

## Iconography of the Sacrifice

# The Iconography of the Sacrifice of Abraham in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Traditions

Zapraszamy na wykład prof. Florentyny Badalanovej-Geller (Royal Anthropological Institute / University College London) w IEiAK!



Przydatne informacje **Miejsce:** IEiAK UW, Żurawia 4, SALA 13

**Data rozpoczęcia:** 25-10-2024

**Godzina:** 11:30

The talk will focus on the scriptural narrative of the FILIAL SACRIFICE which appears to be the conceptual kernel of the most fundamental ritual practices shared by the adherents of Abrahamic religions. Christians consider Isaac's binding as a prefiguration of the Crucifixion, Jews remember the Akedah at Rosh Hashonah, and Muslims refer to the same narrative at the feast of Kurban-Bayram. In all three monotheistic faiths, Abraham is regarded as the ultimate forefather whose readiness to sacrifice his son while submitting to a divine command embodies the supreme manifestation of unshakable faith and pious obedience to God's will. In Jewish and Christian sacred history, "THE CHOSEN SON" whom the Patriarch intends to sacrifice is Isaac, while in Islamic tradition this is Ishmael. Respectively, the role of the "CHOSEN MATRIARCH" in Judaeo-Christian tradition is played by Sarah, while in Islamic tradition by Hagar. Thus, the family tree of Abraham comes to embody the sacred lineages of the communities concerned and shape their respective kinships and social institutions. The iconic theologeme of the Filial Sacrifice is therefore crucial for the confessional identity of the representatives of the three faiths, since sacrificial practices were generally perceived as the primary means of communicating with the Divine. The moral lesson derived from the Biblical and Quranic accounts of the Abrahamic saga is the complete loyalty of the Patriarch towards his newly discovered God, even in the face of such an extreme demand — presenting his offspring as a burnt offering. Significantly, the human victim is substituted by a RAM miraculously appearing next to the bound SON, and in this way the animal agency becomes a crucial component in the development of the drama of Abraham's test, further impacting its ritual code. The ram becomes a unique mediator between the terrestrial

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realm (that of the PATRIARCH Abraham and the Chosen SON), and the celestial realm (that of God and heavenly host), and the zoomorphic embodiment of the perpetual interaction between the heavenly and the earthly, thus securing the cosmic equilibrium. It is exactly this complex cluster of multifaceted permutations of the sacrificial metanarrative within the framework of the three monotheistic faiths that will be one of the main *topoi* discussed in the talk.

**Florentina Badalanova Geller** is Senior Researcher at the Royal Anthropological Institute, London. In September 2022, she joined the Paris IAS as part of the French Institutes for advanced Study fellowship program - FIAS - co-funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 945408. Her fellowship also benefits from the support of the RFIEA+ LABEX, with a national funding (Grant ANR-11-LABX-0027-01). Contact: [f.geller\[at\]ucl.ac.uk](mailto:f.geller@ucl.ac.uk)

*Fot.: The Church of Saints Theodore Tiron and Theodore Stratelates Village of Dobarsko (Bulgaria), 1614.*

**Adres URL źródła:** <https://www.etnologia.uw.edu.pl/aktualnosci/iconography-sacrifice>