening to the Buddha-nature does not entail an infinite expansion of consciousness to the point that the mind is coterminous with the universe. Rather, realizing our personhood in its primordial character is to be authenticated by the Buddha-nature, which has no existence what-so-ever apart from manifestations that are completely specific and finite in the here and now. This is in keeping with Dōgen’s insistence that the Buddha-nature is not a transcendent realm beyond the realm of impermanent phenomena.

Dōgen’s view of the concreteness and immanence of our primordial personhood vis-à-vis the Buddha-nature has deep roots in traditional Mahayana Buddhist philosophical thought, specifically, the teachings of the “Perfection of Wisdom” literature (Prajna-paramita) and especially in the Heart Sutra, a text which figures prominently in Zen monastic liturgy. In the Heart Sutra, the Zen monk chants the follow words: “form is emptiness, emptiness is form.” Applied to Dōgen’s views of the Buddha-nature and our primordial personhood, the Heart Sutra is affirming that the realm of form, the phenomenal world, is completely empty of all enduring substance. But this emptiness that characterizes all phenomena does not constitute a transcendent realm beyond the realm of form. Emptiness itself, like the Buddha-nature, is nothing other than the myriad forms. Therefore, the realm of enlightenment (nirvana; the formless) is not an escape from the realm of suffering (samsāra; form). The Buddha-nature, in Dōgen’s entirely orthodox Mahayana view, is the non-duality of both form and emptiness. If this is the case, then Dōgen would

<sup>48</sup> This is Kim’s translation. See Hee-Jin Kim, *Dōgen Kigen: Mystical Realist*, 135.

hold that our primordial personhood would be what the Perfection of Wisdom literature calls the “form of the formless,” for the formless Buddha-nature has no existence apart from its concrete instantiations in the phenomenal realm of forms. Our primordial personhood, in contrast to the notion of a person as a substance or soul, is the specific, concrete form taken by the formless, or as Dōgen says, the “particularization” of the formless in form. Therefore, the relationship between the formless and form and between the Buddha-nature and primordial personhood is not that of an emanation from a transcendent source as in neo-Platonism or that of an eternal substance that forms the basis for accidents. The formless Buddha-nature has no metaphysical existence apart from its actual instantiations as concrete form. And at the same time, as insubstantial and impermanent, the ultimate nature of our true personhood is the formless Buddha-nature, completely empty of substance or soul.

## ZEN IN DIALOGUE

Often, the Buddhist denial of the soul (*anatman*) is placed in stark contrast to the Christian notion of a soul (*anima*). The crucial point of difference, allegedly, is the eternal, imperishable quality of the soul in Christian doctrine. What is affirmed in Christianity is what is denied in Buddhism: the soul as an eternal substance and metaphysical object. Both Buddhism and Christianity, however, are more complex in their discourses on the soul. The soul as imperishable substance entered Christian discourse through neo-Platonism. In keeping with its Hellenistic social context, early Christians looked on the soul as an eternal substance, in contrast to the perishable body. The dualism of body and soul, however, hardly exhausts Christian discourse on the soul and in fact presents technical difficulties for Christian orthodoxy, despite the fact that this Greek mentality has penetrated deeply into popular Christian thinking. Somewhat analogously, in the history of Buddhism, the doctrine of *anatman* has remained the province of monastic elites. Popular Buddhism has been a religion shaped by the mundane concerns of the laity, its monks made famous by their prowess as thaumaturges and exorcists. Technical expositions regarding the problematic nature of the self, like those found in Dōgen’s Genjō-kōan and Busshō fascicles, were of little interest to anyone but a relatively select circle of elites. Popular Buddhist devotional practices have been based on an implicit belief in a soul as a substance which undergoes rebirth. Dialogue among Buddhists and Christians should include discussions of these discrepancies between popular beliefs and the technicalities of doctrine.

Another opportunity for dialogue has to do with Christian theological teachings about the soul. Throughout Christian history, the notion of a soul has often



functioned as a trope for the human capacity for transcendence. The human being is empowered by divine grace to attain salvation through the transcendence of all finite objectifications of the self. As such, the un-objectifiability of the soul has been woven seamlessly into Christian discourse about the transcendence of God as the *mysterium* that cannot be objectified.

Augustine's *Confessions* offers a particularly influential example of this pattern. For Augustine, self-transcendence into God takes the form of the confession of sins by means of a painful descent into what Augustine calls "the well of memory." Augustine comes to stand in the presence of the transcendent God by means of his retreat into the infinity of the well of memory. The infinity and un-objectifiability of the deity is discerned in the infinity and un-objectifiability of Augustine's interiority. In this fashion, Augustine established a Christian discourse for the soul based on the inward quest for memory.

"This memory of mine is a great force, a vertiginous mystery, my God, a hidden depth of infinite complexity: and this is my soul, and this is what I am. What, then, am I, my God? What is my true nature? A living thing, taking innumerable forms, quite limitless..."<sup>49</sup>

Augustine is not preoccupied with identifying a soul as an eternal substance and metaphysical object distinct from the perishable body. Instead, he speaks of memory as a "vertiginous mystery" and "hidden depth" in which Augustine recognizes his soul as "a living thing, taking on innumerable forms." In dialogue, Zen Buddhists and Christians might explore how the "innumerable forms" of Augustine's soul correspond to Dogen's primordial personhood which arises as the "form of the formless." Similarly, Buddhists and Christians might come together to ask how Augustine's discovery of his soul by mean of memory is similar and different to Dōgen's realization of primordial personhood by means of forgetting. Dialogue with Christians is indicated by the fact that the Zen Buddhist understanding of the soul is by no means a simple negation. The soul is negated in Zen Buddhism in order to affirm the reality of awakening, *satori*, and what Dōgen calls "authentication." At the very least, Zen Buddhists and Christians should recognize that within each tradition there are multiple discourses about the soul. Interreligious dialogue about these multiple discourses brings with it the promise of mutual enrichment.

<sup>49</sup> *Confessions* Bk 10/16/25

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# THE POLYMASTIC NATURE OF THE *DIANA EPHESIA* CULT STATUE

## The Explanation and Research History

ANITA RADI<sup>1</sup>

The cult statue of *Diana Ephesia* is a unique art object, which is very different from other contemporary representations of gods. This goddess has a special so-called “multiple-breasts” pectoral ornament, which we can see mainly in the area of the chest, but sometimes it is positioned at the waist. Most historians started researching the *Diana Ephesia*’s cult statue and its history especially because of these interesting elements. Although many theories and interpretations existed about this statue, it is not clear when, and especially for what reason these “multiple-breasts” objects were created.

### THE CULT STATUE OF *DIANA EPHESIA* AND ITS POLYMASTIC NATURE (SHORT RESEARCH HISTORY)

A lot of researchers are interested in the egg-shaped objects, which we can see under the area of the goddess breasts, or in the area between her breasts and her waist. They are arranged sometimes one after the other, but sometimes they are hanging down, so we have several interpretations about these bumps on the statue. The most accepted theory believes that these bumps are “breasts”, but I would like to mention other existing interpretations and shortly present the research history of the cult statue of *Diana Ephesia*.

There is no consensus among scientists that these objects have animal or vegetal origin. Researchers, who believed in vegetal origin of Diana’s “breasts”, see the various fruits in them. For example Seltman and Karwiese consider them as dates, because the palm is often seen on the coins of Ephesus.<sup>2 3</sup> Some researchers suppose that the “breasts” have animal origin, and therefore identify them with

<sup>1</sup> Department of Ancient History, ELTE.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Theodore Seltman, The Wardrobe of Artemis, *The Numismatic Chronicle* (1952), 33–35.

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Karwiese, Ephesos, *RE Suppl.* XII (1970), 324–326.

eggs (or eggshells), which can symbolize fertility.<sup>4</sup> According to this interpretation these bumps are honeybee eggs, because *Diana Ephesia* is connected with the bees and we can see bees on the cult statue of the goddess, but also on the Ephesian coins. The most contentious theory was the hypothesis of Gerhard Seiterle, who considered these hanging objects on the statue of *Diana Ephesia* as bull testicles.<sup>5</sup> Seiterle pointed at the fact that these objects cannot be breasts, because they do not have nipples. His hypothesis could be theoretically acceptable,<sup>6</sup> because in the ancient times the bull was the symbol of fertility.<sup>7</sup> However, we do not have exact information about this kind of sacrificial rite. Seiterle's theory was refuted by Dieter Zeller,<sup>8</sup> but Seiterle's interpretation became (after the "multiply-breasts" theory) the most frequently mentioned theory about the objects on the cult statue of *Diana Ephesia*.

There are researchers who think that these bumps on the Diana's statue have Hittite origin and they connect them to the Hittite culture. Simon notes, that "the Hittite *kursa* was fashioned into a bag, this sacred sack was an animal origin and could be made of ox, sheep, or goat hide. The *kursa* was filled with objects signifying abundance and also political and military power."<sup>9</sup> The *kursa* belonged to the magical objects. It was the forerunner of two Greek magical objects: the Golden Fleece (the symbol of power and abundance, which is hanging down from the tree in the sacred grove) and the *aigis* (the symbol of the military power), which offers a perfect analogy, because the *aigis* has also ambiguous interpretations. On the one hand it is an object, which is thrown over the shoulders and arms and in some pottery it appears as a tasselled cover, on the other hand *aigis* is connected to the goat "*aix*".<sup>10</sup> According to Morris in the Ephesian Artemis' "breasts" we should see this *kursa*.<sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> Hutter<sup>13</sup> regards this idea tempting, but he notes that we must be

<sup>4</sup> Franz Miltner, *Ephesos Stadt der Artemis und Johannes*, Wien, Franz Deuticke Verlag, 1958a, 43.

<sup>5</sup> Gérard Seiterle, Die Große Göttin von Ephesus, *Antiken Welt* X, 3 (1979), 3.

<sup>6</sup> See Gérard Seiterle, *Artemis: die Grosse Göttin von Ephesos*, 1979, 3–16.

<sup>7</sup> Seiterle's interpretation was accepted by Walter Burkert and Brita Alroth in 1980, but Robert Fleischer criticized and rejected it. Nevertheless, this theory became the most popular. See Robert Fleischer, *Neues zur Kleinasiatischen Kultstatue*, 1983, 81–93.

<sup>8</sup> Zeller, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Simon, Zsolt, Mágia az ókori Anatóliában, in Á. M. Nagy (ed.), *Mágikus hagyományok az ókori Mediterráneumban*, Budapest, Gondolat, 2013, 302–303.

<sup>10</sup> Simon, Mágia, 303.

<sup>11</sup> Sarah P. Morris, Potnia Aswiya: Anatolian Contributions to Greek Religion, in R. Laffineur – R. Hägg (eds.), *Potnia Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age*, *Aegeum* 22, Liège, 2001a, 431–433.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah P. Morris, The Prehistoric Background of Artemis Ephesia: A Solution to the Enigma of her „Breasts“?, in U. Muss (ed.), *Der Kosmos der Artemis von Epheso*, Wien, 2001b, 140–148.

<sup>13</sup> Manfred Hutter, Religion, in *Melchert*, 2003, 269.

very careful, because the protective god of the *kursa* is a male deity, who does not connect with the animal world, but especially with bird-diviners. Simon believes<sup>14</sup> that the “breasts” cannot symbolize the Ephesian Artemis’ political-military power and the *kursa* looks completely different, than the bumps. It is also important, that the *kursa* always appears on its own, not in a group.

## THE POLYMASTIC PHENOMENON IN THE EPHESIAN CULT

Some researchers completely separated the so called “polymastic” (*multimammia*) goddess from the traditional Artemis, the hunting goddess. Frayer-Griggs notes that we must be very careful, when we want to transfer the Greek Artemis’ close relationship with the wild animals into the cult of the Ephesian Artemis, whose origin is Asian and who was completely different from the Greek goddess of hunting, mentioned also by Homer. This difference become mostly apparent from the cult statues of the two goddesses.<sup>15</sup> The Greek Artemis’ characteristic emphasized the features of the goddess of hunting (the goddess is depicted in hunting clothes with bow and quiver), while the Ephesian Artemis has interesting protruding objects on her chest, which are the most remarkable features of the Ephesian cult statue.<sup>16</sup> We must also note that there are many other visible differences between the depictions of the two goddesses.<sup>17</sup> The common features of the two otherwise totally different goddesses may be: 1. the power over wildlife, forests and mountains; 2. the twin-relationship between Apollo and Artemis, who symbolized the Sun and the Moon 3. both goddesses assist and help during childbirth; 4. they are in close relationship with the Moon.

The early Christian author, Hieronymus also detected the differences between the two goddesses when he noted: *Dianam Multimammiam colebant Ephesii, non hanc venatricem, quae arcum tenet, atque succincta est, sed illam Multimammiam, quam Graeci πολύμασσον vocant, ut scilicet ex ipsa quoque effigie mentirentur,*

<sup>14</sup> Simon, Mágia, 304.

<sup>15</sup> Frayer-Griggs, 2013, 467.

<sup>16</sup> See Lynn R. LiDonnici, The Images of Artemis Ephesia and Greco-Roman Worship: A Reconsideration, *The Harvard Theological Review* LXXX (1992), 389–415.

<sup>17</sup> The Ephesian goddess has a typical rigid posture, however the goddess of hunting is always portrayed in the move. The complicated headdress, the tight clothing, and the various symbols (animals, fruits, the zodiac, figures of Three Graces, Victoria etc.) of the Ephesian goddess are completely missing from the representations of the hunting goddess. Similarly, the bow, the quiver and the arrows, which are typical accessories of the hunting goddess are missing from the statues of the Ephesian Artemis. However, their common symbols are deers, and also the symbols in connection with the Moon.

*omnium eam bestiarum et viventium esse nutricem*.<sup>18</sup> (The Ephesians worshipped *Diana Multimammia*, but not the huntress, who holds the bow and is girded, but that multi-breasted Diana, which the Greeks call πῶλυμαστις (many breasts), so that, of course, on the basis of the statue itself they might also falsely assert that she is the nurse of all beasts and living beings<sup>19</sup>). Furthermore Minucius Felix also indicated the differences between the two goddesses: *Diana interim est alte succincta venatrix, et Ephesia mammis multis et uberibus extracta*.<sup>20</sup> (Meanwhile Diana is the well-girded huntress, and the *Ephesia* is filled with breasts and mammas...). The historians of the 17th and 18th century also see the differences between Artemis, the huntress and the Ephesian Artemis. In their works we can read some interesting information about the statues. First of all we must mention *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures/Antiquitas explanatiore et schematibus illustrata*<sup>21</sup>, the voluminous French–Latin work by Bernard de Montfaucon<sup>22</sup>, in which the author discussed and classified preserved ancient monuments of his age. There is a chapter about the goddess Diana<sup>23</sup>, which is divided into three sections (*capita*). Montfaucon separated the three well-known aspects of the goddess: in the 13th section we can read about Diana, the hunting goddess and also, we can see these types of Diana depictions (*Diana, Graecis Ἄρτεμις, filia erat Jovis & Latonae, Apollinisque gemella soror* – Diana, who was Artemis among the Greeks, was the daughter of Jupiter and Leto, and twin sister of Apollo). In the 14th section with the title “Diana-Hecate”, we can read about the three-faced aspect of goddess Diana and there are also depictions of this type. Finally in the 15th section we can find some information about the cult and see the unmistakable statues of *Diana Ephesia Multimammia*. Montfaucon called the bumps on the statue “mammas/breasts”, but he did not mention other interpretations about these objects. The his-

<sup>18</sup> *Sanct. Hieronym. in Epist. B. Paul. Apost. Ad Ephesios, VII. Jerome, Comm. Eph. (Pl 1, 540–41).*

<sup>19</sup> Translated by Heine, 2002, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius XXIII*.

<sup>21</sup> Bernard de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures / Antiquitas explanatiore et schematibus illustrata (Band 1,1): Les dieux des Grecs & des Romains*, Párizs, 1722. For *Antiquitas* in digital form see *Heidelberg historische Bestände – digital*: <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/montfaucon1722ga>

<sup>22</sup> Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) was a French Benedictine monk and scholar, who was the author of the French–Latin work entitled *L'antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures / Antiquitas explanatiore et schematibus illustrata*. Montfaucon described and analyzed all ancient monuments in his book, which existed in the 18th century, so the work is very useful for the modern history of religion scholars. *Antiquitas* also contains the pictures of the shown statues. The book also presents several known and unknown ancient gods and goddesses from the Greco-Roman world. The original work was published between 1722 and 1724 in Paris. It has 15 volumes. Montfaucon can be mentioned as one of the first modern archaeologists and the founder of paleography. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913).

<sup>23</sup> Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée*, 1722.

torian used the adjective “*multimammia*” for the Ephesian goddess and he thought that the multitude of “breasts” was a fertility symbol. Montfaucon supported his view through the citations from the works by Hieronymus and Minucius Felix (mentioned above). Montfaucon’s Diana is a kind of universal Mistress with the power of creation. The author did not mention any information about the beliefs surrounding the goddess, the section contains only descriptions of some ancient *Diana Ephesia statue*. Furthermore Montfaucon thought that this cult statue was so much complicated, that we would not be able to decipher its secret completely: ... *Diana or Mother Nature has undoubtedly many breasts, because she is the nurturer of the animals and plants. About these things, you must see the book of Claudius Menetreius, which was written about the Ephesian Diana*<sup>24</sup>, and was published in Rome in 1657 after the author’s death. There is everything explained down to the smallest symbols. The interpretations in this book are sometimes credible enough; in this book is piled up a significant knowledge and if is not everything in every case to reader’s liking this is because we have about these obscure things so limited knowledge that we cannot be able to explain everything.<sup>25</sup> The work of Montfaucon does not provide new information about the polymastic phenomenon of the Ephesian cult statue, but it contains interesting drawings depicting *Diana Ephesia and her art objects*. These ancient sculptures are unknown today, because in Motfaucon’s era they were certainly located in private collections and they are still there nowadays.

Claudius Menetreius, who was mentioned by Montfaucon, had left for the posterity a unique work entitled *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae Statua exposita*<sup>26</sup>. It was written in Latin and has more than hundred pages. The author also wrote about the symbols, which can be found on the famous Ephesian cult statue of Diana/Artemis. Menetreius thought that the bumps were “breasts”. His theory is based on the fact that *Artemis/Diana Ephesia* is an ancient moon goddess and therefore she is closely related to the Sun, too – the Moon and the Sun as the two most significant planets – so this ancient concept is symbolically given back in the relationship of Artemis and Apollo. So for Menetrius this fact is also an explanation, why was the Ephesian goddess identified even with Artemis. There is also a slight connection between Artemis, the huntress as a goddess assisting during the childbirths and the Ephesian Artemis as a goddess who has power over births. However, while Artemis, the goddess of hunting helps mainly during a childbirth

<sup>24</sup> Claudius Menetreius, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae statva a Clavdio Menetreio ceimeliothecae Barberinae praefecto exposita, Cui accessere Lucae Holstenij Epistola ad Franciscum cardinalem Barberinum De fulcris, seu verubus Dianae Ephesiae simulacro appositis, Io. Petri Bellorij Notae in numismata tùm Ephesia, tùm aliarum vrbium apibus insignita*, Róma, 1688.

<sup>25</sup> Montfaucon, *L’antiquité expliquée*, 159.

<sup>26</sup> Menetreius, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 1688. In digital form: <https://archive.org/stream/symbolicadianaeoome#page/n3/mode/2up>

which according to beliefs became easy and seamless thanks to her protection, the Ephesian Artemis has the power over “universal birth and creation” and on the basis of records she could be the supreme goddess (Mistress), who had power over all things and creations. The Greek hunting goddess was never considered as a certain kind of Creator (she never had the titles as for example *Natura rerum varietate plena, omniumque mater*<sup>27</sup>, it means “who is rich in diversity of nature and the mother of all things”<sup>28</sup>) she never ruled over plants, or over the growth of fruits, which is typical for *Diana Ephesia*.<sup>29</sup>

Menetreius mentioned the names *Ops* and *Magna Diana* as the most common names for Diana and as the third best known name for this goddess, he mentioned the adjective *Polymamma* (in lat. *Multimammia*). However, the sources, which he named in this context are only citations from the works of Hieronymus<sup>30</sup> and Minucius Felix,<sup>31</sup> so it might mean, that *multimammia*-theory about the statue of Artemis/Diana has a real origin in the works by Christian writers (because none of ancient sources mentioned it) and the Ephesian Artemis/Diana was originally not honoured as multi-breasted goddess. The quotation from Macrobius about *Isis Polymamma* raises again doubts for us (the quotation see below), because Macrobius lived in the 5th century, so long after Hieronymus and Minucius Felix, who lived during the 4th and 3rd century. In this context LiDonnici suggests that the objects on the statue of Artemis/Diana were not originally considered as breasts, but it changed in the Imperial times, when this object received such meaning. For researchers the coins from Ephesus depicting the goddess serve as an evidence: before the Imperial times these objects were on the hips of the goddess (or below her hips) on the coins, but in the Imperial times we can see them on the chest of the goddess.<sup>32</sup>

Menetreius wrote that this type of *Polymamma (Multimammia)* depiction of the god also existed in the case of goddess Isis and this is supported with the “not

<sup>27</sup> The name found in the chapter by Montfaucon about *Diana Ephesia*.

<sup>28</sup> The titles for Artemis, the hunting goddess was connected mainly with hunting and with the power over hunting and wild animals: “Huntress”, “Of the Beasts”, “Far-Shooting”, “Delighting in Arrows”, “Hunter of Wild Beasts” etc. Some of her titles emphasize her power over childbirth (*Philomeirax* “Friend of Young Girls”, *Paedotrophus* “Nurse of Children”, *Selasphorus* or *Phosphorus* “Light-Bringer”, *Soteira* “Saviour” etc., or they are connected with her virginity (*Parthenus* – “Virgin, Maiden”). In Homer we can find the title *Potnia Theron* (Queen of Beasts) but this is not the evidence that the hunting goddess had the power of creation.

<sup>29</sup> Menetreius, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 1688.

<sup>30</sup> Hieronymus, *Commentarii in epistolas Paulinas ad Ephesios*.

<sup>31</sup> Minucius Felix, *Octavius*.

<sup>32</sup> LiDonnici, *The Images of Artemis*, 406-408.



small number of gems”,<sup>33</sup> where we can see Isis depicted in this form – however, the author did not attach the pictures about *Isis Multimammia* in his writing. Montfaucon also mentioned the so-called *Isis Multimammia*: *Similarly many breasts were attributed to Isis; but here was the difference among them, because in the case of Isis the headdress could not be the tower, but the lotus flower. Moreover, the two deities mentioned were in fact one, although in the public cults they were different, and the temples were separate, furthermore any of them could have special rituals...these types of Isides in the other (things) were quite similar to Ephesian Dianas, but the Isides occurred rarely with so many applied breasts.*<sup>34</sup> Menetreibus shared a similar view, when he wrote: *Our Diana is just a little different from the Egyptian Isis, namely in her form, but not in the character of her deity, because all in all they do not differ in anything.*<sup>35</sup> It seems that both writers have seen depictions of *Isis Multimammia*, but at present we do not have information about gems or any another objects where Isis is depicted in this form. Even Macrobius mentioned *Isis Multimammia*, he described the goddess as a Nature which took care of everything: *Isis cuncta religione celebratur, quae est vel terra, vel natura rerum subiacens Soli. Hinc est, quod continuatis uberibus, corpus Deae omne densetur: quia vel terrae, vel rerum naturae halitu nutritur universitas*<sup>36</sup> (Isis is honoured in all religions, who is earth or nature subordinate to the sun, this is the reason why the whole body of the goddess is crowded with breasts aligned side by side: because the universe is nourished either by the breath of the earth or the nature), but it was mentioned above that the work by Macrobius was a source from the later times, so he probably only reported the knowledge of his era and its current views. The German scholar Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680) also deals with the phenomenon of the *Isis Multimammia* and he provides interesting information about it.<sup>37</sup> He highlighted that during the history the goddess *Isis Multimammia* was marked by several names (Minerva, Venus, Iuno, Proserpina, Ceres, Diana, Rhea, Bellona, Luna, Hecate, Isis

<sup>33</sup> *Et hanc Macrobianae descriptionem firmare videntur gemmae non paucae, aliaque veterum monumenta: in quibus Isis eadem forma, qua hic a Macrobio describitur, expressa est.* Menetreibus, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée*, 156.

<sup>35</sup> Menetreibus, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, Lib. I, Cap. XX.

<sup>37</sup> Filippo Buonanni – Athanasius Kircher – Francesco Maria Ruspoli, *Musaeum Kircherianum Sive Musaeum A P. Athanasio Kirchero In Collegio Romano Societatis Jesu Iam Pridem Incoeptum: Nuper restitutum, auctum, descriptum & Iconibus illustratum Excellentissimo Domino Francisco Mariae Ruspoli Antiquae Urbis Agyllinae Principi Oblatum*, Róma, 1709, 31–33. In digital form:  
<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/buonanni1709/0049?sid=51f4e5a8be54779f82b43687345c56dc>

or Deorum Mater), her statue was decorated with various hieroglyphs,<sup>38</sup> her arms were spread wide, to embrace and cherish everything which is beneath the sky (in Kircher's work we can see some pictures of Isis, in one case the head of Isis stands out from the egg-shaped object). Judging from the work of Menetorius the author inclined to the Egyptian origin of the goddess *Diana Ephesia* (it marks the close connection between Isis and *Diana Ephesia*) and in this context among modern researchers LiDonnici has a similar view. LiDonnici thinks that the Ephesian Artemis became more universal during the Hellenistic and Roman period and she was identified with Isis – the Egyptian fertility goddess. Ephesians in that time may have started to interpret these decorations as the breasts to emphasize “the goddess’ extremely caring and protective features”.<sup>39</sup> LiDonnici suggests that these object are breasts and the starting point is the cult of *Isis lactans* (“nursing Isis”) however, she adds too that later these bumps may have been interpreted as breasts, but originally they were definitely some kind of jewellery. The identification with jewellery comes from Furtwängler.<sup>40</sup>

However, it seems, Menetorius believes that the Egyptian cult of *Isis Polymamma* was transferred *a priori* into the Ephesian cult (Kircher, Montfaucon and also Macrobius agree with this opinion although they are later sources). It is also important to know that Menetorius could not really be aware of the very important fact that these so called “multiply-breasts” depictions had existed also in other cults (especially in the Anatolian region) and not only in the cult of the Ephesian Artemis. It might have been the reason why Menetorius (and Montfaucon too) identified certain sculptures as the depictions of *Diana Ephesia*, but they are obviously not the representations of *Diana Ephesia* but depictions of the so-called Aphrodite of Aphrodisias:<sup>41</sup> *There are also some other figures of Diana, which are quite similar to the previous one but with this observable difference that the latter have only two covered breasts under their clothes. (One of the statues) has a towered crown and under it a laurel wreath, she is covered in the mantle from head down to the feet: on the arms are two coins, on the first coin is the depiction of man's head, on the second is the woman's head, between two breasts of the goddess is the crescent moon, under it in the first line as usual are the Three Graces (they are shown) clinging to each other, in the second line the head of sun and the moon can be seen, in the third*

<sup>38</sup> Kircher added pictures about *Isis Multimamma*. The body of the goddess is really covered with hieroglyphs, but the “breasts” are missing.

<sup>39</sup> LiDonnici, *The Images of Artemis*, 408.

<sup>40</sup> Adolf Furtwängler, *Die antiken Gemmen: Geschichte der Steinschneidekunst im Klassischen Altertum II*, Taf. XLIV 2, Leipzig–Berlin, 1900, 211.

<sup>41</sup> Menetorius, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 57.

line Venus rising from the sea, who is drawn by water horses.<sup>42</sup> The second statue is very different from that, it has four lines of pictures, three lines are the same as the former, but the Graces appear twice.<sup>43</sup> Menetreius added into his book the pictures of the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias as the depictions of the *Diana Ephesia*.

## THE POLYMASTIC NATURE AND OTHER CULT STATUES

Robert Fleischer made researches about *polymamma* phenomenon on other cult statues<sup>44</sup> and he was the first who observed that the depiction, which is typical for *Diana Ephesia* is not limited only to this goddess, but we can find several other sculptures (for example statues of Zeus, Aphrodite, Cybele or Hera) with the similar decoration and clothing. Several other deities were depicted in the form of “multi-breasted” *Diana Ephesia* (or similarly), but it seems that at a certain time the “multiply-breasts” motive disappeared from the cult statues of these gods and other attributes replaced them. It is interesting that this type of depiction survive in the cult of *Artemis Ephesia*, but it must be emphasized again that it was characteristic only for the Ephesian cult of Artemis. The so-called Greek Artemis (or Artemis the hunting goddess) was never depicted in this form and she always appears with bow and quiver.

First we must mention the cult of so-called *Zeus Labraundos*. Labraunda<sup>45</sup> was once a famous cult center where one of the lesser-known type of Zeus – the *Zeus Labraundos*, was worshiped. This god had a very strong and well-known cult in this city. The sanctuary of *Zeus Labraundos* dates back to ancient times. Based on the archeological findings in 7th century BC an actively functioning cult center could be established here. The majority of the buildings are now in ruins. They are mainly from 4th century BC and they were built during the reign of the Hecatomnid dynasty namely on the site, where was the temple of the former deity whose original name is unknown. This unknown god was later identified with the Greek god Zeus and ancient sources mentioned him continuously under

<sup>42</sup> Montfaucon mentioned a statue which we can find in the book of Claudius Menetrius *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae Statuae exposita*. Menetreius, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 57.

<sup>43</sup> Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée*, 160–161. Montfaucon might have seen the two statues mentioned in the book of Menetrius. Menetreius, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 57.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Fleischer, *Artemis von Ephesos und verwandte Kultstatue aus Anatolien und Syrien*, Leiden, Brill, 1973., *Artemis von Ephesos und verwandte Kultstatuen aus Anatolien und Syrien. Supplement*, 1978., *Neues zum Kultbild der Artemis von Ephesos*, 1999.

<sup>45</sup> *Labraunda* is an ancient archaeological site 14 kms away from *Mylasa* in modern Turkey.

this name.<sup>46</sup> There are only few remarks about the city of Labraunda in ancient sources. The most frequently mentioned fact about Labraunda is that this area has the mountain sanctuary of *Zeus Labraundos*. The golden ages for this sanctuary were the reign of the Hecatomnid dynasty (4th century BC) and the activities of this dynasty brought prosperity to the city. The majority of the buildings in Labraunda were built during the reign of the Hecatomnid dynasty. We have only few depictions of *Zeus Labraundos*. The typical attribute of this god was the *labrys* (a symmetrical double-bitted axe)<sup>47</sup>. In the *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (LIMC) there are only 11 pictures of *Zeus Labraundos*.<sup>48</sup> In these pictures we can observe that in the case of Zeus two types of depictions existed, such as for Artemis. One of them can be called “the Greek Zeus” – depicting a bearded older man who had in the one hand a *labrys* and in the other a spear. On the second type of representations the male deity is depicted in the same tight clothing like the Ephesian Artemis, wore a similar headdress (*polos*) and on the chest we can see the hanging egg-shaped objects (see in the picture). *Zeus Labraundos* was a local version of so-called *Zeus Karios* (of Karia) whose cult had a center in Mylasa in Karia. We have only few depictions of *Zeus Labraundos*, most of them are on the coins. T. J. Wood found in Mylasa a relief that depicts the Zeus-like god, the god who has four lines of “breasts” on chest.<sup>49</sup> Cook interpreted this picture as “the androgynous form of *Zeus Labraundos*”.<sup>50</sup> However, Karlsson disagrees and he returns to Seiterle’s theory suggesting that these objects are not breasts but bull testicles. He highlights that this interpretation would be more appropriate because bull testicles may be more to do with the cult of *Zeus Labraundos* which was the cult of male deity, than breasts.<sup>51</sup> The Greeks would certainly identify this deity with Zeus because this deity was probably an ancient weather god who was similar to their weather god. But not only that point was common and connected these gods. Karlsson points out another similarity between the two gods and it is namely the presence of the bull in both cults. In ancient times the bull was the most significant animal symbol of Zeus and later that of the god Jupiter. The ancient

<sup>46</sup> Agneta Freccero, Conservation and Preservation at Archeological Sites – Labraunda, in *5th International Congress on „Science and Technology for the Safeguard of Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean Basin”*, Istanbul, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Williamson, 1–4.

<sup>48</sup> In the catalogue LIMC we can find sculptures of *Zeus Labraundos* under the abbreviation in *.per. or. (in peripheria orientalis)*.

<sup>49</sup> John T. Wood, *Discoveries at Ephesus*, London, 1877, 270, fig. B.

<sup>50</sup> Cook, 1925, 592–596.

<sup>51</sup> Lars Karlsson, The Sanctuary of the Weather God of Heaven at Karian Labraunda, in Ann-Louise Schallin (ed.), *Perspectives on Ancient Greece: Paper in Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Swedish Institute in Athens*, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen, Stockholm, 2013, 176.

sky god who was worshiped in this region also appeared in the form of a bull and this god also appeared in several Hittite reliefs as a bull. So in the Mediterranean region the identification of the bull with the king of heaven (the bull was also his totem animal), goes back to very ancient times.<sup>52</sup> It does not mean of course that the egg-shaped objects were really bull testicles.

Mamurt Kale is situated 30 kms south-east of Pergamon. In this area there was a cult of the Great Mother Goddess which has ancient origin, too. We can find there a temple of Cybele. Researchers found several terracotta remains in this area, which depicted the Great Mother (*Magna Mater*). Among the artifacts there are also some sculptures, where the goddess has similar bumps like *Artemis Ephesia*.

Aphrodisias is also an ancient city located in ancient Karia. The city was named after the goddess Aphrodite who had here a special cult statue. It is assumed that here could be a similar situation like in the case of *Zeus Labraundos*, that is in Aphrodisias also existed a cult of certain ancient goddess who was later identified with the Greek Aphrodite. Brody and Ratté made archeological researches in Aphrodisias and also in the area of the sanctuary of the goddess. The remaining evidence can be dated especially into the Roman times, so the early history and development of this cult is unclear. The researchers suppose that originally there could be a cult of the Karian goddess (approx. around 7th century B.C.), but her name is unknown. The small number of the archeological finds give us only few information. Pausanias reports that in the sanctuary of Aphrodisias could be a saltwater.<sup>53</sup> The presence of the water may have encouraged the establishment of the cult of the goddess, so the original (perhaps) Karian goddess could be in connection with the water, too. Later it was the common point why people clearly identified this goddess with Aphrodite and not with other goddess.<sup>54</sup>

Brody writes<sup>55</sup> that the earliest cult activity in this area can be dated into the Archaic times, when a monumental building certainly did not exist (neither altar, nor other structure was found during the excavations). Although there is an active cult already in early ages (the evidences are the remaining archeological finds), the golden ages for this cult came mainly in the Hellenistic times namely when the local goddess was identified with the Greek Aphrodite and the divine image was created in the new form.<sup>56</sup> This fact required a creation of the stunning architectural environment, so the first temple of Aphrodite was built.<sup>57</sup> Doves and

<sup>52</sup> Karlsson, *The Sanctuary of the Weather God of Heaven*, 173.

<sup>53</sup> Pausanias, *Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις*, 1, 26, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Lisa R. Brody, *The Cult of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria*, *Kernos* 14, 2001, 93–109.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> We know from the inscription (Hadrian's era) that in one room of the sanctuary the cult statue of local goddess was placed (ἄφιδρῶμα – divine image).

<sup>57</sup> Brody, *The Cult of Aphrodite*, 2001.

a lions (the characteristic Anatolian symbols) were the parts of the original cult and these animals were sacred to the goddess. On the cult statue of the goddess identified with Aphrodite are visible a pale remains of the original cult. In this case the Greek goddess Aphrodite displaced the cult of the original Aphrodisian goddess, as Greek Zeus displaced the so-called *Zeus Labraundos* in Labraundia. We have only few depictions about the Aphrodite of Aphrodisias. Besides these two cults, we can find similar examples in other cults, where the well-known *Polymamma* phenomenon appears on the sculptures of the certain gods and this kind of depiction is typical for male and female deities, too. Finally, we know about sculptures where the “breasts” are missing from the chest, but the deity wore the clothes typical for the *Diana Ephesia* (for example the mentioned Aphrodite from Aphrodisias or Jupiter Heliopolitanus).

### DIANA’S “BREASTS” AND THE MEANING OF THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT

I think that based on the theories and researches mentioned above the most accepted view is that the objects seen on the Ephesian cult statue, which are mistakenly identified as the female breasts, could be originally a jewellery or a certain type of ornament on the goddess. Several arguments are against the “breasts” theory, firstly because we can find these objects also on the depictions of male deities, and it is unlikely that on the sculptures of the male god would be breasts.

In my opinion the *Polymamma* phenomenon appeared on the depictions of certain gods because these objects are originally some kind of the ancient cultic jewellery or pectoral ornaments. In the Neo-Babylonian texts, sparsely, but we can find some information about clothing and certain types of jewellery of Eastern cultures. It is interesting that in this texts different types of necklaces from pearls or beads are mentioned which are named after the shape and form of their pearls. For example the so-called *binītu* is the “fish-roe-shaped bead”, a *nurmū* is a “pomegranate-shaped bead”, a *zēr qiššē* is a “melon-seed-shaped bead”, a *kisi-birrum* is a “coriander-shaped bead”, a *murdiyyum* is a “bramble-shaped bead” etc. We can also find the so-called *erimmatu* which is the “egg-shaped bead” (it can be pearl, bead or stone in this form).<sup>58</sup> According to Hill the objects on the statue of the *Diana Ephesia* are some kinds of costume ornament (he uses the term “polymastic garment”), but he thinks that it could be a type of armor worn in Egypt and Mesopotamia from the late Middle Bronze and early Late Bronze

<sup>58</sup> Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *Cuneiform Monographs: The Pantheon of Uruk During the Neo-Babylonian Period*, Leiden–Boston, Brill, 2003, 13–14.

period.<sup>59</sup> It could be more specifically a scale armor which was made of either interlocking rings of bronze or small elongated scales of bronze tied together with leather thongs in overlapped rows. We can often see this type of clothing (scale armor) in the Mesopotamian art as a clothing of warriors, kings but also gods and goddesses. Hill connects *Diana Ephesia* with Ishtar (the Sumerian Inanna) and believes that Ishtar is the logical source for the Artemis icon because this Eastern goddess embodied the fecundity and military motifs. Ishtar was for the Sumerians and Babylonians the Great Mother, the fertility goddess, and the queen of heaven (for the Assyrians was the goddess of hunting and war, she was honoured among the Hurrians and the Hittites of Asia Minor).<sup>60</sup> In this context Saggs observed a connecting link between the two seemingly irreconcilable characteristics of war and fertility over which Ishtar reigns. He thinks that in both – when life is cut in the war and when life is created in the sexual act – Ishtar is manifested.<sup>61</sup> Menetreibus also mentioned (in the chapter about *fasciae* – bands of *Diana Ephesia*, Menetreibus connected these objects with the Moon and therefore he believes that *Diana Ephesia* must be the ancient Moon goddess) that Egyptians believed that the Moon reigns over death and life.<sup>62</sup>

The *erimmatu(m)* was a „egg-shaped bead” or „stone-bead” (for example from *lapis lazuli*, but it can also be made from other type of stone, metal or wood) used for magical activities, too.<sup>63</sup> The term stems from the word *erimtu* which means “cover”. In the ancient texts the term “necklace of *erimmatu* beads” was also known.<sup>64</sup> We can find this word in the Eastern sources and according to these descriptions we have information about the appearance of the *erimmatu*. There is an ancient myth in the Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian culture about Inanna’s (Innin/Ishtar) descent to the underworld („The Descent of Inanna”). Before Inanna/Ishtar enters the underworld and to her sister Ereshkigal who is the queen of the underworld, Ereshkigal instructs the gatekeeper to open the gate to Ishtar, but to treat her according to the ancient rites. Ishtar must go through seven different gates, each time stripping her of an article of jewellery, including the great crown on her head, the rings in her ears, the beads around her neck, the toggle pins at her breast, the girdle of birthstones around her waist, the bangles on her wrists and ankles, and

<sup>59</sup> Andrew E. Hill, *Ancient Art and Artemis: Toward Explaining the Polymastic Nature of the Figurine*, *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 21 (1992), 93–94.

<sup>60</sup> Hill, *Ancient Art and Artemis*, 93–94.

<sup>61</sup> Henry William Frederick Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon*, New York, 1962, 333.

<sup>62</sup> Menetreibus, *Symbolica Dianae Ephesiae*, 44.

<sup>63</sup> *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian*, 2000, 78.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

the proud garment of her body.<sup>65</sup> In this context Hill points out that it is important to note the section about chains (or necklaces) and the description of the pectoral ornament of the goddess. In this part the *erimmatu* is mentioned namely “the necklace of egg-shaped beads”.<sup>66</sup> According to the description the goddess has a necklace hanging tightly around her neck from the small stones of *lapis lazuli* and on her breasts she wore a necklace of egg-shaped beads.<sup>67</sup> So the goddess wears two separate necklaces: the shorter necklace is from *lapis lazuli* beads (tightly around the neck), the longer extends to the area of chest and it is from *erimmatu* beads. Hill also notes that the goddess wore the pectoral ornament called *dudittu* which is the pectoral ornament worn exclusively by women and goddesses.<sup>68</sup> They were made of metals, including bronze, gold, silver or the combination thereof and they were fairly lightweight decorated with gold discs or beads, inset with precious stones, and engraved with various images (animals, zodiac signs etc.). Hill claimed that the *dudittu* which was originally a type of scale armor, fused or blended artistically with the *erimmatu* (necklace of egg-shaped beads) in the icon as exaggerated human breasts.<sup>69</sup> This feature certainly developed gradually as the veneration of the Anatolian cult statue of the Artemis also changed over time and shifted from a military to a fertility emphasis.<sup>70</sup>

Certain kinds of cultic necklaces or pectoral ornaments which were in some ancient cultures the symbols of divine power and strength and had a magical char-

<sup>65</sup> Tammi J. Schneider, *An Introduction to Ancient Mesopotamian Religion*, Cambridge, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011, 48.

<sup>66</sup> *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, 1958, 4, 294.

<sup>67</sup> Hill, *Ancient Art and Artemis*, 94.

<sup>68</sup> *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* 1958, 3, 168–179.

<sup>69</sup> In the Sumerian, Akkadian and also Babylonian version of the myth about Ishtar’s (Inanna) descent into the Underworld appears the object called *d/tudittu*, which is removed from the goddess. Dales also deals with this jewellery and notes that this word has a long history, appearing first in the Old Akkadian period. The *dudittu* was some sort of ornament on the breast of females, both goddesses and mortal women. It was also one of the important jewellery given to the bride at her wedding. It could be made of silver, gold, bronze, copper, ivory, or semi-precious stones (*lapis lazuli*, serpentin). The *dudittu* was usually very light in weight. That the *dudittu* had some talismanic powers for warding off danger and evil is suggested by several passages, for example: “her (Lamaštu’s) *tudittu* is broken, her breast exposed”; “the curse for rending a (woman’s) cloak, breaking (her) *tudittu* and snipping off (her) *didū*-garment...”; “if (the ghost is that of) a woman, you clothe her (a figurine) in a black garment (you put on her) *d/tudittu*. Considering the fact that the *dudittu* could be made from various materials, it was light in weight and had an amuletic function, too, Dales believes that it was an ornament or pendent, probably suspended from a necklace. George F. Dales, *Necklaces, Bands and Belts on Mesopotamian Figurines*, *Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale*, Vol. 57, No. 1, 1963, 32–33. In this context Kramer translated the word *d/tudittu* as “breastplate” suggesting that this ornament was larger and heavier as surviving writings testify. Dales, *Necklaces*, 33.

<sup>70</sup> Hill, *Ancient Art and Artemis*, 94.



acter too, are much more possible interpretation of mystic objects on the statue of *Diana Ephesia* like the theories about breasts or bull testicles. We have evidence that people in Eastern cultures wore a lot of jewellery and it is also supported by ancient myths (and their religious role in the cults, too). I believe that object on the cult statue of *Artemis/Diana Ephesia* were most probably some kind of cultic jewellery in their origin. There are several researchers, who agree that this cult statue is not Graeco-Roman in origin, but it is more ancient.

George F. Dales deals with necklaces, bands and belts on Mesopotamian figures.<sup>71</sup> The earliest representation of necklace in Mesopotamia are painted on seated female figurine of the Halaf period, possibly as early as 5000 B.C. The figurine from Tepe Gawra (Obeid period) wears also necklace, bands on the chest and belt moreover this belt is the earliest representation of belt and hip-belt in Mesopotamian art. The figurines from Nippur and Ur also depict hip-belts with simple incised lines, for example on figurines from Ur III period from Tell Asmar we can see a type of hip-belt. On the figurine from Larsa period also seems the hip-belt, but the other ornaments on the statue are also interesting. Dales also mentioned that in the Eastern sources we can find many references about necklaces and other ornaments, but they are very brief, therefore it is too difficult to identify the given jewellery and reconstruct it completely. He also mentioned the myth about the Descent of Inanna to the underworld, in the Semitic version of this myth is the so-called *na<sup>a</sup>erimmāti<sup>meš</sup> ša kišādi-šá* removed from the goddess, when she passed through the third gate.<sup>72</sup> Speiser and Heidel translated this term as “the chains round her neck”. However, Dales points out that this translation is not exactly right. This term has several lexicographical variants, but the basic correspondence between Akkadian *erimmatu* and Sumerian *na<sup>a</sup>NUNUZ* is well established. The meaning of this term is rather “egg-shaped beads”, or it denotes the necklace which contains beads shaped in this form.<sup>73</sup> We can observe differences in the Sumerian and Akkadian variants of this myth namely in the section about removing the special elements. In the Sumerian version goddess removed her *NUNUZ*-beads from her chest at the fourth gate. Dales wrote that these egg-shaped stones could have been suspended by a necklace or cord to form one of the various types of necklaces.<sup>74</sup>

On the certain figurines of the Indus Valley or Harappan civilization (dated cir. 2500–1500 B.C.)<sup>75</sup> we can see an interesting pectoral ornament which is very similar to the ornament of the figurine of *Zeus Labrandos* from Mylasa (see in the

<sup>71</sup> Dales, *Necklaces*, 21–40.

<sup>72</sup> Dales, *Necklaces*, 31–32.

<sup>73</sup> Dales, *Necklaces*, 32.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> John Marschall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization, Vol. I*, pl. XCIV, 14, London, 1931.

picture). We can find the drawing of this figurine in the work by Dales, however, he deals only with the hip-belt on the figurine and he does not mention a possible parallel between pectoral ornament on this ancient figurine from Harappan civilization and the ornament seen in the cult statue of *Diana Ephesia*. In the art of Harappan civilization we can find several examples when we can observe that the figurines (depicting woman or goddess) wear the necklaces of egg-shaped objects. These necklaces of egg-shaped objects have one or more lines, in some cases there are complicated lines of chains.

The supposed connection between the certain decorative elements from Harappan civilization (or from other Eastern culture) and the pectoral ornament of *Diana Ephesia* needs a special research, but this example can also be an evidence that objects on the Ephesian cult statue were originally some kind of cultic necklace or pectoral ornament. This type of ornament or jewellery was transferred from the certain ancient culture into the Anatolian region (or may be during the period, when some nations of Eastern origin lived in Anatolia, spreading in this area this type of ornament). However, the Egyptian origin cannot be excluded because people in this culture also wore several types of jewellery, ornaments and decorations.

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1. picture. Figurine of the Indus Valley or Harappan civilization (Mohendo-daro, dated cir. 2500–1500 B.C.) with an interesting pectoral ornament which is very similar to the ornament of Zeus Labrandos from Mylasa. In the corner is the statue of Artemis/Diana Ephesia.

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# VESTAL VIRGINS AND THE HEALTHCARE OF ROME DURING THE IMPERIAL PERIOD

ÁKOS ZIMONYI

According to earliest scholars<sup>1</sup> on the public healthcare of the Roman Empire<sup>2</sup> the term *archiatros* (or in Latin *architer*)<sup>3</sup> denoted a) the personal physician of the ruler, b) a public physician, c) the head of a medical association (*collegium* or school), d) the physician of the port, of a sport association (*xystos*)<sup>4</sup> or that of the Vestal Virgins.<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>This last category is based on the law of Valentinian I, who constituted the public healthcare of Rome in 368 AD, known as the *archiateratus*. The law (CT 13, 3, 8) of the institution of the civic physicians in Rome<sup>7</sup> sat up 14 *archiatri* matching the number of the regions of Rome<sup>8</sup>, excluding physicians of the port, of the *xystos*<sup>9</sup> and of the Vestals.<sup>10</sup> The text is problematic due to some textual difficulties, especially in the part mentioning the exceptions from the law, and thus rightly received scholarly attention, however, except of a very hypothetical argument from Briau, no one paid attention to the Vestal Virgins<sup>11</sup> in this context.<sup>12</sup> Recent studies suggest that, according to the law, the Vestals had some form of medical supervision of an *archiater* at the end of the 4th Century

<sup>1</sup> René Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine ou la médecine officielle dans l'Empire romain: suite de l'histoire de la profession médicale*, Paris, 1877, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolphus Pohl, *De graecorum medicis publicis*, Berlin, 1905, 24–29, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Karl-Heinz Below, *Der Arzt im römischen Recht*, Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 37, Munich, 1953, 35–37, 47, 49–50.

<sup>4</sup> Vivian Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession in Antiquity*, *PBSR* 45 (1977), 191–226.

<sup>5</sup> Évelyne Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec: Sources épigraphiques sur la naissance d'un corps médical*, Geneva, 2003, 42–45.

<sup>6</sup> Vivian Nutton, *Archiateros*, *Brill's New Pauly*, Brill Online, 2013.

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<sup>7</sup> Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine*, 82–92.

<sup>8</sup> Below, *Der Arzt*, 49–50.

<sup>9</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 208–210.

<sup>10</sup> Vivian Nutton, *Continuity or Rediscovery? The city physician in classical Antiquity and medieval Italy*, in A. W. Russel (ed.), *The Town and State Physician in Europe*, Wolfenbüttel, 1981, 19–20.

<sup>11</sup> Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine*, 122–126.

<sup>12</sup> Comper also Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 217–218.

AD, thus they were rightly excluded from being attended by civic physicians.<sup>13</sup> 14 Pliny the Younger informs us that Fannia caught a serious disease from a Vestal Virgin called Iunia, due to the fact that virgins, stricken by a serious disease, which forced them to leave the temple of Vesta, were always sent to revered matrons for medical assistance.<sup>15</sup> The care of a sick Vestal by the noble women of Rome was the standard process in Rome, but when and why the Roman elite decided that *Vestales* needed constant medical attention, has not been studied yet. In this paper I intend to focus on the healthcare of Vestals, how and why the care by Roman matrons was transformed into professional medical assistance. This also allows us to focus on the question of a physician's role in the life of a Vestal, i.e. whether physicians played a role in the selection process or the proof of chastity of the Vestals. I will begin by discussing the legal text of Valentinian I, especially the first part of the text, and look for evidence, whether the exceptional *archiatri* as doctors of port or athletic association or other priests were known in other ancient sources. After that I will proceed with the question of the health of the Vestals, and the possible interactions with physicians.

The legal text (CT 13, 3, 8) begins with this sentence: *Exceptis portus xysti virginum vestalium quot regionum urbis sunt totidem constituentur archiatri*. Pharr translated it as follows: "As many chief physicians should be appointed as there are districts of the city, except in the districts of the Portus Xystus and in areas belonging to the Vestal Virgins."<sup>16</sup> This translation, as Nutton rightly pointed out, may be grammatically correct, but it highlights the problem, that we do not know any districts (*regio*) in Rome named *Portus Xystus* or Vestal Virgins. Even if these two districts existed at that time, there is no explanation, why only these two were denied a civic physician. Thus Pohl and Nutton suggested that the word *except* (*exceptis*) is pertained to *archiatri* and not to the word *regio*, so the translation should begin with these words: leaving aside the *archiatri* of. This translation interprets the text, that *Portus Xystus* and Vestal Virgins already had physicians called *archiatri*, who were "supernumerary to those of the districts, and they are not to be taken into account when calculating the number of doctors to enjoy the title and immunity of *archiatri*."<sup>17</sup> So these physicians were not in the small number of the privileged city physicians, but what further information do we have about them and the institutions they served? *Portus Xystus* is not only nowhere to be found, but is also hardly understandable: *portus* means harbour, and denotes in legal texts the port of Ostia,

<sup>13</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 217–218.

<sup>14</sup> Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec*, 44.

<sup>15</sup> Plin. Ep. 7, 19.

<sup>16</sup> Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions, a Translation with a Commentary, Glossary and Bibliography*, Princeton, 1952, 380.

<sup>17</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 217.

but since the law is concerned with the civic physicians of Rome, we can exclude this possibility. We have no other information about doctors of the port, which suggests that this duty either has never existed or if it did, it could not be regulated exclusively by the city of Rome, but was a concern of the whole Empire, thus was rightly excluded from the physicians of the city. *Xystus*, or its Greek origin *xystos*, denoted the “covered portico of the gymnasium, in which the exercises took place during the winter or in rainy weather.”<sup>18</sup> Thus one might argue that *portus* must be a corrupt form of *porticus*, although to use both words, which mean exactly the same, in the text is redundant, and must be considered a tautology.<sup>19 20</sup>

Taking this argument one step further Louis Robert suggested that *portus* might be a corrupted form of *totius*, so we have *totus xstus*, an association of athletes.<sup>21</sup> And, indeed, there is an inscription from Thyathira dated to the late 2nd–3rd centuries AD, which was set up by Heleis, doctor (*archiatros*) of the whole sport association (*sympas xystos*).<sup>22 23</sup> Rome also had a similar athletic association at the Baths of Trajan employing a priest (*archieris*) and a scribe (*archigrammateus*), and probably a physician (*archiatros*) as well, although we have no other epigraphic evidence of the doctors of such associations from Rome or any other city in the Roman Empire. So according to the law of Valentinian and the inscription from Thyatira, we have to conclude that athletic guilds could have a physician called *archaiter*, but this *archaiter* was not a civic physician, since he was employed and paid by a private institution. Thus the law rightly excludes physicians of athletic clubs, private *archiatri* could not obtain privileges and immunity.<sup>24 25</sup>

The law is also concerned with physicians of the Vestal Virgins. This text is the only source for doctors assigned to Vestals, no other evidence confirms that Vestal Virgins were treated by – let alone employed – physicians. Furthermore, no other priesthood is known from Ancient Greece and Rome, which had its own physician. Some physicians have become priests, mostly, but not exclusively, of Asclepius,<sup>26</sup> and a few inscriptions suggest that associations of physicians, which can be traced from 4th century BC to the 3rd century AD throughout Hellas and

<sup>18</sup> Hugh Chisholm (ed.), *Xystus*, Encyclopædia Britannica 28, 11th ed., Cambridge University Press, 1911, 889.

<sup>19</sup> Pohl, *De graecorum medicis publicis*, 25, esp. note 18.

<sup>20</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 217.

<sup>21</sup> Jeanne and Louis Robert, *Hellenica IX*, Paris, 1950, 25–28.

<sup>22</sup> Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec*, 44, 350–351, no. 229. The city had three gymnasia, so *sympas xystos* must be understood as a general association of athletes. Heleis must have treated the athletes in training or at the numerous competitions they participated.

<sup>23</sup> Compare also Robert, *Hellenica IX*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Robert, *Hellenica IX*, 25–28.

<sup>25</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 217–218.

<sup>26</sup> Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec*, 64–66.



the Roman Empire, concentrated on religious activities, i.e. cult of Asclepius and funerary practices.<sup>27</sup> Of course, physicians were hired in extraordinary cases to treat the visitors of great festivals and games, even if these physicians must have checked upon the health of the priests and priestesses, if necessary.<sup>28</sup> Thus, if our legal text is valid, we have some unique information, that the Vestals had at least one physician by their side, who was always available, and only for the virgins and maybe their staff,<sup>29</sup> so he was not accessible for the general public, and thus rightly rejected as a civic physician.<sup>30</sup>

The causes of this decision – to hire a physician for the virgins – remain obscure, since Pliny the Younger informs us in his letter dedicated to Priscus (Ep. 7, 19) about how a sick Vestal was treated. His information is to be dated from the end of the 1st century AD, but probably this custom was valid during the Late Republic and throughout the Principate: “*I am deeply afflicted at the ill state of health of my friend Fannia, which she contracted during her attendance on Junia, one of the Vestal virgins. She engaged in this good office at first voluntarily, Junia being her relation; afterwards also by order of the Pontiffs; for these virgins, when severe illness obliges them to remove from the hall of Vesta, are delivered to the care and custody of some matron. It was Fannia’s assiduity in the execution of this charge that occasioned her present disorder*”<sup>31</sup> (translated by W. Melmoth). The information Pliny shares is valuable on many points. First, the sickness of a Vestal virgin was seen as a natural process, not as a bad omen. The virgins represented or rather embodied the Roman State<sup>32</sup> and – during the Principate – also the Emperor and his family<sup>33</sup>, so they were in charge to maintain the safety of the State (and of the

<sup>27</sup> Vivian Nutton, The medical meeting place, in P. J. van der Eijk, et al. (eds.), *Ancient Medicine in its Socio-Cultural Context, Papers read at the Congress held at Leiden University 13–15 April 1992*, *Clio Medica* 27, Volume One, Amsterdam–Atlanta, 1995, 6–7.

<sup>28</sup> Eg. from Priene IPriene 111 = Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec*, 347–348, no. 226, and from Dionysiopolis IGBulg I2 15 = Samama, *Les médecins dans le monde grec*, 194–196, no. 96. For more examples see Nutton, The medical meeting place, 5, note 10.

<sup>29</sup> Inge Kroppenbergh, Law, Religion and Constitution of the Vestal Virgins, *Law and Literature* 22/3 (2010), 425.

<sup>30</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 218.

<sup>31</sup> *Angit me Fanniae valetudo. Contraxit hanc dum assidet Iuniae virgini, sponte primum — est enim affinis —, deinde etiam ex auctoritate pontificum. Nam virgines, cum vi morbi atrio Vestae coguntur excedere, matronarum curae custodiaeque mandantur. Quo munere Fannia dum sedulo fungitur, hoc discrimine implicita est.*

<sup>32</sup> Ariadne Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins, Sex and Category in Roman Religion*, London – New York, 1998, 129–30, 135, 137, 143.

<sup>33</sup> Holt N. Parker, Why Were the Vestals Virgins? Or the Chastity of Women and the Safety of the Roman State, *AJPh* 125/4 (2004), 567–568, 570–571.

Emperor)<sup>34</sup>, and one might expect that a sickness of Vestal was seen as a sign of lost virginity (*crimen incesti*) or of other misfortune, thus she was a threat to the security of Rome.<sup>35</sup> But neither Pliny nor other sources suggest that illness of a Vestal was a sign of *incestum*, or was seen as a bad sign (*prodigium*) for Rome.<sup>36</sup> After falling ill, the virgin was expelled from the home of the Vestals, but it cannot be determined, whether in all or only in serious cases of illness. It is not fully clear, whether Pliny's statement refers to all diseases, so every sickness forced the virgin out of the atrium. But the wording of this sentence does not support this theory, since Pliny says that the virgins were forced to leave the house by the strength or force of the disease (*vi morbi*),<sup>37</sup> so only a serious disease could cause a Vestal to leave her home. If the sickness was mild and was not seen as a forceful, contagious disease, the ill Vestal was probably treated by her fellow virgins and their staff. It would be interesting to know, how the Vestals discerned the severe, highly infectious diseases from the moderate ones, which symptoms they attributed to a harsh (or a mild) disease, and whether this classification rested on contemporary medical ideas or on cultic prescriptions. But at the current state of evidence these questions cannot be answered yet.

It is also puzzling why the virgin was obliged to leave the Vestal house in case of a severe disease. Cultic reasons<sup>38</sup> cannot be fully excluded, since a seriously sick Vestal could not fulfil her cultic duties<sup>39</sup>, guarding the hearth, cleaning the tem-

<sup>34</sup> Robin L. Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins: A study of Rome's Vestal priestesses in the late Republic and early Empire*, London–New York, 2006, 1, 81, 86, 101–102, 104–106.

<sup>35</sup> Kroppenberglaw, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 420–422.

<sup>36</sup> It would be also interesting to investigate, whether the Vestal virgins were viewed by the average Roman as a priestess responsible for public health and protector from epidemics. In other words, whether the function of a Vestal as protector of Rome also contained the aspect of healthcare and averting diseases. Fire and water, the two main elements of the rites of the virgins and maybe other aspects of their cult can be seen as symbols of health, but Vesta was not viewed as healing deity, nor were her priests believed to possess any healing power. Staples 1998, 148–152. Only three instances suggest that Vestals had some protecting power from diseases, as in 472 BC Orbinia, in 276 BC Sextilia and finally in 266 BC Caparronia were accused of *incestum* and condemned. Some scholars argue, based on the much later accounts of Orosius, that the reason for these trials was a plague infecting primarily women. This is hardly understandable, since much greater epidemics, like the devastating plague of 291, which resulted in the invitation of Asclepius, were not considered the fault of the Vestals. Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*, 84–85 with further discussion.

<sup>37</sup> Compare Lucr. de rer. nat. 3, 486, 491; Sallust Cat. 36, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier, Priestly and female roles in Roman religion, *The virgines Vestae. Hyperboreus* 2/2 (1996), 140.

<sup>39</sup> Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 150–154.

ple<sup>40</sup>, fetching water, preparing the ritual accessories (e.g. *mola salsa*),<sup>41</sup> attending festivals and sacrifices.<sup>42 43</sup> But if the disease spread around, and the majority or all of the Vestals were stricken by it, no virgin could perform these sacred rites and the fire of Vesta might go out, putting the assistance of the gods (*pax deorum*) and thus security and wealth of Rome in jeopardy. Under these circumstances the expulsion of a sick virgin was reasonable. But the (temporary) expelled Vestal was not left for her own devices, she was taken care of by the rich and venerable Roman matrons, who were chosen by the pontiffs.<sup>44</sup> In the case of Iunia, the matron Fannia volunteered to look after and nurse her, because she was a pious and religious woman,<sup>45</sup> and also they were relatives (*affinis*). Later the pontiffs also ordered Fannia to take care of the ill Vestal virgin, and Pliny comments that it was a custom that the matrons were charged (*mandatur*) by pontiffs (pre-eminently the *pontifex maximus*) to nurse and guard sick Vestals. Pliny makes it clear that the standard procedure of assigning the matron was through the order of the pontiffs (*ex auctoritate pontificum*), but in the case of Iunia, the matron decided not to wait for the mandate of the priests, and she was awarded with the care and custody of Iunia.<sup>46</sup> This brave action of Fannia is not only explainable with the fact that the Vestal virgin was her relative and was in ill health, but by her political role. Pliny writes that Fannia followed his husband, Helvidius Priscus, twice in exile, and was also exiled by Domitian in 93 AD, after she entrusted Herennius Senecio to write the biography of her husband.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately we cannot tell, when and under which circumstances Fannia returned to Rome, but the fact that in ca. 103 AD she was entrusted to take care of a representative of Roman and Imperial order and safety, a Vestal, must have meant that she quickly regained her reputation in Rome and gained the favour of the new Emperor.

Pliny remains silent about how the treatment of a Vestal virgin was carried out. The statement, that Fannia, the matron fell ill, when she attended (*assidet*) and

<sup>40</sup> Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*, 7–18.

<sup>41</sup> Takacs, Sarolta A., *Vestal virgins, Sibyls and matrons: Women in Roman religion*, Austin, 2008, 7, 46, 49, 149, note 14.

<sup>42</sup> Kroppenber, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 425.

<sup>43</sup> Alexander Bätz, *Sacrae virgines, Studien zum religiösen und gesellschaftlichen Status der Vestalinnen*, Paderborn, 2012, 13–14.

<sup>44</sup> Plin. Ep. 7, 19, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Compare Plin. Ep. 7, 19, 4, *Quae castitas illi, quae sanctitas, quanta gravitas quanta constantia!* (How consummate is her virtue, her sanctity, her sobriety, her courage! transl. by W. Melmoth)

<sup>46</sup> The other possibility is that Fannia was infected by Iunia and fell ill, and hence wanted to get rid of the sick Vestal, but the pontiffs ordered she had to continue the nursing of Iunia. But since Pliny speaks held Fannia in high regard, one can hardly imagine this scenario.

<sup>47</sup> Adrian N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny, A Historical and Social Commentary*, Oxford, 1966, 424–425.

assiduously and strenuously (*munere strenuo*) looked after the sick. This rather suggests that Fannia nursed the ill and kept vigil, but did not examine, what illness the patient might have had, and there is no information either, what measures she took to improve the medical condition of the sick. No cultic regulation of Vestals or any other priesthood survives, which forbade medical examination or cure, and since the illness of these virgins was not matter of the sacral law of Vestals, as we have seen, it seems conceivable the sick Vestal was examined by a doctor, who also prescribed medicine or recommended dietetic measures, e.g. light diet, exercise, bathing, etc. The first option would be that Fannia<sup>48</sup>, belonging to the elite, had a slave physician<sup>49</sup>, and this slave physician was entrusted to examine and treat the virgin.<sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> Fannia might have had some freedmen, who were physicians, and as Salvius Julianus, jurist (ca. 110–170 AD) calls attention, *liberti* doctors were obliged to treat their previous owner and his relatives and close friends for free.<sup>52</sup> And, of course, Fannia could also call a freeborn (*ingenuus*) doctor, who lived and practiced in Rome. There was no shortage of doctors in Rome<sup>53</sup>, since Iulius Caesar and Augustus<sup>54</sup> gave citizenship and immunity to doctors<sup>55</sup> practising in Rome.<sup>56</sup> Galen also informs us that during his career (2nd half of the 2nd century AD), there was a constant migration of physicians to Rome.<sup>57</sup> So if Fannia decided that the advice or treatment of a physician would be necessary, she had plenty of options. The decision of the pontiffs to appoint a matron to treat the ill Vestal suggests that the pontiffs tried to avoid male involvement in the cure and other literary sources also affirm this effort to avoid men.<sup>58</sup> Augustus ordered that Vestal virgins must be accompanied by a *lictor*, after one virgin was harassed on the streets at night, so the strict seclusion of Vestals from males disappeared.<sup>59</sup> Yet even this objection

<sup>48</sup> Below, *Der Arzt*, 7–12.

<sup>49</sup> Fridolf Kudlien, *Die Stellung des Arztes in der römischen Gesellschaft, Freigeborene Römer, Eingebürgerte, Peregrine, Sklaven, Freigelassene als Ärzte*, Stuttgart, 1986, 107–108.

<sup>50</sup> Antje Krug, *Heilkunst und Heilkult, Medizin in der Antike*, München, 1993, 199.

<sup>51</sup> Mária Bujalková, *Sklaven in der antiken Medizin, Graeco-Latina Brunensia* 18/2 (2013), 71–75.

<sup>52</sup> Compare Dig. 38, 1, 27 Iul. 1. ex Minicio: *Libertum, qui medicinam exercet, verum est voluntate patroni curaturum gratis amicos eius*. See also Below, *Der Arzt*, 12–15; Kudlien, *Die Stellung des Arztes*, 139–145; Bujalková, *Sklaven in der antiken Medizin*, 73.

<sup>53</sup> Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine*, 60–61.

<sup>54</sup> Below, *Der Arzt*, 22–30.

<sup>55</sup> Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 207–208.

<sup>56</sup> ; Nutton, *Continuity or Rediscovery?*, 18–19.

<sup>57</sup> Gal. 14, 621–623. K. Galen here also complains that the doctors coming to Rome are motivated only by money and are incompetent quacks, who flee from their city so the crimes they have committed could not be convicted. Compare also Nutton, *Continuity or Rediscovery?*, 19.

<sup>58</sup> S. Ovid Fasti 6, 254. Compare Kroppenberg, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 418–419.

<sup>59</sup> Dio 47, 19, 4. Compare also Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 145; Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*, 101–102; Takacs, *Vestal virgins, Sibyls and matrons*, 23, 83; Kroppenberg,

could be averted, if Fannia and Iunia consulted a female physician (*medica*). And there are plenty of female doctors to be identified on inscriptions from the Imperial Era throughout the Empire, many of them practicing in Rome.<sup>60</sup> Certainly, we do not know, whether Fannia called a physician, male or female, and an argument from silence does not allow us to draw such conclusions, but if Fannia decided to consult a physician or ask him or her for advice, he was not going against the will of the representatives of Roman religions, the pontiffs: the decision of the *pontifices* was confined to the matron in charge of care and custody, but they probably had no concern, how the treatment was carried out.

Besides falling ill, were there other occasions when the Vestal virgins were examined by physicians or other healthcare providers, e.g. midwives? Unfortunately we have no sources of medical examinations of the virgins in becoming a Vestal or determining whether she lost her virginity, but there are some parallels in other Roman institutions and customs, which suggest that these examinations might have been carried out by doctors. The first event, where a medical analysis is conceivable is the initiation of a Vestal, or the so called *captio*. Gellius writes extensively, which criteria must be fulfilled by a virgin to become a Vestal and how she was chosen, how the *captio* was carried out. According to him a virgin “*must be free too from any impediment in her speech, must not have impaired hearing, or be marked by any other bodily defect*”<sup>61</sup> (translated by John C. Rolfe). There were also other criteria to be eligible, e.g. she had to be between 6 and 10 years of age, both of her parents had to be freeborn (preferably noble) and alive, etc. Only if all criteria have been met, was the girl available for selection, which was the right of the *pontifex maximus*. The process of ancient selection was drawing lot from 20 virgins, but during the lifetime of Aulus Gellius (ca. 125–180) this custom was rarely in use, since freeborn men from respectable families offered their daughters for Vesta by the *ponifex maximus*, and if the virgin met all the religious conditions, she could join the priesthood. After the decision<sup>62</sup>, the pontiff grasped the hand of the virgin<sup>63</sup> and led her away from her father.<sup>64 65 66</sup>

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Law, Religion and Constitution, 420.

<sup>60</sup> Rebecca Flemming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women: Gender, Nature and Authority from Celsus to Galen*, Oxford–New York, 2001, 383–391.

<sup>61</sup> Gell. 1, 12, 3; item *quae lingua debili sensuue aurium deminuta aliave qua corporis labe insignita sit*.

<sup>62</sup> Cancik-Lindemaier, Priestly and female roles, 139–140.

<sup>63</sup> Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 140–143.

<sup>64</sup> Wildfang, *Rome’s Vestal Virgins*, 37–48.

<sup>65</sup> Takacs, *Vestal virgins, Sibyls and matrons*, 81–83.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander Bätz, *Sacrae virgines, Studien zum religiösen und gesellschaftlichen Status der Vestalinnen*, Paderborn, 2012, 63–78.

The requirement of health, especially good hearing and lack of speech defect, was according to Wildfang crucial in the ritual duties of the Vesta. “A Vestal who could not hear or speak properly would not have been able to offer prayers to the goddess on behalf of the Roman people. Roman prayers were spoken aloud and one of the basic tenets of Roman religion held that one mispronounced or misspoken word in a prayer endangered the *pax deorum* (the balance of power between men and gods). It would, thus, of course, have endangered Rome’s very existence, if a Vestal had had a speech impediment or hearing defect.”<sup>67</sup> Cancik-Lindemaier, based on the 30th ode of Horatius contradicts this view,<sup>68</sup> arguing that the Vestal main task during prayers was to remain silent (*tacita*),<sup>69</sup> although that does not mean that she never had to repeat prayers. The requirement of general good health of the virgins can be explained on one hand by other cultic tasks, i.e. fetching water, which calls for a certain level of strength, to be able to carry the vessels. On the other hand, as Bätz rightly argued, physical (and social) immaculateness stands for absolute purity, which is indispensable for a priestess to be able to enter (and interact with) the realm of the sacred.<sup>70</sup>

How the criteria of good hearing, proper speech and general health were examined, remains unclear due to the lack of sources, but one might expect that the diagnosis, that the virgin, destined to become a Vestal, was healthy, and had no disabilities, was made – at least in some cases – by a physician. We have two parallels for cases of medical examinations of people, and both groups are suggested by ancient authors. Gellius himself compares the rite of *captio* with taking captives, the Vestal was taken or seized (*capi*), just like “if she had been taken in war.”<sup>71</sup> Captives became slaves, most of them were sold on the slave markets by merchants. Slaves had to be measured, and, according to the edict of Curule Aediles, also have to be checked, whether they have any diseases or disabilities: “Care must be taken that a notice is written out for each particular slave, in such a way that it is possible to find out exactly what diseases or defects each one has, whether he is liable to run away or loiter about at will, or is not free from liability for a claim for damages.”<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Wildfang, *Rome’s Vestal Virgins*, 43.

<sup>68</sup> Hor. Carm. 3, 30, 8–9: *scandet cum virgine tacita pontifex*.

<sup>69</sup> Cancik-Lindemaier, *Priestly and female roles*, 141.

<sup>70</sup> Bätz, *Sacrae virgines*, 73–74. Similarly see Stefano Conti, *Tra integrazione ed emarginazione: le ultime Vestali*, *Studia historica: Historia antiqua* 21 (2003), 212, based on Cic. de leg. 2, 10, 24, *caste iubet lex adiré ad deos*.

<sup>71</sup> Gell. 1, 12, 13, *veluti bello capta, abducitur*. Gellius adds that the decisive process of choosing priests in other priesthoods of Rome (e.g. flamen Dialis, augur) was also called *captio*. Gell. 1, 12, 15.

<sup>72</sup> Gell. 4, 2.1, *Titulus servorum singulorum scriptus sit curato ita, ut intellegi recte possit, quid morbi vitiiue cuique sit, quis fugitivus errove sit noxave solutus non sit*. Compare also Dig. 21, 1, 1, 1.

(translated by John C. Rolfe) It also had to be indicated<sup>73</sup>, if a slave woman could not become pregnant.<sup>74</sup> In easy, visible instances (e.g. missing limb, blindness) a medical examination was not necessary, but in difficult cases (like the above mentioned infertility) the strict regulation must have effected to call for physicians to establish a diagnosis and in so to try to cure the ailing serve, or at least improve his or her condition, at least to such extent, that he could be sold. However to view Vestals as captives (or slaves) would be misleading, since the pontiffs did not have total control (*potestas*) over the virgins, as a master had over his slaves: Bätz correctly points out that the pontiffs should be seen as experts of religious matters, and thus sometimes took responsibility of intervening in the activities of the Vestals.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore the captives were not checked on their health before they were seized, only before they were sold, hence the situation of the virgins could be compared with that of the slaves being sold.

So another parallel emerges considerable, also connected with war, that of recruits. That the tasks of the Vestal virgins were also considered to help the Roman army in battle is clearly demonstrated by Pliny's account on the execution of the *virgo maxima*, Cornelia, who cried out: "*Caesar thinks that I am impure, I who have performed so many rites, by which he conquered and triumphed!*"<sup>76</sup> (translated by W. Melmoth). As mentioned above Vestals embodied the Roman state, the fulfilment of their tasks was seen paramount in the security and success of Rome, and Cornelia's complaint shows that the activity of the virgins was also believed to facilitate military success. This comes as no surprise, since the main aspect of the safety and prosperity of Rome<sup>77</sup> has been the success of the Roman army.<sup>78</sup> Before accepted in the army, recruits were checked on their health, and as some sources suggest, this was carried out by doctors in military service. Vegetius in his Military instructions (*Epitoma rei militaris*) lists the conditions a man has to meet to be enrolled in the army: they had to be grown up in places with moderate climate (1,2), and preferably in countryside (1,3), had to be between 17 and 23 years

<sup>73</sup> Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman slavery*, London–New York, 1981, 103–104.

<sup>74</sup> Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425*, Cambridge–New York, 2011, 95. On infertility compare Dig. 21,1, 14, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Bätz, *Sacrae virgines*, 24–27. See also Kroppenberg, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 425–426.

<sup>76</sup> Plin. Ep. 4, 11, 7, *Me Caesar incestam putat, qua sacra faciente vicit triumphavit!* Compare Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny*, 282–283 for further discussion. Also note that after the devastating battle of Cannae two virgins were accused of incestum and hence executed, and similar happened in 114/113 BC at the beginning of the war against the Cimbri and Teutons. Cancik-Lindemaier, *Priestly and female roles*, 144; Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*, 80–83, 93–95.

<sup>77</sup> Parker, *Why Were the Vestals Virgins?*, 574–578.

<sup>78</sup> Kroppenberg, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 429.

old (1,4),<sup>79</sup> their ideal height had to be around 175 cms (1,5), and their profession had to be craftsman (1,7). Vegetius also lists the signs of a healthy recruit: “*Those employed to superintend new levies should be particularly careful in examining the features of their faces, their eyes, and the make of their limbs, to enable them to form a true judgment and choose such as are most likely to prove good soldiers. (...) The young soldier, therefore, ought to have a lively eye, should carry his head erect, his chest should be broad, his shoulders muscular and brawny, his fingers long, his arms strong, his waist small, his shape easy, his legs and feet rather nervous than fleshy*”<sup>80</sup> (translated by John Clarke). It is clear that the criteria for the selection were based on ancient medical ideas. The essay of a Hippocratic author, *Airs, waters, places* writes extensively on how climate changes the human constitution, and this idea was echoed by other ancient, non medical authors. Similarly rural and urban environment also affects the human body. Furthermore the idea, that eyes, face, composition of the body can be used to determine the personality of the individual, in this case, which recruit is better suited for military service, is also rooted in ancient medicine<sup>81</sup>, the theory of physiognomy.<sup>82</sup> Therefore it is not surprising that doctors in the army had a major role in the selection of recruits, besides treating the sick and wounded soldiers. Vegetius also notes that poor health or hidden disability may not be salient at first glimpse, but after the training has begun, and in this case he has to be discharged (*missio ex causa*).<sup>83</sup> A papyrus from Oxyrynchus (P. Oxy 39.)<sup>84</sup> informs us of a soldier<sup>85</sup>, who has been released from military service<sup>86</sup> due to visual impairment.<sup>87</sup> Was it possible that the newly captured Vestal was discharged if her hearing or speech impairment turned out after she had been chosen? Since the sources are silent on medical examination of

<sup>79</sup> Compare the requirement from the virgins to be 6–10 years old (Gellius 1, 12, 1).

<sup>80</sup> Veg. 1, 6: *Sed qui dilectum acturus est vehementer intendat, ut ex vultu, ex oculis, ex omni conformatione membrorum eos eligat, qui implere valeant bellatores. (...) Sit ergo adulescens Martio operi deputandus vigilantibus oculis, erecta cervice, lato pectore, umeris musculosis, valentibus brachiis, digitis longioribus, ventre modicus, exilior clunibus, suris et pedibus non superflua carne distentis sed nervorum duritia collectis.*

<sup>81</sup> Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton, 2004, 57–74, 149–161.

<sup>82</sup> Ido Israelowich, *Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire*, Baltimore, 2015, 88–89.

<sup>83</sup> Vegetius 1, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Roy W. Davies, *Joining the Roman Army, Bonner Jahrbücher* 169 (1969), 208–232.

<sup>85</sup> Juliane C. Wilmanns, *Der Sanitätsdienst im Römischen Reich: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Studie zum römischen Militärsanitätswesen nebst einer Prosopographie des Sanitätspersonals*, Hildesheim, 1995, 125.

<sup>86</sup> Julianne Wilmanns-Grunwald, *Tauglichkeitskriterien für den römischen Militärdienst*, in E. Grunwald (ed.), *Bewertung der Gesundheit – Beurteilung militärischer Tauglichkeit*, Bonn, 1989, 39, 42–45.

<sup>87</sup> Israelowich, *Patients and Healers*, 89–90.



Vesal candidates<sup>88</sup>, and medical ideas<sup>89</sup> on good health were easily accessible for the average citizens in Antiquity,<sup>90</sup> most candidates were probably not checked by a physician, but in cases, where hidden disease and disability was suspected, medical consultations must have taken place.

The other event, where – except from sickness – physicians probably had to carry out an examination on Vestal virgins, was the trial of the virgin, who was accused of losing her virginity (*incestum*). Since, as argued before, virginity has been the force enabling the Vestals to interact with the world of the gods, losing it meant that the Vestal<sup>91</sup> was deprived of her privilege to interact with gods<sup>92</sup>, threatening Rome's existence.<sup>93</sup> “According to ancient sources, when a Vestal Virgin was accused of *incestum*, she was ordered by the Pontifical College to refrain from the sacred rites and from selling her slaves.<sup>94</sup> She was then tried, originally by a court made up of the Pontifices, later by a quaestorial tribunal.”<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately, no ancient author describes, how this judicial process was carried out, what testimonies were used by the prosecution and the defence. If the testimonies were unanimous, or the accused Vestal confessed the crime of *incestum*,<sup>96</sup> no other examinations were needed. But if the statements differed reasonably, one might have expected that the physical examination of the Vestal was carried out to determine whether she lost her virginity or not. The examination could be carried out by a physician or a midwife. Ancient medical authors are well in aware that the loss of virginity can be pointed out, not from the broken hymen, since most medical writers, except from Soranus, do not describe hymen, but from other physical signs from the body,

<sup>88</sup> Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origins and Development of Greek Science*, Cambridge, 1979, 86–98, 254–269.

<sup>89</sup> Vivian Nutton, Healers in the medical market place: towards a social history of Graeco-Roman medicine, in A. Wear (ed.), *Medicine in society: historical essays*, Cambridge, 1992, 19, 21.

<sup>90</sup> Israelowich, *Patients and Healers*, 88–92.

<sup>91</sup> Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 132–138.

<sup>92</sup> Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*, 54–55.

<sup>93</sup> Kroppenber, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 418–420.

<sup>94</sup> The prohibition of selling one's own slaves is understandable, since in trials slaves of the defendant could be subjected to torture by the prosecution to convince the crime committed by the defendant. Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman slavery*, 69–70, 161–163; Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World*, 288, 334–335, 383; 515.

<sup>95</sup> Wildfang, *Rome's Vestal Virgins*, 55.

<sup>96</sup> E.g. the Vestal virgin Primigenia in the late 4th century AD, although the account of Symmachus does not allow us to reconstruct, how he managed to find out this crime. He tried to persuade the Roman officials, first the praefectus urbi (Symm. Ep. 9, 147), later the praefectus Italiae (Symm. Ep. 9, 148) to execute the priestess and her lover, but probably could not achieve this, due to the insufficient scope of power or negligency of the authorities. Cancik-Lindemaier, *Priestly and female roles*, 146–147; Conti, *Tra integrazione ed emarginazione*, 216–217.

like bleeding, or the state of the *cervix uteri*.<sup>97</sup> But if we look at the list of Vestals on trials, most of them presumably were not constrained to physical examination, e.g. Tuccia, who proved her innocence by fetching water with a sieve (in ca. 230 BC), or Aemilia, who reignited the hearth of Vesta with her dress.<sup>98</sup> And even later accusations do not allow us to determine, whether medical examinations were part of the judicial process of Vestals: even if they were part, it seems that other testimonies played a greater role in the acquittal or conviction of the priestess. This comes as no surprise, since “*these sentences were meant to channel mass hysteria*”<sup>99</sup>, and were signs<sup>100</sup> of political and social crisis.<sup>101 102</sup> The accusation of “incest” of a Vestal was almost enough for the death penalty, like the case of Cornelia suggest, who was described by Pliny as acting innocent, but the accusation of the Emperor, Domitian (81–96 AD) was enough for the author to believe that the *virgo maxima* committed the crime of *incestum* – even though Pliny loathed Domitian and his reign of terror.<sup>103</sup>

In case of severe sickness and of a difficult and hidden disability the Vestals must have been examined by a physician, in case of losing her virginity probably not, although in the research of all cases massive caution is needed, since our sources do not permit any certainty. As Bätz rightly pointed out, that ancient authors only wrote about the priestess of Vesta, when they committed something extraordinary, and the everyday life, the cultic tasks or the structure of a Vestal priesthood were mentioned quasi as a side note.<sup>104</sup> But the appointment of a physician to take care of the Vestals in the second part of the 4th century AD can only be justified by the fact that Vestals were used to be treated by a doctor and expected medical examination. This suggests that the virgins had met and were treated by physicians before, who must have become familiar to the priestesses. But exactly when and how the physician connected to the Vestals appeared, cannot be determined exactly: the *terminus ante quem* is 368 AD, the *terminus post quem* is, according to Briau, is

<sup>97</sup> Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages*, London – New York, 2000, 10, 21–28.

<sup>98</sup> Wildfang, *Rome’s Vestal Virgins*, 85–86. Compare also the case of Claudia Quinta, who was also accused of in chastity, but managed to prove her spotlessness (*castitas*) by dragging the stranded ship of Magna Mater to the shore. Although some scholars suggest that she must have been a Vestal, the ancient sources describe her as a married woman (*matrona*). Staples, *From Good Goddess to Vestal Virgins*, 104.

<sup>99</sup> Cancik-Lindemaier, *Priestly and female roles*, 144.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Wildfang, *Rome’s Vestal Virgins*, 79–84.

<sup>102</sup> Kroppenber, *Law, Religion and Constitution*, 439–441.

<sup>103</sup> Plin. Ep. 4, 11, 8. Compare Parker, *Why Were the Vestals Virgins?*, 576.

<sup>104</sup> Bätz, 2006, 16.

the edict of Milan in 313 AD.<sup>105</sup> But, as I believe, a later earliest possible date can be determined. Because there is a person, who had close connection with the Vestals and also had paramount role in instructing the college of 14 city physicians, since the before mentioned law was addressed to him: Vettius Agorius Praetextatus.

Praetextatus was a Roman aristocrat, who held many important magistracies of Rome and Italy and other provinces, he was among others, as his *cursus honorum* lists, *praefectus urbi, corrector Tusciae et Umbriae*, proconsul of Achaëa.<sup>106</sup> He was also one of the last supporters of traditional Roman religion, held many important priesthoods, he was e.g. augur, pontiff of Sol and Vesta.<sup>107</sup> He also intervened in several religious conflicts between pagans and Christians, favouring, of course, his own religion, when he was appealing against the edict of Valentinian I forbidding sacrifices at night (in 364 AD), or when he “initiated an enquiry into the demolition of the temples in Italy by the Christians” in 384 AD.<sup>108</sup> This “zealous pagan”<sup>109</sup> had close connections to the Vestal virgins, as one of his inscriptions (CIL V, 1778) demonstrates, where he is listed as *pontifex Vestae* at the beginning of the inscription, which may suggest that this priesthood was especially close to his heart. The Vestals also honoured Praetextatus, as the account of Symmachus reveals, in which they proposed to dedicate a statue to him.<sup>110</sup> The cause for this high esteem of Praetextatus remains obscure, the resolving of conflicts in favour of pagans was one primary reason, as well as donations and leadership as *pontifex* of the virgins, and, as Briau suggested, probably to provide medical care for the Vestals.<sup>111</sup> But why did Praetextatus decide to employ a physician only for the Vestals? The answer to this question is closely connected to the social and religious changes of late Antiquity. There were fewer and fewer citizens, who could cover the expensive liturgies of pagan cults and this number became even smaller with the rise of Christianity, since Christians had no interest in financing pagan cults.<sup>112</sup> Hence Praetextatus collected so many priesthoods and was part of many pagan assemblies. Certainly, with these factors coming together, Roman matrons did not have any intention to take care of sick Vestals, so the priesthood (on the suggestion and support of Praetextatus, or he himself personally) probably hired a physician

<sup>105</sup> Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine*, 126.

<sup>106</sup> CIL VI, 1777.

<sup>107</sup> CIL VI, 1778.

<sup>108</sup> PLRE I, s.v. Praetextatus 1, 722, 723.

<sup>109</sup> PLRE I, s.v. Praetextatus 1, 722.

<sup>110</sup> Symm. Ep. II, 36. Symmachus is clearly astonished by this proposal of the Vestals, since there are no other statues of men in the *atrium Vestae*. That this proposal was true is undermined by CIL VI, 2145.

<sup>111</sup> Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine*, 124–127.

<sup>112</sup> Michele R. Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire*, Cambridge, MA–London, 2002, 65.

to resolve the matter. If the assumption of the involvement of Praetextatus is correct, the date of the hiring of a doctor for the virgins should be put ca. on the late 350's AD and the first six years of the 360's AD.

This suggestion unfortunately cannot be attested directly by sources, but the fact that Praetextatus had strong relations with the Vestals and the edict of Valentinian on the instruction of 14 city *archiatri* is dedicated to him and excludes just the *archiater* of Vestals must have been more than a coincidence. As discussed above, Vestal virgins were seen as the embodiment of the Roman State, Rome's success and safety laid in their hands. Thus a physician, who checked the condition of the priestesses and restored their health to enable to perform the sacred rites, which were necessary for the survival of the state, might have been seen as a person who performed public duties, and would be expected to be among the public physicians. The tone of the legal text suggests a strong Christian influence, especially, where the law maker is concerned that these privileged *archiatri* were ordered to commit to the praiseworthy service for the poor instead of the nasty servitude for the wealthy.<sup>113</sup> In this case, the decision not to incorporate the physician of pagan priesthood is fully understandable. Furthermore, according to the epigraphic sources, all *archiatri* from Rome in the late Antiquity were Christians, the Christian influence on this institution can be fully demonstrated.<sup>114</sup>

In conclusion, the healthcare of the Vestals came a long way from Roman matrons standing on their bedside to a physician in charge of healing the priestesses. Since doctors of all kinds were accessible, they must have been called to examine ailing Vestals, otherwise the need for medical assistance in the second half of the 4th century is hardly understandable. Some forms of physical examination of virgins dedicated to Vesta must have been also carried out by physicians, but these were rather exceptional. In case of *incestum* one might also expect medical check up, and some physicians and midwives were capable to determine the existence or loss of virginity, but at the current state of evidence no conclusions can be made. The employment of a physician is probably because of the involvement of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, one of the leading pagan nobles of the 4th century AD, but a private physician of a pagan cult had no place in a college of Christian public doctors, thus and because of serving a private institution was rightly excluded from the privileged *archiatri*. The fact that Vestals openly were treated by a doctor also demonstrates the changes of this priesthood, which can also be observed that the Roman authorities hesitated to punish the unchaste Primigenia, one Vestal probably

<sup>113</sup> CT 13, 3, 8, *ministrari honeste obsequi tenuioribus malint quam turpiter servire divitibus*. Briau, *L'archiatrie romaine*, 86–87; Nutton, *Archiatri and the Medical Profession*, 217–218.

<sup>114</sup> CIL VI, 9562, 9563, 9564, 9565; On the inscription ICUR 2, 5412 the word *archiater* is damaged, the restoration is probable, but not proven.

dropped out of the priesthood before her service of 30 years,<sup>115</sup> or Claudia<sup>116</sup>, who was a Vestal but converted to Christianity.<sup>117</sup> The *archiater* of the Vestals was an exceptional case, lasting probably only a couple of years, but can be seen as one of the last demonstration of their high status before the cult was banned in 394 AD.

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<sup>115</sup> Symm. Ep. 9, 108. Cancik-Lindemaier, Priestly and female roles, 146, note 39.

<sup>116</sup> Conti, Tra integrazione ed emarginazione, 214–215.

<sup>117</sup> PLRE I, s. v. Claudia 4, 206; Conti, Tra integrazione ed emarginazione, 214.

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# “INITIATION INTO THE MYSTERIES” INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2015 – A BRIEF OVERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

ANITA RÁKÓCZY

*Initiation into the Mysteries*, an interdisciplinary international conference held by Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, took place in the Ceremony Hall of the University’s Faculty of Humanities at 4 Reviczky Street, Budapest, from 20 to 21 November 2015. The conference was organized by the Faculty’s Research Group *Concepts and Traditions of Mysticism in the European Thought* as part and final event of an ongoing OTKA project. Its primary aim was to discuss core concepts of the several different mystical traditions in the European history of ideas such as initiation, mystagogy, mystery, religious ecstasy and their historical and logical aspects. The conference topics were focused on, but not limited to, the Christian tradition, welcoming papers also about, for example, the Hermetic, Gnostic or Neo-Platonic notions of initiation. Presenters from various countries and areas of research including history of philosophy, philosophy of religion, religious history, teatrology and psychology engaged in scholarly exchange and debate during the vibrant, two-day cultural event. Following a highly competitive selection process, the Board of Organizers (Enikő Sepsi, Anikó Daróczy, Gábor Kendeffy and Miklós Vassányi) invited leading international specialists as keynote speakers: Martin Moors (Leuven), Gerd Van Riel (Leuven) and Stefan Freund (Wuppertal). At the same time, it was a deliberate goal of the organizers to provide an opportunity for upcoming, career-starter scholars to become active participants and presenters, broaden their international horizon, and enter into interdisciplinary dialogue about initiation into the mysteries in their related field of research.

A great number of research institutes, groups and workshops at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (henceforth referred to as KRE) testify that ancient and medieval Christian scientific tradition might serve as sources of inspiration for modern and contemporary scholarship. The research

<sup>1</sup> Special thanks to Bernard Adams for proofreading. I would like to express my gratitude to Dóra Tóth (Research and Tendering Assistant of the Dean’s Office, KRE and coordinator of the “Initiation into the Mysteries” Conference) for providing me the abstracts of the contributors. They serve as the basis of this brief account.

focus of KRE demonstrates that this transition is possible, that faith and science, *fides et ratio* can in fact unite organically to serve the present day.<sup>2</sup>

Following the opening remarks, the conference was launched by Gerd Van Riel's keynote lecture, *Damascius' Mysticism* as part of Section I, chaired by Martin Moors. In his contribution, Van Riel, Research Professor at the De Wulf-Mansion Centre for Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy of KU Leuven, aimed at challenging some simplifying interpretations of Damascius' mysticism by exploring explicit references to the need of finding the right balance between theurgy and philosophy in Damascius' *Vita Isidori* and in his *Phaedo* commentary, and studying Damascius' account of the ascent towards the highest principle. Van Riel argued that mysticism in this particular context is the outcome of a rational project, which, exploring the limits of rational discourse, never fails to account for the mystical experience in a rational way. The keynote lecture was followed by *Mystery or Liturgy?*, the paper of György Geréby, historian of medieval and late antique philosophy and theology (Associate Professor, Department of Medieval Studies, CEU), in which he presented the arguments of the early-twentieth-century debate between Dom Odo Casel and the church historian Erik Peterson in the context of early Christian theological developments.

Section II, which was chaired by György Geréby, comprised of three presentations. The keynote lecture, *Cyprian's Ad Donatum as Mystagogic Protrepticus* by Stefan Freund (Bergische Universität Wuppertal), discussed Cyprian's early writing *Ad Donatum* and pointed out that although it is often classified as apologetic, it is rather a Christian mystagogic *protrepticus*. Freund demonstrated the way Cyprian uses pagan patterns of expression to make Christian mysteries understandable while keeping their secrets. Miklós Vassányi (Vice-Dean for Research, Erasmus and Sports Affairs, University Associate Professor, Institute of Arts Studies and General Humanities, KRE) gave a paper with the title *St Denys on Initiation in De divinis nominibus*. The focus of his presentation was on the still unidentified Christian mystic St Denys the Areopagite, who often speaks about initiation in his most elaborate treatise *On the Divine Names*. The paper discussed the several different stages of this process of initiation on the basis of *De divinis nominibus*, with references to *De ecclesiastica hierarchia* and to *De mystica theologia*. The final speaker of the section, István Pásztori-Kupán (University Associate Professor, Institute of Arts Studies and General Humanities, KRE), conducted his presentation – *Faith As a Prerequisite of the Initiation into the Mysteries in Theodoret of Cyrus* – on one of the last representatives of Christian apologists, who argues that

<sup>2</sup> The Research-Development-Innovation Strategy of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, 2011, 1. [http://www.kre.hu/portal/images/doc/K\\_F\\_I\\_strategia\\_2011\\_09\\_30.pdf](http://www.kre.hu/portal/images/doc/K_F_I_strategia_2011_09_30.pdf), accessed on 01 04 2016.



any knowledge, including the knowledge of and initiation into the mysteries, must be preceded by faith.

After the lunch break, the conference participants and audiences split up to Section III/A and Section III/B. Júlia Gyimesi (Teacher Training Centre, Group of Educational Psychology, KRE) opened the former (chaired by Monika Frazer-Imregh) with her paper *Mystical Experience in the Framework of Hungarian Metapsychical Research*. She gave an outline of the history and the scientific significance of the Hungarian Metapsychical Scientific Society in the light of the 19th and 20th century occult revival and the development of modern psychology. The panel followed with the contribution from Csaba Szummer (Psychological Institute, KRE), *Psychedelia – Initiation into the Mysteries with a Pinch of Chemical Substances*, exploring the connections between psychedelic experience and spiritual imagination. In *Endurance Running as a Mystical Method*, Johanna Domonkos (Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities) argued that besides being an effective means of improving physical and mental health, long-distance running has been used as a method of mystical initiation in human history. Finally, Orsolya Horváth (Senior Lecturer, Institute of Arts Studies and General Humanities, KRE) concluded the panel with her paper *Hermeneutical Borderline Situations – Kierkegaard and the Compelling Sign*, in which she analysed the *compelling sign* in a phenomenological way on the basis of Kierkegaard's interpretation of the story of Abraham.

Section III/B, chaired by Gerd Van Riel, started with a paper by Máté Herner (Graduate Student, CEU), *Plato and Mysticism – Pythagorean Influence in the Phaedo and the Timaeus*. He argued that Plato's abandoning the traditional mystical narrative of our search for knowledge and our ideal self-conduct reflects important revisions made in his metaphysics, cosmology and epistemology. Anna Judit Tóth's (...) contribution, *Dionysus and His Doppelgängers at John Lydus* demonstrated that the Lydus-text discussed provides evidence of the Neoplatonic thinkers' significance in the transmission of the theology of the mystic cults, and also proves that the related cults developed in parallel in the Roman Empire, integrating the same philosophical framework into their own system. In his presentation, *Initiation-Mysteries in the Hermetic Texts*, Endre Hamvas (...) discussed the function of the initiation into the mysteries in the *Hermetica*. The final speaker of this panel was Zsuzsanna Turcsán-Tóth (Assistant Lecturer, Institute of History, KRE), who, in her paper, *The Statue of Artemis Ephesia in the Light of Porphyry's On the Cave of the Nymph*, provided insight into the statues of the Artemis Ephesia in search of evidence for her mysteries. With the help of Porphyry's work, it becomes possible to define the scenes appearing on the statues' chest and therefore to catch a glimpse of the Ephesian mysteries.

Section IV, the last panel of Friday, 20th November was chaired by Melinda Sebők. In his keynote lecture, *Which Initiation Does Not Lead Astray from the True Mysteries? The Later Schelling's Philosophical Quest for a True Method*, Martin

Moors (Centre for Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy of Culture, Institute of Philosophy, KU Leuven) argued that only a positive philosophy grounded into the *maxime cognoscendum* – *das Seyende selbst* – is qualified to rightfully and completely introduce into those mysteries of being and existence by which human reason is somehow already prepossessed. György E. Szőnyi (Visiting Professor, Departments of History and Medieval Studies CEU; Professor of English and Hungarian Studies, University of Szeged) gave a paper on *A Christian-Hermetic-Judeo Initiation into the Mysteries: Lodovico Lazzarelli's Crater Hermetis*, introducing this text, and pointing out the decisive meeting of Lazzarelli and Giovanni "Mercurio" da Correggio. Their twin story is a fascinating example of early Renaissance Neoplatonic mysticism which synthesized high religiosity with classical philosophy and a fervent desire for the deification of man. Monika Frazer-Imregh (Professor, Institute of History, KRE) closed the panel and the first day of the conference with her presentation, *Initiation into the Mysteries in Pico's Works*, examining, *inter alia*, the different stages that people have to pass through in the process of purifying and raising their minds.

Saturday, 21 November opened with Section V, chaired by István Pásztorikupán; Philip Doroszewski (Assistant Professor, Institute of Classical and Cultural Studies Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw) gave a paper with the title *Ritual or Metaphor? The Use of the Word ὄργια in Christian Writings of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*, examining the meaning of the word *orgia* in Christian writings of late antiquity. Then Gábor Buzási's contribution (Assistant Professor, Department of Assyriology and Hebrew Studies, ELTE), *The Intellectual Journeys of Julian the Apostate to the Heaven and Beyond*, focused on Emperor Julian, a pagan Neoplatonist converted from Christianity, who was reportedly initiated into various pagan mystery cults.

Following a coffee break, Section VI, chaired by Anikó Daróczi, continued with Vilmos Voigt's paper (Professor Emeritus, Institute of Ethnography and Folklore, ELTE), *A Mystery Among the Mysteries: Are There Old Icelandic Mysteries?* as he argued, mystery in comparative religion is a rite, revealing some knowledge, and initiating the participants into a hidden, secret world. However, in Old Icelandic texts, there are no proper reports about mysteries. The contribution examined this phenomenon at greater depth. In her presentation, *Exegesis as a Key to Mystical Experience: the Case of Nicholas Love's Mirrour*, Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy (Assistant Professor, KRE) claimed that Love attempted to share his hitherto elitist, hermetic knowledge with his audience of "Symple soules" too, and thus he became one of the most progressist authors of the late-medieval English religious scene. The final speaker of the panel, Antonio Dall'Igna (Università degli Studi di Torino) raised and then unravelled the question, *Is the Mysticism of Giordano Bruno a Form of Initiation?* in his paper.

After the lunch break, the conference participants once again were divided into Sections VII/A and B. The former, whose primary focus was initiation and literature, was chaired by Katalin Kállay. Léna Szilárd's contribution (Professor, Department of Russian Language and Literature, ELTE), *The Development of the Genre of Initiation Novel in 20th Century Russian Literature*, examines the art form of Masonic and Rosicrucian models in the novels of Andrei Bely and his followers. György Zoltán Józsa (University of Debrecen) gave a paper on the *Initiation Drama in Russian Symbolism*, and revealed the origins of various codes embedded in A. Blok's *The Rose and the Cross* and V. Bryusov's *The Pythagoreans*. Melinda Sebők's presentation (Assistant Professor, Institute of Hungarian Linguistic, Literary and Cultural Studies, KRE) about *The Aesthetics of Silence – in György Rónay's Poetry* discussed key concepts concerning Rónay's art, in which transcendent tranquillity gives expression to relevant ontological questions. In Section VII B, which was chaired by Zsuzsanna Péri-Nagy, Ferenc Bányai (Faculty of Law, ELTE) gave a paper on *The Eternal Birth: An Initiation by Meister Eckhart*, examining Meister Eckhart's sermon cycle focusing on the mysterious statement concerning the soul's capability of the eternal birth of the Son of God. Finally, Anita Rád's (Cluj) contribution followed, *The Effect of the Different Images of Saint Francis of Assisi on the Contemporary Franciscan Mysticism*.

Section VIII was another vivid example of the interdisciplinary nature of the conference, comprising a literature-related and two theatre-related topics, chaired by Kate Larson. In her contribution, *Theatrical Approaches to Mystery: the „Kenotic” Theatre*, Enikő Sepsi (Dean, Head of the Institute of Arts and General Humanities, Associate Professor, KRE) argued that organic theatre attempts to reach *via negativa*, the state where the actor is a *vehicle*, an empty vessel ready to receive and carry transcendency. Having researched and translated a number of Valère Novarina's works, she presented and defined the phenomenon of *kenotic theatre* on the basis of Novarina's art. Katalin Kállay (Associate Professor, Institute of English Studies, KRE) introduced us to a short story in her presentation, *Initiation and its Travesty in The River by Flannery O'Connor*, which focused on the extent to which the text is a deliberate travesty of the ritual of baptism and the extent to which the initiation is indeed to be taken seriously. Anita Rákóczy (Assistant Lecturer, Institute of Arts and General Humanities, KRE) gave a paper with the title *Denials of the Divine: The Mystery of Ineluctable Presence in Samuel Beckett's Endgame and Film*, focusing on the dramaturgical function of blasphemous elements in these works and also in a number of preliminary manuscripts of *Fin de partie*.

The last panel of the conference, Section IX started with Kate Larson's paper (Södertörns University College, Stockholm), *Authentic Presence – On the Phenomenology of Initiation*. She argued that there are several connections between Simone Weil's notion of decreation and Plato's concept of virtue. Larson examined

some passages in Plato's writing as a form of phenomenology of initiation and its influence on Weil's thinking, showing their respective and deeper understanding of the mystery of incarnation. The next speaker, Zsuzsanna Mirnics (Associate Professor at the Institute of Psychology, KRE), summarized the results of a joint research group (members include Zsuzsanna Kövi, Anna Mersdorf, Zsuzsanna Mirnics, István Tóth, Levente Fogarasi, Zoltán Vass) in her presentation *Initiation into Mysteries in Adventure Therapy*. Their research results clearly show that adventure therapeutic exercises, especially in caves, offer mystical experiences that increase psychological and spiritual well-being. The final contribution, Anikó Daróczi's (Assistant Professor, Department of Netherlandic Studies, KRE) *Hadewijch in the East: A Flemish Woman Mystic's Hungarian Voice* presented to the audience Hadewijch, the 13th-century Flemish beguine and love-mystic, the author of thirty-one mystical letters, sixteen rhymed letters, fourteen visions and forty-five mystical songs.

Her paper served as an introduction to the closing cultural event of the *Initiation into the Mysteries International Conference*. A brief concert took place in Buda Béla Hall: a selection of her songs were performed in Hungarian, on authentic instruments, which created a special atmosphere of fellowship between the musicians and the audience. As a result of the intense, two-day scholarly exchange, a selection of the conference papers will be published in the new series Károli Books by L'Harmattan France-Hongrie.