

Animals have played an important part in belief systems all around the world, and there is great variation in animal relations among cultures. Animals could be credited with personhood and regarded as ancestors, otherworldly guests, guardian or helping spirits, metamorphic beings and sources of visions or superhuman powers. These relations and beliefs have in turn inspired many scholars of different disciplines.

The Society for Northern Ethnography and the University of Helsinki have invited international scholars to discuss these themes for the symposium “Animals in Indigenous Religions and Folk Beliefs I”. The topics of the presentations range from animal symbols in South Saami drums and Plain Indian shields, animals in myths and rituals from Finnish-Karelian bear ceremonials, Saami traditions and ancient Celtic customs, to fieldwork-oriented presentations of animals in contemporary Tyvan horse-herders' relations and Amazonian food taboos. The program begins with a keynote lecture by Professor Enrico Comba and ends with a panel discussion in which the audience is warmly welcome to participate with questions for the experts

Pictures: (Cover) Stanislav Krupar (left) Victoria Soyana Peemot; (right) Karl Brodowsky

14:00 Keynote: Professor Enrico Comba, Anthropology of Religions, University of Turin: “New Conceptual Interpretation of Animism and Totemism in Native American Cultures”

14:45 Assistant Professor Pirjo Virtanen, Indigenous Studies, University of Helsinki: “Food Taboos, Animals, and Personhood in Indigenous Amazonian Thinking”

15:15 Adjunct Professor Riku Hämäläinen, Study of Religions, University of Helsinki: “Bear as the Symbol of Power and Wisdom among the Plains Indians”

15:40 PhD candidate Vesa Matteo Piludu, Study of Religions / Folkloristics, University of Helsinki: “Changeable Personhoods of the Bruin in the Songs of the Finnish and Karelian Bear Ceremonials”

16:05-16:25 Coffee Break (coffee and refreshments available from the Unicafe downstairs at own expense)

16:25 PhD candidate Victoria Soyana Peemot, Altaic Studies, University of Helsinki: “Humans and Nonhumans in the Transboundary Sayan-Altai Region: Mutual Embodiments and Intertwined Socialites among Tyva Herders and Horses”

16:50 PhD candidate Konsta Kaikkonen, Study of Religions, University of Bergen: “Historical Human-Animal Relations of the Saami in Light of Select Written Descriptions of Rituals and Practices”

17:15 ThM Markus Mononen, Study of Religions, University of Helsinki: “Åsele Type South Saami Drums and their Animal Symbolism”

17:40 MA Caterina Agus, Cultural Anthropology, University of Turin / Orizzonte Valsusa: “The Era of the White Boar: Myths, Traditions and Ritual Practises among the Ancient Celts”

18:05 Panel Discussion

Organised by:

University of Helsinki, Department of World Cultures, Study of Religions and Altaic Studies / University of Helsinki, Indigenous Studies / Society for Northern Ethnography (PES/SNE) / University of Bergen, Study of Religions / University of Turin, Anthropology of Religions / Finnish Society for the Study of Religion (SUS) / Orizzonte Valsusa

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The Society for Northern Ethnography presents:

Folk Beliefs Day 2017

Animals in Indigenous Religions and Folk Beliefs I:

Rituals, Symbols and Personhood

International Symposium

Wednesday 22 November 2017:

2 PM – 7 PM

Main Building of the University of Helsinki

Unioninkatu 34, Auditorium XIII

(3rd Floor, entrance from the Senate Square)

Free entrance!

