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PRACTICAL VIEWPOINT

WHEN A CRISIS OPENS NEW ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES: THE NEW WEBINAR SERIES OF THE SIEF RITUAL YEAR WORKING GROUP

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For over 10 years, the academic journal *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* has regularly published news on the activity of The Ritual Year Working Group (RY WG), a group of international scholars with shared interests in ritual activities, customs and festive celebrations throughout the yearly calendric cycle, an affiliate of the International Society of Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF – Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore). This includes reviews of the annual WG's conferences, reviews of panels organised by the WG at important congresses in the field of ethnology and folklore, and releases of new books. In addition, the journal has dedicated several special issues to topics addressed by the various academic meetings of the WG, reuniting studies written by its members (Fournier & Sedakova 2015; Sedakova & Vlaskina 2016, etc.).

This article sheds light on the drastic changes that the academic world was recently confronted with during the Covid-19 pandemic, and on how the RY WG met the challenges of this new reality; it shows how a crisis can also open new possibilities.

The Covid-19 pandemic radically disrupted lives and traditional rituals all over the world. Among other things, it also altered the normal rhythm of the academic life and restricted the usual activities of our WG. The necessary cancellation of the RY 2020 conference, planned to take place in Riga in early June was a big disappointment to all our members who have, since the group's

creation in 2004, become accustomed to coming together annually (until 2016), and then biennially. However, not meeting in person does not mean not meeting at all, as physical distancing does not imply social and professional distancing. Today, more than ever, it is important for us to stay connected, exchange our ideas and plans, and continue doing what we do best.

In an effort to maintain the tradition of membership contact, in 2020, the RY Board devised the idea of starting a new series of virtual WG meetings: **The Ritual Year WG Seasonal Webinars**. The webinars are coordinated by Irina Stahl, the WG Secretary (Institute of Sociology, Romanian Academy, Bucharest) and are moderated by Irina Sedakova, the WG Chair (Institute of Slavic Studies, Moscow) and Mare Kõiva (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Tartu). Technical support has generously been provided by the Estonian Literary Museum and the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies in Tartu. Initially planned to take place four times a year, once every season, via Microsoft Teams, the webinars have also had, in addition, several special editions dedicated to thematic lectures.

The 1st RY Seasonal Webinar in the series, **Autumn 2020**, took place on 20 October and it consisted of three presentations with a Q&A session and discussions at the end.

Emily Lyle (University of Edinburgh) provided the first talk in the series of webinars, "A Spark of Hope: Needfire as a Response to Crisis". As founder of the RY WG and author of the idea of focused investigation of the ritual year(s), and currently the group's Honorary Chair, it was most appropriate and highly symbolic that she initiated this new form of activity. Moreover, her presentation covered the motifs of initiation and healing powers of fire, combining the ideas of a beginning of a crisis, such as the pandemic. As Emily Lyle stressed, fire serves to mark fresh beginnings of many calendric events worldwide: whether the start of a new season, new year, or new era, as in the case of the Aztec transition between the 52-year cycles. The presence of fire in such events, although condemned in the secular world by the Church, has been incorporated in Christian symbolism. L*é*vi-Strauss explored this symbolism with its contrast of darkness and noise, as opposed to the light and harmonious sound that celebrated the Resurrection. People have believed in its magical power to heal through establishing new eras, and consider it an appropriate response to life-threatening crises, similar to the one our society is experiencing today. Focusing on the Scottish needfire, Emily Lyle once again gave us her particular insights into more ancient as well as contemporary cultures all over the world, in an outstanding lesson of comparative ethnology and mythology.

Mare Kõiva (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, Tartu) presented her paper "Earth Day: Against the Silent Spring". The liberalisation of calendric anniversaries has given rise to new feasts, which focus on the relationship between humans and their environment. The largest grassroots demonstration in history witnessed 20 million people, 10% of the US population, gathered on 22 April 1970 to proclaim the first Earth Day. This demonstration aimed to protect the planet from "the silent spring" and put an end to the neglect of the natural environment. Earth Day, now 50 years old, is celebrated in 193 countries and includes many of the features of anniversaries of the ritual year. Mare Kõiva described the reasons why this is the case and showed how Earth Day is observed in various countries. She also dwelled on the question whether this date and the corresponding feast will be a part of the planetarian ritual year in the near future.

Laurent S. Fournier (Cochair of the RY WG, Aix-Marseille University) gave a talk under the heading "Holy Healers in Provence (France): From Folklore to Anthropology". He argued that throughout Mediterranean Europe, numerous Catholic saints are considered holy healers, who people ask to cure a variety of health issues and diseases. Asking for a saint's intercession is part of popular religion and is considered superstitious by the Catholic Church. Local cults have been documented by folklorists and interpreted as survivors of primitive cultures. During the 20th century, belief in holy healers rapidly decreased although some festivals still remember them. This talk connected the older practices and beliefs with the more modern ones, regarding a crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, showing the anthropological relevance of traditional healing rituals and their renewed meaning in today's world.

Discussions, prompted by the variety of rituals described, ensued following the paper presentations. A certain allusion to viruses and the current pandemic was evident. Participants discussed the purifying power of fire in many traditional societies, and the long-standing beliefs that fire can drive away an epidemic. The issues of newly emerging prayers against diseases and the pandemic, as well as the recent ritual complexes of the devotional veneration of the Earth and Nature in various countries, were touched upon.

A special Christmas edition, on December 23, served as our **2nd RY Winter 2020 Seasonal Webinar**. The virtual meeting was dedicated to festive Christmas foods from all around the world. The lectures, with picturesque presentations, covered five countries: Sweden (Marlene Hugoson, Institute for Language and Folklore, Uppsala), Philippines (Maria Bernadette L. Abrera, University of the Philippines, Diliman), Romania (Anamaria Iuga, the National

Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Bucharest), USA (Lucy Margaret Long, Bowling Green State University, Ohio), and France (Laurent S. Fournier, Aix-Marseille University). Many similar features (due to the mutual origin, historical and religious interactions and geographical proximity, or globalisation) were identified in festive Christmas dishes, as well as significant differences. All speakers underlined the growing interest in old traditions, shown by contemporary societies, sort of a fashion of traditional culinary, a reality for which ethnologists and folklorists can rejoice.

Marlene Hugoson spoke about the Swedish Christmas table, stressing the historical differences of the menu, depending on the family's social status and the economy of the region. She dwelled on the dialectal names of the ritual foods and their differentiation from region to region. As examples, Marlene Hugoson showed pictures from her institute's archive as well as those from her own family archive. Christmas ginger houses remain popular in Sweden, where they are frequently baked from scratch and decorated by the families, or they are simply bought. The speaker shared several old magic and fortune-telling acts connected with foods from the Christmas table, which aimed to ensure the prosperity of the house and the marital future of girls. Nowadays, multiculturalism has impacted the traditional menu, and there are many "borrowed" foods on the Christmas table. In Sweden, Muslims also organise "Christmas" tables, following the proverb "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", but the kind of food served has almost nothing to do with the Swedish tradition.

In her presentation, "Exploring Culture and History in Philippine Christmas Foods", **Maria Bernadette L. Abrera** argued that Christmas foods in the Philippines illustrate the colonial history of the country. Christianity was introduced in the Philippine Islands by the Spanish expedition of Fernando Magellan 500 years ago. Since that time, the holiday and the foods served are called by Spanish names, and in general repeat the Spanish Christmas menu, in an adapted form. There are many rice products, such as "sticky rice" (with the idea that, as the rice grains, family members should stick one to another in the future). American colonialism has also influenced the Philippine Christmas menu, adding spaghetti, which in this case has been sweetened.

In her presentation, "*Sarmale* and Strong Drinks for (and after) Christmas in Transylvania and Maramureș", **Anamaria Iuga** discussed several regional differences in the Romanian Christmas menu. Nevertheless, the main dish, *sarmale* (cabbage rolls with minced meat), are the centrepiece of Christmas tables all over the country. Ritual breads and sweets are also very important. Smaller buns are presented to the carol singers, while the big Christmas loaf does not leave the table, to ensure good luck would not leave the house. Pork and

derived products, from the pig slaughtered on Saint Ignatius Day (20 December), are other typical dishes. Warm brandy complements the Christmas dishes.

Lucy M. Long started her presentation, "American Christmas Foods: Ethnic, Regional, and National Traditions", with the consideration that it is difficult to talk about one tradition in such a diverse and large country as the USA, where immigrants from various cultures and ethnic backgrounds provide for a wide array of food varieties, typical of Christmas celebrations. Lucy Long focused on home-baked cookies as a social, family activity, observed via Zoom during the pandemic. Characteristic of Christmas food products in the United States is their commercialisation, the display in the shop windows and the special holiday sales; many also contain added religious symbols. Another trend is also the creative combination between other nations' cuisines and family Christmas food traditions.

In his presentation, "Thirteen Desserts for the 12 Days Cycle: A Modern Mythology of Christmas in Provence", **Laurent S. Fournier** addressed the theoretical question whether the term "invented traditions" as coined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) can be used to denote the regional Provence ritual of the thirteen Christmas deserts. Based on his own fieldwork materials and studies by other ethnologists, the speaker argued that this notion of thirteen foods, though becoming increasingly popular during the past several decades, can be regarded as a transformed tradition. It has symbolic and magical meanings, alluding to Christian (there are three layers of cloth covering the table, symbolising the Holy Trinity) and pre-Christian issues (weather and wedding fortune-telling) as well as to modern facts (the largest city in Provence, Marseille, is located in department number 13). The abundance of food, typical of Christmas tables, conveys a magical message; a wish for the house and the family to have a prosperous year.

The discussion following the presentations touched upon practical and theoretical questions. Some features common in all Christmas celebrations were noted: the special importance of family gathering, making of the best food with at least one, typical dish, prepared only for this seasonal feast, etc. Although the religious content of the holiday in the countries presented may be fading away, the cults of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ continue to be traced through some acts of dedication of food.

The 3rd RY Winter 2021 Seasonal Webinar was held on a date which is meaningful for many calendars – 1 February. The three speakers examined both old and innovative features in archaic traditions, speaking about near as well as more distant celebrations and traditions, in connection with the beginning

of the calendric year. The central theme was traditional and newly developed forms of folk religiosity.

Jenny Buttler (University College Cork, Ireland), in her talk "Saint Brigit's Day and the Festival of Imbolc: Themes of Regeneration and Fertility", explored themes of regeneration and fertility that connect the Celtic goddess and her Christian namesake. Saint Brigit's feast day, which falls on 1 February, also corresponds with the pagan festival of Imbolc, and the traditional beginning of spring and the pastoral year in Ireland. The talk focused on Irish popular tradition with some parallels being made with the Gaelic tradition of Scotland. The presenter reflected on the Old Irish names of Saint Brigit, her pre-Christian folk images (connection with lactation, fertility, purification through water, etc.), and her connection with the Virgin Mary and the birth of Jesus, who she helped deliver. She also characterised the powers and miracles ascribed to Saint Brigit and the ritual practices on 1 February, such as making special crosses for good luck and protection against fire and lightening.

Tobias Boos (Free University of Bolzano-Bozen) dedicated his presentation, "Exploring Urban and Rural Carnivals in Auzuay and Cañar (Ecuador)", to shedding light on the Latin American festivals held in Argentina and Ecuador. His field research in these countries, though quite short in time, allowed him to trace the development and the strategy for enforcing the city carnivals. "Home" events 20 years ago, the carnivals have today turned into urban processions, with music performances, competitions, and water battles. The aim of the government is to develop the attractiveness of the cities in order to appeal to foreign investors and consequently increase the work opportunities for locals.

In her paper, "Russian and Bulgarian Popular Versions of the Epiphany: Traditions and New Developments", **Irina Sedakova** (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) traced the development of certain rituals, carried out during Epiphany in two Christian Orthodox Slavic countries. The water with its power of purification is the dominating element of ritual practices in Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox feasts, and in their folk versions. Still, the factual ritual activities, increasingly documented today, differ. In Russia, bathing in the freezing waters of rivers, ponds, and artificial basins is gaining in popularity. In Bulgaria, the custom of sanctifying the waters is followed by throwing a cross into the waters. There has been a widely discussed development of this custom, initially performed in the freezing river of Tunja, and now in many other regions of Bulgaria. Men dressed in national costumes and singing heroic and other folk songs, accompanied by a folk music assembly, perform the *horo* dance, while holding up the national flag. The development of the ritual, both in Russia and Bulgaria, demonstrates a similar feature: it has become infused with national symbols and embodies the national identity.

An interesting discussion at the end of the presentations raised questions about how Epiphany is celebrated in India, Canada, and the Philippines. Interestingly enough, in the Philippines people begin preparations for Christmas as early as 1 September, and the winter holiday season ends on New Year's Day. The idea of Epiphany being the closing holiday of the "impure" season is not known here. Parallels were made regarding organisational strategies for carnivals in various other places, similar to those observed in Ecuador and Argentina by Tobias Boos, who refers to them as "festivalisation".

For the **4th RY Spring 2021 Seasonal Webinar,** held on 5 April, **Anna Muradova**, an independent scholar in Celtic studies and translator from Tbilisi (Georgia), was invited to talk on the exceptional, though little known figure of Ekaterina Balobanova (1847–1927). In her presentation, "Breton Christmas and Other Holidays in Ekaterina Balobanova's Traveller Notes", Anna Muradova gave an account on Ekaterina Balobanova's biography, with a particular focus on her writings on Brittany. Balobanova was an outstanding lady of her time, librarian, translator of many languages and the first Russian specialist in Celtic studies. Her deep knowledge of Celtic literature and local traditions was due to her studies at the Sorbonne and Heidelberg universities, and her travels in French Brittany in the 1860s. She is, however, considered to be neither an ethnologist nor a linguist. Her writing about Bretons' oral literature and traditions was published as a traveller's notes or a retelling of local legends, and appears to be a literary creation rather than a result of field research. Her books are of particular interest for modern researchers due to the description of various local celebrations, including Saint John's Day and Christmas (see Balobanova 2021). The speaker described in great detail the Breton versions of Midsummer and Christmas and the folklore surrounding these dates. She also drew parallels between mythological beings, bringing and predicting death in Celtic cultures and the popular cult of the dead.

At the end of June, many of the RY WG members took part in the 15th SIEF congress under the heading *Breaking the Rules? Power, Participation, Transgression*, organised for the first time virtually, by the University of Helsinki. Consequently, the **5th RY Seasonal Webinar** took place on 26 May as a joint **Spring-Summer 2021** edition dedicated to Midsummer.

During this meeting, **Tiziana Soverino** (Crumlin College of Further Education, Dublin) gave a talk under the heading "Midsummer in Ireland: Food, Drink, and Stories of the Supernatural", in which she focused on the role of bonfires. In her research, the presenter used answers given to questionnaires,

going back to the 1940s and 1970s, documents from the schools' collection, as well as more recent data, collected during her own fieldwork on bonfires and pilgrimages to holy wells in several Irish regions. Tiziana Soverino noted that pagan and Christian ideas are mingled in the celebration of the summer solstice, with the tendency of Christian references dying out. Apart from marking the summer solstice, 21 June is also an important day in the history of some parts of Ireland. The fishermen of Bushmills (Antrim County, Northern Ireland), for instance, celebrate it as their trade holiday, eating fish (often salmon) and new potatoes. The rest of the people eat a special dessert-like dish of bread and milk, a combination known under the name of *goody*. These foods are shared around a bonfire, and accompanied by music, singing and dancing. The feast combines the ordinary and the extraordinary, which can be traced both in food and in the ritual activities. Rites of preparation (wood for the fire, cleaning the houses) purification (jumping over the fire) and runaway marriages are typical of Midsummer. The location of the fires is very important; usually they are burnt on hills, so as to increase their visibility. Around the bonfires, pagan customs prevail: folk medicine rituals are performed, while the ashes are taken home to be used during the year for multiple magical purposes.

During his presentation, "Midsummer Mock-marriages in the Nordic Countries", **Terry Gunnell (**University of Iceland, Reykjavík) shared his observations on certain Midsummer rituals performed in the Nordic countries. The data he used were taken from his own fieldwork in Norway, as well as from the studies of several other scholars, included in the volume *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (Gunnell 2007). After analysing the Nordic and Scandinavian names of Saint John's Day, Terry Gunnell outlined the mock wedding involving young children dressed in national dresses, with the bride wearing a special crown, and accompanied by a mock priest. This ceremony is performed in some regions of Norway on Saint John's Day, while in other areas and countries on Saint Gregory's Day (12 March), on Easter, Whitsun, or other spring or summer holidays. It corresponds with other "begging" processions, in which children go around the village collecting food and sweets. The mock marriage has strong links to the archaic view of the Scandinavian ritual year divided into two halves, male and female. The genders meet during the summer solstice, symbolising the new beginnings, unification, respect for the nature and the memory of the past.

Georgi Mishev (independent researcher, Plovdiv), in his paper "Midsummer Celebrations in Bulgaria: Ancient Sites, Folk Beliefs and Modern Life", highlighted several parallels between Bulgarian and ancient Thracian mythology, which connect the aristocracy and the kings with the sun as the symbol of male power. The speaker focused on the sun motifs in the semantics of Midsummer

customs, such as in the beliefs that at dawn the sun dances or jumps. Another focus was on the water rituals with their purifying and fertilising powers. Today greeting the sun by collecting herbs at dawn is still very popular in Bulgaria, as parts of a ritual activity of the neo-paganists and as part of historical museum re-enactments. Georgi Mishev spoke in detail about the ways the plants should be collected, and about their healing qualities, as described in his recent book (Mishev 2021).

Following the paper presentations, the audience discussed the parallels between the mock marriage and other wedding-like rituals, such as the Balkan *Bride of Enio* (Sun), performed by a girl who is thought to be the intermediate between the Sun and the community. Other customs such as stealing the fertility and bathing in the morning dew were mentioned as well.

The **6th RY Autumn 2021 Seasonal Webinar** took place on 25 October, and was dedicated to ethnoastronomy, celestial bodies, and mythology.

Opening the virtual meeting with her talk, "The Myth of the One-Eyed God and the Signal Star at the Start of a Season", **Emily Lyle** (University of Edinburgh) expressed her intention to continue one of her previous presentations, given at the Ritual Year WG's 10th conference in Innsbruck (Lyle 2015), referring to a proposed eight-point ritual year of the Proto-Indo-Europeans. In it, one set of four was related to the life cycle of birth, initiation, marriage, and death, while another set of four commemorated the victories of the young hero god over the monstrous old cosmic gods. The speaker had now more to say, in the Scandinavian and Celtic contexts, about the myth of the contest of the young god (Thor, Lug) with the cosmic sky god (Geirrod/Odin, Balor/Bres) who posed a threat to the Earth by being too hot and burning it up. The hero threw the glowing eye of the god into the distance where it became a star (the Pleiades cluster). This star cluster is of great value to humankind because it signals the start of agricultural activities.

Oksana Tchoekha (Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow) gave a presentation titled "Human Life of the Celestial Bodies". Her talk focused on the Sun and the Moon and other celestial bodies portrayed as human beings, exhibiting their strengths and frailties. Both the Sun and the Moon are provided with a life story including a history involving marital or familial relationships, often between each other (e.g., they are believed to be either siblings, or husband and wife). The dichotomy of the Sun and the Moon displays different interpretations geographically. While the Moon is usually more important and has more folklore evidence than the Sun, in many parts of Europe, in the Balkan region, the Sun dominates over the Moon.

Tsimafei Avilin (Centre for Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature Research, National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Minsk) started his presentation "Belarusian Folk Astronomy: What Is Your Ritual about?", with a short introduction into Belarusian folk star names (astronyms) and provided an overview of practices related to the starry objects in East Slavonic and Belarusian folk knowledge. Particular examples dealt with meteors, or the so-called falling stars, or dragons. The scholar presented maps, illustrating the distribution of the main motifs among Eastern Slavs. His talk was a brief overview of his latest book, where these subjects are investigated in great detail (Avilin 2021).

In the ensuing discussions, participants underlined the close connection between calendric customs and folk astronomy, the endurance and stability of anthropomorphic images of the Sun and the Moon in the folklore of many different cultures, and the relevance of area studies of motifs related to the celestial bodies. The catalogue published by Yuri Berezkin and Evgeny Duvakin (Berezkin & Duvakin n.d.) is an unprecedented and valuable tool in the investigations of ethnoastronomy and other mythological subjects.

The 7th RY Special Christmas 2021 Seasonal Webinar was held on 13 December, and was entirely dedicated to Udmurt traditions. The topic was imposed by the recent publication of two new books in Tartu, Estonia.

Tatiana Vladykina (Udmurt Federal Research Centre, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Izhevsk), **Tatiana Panina** (Udmurt Federal Research Centre, Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Izhevsk) and **Galina Glukhova** (Udmurt State University, Izhevsk) gave a presentation "The Winter Cycle of Udmurt Calendar Rituals". A very archaic feature of the Udmurt calendric year is the division of the cycle into two equal parts (in Udmurt, *polar*), and its orientation with regard to the Sun. One part lasts from the winter solstice to the summer one, and the other from the summer solstice to the winter one. The transition periods from one *polar* to another are marked by multiple feasts and rituals, incorporating allusions to family cycle customs, such as an improvised wedding, or funeral ceremonies. Christian Orthodox influences are documented in many calendric customs, including the transitional period in January, from Christmas (6 January (Julian calendar)), until Epiphany (19 January). During this time, multiple dangerous creatures, like Vozho, emerge from the water; typologically they are comparable to the Balkan evil spirits (Sedakova 2021). Another focus was on dressing up as mummers, illustrated with a video showing a group of disguised people visiting a house in an Udmurt village.

Tatiana Minniyakhmetova (independent researcher, Innsbruck) presented her latest book, *In Search of Udmurt "Pearls" in Estonian Archives*

(Minniyakhmetova 2020). She briefly talked about the main contributions to the Udmurt folklore and ethnological studies and reported on the classification of the folklore types represented in the Estonian archives. The documentation included in her book was collected from the Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum and from the archives of the University of Tartu, from the Estonian National Museum, the Institute of the Estonian Language, the Estonian Academy of Arts, the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and several private archives of Estonian colleagues. The volume contains notes on the history of the study of the Udmurts by scientists from Estonia, in chronological order, a list of catalogues, deciphered archival texts on the Udmurt tradition, with their literal translation into Russian and explanations. Tatiana Minniyakhmetova read several passages regarding the cult of the dead and commemorative rituals, which involve sacrifices.

Before advertising another book, the latest publication of the Estonian Literary Museum, *Udmurt Mythology and Folklore* (Anisimov & Kõiva & Toulouze 2021), Mare Kõiva informed the audience that the book is a *Festschrift* to Tatiana Vladykina on her jubilee, which was an unexpected and pleasant surprise to the Udmurt scholar. The book includes memories of collaboration with Professor Vladykina and articles dedicated to her by peers.

Eva Toulouze (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris & University of Tartu) continued by presenting the book, "warm from the oven", as she said. The speaker highlighted the main topics included in the book, among them: demonology with depictions of all spirits known among the Udmurts; mythological beings in modern Udmurt poetry; sacred places, images of local priests and commemorations; the ritual of sending a young boy to the army, still very much alive today; the relevance of music and sound in Udmurt culture as a communicating means, etc.

At the end of the webinar, fragments of *Tol mör vös* (winter intervillage ceremony), an ethnographic film by **Liivo Niglas**, filmed in December 2016 in Novye Tatyshly, Tatyshly district, Bashkortostan, were shown. They illustrated the winter sacrificial ceremonies of the Tatyshly Udmurts, who escaped evangelisation and live in a tolerant Muslim environment. In the Udmurt culture, the winter ceremonies are more modest than the summer ones: in the district, there is only one winter village ceremony (compared to 19 in the summer), and one winter ceremony, gathering three-four villages together. The aim is to obtain the favour of the main deity, Inmar-Kylchin, to whom a sacrifice and the offerings of the villagers are addressed. As in the summer ceremonies, the winter ceremony is led by the village's sacrificial priests. The movie was filmed during an expedition organised with Liivo Niglas, Eva Toulouze, and Nikolai

Anisimov, in the framework of a French I.U.F. project on the religion of the Eastern Udmurts.

In the discussions following the presentations, Irina Stahl asked the presenters to describe the sequence of sacrifices demonstrated in the film. The Turkic word *aide*, used by the ceremonial priest, also raised questions, since it is known in many other languages, including Romanian and Bulgarian, in which it is used with the meaning "let's go", "let's do it", "come on".

This "one-tradition" webinar gave us a wide perspective of the Udmurt calendric rites, as it was analysed both from the insider's and the outsider's point of view: by the Udmurt scholars, bearers of the archaic tradition, and by the scholars from Russia, Estonia, and France.

In conclusion, our RY Seasonal Webinar series have proven the relevance of the WG's topical interest in the development and continuous transformation of the ritual year, documenting and scrutinising the process of ritual structuring and marking of the major and minor calendric feasts on both micro- and macro-scales.

All the past RY webinars have been recorded and are available on the WG's SIEF webpage at https://www.siefhome.org/wg/ry/seasonal_webinars.shtml and http://www.folklore.ee/. These videos constitute an informative source for university and public lectures; they promote the interest in past traditions and the necessity to keep them alive for the future, regardless of new and unexpected obstacles.

Our future webinars are announced on the WG's Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/148137881914062 and on the SIEF website.

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