The function of magic is to ritualize man’s optimism, to enhance his faith in the victory of hope over fear.” 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 Klingenmuseum 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 Klingenmuseum’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)

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