

6th Leiden Symposium on New Religiosity

What Cards and Coins Reveal

Divinatory Techniques in the Netherlands

24 April 7.30-10.00 p.m. | Lipsius 003 | Free Entrance

Programme

- 19.30 Welcome
- 19.35 Hanneke Minkjan: Searching the Web of Wyrð: Divination in Dutch Neo-paganism
- 20.05 Response from student group
- 20.15 General discussion
- 20.35 Break
- 21.00 Hella de Jong: Taking Matters Into Your Own Hands: The Skill of Divination as a Modern Coping Mechanism
- 21.30 Response from student group
- 21.40 General discussion
- 22.00 The discussion continues in a nearby pub

Venue. Lipsius Building, Cleveringaplaats 1, 2311 BD Leiden

Parking. Maliebaan,

Organisation. The symposium is hosted by the Leiden Centre for the Study of Religion (LUCSoR). It is part of the courses New Religions and Lichaam en Geest in Alternatieve Spiritualiteit within the BA programme Religious Studies (Religiewetenschappen), but open to all.

Contact Markus A. Davidsen (m.davidsen@hum.leidenuniv.nl) for more information.



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Hanneke Minkjan

Searching the Web of Wyrd: Divination in Dutch Neo-paganism

Abstract. Divination is an art or practice of discerning the future. Already in antiquity, but also in indigenous non-Western cultures, divination practices were common. The word divination comes from the Latin word *divinatio* and means ‘belonging to deities’. Therefore, divination is supposed to take place through divine interference. From the 15th century onwards, divination practices, such as astrology, became widely known also in Western societies. Some of these practices are still in use in modern neo-pagan traditions. For instance, Tarot readings are popular, but also other card decks are recognised to receive glimpses of the future. Both *divinatio naturalis*, or “intuitive” divination, and *divinatio artificiosa*, “inductive” divination, is discussed for five neo-pagan traditions: Modern Witchcraft, Druidry, Asatru, the Goddess movement, and neo-shamanism. Practices that will be elaborated are, for instance, the Germanic Runes, the Ogham Oracle, as well as trance journeys, where communication with the pagan divine takes place. In contemporary paganism, the Web of Wyrd is a much used symbol, in which all things are connected. By scrutinising this “Web”, neo-pagans try to get to know future events and, sometimes, even change these circumstances through magic.

Bio. Hanneke Minkjan is a cultural anthropologist and a PhD candidate at the Free University Amsterdam (VU). Her subject of study is neo-paganism in the Netherlands: Wicca, Druidry, Asatru, the Goddess Movement, and neo-shamanism. She received her MA at the University of Amsterdam, where she studied trance practices in Dutch neo-shamanism.

Hella de Jong

Taking Matters Into Your Own Hands: The Skill of Divination as a Modern Coping Mechanism

Abstract. Divinatory practises play a role in helping us find our place in the grander scheme of things. They provide us with alternative insights on how a given scenario is playing itself out in our lives. Whether we use crystal balls, card decks, rune sets, or any other means of divination, they are all tools to aid us in making the right decisions so we can create for ourselves a better future. In this talk you will be presented with an emic view on divination to complement the etic view given in the first part of this symposium. In defiance of the idea that divination is an ancient practice that somehow survived in our modern times, you will learn how recently developed most of our divinatory tools actually are and how these systems are currently used not merely to read the future but also to help us shape it. Illustrated by the story of the Raven Coins, a brand new oracle system that will be published later this year, you will be given enough ideas to create your own oracle when you get home.

Bio. Hella de Jong has received her MA in the Study of Religion (*cum laude*) at the Leiden University in 2015. She has been a practising Neo-Pagan for more than 25 years, active in both Druidry and Wicca. She is currently working on a new divinatory system that will be published in the autumn of 2017.

Earlier years' Leiden symposia on New Religiosity

2012: Hekserij in Holland – 2013 Identity and Tradition in Contemporary Paganism

2014: New Forms of Sacrality in the Netherlands – 2015: Playing with Religion

2016: Elves, Spirits, and Aliens: Superhuman Entities in New Religions