



# Battle Magic. Supernatural Support for Physical Combat 2<sup>nd</sup> International St. Martin Conference 26. | 27. JUNE 2020 DEUTSCHES KLINGENMUSEUM SOLINGEN (GERMAN BLADE MUSEUM SOLINGEN)

“The function of magic is to ritualize man’s optimism, to enhance his faith in the victory of hope over fear.”<sup>1</sup> Even though Malinowski’s concept did not remain uncontested, his perception of magic as the human mind’s answer to uncontrollable or even dangerous situations is inspiring still today. The conference “Battle Magic”, to be held at Deutsches Klingensmuseum Solingen (the German Blade Museum), will take those kinds of magic into perspective that deal with one of the most uncontrollable and stressful circumstances possibly encountered: physical combat.

In this regard, the term “battle magic” is to be understood only as an anchor point. The conference invites presentations on all forms of “supernatural” support for physical combat. Topics could include, but are in no way restricted to:

- **Omens and timing:** determination of the perfect time for battle by the observation of natural phenomena, astrology, or prophecies;
- **Enhancement of the warrior:** observation of specific taboos before combat, spells and body techniques to render the body invulnerable against the enemy’s weapons, or the improvement of the capacity to inflict damage;
- **Enhancement of weapons and armour:** observation of specific rituals in the making of weapons, their inscription with protective symbols, or their enchantment;
- **Superhuman help:** invocation of superhuman agents for support in combat, and offerings given to them after the fight.

Beyond such core topics, themes like the use of physical combat within larger, complex rituals, the representation of “battle magic” in (historic or modern) media, or other, related issues can be addressed. Even though the conference will be held as part of the event program for the Klingensmuseum’s current exhibition “Steel and Magic. Edged Weapons of the Malay Archipelago”, topics from all times, areas, and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

Introductory lecture and keynotes will be

- *Divine Weapons in Hinduism and Their Use in Worldly Combat by the Warrior*  
Prof. Dr. Dr. Manfred Hutter (Abteilung für Religionswissenschaft, University of Bonn)
- *Djadwal: Numerology and Islamic Magic on Southeast Asian Weapons*  
Michael Marlow (Stockholm)
- *Warriors of the Winged Snake: West Slavic Riders in the Viking World*  
Dr. Leszek Gardela (Berlin)

<sup>1</sup>B. Malinowski: *Magic, Science and Religion*. In: B. Malinowski: *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*, ed. by R. Refield. Boston, MA, 1948, p. 70.

*Image:* A wafiq (Islamic numerological square) on a sword from Java, 19th century.

## Proposals

Please send your proposal of ca. 300 words, five keywords, and a short biographical note of ca. 100 words to Dr. Sixt Wetzler, Deutsches Klingensmuseum Solingen, [s.wetzler@solingen.de](mailto:s.wetzler@solingen.de). Deadline is 31 March 2020. Contributions must not be longer than 20 minutes, the conference language is English.

The conference is organized by Deutsches Klingensmuseum Solingen in cooperation with Abteilung für Religionswissenschaft, Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn.

## Publication

The contributions will be published in a collected, academic volume.

## Location

Deutsches Klingensmuseum Solingen  
Klosterhof 4  
42653 Solingen  
Germany  
[www.klingensmuseum.de](http://www.klingensmuseum.de)

## Participation and conference fee:

Speakers will be exempt from conference fees. Regular conference fee (for attendants not presenting) is 60,- €. Conference dinner and refreshments are included. Travel expenses cannot be covered by the organizers. For registration, please send an email to Dr. Sixt Wetzler, [s.wetzler@solingen.de](mailto:s.wetzler@solingen.de).

