



Conference Announcement

The Retrospective Methods Network

RMN

Newsletter

RMN Newsletter 17 (2022): 65

Conference Announcement: Austmarr XI Blurred Boundaries and Hybridizations of Magic, Religion and Authorized Knowledge or Practice in the Baltic Sea Region: From Etic Theories to Emic Materialities

8–9 December 2023, Stockholm, Sweden

Austmarr XI is devoted to the theme of ‘Blurred Boundaries and Hybridizations of Magic, Religion and Authorized Knowledge or Practice in the Baltic Sea Region’. Magic and religion are central concepts both in a wide range of research disciplines and in popular culture. Although these concepts play a fundamental role in our construction of cultures and practices of the past, they are sometimes used heuristically with vague and intuited meanings, sometimes analytically, with various and potentially incompatible definitions, and sometimes correlated with the terms and categories of a vernacular or render relevant distinctions invisible. These issues concern each term individually and also their relationships to one another. The variety of usages both within and across disciplines can lead to confusion, misunderstandings, misrepresentations and misinterpretations. Austmarr XI brings these issues into focus by considering both the etic (i.e., of the researcher) and emic (i.e., of the culture concerned) concepts and how we engage with these and relate them to what we study.

The programme includes papers addressing a wide range of topics relating to religion, folklore, magic, and witchcraft, with emphases that are theoretical, empirical, or some combination thereof. Geographically, the conference papers travel widely around the

Baltic Sea Region, including Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden. The conference also promotes reflexive consideration on how our own positions as researchers and the positionality of our sources and key literature in the history of research can impact on our own investigations. Our aim is to make the event a nexus for the discussion of these topics that we can explore together through texts, language, physical objects, landscapes and other media.

The Austmarr meetings have been a venue to present and discuss ideas and research in progress and to test and evaluate findings in a multidisciplinary environment where these may be illuminated by complementary perspectives. We therefore feel that the eleventh Austmarr symposium will be an ideal setting to respond to the recently resurgent interest in premodern magic and the current concern is that such interests easily to become ensconced within particular disciplinary or regional/national boundaries, which creates confusion and a lack of clarity when advancing into multidisciplinary international discussions.

The conference will be hybrid; if you would like to participate digitally, please contact Gwendolyn Knight: [gwendolyn.knight\[at\]historia.su.se](mailto:gwendolyn.knight@historia.su.se).