

PRESENT AND PAST

CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

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Christianity: continuity, changes and interactions*
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Abstracts



MTA

Bölcsészettudományi
Kutatóközpont
**Néprajztudományi
Intézet**

Balatonyi, Judit
Pécs–Budapest

*Rusalii and Rosalia: The role of the Romanian Rusalii Festival
in the framing of cultural remembrance in Gyimes*

This paper analyses the contemporary Romanian Pentecost folk customs called *Rusalii*, in the region of Gyimes (Ghimeş). On the level of everyday concepts and practices, the Romanians of Gyimes consider the festive cycle of Pentecost to be related to the dead and they wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit; however, more recently the narratives of the Romanian elite of Gyimes and of the local Orthodox Church have assigned an increasingly important role to the commemoration of heroes, who have protected the ancient Romanian lands. This focus on the cult of heroes is reinforced by the local *Rusalii Festival*, taking place on the day of the Orthodox Pentecost since 2011, which also wishes to commemorate the heroic dead and, at the same time, attempts to emphasise the religious and national identities of Orthodox Romanians who constitute a minority here. As regards public discourses, it is important to emphasise the ancient roots of this festival: the Romanian and hence local celebration of Pentecost can be traced back to the Roman festival of *Rosalia*; the pentecostal traditions outside the Orthodox liturgy are considered to be pagan customs elaborated by the Dacians. During the time of the festival they arrange a holy mass for pilgrims, they consecrate tree branches, and remember their heroes and their dead at the heroes' memorial; they bring flowers, light candles, clean the cemetery, bring food and drinks (salt and sweetbread). The current research examines why, how and on the basis of which sources the cultural commemoration of Pentecost celebrations was shaped, especially that of the *Rusalii Festival*: how are the different layers of the narrative past interrelated. The emphasis on the Roman origins is closely connected to contemporary socio-political processes; the 2011 festival was essentially a cultural response to the Hungarian Pentecost festivities in Gyimes.

Bowman, Marion
Milton Keynes–Oslo

*Old saints and new pilgrims on the move:
St Olav, St Cuthbert and contemporary currents in Anglo-Nordic pilgrimage*

In many parts of northern Europe, the Protestant Reformation ensured that pilgrimage was not only physically discontinued but theologically discredited in relation to institutional religiosity; the foci of pilgrimage, the traditions and narratives of pilgrims in relation to the landscape of saints were disrupted but often diverted within vernacular religion and cultural tradition. A remarkable feature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries has been that increasingly people in northern Europe are seeking to restore 'lost' pilgrimage routes, and to restore, reframe and re-engage with narratives and traditions relating to special landscapes and people.

Framed by vernacular religious theory, this paper will focus on the changing fortunes of pilgrimage and landscapes relating to two saints, St Olav and St Cuthbert, examining the contemporary appeal of pilgrimage for Protestants and non-institutional spiritual seekers, who now want to walk the ways of St Cuthbert and St Olav in both Britain and Norway. Whether Protestant pilgrimage is more about travelling than arriving at hallowed ground, whether it is more heritage/roots tourism than devotional journeying, whether the current Protestant enthusiasm for pilgrimage reflects a longing for a pre-Reformation world of sensory experiences and closeness to nature (especially in peripheral places), exploring this phenomenon provides a valuable case study in the renegotiation of the past in the present by Protestant and non-traditional pilgrims.

Caciola, Nancy
San Diego

*A new age of the divine feminine:
The Guglielmites and contemporary California Goddess-worship*

One of the most intriguing episodes of popular heresy in the Middle Ages is the case of the Guglielmites, a group prosecuted by the Inquisition in Milan in the summer and fall of 1300. The group was dedicated to the memory of a woman named Guglielma, who had died in the city some years earlier, in 1282. Leading devotees came to believe that Guglielma was a female incarnation of the godhead: specifically, the third person in the Christian Trinity. The elaborate theology her followers developed claimed that Guglielma would resurrect to initiate a New Age of spiritual perfection, in which the Church would be led by a female pope and all of humanity, regardless of religious belief, would be saved. Some aspects of the medieval group may be regarded as foreshadowing contemporary New Age beliefs in America, particularly the interest in spiritual apotheosis and in goddess worship. Such trends in American spirituality are particularly marked in the state of California, and I draw both on published research and on interviews with friends to explore the role of apocalyptic gender reversal in these two different contexts.

Csáji, László Koppány
Pécs

Contemporary and historical vernacular prophets and holy men/women

This paper is the fruit of the author's fieldwork with the new religious movement of Dénes Péter ("Prophet Dénes") from 2010. It places the figure and the social role of Dénes Péter in the context of the terminology used in the scholarly literature of religious studies regarding holy men/women and peasant prophets. A comparative analysis with the following persons as historical prefigurations: András Orás, György Schultz, János Szentpéteri Juhász, György Gál, Henrik Meyer, Antal Novák, Mihály Kornya, József Megyesi, Vince Engi Tüdő, István Orosz, László I. Bálint, Borbála Szanyi Mikó, Mariska Borku, Ilona Jánó and Rózsika Marián is conducted. The research gives an historiographical overview of the scholarly terminology in relation to peasant prophets and holy men/women; although these concepts far from constitute a uniform definition, neither in the scholarly literature of the ethnology of religion, nor in their common use. The people belonging in this category do not have a historic prototype as an 'inherited' behavioural pattern; they are rather dedicated, creative characters who search for answers (that can also be interpreted in a sacred space) to the challenges of their actual contemporary society, and who become active specialists of their community. They organise the religious life of certain regions; and, besides having an intensive relationship with the transcendent, they also shape the social reality.

Christian, William A.
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Toing and froing between more distant to closer past in Spanish religious history

My experience in the study of Spanish Catholicism both as an ethnographer of contemporary communities and as a historian of the late medieval and early modern period is that the two endeavours are complimentary, for one recognizes homologues and historical continuities. These recognitions have occurred in both directions:

1. identifying patterns and cultural traits in the close past, and thereby recognizing them, maybe in different guise, in the distant past example: practical religious vows and promises; example: the identification of personal patrons; example: types of religious apparitions
2. Conversely, identifying cultural procedures in the more distant past, and recognizing similar practices (transformed and adapted) in closer past example: discernment by emotions; example: the

representation of prayers and visions in paintings transposed to the representation of persons with absent or deceased loved ones in photographic montages.

Csepregi, Ildikó
Budapest

The challenges of studying continuity and change in miraculous healing

Cult continuity and change are prevalent and divisive issues among scholars of religious history. Certain periods and research trends favoured continuity-theories, other scholars fought it vehemently. Even if we limit our focus to one particular cult practice or healing ritual, there are challenging factors that hinder the ability to form a clear picture. This paper attempts to illustrate the difficulties researchers of early medieval ritual healing face, when examine a cult place, the attached cult function, and the narratives recording miraculous healing over centuries. My examples concern cases in which 1, long-believed cult continuity was refuted 2, spontaneous cult continuity can be reasonably proved 3, cult continuity was consciously organized or tolerated in practice but disguised for theological reasons. All my material comes from the intersection of Late Antique pagan and early Christian miraculous healing, from the 1st–5th centuries AD of the Mediterranean.

Czégényi, Dóra
Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár

The exorcist priests figure and activity in the Romanian online media

The exorcist priest's figure and activity in the Romanian online media

This paper reviews reviews and analyses a segment of Romanian online media of the 2000s that has so far been neglected. Namely, when, where and how it reports on exorcising activities engaged in by Orthodox priests and the judgements and attitudes it disseminates about such practices. Apart from the case known as the "Tanacu exorcism" that was intensively covered by Romanian media and foreign forums (see Peti L. 2005), magic returning to media remains an unnoticed phenomena even in media sociology (see Keszeg V. 2013: 402–403.), despite occasional disclosures of exorcising activity by the Orthodox clergy (see e.g. Transindex, the best-known Hungarian news portal in Romania: <http://itthon.transindex.ro/>)

Th current research reviews contemporary data on exorcism – that implies the semi-official (semi-canonical) or illicit (non-canonical) survival of exorcism officially practised by priests and monks in the Middle Ages – as a continuation of sporadically appearing data in the 18th–20th century Hungarian printed media (e.g. *Magyar Hirmondó*[!] 8th of April 1786; *Budapesti Hírlap* 18th of January 1894; *Pesti Napló* 3th of September 1911).

Esborg, Line
Oslo

*“In most cases, the village with the strictest pietists adheres to the richest tradition”:
tourism and religion in early folkloristic fieldwork*

This paper highlights the fieldwork conducted by Norwegian folklorist Moltke Moe in the 1880s. Travelling in the footsteps of earlier folklore collectors, Moe's fieldwork among pietistic farmers became the foundation for his influential lectures on "The mythical mindset", delivered in 1888 at the University of Christiania. This paper explores the movement from encounters in the field to "tales of the field".

Farkas, Judit
Pécs

Tradition and innovation in Gaudiya Vaishnavism

The western Hare Krishna movement is an excellent example of a phenomena originating in the past and surviving into the present: the movement associates itself to a Hindu reform-movement in 15th century (Gaudiya Vaishnavism), that is they connect to a remote culture (India) and also to a remote age (middle ages). Overcoming discrepancies between past and present, and conserving and establishing continuity are the main aims and tasks of the movement. Legitimizing techniques established in Hinduism help them to realise this aim.

This paper seeks to present the workings of and the players active in these legitimating processes through a case study: the example of the formation and interpretation of the Krishna Valley as a holy place.

Fiadotava, Anastasiya
Tartu

An atheist people? Re-examining the Soviet interpretation of Belarusian folk jokes about religion

For almost 70 years Belarus was part of the USSR, a country whose authorities were engaged in a perpetual fight against religion. Atheist propaganda was omnipresent: it was to found at school, at workplaces, in the mass media. The Communist party made every possible effort to construct a pervasive narrative according to which the Soviet people themselves opposed religion and mocked it. One of the vehicles of this narrative was the use of jokes in official discourse. The popular satirical magazine “Vozhyk” and various published joke compilations often contained jokes about religion. Soviet folklorists and linguists argued that these jokes indicated the Belarusians' contempt for religion.

However, if we look beyond the official interpretations and examine the joke texts themselves, it becomes clear that most of them do not address the key feature of religion: a belief in supernatural powers. The primary butt of the jokes are priests and their way of life which often does not correspond to the Christian values that they expound. In these jokes, Catholic and Orthodox priests alike demonstrate a desire to acquire money, have love affairs, drink excessively, and to possess other traits that undermine their position of spiritual leadership. They may also be portrayed as incompetent in their work. Many joke plots feature priests being outwitted by peasants whom they wanted to fool or exploit. The issue of religious faith itself rarely features in the jokes. Therefore, these jokes should be placed not in a religious but a social context. They reveal certain aspects of power relations in traditional Belarusian society rather than the supposed atheism of Belarusians.

Graham, Fabian
Göttingen

Competing cosmologies of post-mortal existence in Chinese vernacular religion: Diametric oppositions from within an evolving religious tradition

This paper analyses the evolution of difference between two religious landscapes, Singapore and Taiwan, where, in Chinese vernacular religion, until perhaps fifty years ago, outside of local festivals, religious cosmologies and their associated material and ritual cultures were essentially analogous. Of key interest are two diametrically opposed post-mortal cosmologies that have evolved in the public eye, yet in isolation both from each other and from comparable external traditions. Singapore has seen the development and popularisation of Netherworld spirit medium (tang-ki) cults based around the channeling and worship of two Netherworld deities commonly referred to as Tua Ya Pek and Di Ya Pek. Meanwhile, in Taiwan, lingji groups, utilizing divinely inspired actions with the dual intentions of ecstatic self-cultivation and universal salvation have become the dominant form of group religious practice. With the former emphasizing crime and post-mortal punishments in Hell, and the latter

focussing on healing the souls of the dead to be promoted to higher spiritual levels, each of these religious traditions has developed ritual and material cultures based on diametrically opposed interpretations of the post-mortal journey of the human soul. This paper will present ethnographies from case study temples highlighting the extreme difference in beliefs and practices with the aim of illustrating how each tradition has reinterpreted or reinvented ancient Taoist and Buddhist symbols, texts, beliefs and material culture, and absorbed them into their contemporary cosmologies and practices. In an evolutionary sense, the paper will discuss how these reinventions and reinterpretations reflect specific reactions to local societal challenges, and how each has in turn contributed to the survival of ancient Chinese vernacular religion practices amid increasingly modern and competitive religious and secular environments.

Gyórfy, Eszter
Budapest–Cluj Napoca/Kolozsvár

*Historical and contemporary discourses on the religious and ethnic relations
of a village community (case study)*

This case study examines a village community in the Eastern Carpathians, on the historical border of Transylvania and Moldova that was settled in the second half of the 18th century by people of various ethnic and denominational backgrounds. However – for various demographical and pastoral reasons – the community was Greek Catholic in denomination until the 1940s, when Roman Catholic and (after the banning of the Greek Catholic church in Romania) Orthodox pastoration began in the village.

During my fieldwork in the village, I found it very difficult to understand the interrelations of the two local churches and their believers, as well as the very diverse and rather unusual categories local identity schemes include (Orthodox believers with Hungarian national identity, Romanian-speaking Roman Catholics with strong Romanian nationalist attitude, Orthodox people who are Romanian nationalists but do not speak a word of Romanian, etc.) based on religious and ethnic affinity. The central aim of this paper is to show how and to what extent archival sources assist in providing a better understanding and analysis of recent interreligious relations and local identity by revealing the changing local, regional and national discourses engaging with these issues from the past. It is hoped that this will show how different political, ecclesiastical and local events, processes and purposes during the 20th century entangled religion and ethnicity in local people's identity and everyday religious life; and how various historical and contemporary narratives and perspectives, national affinities, religious traditions interact, interfere and coexist in this village today.

Hesz, Ágnes
Pécs–Budapest

*Different concepts or different perspectives?
Comparison of contemporary and historical material on the vernacular discourses of bewitchment*

In the early 2000's, while undertaking extended fieldwork focussing on ideas and practices surrounding death in a Hungarian Catholic village in Transylvania (Romania), I came across a lively discourse on witchcraft and bewitchment. The material I collected during interviews, spontaneous conversations, or while "being around", shows peculiar features when compared to the results of historical witchcraft studies: magical harm could be done both through evil or divine forces, bewitchment was instigated through mediators (magical specialists or orthodox priests), and the state of being bewitched was often attributed and contested by the alleged victims. Concrete accusations also seem less central in this material, while certain patterns of accusations dominant in historical discourse are also missing. This, along with the attributed nature of victimhood, indicates a more versatile dynamics of motives and relationships underlying the discourse on witchcraft than those discernible from historical and folklore sources. To see whether these differences are due to the logic of contemporary local ideas on bewitchment, or to the nature of the source material, my material will be compared to the material from Transylvanian witchcraft trials.

Håland, Evy Johanne

The value of comparing modern and ancient Greek culture within historical research

Based on a comparative analysis of select religious festivals and life-cycle rituals in modern and ancient Greece, the paper demonstrates the importance of cults connected with the female sphere and its relation to the official male-dominated ideology. Within these festivals are encountered supplementary, complementary or competing ideologies connected with men and women, and it is highlighted that we are dealing not with a one-way power or male dominance within Greek culture, but rather with competing powers linked to the two sexes and their respective spheres. The point is, from what position does one assesses such power relations, and thereby read our ancient Greek myths. In addition to gender, we also encounter the relationship between the “great” and “little” societies, in the form of official and popular religion. The paper seeks to broaden our knowledge of ancient, but also modern, society, because it concerns the relationship between various spheres of life which each possess their own competing and overlapping, but also co-existing, value-systems.

Ilyefalvi, Emese
Budapest

Beyond the “sociology of accusation”

– vernacular bewitchment discourses from early modern Transylvanian witchcraft trials

When comparing Hungarian witchcraft trials with those of Western-Europe, Hungarian witchcraft studies emphasise that bewitchment accusations were the key element of Hungarian trials. Within the witch-hunting frame the accused person is the witch – despite an unclear, obscure definition – and a witch is someone who can bewitch. But what were the local concepts of bewitchment? Looking behind witchhunting ideology, time distance, and the peculiarities of the source material, is it possible to recover local and personal features and the vernacular usage of bewitchment? With reference to the questions and problems raised in Ágnes Hesz’s paper, the current research analyses depictions and interpretations of everyday life situation from depositions, focusing on the semantic and pragmatic network of bewitchment (*rontás*) and witchcraft (*boszorkányság*) to explore the connections, differences and overlaps of the two phenomenon. Also discussed is the question as to whether contemporary fieldwork experiences and theories of anthropology of religion and discourse studies could help in understanding fragmented historical material.

Jiga Iliescu, Laura
Bucharest

A hidden ritual of the former Carpathian shepherd and its contemporary still hidden remembrances: the fir tree confession

In the 1920s, an Orthodox priest learned (while taking confession) that shepherds isolated on the mountain harrow a cross in a fir’s bark and confess in front of it; each shepherd has his own tree used for such purposes.

Probably because it was performed by a certain (and limited) category of (isolated) people and also because it is so unconventional (even non-canonic, since the Orthodox dogmatic prescriptions require the priest involvement in each sacramental ritual), there are only sporadic attestations to such confession. But, at the beginning of the 21st century (2014), the chance arose rather unexpectedly to record more recollections related to this ritual, and also to note people’s attitudes toward it, speaking with bated breath being one of them.

The first goal of this paper here is to enrich the corpus of data about this strange ritual, which may reveal a specific form of Christian religiosity, almost unknown and close to extinction. The second goal is to explore how today shepherds are (re)evaluating their old rituals, either contesting them, or exploiting them as a part in the fabrication of their new, mythical profile, delivered through touristic and mediatic discourses.

Johannsen, Dirk
Oslo

The school of prophets – crafting a saint for the periphery in 19th century Norway

Since the late 19th century, Norwegian media prominently featured faith healers and clairvoyants from rural areas both as ‘typical’ representatives of localised forms of piety and as ‘alternative’ voices in the major debates on the nature of (popular) religion. Knut Rasmussen (1792–1876), known as Wise-Knut, was the first of them to reach national prominence and has since served as a role model for several generations of miracle workers. From his early practice as a travelling preacher to his fame as seer and healer and his lasting reception as a legendary figure, Rasmussen seemed caught in the middle of opposing factions. Clerics and pietists, spiritualists and rationalists, confessional and secular nationalists alike identified him as a manifestation of a ‘folk religious’ domain, when they assessed his performances as those of either a ‘false prophet’ or a ‘peasant saint’. In this paper I will focus on the reception of Vis-Knut from the 1860s to the 1880s. In this period, folklorists made him a ‘living legend’, and liberal theologians and secular novelists used his story to substantiate a modern chronotope: that the religion of the future and the ‘new man’ will have its roots in the periphery.

Kapaló, James A.
Cork

*Materialising religion in the secret police archives:
Some methodological challenges and opportunities*

The use of secret police archives by researchers to trace the history of repression and collaboration and to understand the methods employed by totalitarian regimes to control their populations is well established. The significance of these archives for the study of material religion, however, has been largely overlooked by scholars. The Secret Police archives in Romania and Moldova constitute a hidden repository of confiscated religious art, materials and publications that in many cases survive nowhere else, presenting an exceptionally rich resource for the study of religions in the 20th century. These archives, therefore, represent an important resource for understanding how religious groups deployed various creative art and media in resisting and critiquing the totalitarian and authoritarian system of the time. They also present us with “authoritative” accounts of belief systems and worldviews judged to have been dangerous and subversive and tantalising glimpses of religious lives lived during rapid social and political transformation. The ideological nature of the archives and the oppressive practices they represent, however, present the researcher with distinct challenges in terms of methodology and ethical practice. In this paper, I will outline some of the challenges of interpretation of archival data on religious belief and practice as well as some opportunities presented by this rich resource of religious “ephemera” captured in secret police agents’ and informers’ reports, photographs and confiscated materials.

Kis-Halas, Judit
Budapest

From folk healer to priest in a reinvented religion. The case of the javas

In his monumental opus on the ancient religion of the Hungarians, Arnold Ipolyi set up an impressive taxonomy of priesthood. Among these he listed several expert practitioners of popular magic, which he garnered from folklore collections of contemporary folk belief. The fact that he mentioned *javas* immediately after *táltos* (the chief priest) in his system, suggests that he considered these individuals the second most important specialist of religious acts. Even though he stressed that the figure of *javas* in 19th century folk belief might not be identical with this hypothetical healer-priest, his interpretation had a great impact on the academic research of ancient Hungarian religion. It is clearly reflected in the fact that soon afterwards this regional, emic notion became an umbrella term for all manner of popular and healing specialists. What kind of magical expert was the *javas* then? Apart from his name, did his

activities bear any kind of particular ethnic features, too? This paper examines the figure of the *javas* in various social and cultural contexts in an attempt to answer these questions. First, *javas* is described in the social environment of 18th century village witchcraft. Then, how his figure was depicted in 19th century popular enlightenment literature, newspapers and protestant sermons is examined and thirdly, belief narratives from the late 19th and 20th century are considered. The paper concludes with a brief evaluation of the most recent *javas*-interpretations in modern ethno-pagan and New Age discourses.

Klaniczay, Gábor
Budapest

Padre Pio and Saint Francis of Assisi – the emulation of models in the lives and cults of a contemporary and a medieval saint

The stigmatization of Saint Francis is a prominent moment in the history of medieval sainthood in Latin Christianity. According to medieval assessment, none of the saints managed to get so close to Christ whom they strove to emulate, as Francis, respected as “alter Christus” by contemporaries and posterity. This resemblance found its bodily expression with his reception of the wounds of Passion, the stigmata. Though Franciscans insisted that this was a unique privilege given to their founder, several hundreds of stigmatics appeared in the subsequent eight centuries. One of the most popular among them was the Capuchin friar Pio da Pietralcina, known as Padre Pio (1887–1968), stigmatized in 1918, canonized in 2002. Though his stigmata, and the cult unfolding around him initially had an ambivalent and controversial reception, Padre Pio has become the most popular of recent saints in the Catholic Church, in Italy and also beyond. His shrine in Apulia, South Italy, in San Giovanni Rotondo is a huge cult center. In the impressive Pilgrimage Church built on his grave by Renzo Piano, the winding corridor descending to his crypt is adorned with two series of mosaics, representing corresponding scenes of the life of the “great model” Saint Francis and his eminent follower Padre Pio. This consciously advertised reference will be examined in my paper from three points of view. First, I will compare the medieval and the contemporary model of the “living saint,” the nature of his popular cult, and the conflict-ridden process of a cult such as this asserting itself within the Church. Second, I will analyse, how Padre Pio consciously attempted to emulate Saint Francis and other stigmatics such as Veronica Giuliani and Gemma Galgani. Finally, I will reflect upon the fact that emulation is at the heart of the phenomenon of stigmatization.

Komáromi, Tünde
Budapest

Witchcraft in Torda county (comitatum) and the seat (sedes) of Aranyos in the 17–18th centuries and today

The paper is based on witch trials and contemporary fieldwork on witchcraft in a region of central Transylvania, composed of the historical Torda county (comitatum Torda) and the seat of Aranyos (Sedes Siculicalis Aranyos). I am utilizing published historical sources, the witch trials edited by András Kiss and Sándor Pál-Antal (*A magyarországi boszorkányság forrásai / The sources of witchcraft in Hungary / III*, 2002, 277–458). Witch trials have survived from the period 1695–1804 in Torda county and 1651–1792 in Aranyos seat. For comparison unpublished field material from the region (1993–2001) as well as my monograph (Komáromi, T.: *Rontás és társadalom Aranyosszéken / Witchcraft and society in Aranyosszék /*, Babeş-Bolyai University Press – Kriza János Ethnographical Society, Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, 2009) is employed.

While studying the early modern witch trials of the region, this research focusses on moral problems and the interrelated accusations of witchcraft, fornication and theft as well as the problematic status of the supernatural knowledge of witches, healers and seers. Several cases are presented and analysed, among them that of the itinerant beggar Aniska accused simultaneously of witchcraft, theft and fornication, and the 22-year old Romanian Orthodox healer accused of deception and charlatanism, after having burnt a five-week old baby.

Following the above, possible connections are traced between historical and contemporary social phenomena. The impact of the Enlightenment on the concepts of body and soul will be considered as well as a comparison of old and contemporary love magic. Multiple accusations against one person can be found even today, although they are spread by gossip and never taken to the court. The social role of healers and seers from the 17–18–19th centuries as well as the role of some contemporary Romanian Orthodox priests is of an ambivalent nature. They have a number of qualities in common, like their ethnicity, religious affiliation, their supposed supernatural power, the high number of visitors they receive and the large variety of problems treated by them, among others demonic possession. Furthermore, there is one more reason to connect religiosity and witchcraft in this study: in one of the trials there is an accusation of the drying out of an individual by the act of fasting nine Fridays. Religious practices which are used outside their original context risk ambivalent interpretation even today. In conclusion, it seems that many beliefs and practices have survived the last centuries, while attitudes toward witch beliefs and folk healing have undergone significant change.

Lunde, Hannah-Kristine
Oslo

*A journey of degradation and redefinition –
Agnus Dei and Brudedalere as a part of custom and belief in Norwegian rural society*

Material objects are a vital part of religious practice. Views on material objects in relation to religious spaces and rituals have changed through both time and place, and in many cases undergone transformation, adaption and/or restoration related to geographical, physical and metaphysical contexts. A study of one group of artefacts viewed as a part of ‘the materiality of religion’ may be a fruitful entry point to a broader study of the cultural and social contexts that the objects have been, and still might be, a part of.

The Church may be viewed as a threshold between the sacred and the profane, centre and periphery - a meeting point between educated theologians and laymen's understandings of faith as lived experience. The Reformation marked a critical turning point in the view of the relationship between religious practice and the material, with many kind of objects "degraded" from their prior functions and meaning with the Church, to the same things and practices being viewed as “superstitious” when employed beyond it.

This can be exemplified by the silver pendants known as Agnus Dei. Agnus Dei is a sacramental in the Catholic Church - a blessed item worn for protection. In Norway a similar type of pendant known as "Brudedalere" has been worn traditionally as part of the bridal silver, and also as a protective agent against natural and supernatural dangers. The accounts of these kinds of ritual functions date to after the Lutheran Reformation of Denmark-Norway in 1536–37, when the use of sacramentals was abolished. This is my entry point for a discussion of routes of material religious practice, both inside and outside the Church, with definition and redefinition through the human agent's (re)negotiation of function and meaning.

Marjanić, Suzana
Zagreb

*Conspiracy theories as some kind of (contemporary) urban legend/belief:
the case of Croatia, as part of the global paranoia*

As the Croatian folklore research, ethnology and cultural anthropology does not have a special interest in the research of conspiracy theories, here I shall interpret the systematic work of Krešimir Mišak, a science journalist, rock musician and a fiction scientist writer, who as a theorist of conspiracy theories systematically deals with that issue in the cult TV show *On the Edge of Science* (Croatian Television, since 2002). Krešimir Mišak brought a number of researchers, scientists on Croatian television, for example, hosting the American researcher and writer Daniel Estulin who revealed the interested

sphere of Group Bilderberg, about which he held a speech at the European Parliament on 1st June 2010.

Furthermore, in the context of the Croatian scientific paradigm Nebojša Blanuša, an assistant professor at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, is the only scientist in Croatia who also systematically conducts research on political conspiracy theories. In the book *Conspiracy Theories and Croatian Political Reality 1980–2007. (Teorije zavjere i hrvatska politička zbilja 1980–2007., 2011)* the author interprets the prevalence of the belief in the conspiracy theories in Croatian society, and shows that imagining a conspiracy is much more often than it is generally thought. Conspiracy theories are not labeled – how it is often supposed – to eccentrics, and conspiracy theories are primarily related to the political controversial events and processes (cf. Blanuša 2011: 12).

With the research of Krešimir Mišak (from the popular paradigm) and Nebojša Blanuša (from the political paradigm) I shall document how conspiracy theories are set up in the popular and political matrix, context in the Croatian society.

Jack Z. Bratich, a professor of journalism and media studies at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, in his book *Conspiracy Panics: Political Rationality and Popular Culture (2008)*, highlights that conspiracy theories are "para (beyond or beside) the nous (mind). They are paranoid" (Bratich 2008: 3).

In short, here I shall try to observe how conspiracy theories could be defined as the survival of the past phenomena (belief/legends) in the present, but with a special addition – the state of global paranoia. As for the correlation between conspiracy theories and urban legends/belief, the conspiracy theories can be interpreted as a contemporary version of ancient myths in which monsters and gods of Olympus or of Valhalla are replaced by aliens and Illuminati from Washington and Buckingham Palace (Enciklopedija urota 2010: 20).

In the final part of the paper I shall interpret the research on conspiracy theories by Steven M. Greer who states the following: "What most people do not realize is the fact that we still live in theocracy which is not yet proclaimed. It is just that people simply has not been told that we live in a theocracy" (Greer 2008: 219).

Mencej, Mirjam
Ljubljana

Ancient graves and recent deaths on a Bosnian highway

This paper takes as its point of analysis traffic accidents which have been occurring on the M17 highway in Central Bosnia. These, according to the narratives recorded in the field as well as in newspaper articles, are a consequence of Muslim graveyards having been removed upon the construction of the road in the seventies. The removed graveyards are as a rule ancient, and are often those of shehids, Islamic warriors who died for their faith, or those that bear a special significance in the local cultural tradition. The author argues that the narratives on the one hand reflect traditional notion that graves, and the bodies in them, should not be disturbed, and yet, on the other they also act as a metaphor for Bosniaks' endangered religious identity.

Minniyakhmetova, Tatiana – Suleymanova, Margarita
Innsbruck – Ufa

Revival and survival of Traditional ways of treatment among Bashkirs and Udmurts

Bashkirs and Udmurts live in the area of the Volga-Ural region in Russia. The interaction and exchange processes has endured in these ethnic groups over the centuries and in due course has formed a mutual layer of culture. Similar features are observed in ritual practice and methods of traditional treatment. Some survival forms are still kept, and moreover today there are undergoing something of a popular revival.

Traditional forms of treatment among those participants in the fieldwork are classified differently. In the given research, it will be considered that illnesses are caused by various spirits or as result of inappropriate behaviour by the afflicted individual. The comparative analysis of this phenomenon

demonstrates that it is necessary to discover a cause for illness and that mostly afflictions as a consequence of one's spirit falling. It is common belief that one may be set free from a malicious/ill spirit and return to health. There are individuals with shamanic abilities which may perform healing practices.

During the last decades, a revival in interest in the traditional ways of treatment has resulted in the appearance of all manner of healers. This tendency is increasing and an analysis of their practice demonstrates a synthesis of traditional and new methods interwoven with their religious attitudes and cultural influences. The research is based on a comparative analysis of a number of treatment methods from both the past and today.

Nagy, Ilona
Budapest

The creation of man. Antique literacy – modern folklore

The narrative tradition of the creation of man draws upon numerous other written sources besides the creation narrative of the Genesis (Gen 1,1–2,4, 2,4–3,24). Among the most important are the Life of Adam and Eve (fifth and sixth century) and the Apocalypsis Mosis. Besides the many, mostly lost eastern Adamsbooks we can mention among the sources a Syrian text, The Cave of Treasures (sixth century), as well as numerous eastern sources and the diversified Slav Apocrypha: A Word on Adam and Eve – Slovo za Adami Eva ot načaloto do svūrška (tenth and eleventh century), On the Sea of Tiberias – Za Tiveriádsokoto More (probably from the eleventh and twelfth century), a Word from John Chrysostom on How Michael Vanquished Satanael – Slovo na sveti Ioan Zlatoust za tova kak Mihail pobedi Satanata (earliest manuscript from the sixteenth century), and The Beginning of the World – Počētie svyeta (seventeenth century). The main motif of the apocryphon On the Sea of Tiberias about the universe being created from bits of mud carried to the surface from the seabed, which appears under numerous variants in the Hungarian folk traditions, is often followed by the episode narrating the creation of the first man; as it is in the written sources and in the folklore of the peoples living to the south and to the east of Hungary. According to Florentina Badalanova, the similarities between the scriptural Jewish, Christian and Muslim tradition of the creation of man and the folk Bibles in different languages suggest the existence of a proto narrative, a so-called Ur-hypertext. Alan Dundes claims, “orally transmitted folklore such as proverbs and legends can survive relatively intact for centuries with no help from written sources.” (Dundes, 1999: 10). According to Magdalena Lubańska, however, these richly varied narratives “were not self-generated [...] from an original ur-source (or its variants) transmitted locally down the generations, but rather were popularized by the religious elites”, by the popular literature in the nineteenth century. The presentation attempts to give an illustration of this.

Németh, Ildikó
Sopron

Using archival records to discover hidden histories.
Case study of a witchcraft trial in Sopron 1630

In 2011 Balassi Kiadó published source material of the witchcraft trials in Sopron titled “Soproni boszorkánypercek/Ödenburger Hexenprozesse 1429–1702”. The witchcraft trial presented here is one of those published trials; it offers a good opportunity to examine a witchcraft trial from the beginning of the 17th century by using not only the immediate documentation of the trial but also other – recently published – sources of urban history. Behind the primary source text interpretation there are several other contexts to explore. The documents reveal much more than an interesting story, they also allow us to study the layers and levels of the social relationships during that time.

This paper illustrates the many different opportunities archival records offer and will afford some examples that provide a detailed picture of the everyday life of 17th century Hungarian urban communities.

Ohrvik, Ane
Oslo

Reactivating St. Olav's wells in Norway: From pilgrimage to Japanese sake

Wells attributed to the Norwegian Saint Olav are very numerous, and are scattered all around Norway. As the medieval pilgrim routes were strategically placed close to these wells, they served central functions in the pilgrimage movement in the late Middle Ages. Well into the modern period, historical sources and local legends document lively local religious practices connected to the wells. Today, several of the wells are being rediscovered, restored, and reinterpreted to accommodate today's diverse needs in commemoration practices. This results in different measures of reactivation: from restoring the pilgrimage routes to the use of the water from a Saint Olav's well for a famous local brewery. This paper seeks to answer the question: What modes of reactivations are the wells subjected to, and why?

Peti, Lehel
Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár – Budapest

Religious transformation and migration in a Moldavian Roma community

This paper analyses the religious and social changes in a Roma community, and the relationship between their migration practices and conversion to Pentecostalism. The first part describes the particular Roma community and outlines the circumstances in which Pentecostalism appeared. This is followed by an examination of the economic and social reasons behind the conversion to Pentecostalism, with an emphasis on the relationship between migration and Pentecostalism. The author explains the ongoing Roma conversion to Pentecostalism with their unique social establishment, their aspiration to overcome their inferior position vis á vis the Romanians and their stigmatised ethnicity, their restricted opportunities for mobility, and their popular religiosity being susceptible to Pentecostalism, a religion that draws upon subjective religious experiences, prophecies, predictions and exorcism. The foundation of livelihood for the Roma is abroad-bound labour migration. Besides migration for the purposes of begging, which mostly concentrates on Sweden and Norway, there exists an increasingly-established migration practice, primarily targeting England, Spain, France, and most recently Germany, which has resulted in fundamental social changes in the half Roma, half Romanian village. It is the contention of the author that the Pentecostal ideology helps the Roma community to formulate their aspiration to liberate themselves from stigmatisation, considering that, through migration, they successfully meet the challenges of modernisation. In this sense, Pentecostalism is a system of explanation resolving and representing the economic success of the Roma on an ideological level. With its help, instead of saying that through migration they have become 'more modern' and closer to the system of values and norms of the Romanians, the Roma are able to say that through religion they were 'reborn'.

Petrović, Sonja
Belgrade

*Invention and reconstruction of the past and the present
in legends and narratives of Despot Stefan Lazarević*

This paper will explore the phenomena of adaptation, invention and reconstruction of tradition, utilising available materials on Stefan Lazarević (1377–1427), prince and Despot of Serbia. Legends and stories about Stefan Lazarević are not plentiful, yet those that there are are multilayered and introduce different complexes of motifs, which are to a certain extent connected to Stefan's historical identity. In the 18th and 19th century records, Stefan, who was childless, is linked to the motif of sacred hospitality and divine prostitution, and presented as the father of Janos Hunyadi (1387–1456), Hungarian general and regent, in an invented genealogy. In some mythologised epic songs and legends Stefan is depicted as a dragon slayer who avenges his father Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović. Stefan is also associated with the impossibility motif, adynaton: he vows that the sunken mace, which he used to

expel the Turks over the sea, shall not be able to surface again, however it rises to the surface immediately, thus symbolising that the Turks cannot be defeated at that moment. These traditional themes will be interpreted with regard to the ideological context that produced them, and juxtaposed with the contemporary legends, which emerged due to the recent discovery of his grave and remains in his endowment, monastery Manasija. While it was previously deemed that Stefan's tomb was placed in his other endowment, the monastery of Koporin, this discovery at Manasija has motivated the sisterhood of Koporin monastery to attempt to maintain interest in the temple and strengthen Stefan's cult by encouraging and circulating legends and stories about the miraculous power of blessings which helped infertile women to have children, about the holy water which heals different illnesses, and the like. Equally interesting are the narratives that reconstruct historical and legendary details in order to suit the purpose. The aim of the current research is to examine traditional and contemporary legends, narratives and other sources, to analyse their ideological context and narrative strategy, and show how they are related to the process of construction of national past.

Pócs, Éva
Budapest

The sieve and the drum in the labyrinth of mythological reconstructions

Hungarian scholarship has been trying for some 150 years to reconstruct what is commonly referred to as 'our ancient religion' – the pre-Christian faith of the Hungarians. In the reconstruction created by Gyula Sebestyén, Géza Róheim and Vilmos Diószegi, shamanism played a central role, which, however, is purely a construct of scholarship. In order to draft the figure of the shaman of the ancient religion, the researchers built up an incoherent, idealised notion of shamanism from elements coming from different places, ages and peoples. It was with this ideal that Hungarian research has tried to align the figure of the *táltos* who was assumed to have been the shaman of the ancient religion. Since attaining ecstasy through drumming is a fundamental characteristic of Eurasian shamanism, the drum has played an important role in the reconstruction of the ancient Hungarian religion, too. This happened in line with the pre-supposition whereby the *táltos* was the Hungarian shaman, therefore he also had a drum. The motif of the *táltos*'s drum has been present in all reconstructions to this day, and at the same time it is the most important ritual requisite of 'neo-shamans' and other pseudo-scientific impostors. However, this is also one of the most vulnerable points of this construct, since data about the Hungarian *táltos* drum do not actually exist. Since, however, the *táltos* drum was one of the leitmotifs of the reconstruction, every possible attempt was made to collect evidence as to its existence at some distant point in time. Such 'proofs' include the mention of drums in nursery rhymes and children's games, as well as the use of the sieve as a tool for divination and for 'peeping into the other world'.

My paper focuses on the possibilities and impossibilities of connections between such data on sieves and the shamanic drum, and wishes to illustrate certain research problems of mythological reconstructions.

Povedák, István
Szeged

Jesus, E.Ts and Hungarians. Hungarian paleoastronautic myths

According to the widespread concept of paleoastronautics, the evolution or even the genesis of human civilisation occurred as a consequence of alien visitations to Earth. This theory is widespread in the classic works of contemporary new Hungarian mythology as well. Moreover, the extraterrestrial concept of Hungarian origin has become the basic theory of Arvisura, the most important collection of new Hungarian myths. This paper intends to approach this phenomenon from the folkloristic perspective and addresses the question of how folklorists can investigate and analyse these narratives? How these Hungarian paleoastronautic myths fit into a more general frame and how they correlate with basic transformations of our culture?

Povedák, Kinga
Cork

Doing ethnography in secret police archives?

Research on the history of Christianity of the second half of the 20th century in post-socialist Hungary is dominated by research on institutional church history and on the persecution of key leaders or religious groups within the historical churches. There have been practically no studies in Hungary from a folkloristic perspective as the study of vernacular religious practices was not encouraged during the years of communism. In Hungary, historians investigated religious practices during communism based only on archival sources and their findings have not been extended to present times. Their main focus was on how religion survived and the suffering of the churches. Everyday/local religious practices and minority religions are not on the agenda.

In this paper I present my ongoing work carried out in the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security (ABTL) as part of the *Hidden Galleries* ERC project led by Dr James Kapaló. The project is concerned with minority religions and vernacular religious expressions on a local level. Through select case studies, I will explore the methodologies of researching vernacular religious practices in secret police archives. I intend to introduce two types of novel source: the written and material sources of ABTL and the oral accounts for the study of vernacular religious practices during communism. I attempt to draw some conclusions based on an analysis of these two distinct sets of resources and how they complement each other. In this paper secret police archives are utilised as a field and archives conceived as a field of ethnographic practice (Gomes de Cunha 2006).

Resløkken, Åmund Norum
Oslo

Customs, folklore, and the roots of religion

During the early twentieth century, folklore came to the forefront of the study of the roots and routes of religion. A crucial change in the conception of the origin of religion was present in the discussion about the status of ritual and myth. What had influenced what? And which of them were the oldest?

The idea that ritual was more primary than myth is often associated with J.G. Frazer, but he had the idea from the folklore-researcher Wilhelm Mannhardt, who in the 1870s did one of the first large-scale collections of folklore using questionnaires. With these, translated into different European languages, he collected folklore material from large parts of Europe. Mannhardt's methods and conception of vernacular customs as the place to find survivals of the origin of religion had enormous influence on folklore-research in the early 1900s, including in Norway.

This can be seen most clearly in the writings of Nils Lid, and the part he played in the issuing of the questionnaire-series *Ord og Sed* (Words and Customs) begun in 1934. Lid's work also inaugurated the beginning of ethnology as an independent subject in the Norwegian university system, with Lid as its first professor from 1940. In this paper I will use examples from questionnaires in *Ord og Sed* about different supernatural beings in order to show how the conception of the origin of religion changes how these beings are being perceived as actors and objects in scholarly texts, thus changing the perceived roots of vernacular religion. How did these 'restored' beings affect the idea of what vernacular religion was? And can we still see the influence of this in discourses about 'religion' and 'superstition' today?

Saikia, Baburam
Tartu

*Continuity and change of Vaishnava religion:
A study on institutionalized religious community of Assam*

The Vaishnava religion is one of the major branches of Hinduism. Vaishnava movement in Assam had strong connections with the current of Vaishnava revival that swept over India between 12th and 15th

centuries. Sankaradeva (1449–1568), the great Assamese social reformer had led the neo- Vaishnavite movement all over North East India, Assam in particular. Within three hundred years the movement firmly established the Vaishnava faith as the supreme religious order of the Brahmaputra Valley. The movement also developed a new institutional structure known as Sattrā, a socio – cultural and religious institute, which introduced celibate lifestyle of the followers along with dance, drama and music as a medium of worshipping God. Some village families, those who belong to the Vaishnava religion, willingly offer young boys to the Sattrā to become an active practitioner and authority accept them in the Sattrā. A particular monk family takes the responsibility to adopt a boy and also help the boy to familiarize with the spiritual world by teaching different dance numbers and music under an appointed Guru (teacher) among other boys in a group. Even though the senior practitioners deserve to continue the rules of the tradition without the effect of modern society it has not become possible, especially to the young ones. My study aims to discuss continuity and change of the Vaishnava religious tradition which will also include life struggle of the practitioners and their contemporary situations. Paper is based on my twenty years’ experience staying in the field among the Vaishnava community.

Smid, Bernadett
Budapest

The Magic of Saint Cyprian: individual crisis and historicity in the recent on-line prayer texts

The name of Saint Cyprian is absent from the new Roman Calendar, which came into effect in 1969, after Vatican II. Nonetheless, the internet is awash with websites on religion and magic that include countless types of Saint Cyprian prayers in Spanish. The active and personalised use of the texts is confirmed by the improvised textual elements, the comments invoking Cyprian and the texts of gratitude, mostly in situations of individual crisis.

So far I have examined the function of Cyprian prayer texts in terms of magical aversion of misfortune relying on seventeenth-century historical material, and as much as the sources permitted, I also analysed their usage and the paratextual data.

This paper discusses three groups of issues. Firstly, I will give a short outline of how the characteristics of the sources influence the questions that can be formulated concerning contemporary or historical texts. Secondly, I will present the relationships between the text and the mediator (Cyprian); the question is how the character of Cyprian is represented in the various types of prayers and charms. Thirdly, from the perspective of the present, I will explore the significance of Cyprian as a historical figure in the case of internet-based texts; and discuss the shift of emphasis and the problem of continuity manifested in the contemporary phenomenon compared to the historical material.

Tausiet, María
Madrid

Past made magic. Religion, folklore and myth in Mary Poppins

The figure of Mary Poppins is still today one of the most popular characters in modern culture. An invention of the writer P. L. Travers, the iconic governess appeared in a series of eight books published over the period 1934–1988. The peak of her popularity didn’t come, nevertheless, until 1964, when she was brought to the screen by Walt Disney. Henceforth she has been usually seen as a mere entertainment for children or, at best, as the ideal nanny able to restore domestic bliss. However, there is a deeper meaning in her ungraspable singularity, her mixture of familiarity and strangeness, her real and fictional features, as well as in her trustingly open attitude, able to communicate daily life with unexpected but continuous entries into other worlds.

This should not be surprising inasmuch as the character’s creator was not only a novelist and a poet, but also a folklorist who devoted her life to the study of religion myth and fairy tales. Especially attracted by the traditional culture of her Irish ancestors, she was a friend of some nationalist poets like George William Russell, Oliver St. John Gogarty or William Butler Yeats, whose interest in the supernatural lore were connected to spiritualistic ideas of ecstatic primeval unity. Although in the last

years the study of folklore and the occult in literature has increased enormously, there are still many aspects unexplored which reveal to what extent the past is present in the present.

In particular, this paper will analyse some folkloric religious motifs lying behind Mary Poppins stories and adventures, either related to historical magic beliefs and practices or to literary topoi. The liminality and lightness of this unique governess who comes and goes with the wind works as a catalyst. She subverts the common sense of a society governed by conventions, leads us towards experiences of elsewhere and otherwise, and, above all, encourages her readers to trust and face the unknown as the best way to embrace life.

Tóth, Anna Judit
Budapest

The ancient Rosalia in modern Balkan folklore

This paper takes as its focus the festivity of Rosalia originating from Antiquity, and its possible survival in Balkan folklore. The names of the festivity, Rosalia, Rosatio, or Rhodismos in Greek, are all derived from the Greek and the Latin variants of the word ‘rose’, and represent a very unique name type for a festivity because anything could be called Rosalia in which roses played a role; thus, they can be considered as generic designations for certain rituals. The name became popular during the time of the Roman Empire, and was used as a label for at least two groups of rituals, one of them a kind of commemoration of the dead. Here, Rosalia is paired with Violatio; both were named after the flowers typically placed upon the graves: roses and violets. This type of Rosatio is a family event, celebrated in a small group; it had no fixed date, except for what the deceased had requested. The other type of Rosatio is an urban community festivity held on varying dates, following the time when the roses bloom. In one form or another, it is included in every calendar dating from Late Antiquity; albeit we have no knowledge on the type of rituals performed on these days. This paper seeks an answer to the following question: is there any correlation between the variants of the antique types of Rosalia and the different modern-age survivals of Rosalia.

Vidacs, Bea
Budapest

Natália and Mária: Two seers, two contexts, continuity?

The presentation will discuss two Hungarian seers, who have had rather similar private revelations with regard to the special calling of the Hungarian people. They are: Sister Natalia (1901–1992) and Mária, the Seer of a South Central Hungarian village, born in 1956. Sister Natalia was a nun who had private revelations from the Virgin Mary as well as from Jesus Christ. We know of these from her diaries that have been published in English. Mária is a housewife, who has had visions of Jesus Christ since 1993. Since 1994 she has also been reliving the suffering of Christ on a regular basis every month. At the end of these reenactments of the Passion, Jesus Christ speaks to the congregants through her. The texts of these teachings are published by her followers. Some of the messages that are thus in existence have striking similarities to each other, and many of Mária’s followers think that she is an „heir” to Sister Natalia. The paper will concentrate on these revelations and will consider the contexts in which the seers began to talk about the calling of the Hungarian people and their role in worldwide reparations and think about continuity and discontinuity, tradition and innovation in these contexts while recognizing that the messages constitute part of larger, world-wide discourses.

Zorić, Snjezana
Seoul

The ambivalences in Korean christianity

In the predominantly Buddhist or even atheist culture in modern Korea, the rapid development of Christianity opens up several questions which can be answered from different perspectives. This paper

focusses on the dissemination, doctrinal foundations and political engagement of Catholic tradition in Korea. I will also examine how Catholicism was formed and shaped in relation to the much more powerful Protestant Church.

The introduction of Catholicism to Korea was not through missionary work but through the Korean scholars who visited China in the 17th century. However, those who took an interest in Catholicism or converted to the religion suffered severe persecution (1801, 1866) by the Korean ruling class consisting of conservative Confucian scholars (yangban). Eventually, with the opening up to the outside world and arrival of Protestantism, both denominations were tolerated and accepted by the end of 19th ct. The Catholic Church also earned further respect through its support of Korea's pro-democracy movement in 1919 and its left-wing political orientation, as opposed to the rest of the Catholic world. According to Korean public opinion, the Catholic Church is the most decent and honest religious affiliation in Korea today. On the contrary, many Protestant pastors are involved in various financial scandals.

The current research will shed light on the ambivalences inherent to Korean Catholicism, and, by extension, to many of its followers. Despite being highly educated and progressive-minded, Catholics and Protestants as well, often adhere to traditional Confucian values and still hold ancestor's rituals, while some even tolerate shamanic practices within the Christian mindset.

This paper elaborates on the reasons for and outcomes of those ambivalences in the doctrine and practice of Korean Christianity.

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