

**SCHOLARLY PAPERS
UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA**

VOLUME 793

Oriental Studies

Between East and West:

**Cultural and Religious Dialogue
before, during and after the Totalitarian Rule**

Based on papers read at the 1st International Scholarly Conference
of the Latvian Society for the Study of Religion,
University of Latvia, Riga, October 6-8, 2012

Editor of the issue Jānis Priede

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RAKSTI**

793. SĒJUMS

Orientālistika

Starp Austrumiem un Rietumiem:

**kultūru un reliģiju dialogs
pirms totalitārā režīma, totalitārā režīma
laikā un pēc totalitārā režīma**

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pētniecības biedrības konference
Latvijas Universitātē, Rīgā, 2012. gada 6.–8. oktobrī
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Introduction

The 1st International Scholarly Conference of the Latvian Society for the Study of Religion *Between East and West: Cultural and Religious Dialogue before, during and after the Totalitarian Rule* took place in Riga at the University of Latvia, 6-8 October 2011. The conference was organized by the Latvian Society for the Study of Religions in cooperation with the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Latvia and the Faculty of Humanities of Daugavpils University within the EC 7th Framework Programme project “Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement”. The conference was concerned primarily with the dialogue of religions and cultures affected by diverse totalitarian regimes. It placed a special emphasis on relations among culture, science, and religion, the contemporary religious situation and processes, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and new religious movements. A special panel at the conference was dedicated to the impact of collective memory accumulated during the difficult periods of the past and manifesting itself in society within various contemporary processes.

Among conference participants there were more than 55 researchers from about twenty countries, including Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Russia, Byelorussia, Bulgaria, the USA and Japan. The Latvian Society of the Study of Religions is a member of two most important international scientific associations whose official representatives attended the conference. The International Association of the History of Religion was represented by the Secretary General Tim Jensen, and the European Association for the Study of Religions by the treasurer Marco Pasi. One of the most advanced European interdisciplinary research fields was represented by Professor Hilary Pilkington, coordinator of the project “Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement”, funded by the European Union under the 7th Framework Programme for research and technical development. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung was represented by Andreas Michael Klein, Director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Three highly important plenary keynote sessions – “Western Esotericism between East and West: Identities, Boundaries, Polemics” by Marco Pasi (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands), “Bucking the Trend? Youth, Religion and Subculture in Post-Soviet Russia” by Hilary Pilkington (University of Warwick, U.K.) and “Religion Education East and West” by Tim Jensen (University of Southern Denmark) – were organized with the support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Latvia.

The conference was an important forum for the Latvian researchers of religion. University of Latvia was represented by nine researchers (five of them from the Faculty of Humanities, two from the Faculty of Theology, one from the Institute

of Philosophy and Sociology, one from the Institute of History of Latvia). Other Latvian academic and research institutions also participated at the conference, among them there was the Academy of Culture and the Museum of Occupation of Latvia.

The present collection of the peer reviewed articles is a result of serious work invested by the authors after the conference. We hope that the collection will find its path to the interested reader. And – which is no less important – we strongly believe that our next conference will succeed in reclaiming Riga as a city where science has no borders and where East and West finally meet.

Assoc. Prof. **Jānis Priede**
President of the Latvian Society for Study of Religions

I

**BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:
RELIGION, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY**

Richard Wilhelm between China and Europe: a Failed Missionary?

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Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) was a German Protestant missionary and sinologue, nowadays famous for his translations of Chinese Classics. In 1899 he joined the *Allgemeiner evangelisch-protestantischer Missionsverein* and agreed to serve as a missionary in China in the German colonial city of Qingdao where he pursued his duty for the following twenty years. He clearly realized the dismissive attitude of the Protestant missions towards local and high Chinese culture. Unable to accept it as his own, he dedicated himself to the study of Classical Chinese and Chinese philosophy, as well as of China's religious tradition.

After Wilhelm returned to Germany in 1924, he became a professor of Chinese Studies at the University of Frankfurt and the focus of his work shifted from translation work to teaching and lecturing. In his monograph on China "Die Seele Chinas" (1926), Wilhelm elaborates on the spirit of the nation and strictly criticizes the established praxis of the former Protestant missions in China. He argues against the discredit of local culture and the insistence on western customs to be constitutive for religious life, which brought him distrust within the German religious community. Due to his missionary background, Wilhelm first encountered opposition from the German academic community as well. Providing insights into Chinese culture with his writings, translations and lectures, he succeeded to create a bridge for the audience in the West to understand and approach the East. This article follows up Wilhelm's metamorphosis from a protestant missionary into a Confucian sinologue fully devoted to China, and his mission as a bridge-builder between the East and the West.

Keywords: Richard Wilhelm, Christian mission, China, sinology, Germany.

Richard Wilhelm is a well known sinologue and translator who was the first to publish translations of Chinese classics—mainly Confucian and Daoist—into German. In this respect he can be compared to James Legge, the first Protestant missionary who rendered the Confucian "Four Books" (*Si shu*) into English. Legge's translations and interest in the Chinese canon were primarily motivated by the aim to be a more successful missionary. His translations were accompanied by his own commentaries and essays filled with criticism of Confucianism. Richard Wilhelm was a Protestant missionary, too, and at first sight he would seem to share common ground with Legge. Yet Wilhelm's background as a missionary is not as clearly displayed in his translations and commentaries as Legge's. In his writings, Wilhelm appears to be steeped in contradictions and metamorphosis. In his China studies, Wilhelm was extraordinarily productive. In addition to his well known translations he also published countless articles on different subjects regarding

China. Most of them display his view on China and Confucianism which is notably positive in all respects. The criticism in Wilhelm's writings applies mostly to Western European society, its moral principles and political strategies, and his colleagues in the mission. While Legge was primarily a missionary and judged Confucianism from a conservative Christian perspective, Wilhelm, on the contrary, became a Confucian at the end of his life, criticizing the common China perception of European Christians.

Richard Wilhelm was born in 1873 in Stuttgart, Germany. His family background influenced his decision to become a missionary, since the career of a theologian promised a chance for a prosperous life.¹ Wilhelm studied theology in Tübingen and moved to Bad Boll, South Germany. He worked there under the supervision of Pastor Christoph Blumhardt (1842-1919), who became his mentor and later his father-in-law. Wilhelm's relationship with Blumhardt is of particular importance because it had an enormous influence on Wilhelm's later missionary work in China.²

In 1898 Wilhelm found an announcement in a newspaper by the Allgemeiner evangelisch-protestantischer Missionsverein (AEPM)³ seeking a missionary and pastor in the new German dependency in Jiaozhou, China. Wilhelm saw it as an opportunity and he was highly enthusiastic about becoming a missionary in China. Also, Blumhardt, who was directly associated with this mission society, strongly encouraged him to apply for this position. As a representative of the AEPM, Wilhelm arrived in Qingdao, Shandong Province, in 1899. The AEPM appeared as an alternative to other piously working associations in China.⁴ According to the statutes of the mission, the AEPM was "based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ" and it aimed "to spread the Christian religion and civilization among the non-Christian peoples thereby taking into account there already existent elements of truth."⁵ Health care and children's education were the strengths of the AEPM's missionary activities. After his arrival in China, Wilhelm enthusiastically devoted himself to these missionary duties. Several schools and a hospital were established.⁶ An important declared aim of the AEPM was the emphasis on cultural exchange activities. Wilhelm's interest in China's literary culture was endorsed by his predecessor and one of the founders of the AEPM, Ernst Faber (1839-1899). Shortly after Wilhelm arrived in Qingdao, he started to learn Chinese and began studying Chinese classics. He devoted himself to the literary work that was one of the focuses of the AEPM, which supported him financially.

In 1902 he published his first translation of the "Three Character Classic"⁷ in a German magazine issued in Shanghai. In 1903, several editions of Wilhelm's translations from the classical Chinese were published, and his first version of *Lunyu* or the *Analects of Confucius* appeared in 1904. In the same year the proposal to translate the most important Chinese classics into German arose with the intent to publish these translations in Germany. The idea was integrated into a project that aimed at German-Chinese cultural representation and promotion. Comparable translations already existed in France and in England. From 1904 to 1914, Wilhelm was also active as a journalist. He published numerous articles in German magazines on different subjects regarding China. Meanwhile, Eugen Diederichs, whose publishing house in Jena counted as the most popular in Germany the time,

published the first translation of the *Analects of Confucius*⁸ in his series “Religiöse Stimmen der Völker” (“Religious Voices of the Nations”) in 1910. This book soon won great popularity in Germany, and Diederichs decided to bring out more of Wilhelm’s translations. For this endeavour he established a new series “Die Religion und Philosophie Chinas” (China’s Religion and Philosophy). There were three new translations published before World War I – *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Liezi* – then a revised and enlarged version of *Analects*, and Chinese folk tales. A translation of Mengzi was also published in the middle of the war in 1916.⁹

Taking into account Wilhelm’s agile preoccupation with Chinese classics and their translation, he obviously could not dedicate himself to the missionary work within the framework determined by the mission. Consequently, the mission officials showed discontent. In 1910, on an official visit, the AEPM inspector was not impressed with how things were going in Qingdao. The trust between Wilhelm and the administration of the mission was decreasing. He was admonished to devote himself more to pastoral care and the “actual religious work.”¹⁰ In order to meet the formal requirements of the mission, Wilhelm started to work on some projects to meet the demands of the mission. There is no clarity on whether Wilhelm was really interested in following the directions of his mission colleagues, or if he put in an effort just to keep the funding of the mission unreduced. In 1912, Christian religion was brought into the curriculum of his boy’s school for the first time as a school subject, but until then Wilhelm had focused on teaching Confucian thought, considering the teaching of traditional Chinese culture to be the headstone of further education of Chinese students. In his letters to his colleague, Rudolf Otto, he enthusiastically described his students’ interest in the Bible class, and he was especially delighted about his magazine, “Friend,” where he published his answers to the religious questions raised by his students. In his letters Wilhelm mentions an intention to write a book of Bible stories for his students.¹¹ He did not realize this plan, presumably because of the beginning of the war.

As a missionary, Wilhelm was committed to his mentor, Christoph Blumhardt, and Blumhardt tried to keep an eye on Wilhelm’s missionary activities in Qingdao.

Meanwhile Blumhardt had expressed avowal to socialism and joined the Socialist Democratic Party. Consequently, he was asked by the Royal Consistory to renounce the rank and title of pastor of the church of Württemberg. Nevertheless, he still wielded a prevailing influence in the AEPM. Blumhardt’s criticism of the official church as an institution that considered its priority power and influence affected Wilhelm’s activities. In a letter to Wilhelm, Blumhardt says, “Don’t baptize any Chinese. God baptizes his people with Spirit and fire. He who follows the will of God is God’s child, it doesn’t matter whether he descended from Confucius or from the fathers of the church.”¹²

Wilhelm keeps following Blumhardt’s guidelines and advice. In his book, “The Soul of China,” looking back on the time he spent in China, Wilhelm writes, “It seemed to me to be more proper to focus on simple life based on Christian principles while working at school and hospital, to live together with people and to come closer to them, while leaving them to the Spirit, whatever it would frame out of them. A church in a civilized nation can be constituted only by the nation itself, it can’t exist under the guidance of foreigners – often socially low educated

or without tactfulness – without itself being doomed to inferiority. Thus I haven't baptized anyone in China and maybe this is the reason why I have come even closer to the character of Chinese people."¹³ Wilhelm calls it his "new method" to proselytise. From the very beginning he does not foresee any benefits of baptizing. He believes that "not a doctrine makes the men great, but the man makes the doctrine capacious."¹⁴

The different methods of Christian missions in China all shared one common ground – the conviction that Christian beliefs are superior to the local religious tradition. Shortly after Wilhelm delved into studies of Chinese culture and religion, especially Confucianism, his views as a missionary displayed a disagreement with this convention. Wilhelm went even further, trying to merge the Gospel with Confucian thought.¹⁵

In "The Soul of China," he reports an experience that opened the way to the hearts of the Chinese people for him, namely "meeting each other on equal terms, without any selfish calculations, without wanting money or exploitation, or even worse – a will to convert them or to let them join any foreign institution in order to attain the eternal beatitude."¹⁶ The abandonment of baptizing and Blumhardt's request not to eschew parish foundations were forwarded by Wilhelm to the Board of the mission and approved in 1904.

Christoph Blumhardt sums up the position of the mission in a letter to Wilhelm in 1907; in contrast to other missions, where the church uses its outer dogmatic forms such as baptizing, service, and the sacrament as a backup, "*We, instead*", he says, "*in our work in China have nothing alike: we just have the Gospel, which lies in our hearts, and which eludes the controversies of the church, by abandoning those forms which were developed by Christianity during the centuries; we face the people not with the idea: you should belong to our church! But with our hearts will, to feel it, that you are having a Father in heaven as well, who will lead you to the truth of the eternal life in his gnosis and in the gnosis of Jesus Christ. With this gospel you are alone in China...*"¹⁷

The more Wilhelm devoted himself to sinological studies, the more he felt alienated from his missionary practice.

In 1920, Wilhelm, as a member of the AEPM, returned to Germany without regular employment. In the following year, sent by the mission, he presented lectures in across Germany. However, Wilhelm had a new project in mind – the founding of an Oriental institute in Beijing to promote the projects of cultural exchange. He used the lecture tours to promote his new project. At the same time his translations brought him popularity in Germany. He was welcomed as guest by various cultural and educational institutes and private individuals.

Nevertheless, Wilhelm did not feel at home in Germany and he hoped to be able to return to China. He wanted to realize his project of the institute. In 1922, he had a chance to return to China, this time as an academic advisor for the German embassy in Beijing. The new institute had a very good start with numerous lectures, but because of an economic crisis, a staff reduction at the German embassy was necessary and Wilhelm had to leave. After another project failed, Wilhelm started to consider returning to Germany. Although most of his friends advised against it, Wilhelm's intention was to become a professor of sinology. After bridging

numerous difficulties, Wilhelm succeeded in becoming an honorary professor at the University of Frankfurt. In 1924 he returned to Germany. In 1925, Wilhelm founded the China-Institute in Frankfurt. However, an academic career in Germany turned out to be very difficult. Wilhelm was not content with the honorary professorship, since it meant he would depend on private funding. Only an ordinary professorship created acceptance within the academic community. Wilhelm's background as a theologian and a missionary was an obstacle to his academic career as a sinologist. His colleagues criticized him for his lack of objectivity and idealization of China, and the lack of philological studies regarding his translations. Wilhelm's work with his Chinese colleagues was not accepted by most German sinologists. It was considered to be responsible for his emotionally determined approach to China.¹⁸ Within the academic community, Wilhelm's affection for Confucianism appeared suspicious. The sinologist Alfred Forke criticized Wilhelm, saying that his long sojourn in China had cost him the ability of critical judgment, and Wilhelm had become almost Chinese – he as a Confucian scholar would look up to Confucius as Christians to Christ.¹⁹ Also Wilhelm deplored German imperialistic politics in Qingdao, and was accused of having lost his German identity and loyalty. Another objection was Wilhelm's association with the School of Wisdom founded by Hermann Graf Keyserling²⁰, who had no authority within the academic circles and was considered to be a "philosopher dilettante." Wilhelm disregarded this criticism and was aware of his immense popularity with the public. Like few others, Wilhelm could reach very wide audiences due to his relatively simple diction and terminology that was understandable for everybody in the West.

His idealized image of China is revealed when Wilhelm, as he does so often in his writings, juxtaposes the East and the West. In the 1921 essay, "The Light from the East," he concludes: "*always when the active European spirit arrived at a militant culmination and a turnover started, there came a spiritual direction from the East which was calming, internalizing and thereby enriching...It seems, today we are in front of a similar moment, since after the World War the materialistic, expansive European Spirit, in spite of the continuance of militant unloading, faces a crucial change of direction. And this time it is the Far East that starts to send us its complimentary and fertilized flows.*"²¹ At the same time, in spite of his willingness to absorb Eastern influences, Wilhelm noted that there was still a very large gap between both cultures that might be impossible to bridge.

What then should be taken from China? What is to be absorbed from the East, according to Wilhelm? In the article above he comments on the crises of European society and explains his standpoint where East and West are exposed as antipoles. According to his observations, "*European spiritual life is designated by the drive towards the outside. Thus it is mainly concerned with the world of objects. The aim is to carry out reconfigurations, control. The objects are controlled by violence after the known causal rules, which are the basis of this mechanism.*"²² Furthermore, Wilhelm condemns imperialism as the origin for World War I. In contrast to this negative Western image, Wilhelm juxtaposes the spirit of the East. "*It is,*" Wilhelm explains, "*directed towards the inside and therefore more intensive than expansive. The most important concern for it is the human being.*"²³ Comparing the East and the West he figuratively compares two outlooks, the European outlook that is focused on

the atoms as the smallest entities regulated by mechanical causality, and the Eastern outlook that is focused on the cells harmonized by the universal rules of organic coherence. In Europe, Wilhelm believes, the personality is seen individualistic apart from its environment,²⁴ whereas in the East the basis of education is the focus on the personality within the society, like one of the cells as a constituent in a human body, building one entity.²⁴ In the “The Soul of China,” Wilhelm continues to mark the extremes. Wilhelm describes Western society as materialistic, rationalistic, technocratic, and spiritually hollow because of its industrial advancement. Here he depicts an idealistic image of China: *“It doesn’t matter how often China was turned into chaos and revolution, always there were people who restored peace applying the eternal rules of harmony. Often China has been compared with a firm dice. It might tumble down, but no matter on which side it falls, it always takes a position of a stable balance...The Chinese culture shows an idea, that is mainly focused on harmony, reasonably organized in cosmos and society. This is the reason why the life even of a very humble person is happy and satisfying.”*²⁵

For Wilhelm, Western civilisation embodied power above nature. He condemned technical progress and individualism as a power of the new spirit that destroyed ancient cultures wherever European civilization spread forth.²⁶ He talks of a crisis of Western culture that could be solved by Eastern tradition, especially Confucianism. His decisive interpretation of Confucianism was influenced by the Chinese orthodox Confucian circles he had been surrounded by since the beginning of his stay in Qingdao.²⁷

The history of 20th century China brings evidence of a crucial counter-current movement among China’s young intellectuals, bringing forth a discussion about the burdens of tradition and the role it played in the backwardness of the Chinese state in the early 20th century. Wilhelm advocated the reclaim of Confucian tradition and did not engage himself in a discussion on the issue of the anti-traditionalism movement in China.

By the time of his return to Germany, Wilhelm saw himself predominantly as a sinologue, an expert in China studies. The book, “The Soul of China,” published in 1926, marked a break from the AEPM, since it revealed Wilhelm’s different view of the aims and practice of the mission in China and contained an unacceptable criticism of mission officials. He was asked to give up his AEPM honour membership voluntarily.²⁸ Officially he was on leave until 1929 and thereafter was no longer associated with the AEPM.

Wilhelm’s return to Germany marked a fateful turn in his life. He appeared to be a stranger in his native country. His decision to return to Germany was not welcomed by everyone. In a letter to Wilhelm, Hermann Graf Keyserling asked Wilhelm not to leave China because, on the one hand, he thought it would be difficult for Wilhelm to make his living in Germany because of the financial and political situation and, on the other hand, because he thought China might be a more fertile soil for his activities.²⁹ C.G. Jung, whom he came to know in Keyserling’s School of Wisdom, in his memories about Wilhelm remembers: *“Wilhelm, when I met him, seemed completely Chinese, in outward manner as much as in his way of writing and speaking. The Oriental point of view and ancient Chinese culture had penetrated him through and through.”*³⁰ Jung had his own theory on Wilhelm’s

adaptation to Western society. Although invisible for others, Jung supposed serious difficulties for Wilhelm in the process of what he called the “re-assimilation to the West.”: *“I saw it as a re-assimilation to the West, and felt that as a result of it Wilhelm must come into conflict with himself. Since it was, so I thought, a passive assimilation, that is to say, a succumbing to the influence of the environment, there was the danger of a relatively unconscious conflict, a clash between his Western and Eastern soul. If, as I assumed, the Christian attitude had originally given way to the influence of China, the reverse might well be taking place now: the European element might be gaining the upper hand over the Orient once again. If such a process takes place without a strong, conscious attempt to come to terms with it, the unconscious conflict can seriously affect the physical state of health.”*³¹

After only four years in Europe Wilhelm suffered a relapse of the amoebic dysentery that first affected him in early 1910. Incurable during Wilhelm’s lifetime, it led to his premature death in 1930. The clash of both sides – the East and the West – was evident for Jung, who assumed that the conflict was the cause of Wilhelm’s illness and death. Nevertheless, Wilhelm’s works do not suggest a conflict in his perception of the East and the West. Instead, he attempted to depict the different world views and search for common values and the complementary qualities in both traditions. The time Wilhelm returned to Germany was marked by a cultural crisis after World War I. The China construct, as offered by Wilhelm, correlated with the search for a new sense, a new philosophy of life. Wilhelm’s writings in the 1920s suggest a synthesis of Chinese and Western thinking as a solution for European society. He was comfortable in his role as a mediator between the cultures and argued for a re-evaluation of China after the colonial period cast a cloud over the perception of this region. Wilhelm’s attempt to rehabilitate China and his emotional commitment to the land where he had lived for a long time prepared the ground for his idealization of Chinese society.

Today Richard Wilhelm is better known as a sinologue and a translator. After Wilhelm discovered his passion for China’s culture and philosophy, especially Confucianism, his understanding of proselytization did not correspond to the concept of the traditional missionary practice or with the alternative guidelines of the AEPM. He failed to remain a Christian missionary in China and instead became a missionary, an advocate for Chinese culture in the West.

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- ³ General Evangelical Protestant Mission
- ⁴ AEPM, known today as German East Asia Mission, was founded in 1884 in Weimar and has been active in China since 1885.

- ⁵ Zehnter Jahresbericht des Allgemein evangelisch-protestantischen Missionsvereins über das Jahr 1893/94.
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Kopsavilkums

Rihards Vilhelms (1873–1930) bija protestantu misionārs un sinologs, tomēr mūsdienās viņš vairāk ir pazīstams kā Ķīnas klasisko darbu tulkotājs. 1899. gadā Vilhelms iestājās vācu misionāru biedrībā "Allgemeiner evangelisch-protestantischer Missionsverein" un piekrita doties uz Ķīnu, kur vācu kolonijā "Cjindao" viņš pildīja misionāra pienākumus divdesmit gadu garumā. Jau savas kalpošanas sākumā Vilhelms ievēroja protestantu misionāru augstprātīgo attieksmi pret vietējām tradīcijām un Ķīnas kultūru kopumā. Nevēloties to pieņemt, viņš meklēja savu ceļu, kā uzrunāt kolonizētā reģiona iedzīvotājus, un sāka nodoties padziļinātām klasiskās ķīniešu valodas, ķīniešu filozofijas un reliģijas studijām.

1924. gadā Vilhelms atgriezās Vācijā un kļuva par sinoloģijas profesoru Frankfurtes Universitātē. Savā grāmatā "Ķīnas dvēsele" (Die Seele Chinas) Vilhelms runā par Rietumu un Austrumu kultūru mijiedarbības problēmām un asi kritizē protestantu misiju darbību kolonizētajos Ķīnas reģionos. Viņš iestājās pret vietējo kultūru noniecināšanu un Rietumu tradīciju uzspiešanu ķīniešiem, un tas strauji pasliktināja Vilhelma attiecības ar vācu reliģiskajām institūcijām. Būdams misionārs, arī Universitātes akadēmiskajā vidē Vilhelms sastapās ar pretestību un neuzticību. Ar saviem tulkojumiem, rakstiem un pedagoģisko darbu viņš Rietumu sabiedrībā veicināja dziļāku Austrumu kultūras izpratni. Šajā rakstā tiek pētīts misionāra Vilhelma dzīves posms, kurā viņš, kļūstot par konfūcieti sinologu, realizē savu misionāra aicinājumu kā Austrumu un Rietumu kultūru starpnieks.

Atslēgvārdi: *Rihards Vilhelms, kristīgi misionārā darbība, evaņģēliski protestantiskā misija, Ķīna, sinoloģija, Vācija.*

Religion and Science in Russia: Religious Studies

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The scientific researches of religion in Russia as well as in Europe begin in the 19th century when for the new and special sphere of scientific interest, the common European terms “the History of Religion” and “the Science of Religion” were used. The Russian term “religiovedenie” (German “Religionswissenschaft”) for the first time was used in 1908 (Leo Tolstoy) and 1932 (in the preface to the book edited by A.T. Luckachevski). The authors of the edition in 1932 had already opposed their “harmonious successive dialectic materialism theory of religion by Marx-Engels-Lenin” to alienate “bourgeois religious studies”. Then the given term was practically forgotten till 1960. Dmitry Ugrinovich, the author of the first monograph in Russian, includes the term “religiovedenie” (1973), to oppose the “Bourgeois Religious Studies” and “Marxist religiovedenie”. In the “post-communist” Russia there appeared and spread a great number of new approaches in Religious Studies: “Comparative Studies”, “Exclusive-Holistic” (‘Orthodoxy Religious Studies’, ‘Esoteric Religious Studies’, etc.) and “Dialogue” (‘Meta-Theology’, ‘General Theory of Religion’, etc.).

Keywords: Russia, religious studies, meta-theology, atheism, *religiovedenie*.

The relationships between science and religion have many aspects, and in this paper we will focus on the research of religion, which in Russia was given the name of “religiovedenie”, or in English “religious studies”. Today in Russia the word “religiovedenie” appears as a term that has become one of the most popular on the Internet; for example, in the Google search engine in the Russian language it was possible to find: on September 1, 2010 – 231 000 000 documents on the topic of “religiovedenie”, on September 1, 2011 – about 445 000 000 documents, and on January 1, 2012 – 527 000 000 documents. In the Russian language there is also another name: “religievedenie – religious studies” (it differs in the spelling of one letter in the Russian term, comparing with “religiovedenie”)¹, but it is less common, and the term “religiovedenie” started to label everything that is connected with the study of religion and the teaching of knowledge about it.

The popularity of the term over the last twenty years reflects the rapid spread of the public interest in Orthodoxy, religion and the “all things mysterious”, the formation of “pro-Orthodoxy consensus” when people began to consider the Orthodoxy, particularly the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), the only “regulatory” spiritual community,² and the mass interest in non-denominational “esotericism”, which in the church community received the name of “occult revival”³.

The founder of interpretive anthropology Clifford Geertz believes that science in general should not be understood as a “final diagnosis” as defined by one or another “essence of religion”, but as a much less pretentious “hermeneutic step, as an attempt to shed light and to give a definition, and not to bring under column and decode.”⁴

We can distinguish, with an inevitable degree of conditionality, the seven periods (and forms) in the development of common types of “religious studies” in Russia:

1. traditional pre-church (mythology, folklore),
2. church (theological-universal, and apologetic-conservative),
3. philosophical and axiological (“philosophy of religion,” “religiovedenie” by Leo Tolstoy),
4. positive-scientific (“history of religion,” “the science of religion”),
5. “militant infidelity” (“militant atheism”, “Marxist religiovedenie”),
6. “scientific atheism”,
7. “neutral religious studies” and contemporary “postmodern project”.

Historically, the first form of knowledge about religion “may be considered pre-Christian oral stories about the “ancestral traditions” preserved as “folklore” until the present day in some villages of the Russian North. The second stage begins with the period of Christianization of Rus’ (Russia), acquaintance with the richness of knowledge of European theology of the East.

Such monuments of Old Russian literature as the “Sermon on Law and Grace” by Metropolitan Hilarion (1047–1050) or “The Tale of Bygone Years” (1113) describe the Russians as a “Christian nation” as opposed to “paganism,” “Judaism,” “Islam”, “Latins,” and who believed correctly – “true belief”, while our familiar term “orthodoxy” started to spread only at the end of 14th century.⁵ The study of other religions was not recommended, but intended to show their danger (“heretics” and “fatality”), justifying the need for state enforcement of “involvement in religion,” more precisely, “state religion or confession”. The main problem of this period (and the approach itself) has been and remains to this day the problem of the boundaries of the church, that is, contradiction between the theological-universal and the apologetic-conservative tendencies in Christianity as a particular jurisdiction, and as an exclusive-universal worldview, manifested, for example, in the concept of “Christians before Christ” (“... apologists derive that ... Socrates and Heraclitus were Christians before Christ”).⁶ It starts with the criticism of the “external” self-identification through a confession: “We know that there may be people, not knowing Christ, but his servants and they who do His will, and vice versa, who call themselves Christians, but in fact alien to Him ...”.⁷

Philosophical-evaluative stage of understanding of knowledge about religion in Russia (the “philosophy of religion,” “Religiovedenie” by Leo Tolstoy) begins in the 19th century, herewith “the object is not conceived almost as something separate from theological apologetics.”⁸ Especially after the decree about Toleration in 1905, there was a much wider understanding of such an approach by Leo Tolstoy, for which the theological apologetics should be contrasted with “religious teaching, common to all people, and doctrine of morality which follows from it, is also the same for all peoples” which must “be the main subject of all education and

training ...".⁹ As suggested by A.P. Kostylev, Leo Tolstoy was the first who used the term "religiovedenie" in 1908, when he said that "religiovedenie is a whole science, for which there is no name", but it is necessary because "core truths in all religions are the same."¹⁰ A somewhat different look at the problem was offered by S.N. Bulgakov, who in 1906 pointed out that in the militant Marxist atheist the passionate theist can be seen, and by "religion" he understood "... those highest and last values, which are recognized by man over and above him, and the practical attitude which man adopts to these values.... In this sense we can talk about religion of every man, either religious or one who consciously rejects any particular form of religion."¹¹

The beginning of positively-scientific ("History of religion," "The science about religion") stage in Europe is dated with the lectures on "Introduction to the science about religion" by Frederick Max Muller in London in 1870, although particular scientific researches of religion in Russia, like in Europe, started earlier in the 18th–19th centuries, as part of history, ethnology, philology, and so on.¹² In the 18th–19th centuries, actually "Oriental" studies of Buddhism, Shintoism, "medievalistic" works were published, researches on the history of the Church (by V.V. Bolotov, N.N. Glubokovsky, E.E. Golubinsky and others), by N.F. Kapterev about Old Believers, excellent articles in the Encyclopedia of F.A. Brockhaus and I.A. Efron (1890-1907), etc.¹³

It is important to note that at that time cooperation between Russian and European scientists was considered normal, which allowed to describe and summarize the materials using the same terminology, to obtain similar and mutually interesting results, also translations of studies by leading European scholars were published, Orthodox priests were actively involved in those researches.¹⁴ In the publications of this kind, with the purpose to name this new and particular area of scientific interest, general European terms were initially used, such as "the history of religion" and "the science of religion". S.N. Bulgakov believed that scientific research, separated from apologetic theology, "unquestionably extends the knowledge about religion and ... impacts on religious identity," and "... the fact of development of the science about religion" was understood by him as "a specific manifestation of religious life".¹⁵

The totally new stage of development begins in the early twentieth century, with the spread of Soviet ideology "of militant infidelity." During this period, in scientific publications the term "religiovedenie", as suggested by E.V. Menshikova, was first used in 1932 in the preface to the book, edited by A.T. Lukachevsky "Proishozhdenie religii v ponimanii burzuasnih uchonih" ("The origin of religion in the understanding by bourgeois scientists") and has been translated as the term common before "science of religion" from the German "Religionswissenschaft" (this German term referred to the emergence in the 19th century Europe of empirical and positive areas of the "The Science of Religion", "Religious Studies", "Comparative Religion", etc.), and the authors contrasted their "theory of religion of Marx-Engels-Lenin" the "bourgeois religious studies" being alien to them.¹⁶ Later, in 1937, the term "religiovedenie" with the same confrontational value was used by V.K. Nikolsky.¹⁷ From his student years N.M. Nikolsky was a sincere supporter of Marxism, and in 1922 considered it as the most fruitful method for the application

to “the religious phenomena”. He believed that “only here the materialist historians could stand on their own feet and not seek a foundation for their works in the writings of linguists and anthropologists”, because only in this context it could be understood that “religion in general is a social phenomenon, which some groups people associated with the set of economic, social and political relations in this society and in this era”.¹⁸

“The Marxist religiovedenie” has been inextricably linked with the well-known concept of the “withering away of religion”, which was justified by the fact that religion by its very nature is a “perverted, fantastic reflection in men’s minds of the natural and social forces prevailing over them of”, which “played an active role in strengthening... the system based on the enslavement and exploitation of man by man, ... it is an instrument of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the struggle against the camp of democracy and socialism, ... it appears as an implacable enemy of progress and science.”¹⁹ In this social context, the term “religiovedenie” proved to be almost forgotten until the 60s of the twentieth century. We can assume that the reason for this, apparently, was that in the 1940s and 1950s Stalin, in the context of the events of World War II, dramatically changed the overall policy in respect to religion, trying to make it an instrument, to practically “manage and own” (he organized the election of a new Patriarch in 1943, seeking by this to create an “Orthodox Vatican” in Moscow, etc.).²⁰ However, it is important to note that in these years a literary genre of mystical fiction appeared, and the famous novel by Mikhail Bulgakov “Master and Margarita” was written, which presents a completely different attitude to religion. Semiotics appeared – the only humanitarian research area in the former Soviet Union which obtained worldwide recognition and allowed to describe religion in terms of symbolic systems.²¹

After Stalin’s death in 1954, the CPSU Central Committee issued a decree “On the errors in the conduct of scientific-atheistic propaganda among the population”, which criticized the “insulting remarks against the clergy and the believers”, intervention of authorities in the activities of religious associations contrary to the Constitution of the USSR, and hereafter it was recommended to continue “deep, patient, skilfully promoted scientific-atheistic propaganda” on the basis of scientific and materialistic knowledge.²² This meant a change in religious policy – from aggressive anti-religious activities of the 1920–1930s to the comparative academically balanced “scientific atheism”, although N.S. Khrushchev, who had promised to build communism by 1980 and “to show the last orthodox priest on television”, began a new wave of repressions against believers.

During these years, in the journal “Problems of Philosophy” in a series of articles “Marxist atheism” continued to be opposed to the “vicious bourgeois religious studies methodology.”²³ Y.V. Kryanev thought it necessary to clarify that the “accusation of borrowing the term “religiovedenie” from the lexicon of bourgeois science is untenable: there is also the term “philosophy”, which exists since the slave-owning society. Bourgeois religious studies explore religion from objective or apologetic positions. In contrast, Marxist scientific religiovedenie, explore religion in order to overcome it, and this kind of religious studies promotes the consistent militant atheism.”²⁴ D.M. Ugrinovich, author of the first monograph in Russian that includes the term “religiovedenie” (“Vvedenie v teoreticheskoe

religiovedenie”, “Introduction to the Theoretical Religious Studies” 1973), also contradicted the bourgeois and the Marxist religiovedenie by stating, in response to the observation noted above by Y.V. Kryanev, that the latter does not oppose, but rather is “an important and integral section of scientific atheism”.²⁵ In this study, a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the achievements of the “bourgeois religious studies” was given. The term “religiovedenie”, however, was not included in the popular “Pocket Dictionary of Atheist” (1973) and the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (1975, Vol. 21); it appeared only in the “Atheist Dictionary” (1983).²⁶ The attitude towards religion changed among the intelligentsia of the 1960s: the publications of “village prose writers” came out, travel routes not only to “places of revolutionary and military glory,” but to the ancient cities (“Golden Ring”, etc.) were opened, the film by A. Tarkovsky “Andrei Rublev”, came out, studies of M.M. Bakhtin, S.A. Tokarev, S.S. Averintsev, D.S. Likhachev were published.²⁷

“Perestroika” in the late 1980s–early 1990s led to an entirely new situation, when courses in religious studies emerged in universities; besides, departments of the faculties and academic specialities related to this areas of studies were opened, also new thesis research councils were established (09.00.13 “Religious studies, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of culture”, at present 09.00.14 “The Philosophy of religion, religious studies”); the journal “Religiovedenie” started coming out, and a new research paradigm, according to A.N. Krasnikov, became a way of “permanent disengagement from theology and atheism,” desiring to become a truly neutral “impartial and objective study of the world religions.”²⁸ At the same time information about Orthodoxy and about the “mysterious” flooded from the pages of the media. TV sessions of “healers” like A. Kashpirovsky and A. Chumak started, the return of religion in the public space occurred in the spirit of the concept of P. Berger and T. Luckmann, according to who the religion can connect the “social constructions” with the highest order “of the sacred being.”²⁹ Indeed, Orthodoxy and the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), represents today for many Russian citizens (75% in 2010³⁰ and 82% in 2011³¹) not just abstract and discrete “religion as it is,” but what in the European culture since Plato symbolized the involvement of individuals and communities in a higher order of being. In those years “orthodox religious studies” appeared, as well as the new ideological projects of “Holy Russia”, “Russian World”, “Orthodox civilization” etc. emerged³² Attempts were made to create a kind of “security religiovedenie” (“court religiovedenie”); an answer to that was “religiovedenie of human rights”.³³

The methodological problematic nature of “scientific religious studies” was noted by S.S. Averintsev, who believed that only the sorting of specific “flesh of faith, as it is,” can make the research phenomenon closed to us if “we do not have sufficient understanding of their faith inspiring them”.³⁴ He believes that the works of Alexander Myen are an example of “intellectual position” that can overcome the irreciprocity of “school-theology”, “religious studies” and “historical-cultural” approaches, excluding as “persuasion-recruitment to the proselytes” as “gross exposure”, which is making “the main point” pointless, which in fact needs understanding, since “people not stupid like we are, have spent their lives” for the sake of it.³⁵ The situation could be changed by the phenomenological field, but it, with the exception of several works by M. Eliade, it remains obscure.³⁶

The recent years of post-Soviet development have shown the importance of the idea of differentiation and specialization of subsystems of modern society – politics, art, science and religion (theology) as “autopoietical” (N. Luhmann), when “in the middle of 16th century, science ... distanced from religion,” therefore the “law to be actively engaged ... is to go to religious tolerance”.³⁷ As a standard B. Malinowski took the internal differentiation of world orientation (magic-religion-science) of each person.³⁸ P. Berger pointed out that he “was a believer, even when he became a sociologist”, which means the same person has “religiousness” as well as “scientism” and perhaps “poetry” (magical).³⁹ R. Bellah noted that representatives of the “educated and well-minded segment of the population,” are no longer able to “take the traditional commitments on faith”, and “everything that is inherited from the past becomes the subject of careful study and examination”.⁴⁰ Election of the supreme power in Russia in December 2011–March 2012 showed the growing influence of the “middle class”, i.e. “educated and well-minded segment of the population”, the religiousness of which is compatible with “science” and “poetics.” In recent years, criticism of religion has emerged, especially of the Russian Orthodox Church, by the representatives of mass media in terms of extreme laicism (anti-confessionalism).⁴¹

Today religious studies on the Internet and mass consciousness act as a “post-modern project” where logically inconsistent forms are mixed, being understood in the academic environment as a science that studies the “laws of the origin, development and operation of the religion, its structure and various components of its diverse phenomena as they appeared in the history of society, the relationship and interaction between religion and other areas of culture”.⁴² The forbidden “bourgeois religion” studies are first published; a critical rethinking of Soviet religious studies begins.⁴³ There is a “dialogue on religious studies”, focusing on the existence of religious meanings in the culture.⁴⁴ An important publication summarizing the development of recent years has become the “Information guide to religiovedenie” containing a description (self-description) of centres and departments for religious studies of the country.⁴⁵

Thus, in modern Russia there are all the “historical types of religious studies” which can be generalized in the form of three basic models:

- “Comparative” and traditional, from the 19th century, critical-philosophical, scientific-critical and self-critical “maintenance of religion and religions” (academic, non-apologetical, neutral, analytical, fair, etc.⁴⁶); “centrifugal” scientific-philosophical description and generalization of empirical aspects of religion as a personal and social phenomenon, suggesting the development of appropriate regulatory languages, terminology, understandable to colleagues from any country and any university;
- An exclusive-holistic field, tending to the regulatory “the only true religious studies”, is inextricably linked with the conflict of interpretation in the modern world, including Russia; it can be classified as religion, differentiated today by “true theology” (“confessional religious studies”, “sect science” by A.L. Dvorkin, etc.), “esoteric religious studies”,⁴⁷ security “religious studies of law enforcement agencies,” human rights “legal religious studies” or “anti-confessional” (“neo-atheistic”) fields;

- Academic “dialog” or “centripetal” field, developing projects of “the fundamental theory of religion”, “meta-theology”, “theoretical synthesis”, which is sometimes referred to as “understanding”, clearing up the personal and social aspects of faith as moments of the mystery of being an individual in a world where “categorizations” into faithful and unfaithful, clerics and scholars, philosophers and anthropologists are relative, but openness to dialogue and professionalism is significant, treating mutual dependence of “meta-theology” and “meta-philosophy” as a special level of dialogue of theology, philosophy and empirical religious studies.⁴⁸

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Kopsavilkums

Reliģijas pētniecība Krievijā un Eiropā aizsākās 19. gs., kad Rietumeiropas zinātniskajā valodā tika ieviesti termini “reliģijas vēsture” un “reliģijas zinātne” (vāc. Religionswissenschaft). Krievu valodā termins “religiovedenie” pirmo reizi tika izmantots 1908. (Ļevs Tolstojs) un 1932. gadā (redaktora A. T. Lukačevska rakstītajā priekšvārdā). 1932. gada izdevuma autori pretnostatīja savu “Marksa–Engelsa–Ļeņina harmonisko un secīgo dialektiskā materiālisma reliģijas teoriju” tolaik padomju ideoloģijai svešajai “buržuāziskajai reliģiju pētniecībai”. Termins “religiovedenie” tika aizmirsts līdz 1960. gadam, kad reliģiju pētniecībai veltītās pirmās krievu monogrāfijas autors Dmitrijs Ugrinovičs “buržuāziskajai reliģiju pētniecībai” pretnostatīja “marksistisko”, tieši šo pēdējo nosaucot par religiovedenie (1973). Postpadomju Krievijā ir sastopamas visdažādākās reliģijas pētniecības metodes: gan salīdzinošā reliģiju pētniecība, gan izslēdzoši holistiskā reliģiju pētniecība (piem., pareizticīgā reliģiju pētniecība un ezoteriskā reliģiju pētniecība), gan dialogiskā reliģiju pētniecība (piem., metateoloģija, vispārējā reliģiju teorija).

Atslēgvārdi: Krievija, reliģiju pētniecība, metateoloģija, ateisms, religiovedenie.

Interpreting Religion: the Notion of the *Sacred* in Contemporary Religious Science in Russia

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Despite the fact that today's authorities in the field of Religious Science in Western Europe ignore the notion of the *Sacred* and define religion as being completely constructed by the context, Russians are still devoted to the classic Eliade's definition of religion. The purpose of this modest research is to analyze the position of a few prominent Russian authorities in the field of Religious Science in order to demonstrate that Russian mentality deliberately, or not, accepts the irrational, that is, the semi-academic model of religion. In the second part of the survey the attitude of Russian scholars in the field of Phenomenology of Religion to the notion of the *Sacred* is discussed. Although they are aware of the contextual approach to religion in Western Europe they still try to take the middle path between the position of the classic Phenomenology of Religion (represented by R. Otto and M. Eliade) and that of constructivism, making use of ideas proposed by W. Gantke and P. Ricoeur. Although such an authority in the field of Comparative Religion as René Guénon interprets the conservative character of Russian scholarly thinking as a derivative of stagnation in Religious Science taking place during the Soviet period, we nevertheless contend the source of the conservatism is much deeper being rooted in the Eastern, or irrational feature of Russian mentality.

Keywords: phenomenology of religion, comparative religion in Russia, the Sacred, essentialism, constructivism.

It is common knowledge that according to the proponents of the classic Phenomenology of Religion, such as Rudolf Otto or Mircea Eliade, religion is endowed with some sort of unchanging essence called the *Sacred*. R. Otto contended that it is the experience of the *Sacred* by man that is the source of religion. M. Eliade in turn underscored that the *Sacred* reveals itself to us through the so called *archetypes* becoming tangible in religious *symbols*. For Otto, Eliade and other adherents of the classical Phenomenology of Religion the *Sacred* although not verifiable is an axiomatic point of departure for any religious idea and cult as well as for an academic research in Religion.

This interpretation of religion has been contested by the participants of the post-modern Phenomenology of Religion. One can start with Ninian Smart's (1927–2001) contextual understanding of religion. It is common knowledge that his concept of religion has become paradigmatic for the West today. According to him religion has no perennial essence, has no core. Consisting of approximately seven different factors (these are ritual, doctrine, experience, art, mythic, ethical, social) religion is always in change. The combination of the factors is a matter of chance.

Religious phenomena are completely constructed by the context.¹ No perennial parallels are possible in this situation. Douglas Allen, also representing the contemporary Phenomenology of Religion, proposes an idea of universal *structures* which are not rooted in the *Sacred* but “are based on the empirical historical data”². The most important thing here is the absence of the category of the *Sacred* as a base of religion.

How do Russian experts interpret religion? Do they also contend the notion of the *Sacred*? To put it differently, do they believe in the Sacred as a source of religion or not? Without doubt, this is not a simple question. Russia’s territory is large enough and rich with talented scholars; it would be complicated to analyze the convictions and considerations of all of them. Hence, mention is made of just a few prominent experts in the field of Oriental Studies and Ancient Religions in order to understand their conscious or unconscious position concerning the essence of religion. The second part of this small research is a review of the main interests of Russian experts in the field of Phenomenology of Religion. Because of the selective character of our survey it cannot be considered as a systematic survey, rather it may show just the main tendencies of Russian academic mentality at this period of time.

The main feature of Russian understanding of religion is the acceptance of the *Sacred* as the base of religion without any compromise. It is noteworthy that the *Sacred* should be here interpreted in a wider sense than it is in the case of Otto’s *numen* or Eliade’s *Sacred*. To understand the *Sacred* as the *Ultimate Reality* or even as the *Ultimate Principle*. Such an understanding of the term will allow one to escape its narrow meaning as the Reality situated outside man accepted in theistic religions and to apply it to non-theistic religious systems as well. For instance, the notion of *śūnyatā* in Buddhism of *Mahāyāna* may be defined as the Ultimate Principle, but not as Otto’s *numen* or the Eliaden *Sacred*.

According to Russian experts, it is in this way that the interpretation of the Ultimate plays a role at the core of religion. Besides, Russian mentality does not feel any need for verification of the concept transforming it into some sort of axiomatic truth. Therefore, the Sacred in the sense of the Ultimate as the common denominator of religions, allows Russian researchers to compare different religious systems even without their common historical and cultural background, in a way that is impossible in the case of Western *contextualism* or *constructivism*. This semi-scientific model of religion is consciously or unconsciously present even in the works of those Russian experts in the field of Religion whose aim is not to define religion. In order that our consideration does not appear to be lacking proofs, a few famous experts in the field of Oriental studies will be mentioned.

To start with the most prominent Russian scholar in Buddhism V. P. Androsof, discussing specific questions of early Buddhist *matrikas* and translating the philosophical texts of *Mahāyāna*, he is qualified as a very competent expert in the mentioned field. The language of his discourse is very specific and free of poetic turn of speech. That is why the modest thoughts of the researcher about religion on the whole are rather interesting. He compares the Divine Reality of Christians and the Buddhist *Dharma* on the base of the idea of “oneness of all things”, which in its turn gives a chance to ascribe “the common nature and genuine character to

all spiritual revelations in the history of humankind". V. P. Androsoff continues his consideration asserting that there exists just one "salty taste of human spirituality".³

In order to explain the inner logic of the Buddhist psycho-technique, V. P. Androsoff utilizes the notion of *communitas* ("the collective consciousness", Rus. "общинное сознание") used by the anthropologist Victor Witter Turner. It is obvious that the idea of *communitas* is to some extent similar to K. G. Jung's *common unconsciousness* and the *Sacred* of Eliade. According to Androsoff, *communitas* may overcome structure or flow through splits of structure into *liminality* entailing very strong emotional experience.⁴

Yevgeny Torchinov (†2003), famous as an expert in the field of Sinology, discusses the question of definitions of religion to a greater extent than does Androsoff. Being a representative of the so called school of Transpersonal Psychology, he submits that *transpersonal states* are the common denominator of all religions. It means that they may be considered as the universal core of religion. Various religious doctrines are derivatives of the experiential dimension. Asserting that the quintessence of any doctrine is *Soteriology* the scholar interprets the latter as "a directive to reproduce the basic experience". Hence, the notions of *transpersonal experience* and *Soteriology* are inseparable constructs in the spine of any religious system.⁵ The scholar does not want to ignore all other factors forming religion similarly to N. Smart. Nevertheless, in contrast with Smart, he proposes the idea of hierarchy of religious phenomena with the religious experience on the top.

Yevgeny Torchinov, in defining religion as experience, refuses to discuss its object. The expert underscores that it is rather difficult to say what is really experienced by man. He criticizes the category of the *Sacred* as the reality experienced, but not because it cannot be verified (that is the main argument of post-modernity). Torchinov admits that the notion of the *Sacred* should always be paired with the category of the *profane*. Such kinds of antithesis is not present in all religious systems, for instance, it is not possible to find the polarity of the *Sacred* and the *profane* in Tantrism.⁶

Although Y. Torchinov tries to escape definitions of religion according to the principle of the essence, he, on one occasion, alleges the *Sacred* as the reality experienced in religion: "Religion is the presence of the existentially genuine entity ("экзистенциально подлинное") which is usually called the *Sacred*, the Divine, etc."⁷ It means that in the same way as K. G. Jung in his capacity as psychologist refused to discuss the Imprinter in order to explore the imprint in human consciousness⁸, Y. Torchinov does not tend to discuss the meta-physical characteristic of the experienced reality. Nevertheless, it is obvious that he strongly believes in such a reality and subjects his discourse to it.

Professor Andrey Zubov, an expert in Ancient Religions, does not disguise his adherence to the Christological approach to religions. In the system of A. Zubov the concept of *logos spermatikos* (Gr. the *seed logos*) represents the universal core or the common denominator of all religious traditions that allows him to speak about the seeds of the Truth planted by God himself in the soil of human hearts.⁹

The equivalent of the *Sacred* here is God the Creator. The fall of man as the historical fact¹⁰ being the point of departure in all researches of A. Zubov, gives him the possibility to create an original and rather profound interpretation of the

pre-historical and ancient religiosity as a collective memory of humankind about the lost paradise and an endeavour to return there. But what about the definition of religion? The expert makes use of the classical interpretation of religion as the tie (Latin *religare*, to bind or to tie) between God and man proposed by Lactantius and underscores that religion is the sum of methods allowing man to achieve an experience or knowledge of God.¹¹

Aleksey Maslov, a prominent Russian expert in the field of Sinology, explains the essence of religion in the context of Chinese religions. The sense of the *Sacred* being an obvious background of his researches, it is a result of a deep empathy into or becoming part of the traditional Chinese religiosity. The sinologist contends that the notion of *illud tempus* or the *sacred pre-historical times* is common to the Chinese religiosity and Christianity. To be precise, the mentioned *illud tempus* means the mythological image of “the noble antiquity” in the context of China and that of “the lost paradise” in Christian spirituality.¹²

Maslov admits that all religions in China represent a search for the tie with ancestors or an endeavour to establish relationship between the world and the realm beyond.¹³ It is curious that Confucius is treated as a typical mystic yearning only for the vital contact with the alleged emperors of the Chinese antiquity.¹⁴ Hence, A. Maslov accepts the idea of the *Sacred* as well as looking for perennial correspondence of ideas among religious traditions not connected with each other in a contextual sense.

The notional apparatus made use of by another famous Russian sinologist V. V. Malyavin in order to explain the phenomenon of Chinese spiritual tradition and religion as a whole, has its origin in Taoism and neo-Confucianism. Besides, the idea of *translation* broadly discussed by the prominent Russian indologist Vsevolod Semencov in the eighties of the 20th century¹⁵ has its lineage in the works of Malyavin as well as in the philosophical discourse by A. Pyatigorsky.

On the first pages of his fundamental work called *Сумерки Дао: Культура Китая на пороге Нового времени*, Malyavin interprets the essence of Chinese religious mentality as follows: The self-identification (Rus. “само-типизация”) of Chinese culture is connected with the notion of the *edge* of understanding and experience that is the incomprehensible depth of human beings vitalizing the tradition. Tradition in its turn is something that should be translated; it is at all times endowed by its own special and unique identity that embodies the wholeness of being. Tradition as such is *alpha* and *omega*, it is the entity which is before understanding and all things and thus it is understood as the last thing.¹⁶

It is important to note that the mentioned *edge* of understanding and experience, is the same Great Ultimate or Great Edge (*Tai chi*) of neo-Confucianism replacing the idea of *Tao* of classical Taoism. *Alpha* and *omega* as the reality present from the beginning has strong affinities to the category of the *Sacred*. And although Malyavin does not make use of the word *religion*, the context of his interpretation of tradition is obviously religious if we interpret religion as an experience of the Ultimate.

The prominent Russian philosopher and expert in Indian religions Alexandr Pyatigorsky (†2009) was especially interested in philosophy of Buddhism. His notional apparatus is rather specific. Pyatigorsky tries to escape the notion of

religion considering it to be a derivative of *philosophy*. But what is *philosophy* for Pyatigorsky? While making use of this term he cautions us not to mix it up with what we know as the Western philosophy. The object of the philosophical discourse in the case of Buddhism is a *text* whereas in Western philosophy such a role is played by an *idea*. The *text* (or *texts*) is endowed by the absolute character because it carries the “proto-forms of its unwritten mode of being” (Rus. “протоформы своего неписьменного существования”). This very precious form of existence being imperceptible by ordinary mind is supposed to be translated.¹⁷ *The text or the entity of texts* in Pyatigorsky’s discourse is some sort of Ultimate reality that is the same primal and incomprehensible realm of *Dharma*. This very realm is an object of translation performed by an individual but is never generated by individual.¹⁸ Obviously the *entity of texts* resembles Maslov’s *realm of the noble antiquity*.

As to religion, the expert interprets it as a teaching or an *idea* set forth in a touchable *text*. This kind or level of the *text* is a derivative of the untouchable one.¹⁹ In the Buddhism of Vajrayāna, this secondary mode of texts, is called the conceptual one and is supposed to be annihilated when the state of the unmediated wisdom is achieved. That is why Pyatigorsky ignored religion trying to underscore the “universal predicate”²⁰ of religion. It is rather curious here that the prominent researcher’s attitude to a context of any kind is very negative. He contends that a philosopher must get rid of the contextual thinking.²¹ Of course, in saying this, Pyatigorsky is not in accordance with the post-modern contextualism; rather he is strongly influenced by Buddhism and accepted the alleged fact of the Ultimate as an axiom.

These six authorities go the way of hermeneutical insight in the Eliaden sense of the word that is much deeper than the post-modern phenomenological empathy concerning just a surface or the so called *context* of religion. These experts in religion testify to the Ultimate reality as the essence of religion and underscore that religion is a link between man and the Ultimate or the *Sacred*.

For the search of a commonly accepted definition of religion in Russian Religious Science it would be helpful to go to Yevgeny Arinin who has made an endeavour to analyze various interpretations of religion and to opt for the most adequate one. Discussing the question of hermeneutics, he makes use of the ideas of the philosopher P. Ricouer. Yevgeny Arinin underscores that there exists some sort of *ontological structure* which is able to unify various interpretations of religion although they cannot be unified at the linguistic level. Different interpretations of religion are not just interpretations, rather they are interrelated and even coincide on points as the signs of one *basic or genuine reality* (in Russian *знаки подлинного*).²² Such a position stands in contrast to the contemporary contextual hermeneutics, which in turn ignores such a common denominator in religions.

Russian researchers in the field of Phenomenology of Religion earn a special comment; therefore there is brief mention of them without profound discussion. It is curious that it is not possible to find any interest of the interpretation of religion proposed by Ninian Smart in the works of such prominent participants of the phenomenological approach in Russia as M. A. Pilayev, A. P. Zabiyaiko and A. N. Krasnikov (†2009). Smart’s definition of religion is mentioned once by A. N. Krasnikov in the context of History of Religion but not in connection with the

contemporary Phenomenology of Religion. Krasnikov utilizing an early work by N. Smart (*The Religious Experience of Mankind*, New York, 1969) concludes that, according to Smart, religion is a conglomerate of six different factors among which experience is the main or leading one.²³

It is noteworthy that even if Smart had such an idea of the primary role of the religious experience in the early period of his academic career, his understanding of the phenomenon of religion in his later works differs completely. Now religion is interpreted by him as an unintentional coming together of various factors without any dominator among them. It is also interesting that whereas in the fundamental issue *Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*²⁴ N. Smart is mentioned as the main authority in Phenomenology of Religion today's Russian researchers consider that the role of such authority is played by the participants of the so called neo-Phenomenology, namely by J. Waardenburg, P. Ricoeur and W. Gantke.

J. Waardenburg has made an endeavour to remove the accent from the religious phenomena to human consciousness and intentions which are declared to be the source of the former.²⁵ P. Ricoeur and W. Gantke are critically minded about the classical category of the *Sacred*. P. Ricoeur proposes to interpret the *Sacred* through the prism of a profoundly developed theory of being. On the contrary, W. Gantke tends to turn special attention to the experiential horizon and to understand the *Sacred* as an *open question* in the sense of the *open experience*.²⁶ To put Gantke's idea differently on the one hand, experience as well as its interpretation, is dynamic, and hence belongs to the context. On the other hand the experience is open to the transcendent reality. Therefore Gantke goes the middle path between the traditional way of understanding of the *Sacred* and the post-modern contextualism.

It is important that all the three mentioned neo-phenomenologists modify the notion of the *Sacred* but do not contest the basic meaning of the *Sacred* in religion. Indeed, Pilayev notes that the discussion about the *Sacred* is a burning question in the beginning of the twenty first century.²⁷

What is the purpose for such a radical difference between the attitudes to the problem of the *Sacred* in Russia and in the West? Professor René Gothóni, from the University of Helsinki, a prominent figure in the field of Comparative Religion, in private conversation in 2005 in Helsinki, expressed an assumption that Religious Studies in Russia are backward because of the long stagnation in religious discourse during the Soviet period. However, we have another explanation to offer. Without doubt the Soviet period had influence on the situation; nevertheless it is obvious also that Russian mentality is both Eastern and intuitive to a larger extent than Western and pragmatic. It cannot reconcile itself with the situation of annihilation of the *Sacred*, because the experience of the Ultimate is for Russian scholars a guarantee of the adequate empathy and a profound analysis of an extraneous religious tradition from inside.

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Kopsavilkums

Neskatoties uz to, ka mūsdienu reliģiju pētnieki Rietumu Eiropā ignorē Svētā jēdzienu, definējot reliģiju kā tādu, ko pilnībā konstruē konteksts, krievu eksperti vēl joprojām uzticas M. Eliades reliģijas izpratnei. Šī pieticīgā pētījuma uzdevums ir izanalizēt vairāku prominentu krievu reliģiju zinātnes pārstāvju nostāju, lai parādītu, ka krievu mentalitāte apzināti vai neapzināti pieņem iracionālo jeb semi-zinātnisko reliģijas skaidrojumu. Otrajā raksta daļā ir apspriesta krievu fenomenologu attieksme pret Svēto. Kaut arī viņi apzinās Rietumeiropas kontekstuālo pieeju reliģijai, viņi cenšas iet vidusceļu starp klasisko reliģijas fenomenoloģiju, ko pārstāv R. Oto un M. Eliade, un konstruktīvismu, dodot priekšroku V. Gantkes (W. Gantke) un P. Rikēra (P. Ricoeur) idejām. Kaut arī tāda autoritāte salīdzinošās reliģiju zinātnes laukā kā Renē Gothonijs (René Gothóni) izskaidro krievu konservatīvo nostāju kā sekas stagnācijai padomju laika reliģiju pētniecībā, tās iemesls, šķiet, ir daudz dziļāks, būdams saistīts ar krievu austrumniecisko un līdz ar to iracionālo pasaules skatījumu.

Atslēgvārdi: *reliģijas fenomenoloģija, Krievijas reliģiju zinātne, svētais, esenciālisms, konstruktīvisms.*

Bloggers in the Name of Christ: The Orthodox Faith in Network and “Private” Theologies in Greece Today

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In the era of globalization, the Internet is the major contemporary way to present the faith in Christ. In Greece, where over 90% of residents are registered as “Orthodox Christian”, there are hundreds of religious blogs which, for various reasons, present, describe and examine closely the Orthodox faith. However, it seems that there is a significant number of these blogs whose administrators act as though certain qualitative criteria of evaluation did not exist. They usually introduce or advertise an individual understanding of faith which is psychologically based on the subjective assessment of the religious phenomenon, forming, “in the name of Christ”, “private theologies”. At this point, conceptual tools, like the theory of third-person effect, may contribute as an important factor to the understanding of the sociological and psychological background of several Christian bloggers.

Keywords: blog, Orthodox Church, private theologies, Elderism, theory of third-person effect, Depth psychology.

According to various findings of empirical researches, concerning the emerging of Christian blogs, “much of what is found in the Christian blogosphere has its analogue in the blogosphere as a whole”¹. In other words, a Christian blog, taking advantage of every possible technical support in the era of on-line communication, represents a Christian version of the blogosphere as a whole. In Greek Christian blogosphere there are blogs that present the views of various Christian Churches. We shall focus on Orthodox blogs, since over 90% of people, living in Greece today, are registered as “Orthodox Christian”.

An outline of Christian blogs

A typical blog contains various labels concerning ecclesiastical news (including information on various events such as all-night vigil services and pilgrimage tours), issues of Orthodox spirituality (e.g. stories from the lives of saints and other teaching stories from the Sayings of the Desert Fathers), missionary issues, but also modern issues such as parenting, culture, ecology and bioethics – they even include Lenten fasting recipes – through articles, posts or threads relating to it. Many Orthodox Christian bloggers upload folkloric material and draw the readers’ attention to Greek folkloric tradition and national issues. On the other hand, many Christian bloggers, trying to suggest new ways of fruitful dialogue between the Church and

modern Society, emphasize culture and art. Furthermore, some bloggers choose to express themselves through music, cinema, poetry and photography. They usually make critical comments on the Church's conservatism for its reluctance to develop progressive ideas for social issues.

Aspects of “private theologies”

Thereafter, we shall examine the reasons and causes of “private theologies”, that is to say the pathological forms of theology, drawing on my research into the network and the religious press. We should like to emphasize the fact that our theoretical context for understanding the term “private theology” is the tradition of the Orthodox Church, taking seriously into account the compact and historical character of the Orthodox Church which is founded on the theology of the Churches Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils. Hence, we use the term “private theology” to describe a theological teaching which, in spite of its being merely an individual's interpretation of the faith, claims to possess the authority of a universal truth². The members of the Church who promote their “private theologies”, rather than create an autonomous religious system (e.g. in Greek orthodox blogosphere does not exist the practice of “Religion on line”)³ seem to prefer a general acknowledgement of their individual religious identity⁴.

In this context, major issues emerge, such as religious intolerance (especially concerning the issue of the places of worship for the Muslims) and religious fundamentalism. Those issues reflect the apocalyptic prophecies and messianic hopes of the 17th and 18th centuries and are due to ecclesiological misconceptions, such as the confusion between political and religious identity. Thus, in several blogs we meet a *sui generis* revival of ethnophyletism: for many Christians, the Church should be based not on a local [ecclesial] criterion, but on a national one. In this respect, the main role of the Church is to maintain national identity. Through many Christian blogs we are informed that a large number of members of the Church, though they avoid confessing it, share the belief that the nation is protected by immediate divine guidance, which is granted to certain ruling officials, including military ones. Within this ideological context, there are blogs that reproduce apocalyptic prophecies concerning the future of Greece (reminding us of the apocalyptic literature of the seventieth and eightieth centuries), such as the “prophecies” of elder Joseph from Vatopedi monastery (Holy Mountain)⁵.

This practice affects pastoral care significantly, since, via the network, many religious people give spiritual advice. A serious issue is the phenomenon of “Elderism” (spurious “Elders”), i.e. the situations in which clergymen, especially younger, celibate ones, aspire to become spiritual fathers and often present themselves as Elders. Although they have never practised obedience themselves, they demand strict obedience from their own (usually gullible) spiritual children. As Nilus the ascetic teaches, those “elders” who possess the false sensation of spiritual maturity become self-designated teachers, “pulling along a row of disciples”⁶, without realizing that “to look after souls is the most difficult task of all”⁷. They lack spiritual experience, namely the source from which they could draw streams of divine wisdom in their pastoral teaching. This lack of spiritual experience has damaging consequences for the souls of their spiritual children. For

those clergymen, spiritual fatherhood is a trophy and not a ministry. We read in a reliable Christian blog: “Nowadays the web is full of sites advertising modern elders! This is not a joke. Enter the term and you shall be amazed!”⁸

Clergymen of this kind are immature and inexperienced in pastoral models. They have confused views on pastoral guidance, and their pastoral interests are based on selfish motives and ambitions. They are usually formalists and, instead of humble living, they prefer self-assertive sophistication. An Orthodox blog, criticizing this situation, notes: “We blame the Pope for the doctrine of infallibility, while we have also in practice adopted it.”⁹

In addition, a serious issue in this context is the dependence of those bloggers on the advice, inducements or admonitions of remarkable modern spiritual fathers (such as the well-known in Orthodoxy Elder Paisios). On the Internet there is immediate access to sites and blogs promoting the authority of these elders, but the selection of their sayings from those to post them follows no particular pattern of individual counselling. This practice, however, seems to ignore Basil the Great’s favoured distinction between *oikonomia* (economy) and *akribeia* (exactness)¹⁰ which is necessary in exercising pastoral care. The readers of those blogs learn how to deal with the difficulties of spiritual life by means of distant impersonal spiritual guidance which is not able to distinguish between different levels of maturity among individuals.

Obviously, this kind of pastoral guidance affects adversely also the way of spiritual life, in terms that lead to the confusion of two different lifestyles, namely monasticism and secular life. These blogs often upload on the web instructions on moral life, taken from ascetic sources or monks who are experienced in a different lifestyle and try to relieve the modern man from his daily difficulties in secular society. Inevitably, there are Christians who follow these instructions or inducements (either because of the strength of their faith, or for reasons irrelevant to the meaning of spiritual life, such as religious phobias or neuroses) and Christians who fail to follow them. Hence, this variety of modes of spiritual life, which is often due to pathological attitudes, causes divisions in the Body of the Church. Christians, who are strong enough to follow the ascetical teaching without any particular difficulty, are usually under the illusion that they are perfect, while the “weak” Christians suffer from the realization that they are at a far distance from the ideal of Christian perfection and encounter the danger of deep feelings of guilt as the beginning of pathological attitudes.

Finally, such “private theologies” create a religious context in which the two fundamental concepts of Christianity, freedom and love, are underestimated. In that case, we have to deal with a religious behaviourism, according to which the dynamics of the Holy Spirit is limited to the community of religious people who share the same religious ideas¹¹.

Following Maximus the Confessor’s classic distinction between Christians’ states of spiritual development, namely the state of the *servants*, the state of the *wage-earners* and the state of the *sons* who obey God’s will out of love for Him¹², we can argue that these blogs, by advertising their “private theologies”, actually confine Christians to the first two states, preventing them from achieving spiritual progress. As a matter of fact, one can argue that these blogs, by giving rise to

feelings of guilt in the souls of their Christian readers, to some extent confirm Bertrand Russell's theory that "*Religion* is based primarily and mainly upon *fear*"¹³, or Freud's conclusion that *religion* is "a defensive manoeuvre akin to neurosis", relieving the devotee from feelings of *guilt* and fear of divine retribution¹⁴.

Undoubtedly, fear is an incentive to spiritual life to such an extent that numerous blogs avoid discussing the real problems of modern man, and highlight instead eschatological "prophecies". For example, a problem, common to all Christian Confessions, is the era of the Antichrist and the end of the world¹⁵. Thus, in these blogs we meet the certainty that we are already in this era. As their administrators or the blogging community claim, there are certain signs that herald the advent of the Antichrist, such as a) an apparent intention to build the Third Temple in order to fulfil the relevant prophecies on behalf of the Jews, b) the phenomenon of globalization and c) the number "666", used by the format of the information recorded on the stripe in the new electronic ID cards.

Sociological and psychological profile of the blogger

The act of a blogging individual claim in a theological context can only be understood through the scrutiny of sociological and psychological profile of the blogger. A "private theology" is considered as "private" because it reveals effort of an individual to adjust religion to his or her psychological needs. It is obvious then that any personal interpretation of religion also reveals the unconscious quest for self-identity and the problem of guilt in case of one's failure to be no less than perfect. As a matter of fact, a blogger, by creating a Christian blog, through all its contents (posted texts, selected images, music or chants, comments from its owner or the Christian community) unconsciously seeks to be praised by the community for his religious experiences and his own interpretation of the Christian faith. In several Christian blogs, there exists an imaginary conception of truth and, in spite of the blogger's certainty that he sets his readers free from their ignorance on spiritual issues¹⁶, his blogging activity promotes his truth instead, which he believes to be redemptive for him and therefore necessary.

At this point, we would like to refer to *the theory of third-person effect* (Davison, 1983)¹⁷, for we believe that it can make an important contribution to the understanding of the sociological and psychological background of several Christian bloggers. According to this theory, a person exposed to persuasive communication from various mass media presumes that this has a greater effect on others than on him. Therefore, he believes that he himself remains unaffected by any message he receives and transfers the problem to third parties. In this way, a message may lead to action not because of its impact on those who are seemingly addressed, but because others (third persons) think it will affect the above-mentioned people. This is the concept of *behavioural hypothesis* which explains the imposition of various restrictions by religious leaders on the community, such as restrictions imposed for fear of heretical propaganda.

Behavioural hypothesis explains, from this point of view, the phenomenon of religious censorship, which presupposes an arbitrary distinction inside the community between persons who are, by definition, vulnerable to the dangers coming from various messages and those who are strong enough to resist such

dangers because of their abilities or knowledge of how to do so (reminding us of the distinction drawn by Origen and the Alexandrian school in general between imperfect and perfect Christians)¹⁸. Several blogs echo this distinction while reproducing the debates of modern theologians who fairly easily accuse one another of ecumenism (for espousing the principles of promoting cooperation among various religious faiths) or fundamentalism (for their strict adherence to the Orthodox tradition).

It is generally accepted that the fundamental contribution of Depth psychology to the study of human soul, is the discovery of the unconscious. The unconscious part of the soul affects the behaviour of personality to such a degree that the way in which one reacts to life's difficulties and experiences depends directly on its content and operation. This means that, if human is affected by unknown forces, then we have to be cautious when examining the criteria of religious life, since an act of devotion to the Church, e.g. a missionary activity, may derive its dynamics from outside conscious perception so that it is not always clear whether a pious or humanitarian intent is always such.

Under this perspective, a man's choice to create a Christian blog for promoting his "private theology" must be analyzed through the perennial problem of man's relationship with himself. Psychoanalytic thought, through various theories, claimed more or less the same thing: that man needs to become an integrated personality¹⁹, that there is always the danger of self-idealization and that man is ready to defend and support this idealized self at any cost²⁰, which is actually a neurotic symptom.

In this context, we realize that a Christian blog can be itself a sort of "defence mechanism" serving the spiritual and psychological needs of its administrator. Such a mechanism could be *introjection*, which means that the Christian blogger identifies himself with religious people and ideas he admires, presenting thus the spiritual life in terms of onerous requirements. On the other hand, pejorative comments on ecumenism or fundamentalism from Christians against each other and frivolous accusations of heresy against those who approach faith from a different point of view are due to the mechanism of *projection*. In this case, while the blogger considers himself as the guardian of the integrity of his community's faith, he fails to realize that it is his unconscious that forces him to an enthusiastic spiritual life with passionate piety and devotion.

On these grounds, we believe that we can easily understand that the mechanism of *introjection* explains sufficiently the *conceptual hypothesis of third-person effect theory* (the blogger identifies himself with models of mature spiritual life), while the mechanism of *projection* explains the *behavioural hypothesis* (the blogger, projecting to others his failure to live a consistent spiritual life, unconsciously attacks his own self through actions like censorship).

According to the Sermon on the Mount, Christians "are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden." Hence, no one should "put the lamp, after lighting it, under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand" so that "it gives light to all in the house" (*Matt.* 5, 14). In relation to the aforementioned scriptural text, the way of Christian blogging reveals the degree of collective and individual consciousness of the members of the Church. Consequently, whoever desires to blog his religious experience in the name of Christ really contributes not only to the community but

also to blogosphere as a whole only if he realizes his responsibility to verify Paul's teaching that Christians are "letters", "to be known and read by all" (2 Cor. 3, 2).

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Kopsavilkums

Globalizācijas laikmetā kristietības nozīmīgākais prezentācijas veids ir internets. Grieķijā, kur vairāk nekā 90% iedzīvotāju ir reģistrējuši savu piederību pareizticīgajai Baznīcai, ir simtiem blogu, kas dažādu motīvu dēļ apraksta, izklāsta un analizē pareizticību. Neraugoties uz šo piederību, daudzu blogu administratori nav izvirzījuši nekādus kvalitatīvās izvērtēšanas kritērijus. Šie blogi parasti iepazīstina ar indivīda psiholoģijā un reliģisku fenomenu subjektīvā vērtējumā bāzētu izpratni par kristīgo ticību, tādā veidā radot un "Kristus vārdā" popularizējot "privātās" teoloģijas. Lai saprastu socioloģiskos un psiholoģiskos faktoros, kas ir atsevišķu kristīgo blogotāju aktivitātes pamatā, nozīmīgu ieguldījumu var sniegt konceptuāli instrumenti, piemēram, trešās personas efekta teorijas lietošana.

Atslēgvārdi: blogs, pareizticīgā Baznīca, privātās teoloģijas, elderisms, trešās personas efekta teorijas, dzīļu psiholoģija.

II

BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:

**RELIGION AT THE CROSSROADS
OF BALTIC HISTORY**

Latvia: Culture as a New Religious Movement?

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Latvia can be considered a country of double religious identity. For seven centuries Germany, Sweden, Poland and Russia have heavily influenced the country's religious makeup. Under the surface of the dominating religious doctrine, the indigenous religious identity has survived. The 20th century with its major social and cultural changes influenced the local religious mind taking shape of a new secular religion. It was aimed as a counterbalance to the Marxist doctrine, which was very much religion itself. The relics of ancient religious past understood as "culture" is functioning as a new religious movement with its texts, dogma, rituals, and saints.

Keywords: Letts, secular religion, new religious movement, culture, Christianity.

Murray Rubinstein has characterized new religious movements (NRM) by a number of shared traits. These religions are, by definition, "new"; they offer innovative religious responses to the conditions of the modern world, despite the fact that most new religious movements represent themselves as rooted in ancient traditions. They are perceived to be alternatives to the mainstream religions of Western society, especially Christianity. These movements are often highly eclectic, pluralistic, and syncretistic; they freely combine doctrines and practices from diverse sources within their belief systems. They are products of and responses to modernity, pluralism, and the scientific worldview.¹

Simultaneously, new religious movement may correspond to the basic features of secular religion, which consists of the ideas, theories or philosophies that involve no spiritual component yet possess qualities similar to those of a religion. At times of national crisis secular religion commonly renews itself by calling on citizens to be true to the nation's deeper values.

The idea of secular religion emerged probably in the 1930s when Communist and Nazi ideologies created repressive states trying to alter the established religion by secular quasi-religious worldview and ritualistic public behaviour. F.A. Voigt, the first author who coined the term, wrote in 1938:

"Marxism [...] is a religion of the mind rather than of the emotions. Although anti-philosophical, indeed anti-critical, its main instrument is the reason, but operating within extremely narrow limits and on an irrational foundation. The Marxist is accessible to logical argument as long as it does not affect his premises. His mythical world a narrow reason and a limited realism prevail. The National Socialist rejects the sovereignty of the mind, even within the mythological limits, and enthrones brutish

instinct. The Marxist – always within the same limits – is for an urban and rational outlook the National Socialist is for “blood and soil”.²

The history of the inner emotional resistance to the Marxist “religion” in a way created the opposite religion – devotions to ethnic culture. In this case it is safe to say that the elements of ethnic religion are involved as well. They are characterized in that adherents generally are defined by their ethnicity and, in Latvian historic context, by their opposition to Marxist dogma. In general this process is only a short episode in the long religious history of Letts.

Country overview

Latvia can be considered a country of double religious identity. One identity is spectacular, represented by official statistics, but the reality is entirely different. According to official statistics, published by *Nationmaster*³, there are 414,000 Roman Catholics (19.4 percent), 1,145,119 Protestants, mostly Lutheran Evangelicals (50 percent). Russian Orthodox, according to the data compiled by the Latvian Bible Society, constitute 35,000.⁴ The actual church attendance is much lower and does not exceed 5 percent.⁵

Latvians at various times throughout their history have been subject to the control of its neighbours, particularly Germany, Sweden, and Poland to the west and Russia to the east, all of which have influenced its religious history. Today Latvia has several Christian faiths, including Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox, Baptist, and various free churches. There also are several legally registered non-traditional religions, including Islam, Vaishnava (Hare Krishna), Buddhism, Latvian paganism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Mormonism. According to Latvian legislation, members of the Unification Church (Moonies), Scientologists, Satanists, and followers of certain other sects are considered destructive and are therefore illegal. Most of these operate as secular social or “scientific” societies. The majority of the non-believers in Latvia, which make up 43.7 percent of the population, prefer to identify themselves not as atheists but as “agnostics”, “free thinkers”, “believers in their own way”, or the like. We are concentrating on the figure of 43.7 percent of the population, but it does not mean that the rest of the Letts (we do not include the Russian population in our analysis) are not involved in some New Age thinking and religious practice. It means that we are speaking of not less than 50 percent of the population.

History

Christianity, introduced by Teutonic knights in the 13th century, was not accepted by the totality of the local population. The reason probably was the language gap between the local tribal people speaking either Baltic languages (Baltic group of the Indo-European family of languages) or the Livonian tongue (belonging to the Finno-Ugric family of languages), but the newcomers spoke German. The second obstacle was the great cultural difference: the local population was still at the stage of primitive tribal society while the Germans represented the most advanced stage of European civilization of late medieval period. In the course of eight centuries of Christianity the heathen religious elements survived shaping the indigenous culture.

The Reformation of the 16th century changed the situation in a very specific way. The Reformation reached Riga, the capital, in 1521, but the countryside was not evangelized until the seventeenth century mainly because of the absence of the Bible in Latvian. The Reformation was a triumph of literacy and the new printing press. Luther's translation of the Bible into German was a decisive moment in the spread of literacy, and stimulated also the printing and distribution of religious books and pamphlets. The German speaking population, including the literate part of the Latvian population, was captured by the Reformation but for the majority of the local peasant population, who were illiterate, fell back. Because of the principle *cuius regio eius religio*, they lost the former Roman-Catholic faith and formally became Lutherans. In reality they returned to the local beliefs. The Reformation required literacy and the Bible in the local language. There was none.

The beginnings of the Reformation for the Letts are closely related to Johann Ernst Glück (1652–1705) the translator of the Bible into Latvian. It means that Lettish Reformation took place more than two hundred years later, comparing to Riga and other major Latvian cities. The Latvian text of the Bible did the same work Luther's Bible did for Germany. The standard version of the Latvian language was created and finally the Baltic tribes merged into one Lettish nation. When the skills of reading and writing were successfully acquired, the Lettish Reformation began. It was triggered by German *Herrnhuters* who arrived in Latvia around 1737. Five Herrnhuter brothers arrived Latvia, studied the Latvian language and began to preach among peasants. This was the real start of the Lettish Reformation. The Reformation in its Moravian version became really popular among the local peasants and townspeople. It had its own native preachers and exalted devotion due to Pietist religious tradition. In the course of this movement the local heathen beliefs were uprooted in the most effective way.⁶

It should be mentioned that the Reformation under the aegis of the Moravian brethren covered only a limited part of Latvia. The rest of the country was slowly Christianized by the established Lutheran Church. The German ministers were visiting peasant households, screening how the parents instructed their children into the Bible reading, Ten Commandments and basics of Lutheran dogma. Both the landlords and ministers were German, for Letts they were foreign masters of the land. There was passive resistance to the religion as superimposed from above.

The tension between the German clergy and the local population arose during the Revolution of 1905 when the local population tried to overthrow the tsarist regime of the Russian Empire and its supporters in Latvia – German landlords and their ideological allies – German ministers. Revolutionary agitators rushed into churches during the Sunday sermon, pushed away the minister and spoke themselves. The congregations did not move to expel the troublemakers from the church building. Distrust between the German clergy and the local people led many of the local subjects to alternative religious and philosophical quest. During the years of the 1905 revolution many of the Latvian intellectuals joined the social-democratic movement, keeping its doctrine in high esteem – almost as a religious teaching. The utopia of a socialist society resembled the egalitarian ideals of the primitive Christianity. It was the reason why many Letts served the Russian revolution with a religious fervour.

The interlude between the two World Wars probably was too short to indigenize Latvian Christianity. During the two decades of independence, from 1918 to 1940, the Lutheran Church was slowly Latvianized. The clergy educated in Latvian schools replaced many German pastors, and the New Testament was translated into the modern Latvian literary language. This process was stopped by World War II. In the outcome of the war Latvia was occupied by the Russian Communist state and anti-religious measures were introduced. The property of the Lutheran Church was confiscated. The church was compelled to pay rent for the use of its former premises, religious instruction in the schools was forbidden, and ministers were dismissed. Religious meetings other than regular church services were prohibited. A great number of church buildings were turned into storehouses or were destroyed. Children and young people were systematically estranged from the church and rigorously indoctrinated in atheistic materialism.⁷

After Stalin's death in 1953 a slow erosion of the rigid doctrinal atheism began. During the following decade the Soviet Marxist thought step by step acknowledged a need for some sort of ritual behaviour and rites of passage simply to diversify the routine life. This was meant as a sort of competition between Church ritualism and civil ceremonies. Ethnologists were asked to create secular rituals to replace Lutheran (and Catholic) Baptism, the first Communion, funerals. The eminent church buildings, such as the Dom Cathedral and several others, closed during the first decade of the occupation, were reopened to serve as concert halls where Masses of famous composers as well as organ music were played to numerous attendants. In a way these concerts became surrogates of the previous Church services and were accepted by general public: they were very well attended. Later on, the Soviet tourist industry advertised the Riga Dom Church as a brand of Riga and the Baltic states. The local Lettish population was proud of it as a mark of superior culture of the Baltics, comparing it to the rest of the Soviet Union. As to the creation of the rites of passage, success was much more modest. Only secular marriage ceremonies at the municipal buildings, and funerals conducted by a secular administrator were practised. The birthday ceremonies and rituals imitating the First Communion were a failure partly because the reconstruction of pre-Christian rites addressed modern people no more.

Religious effect had another facet of ancient Latvian culture – *dainas*, which is a traditional form of music and poetry. Latvian *dainas* often feature pre-Christian themes. (Lyrically, *dainas* concern themselves with native mythology but, in contrast to most similar forms, do not have any legendary heroes. Stories often revolve around pre-Christian deities like the sun goddess *Saule*, the moon god *Mēness* and, most notably, the life of people, especially its rites of passage – birth, wedding and burial. There are well over two hundred thousand collected *dainas* preserved in written form). A number of Latvian writers and scholars were and still are arguing that the ethical norms which can be identified in *dainas* can compete with Ten Commandments and the huge Christian theory of morals and ethics.⁸ Thus, *dainas* for many became a symbol of the ultimate knowledge of Letts, the symbol of (religious) Wisdom of the nation. Any attempt to reflect on *dainas* critically is met with fierce criticism both by the general public as well as academics.

Holiday/Festivals

Of the ten public holidays in Latvia, five are religious holidays. Good Friday, Easter, and Christmas are the most popular holidays, and on these days both Lutherans and Catholics attend church services. Christmas for the majority of Latvian population is considered winter solstice and a family holiday. Saint John the Baptist Day, however, is celebrated mostly as summer solstice and the pagan festival *Līgo*, and as such it is fixed in the official calendar. The course of time has erased from people's memory the religious content of the ancient Solar cult. Rural traditions of the celebrities are lost partly because of the huge migration to the cities, partly because the patriarchal homesteads of the countryside have turned into modern agro-industrial farms. The festivities have turned into day-and-night outings with huge consumption of alcohol and reportedly sexual adventure. Simultaneously the popular mentality praises this festival as one of the heights of the "national spirit", or "Lettish identity". It should be mentioned that by a great part of Russian immigrants this festival is considered to be the evidence of the low level of the indigenous culture.

One more peculiarity of local ritual behaviour is the once-a-year "cemetery feast", introduced by the Latvian Lutheran minister, poet and politician Andrievs Niedra.⁹ Normally the feast takes place in summer, but the precise date differs from one cemetery to another. General public then go to the cemetery where their parents and other relatives are buried, tidy the place, decorate it with flowers and light candles. The minister or, sometimes, the secular administrator conducts a ceremony consisting of speeches, poetry reciting and appropriate music (in the case of a secular ceremony). The attendance of public activities in cemeteries among Lettish public is very high. The participants themselves consider it as a "matter of culture". On the other hand, a scholar studying religion would probably see here the remnants of a cult of ancestors. It should be admitted that regular Christian days of commemoration of the dead, as All Souls Day, are very popular among the Catholics and the commemoration of the dead on the Sunday before Advent is well attended even by nominal Lutherans and mostly by unbelievers.

The last attribute of culture but perceived as a substitute of religion is the well-known Song Festival which takes place every 4-5 years. The first festival took place in 1873 as a convention of numerous church choruses. The repertoire was secular par excellence, but the religious fervour of the participants and listeners is worth seeing. The festival used to be a unique cultural performance in the former Soviet Union, one of the cultural brands of the occupied Baltic Republics.

After Latvia regained its independence from the Soviet Union, a 5-7 year-long period of religious Renaissance took place. Non-traditional religions appeared. Buddhists, Hindus, Mormons, Methodists, Jehovah's Witnesses, New Age movements, and other groups emerged from Western Europe, the United States, and Canada. Theological education flourished, religion became a top subject in the society. The second half of the 1990s marked the religious decline and the church attendance went down to the low 2-3 percent mark.

My theoretical background is Arnold Toynbee's notion that the great religions nourished the civilizations of mankind. The recent history of Latvia shows that the nut and shell have changed their places. The shell is culture, the nut is religion.

Letts still consider that three Christian confessions represented in Latvia are alien to the local people. Roman-Catholicism is considered to be Polish Christianity, Lutherans are thought of as a German project, and Orthodoxy as an import from Russia. A wide-spread opinion is that Letts worship nature – Latvian poetry reveals this. General opinion is that the majority of Letts are atheists, but Latvians consider themselves as agnostics, free thinkers, or believers in their own way, not atheists.

* * *

During the Soviet occupation (1940–1990) both religious traditions were suspended, but the latter, disguised as “culture”, won certain favour with the Communist authorities. The fall of Communism resulted in a short period of Renaissance of Christianity but later “culture” took the momentum. The religious fervour of the Lettish population took forms of numerous “cultural” events, such as Song Festivals, the ancient Solar cult day (*Līgo* festivities), a special feeling of Latvian as a “sacred” language, exaltation of folk songs (*dainas*) to be unique Indo-European heritage, preserved by Letts; Christmas and Easter reclaimed as a pre-Christian cult, accompanied with respective rituals, etc. The relics of ancient religious past understood as “culture” are functioning as a new religious movement. Lettish ethnic population becomes religiously sensitive when one is criticizing some of Latvian “cultural” peculiarities.

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- ⁸ “To the Latvian the *dainas* are more than a literary tradition. They are the very embodiment of his cultural heritage, left by forefathers whom history had denied other, more tangible forms of expression. These songs thus form the very core of the Latvian identity and singing becomes one of the identifying qualities of a Latvian,” wrote V.V.Freiberga, the scholar and President of the Republic of Latvia. (Vaira Viķe-Freiberga, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 6, No.1 (1975.), p. 17 ff. “The ten commandments and *dainas* are very different, but there are a lot of similarities between them, too. The content and the moral of 10 commandments and *dainas* can be compared as well as the content, the tone and the way of expression can be contrasted.

⁹ Andrievs Niedra was a major Latvian writer, a Lutheran pastor, and the Prime Minister of the German puppet government in Latvia between April and June 1919, during the Latvian War of Independence. His name is mentioned in books dealing with Latvian political history. See Andrejs Plakans, *A Concise History of the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2011), p. 203 ff. Unfortunately his literary heritage is not reflected in English.

Kopsavilkums

Latvija ir divu reliģiju zeme. Ārvalstu iekarotāji – Vācija, Zviedrija, Polija, Krievija – ir uzspiedušas katrā laikā savu reliģisko doktrīnu. Vietējie iedzīvotāji aizvien ir glabājuši zināmu reliģisko opozīciju valdošajiem režīmiem, taču tā ir mainījusies, īpaši 20. gs. Padomju režīma laikā (1940–1990) reliģiskā pretestība valdošajam marksismam ieguva “kultūras pasākumu” formas, radot jaunu sekulāru reliģiju ar tekstiem, dogmām, rituāliem un svētajiem.

Atslēgvārdi: latvieši, sekulārā reliģija, jaunās reliģiskās kustības, kultūra, kristietība.

Forced Ecumenism under Soviet Regime in Latvia and Its Impact on the Collective Memory

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Before the Soviet occupation, the relationship between Christian denominations was neither very good, nor bad. Each denomination had something to complain about another denomination for the expropriated property after the First World War. During the years of the Soviet occupation (1940–1941 and 1944–1990), it was in the interests of the Soviet regime to demonstrate a consensus with adherents of various denominations and religions fighting for peace throughout the world. Thus, believers of the Latvian Christian denominations had to attend peace conferences together and organize joint worship services for peace and prosperity of the Soviet State. Granting privileges for definite denominations, allowing the issue of calendars or song sheets, rather led to a mutual distrust among the leadership of different denominations. Spontaneous and uncontrolled expressions of ecumenism, for example, the use of one cultic building for the needs of various denominations, were not supported by the Soviet Regime. Although exactly this phenomenon positively changed the prejudicial pre-war atmosphere between members of Christian denominations in Latvia.

Keywords: Ecumenism in Latvia, Soviet policy of religious affairs, collective memory.

How does the impact of the forced ecumenism of Soviet Regime reflect in the collective memory of the society? A slightly distanced view on the path of history is one of the benefits of the Church's history course. The Church's history tries to put respectively considered bad and good phenomena on the axis of salvation history in order to distinguish the positive aspects of the difficulties and trials imposed on the nation and the Christian community.

An evident example is the Soviet Regime's forced cooperation among different denominations or at least the leaders of these denominations in the territory of the Soviet Union. In this publication we will deal with the analysis of this process only in the territory of Soviet Latvia. Was this cooperation good or bad? The aim of our today's work is to evaluate the results of forced ecumenism, and the task of the work is to discover why this cooperation was possible and how it manifested itself. During the preparation of work, historically comparative method and field research method were used.

Background of ecumenical relationship in pre-Soviet times

At first, we must admit that ecumenism, thanks to God, is not a movement invented in the hallways of the Soviet communist party and artificially implemented

in real life, which would have died out immediately, without a financial support from the state. In the end of XIX century – beginning of XX century, all the major denominations considered a possibility of mutual cooperation. In the Catholic world, it was promoted by invitations of convened Vatican Council I (1869–1870) sent to the non-Catholic religious authorities by the blessed Pope Pius IX (1846–1878). The struggle with modernism by Pope Pius X (1903–1914) slowed down the possibilities of accelerating the ecumenical cooperation, although talks in Mechlen (Malina), Belgium, with representatives of the Anglican Church gave an evidence of half-open doors. A special incentive for ecumenical cooperation in the Protestant world was evangelisation and difficulties of foreign missions in a competitive environment among various denominations, which led to a search not only for possibilities of coexistence but also for cooperation. First of all, in mission areas, but later on, in metropolis.

But what ecumenical relationship heritage did Latvia receive from the previous historical periods? In the case of Latvia, the policy implemented by the tsarist Russia until 1917, by granting privilege to orthodoxy, on the one hand might have supported the cooperation of other non-orthodox denominations in order to protect its own interests. However, social and national prejudices did not allow this fertile cooperation to expand. As it was retrospectively written by J.Vaivods in 1975, remembering ten years of Vatican II Council's impact of official ecumenism, "to significant part of Lutherans the words *Catholic Church* and *Polish Church* were synonyms", and "to Lutheran pastors, the abusing of Catholicism was an important part of Sunday's sermon¹. Even if this observation cannot be applied to all the pastors and priests and all Sundays, such publicly expressed acknowledgement testifies the objectivity of this observation.

In 1919, the shock of the Soviet terror temporarily approximated the denominations. It is signified by mutual Lutheran and Orthodox prayer after the martyr death of the first Estonian Orthodox bishop Platon (Kulbush) (1869–1919) and other Orthodox prelates and several Dorpat's Lutheran (Tragot Hahn, Vilhelm Schwarz) ministers in the cellar of Dorpat's (now Tartu) prison in January 14th, 1919.²

But after the first terror, the sprouts of this good cooperation were smothered by the fight for real property after the collision of the empire in the three newly-founded Baltic States. The wish of Catholics and Lutherans to regain or get back the churches that were lost or given to the Orthodox worsened the mutual relationship. Later, in 1930's, in the circumstances of other types of "forced ecumenism". during the Presidency of K. Ulmanis in Latvia, namely, as a result of authoritarian regime, the relationship improved, at least formally, between the highest Orthodox and Lutheran ministers. It ameliorated due to the financial compensation, which was promised by the Latvian State for the confiscated real estate. Thus, in 1937, the 15th of March, six months after two repeated requests by the Metropolitan Augustine to J. Auškāps, the rector of the University of Latvia (UL), it was possible with the decision of the University Dean's Council to open an Orthodox department within the Theological Faculty of the UL, where the teaching of some subjects was designed jointly for the Lutheran and Orthodox students, but Lutheran pastors, the teaching staff of Theological Faculty, were asked by the Metropolitan Augustine to give

sermons in Riga Orthodox Cathedral. In an ecumenical openness the Metropolitan pretended to have forgotten that this same Orthodox Cathedral was taken in 1918 by Lutherans for their own needs. Only after the return of the Archbishop Jānis Pommers from Russia in 1921 the Cathedral resumed to serve for the Orthodox on a regular basis. But in the 30's Lutherans still held several Orthodox churches (Cathedral of the Sea in Liepaja, St. Peter's and Paul's Church in Riga for the use of Estonian Lutheran congregation).

However, some Orthodox circles, even after 80–90 years, continue to mourn for what has been lost in 1920's. The focus is on real estates in Riga, primarily, the Orthodox St. Alexei men's monastery, in whose building the Catholic Curia³ is situated since 1922.

Admittedly, the Orthodox sources hardly ever mention that a large proportion of the lost property in the past centuries was violently taken from Catholics, especially after the Polish uprising in 1863.

Even greater clamour was caused in the Latvian public opinion by the case of St. Jacob's Cathedral in 1922–24. As a typical scenario of tsarist administration, the church of one confession was transferred to another confession, namely, the keys of the church were taken away from the former holders with the help of police. Of course, Catholics also in this case alluded to the correction of historical injustice, because St. Jacob's Church was built in the 13th century. After the Reformation it was passed four times from Catholics to Lutherans, until the Swedish occupation in Riga gave it to Lutherans in 1621. According to the international agreement between The Holy See and the Latvian State, Catholics had the rights for a cathedral in Riga. The smallest of the three considered options was chosen – St. Jacob's Church. But the fact remains that the Lutheran society made a possibly larger press campaign, involving in protests the Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala *N. Söderblom* from Sweden, who is otherwise known as the promoter of the ecumenical movement. The Lutheran Consistory quickly right there and not in the twice larger Dome or St. Peter's Church organized a celebration of the consecration of the first Latvian Lutheran Bishop *K. Irbe*, chaired by a Swedish bishop⁴. However, despite these activities the Lutheran public opinion could not collect the required number of signatures to hold a referendum on the transfer of the church to another denomination. Most of the Lutheran public ignored the events, showing no interest in the ongoing developments, as evidenced by the low number of signatures, compared to the total number of Latvian Lutherans. However, it did not promote affection among the most active Lutherans to endorse the ecumenical fellowship with Catholics.

Therefore, it is interesting to evaluate the fact that in the period from year 1910–1940, the titles of books and periodicals published by the Catholics do not imply any denominational confrontation. In the list of books published in the dialect of Latgale, there is only one such book: Dr.theol. *B. Valpīters* "Kas tī taidi baptisti" (1928), which is dedicated to apologetics against the Protestants.

Another interesting example is the denominational belonging of participants of three pilgrimages from Latvia to Rome, in the period of the 30's. In 1925, i.e. Jubilee year, in 1929, when celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Pope Pius XI's priesthood, and in 1933 in the pilgrim groups guided by the Prelate *E. Stukels*, not

always the Catholics were in majority. For example, in 1933, among 115 Latvian pilgrims, only half were Catholics, the other half – Lutherans and Orthodox.

Another interesting example was “Latvian faithful union”. This organisation arose in order to unite the different denominations of Latvia against the impact of atheism in 1931. The Orthodox Archbishop Jānis Pommers was elected as the Honorary Chairman, but the actual leaders were the Lutheran Minister Jānis Birģelis, Baptist Minister Viljams Fetlers and the Orthodox Priest Jānis Jansons. The Lutheran Minister Janis Birģelis was in specially privileged position in order to be able to address all the denominations officially registered in Latvia because he was the Head of the Latvian State denomination department. As the head of the Latvian State denomination department, J. Birģelis developed correct relations not only between different Protestant denominations, but also with the Orthodox and Roman Catholics, the Cardinal J. Vaivods remembers in his diary from the War Years⁵.

In the Latvian public religious life no denomination succeeded to protect believers from the contact with the “Gentiles” (adherents of other faiths). What is more, denominationally mixed marriages were a relatively common phenomenon. In 2011, the Faculty of History of the University of Latvia prepared a thesis on the phenomenon of mixed marriages before the World War I by K. Ante⁶. More frequent mixed marriages were found after the World War I and World War II, when Latvia experienced intense internal migration. Historically homogeneous religious map was spotted by diaspora – Catholic diaspora in Vidzeme and Kurzeme, and Lutheran diaspora in Latgale.

In a pastoral letter to Catholics in the 1926.6.I. by the Archbishop A. Springovičs conditions were laid for the exceptional cases of allowed mixed marriages – to ensure a free observance of the Catholic faith for a catholic spouse, to bring up children in the Catholic faith, marriage should be consumed in a Catholic Church, and to ensure that it does not happen before or after marriage in the church of another denomination⁷.

After 20 years, in the spring of 1945, one of the denominationally most open-minded Latvian Catholic priests – the future Cardinal J. Vaivods – was realistic when commenting on the often bitter aftertaste of denominationally mixed marriages: “In our conditions mixed marriages are common, and from each of the Gentiles (other believers), who marry in the Catholic Church, a written promise is received that he will not prevent the Catholic spouse to perform their religious duties and will allow children to be baptized in the Catholic Church. An honest man would be obliged to fulfil promises, but in practice, however, it is different. Some non-Catholic men hurt their wives, even preventing to go to the Catholic Church. There are cases that a wife can only furtively come to the Communion on working days”⁸.

This is written by a man that cannot be blamed for intolerance, because he does not hide the “favourable support from other believers” for the building of the Parish hall of Lēnu Catholic parish in 1930’s of the 20th century, since among the Catholics in Lēnas “the antagonism against Lutherans as it is in Suiti is absent”⁹.

Therefore, on the construction of the parish house in Lēnas, J. Vaivods specifies: “The share of the material we purchased ourselves, the other share was donated

by the members of the Catholic parish. Another share was given by surrounding Lutheran owners.”¹⁰.

Or elsewhere he writes in a diary that in the Good Friday he had found time to visit the neighbouring Lutheran church and was happy to see all benches full with praying believers.¹¹ Or due to being busy and being unable to participate in the funeral of the Lutheran pastor J. Birģelis, he sent a telegram of condolence to the Lutheran interim administration¹²

But how did J. Vaidods explain the mutual intolerance? One can understand from his writings, that the basis of the intolerance was not as much denominational, as it was ethnic or, even funnier, ethnographic, local prejudices against over-district countrymen, and not only from confessional difference, like he explained precedently, with the admiration of the Parish hall of Catholic Lēnas from the side of non-Catholics in the same administrative community¹³. He writes significant passages about it, after parting from the emigrating Director Jānis Niedre from Liepāja in 1945: “Today they have discovered his great fault – he comes from Latgale! Is that why he is not Latvian? How long will the inhabitants of Latgale be considered as lower subspecies of Latvians? Was the lesson that the current events (war, occupation) have given to Latvians too small that this small community will be chopped even further?”¹⁴

In 1944, in Kandava – a small town in the Kurzeme – when there was a need to find a place for a religious service for Catholic refugees, for a long time it was impossible to find an owner who would reserve a room for this purpose, until finally Catholics were admitted into a room in the secondary school. With some sarcasm about the aforementioned lesson Vaivods writes, that when after the bombing only this room in the school was left untouched, there was no longer a need for Catholics seeking their own space for services to wait so long¹⁵.

The ecumenical relationship during Soviet times

In 1944–1945, the whole territory of Latvia again became a part of the Soviet Union. However, the policy towards religion at the beginning of the second occupation was more careful than in 1940–1941. The clerks in Moscow even suggested to the local communist activists not to be so eager with the implication of Soviet oppression methods upon religious organizations. What political interests could the Soviet regime have had for their obliging attitude and promotion of the ecumenism?

1. Firstly, for propaganda and the development of a positive image to please foreign countries. To serve this purpose Soviet Union and Republican “Peace committees” or “Supporters of the Peace” were established which organized peace conferences. The Soviet regime used these institutions to represent the great variety of legally registered religious organizations and denominations in foreign mass media. Never the less, the religious organizations and denominations themselves were responsible for paying the costs of these expensive events. Only rarely, there were complaints from the members of religious organizations about these costs. On the other hand, the leaders of the denominations did not refuse participation in these peace conferences. For example, Gustavs Turss, the archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, was sure that this is one of the very

few possibilities to remind the Soviet society about the church and keep it from being pushed outside of the society into an existence of a secluded ghetto. The Catholic Church was more reluctant towards the peace conferences in which the peace policy of the Soviet Union was highly praised. This is demonstrated by the example of the Catholic Archbishop's A. Springovičs reply letter to the Chairman of the Religion and Cults Department at the Council of Ministers of the USSR, in which he was recommending the Bishop P. Strods for the participation in the peace conference. This peace conference took place in the residency of the patriarch in Zagorsk. near Moscow, in May 9–12. In 1952, Springovičs wrote that he is able to nominate his deputy only in the case of the Soviet regime's guaranty that the "non-Catholic" delegates will not be given opportunity "to insult our Church" and if the excommunicated Catholic delegates will not be present from abroad (the suspended priest Buglie and others from Poland and Czechoslovakia)¹⁶. It is interesting enough that the mutual insults really were prevented by the Soviet regimes "imposed ecumenism". However, with great efforts I have found some cunning remarks that were still used during these conferences. One example is in the speech of a representative of the Moscow patriarch, the Metropolitan of Krutzka and Kolomna Nikolai, who praised the Old believers of Lithuania for their contribution to the peace movement, however, still reminding them that they do not have the threefold offices¹⁷. The same Metropolitan Nikolai praised the Latvian Catholics and used them as an example for their "active struggle for peace"¹⁸. Of course, the Bishop P. Strods participated in such a conference every year or sent greeting telegrams to the foreign peace conferences. However, there were exceptional cases when Catholic leaders refused to sign the peace memorandums that other denominations had signed. For example, in 1950, the Archbishop A. Springovičs and the Bishop P. Strods did not sign the memorandum signed by the Patriarch of Moscow, the Patriarch of Tbilisi and the Patriarch of Ecmiadzin, because in the memorandum the Vatican was accused of promoting war. In 1953, Restbergs, the Chairman of the Religion and Cults Department of the Latvian Council of Ministers, stated: "The leadership of the Latvian Catholic Church is starting to adjust to Soviet circumstances." Never the less, in the plenary of the Republican peace committee on September 11, he evaluated the speech of Bishop Strods as weak, at the same time recognizing the positive attitude of Strods for taking out many quotations from the Holy Scripture, which originally were in his speech. Soviet clerks were not satisfied with the attitude of the Catholics for refusing to join "the protests of all other religious organizations", condemning "Anglo-American aggression against the peace loving Arab nations". Nevertheless, the Catholics explained their refusal as following the policy of not involving or participating in politics. The refusal of the Catholic Church to send a representative to the Friendship Society with the Latvians abroad in 1958 was also met with mere intolerance from the Soviet clerks¹⁹.

2. Secondly, the Soviet regime used the policy of "*divide et impera*" (to divide and rule). It also tried to be ahead of possible independent actions from the Christian Churches. In no way was real, self-organized ecumenism allowed outside the interests of the Soviet propaganda politics. Clerks in Moscow were worried when on May 1945, the bishop of the Baptist Church Kārlis Lāceklis organized a meeting with Lutherans (represented by Arvīds Perlbahs) and the Methodists (represented

by Edvards Kaimiņš) in Riga. In June, the second meeting took place at the Pastor A. Perlbahs' home where the representatives of the "Blue Cross" were also present. The main topic was a possibility to re-establish the work of the Union of Latvian Believers, which was founded in 1931 and interrupted its activities during the occupations. The Baptist Bishop K. Lācekļis went even as far as to say that such cooperation could lead to the union of participating denominations. On June 20th, the meeting took place at the Lutheran Consistory and was led by the Deputy Bishop Kārlis Irbe. Irbe expressed the view that in the given political circumstances it was the duty of all Protestants to unite themselves in order to gain more influence upon the events in the society and politics. Concrete results were not achieved and no agreements were signed, but K. Irbe was ready to continue these meetings and mutual consultations.

After the Lutheran Deputy Bishop K. Irbe was arrested on January 21st, 1946²⁰, the Methodist Pastor E. Kaimiņš handed in on June 4th, 1946, a report at the KGB about ecumenical meetings that previously took place, in which he had also participated. In this report he recognized, that from the Soviet legal point of view these meetings were illegal²¹.

It is true that the basis of these ecumenical endeavors were not for ecumenism itself, but for the acquirement of national and patriotic thoughts and feelings. Most likely, the danger that the Soviet regime saw in these meetings was their national-political background, therefore, in order to have control over the process, they hurried in carrying out their own movement of unity²². The Chairman of the Religion and Cults Department Voldemars Šeškens reported to his chief Polanskis in Moscow, on June 1945, that the union between Lutherans and Orthodox should be developed. The reason was not the interest in promoting ecumenism, but being able to adopt the methods of suppressing the Church, that had been so successfully implemented in the Russian Orthodox Church²³. As a result, one of the Lutheran Pastors Oskars Blumbergs, who already graduated an academical course of studies at the Theological Faculty of the University of Latvia, in 1936, with the final work about Buddhist meditation²⁴, went to complete his studies at the Orthodox Theological Academy in St. Petersburg (formely known as Lenigrad)²⁵. However, no evident results of the Lutheran and Orthodox Church becoming closer were reached, apart from the common worship services at soviet state festivals.

Quite soon, the more radical communist Restbergs, who assumed office on September 14, 1948, replaced Šeškens. V. Šeškens was reproached by Soviet leaders for having too good a contact with denominations, especially the Lutheran Church whose meetings he attended as an honorary guest. Moreover, he permitted prayer for the Soviet State and for himself. It was assumed that he was giving an impression, that Lutheran Church had become a state church again like in the pre-soviet Latvia²⁶.

In respect to the smaller denominations in Latvia – Methodists, Kurzemes Brothers and the Catholic Apostolic Congregation – the Soviet regime did not provide them with registration as independent religious organizations, but required that they join larger denominations. The Pentecost congregation and "Blue Cross" were simply denied registration. Pentecosts, as well as the Evangelical Congregation of Jesus, were not even striving for registration and willingly accepted a status of

underground Christianity. The Lutheran Archbishop G. Turss felt pleased by such a development of events, for then he did not need to be in conversations with these minor groups, and all the blame for Christian resistance to the collective-farms and other Soviet indicatives were put on “sectarians”, which he also named as a “nightmare”²⁷.

There were also acts of “practical ecumenism” within the Lutheran Church. For example, in 1946, the newly elected archbishop Turss rather unenthusiastically ordained Arnolds Kondrāts, the former student of the Adventist Seminary²⁸. He did so because there were many Lutheran congregations who did not have their own pastor.

In the fall of 1948, 3 150 Methodists were required to join one or another protestant denomination, because they were refused registration as an independent denomination. At the meeting of Lutheran pastors (October 25, 1948), the majority of them agreed to accept Methodists. A formal acceptance of Methodists in the Latvian Lutheran Church took place on November 3, 1948. Two Methodist and two Lutheran congregations were united in one – The Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of St. Mark, which had its church building at Slokas iela 6, in the church of the former Second Riga Methodist Congregation, with Edvards Kaimiņš being appointed as their pastor. The Third Riga Methodists Congregation was united with the Evangelical-Lutheran Brothers congregation, and also used the former worship space of the Methodists. The Methodist congregations in Jūrmalciems and Mātra were simply registered as Lutheran. It is important to mention, that the only dogmatic question raised during this union was a concern from the Lutherans – whether Methodists will conduct their worship service according to the Lutheran handbook²⁹. It is no surprise, that after 42 years of such a “forced marriage” only a part of the former Latvian Methodists wanted to “divorce” Lutherans and be an independent denomination, having relations to the World Methodist Council. Some former Methodist congregations kept their association with Lutherans after 1990 in Liepāja.

The situation with the Brother congregations in Kurzeme was more serious. In difference to the Herrnhute Brother congregation in Vidzeme or in Estonia, they had concisely kept as far as possible from the Lutheran pastors and congregations. The Brother congregations of Kurzeme consisted of 8 congregations with 4 worship houses and about 300 members (however, there is information that some other congregations existed alongside with the 8 largest ones)³⁰.

In summer of 1948, the chairman of the department of Religion V. Šeškens demanded the Preacher of Nīca Brother parochial E. Grietēns to choose whether to become Lutherans or Baptists. The Lutheran Archbishop G.Turss operatively authorized the Evangelist H. Kalniņš to talk with the Brother parish of Kurzeme.

On the 5th October of 1948, the Lutheran pastor conference agreed to admit the Brother parish with rules as they admit Methodists. On December 2, 1948, a month after Methodists, the Lutheran central administration registered in their congregation list 6 Kurzeme Brother parishes as members of the Lutheran Church of Latvia, who promised to observe the Lutheran faith confession, the Latvian Lutheran Church Constitution and adhere to archbishop and dean's instructions. However the Religious Cult Object Council registered only their 4 Brother parish

members of Kurzeme, who had their own unaided prayer houses, but others demanded to disband. Restbergs reminded Lutherans of how important it is to control new parish activity, so they would not use Lutheran status like a signboard to continue working in the old way. At the beginning, the Brother congregation of Kurzeme's "forced marriages" unlike Methodist's "calculated marriages" did not contribute to an ecumenical openness. Later on, part of the visitors stopped attending religious services; some began to attend Baptist meetings³¹, and only a couple of Kurzeme Brothers congregation, respectively, Dunika Calvary Church, succeeded to this day to make a noticeable contribution in Ecumenical Christian-oriented Latvian society development.

The Lutheran Pastor, N. Plāte, from Parish of Rucava, wrote about it, recognizing "the importance of the Brethren church's internal religious life care, and serious efforts to be a Christian not merely in words, but live to be the disciples of Jesus. When many people because of word turned their backs to the Christian Church, I learned to respect the Kurzeme Brother congregation people as the best of my church nationals"³².

But how does a "Divide et imper" policy operates in relation to the major faiths? About Šeškens' bold idea to combine Lutherans and Orthodox we have already discussed. As for Roman Catholic Latvian case (or abroad – in Poland) – spall Catholics from Rome. The next step would be for Catholics to make them as Old Catholics. Old Catholic delegates from Austria did not say no to participate in the councils of peace conferences and glorify the Soviet Union's peace policy³³. In this direction worked the first post-war Latvian SSR Council of Ministers of Religion cult affairs official V. Šeškens. Šeškens initial impression of A. Springovičs was like the Soviet people, who could be rewarded with a Soviet medal, to eventually putting him on the entire Soviet Union, Catholic Church leaders with residence in Moscow. Šeškens investigated A. Springovičs relationship with the Nuncio in pre-soviet times and was glad it was found that it was not always excellent.

But the concluding talk with A. Springovičs rejects the idea to depart from the canonical relations with the Vatican, although previously more or less consciously Soviet officials had made against the Roman pope's directives indifferent impression. On the 29th May of 1945, Šeškens writes to Moscow that "it is not promising to talk to him about Old Catholics, but almost to prove A. Springovičs about Vatican "pro-fascistic" policy. At least they do not run to the Vatican on a leash"³⁴.

The position of new catholic bishop of Latvia J.Vaivods as an apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Rīga and diocese of Liepāja (1962–1990) in the field of an ecumenical cooperation was shaped by three conditions: 1) his own personal experience before his ascent to the bishop's throne, 2) pressure from the Soviet authorities, 3) the norms of the Catholic Church's canon law and directives of the Vatican Council. Thus, we can see some evidence of the development of his position. Thus regarding the ecumenical worship in 1964 in the retreat for the clergy of metropolis of Riga he said: "It is not allowed without special permission. Unfortunately, there are priests who are feeling as being specially authorized by Rome concerning the implementation of some innovations. Their motivation: the Pope himself had prayed together with representatives of other denominations. Why shouldn't it be done here? True, the Church is looking for new forms of

living together with other denominations, but as she is just looking for, we cannot anticipate it. I am convinced that one day we will be able to do this when it will be commanded by or at least allowed by Higher Authorities³⁵.

Speaking of the implementation of the Vatican II document “Unitatis reintegratio” in Latvia, J. Vaivods admits with satisfaction: “Now, the antagonism, that was so distinctive in the past, is absent. The relationship between Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox clergy has taken relatively good shape. Ecumenical worship services do not occur, only on festive occasions the clergy of the same denomination passively participates in the worship of the other denomination.”

The church historian H. Trops, writing about J. Vaivods, recognizes with satisfaction that J. Vaivods have created friendly personal relations with representatives of other Christian confession in Latvia, with Orthodox Metropolitan Leonid and Lutheran archbishops J. Matulis un Ē. Mesters and received different honorific titles from Orthodox patriarch Pimen³⁶.

Communitarian use of church buildings in the Soviet era

Ecumenism is, of course, not only a common worship or “forced marriage” between different denominations. One of the most striking examples of the cooperation was the common use of churches belonging to another denomination, thus helping to maintain the church of another denomination with their donations and helping to pay taxes to the state.

Especially noteworthy is the prayer of the Lutheran archbishop G. Tour for his congregations that they would not dismiss after the closure of the churches, but would continue to gather in church buildings of other denominations.

The first precedent during the Soviet years was related to the Catholic church in Vaiņode, where worship services were celebrated by Lutherans (their own church of Bāta burnt down during the war in 1944 and was not reconstructed, but the local parish looked for possibilities to continue to exist with other place of worship)³⁷ and Baptists, but, according to other sources, the household “under one roof” was not planned and coordinated³⁸.

In places where their churches were destroyed in the war or nationalized, and until the “free but forced” inclusion into another denomination had taken place, Methodists before of own marriage with Lutherans easily chose to gather in churches of other denominations – in Aizpute in Baptist church, in Ziemepe in Lutheran church and Riga’s First congregation – in the Russian Baptist church³⁹.

Jaunjelgava⁴⁰. Two years after the end of the Second World War, in 1947 April the 26th Jaunjelgava Lutheran Church burnt down. The Soviet authorities did not allow reconstructing the building which was situated in the center of the town. But in exceptional way the Soviets allowed to construct one new Lutheran church, but no more in the center of town but on the new place, outskirts of the city, it was in front of cemetery of Jaunjelgava⁴¹. Under the guidance of local Lutheran pastor Mārtiņš Kārtiņš (1866–1968), in charge as pastor of parish of Jaunjelgava from 1948 till 1967, the new small church was constructed during the years of 1956–1957⁴². But meantime where did the local Lutheran congregation worship during the years 1947–1957, before the new construction was finished? J. Talonens mentioned that in the local Orthodox Church, but the local Lutheran from neighboring Tome, where

also a church was burn down, affirmed that they gathered in the catholic church of Jaunjelgava and very strongly affirmed that the Lutheran children were baptized there.

On the 20th of March, 1953, Catholic Archbishop A. Springovičs wrote to the chairman of the department of Religion in Soviet Latvia about 12 catholic parishes, which he refused to registered and where with his not written directive from 1 January of 1953 it was forbidden to held religious services. Between theses 12 congregations A. Springovičs counted Zante (not to mention that in 1945 the founded Parish used a former Baptist Prayer house, which was given to Catholics from local soviet authorities⁴³ after parting in emigration of entire Baptist community), Vecumieki, where he wrote that Catholics gathered in sacristy of Lutheran Church, Mazsalaca – the same way where to worship, and Limbaži – the same⁴⁴. But from these 12, the Soviet chairman allowed to officially exist only 2, and none of them using the building of another confession. Such a way of mutual cooperation between Confessions was the ecumenism *à la soviet*.

The next precedents are related to Sigulda and Velēna Lutheran churches, where respectively from the 1960 till 1997 (Sigulda), and from 1965 (Velēna), Catholic worship was celebrated in Sigulda. Apart from Catholics, Latvian and German Baptists gathered there as well.

Since 1965, Catholic Church local Orthodox and Lutheran congregations gathered in Koknese to worship after the closure of their churches. Similar process took place in neighboring Krape.

After the closure of their church, Lutherans held worship services in Krape Orthodox Church and moved part of its inventory there. No serious problem for the Orthodox was due to the fact that the Lutheran pastor of congregation of Krape was a pastor woman B. Stroža with pietistic view of theology. The same about tolerant comportment we can say about the Catholic Parish of Koknese, where she also held the service for the Lutherans who gathered like the Orthodox for own services in the only opened church of Koknese.

In Valmiera, after the closure in 1964 of medieval church of St. Simon and Juda, the Lutheran and Baptist community gathered in Prayer house of Adventists⁴⁵.

After the closure of their church, Mazirbe' s Lutherans heroically one pro year gathered in Pitragas Baptist Church, where a Lutheran Prevost came from Ventpils to guide the worship.

In 80-ies in Riga, St. Paul's Lutheran church and St. Cross Lutheran congregation under pastor A. Perlbachs rented a space for the Russian Baptist churches.

The Seventh-day Adventists gathered in Cesis St. Anne Lutheran Church and Riga Luther's Church in Torņakalns.

In all these cases, those were not the Soviet authorities who were looking for a solution of the prayer space problem, but confessions themselves, without a direct intervention from the Soviet authorities. Of course, congregations had to register at the Religious Affairs attorney, but it was required to indicate the difficulties or facilities in the process of registration, so this process did not happen without consent from the Soviet authorities.

However, an instance of "forced ecumenism" is the congregation of St. Anthony in Riga, whose church was closed in 1969, November 17th, but was given a space

in the former Our Lady of Kazan Orthodox Church in Ivan's Cemetery, which at the time was used as a repository, but in so bad conditions that the comity of St. Anton's parish initially refused to accept it. However, later it had no other choice⁴⁶. After 2000, Catholics returned this building to the Orthodox.

In the collective memory exactly these examples – real collaboration to maintain opened our church buildings and not like parade official and state patronage ecumenical worship services (like theses of the 1st of May, Victory Day – 9th of May or October celebration in 7th of November) – contributed to a mutual understanding and removal of prejudices. Personally, I have spoken with the most active members of Vēlēna Lutheran church's congregation who afterwards, when Catholic tenants finished using this building, thanked Catholics whose donations helped the small local congregation to protect the magnificent building from profanation and closing.

Conclusion

How does the Latvian collective memory evaluate the religious experience of the Soviet years? The very fact that today's discussions on the Soviet heritage are based on my and my family's Soviet-era experience has shown the existence of a collective memory.

The objective assessment, of course, acknowledges all the negative consequences arising from Soviet restrictions on the religious organizations. These can be supplemented with a lack of systematic religious formation among laymen and clergy people. It is accompanied by a formalism and ostentatiousness in religious duties. If Western Christians admire mass participation of inhabitants of some region (Latgale, Alsunga) in worship, then it is not always due to internal spiritual maturity and confidence, but almost folkloristic approach to religious rites of their ethnic or ethnographic identity expression. The Soviet rule, despite the introduced "alternative Soviet rituals" like name giving celebration instead of baptism or celebration of maturity or a solemn presentation of the passport instead of confirmation, civil funerals and civil "fast of cemetery"⁴⁷ e.c.t did not succeed to deracinate the link between the collective identity of people of these regions and the religious cult. But the regime managed to prevent the consciousness of the religious belonging from becoming a Christian personal conviction. Consequently, we are today meeting practicing Christians, but wondering if they do not observe the Christian way of life – alcoholism, theft.

However, imposed Ecumenism during the Soviet era is a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, it led to relativism. But on the other hand, the Soviets helped to overcome the pre-war mutual prejudices, which were described by Card. Vaivods. As summarized by the Catholic Archbishop Emeritus of Riga, J. Cardinal Pujats: Western Christians speak intelligently on Ecumenism, but we practice it⁴⁸. In the territory of the former Soviet Union, only in Ukraine the Greek – Catholic parishioners were forced through re-registration into orthodoxy at the end of forties of the last century and will not be so easily able to heal injuries left by the forced ecumenism. Unfortunately, relations between the Orthodox and Greek – Catholic believers in Western Ukraine are not normal to this day, despite Vatican's efforts to implement ecumenical policy of the document of the 2nd Vatican Council *Unitatis reintegratio* there as well.

But in other parts of the former Soviet Union we can only regret the arrogance of the poorly educated clergy of the new generation against believers of other denominations. But in general relationship between believers are overall good and even very good. Moreover, this applies not only to Christians of different denominations, but also to representatives of different religions. To some extent, this mutual tolerance came up as an unconscious legacy of very interesting religiosity of the Tsarist Russia's, which is an object of a particular study. But much of this good relationship is a Soviet-era legacy. Common persecution made Christians unite, according to the Church historian H. Trops, speaking in spite of mutual lack of trust, thanks to privileges which were given to the Russian Orthodox and partly Lutherans who were authorized to have almost every year one new calendar and to invite guests from abroad, while other confessions were not⁴⁹.

A significant example shortly after the World War II is how two grandmothers from Moscow – an Orthodox and a Catholic – agreed on the baptism of a grandchild (now a professor of Orientalistics B. Mališev from Moscow): we'll baptize our grandchild at a clergyman of that denomination Catholic or Orthodox, who would promise not to record the fact in metrics, not to report on the baptism to the Soviet authorities, thus not making a trouble for the parents. The baptism was celebrated in the Catholic Church of St. Ludvig, directly in front of the building of Soviet Service of Security, with typical sense of humor from Soviet era, said prof. B. Mališev⁵⁰.

Moreover, these good relationships were not hidden. On the contrary – everyone knew how to excuse oneself, according to Stalin's constitution "it is prohibited to make hatred on the basis of religious beliefs." If in 1945 the Methodist preacher Edv. Kaimins did expect to please Soviet authorities by denouncing cooperation talks between Baptists, Methodists and Lutherans, three years later Soviet officials, without asking his consent, ordered to implement something that could not be done by these negotiations so soon, namely, to unite.

Although the merger took place without any dispute on doctrinal disagreements, during these 42 years of "a forced marriage" formal unity had become the unity of the hearts.

As regards to the Lutherans and Methodists, those were not the ambitions of the believers, but rather of some members of the clergy that led the ecumenical conversation to the point where we have already been at the beginning of the Soviet era, when everyone took their property back.

While canonical ties of larger denominations with their religious centers outside Latvia delayed this kind of "experimental marriage", often the use of the same church building strengthened the spirit of mutual goodwill and helpfulness among believers of different denominations that has to be maintained in the future as well.

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- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- ¹⁹ J. Cakuls, op. c., pp. 240, 288.
- ²⁰ K. Irbe. *Prāvests Kārlis Irbe*, w.d.e., p. 345.
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- ²² *Ibid.*, op. c. p. 39.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, op. c. p. 18.
- ²⁴ E. Ķiploks. *Teoloģijas fakultāte*. Lincoln, Nebraska: LELBA apgāds 1981. p. 116.
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Kopsavilkums

Ekumeniskā sadarbība Latvijā pirms 1940. gada attīstījās atbilstoši autoritārā K. Ulmaņa režīma interesēm konsolidēt visas institūcijas valsts attīstības procesā. Padomju okupācijas laikā līdz 1990. gadam ekumēniskās sadarbības iespējas kontrolēja padomju režīms, kas bija ieinteresēts starptautiskā mērogā sevi prezentēt kā līderi cīņā par mieru pasaulē. Šim nolūkam kā Vissavienības, tā atsevišķu republiku mērogā dažādu reliģiju un konfesiju pārstāvjiem Reliģisko kultu lietu padomes pilnvarotais pieprasīja rīkot kopējus aizlūgumus par mieru un piedalīties miera konferencēs. Lai labāk kontrolētu reliģisko organizāciju darbību, mazākās denominācijas apvienoja ar lielākām, starp kurām atsevišķas konfesijas baudīja īpašas privilēģijas, piemēram, tiesības izdot kalendārus vai dziesmu lapiņas. Tas savukārt veicināja savstarpēju neuzticību konfesiju vadības starpā. Toties atsevišķu draudžu mērogā kā aizspriedumus mazinošs faktors darbojās bieža citu konfesiju dievnamu izmantošana saviem dievkalpojumiem, kas pozitīvi iedarbojās uz kolektīvo atmiņu pēcpadomju laikā.

Atslēgvārdi: ekumenisms Latvijā, padomju politika, reliģija, kolektīvā atmiņa.

Religious Life in Latvia during the Period of Communist Totalitarianism: Individual Choices and Consequences

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The life stories of the residents of southeastern Latvia, collected at the Oral History Centre of Daugavpils University, contain information which makes it possible to reconstruct models of individual religious behaviour in the years between 1944 and 1991: rejection of religion and anti-religious activity; participation in anti-religious measures while secretly practising religion; refusing to take part in anti-religious measures and attendance of church; open protest against limitations on freedom of religion, etc. An analysis of oral history sources clarifies people's motivation when making choices and facing consequences of carrying these choices through.

Keywords: oral history, life stories, religious life, individual religious choice, southeastern Latvia, period of Communist totalitarianism.

The period of Communist totalitarianism in Latvian history (1944–1991) is characterized by atheistic governmental repressions on religious expression. The Soviet Union had an ideological objective of elimination of religion and its replacement with atheism. It necessitated an almost constant concealment of the rank-and-file of religious adherents. As a result, religious practice largely went underground. In order not to jeopardize their congregation members, the clergy often avoided the documentation of sacraments and other events of religious life.¹ Thus, written historical sources, in particular archival documents on religious life in Latvia from 1940s to 1980s, are quite modest, and often show signs of falsification. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to research this topic without utilizing oral testimony.²

Oral sources facilitate not only the documentation of the unrecorded past, (for example: Christian rituals carried out in secret, the avoidance strategies of atheistic activities, etc.), but also human perceptions, emotions, motivations, and the clarification of the era's socio-psychological atmosphere as rendered by 'ordinary people', and the historical nature of their consciousness. It meets the interests of historians who are less motivated by the desire to know rather than the desire to understand.³ In dialogue with the narrator, it is necessary to go deeper into the narrative and the narrator's personality. One must look at past events through the eyes of the observer or participant, and with that individual's inherent system of perception and value scale. The interview process supports Mark Block's metaphor of historical sources speaking only when they are asked questions.⁴ The interviewer may ask the witness questions about the past and gain a great opportunity to draw

from the primary source. But one must also consider limits of human memory and, quite possibly, misrepresentation of information.⁵

In order for oral testimonies to become helpful historical sources, both their preservation and availability to researchers is necessary. The Oral History Centre of the Daugavpils University (DU OHC), established in 2003, performs both of these functions. The Centre, from its very inception, has focused on audio recording of the historical experience of eastern Latvia's (Latgale and South Sēlija) residents. The project has facilitated systematic collection of living people's testimonies about life histories or eye witness accounts, experiences from persons who might never have thought of recording their own memories. Since its founding, the DU OHC has carried out ten oral history expeditions in southeastern Latvia's parishes and towns. It has compiled more than 1000 life stories of persons who were born in the 1910s–1930s and have diverse ethnical and religious backgrounds, social status, professions, education level, etc. These life stories contain information which makes it possible to reproduce the psychological atmosphere in a society that, according to testimonies, was dominated by tension and fear:

[...] few people came to church, people were afraid. [...] We went in secret, we then sang in church, wrapped in shawls, so as not to be recognized, and running toward the choir [...] We hid icons behind small curtains, we uncovered them only overnight. Other people hid icons in their wardrobes. Suppressed terribly, people were afraid to go to church.⁶

Despite the regime and its official ideology, all traditional church denominations continued to operate in eastern Latvia after the Second World War. In Daugavpils, during the Soviet period the regime demolished Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral, and the Orthodox church of Dormition of the Mother of God was converted into a library, but Martin Luther Lutheran church was transformed into a boxing training hall. Despite this, the faithful continued to congregate in common prayer and the congregations continued to operate, which is all revealed through oral testimonies.

Individuals still self-identified with the major religions, each according to his or her choice, and in consideration of his or her future goals and circumstances in relation to sovietization. Oral history sources allow scholars to focus on each population's specific situation from the 1940s to 1991, to uncover the factors that might have influenced the behaviour of people in the field of religion. The information contained in life stories serves as models allowing to explore various religious behaviours and find explanations for their motivation, rationale, feelings, and attitudes towards people's experiences, both then and now. Why might they have made a certain choice at a particular time, and to what extent do they bear responsibility for their choices today?

Individual choices varied over a wide spectrum, from denial of religion and involvement in its destruction to the complete devotion to God, becoming a priest or a monk. Only in such cases full religious affiliation was consistent and possible. But it stigmatized not only the person him/herself who chose to opt out of the secular life, but also all of their background – family, school, local community. Life stories are representative of a particular experiential awareness which allows one to determine the most common types of behaviour during the Communist totalitarian period:

- rejection of religion and anti-religious activity,
- secret practice of religion.

With the Soviet system taking hold, there was progressive decline in such manifestations as:

- open protest against limitations on freedom of religion,
- refusal to obey the demands of the authorities.

Rejection of religion and anti-religious activity were required by the Communist regime, but amongst the narrators this conduct was not particularly popular. Those non-religious who lived in Soviet Latvia and today continue to hold on to this atheistic worldview, are predominantly from outside of Latvia, from the greater USSR ‘the old Republics’, or were born after the Second World War. While cases can be found where the narrator as a youth abandoned religion and still today retains an atheist stance, they are relatively rare. For example, a Soviet era teacher, who devoted much energy to the atheist propaganda, today proudly remembers making the choice in favour of a life without faith in God:

[...], my elderly grandmother lived with us in our home, and she would have us pray. And, we prayed. And those were morning and evening prayers, as appropriate. And, somewhere up to the sixth grade, we still had faith in God. But when in the seventh grade, I joined the Young Communist League, I decided: He [God] does not exist! And that was that.⁷

The narrator refers to a relation between the membership in the Young Communist League, and the abandonment of the faith, which allows us to infer that the statement ‘He [God] does not exist’ was the result of the indoctrination of future Young Communists through propaganda. Also the adolescent’s desire not to fall out of favour with his peer group certainly played a role – these motivations are clearly visible, such as in a former pupil’s memories of having taken part in the procession of the Catholic feast and was ‘caught’:

We were shamed in front of the school [...]; I cried, I don’t remember, maybe a week! Because we were put in line with the hooligans and the worst students. And I remember when I came home, I said to my Mom: ‘I’m not going to church anymore, not the procession, not for anything!’⁸

Yet, the main reason why people stopped attending church and gradually adapted to it, was the fear of losing a job, or otherwise endangering one’s career and social growth. ‘It was not allowed to go to church. Teachers would stand and watch.’⁹ In addition, the Communist ‘proper behaviour’ was not only rejection of religion, but also an atheist activism:

[...] during the Soviet rule mandatory Atheist Clubs were established in high schools, the so-called Without-God Clubs. [...] I had to work there and run [one of these] so-called Without-God Clubs, and later another teacher took over. And many of us were even sent to church by the party committee – to watch for students attending our school. And I too, visited the church on behalf of the Party Committee.¹⁰

According to oral history sources compiled today, it is difficult to judge the disposition of the narrator directly engaged in these antireligious activities in their youth. It is possible that people approached the opportunity to erode the ‘stagnating’ tradition with enthusiasm and the excitement of youth.¹¹ In life stories, this past is often contentious, possibly influenced by awareness of the present, putting people

on the defensive today and seeking justification for their actions which in the past did not seem to be reprehensible. I cannot erase from my memory a 1940s picture in a private photo album: smiling local youths around a pile of skulls with the plundered Plater tombs in the background at St. Ludvig's Catholic Church in Krāslava. I cannot ascertain that these same young people also desecrated the crypt, but they purposely posed with a looted tomb in the background without feeling any psychological discomfort. Although enthusiasm certainly carried some Latvian citizens away at the beginning of the Soviet period, today they remember it with reluctance or, indeed, at the end of their lives today, they have forgotten their past delight.

Residents of eastern Latvia, born in 1920s–1930s and who became 'Soviet people' after the Second World War, were often unable to abandon their faith. The main factors that determined the individuals' devotion to religious practice were:

- demands of parents or other authoritative persons not to get involved in Communist activities, but participate in religious life:

... I never joined the octobrians, neither was I a pioneer. [...] my Granddad used to say: 'You are an Old Believer. How can you become an octobrian or a pioneer?' That was a kind of underground activity. Maybe, I was slightly restricted by this, but maybe pleased, yet I never took part in that kind of things.¹²

- the inability of the person to live by denying their faith:

[...] We were all believers, we were brought up in such a way that every Sunday we all had to go to church; the entire school would go to the confessional.¹³

In the course of an interview, the question of motivation for performance of religious ritual during the times of persecution is often left without a detailed answer – when remembering, the narrators assess themselves at the time, and clearly state that it went without saying, that in fact they did not see themselves as having had any choice:

- Why would you be required to marry [in church]?

- Well, as his family was devoutly religious, my family was religious, and how could we not marry?¹⁴

Life stories sometimes contain statements such as 'during Soviet times attending church was not prohibited'. But mostly these are declarations coming from the people who did not feel the need to attend service, or otherwise participate in religious life:

..Nobody forbade [church attendance]. The Young Communist League members could not attend. But, no one forbade ordinary people– you could go, and they went [...] went, went to church, those who wanted to. Who did not want did not go.¹⁵

Religious believers had to adapt to the atheist ideology based on authoritative guidelines. Consequently, individuals formed their relationships with God according to the family tradition, choice of profession, personal character, etc. Some did not go to church, although in their hearts they remained faithful and continued to observe religious traditions amongst their loved ones:

[...] Understandably, I did not attend church. But we still went to visit her [the narrator's mother] on [religious] holidays. At Easter, Christmas [...] we came and she was happy [...] but we always celebrated these holidays.¹⁶

There is no shortage of cases regarding people who broke from religious practice during the Soviet period, but before their death sought to make it up with the past and beg for God's redemption:

.. He [the narrator's husband] was a believer, but at that time there were other ideologies, he worked as a teacher. You know, a teacher could not even look in the direction of a church, let alone go there. The secretary of the party organization, [...] and when he retired, then he no longer had anything to do with the school, and then we could attend church freely. He began to go to church himself, and then it was a totally different life. We got married. We just jumped into a moving train ten days before his death. We managed it.¹⁷

Major events in life (baptism, marriage, funeral, etc.) often drew the residents of eastern Latvia to God's blessing. This is demonstrated by both the life stories as well as photos from private collections. For the most part, those born before the war never severed their ties with the church. These links are maintained by different people in various ways. For example, a former collective farm chairman tells that he did not conceal his faith, though he did not show himself in church visits or at religious rituals. The narrator seems to understand that it was only a favourable coincidence that he was "not found out", that no one reported him, and that he was not punished. The narrator does not count his merits. Because he belonged to the Old Believers faith, it seems obvious that he could not imagine himself (let alone his father!) without any religious practice and the proper ritual observance of the deceased. At the same time, during the Soviet years, he was clearly aware of how unsafe such behaviour was. An example of the former district executive officer reveals the persecution due to his mother's burial according to religious rites:

- And your father, how was he buried?
- I buried him with a clergyman.
- When was this?
- In 1971.
- You invited the clergy?
- The clergy and everything, as it should be.
- Were you not afraid of what would happen?
- Well, whether I was afraid or not afraid! Somehow no one took notice. [...] [On the other hand] our district Executive Committee Chairman was Kļader, Staņislav Janovič. His mother died, and he buried her in Preiļi, and you know someone photographed the entire funeral process [...] with a Catholic priest, and sent it somewhere. I don't know if he was ever vindicated, but it did not go well for him.¹⁸

There were many such people and families who took targeted actions quietly and unobtrusively, but steadfastly in protest against the state policy. This is clearly revealed in oral history testimonies. However, for objective and subjective reasons, since 1950s, the number and proportion of religious believers in the local society fell. The proportion of practising Catholics, Lutherans, Old Believers, and those of Orthodox faith progressively declined. The narrators' children's and

grandchildren's generations do not have the same adherence to religious beliefs. This is partly a result of the efforts of anti-religious activism, but parents also take partial responsibility:

[...] when I worked as a teacher, I obviously worked during the Soviet times, I did not teach the children anything [about God]...¹⁹

Religious believers tried to act with discretion in order not to jeopardize people close to them and themselves as well. The DU OHC has many testimonies of secret visits to church for baptisms and weddings, which took place under circumstances resembling a conspiracy:

[...] my children were also baptized, but they [were born in] 1952 and 1954. Well, then that was how Luberts was. He brought me a priest from Ilükste in the middle of the night with a motorcycle. The windows were closed, and so my kids were baptized. Anyway, I just asked the priest not to record this in the parish register, that I am a teacher [hits the table], that such things are not allowed.²⁰

A graduate of the pedagogical courses remembers the early 1950s:

[...] I got married ... well, one was expected to marry [in church]. ... openly you could not... Mom made arrangements in Indra, rather than Pustiņa, with a priest ... Well, Victor and I were there with Mom early in the morning, early, early... we woke up at four just with the first morning light and went to Indra. When we arrived, the priest was waiting... So, he just married us there, not even at the church altar, married in the sacristy... well, and when we came home, it was still early, early in the morning, but somehow someone had seen us.

Applying for work, the narrator needed to justify her past actions. She feigned innocence claiming that no wedding ceremony had taken place. Bluffing, she requested the name of her accuser, asked that the witness corroborated how he or she had seen her husband and herself visit church, and demanded evidence of the wedding. Finally, she accepted a job as a Young Pioneer group leader, and was afraid even to secretly attend church. Later, she herself admits, she was involved in the struggle against student visits to church, however, she did this grudgingly, and after the collapse of the totalitarian regime she has returned to the lap of the church.²¹

Also for funerals, families would, as much as possible, proceed with discretion, especially if the deceased or any of their relatives had a prominent social status. A woman whose youngest daughter at the end of the 1970s died of pneumonia, at her funeral recalled that the Lutheran pastor 'in secret conducted all of the prayers', then changed into 'civilian clothes' and walked away, but then an ambitious civil farewell ceremony followed, because her daughter was in the Komsomol and worked on the Board of the Chairman of a Collective Farm.²²

Another narrator's husband worked as a history teacher and was the school Party organization secretary:

- [...] my mother-in-law died on the 25th of March, 1985. Oh, then we had no freedom. And my husband (she [my husband's mother] was buried by a priest), and my husband stood in the distance, away, well, while the priest buried her, carried her into the church. He [the husband] did not go in the church. And at the grave, he also stood at a distance. He came to the grave only when the priest had left and she was buried.

- But there were no sanctions?
- No [repeats 4 times].²³

For participation in religious ceremonies (including funerals), people would often pay with their jobs or their CPSU membership card. Nevertheless, throughout the Soviet period, residents of eastern Latvia, including party functionaries and municipal leaders and other management staff, often buried their parents according to traditional Catholic, Orthodox, Old Believer or Lutheran religious rites. News about these practices frequently spread in the local community and often increased the respect of such officials in the eyes of the local population.

Oral testimonies rarely show reports of public protest against restrictions on religious freedom. Some reference can be found about third persons participating in overt religious rituals, which were followed by a variety of repressions, but first person accounts of conscious and overt resistance rarely appear. Also, when such facts are mentioned, the psychological confidence is not high:

We, religious people, now we had to wed in the church [...] we both had komsomol membership cards in our pockets [...] and straight after that it was in the newspapers that Vuguls was coming back from the church with a cross what with them both being komsomol members [...] so we both wrote that because we had wed in the church we were giving up komsomol, and we gave away those cards. [...] the secretary of the regional communist party committee asked:

- Did you wed in the church?
- Right.
- You are both komsomol members.
- Yes!
- Well, tonight at seven you must be at the party meeting in Gaigalava...
- Comrade, at seven we have holy mass in the church!

He just blinked and left. Imagine that kind of freedom, it was not so that you could not resist, you could actually, and it's just that [...] there were too many myrmidons...²⁴

It would seem that the narrator may have a tendency to attribute to himself today's frame of mind when expressing open pot-valiant mockery of the Komsomol and party officials, as if it were natural behaviour for a driver at a collective farm to behave in such a manner, and that this was typical behaviour, except for cowardly bootlickers.

In comparison with other historical sources, oral history has the advantage of presenting a person's life allowing one to see the consequences of choices made henceforth in life. Remembering their religious behaviour, today the narrator experiences a whole range of feelings and emotions, from joy and satisfaction to bitterness and regret. The joy is caused by a religious 'rehabilitation' in the post-Soviet period and the fact that the narrator today is not ashamed of his past behaviour:

[...] By chance, when the awakening period began, people would tell me: 'We know where you go to church. [...] You go to Grendze. You had a different coat and scarf, and you went to the Grendze Church by bicycle. They all said that Spūle was in church.' I asked, 'Why didn't you tell the school that I was in church?'²⁵

The narrator, a former teacher, emphasizes her loyalty to the Catholic tradition, for which during the Soviet period she would have paid dearly if the regime had

known – that is, if the surrounding community had revealed her secret. However, she was not reported to the school. As a result, this helped the teacher to maintain her ties with the church. This incident reveals a glimpse of the dynamics of the local population ('we'), and their cohesive stance against a power structure with atheist orientations. This instance could be considered an example of non-violent resistance in opposition to the regime's totalitarian manifestations.

Today, those who chose to suppress their religious faith, frequently feel differently. They are often tormented by remorse and bitterness caused by self-critical accusations about the relinquishment of traditional values as well as excessive compliance with the Communist power carrying out atheistic propaganda:

... but then, when the [19] 90s started, it was the worst moment for us [teachers], when you had to go to church if you wanted to go. And the women standing in the doorway would ask: 'Now, are you allowed?' 'Yes, we can!' Just answer it for yourself, and go. Until they all became used to it. Oh! [...] you go to church, as if they were immediately going to douse you in hot water.²⁶

Individuals are still looking for healing their trauma by turning to priests for advice, by visiting church worship services and by attempting to find other opportunities to redeem their past resignation, such as donations to the church:

How grateful I am that I did this in the autumn [...] I did this for fifty-four lats. I made two beautiful table covers for the altar, I sewed them myself [...] now I think that it is right, it is over, there is no money left. I did this because everyone of my great-grandfathers and parents married there and we were baptized there.... For our church something was ... needed.²⁷

Thus, during the era of Communist totalitarian rule (1944–1991) the people of Latvia faced the Communist party's and the Soviet administration's openly oppressive attitude toward religion and its believers. Individuals with career concerns usually avoided the practice of a family nurtured in religious traditions. The majority chose a different path, that of a secret practice of faith, and the need to adopt a double standard, which was well suited to the Soviet system at the time with its characteristic name and job mismatch. However, people's refusal to relinquish their religious traditions automatically placed them into the category of 'suspect' or even enemies of the Soviet system. This caused fear and frustration among the population, and understandable tensions in society. The memories recorded at the beginning of the 21st century are full of traumatic suffering, because the transformation into a 'Soviet Person' involved not only adopting certain new qualities and getting adapted to new values, but also rejecting the values which had long been familiar. Today, decades after the collapse of the Communist regime, when the norms enforced then can no longer be justified in any way, there is more and more often bitterness in people's memories about that spiritual retreat committed by them many years ago. Many blame themselves for not preserving, or being able to transmit to their children, religious beliefs, values and thought acquired earlier in the pre-war Latvian society, but then replaced by Marxist dogmas under the pressure of Communist propaganda.

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²⁵ Olga Spūle's life-story.

²⁶ Janīna Gekiša's life-story.

²⁷ Ibid.

Kopsavilkums

Dienvidaustrumu Latvijas cilvēku dzīvesstāsti no Daugavpils Universitātes Mutvārdu vēstures centra krājuma ļauj rekonstruēt individuālās reliģiskās uzvedības modeļus laikā no 1944. līdz 1991. gadam, proti, atteikšanos no reliģijas un iesaistīšanos antireliģiskās aktivitātēs; piedalīšanos antireliģiskajos pasākumos, vienlaikus slepeni praktizējot reliģiju; izvairīšanos no dalības antireliģiskajos pasākumos un baznīcas apmeklēšanu; atklātu protestu pret ticības brīvības ierobežojumiem u. c. Mutvārdu vēstures avotu analīze palīdz noskaidrot motivāciju, kas mudināja cilvēku izvēlēties kādu no reliģiskās uzvedības modeļiem, un atklāj šīs izvēles sekas.

Atslēgvārdi: *mutvārdu vēsture, dzīvesstāsti, reliģiskā dzīve, individuālās reliģiskās izvēles, dienvidaustrumu Latvija, komunistiskā totalitārisma periods.*

The Origin of the Hill of Crosses, Devotional Practices and Music of the Pilgrimages

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The Hill of Crosses is not only a religious object but also a symbol of national and religious freedom. This symbolism started as a result of historical, religious and political events and that proves an initial premise about the identity of the Hill of Crosses with its unique historical origin and still lasting pilgrimages with different folk devotional practices, prayers, hymns and music. The study aims to justify this assumption.

Keywords: Hill of Crosses, Stations of the Cross, religious freedom, national freedom, devotional practices.

There are countries all over the world where Christianity is much deeper rooted than in Lithuania and Poland. Nevertheless, you will never meet such popular piety and such expressions of spirituality that exist in the cult of the Hill of Crosses. It is a unique phenomenon all over the world. The Hill of Crosses is in Lithuania – 12 km north of the city of Šiauliai, not far from the highway to Riga.

The hill is on the left bank of the Kulpe stream, surrounded by its small nameless affluent. It is 70 m long and 60 m wide, the height of a two-storey house. Geologically, it is the highest point of the area. Today it is under the subordination of the Šiauliai diocese. People often call it the hill or cemetery of Jurgaiciai, the hill of the castle, the hill of crosses, or simply a holy hill.

More than 160 years ago, this place was mentioned as a sacred one for its Feast of Indulgence. It was visited by the pilgrims from different Lithuanian regions followed by ethnographic processions or attendance by separate individuals. During the years of Soviet occupation, they came at night-time or under some non-religious pretext. After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990, pilgrims from the USA, Israel, Japan, China, Canada, Germany, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Byelorussia and especially from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland visited and are still visiting the Hill of Crosses.

Nowadays the research of the pilgrimage to the Hill of Crosses is only at the initial stage because of the taboo during the preceding Soviet occupation. The beginning of the pilgrimage to the Hill of Crosses is initially related to the origin of the cult of the Hill of Crosses with its devotional practices, prayers and hymns, along with the geography of pilgrims. The research is based on the assumption that the cult of the Hill of Crosses is firstly revealed by its unique historical origin

together with a great number of pilgrimages, displaying different folk devotions, offering prayers, hymns and music.

Historical, ethnological and ethno-musical materials supplement these data.

There are a lot of legends about the Hill of Crosses. One of them tells that in pre-Christian Lithuania, at the site of the Hill there was a big fight between the Crusaders from Riga and the local pagans, during which many monks and soldiers were killed. Local people mounded a hill in commemoration of this fight and lit a holy fire, nursed by the priestesses. Livonian Chronicles mention the fact that there used to be a castle, Kule or Kulan, that was burnt by the Crusaders in 1348. The name of the castle could have originated from the nearby Kulpe stream. With the coming of Christianity, the pagan altar was destroyed but Lithuanians kept worshipping the Hill¹.

Concerning the appearance of the first cross on the Hill, there is also a legend about a chapel on the Hill from the times immemorial to which the rebels came to pray in 1863. When the Russian Cossacks learnt about it, they kept the door closed and in three days' time buried the rebels. In the course of time, the chapel collapsed and there appeared a pit on the Hill, and people started putting up crosses there in commemoration of the buried-alive rebels and built a chapel².

According to the historical sources, in the 19th century Poland and Lithuania, being under the oppression of tsarist Russia, were fighting for their freedom. In 1830 the Polish were the first to organize a revolt in order liberate the occupied territories from the Russian rule. On March 25, 1831, Lithuanians joined them. The rebels suffered the biggest losses near Šiauliai³. It is told that in 1831 the chapel was built by the relatives of the slain because the tsarist powers did not let them pay proper tribute to their dead; from 1850 Indulgence Feasts started on the Hill of Crosses⁴. The strict tsarist regime evoked further Polish and Lithuanian religious and national manifestations. In 1863 a big revolt took place that included all Lithuania and Poland, but at the end of the year it was put down. There are stories telling about the executions on the Hill of Crosses in suppression of the revolt. It is thought that on the western slope four rebels were shot. Another story tells that after the suppression of the revolt, the tsarist general, Muravjov the Hangman, built something similar to a concentration camp. About one thousand rebels died there of famine and terrible weather conditions. Only eleven martyrs survived. They were put to death on the western slope. Their bodies were thrown to the pit on the Hill and the tsarist army trampled their grave in order not to leave any trace. Local people and pilgrims from the neighbouring parishes had built crosses but they were destroyed by the administration. In 1888, in the USA, the Lithuanian paper "Lithuanian Voice" wrote that the Stations of the Cross (14 of them) were put at the foot of the Hill in commemoration of the slain and all the dead⁵.

The chapel was destroyed during World War II. Only the foundation remained. Nowadays the statue of Our Lady stands there.

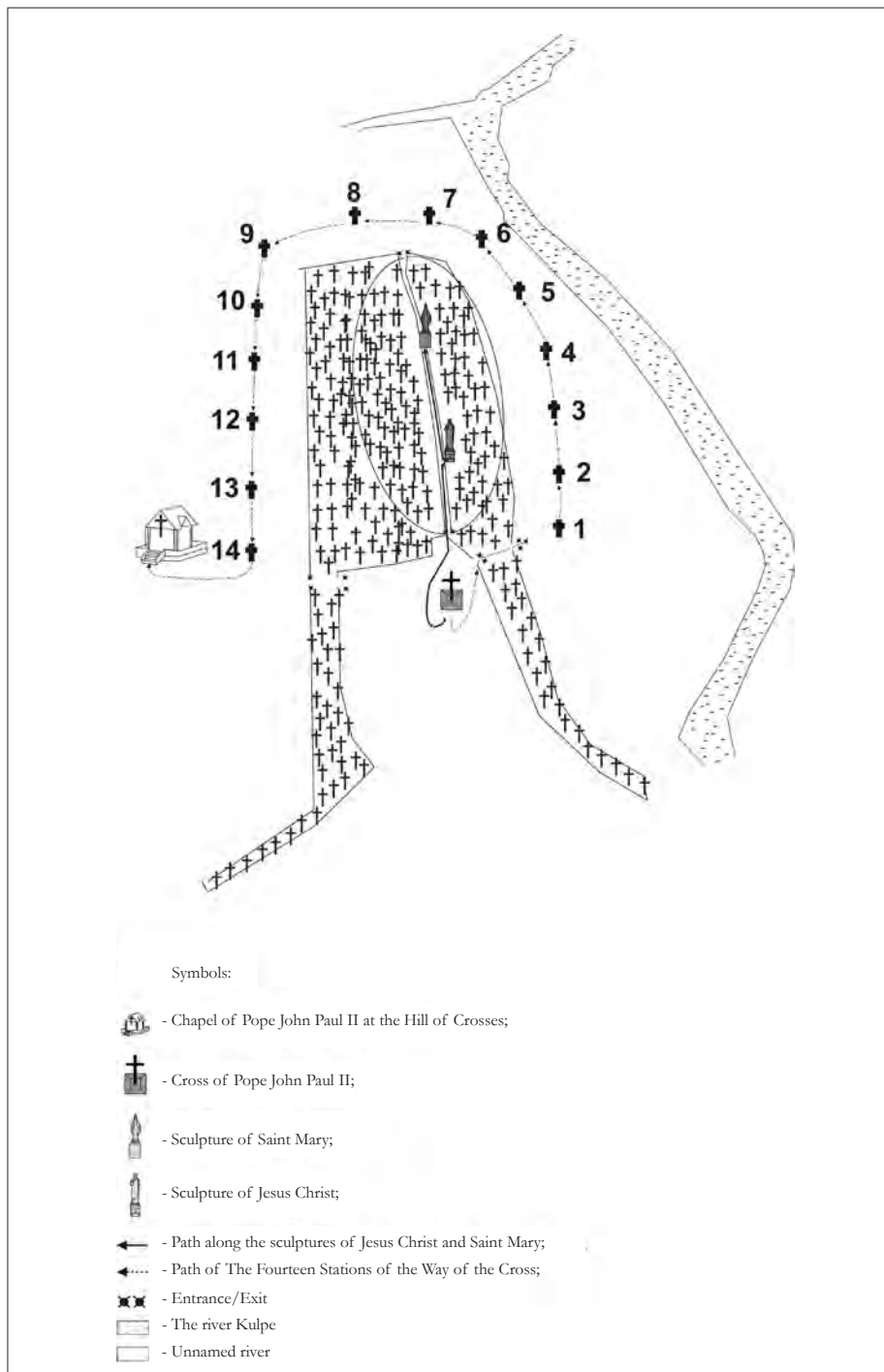
In Soviet times, communists and atheists five times destroyed the Hill⁶. In 1990, Lithuania regained its independence. Pope John Paul II visited the Hill of Crosses on September 7, 1993 (*Picture 1*).



Picture 1. The Hill of Crosses and Pope John Paul II

During his visit, he was taken to the Hill of Crosses and celebrated the Holy Mass in a nearby chapel. This event made the Hill of Crosses popular all over the world. The Pope evaluated the common Lithuanian and Polish struggle for national and religious freedom in his words on the Hill of Crosses: “Climb the Hill and remember all the sons and daughters of this country who were sentenced, put to prison, sent to concentration camps, exiled to Siberia or Kolyma, put to death.<...>⁷. By saying this, the Pope also meant Polish rebels who died for the freedom of their country because the Hill of Crosses is a symbol of the struggle for Polish and Lithuanian religious freedom.

According to the collected materials, the Hill of Crosses is visited in groups and individually for organized or private devotions. People build crosses or other signs (stakes, chapels, paintings, etc.), leave rosaries. All of them are either votive signs of gratitude or pleading for something (health, success, sobriety, happy marriage, etc.), or memorial signs (in remembrance of the dead, perished, exiled, sentenced, etc.), or in remembrance of historical events, jubilees and so on. Some come with promises; they pray or sing at the Stations of the Cross and pray the Rosary in the Holy Name of Jesus, or ascend the Hill on their knees (*Picture 2*). Other pilgrims pray for their dead, singing and playing different musical instruments of the Cross⁸.



Picture 2. The plan of the Stations of the Cross

No.	DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES	PRAYERS, HYMNS
1.	Celebration of the Feast of Indulgence.	Rosary in the Holy Name of Jesus Stations of the Cross
2.	Processions and individual practices	
3.	Commemoration of the dead	
4.	Praying	
5.	Singing of hymns	
6.	Playing musical instruments	
7.	Ascending the Hill on the knees	Rosary in the Holy Name of Jesus
8.	Building of the crosses	Silence

Table: *Devotional practices, prayers and hymns on the Hill of Crosses*

The table shows eight devotional practices performed on the Hill. Only one of them, building of the crosses, is done in silence.

On the basis of the collected materials we can make the following conclusions:

1. The pilgrimage on the mound of Jurgaičiai (the Hill of Crosses) started as a result of the 1831 and 1863 Polish and Lithuanian revolts against the tsarist Russia and the 1940–1990 Soviet occupation along with national and religious oppression, going back to 1850 when the Feast of Indulgence on the Hill started.
2. The number of pilgrimages increased after Pope John Paul II visited Lithuania on September 7, 1993, when the news about the Hill of Crosses spread all over the world.
3. The Hill of Crosses is a sacred location for the Cross, religious unity, religious cult and a burial place of the heroes.

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Kopsavilkums

Krusta kalns Lietuvā jau vairāk nekā 160 gadus tiek uzskatīts par unikālu svētvietu pasaulē un tiek cienīts ne vien kā reliģisks objekts, bet arī kā tautas dvēseles, tautiskuma, brīvības simbols. Šo simboliku veidojuši vēsturiskie, reliģiskie un ģeopolitiskie apstākļi. Krusta kalna diskurss apstiprina darbā izvirzīto hipotēzi, ka šī kalna kulta savdabība vispirms atklājas tā unikālajā vēsturiskajā izcelsmē un svētceļojumos, kas notiek gan virzienā uz kalnu un no kalna un ko pavada tautas lūgšanu tradīcijas, garīgās dziesmas un mūzika.

Atslēgvārdi: *Krusta kalns, svētceļojumi, nacionālā brīvība, reliģiskā brīvība, dievbijības izpausmes formas.*

Relationships between Old Believers and Orthodox Church Clergy in Dinaburg District at the Turn of the 19th Century

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At the turn of the 19th century the Orthodox Church of the Russian Empire was playing a crucial role in home politics: it had to unify all Russian people on the basis of one religion. At the same time the Old Belief became its rival and proclaimed itself to be the only true Russian religion. To solve the problem in Vitebsk Province, *The Fraternity of Saint Vladimir* and *An AntiRaskol Committee of Missionaries* were established. Three Orthodox missionaries were working in Dinaburg district. They organised public and private conversations and discussions with Old Believers, distributed special books and propagated the Orthodox doctrine. In general their activities were not successful – only in rare cases they persuaded Old Believers to perform christening into Orthodoxy. One of the reasons of their failure was the efficient activity of Old Believers' spiritual leaders, who resisted Orthodox clergy and spread the ideas of Old Belief among local Orthodox communities. Also Old Believers' firm devotion to their religious traditions and their willingness to protect them by any means favoured the conservation of the Old Belief to the present day.

Keywords: Latvian Old Believers, Dinaburg district, Orthodox Church of the Russian Empire, Orthodox missionaries, Old Believers' spiritual leaders.

Russian Old Believers are considered to be a unique ethnic and religious part of modern Latvian society. The majority of them live in Riga and eastern part of Latvia – Latgale. Dinaburg district – nowadays Daugavpils region – historically became a centre of the social initiatives of Latvian Old Believers and still is of great importance in the development of Old Believers' culture in Latvia and the nearby regions. At the end of the 19th century Dinaburg district was part of Vitebsk Province that was ruled by the officials of the Russian Empire, therefore the main political and social ideology was based on the values of Orthodoxy.

By that time the Orthodox Church of the Russian Empire was playing a crucial role in domestic policy of the state. The schism of the Russian Orthodox Church in the middle of the 17th century and the appearance of *the Raskol*, nowadays called the Old Belief, as a different and unique alternative confession to Orthodoxy became one of the chief sources of troubles for the reformed and nationally recognized Orthodox Church.

The main purpose of the state was to realise such a policy that would ensure stability in the religiously, socially, ethnically and economically diverse society of

the Russian Empire. It was precisely the protection of the Orthodoxy as a ruling Russian belief that made the state treat other beliefs as “alien”¹

However, the Old Belief had a special status: it was not a foreign religion and it had very strong relations to Russian history, culture and the Orthodoxy itself. In fact, it was the Orthodoxy that had not accepted the reforms of Patriarch Nikon in the 17th century and kept the existing traditions, considering them to be the only right and true ones. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church tried to prove by all means that it was the only true religion for the Russian people. And this struggle between two religious traditions continues nowadays, too.

From the very beginning the relationships between the Orthodoxy and the Old Belief were very complicated and indefinite. For a long time nobody tried to discuss and analyse them. Usually, researchers of both confessions did not accentuate this problem, that is why with the lapse of time stable stereotypes were formed, and they were not grounded on historical facts. It should be noted that there is not much information about the relationships between the Old Believers and the Orthodox Believers on the territory of Latvia, so the present research is one of the first attempts to analyse these questions.

In the 1880s and 1890s the majority of the population in the territory of Dinaburg district was Catholics; Old Believers² constituted 28.04%, Orthodox Believers 5.93%, and Yedinovertsy³ 0.51% of 74 5000 of the overall number of inhabitants.⁴ The majority of Old Believers belonged to Fedosejevtsy creed, who did not organise religious weddings and called their wives “cohabiters”⁵; however, little by little they started to register their matrimones in police departments and write them down into parish registers.⁶ Nowadays Latvian Old Believers belong to the Pomortsy creed, but still do not accept the Sacrament of Marriage, although they use a special ceremony for this.

A big number of Old Believers in Vitebsk province and Dinaburg district made the tsarist government establish a special organisation that would purposefully eliminate the Old Belief. Thereby, in the year of 1887, the *Fraternity of Saint Vladimir*⁷ was founded, under whose wing in 1894 an *AntiRaskol Committee of Missionaries*⁸ started to work. The *Fraternity of Saint Vladimir* published short extracts from discussions with Old Believers (6 issues, 2000 copies each) which took place in the hall of Vitebsk Theological Seminary and were run by the lecturer T. Nikiforovsky.⁹ The main purpose of the *Fraternity* was to “weaken the Raskol and to protect Orthodox inhabitants from harmful influence <...> of the Raskol”.¹⁰ To reach this aim the *Fraternity* formed a special staff of missionaries (in 1897, thirteen of them were working in Vitebsk province), who held discussions with Old Believers, distributed free books and booklets, and propagated Orthodox doctrine.¹¹ There were three Orthodox priests in Dinaburg district who took part in the work of the *Fraternity*: Konstantin Shirkevich, a teacher of the parish school in Yakubino village; the following year he was substituted by Aleksandr Scherbakov, a student of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Stefan Kupalov, a priest of the Orthodox church in Lipinishki village, and Mitrofan Schesnovich, a priest of the Orthodox church in Graveri village. It is precisely these people who made reports that contain a lot of valuable information, not always impartial, about the relationships between Orthodox and Old Believer inhabitants.

According to the reports, the Old Believers lived next door to all nine Orthodox parishes of Dinaburg district. There were four official Old Believers' praying houses – two in the city of Dinaburg, one in Moskvino and one in Danishevka. Other Old Believers used private houses for praying.¹² It is necessary to note, that despite the law of 1883 “About giving to *raskolniki* some rights for civil and occasional religious rites”¹³ that allowed Old Believers to practise their religion officially, in reality the majority of their praying houses were closed down by the police and only a few parishes succeeded in acquiring permission to restore theirs.¹⁴

In 1897, K. Shirkevich held one public and several private debates. During the public discussion he tried to explain the teaching about the Sacrament of Confession¹⁵, and in private meetings he talked about dogmas, belief and rituals, tried to persuade Old Believers to become loyal to the tsar and to follow the law on “sectarian” behaviour in public.¹⁶ Over the following years K. Shirkevich organised public readings of several Orthodox publications, they usually lasted one hour, four hours on holidays.¹⁷ He noted that Old Believers and Orthodox people attended these meetings “in quantity” and with interest, and exchanged their opinions during breaks.

During the meetings with Old Believers all missionaries noticed that there was no hate towards the Orthodox clergy anymore; Old Believers willingly turned to the priests for books, they returned them with gratitude and asked questions about the materials they had read.¹⁸ Sometimes Old Believers invited Orthodox priests to celebrate Christmas and took part in Orthodox divine services, too.¹⁹ Those Old Believers who lived far from their spiritual leaders often hesitated over their religious beliefs and “seemed to become Orthodox”.²⁰

However, sometimes missionaries came across distrust and even enmity. A significant event happened in Folvarki village in 1898. The missionary M. Schesnovich started a conversation about Old Believers and their unwillingness to join the Orthodox Church. One of the listeners, an old grey-haired man with a long beard emerged from the crowd and exclaimed: “Tell me, father, who loves Christ more – you or me?” The missionary answered that the old man loved less because he did not follow the Commandments, which was the only true way to prove love to Him. But the old man answered: “No, I love Him more, and because of my love I will cut off my fingers on both hands! Give me axes and I will prove that I love Christ!” M. Schesnovich tried to counter that there was no need in such a sacrifice and it was important just to follow the Commandments.²¹

Commonly missionaries influenced the youths who were more open to new ideas, often acted against their parents' will and disclaimed their belief. Besides, conversion to Orthodoxy helped to solve many social and economic problems. In January of 1898, in the village of Novoye Rachino a young Old Believer girl decided to convert to Orthodoxy and get married to an Orthodox Believer man who lived by an Orthodox church in Lipinishki village. It was impossible to do it openly, so the girl ran from her parents' house and kept in hiding for several days. Her parents these plans and started to search for her; they put armed guards around the village, Lipinishki Orthodox church and the priest's house. Only owing to the help of the police the bride and the groom got to the Lipinishki Orthodox church for the wedding ceremony. Eventually, the bride's father cursed his daughter.²²

Quite often Old Believers conversed to Orthodoxy before their death, usually the ones who some time ago had conversed to Orthodoxy came back to the Old Belief. For example, in May 1898, in the village of Pavlovka, which belonged to Krivosheyeva village Old Believers' parish, an eighty-year old peasant decided to repent his sins and receive Communion. Three days he begged his Old Believer neighbours to send for the Orthodox priest. When the priest came, the old man openly cursed the Old Belief and its followers for inhuman treatment.²³ A similar case happened in the neighbouring village of Brentelishki: an old poor Old Believer had spent his last days with the support of his neighbours. Unexpectedly, before his death, he wanted to receive Communion. The man had to wait for the priest for a long time and, when he conversed to Orthodoxy, his neighbours refused to support him.²⁴

The above mentioned cases show that the Old Belief as a religious tradition was extremely important for Old Believers and sometimes it lead to fanaticism and made them break the Commandments of Christ. To protect the interests of the Old Belief, every member was significant, that is why any case of conversion to Orthodoxy was treated very painfully, and Orthodox missionaries tried to exploit it as much as possible. The above mentioned cases, however, were not widespread in Dinaburg district, the majority of Old Believers kept to their religious traditions.

In 1894, in Vitbesk province only 73 people officially conversed to Orthodoxy (there is no information if there were Old Believers among them), 39 people were inhabitants of Dinaburg district.²⁵ In 1897, the Orthodox priests of Dinaburg district baptised 18 Old Believers²⁶, next year – 14.²⁷ The missionary M. Schesnovich persuaded Old Believers' families to send 10 children to the Orthodox parish school.²⁸ All in all, the aims of the *Fraternity of Saint Vladimir* were not reached – the Old Belief continued to exist and firmly kept its positions. Besides, three of the six Orthodox parishes of Dinaburg district partly or fully conversed to the Old Belief.²⁹ Only in the village of Malinovka Orthodox believers constituted the majority – 70% of all the village inhabitants.³⁰ So, Russian inhabitants of Vitebsk province and Dinaburg district continued to observe the traditions of the Old Belief.

According to official publications of the Russian Empire, the durability of the Old Belief was explained by its ancient traditions, the unity of the members and their wealth; however, their defiance of new ideas was also pointed out.³¹ *Nastavniki* or spiritual leaders of the Old Belief parishes were treated as the main enemies of the Orthodoxy because they had an enormous influence on the parishes and set them against the Orthodoxy and its priests.³² At the end of the 19th century the most active spiritual leaders were called *Raskolouchiteli* or “teachers of *the Raskol*”. They were a kind of missionaries who propagated their belief and tried to persuade Orthodox Believers as well.

In accordance with the information provided by a Dinaburg district police officer in 1886, there were 14 “teachers of *the Raskol*” with more than 20 thousands of followers.³³ These spiritual leaders were using not only traditional ways of missions, but also radical methods: often they disorganised Orthodox missions, cursed Orthodox priests in public and baptised in the Old Belief. They called Orthodox doctrine “heresy of Nikon” and saw their mission in protection of the Old Belief.³⁴

One of the most active spiritual leaders was Ivan Zelenkov from the village of Yakubino. In the 1880s he was considered to be “extremely harmful” because he not only organised prayers in his own house, but also spread the Old Belief among Orthodox inhabitants.³⁵ He visited Orthodox parishes, buried Orthodox Believers within Old Belief traditions. If he saw an Orthodox choir at the cemetery of the neighbouring Rubenishki village, he and his followers sang as loudly as possible and thus disturbed the Orthodox ceremonies.³⁶ Such radical I. Zelenkov’s activities are easy to explain: the village of Rubenishki was one of those rare territories where the majority of the inhabitants were Orthodox, so I. Zelenkov fought for his Belief using all means available.³⁷ He was even punished by the Governor of Vitebsk, and the Old Believers’ praying house in Rubenishki was closed down.³⁸

Another harmful “teacher of *the Raskol*” in the 1880s lived in the village of Krivosheyeva – Ivan Trofimov.³⁹ In fact, he did the same as I. Zelenkov, but he also denied the Sacrament of Marriage, abused the Sacrament of Communion and propagated the idea of refusing to pray for the tsar, which was obligatory for all the confessions in the Russian Empire.⁴⁰ I. Trofimov was punished, too, and the Old Believers’ praying house in Krivosheyeva was closed down.⁴¹

At the end of the 19th century such villages of Dinaburg district as Starodvorye, Pantelishki and Bikernieki were considered to be the most dangerous because of their spiritual leaders – Yegor Zelenkov, Flor Andreyev and Mihey Sholkov. The so-called “fanaticism” of Old Believers was so strong that they avoided any contacts with the Orthodox Believers, despised Orthodox priests and rituals.⁴² Some of the Old Believers’ spiritual leaders in private visited houses of Orthodox Believers, propagated their views and cast doubts on the Orthodox Church.⁴³

Without a shadow of a doubt, these “teachers of *the Raskol*” bothered both the Orthodox Church and power structures of the Russian Empire, therefore towards the end of the 19th century those Old Believers’ spiritual leaders who allowed “ex-Orthodox” Believers to assist at their ceremonies, were condemned.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding that, the Old Belief continued to oppose Orthodox missionaries and tried to prove that it was the only Russian Faith and that other faiths, including the Orthodoxy, were identified as “alien”. The Old Belief did not accept the national character of the Orthodox Church and was its rival in preserving “truly Russian” piety.⁴⁵ It was principally owing to the Old Believers’ spiritual leaders who inspired their followers to keep their traditions by all means and in any situation.

In conclusion, it is evident that this struggle between the Orthodoxy and the Old Belief was a manifestation of a deep and, indeed, artificial split within the Russian people that created cultural and religious borders and put them at war during several centuries.

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- ² Officially Old Believers were called *raskolniki* that stressed their belonging to *the Raskol*. Russian: раскольники.

- ³ Russian: единоверцы; an attempt initiated by Russian Orthodox Church to unite Orthodox and Old Believers by keeping religious ceremonies of Old Believers and involving Orthodox Clergy as head of parish.
- ⁴ National Historical Archives of Belarus (NHAB) Fond (Fnd.) 1430., Inventory (In.) 1, Folder (F.) 37873, Page (P.) 4
- ⁵ Nowadays we would call it “a civil marriage”.
- ⁶ NHAB Fnd. 1430, In. 1, F. 38547, P. 13
- ⁷ Russian: Свято-Владимирское братство
- ⁸ Russian: Противораскольничий миссионерский комитет
- ⁹ Обзор Витебской губернии за 1894 год. – Витебск: Губернская типография, 1894. – с. 58
- ¹⁰ “Содействие ослаблению раскола и ограждение православного населения от вредных влияний <.> со стороны раскола.” NHAB Fnd. 2256, In. 1, F. 1, P. 1
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Kopsavilkums

19. gadsimta beigās Krievijas impērijas pareizticīgā Baznīca spēlēja noteicošo lomu valsts iekšpolitikā: tai bija jāapvieno visus krievu iedzīvotāju uz reliģiskās bāzes. Tajā pašā laikā vecticība kļuva par tās sāncensi un pasludināja sevi par vienīgo īsto krievu reliģiju. Lai atrisinātu šo problēmu Vitebskas guberņā, tika izveidota Svētā Vladimira brālība un Pretšķeltniecības misionāru komiteja. Trīs pareizticīgo misionāri strādāja Dinaburgas apriņķī. Viņi organizēja publiskas un privātas diskusijas ar vecticībniekiem, izplatīja speciālas grāmatas un propagandēja pareizticīgo mācību. Kopumā viņu aktivitātes nebija veiksmīgas – tikai retos gadījumos viņiem izdevās pārliecināt vecticībniekus pāriet pareizticībā. Viens no viņu neveiksmes iemesliem bija aktīva vecticībnieku garīgo līderu darbība. Viņi pretojās pareizticīgo garīdzniecībai un izplatīja vecticības idejas vietējo pareizticīgo kopienu vidū. Vecticībnieku pastāvīgā sekošana savām reliģiskajām tradīcijām un viņu vēlme sargāt tās par katru cenu veicināja vecticības saglabāšanos līdz mūsdienām.

Atslēgvārdi: *Latvijas vecticībnieki, Dinaburgas apriņķis, Krievijas impērijas Pareizticīgā baznīca, pareizticīgo misionāri, vecticībnieku garīgie līderi.*

Ancient Baltic Religion: Evaluation of Archetypes Authenticity

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The article deals with the authenticity of evaluation of ancient Baltic religion archetypes: images of wild boars, cult of the maternal deities, Latvian theonym *Coracle*. Recently some attempts were undertaken to reinstate the new mythological elements which require in-depth verification since such innovations are frequently founded only on the researcher's guesses and erroneous elucidation of the linguistic data.

Keywords: Baltic religion, *Aestii*, *Mater deorum*, *Coracle*, images of wild boars.

Most of the ancient Baltic religion and mythology investigators¹ start their analysis from the fact-finding in Publius Cornelius Tacitus' (55–117 A.D.) work *De origine et situ Germanorum* (98 A.D.). In subsection 45 he writes:

ergo iam dextro Suebici maris litore Aestiorum gentes adluuntur, quibus ritus habitusque Sueborum, lingua Britannicae propior. matrem deum venerantur. insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant: id pro armis omnique tutela securum deae cultorem etiam inter hostis praestat. rarus ferri, frequens fustium usus. frumenta ceterosque fructus patientius quam pro solita Germanorum inertia laborant. sed et mare scrutantur, ac soli omnium sucinum, quod ipsi glesum vocant, inter vada atque in ipso litore legunt. nec quae natura quaeve ratio gignat, ut barbaris, quaesitum compertumve; diu quin etiam inter cetera eiectamenta maris iacebat, donec luxuria nostra dedit nomen. ipsi in nullo usu: rude legitur, informe perfertur. pretiumque mirantes accipiunt².

The translation is as follows:

Thus, the right-hand shore of the Suebic Sea washes the tribes of the Aestii.; their customs and dress are Suebic, but their language is closer to British. They worship the mother of the gods; as an emblem of that superstition they wear the figures of wild boars; this boar acts as weapons or any other protection, and guarantees to the votary of the goddess a mind at rest even in the midst of foes. They use swords rarely, clubs frequently. Grain and other products of the earth they cultivate with morepatience, not laziness, customary to Germans: nay, they search the sea also, and are the only people who gather amber in the shallows and on the shore itself, which they themselves call 'glesum'. Nor have they, being barbarians, inquired or learned what substance or process produces it: nay, it lay there long among the rest of the flotsam and jetsam of the sea, until our [Roman] luxury gave it a name. To the natives it is useless: it is gathered crude; forwarded [to Rome] unshaped: they are astonished to be paid for it².

In accordance with the uncertainty of the cultural facts mentioned in Tacitus' work, this problem is determined as the cause of undefined ethnic dependence of the *Aestii* tribe, all of the facts have to be taken with warily circumspection and criticism. The motivation of such judgment could be traced in some earlier papers, for instance, in Jonas Balys' selected works. He⁴ points out: "We do not know exactly which of Baltic tribes, whose people worshiped the Mother of gods, Tacitus (A.D. 55–120) kept in mind when presenting the denotation *Aestiorum gentes* (which Kazimieras Būga explains as *aisčiai*). Estonians deem them to be their ancestors. Latvians, due to the influence of Līv and Estonian cultural tradition, have many deities of that kind, for instance, maternal deities: *uguns māte*, *zemes māte*, *veļu māte* (Goddesses of fire, of land, of the departed etc.). These goddesses are called 'daughters' by Suomi – *tar* (*Ilmatar* 'air's daughter'). Lithuanians do possess goddesses attributed neither to the mother, nor the daughter conception (mythologeme 'Sun's daughter' has to be recognized as a borrowing from Latvian folklore), but they have Gabija, Žemyna, Laima".

Despite the fact that there are no archeological findings of service dress or cap of zoomorphic images in the Baltic area, the figures of wild boars are considered a representative feature of the Prussian religion⁵. This point of view is particularly frequent in the works of the so-called matriarchal theory representatives such as Maria Gimbutas⁶, Rimantas Balsys⁷, Vladimir Toporov⁸, Nijolė Laurinkienė⁹ and the others¹⁰. Unfortunately, these investigators in every way ignore the fact that "creatures such as ravens, wolves and boars, known to be symbols of the warrior gods, were used to decorate weapons, shields, helmets and ornaments in Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia <...>"¹¹.

Helmets from Vendel (Sweden, 7th cent. A.D.), are the most convenient archeological finding to prove the existence of the German or Celtic (s. further) cultural motifs in subsection 45 of Tacitus' work, having nothing in common with the cult of *Mater deorum*, attributed by the antique author to *Aestii*, unless this tribe was of German, instead of Baltic, origin. One of the artifacts is decorated with warriors' images, which was worn by warriors as a helmet with a boar head on its top¹².

Scholars interpret this sign as a glyph to prevent military adversity and misfortune, or used as amulets against the evil eye¹³, i.e. this function is identical to the one mentioned in Tacitus' work.

Another example of non-Baltic, rather German or Celtic¹⁴ cultural heritage relicts¹⁵ in the cited fragment might be decorative elements of Gundestrup Cauldron's panels¹⁶. This outstanding ritual vessel – a great silver bowl from Denmark, known as the Gundestrup Cauldron – was found in a peat bog in Jutland in 1891¹⁷.

According to John R. Hinnells¹⁸, "a series of panels had been torn off the bowl and placed inside it. Those from the outside represent four male and three female busts, assumed to be divinities, while the plates from the inside show elaborate scenes which have provoked much speculation. One shows a horned human figure sitting cross-legged beside a stag, a **boar** and a serpent, while on another side there is a towering male figure apparently putting a smaller man into a vessel, and alongside warriors and men playing trumpets are marching or riding. <...> Certain features <...> belong to Celtic tradition, but there are other figures which are Mediterranean

in style or they have been thought to have come from farther east. Some believe that the bowl was made in Gaul, and others think that it came from the Black Sea area. There has been much argument about its date, the favoured estimate being the first century BCE”.

The most interesting and important construct of Gundestrup Cauldron is associated with military topics. It presents a gigantic man with a cap, who probably pushes a warrior through Valhalla's¹⁹ gate.

Actually, the salient object of the picture is commonly interpreted as a pot. In accordance with mythological data, I mean the 540 gates to Valhalla of which there was only one through which the slain could get to Odin's sacred place, *Valgrind*, which in Old Icelandic means ‘the grating of the gates of Valhalla; also the gate of the Slain’. Odin was the only one who knew the secret of door lock. Thus, probably, the gigantic man with the cap might be interpreted as Odin as well. This presumption could be substantiated with the epithets of the god: ON *Grímr* ‘covered with a hood or cowl’, ON *Grímnir* ‘ditto’ (IED 216), ON *Hqtr* ‘wearing a hat-knoll’²⁰, ON *Valfǫðr* ‘the father of the slain’²¹.

The most relevant item of the constructs mentioned above is the boar portrayal on the warriors' helmets. This decorative image, widely known as a peculiarity of Anglo-Saxons', was used not only for helmet decoration but also for the sword sheath. Despite the efforts to explain the aetiology of the boar symbol²² and its functionality²³, it is safe to state the presence of German or Celtic²⁴ cultural reflection, which has nothing to do with the ancient Baltic religious and material heritage.

Analyzing the purport of the mythologeme *matrem deum*, mentioned by Tacitus, it is necessary to point out the possible existence of the Roman novelty superimposed on the *Aestii* and Germans. In subsection LX (6–7) Tacitus describes Germanic *Terram matrem* by the name *Nerthum* (acc. sg. form) (cf. reconstructed *Nerthus*), which is not attested in the written sources of the Teutonic either²⁵. The feature of the cult of the Goddess is equal to the Roman *Mater deorum*, which Tacitus also attributes to the *Aestii*:

The Langobardi, <...> Reudigni and the Aviones, and the Anglii, and the Varini, the Eudoses and Suardones and Nuithones <...> worship in common Nerthus, or Mother Earth, and conceive her as intervening in human affairs, and riding in procession through the cities of men. In an island of the ocean is a holy grove, and in it a consecrated chariot, covered with robes; a single priest is permitted to touch it; he interprets the presence of the goddess in her shrine, and follows with deep reverence as she rides away drawn by cows; then come days of rejoicing, and all places keep holiday, as many as she thinks worthy to receive and entertain her. <...> After this the chariot and the robes, and, if you are willing to credit it, the deity in person, are washed in a sequestered lake <...>²⁶.

It is well-known that the Goddess or *Mater deorum* forms of worship were started in Rome only during Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus rule (1.08.10 –54.10.13; emp. from 41 A.D.). As it was mentioned earlier, the sacred service to *Nerthus* in *Germania* and *Mater Deorum* in Rome was similar: the cult-figure of the Goddess was drawn in a consecrated chariot by neat to the *Almo* river (it debouches into the Tiber), where it was cleaned with water²⁷.

According to the established similarity, a strong presumption might be made to indicate the existence of bogus affirmations in Tacitus' work, which have nothing in common with the Teutonic or Baltic cultural tradition.

For this reason there is no need to make presumptions about a possible affinity of Tacitus' *Mater deorum* and Lithuanian *žemyna* 'upper, powdery topsoil; severalty, landed property', Latvian *Zemes māte* 'Mother Earth (a kind of deity)'. The first one represents Italic religious innovation borrowed from Asia Minor (Phrygia²⁸). The second never existed. Latvian *Zemes māte*, only two or three times mentioned in Latvian *Dainas*, probably represents a borrowing from the Lūv cultural heritage. Therefore Balys relates the origin of the above mentioned deities with the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary²⁹.

Balys³⁰ also points out the patriarchal character of Proto-Baltic pantheon: "After the arrival in the territory of the Balts, Indo-Europeans upheld traditional values of patriarchy (*male chauvinist pig*, libbers would say). They worshipped Dievas, Perkūnas and Velas, Velinas, i.e. devil".

The evaluation of the authenticity of ancient Baltic religion archetypes is also related with etymological analysis of the mythologemes, some of which are wrongly included in the Pantheon of the Balts. Because of such misunderstanding, *Coracle* of Latvians, mentioned in the cardinal Valenti's work for the first time, is interpreted as a derivative from the Latv. verb *cerot*, meaning 'Grow in tufts', and it is mythicized as the god of crops³¹. My guess is that this word may be interpreted as *tatpuruša* type compound, consisting of two components: (1) the name of the Roman fertility god *Cerus* (masc.)³² was contaminated with (2) the Latin word *oraclum* 'augury; **priest**'³³ → **C-é-(rus)-oracl-e* → **C-oracl-e* (with maximal absorption of the first component in relation to elimination tendency of unaccented syllables in Medieval Latin³⁴, and *-e-o-* shift to *-o-*, next to inflectional formative *-um* changes to *-e*, probably, by reason of contamination with Latv. *māize* 'bread, food; corn'³⁵). This change might be explained in the way of functional connotation influence of mythological nature, set by Jānis Strībiņš in *Riga's Jesuits annual report* of 1606. He transformed Valenti's *Coracle* to *Dewing Cereklicing / Cerekling*³⁶ and specified the reasons of its idolatry: according to him, it was a deity of fields and grain crops. There is no possibility to presuppose the impact of Medieval Latin morphological change appears due to gender mutation tendencies, as words of neuter became of masculine gender because of convergence of declension types³⁷.

Besides the unusual morphological structure as such, the Baltic origin of the Latv. *Coracle*, which later became transformed into *Dewing Cereklicing / Cerekling*, is questionable because of the Italic mythological identity presence: (1) Latin *Cerus* was worshiped in a **grove**; (2) a **black** bull, a hen and a piglet were sacrificial offerings. The same characteristic features are assigned to *Ceroklis* cult as well.

Pēteris Šmidts³⁸ was the first who drew a parallel between the Latv. *Coracle* and the Latin *Ceres* 'the goddess of grain and fruits, mother of Proserpine', which in periphrases also means 'wheat, food, bread'³⁹ as a possible mythological tally. Unfortunately, he did not consider the cultural borrowing from Latin, but tried to explain its origin along the lines of Baltic inheritance. His attempt to link the reconstructed form Latv. **çeruoḱlis* 'a deity of rye running riot' with the verb Latv. *çeruoḱt* 'sprout, run riot (as rye), tuft'⁴⁰, as if it were a derivative with the suffix *-kl-*⁴¹,

is not to be considered as correct because such a morphological form with the sememe does not exist in Latvian written sources and folklore collections⁴². Instead, *Ceru mate* ‘mother of the bush’ is mentioned⁴³. Even though such a mythologeme has been in use, the rituals of a corn deity (probably, of a sheaf form) were to be officiated in the rye field, as it is common to Prussians, Lithuanians, Slavs and Germans, but not in the forest, which is a distinct feature of Italic cult.

In summary, the necessity and substantiality of internal analysis of linguistic and mythological data have to be emphatically pointed out, as they are the stepping-stones of a successful research in the field of cultural heritage of the Balts.

Conclusions

1. The figures of wild boars, mentioned by P. C. Tacitus in *Germania* (XLV: 19 etc.), might be interpreted as the representative feature of the German or Celtic, not Baltic cultural heritage.
2. Mythologemes *Mater deorum* (mentioned in Tacitus work *Germania*), Lithuanian *žemyňa* and Latvian *Zemes māte* are different by their origin.
3. Latv. *Coracle* presupposes alteration of the Roman fertility god name *Cerus*, attributable to *tatpuruša* type compounds: *C-é-(rus)-oracl-e (← Lat. *Cerus* + Lat. *oraclum* ‘augury; priest’).

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² Germ. XLV: 19 etc.

³ S. 28: 329.

⁴ S. 14: 356.

⁵ S. 3 (I): 140–141.

⁶ S. 7: 25; 8: 16; 9: 98; 10: 8, 19–20, 48.

⁷ S. 1: 11, 15, 42.

- ⁸ S. 30: 256 etc.; 40: 278, 315.
- ⁹ S. 17: 74.
- ¹⁰ S. 16: 62 etc.
- ¹¹ S. 12: 394.
- ¹² S. 37: 141–142; 18: 187.
- ¹³ S. 26: 16; 38: 212.
- ¹⁴ Perhaps for this reason P. C. Tacitus likened language of *Aestiorum gentes* to the Celtic: <...> *lingua Britannicae propior* (s. Germ. XLV: 4).
- ¹⁵ S. 26: 233.
- ¹⁶ S. 23: 26–27; 26: 76, 79, 85, 132.
- ¹⁷ S. 26: 232.
- ¹⁸ S. 12: 393.
- ¹⁹ Cf. ON *Valhøll* ‘a Hall of the Slain’ (IED 675).
- ²⁰ S. 15: 110; 13: 312.
- ²¹ S. 13: 675.
- ²² Malcolm Todd (S. 39: 39, 41, 142) interprets its penetration due to the influence of Roman cultural heritage.
- ²³ Helen Guerber (S. 34: 120) associates it with the warrior’s status symbol. Purportedly it was used as a decorative image by Norwegian sea-kings and war heroes.
- ²⁴ Celts also used boar figures as helmet decoration (S. 26: 380).
- ²⁵ S. 15: 157; 33: 410–411.
- ²⁶ S. 28: 319, 321.
- ²⁷ S. 32: 183.
- ²⁸ S. 2: 113–114.
- ²⁹ Cf. “Zemes māte. Lett. “Erdmutter“. Neben → Dievs ist sie ursprünglich diejenige Göttin gewesen, die über das Wohlergehen der Menschen im Leben und über die Fruchtbarkeit des Ackers zu bestimmen hatte. Es besteht die begründete Neigung, sie mit der von Tacitus erwähnten Göttin *deum matrem veneratur* zu identifizieren, doch fehlen in den Quellen Angaben über ihre Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Göttern oder deren Abhängigkeit von ihr. Das ist offenbar aus dem Charakter der uns zugänglichen Quellen zu erklären. Ihr Muttercharakter ist mit den Mutterfunktionen der späteren christlichen Hl. Maria verschmolzen, diese hat denn auch die Züge der Zemes māte aufgesogen und ihre Funktionen übernommen” (S. 14: 274).
- ³⁰ S. 14: 357.
- ³¹ S. 19: 478; 29: 58; 1: 127; 35: 617; 36: 588.
- ³² Cf. *in carmine Saliari Cerus manus intellegitur creator bonus* Paul. Fest. 122 M (S. 27: 306).
- ³³ S. 27: 1262.
- ³⁴ S. 11: 2.
- ³⁵ S. 24 (II): 552–553.
- ³⁶ S. 3 (II): 555.
- ³⁷ S. 11: 6.
- ³⁸ S. 29: 58.
- ³⁹ S. 27: 301.
- ⁴⁰ S. 24 (I): 376.

⁴¹ Cf. Latv. *perūkļa* / *perīkļa* 'brood-hen' ← verb. Latv. *perēt* 'brood; teethe' (S. 24 [III]: 201; 6: 352).

⁴² S. 24 (I): 37.; 5: 266.

⁴³ S. 36: 589.

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā aplūkoti senās baltu reliģijas arhetipi un to autentiskums, proti, mežacūku atveidojumi, dievietēm mātēm veltītais kults, teonīms Coracle. Radusies nepieciešamība padziļināti pārbaudīt pēdējā laika mēģinājumus atgriezties pie jauniem mitoloģiskiem elementiem. Šādu jauninājumu pamatā nereti ir pētnieka minējumi un kļūdaini lingvistisko datu tulkojums.

Atslēgvārdi: *baltu reliģija, Aestii, Mater deorum, Coracle, mežacūku atveidojumi.*

III
BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:
NEW AND OLD RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Ritual Change in a Japanese New Religious Movement

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Tenrikyo, a Japanese new religious movement founded in 1838 in rural Japan, presently has many religious centres throughout the world. One of its basic tenets is the performance of a religious ritual dance which was purportedly taught by the foundress Miki Nakayama to embody and express the norms for joyous living. As with many religious rituals, however, its contemporary expression is restricted to the way it has been passed down from one generation to the next, beginning with the foundress herself, and thereby creating a rather narrow space for the possibility of its vernacular.

This essay will take a closer examination at this narrow space so as to clarify what ritual change may imply for the Tenrikyo community in western countries as well as the upshots this may have for its central organization in Japan. Rather than deal only with normative Tenrikyo sources, relevant ritual theories and anthropological resources will provide some leverage for which to tease out the questions of ritual transformation. The notion of ritual efficacy, agency, and reflexivity, for example, will help guide theoretical issues through while in-progress interviews with Tenrikyo members in Japan and abroad will supply a fresh source of practical data for further reflection.

Keywords: ritual transformation, Tenrikyo, ritual dance.

Much of the authority and power of religious rituals derive from the rather typical anthropological observation that practitioners understand them to be unchangeable styles of expression from times immemorial. *We've always done it that way!* is a very common response by locals as to why their rituals are carried out in those specific ways and under those particular circumstances. Tenrikyo, a new religion originating in Japan with its distinctive religious rituals, is certainly no exception. Its liturgical dance known as the Teodori, literally, "the dance with hand movements," is one prime example of that local response in that no matter where one goes, with the exception of the Republic of Korea, the Tenrikyo dance is done precisely the same way everywhere.

Although the Teodori can be carried out and practiced anywhere by anyone who knows how to perform it, its enactment at a church monthly service is where it actually counts. During a typical monthly service at any of the over seventeen thousand Tenrikyo churches the world over, six dancers line up, three men and three women, on a wooden dais facing three elevated shrines each within a boxed altar dedicated to God the Parent (in the centre), Foundress (to the right), and predecessors (to the left), respectively, with their backs to the congregation. Nine musical instrumentalists sit perpendicularly to the dancers' left (nine men's instruments) and right (three women's instruments), in front of musical instruments

which were once upon a time used for generating Japanese folk music, to provide the contemporary melody and rhythm for the Teodori performance. The lyrics to the dance are sung by the singer who sits at an angle between the dancers and the shrine dedicated to predecessors. The prelude and twelve songs known as the Songs for the Teodori were written by the foundress of Tenrikyo Miki Nakayama and comprise part of the Mikagura-uta, one of the three Tenrikyo scriptures. More on this point below. It will suffice here to say that all three Tenrikyo scriptures were written in the language which was used in the mid-nineteenth century, that is, a dialect in central Japan where the new religious movement originated. Of interest to us is that the language of the dancing liturgy is Japanese through and through and that its vernacular, with the exception of Korean, has yet to be carried out in a monthly service setting as described above.

The Impact of Ritual Change

Several studies have pointed out that, despite an insider's recognition that religious rituals are unmodifiable, all rituals to a certain degree are flexible and their fluidity could best be viewed through the analytical lens of a "ritual dynamics."¹ As one pioneering volume points out, this view calls for special attention to three overlapping layers of dynamics, namely, historical, social, and structural, based on the assumption that rituals continue to be carried out precisely because of their mechanism toward change.² Moreover, due to the ever increasing mobility of people from the so-called sending countries to receiving ones, the translocation of religious rituals from one geographic place to another and sometimes yet again to another, has intensified the notion of ritual dynamics through what has been more or less reframed as the "transfer of ritual."

The transfer of ritual "refers to the transfer of ritual from one context to another – or more generally – a change of the context surrounding the ritual" whereby the processes of change can take place in space and time.³ Proponents of this approach employ analytical instruments to investigate the transfer of ritual and argue for two yet interrelated changes – a change in the context and a change in the ritual itself. Whereas the contextual aspects of change include media, geography, culture, politics, history and so on, the internal dimensions of change, that is changes in the ritual itself, include script, performance, structure, self-reflectivity, communication, and so forth.⁴ The basic thrust of the two types of change is that "when ritual is transferred, i.e., when one or more of its contextual aspects is changed, changes in one or more of its internal dimensions can also be expected."⁵ In other words, a transfer of ritual will most likely result in ritual change. Another important feature in ritual transfer is the role of the ritual participants. Participants demonstrate differing degrees of ritual expertise – active or passive – but regardless of that degree ritual actors link the contextual features with the internal aspects of ritual.

With these broad theoretical strokes in mind, I hereafter discuss the implications of the Teodori's ritual transfer. Rather than focus on the historical dynamics of ritual transfer, I put emphasis on the contemporary debate regarding the conscious effort being made to transform the Teodori into its vernacular for an audience living in English-speaking countries. Besides a vocabulary for talking about ritual

transfer, I implicitly introduce notions of agency, reflexivity, and ritual efficacy in the background – all of which help cast the argument. Allow me to briefly introduce Tenrikyo and the Teodori and strive to survey the evolution of the translation of the Teodori text into English which will then be contended here as the primary enabler in modifying Tenrikyo's dance into the vernacular.

Tenrikyo and the Origins of the Ritual Dance

Tenrikyo, literally meaning “the teaching of divine wisdom,” was founded by a woman named Miki Nakayama when she began to reveal the intention of God the Parent in 1838, and for fifty years thereafter, taught and implemented what it might take for humankind to live a life of joy. The tenor of this newfound teaching was that humankind was created equally as brothers and sisters to live life with joy so that God the Parent, too, could share in it. One indispensable point is the idea that the human body is “a thing lent, a thing borrowed” by God the Parent and that the human mind alone is something human beings can “call their own.” In other words, the essential means toward a bright life depends on the individual's use of mind, one that is conscious of the providence of God the Parent working unchangingly in the human body and throughout the natural order of the world. The upshot of this awareness in actual practice, as Miki taught, is that “by saving others, you yourself will be saved.”

During the fifty-year period of developing the Tenrikyo teachings, Miki Nakayama wrote two of the three Tenrikyo scriptures herself, a collection of 1,711 two-lined poems called the *Ofudesaki*, or the *Tip of the Writing Brush*, and the hymns for its liturgy called the *Mikagura-uta*, or the *Songs for the Service*. Of special interest is the *Mikagura-uta* since this text makes up the words for which the Teodori is sung and danced as mentioned above. The *Mikagura-uta* can be divided into two distinct parts – the Songs for the Kagura and the Songs for the Teodori. Whereas the former are part of Tenrikyo's most important rite called the Kagura Service performed exclusively at Tenrikyo Church Headquarters [hereafter TCH] in Japan, the latter are those chanted for the Teodori performed not only at TCH, but also at all Tenrikyo churches the world over. The Teodori consists of a prelude and twelve “counting” songs. The combination of the Kagura and Teodori form the Tenrikyo service in its entirety and its performance is purportedly taught to bring about universal salvation.

Miki Nakayama wrote all but the prelude for the Teodori in 1867, and for three years thereafter, taught the melody and the hand gestures that go with the songs to her early disciples. She added the prelude in 1870 thereby completing the words for the Teodori as it stands today.⁶ The dancing of the Teodori has since been passed down from one generation to the next through directly teaching it to others by those who had mastered it.⁷ But this would not have been possible without the printed word – the publication of the *Mikagura-uta* text – which was first officially published for public usage in November 1888. This first official publication was based on several individual copies that go as far back as 1868 as they were hand-copied from one source to another for private use. It appears as if some individuals wrote down the *Mikagura-uta* with the intent to memorize it. Mastering all the Teodori movements and accompanying songs through others drastically changed in the

1920s when some individuals published private drawings of the dance movements: a dance tradition, once passed down by imitating others, was now being transmitted to others graphically and textually. As any student of textuality knows, these print media reached a far greater number of people than it would have managed with its previous pedagogical method and systematized its reproduction according to a manual-like dance book. The publication of such a manual most certainly enabled students to learn it on their own when they wanted and at their own convenience, but at the same time, it also limited the amount of room for personalized dance styles to be incorporated. In other words, through the re-presentation of the dance movements through printed form, the liturgical dance became more formalized and rigid, leaving out the possibility of personal style and colour. Along the way, moreover, it was taught as if it came directly from the foundress herself.

A further addition to the “fixedness” of the liturgical dance came with a volume by Tametsugu Yamazawa, a senior official of the church hierarchy, who in 1933 published a book backed by TCH, entitled *Otefuri* which included explanations and commentaries as well as black-and-white photographs of the dance movements. This official manual was later republished as *Otefuri Gaiyo* by the same author but without the photographs in 1949. Presently, the *Otefuri Gaiyo* is the authoritative guide on the hand movements of the dance. In this way, dancing the Teodori has become a prominent feature of Tenrikyo ritual life, uniformly being taught with the help of manuals but carried out according to the gestures, melody, and language as purportedly taught by the foundress Miki Nakayama herself.

The Evolution of the English Translation of the Mikagura-uta

English translations of the Mikagura-uta began relatively early on in Tenrikyo’s career. Daniel Cosby Greene, an American Christian missionary sent to Japan by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, introduced a fifty page article on Tenrikyo in the journal *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* in 1895. This work is not only acknowledged as the first introduction of the new religion in English in an academic journal but is also recognized as the first English translation of the Mikagura-uta as well.⁸ Takahito Iwai, a TCH senior official, several decades later followed with his own translation in 1932.⁹ It was not until after the Second World War in 1950 that TCH published a trial, but nevertheless “official” translation, entitled *Dancing Psalms*. A little over a decade later, Forest E. Barber, an American follower, published a trial private translation in 1962 for Sunday School use at the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America.¹⁰ The development of different kinds of English translations was perhaps the major incentive for TCH to publish an authoritative English translation in 1967, approximately a century after Miki Nakayama is said to have written the original.¹¹ This official version continues to be used today as it is now in its seventh reprinted edition.

A slightly smoother but different English translation was carried out by the dance ethnologist Louise W. Sasaki.¹² As an ethnologist, Sasaki approached the Mikagura-uta as a song-dance, and therefore, viewed the hand gestures and subtle foot movements as an integral part of the songs. An attempt to actually sing the Tenrikyo liturgy in the English language while maintaining the same melody and dance movements was carried out by two scholars of Japanese studies. Kenneth

Yasuda and Toyoaki Uehara published a work entitled *Mikagurauta: An English Translation in Original Meter* in 1987.¹³ The volume was a private publication and did not circulate well within Tenrikyo circles, thereby receiving relatively little attention. Despite the less than hoped for provocations, Yasuda and Uehara's work has been used as a reference source for what has come to be known as the English "singable-danceable Mikagura-uta." More on this below. Before this project was launched, though, an English manual entitled *The Otefuri Guide* was published in 1992 which includes computerized graphics of each of the dance movements and thorough explanation of each verse.¹⁴ This guide is widely known as the English version of the Japanese *Otefuri Gaiyo*.

These English translations of the Mikagura-uta provided the engaged reader with several things. From a theological point of view, the translations paved the way toward a better understanding of Tenrikyo revelation for those who do not know the Japanese language and engrossed readers with the possibility of a Tenrikyo theology without having to entirely acclimatize oneself to a specific socio-cultural reality. In so doing, opportunities arose to sort out "truths" as manifested through the teachings of Miki Nakayama as well as for Tenrikyo missionaries to convey them in different international settings. Moreover, the English translations of the Mikagura-uta also provided an interface for those learning the dance movements in English-speaking countries. It would be one thing to learn the dance movements without reference to its meaning in the local language and quite another with one readily available for the novice follower: all dance movements could silently – theoretically at least – correspond to their original verbal counterpart. Singing the songs to dance movements, and knowing precisely what those songs mean in your own language, most certainly helps to learn by rote the dance movements. Finally, and based upon the first two consequences above, the English translation of the Mikagura-uta has made way for a clearer interpretation of some of the vague areas found in the original. To be sure, this last point is a hermeneutical matter, but due in large part to the English language which more or less necessitates a grammatical subject for the phrase to be intelligible in the first place. A subject has been added in quite a few verses of several English translations of the Mikagura-uta, and therefore, staying clear from getting caught up in the "ambiguity" when encoding a religious text. At the same time, this linguistic mutation provides for original creative space which includes the adaptation of the Teodori in the vernacular. The several available English translations of the Mikagura-uta have therefore led to the idea of altering the dance with hand movements by singing it in the English language while sticking completely to all the dance movements and the melody as they are performed in the original. The ritual change we speak of here is restricted therefore to singing and dancing the Teodori in English, which is far more complicated than translating it from one language to another since the different rephrased words would have to correspond to the unchanging hand movements of the dance to which they correspond.

Toward Changing the Teodori

The Mikagura-uta maintains a very special place in the lives of Tenrikyo practitioners since it is not only one of the three scriptures, but a text for which

Tenrikyo's liturgical dance is carried out. The Mikagura-uta is read out aloud daily after a morning or evening service at local churches and becomes rather "alive" when the words for the Mikagura-uta are sung and danced through the performance of the Teodori. The rhythm, the melody, and the hand gestures that accompany the words to the Mikagura-uta help make the Teodori complete, and when done in a monthly service with the nine musical instruments and singers, it is taught that the fulfilment of the world of joy as promised through its performance can be savoured. In this sense, it just may be that the performance of the Teodori is a means of empowerment. Since the Teodori is not derived from a human mind but purportedly originated through the manifestation of the divine, and coupled with the awareness of the teachings that the foundress underwent many years of hardship just to perform it, members may be led to view the "sacred" dance as being interlocked with a special "sacred" history, inheriting a responsibility to re-enact its very performance today. In other words, the ritualization of the Teodori inscribes onto the ritual actors a sense of Miki Nakayama's life of suffering as well as a sense of that sacred history which continues into the present through their very own ritual participation.¹⁵

Based on this representation of the Teodori, therefore, it would be rather difficult to imagine the ritual to be more "user-friendly" especially for those in different socio-cultural settings. As mentioned above, the Teodori is performed precisely the same way everywhere, manifesting a logic of rigidity and fixedness when it comes to its enactment. This is because the dance is believed to have been passed down directly from the foundress herself. One extreme drawback of this homogeneous enactment may be captured in the studies done by scholars on Tenrikyo's overseas mission.¹⁶ On the other hand, however, the simple fact that Tenrikyo's liturgy is carried out in a language foreign to English-speaking followers was a crucial point prompting Tenrikyo leaders in the United States diocese to work on a dance with hand movements that could be sung in the vernacular. This project to adapt the Tenrikyo liturgy to a different cultural setting is still in the making and has just recently been given the following name: the English "singable-danceable Mikagura-uta" or simply the "English SDM." The "SDM" acronym, taken from the phrase "singable-danceable Mikagura-uta", was coined only recently in view of, and in preparation for, a Tenrikyo gathering held in Honolulu, Hawaii, in May 2011 where for the first time a part of the English SDM was performed for public viewing. It is worth mentioning here that the acronym is but one of many innovating and "local" ways to express the recent enthusiasm represented in the performance of the Teodori's vernacular by a media-saturated younger generation.¹⁷

The English SDM project was sanctioned by the highest of Tenrikyo officials at TCH in Japan with the aim to investigate the *possibility* of singing and dancing the Mikagura-uta in English. The group endowed with the responsibility to create the Teodori vernacular consists of members of an international translation committee – a group of approximately 12 to 15 individuals working in Mainland U.S., Hawaii, and Japan, as head minister or the like – who have been chosen by an administrative office which oversees the international Tenrikyo mission. Despite the fact that the project has been in a work-in-progress since 1994, members openly admit that the project is still in its infancy and much work needs to be done. The project members

have met once or twice a year both domestically and internationally to discuss the SDM project along with other translation work that have been published over the years.

The committee began its work by going through an initial draft written by a committee member rather than working directly from the original to its vernacular. The expertise of the majority of these members, however, is not in the field of music, dance, ritual or liturgical studies as one might imagine, but they are rather a group with a better than average grasp of both the Japanese and English languages and very well-versed in the nuances and complexities of Tenrikyo theology. In the three consecutive years since its beginnings, the working group went through the entire Mikagura-uta and transformed it into a rather “rough,” but nevertheless “doable” English SDM. In the endeavour to complete it, however, the English SDM has been discussed both formally and informally, on and off, and periodic additions have been incorporated to the present. As of April 2012, however, no trial version backed officially by TCH has been announced, nor does anyone else besides the relatively few committee members of the project know how to perform the entire Teodori in the vernacular.

Some Preliminary Observations

In making some preliminary observations regarding the ritual change of the Teodori, allow me to point out as a prelude that the previously produced English translations of the Mikagura-uta, whether private, trial, or official, have impacted the English-speaking ritual actor’s understanding of the Teodori over the years. This is one consequence of the ritual transfer discussed above. That is, when the Teodori is enacted in Japanese but in different transnational settings, the existing translations discursively provide the ritual actor with a type of “intertext” for which to understand the Teodori. Examples may help explain this facet of ritual change. The dance movement in the original text using the word *kami* has been translated into English as “God.” Much has been written about the difference between the concept of *kami* in Japanese religious history and the concept of “God” in the Judeo-Christian religious history, and so I wish not to explore it here. The point is not so much about the accuracy of the translation of *kami* to “God” than the impact of available translations upon its actual performance without the deliberate attempt at ritual change. Singing *kami* while subjectively invoking “God” as the referent in mind changes the ritual re-enactment for the English-speaking ritual actor. Another random example could be the term *ashiki* which has been translated into English as “evil.” Once again, the western notion of “evil” speaks volumes. Chanting *ashiki* with the western notion of “evil” in mind demonstrates once again how discursive changes of the Teodori are sometimes reproduced, or even “lost,” through translations. These are but just two instances – two religiously glossed words – yet the issues multiply when working with entire verses. The point is that prior translations alter the ritual discursively without even making an effort toward ritual change. As the ritual transfer theory argues, a change in the ritual context indeed enhances a discursive change of ritual, and in this case it occurs through the help of prior translations.

But what happens when deliberate attempts are made to change the scripture so as to sing and dance the Teodori in English? Due to the linguistic changes made in the ritual, other features of the Teodori also change. One of the major ones will be pointed out here. In the original, for instance, each counting song begins with *hitotsu*, meaning “firstly”, and then after this first verse is sung it continues onto the second verse with *futatsu*, meaning “secondly,” and so on. In the original, there is a parallel in the syllabic dimensions of the first two words after each of the number as *hitotsu, hiroi. . .* or *hitotsu, hitowa. . .*: the *hi* in the *hitotsu*, and the *hi* in the *hiroi* are always the same. This is true for the remaining numbering song system: *futatsu, fufu. . .* or *futatsu, fushigina. . .*, *mitsu, mina. . .*, and so on, with the exception of the tenth verse. In the vernacular, however, this syllable system collapses, thereby dividing one English syllable into two, or its opposite by forcing two syllables into one, in favour of maintaining the original melody. Therefore, *hito-tsu, hi-ro-i. . .* would be something like “*first-ly, wi-de-ly. . .*” and *hito-tsu, hi-to-wa* would be “*first-ly, peo-ple are. . .*” *Futa-tsu, fu-fu* would be something like “*second-ly, husband-and-wife. . .*” and *futa-tsu, fushi-gina* will turn out to be something like “*second-ly, marvellous-ly,*” etc. The first syllable of the number does not coincide with the first syllable of its verse, creating several complexities throughout the dance, which makes it that much more difficult to learn by rote.

This leads us to the second observation regarding the “form” and “content” of the Teodori. The English SDM from the very beginning was a project focusing on transforming its “content” – the ritual script – rather than modifying any part of its ritual “form” such as the hand movements or the melody of the songs. Why were the lyrics of the Teodori the only possible feature suitable for ritual change? Were other dimensions of the ritual non-negotiable, so to speak, with regard to adapting into English-speaking environments?

To answer this question, we have to go back to the purpose of the English SDM project which was to investigate whether modifying the Tenrikyo liturgy into English was possible. The committee assumed that they had only to refine, and perhaps update, the official translations so that the English words would correspond with the hand dance and melody. By so doing, the completed work would allow local English-speaking followers to understand not only what they were *singing*, but also what they were *doing* in the ritual as well. Emphasizing the displacement of words may have been carried out for convenience’s sake. From a different angle, however, the decision by the committee members to work from the official English translation from the very beginning could also be seen as a way to uphold Tenrikyo’s status quo. Without the authorized text as a base for which to begin the work, it would have appeared as though the crusade requesting ritual change was inexplicitly contesting, and even resisting, the performance of the Teodori in the original. In other words, there appears to have been a tacit understanding that the existing official 1967 English translation of the Mikagura-uta was the only common ground *negotiable* for change. The hand movements, the melody, the musical instruments, and other features implicit in the performance of the Teodori were never mentioned as possible factors that could be modified since these were purportedly revealed directly by the foundress herself, and the English translation, however official and

one deriving from the organization's status quo, was acknowledged as an invention of a human mind, and therefore, a prospect for change.

The third and final observation concerns the efficacy of the changed ritual. Is the Teodori in the vernacular effective? Certainly, there is no simple answer to this question, especially since the English SDM was only revealed publicly for the first time in May 2011. Recently, the notion of the ritual's effectiveness has become a hot topic of debate in ritual studies.¹⁸ One joint effort has even put forward an "interpretive grid" which may help put into perspective the necessary preconditions for any statement about ritual efficacy.¹⁹ Scholars have proposed interesting categories such as the *efficiens* (who or what is held to be efficacious in the ritual) and *efficiendum* (what is held to be affected in the ritual). But the central question is this: "in ritual, what or who affects what or whom and according to whom?" For a self-reflexive initial answer, therefore, I contend for the time being that the Teodori is efficacious when carried out in English in that its vernacular enables the ritual actor to directly engage in the singing and dancing without the intermediacy of the intertext mentioned above – a direct "bodily" experience in one's own language. And this direct experience, when done in a proper state of mind, is perhaps what the foundress purportedly taught as a means toward joyous living.

At the same time, however, there are many aspects of the English SDM which make it *less effective* than the original, such as the inconsistent synchronization of hand movements with the songs in English. But this reflexive opinion comes from someone who can perform the Teodori in the original. Therefore, it would probably take several more years, perhaps decades, before we can truly assess the effectiveness of the English SDM. Only when there is a following of people who can *only* perform the English SDM can we assess the true effect of the transformation of the Teodori into the English vernacular. For now, though, it appears as though the English SDM may just be on the right track toward further change useful for more and more local ritual actors.

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- ⁶ It is recorded in anecdotal form that, after penning the bulk of the words for the Teodori in 1867, she asked her attendants one day to sing them to the best tune they could find. No one apparently sang them the way she had wanted and created a tune of her own, saying, "you should sing them in this way." And so she sung. She then asked her attendants to try dancing to the tunes to the best of their knowledge. Again, no one danced the way she had intended and stood up before them and performed the dance movements herself. And so she danced. As this oral tradition demonstrates, it is common knowledge among Tenrikyo

followers that Miki Nakayama not only prescribed the liturgical formulas but also laid down the hand motions that accompany them as well. See Tenrikyo Church Headquarters ed. 1976. *The Anecdotes of Oyasama, the Foundress of Tenrikyo*. Tenri: Tenrikyo Church Headquarters.

- ⁷ Midori Horiuchi points out: “By the end of the year [1888] the number of people wanting to learn the *Otefuri* [the hand gestures] was so remarkable that followers rushed to practice the Teodori. They would gather immediately after work and their practice sessions came to life. Speaking from memory, old men who knew of those days said that there was a force to drive away everything negative and the power to save people from any illness. Followers practiced the Teodori enthusiastically, packed with excitement. Sometimes they kept dancing throughout the night. Practice was continued from one’s home to other homes, from village to other villages.” Horiuchi, Midori. 2008. Prayer and Scripture: On the Mikagura-uta in Tenrikyo in *Prayer as Interaction*. ed. Organizing Committee of the Tenri University and Marburg University Joint Research Project, 267–268. Tenri: Tenri University Press.
- ⁸ “The translation which follows is believed to be faithful, though it is confessedly and, I may say purposely, rough. The notes which are added will serve as a commentary and set forth what, after considerable study, I believe to be the true meaning” (D.C. Greene, 1895, 48). See D.C. Greene. 1895. Tenrikyo, or the teaching of the church of the heavenly reason. *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* XXIII: 24–74.
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- ¹⁶ Sociologist Peter B. Clarke, for example, has had some very unfair words to say about Tenrikyo’s unwillingness to adapt its liturgy to environments outside of its homeland and with a very one-sided way of saying it. He unrightfully concludes that Tenrikyo as a Japanese new religion has the primary goal to conserve Japanese customs and culture throughout the world over only because the religion, says Clarke, refuses to adapt. He says, “almost everything about Tenrikyo [i.e. rituals] reinforces the image people have of this movement as a model of traditional Japanese life” (Clarke 2000, 288). Although Clarke may be correct on Tenrikyo’s uniform liturgy regardless of where it takes place, this argument does not lead to the conclusion that Tenrikyo represents itself as “a model of traditional Japanese life.” See Clarke, Peter B. ed. 2000. ‘Success’ and ‘failure’: Japanese new religions abroad. In *Japanese New Religions in Global Perspective*, ed. Peter B. Clarke, 272–311. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.
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Kopsavilkums

Tenrikjo – 1838. gadā Japānā lauku vidē dibinātajai jaunajai reliģiskajai kustībai – mūsdienās ir aktīvi centri daudzviet pasaulē. Viens no šīs kustības pamatelementiem ir reliģiska rituālā dejas, kurai saskaņā ar kustības dibinātājas Miki Nakajamas pamatprincipiem ir jāsimbolizē un jāpauž prieka pilna dzīve. Taču mūsdienās šo dejas formu tāpat kā daudzus citus reliģiskos rituālus ierobežo no iepriekšējām paaudzēm pārmantotā tradīcija, kuras aizsācēja ir kustības dibinātāja. Tādēļ nav plašākas iespējas šo tradicionālo formu pielāgot vietējiem apstākļiem. Raksta autors iedziļinās jautājumā, ko tradicionālās dejas rituālu maiņa nozīmētu Rietumu kultūrvidē un kā tas ietekmētu kustības vadošo centru Japānā. Rakstā izmantoti kā tenrikjo normatīvie avoti, tā arī rituālu teorijas un antropoloģiskie pētījumi, kas palīdz izprast jautājumus, kas saistīti ar rituālu transformāciju. Rituāla efektivitātes, iedarbīguma un atgriezeniskuma kategorija ir izmantota teorētiskajā izklāstā, ko papildina jauni dati, kas iegūti intervijās ar tenrikjo sekotājiem Japānā un ārzemēs.

Atslēgvārdi: rituālā transformācija, tenrikjo, rituālās dejas.

The Last Testament Church: A Preliminary Research Report

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This short report is a result of my preliminary ethnographic fieldwork in the Siberian centre of the Last Testament Church (LTC). One problem that arises already at this stage of research is the maintenance of a proper balance between focusing on global-scale similarities and exclusively local characteristics of the studied phenomena. I discuss the validity and relevance of the “religious revival” thesis for the research concerning LTC and briefly present the history and beliefs of the community.

Keywords: Russia, Siberia, new religious movements, Last Testament Church, Vissarion.

This short report is a result of my preliminary ethnographic fieldwork in the Siberian centre of the Last Testament Church (LTC) in August 2011¹. It constitutes a part of my PhD research project concerning the LTC community, and its next stage will be a long-term fieldwork in the years 2012-13. As is the case with preliminary research, its aim was rather to raise new, possibly more relevant (than those suggested by available publications) questions than to provide answers.

One problem to tackle at a preliminary stage – very general one, yet crucial for further studies – is the maintenance of a proper balance in the research between focusing on the local specificity and more universal aspects of the phenomena under investigation. For in numerous discussions about the contemporary religious scene in Russia (or, more generally, in the post-Soviet or “post-socialist” region) one observation has been repeated with particular eagerness – that the period of over 70 years of atheization and the ultimate failure of the communist project brought about an ideological and symbolic vacuum which, however, was soon filled by numerous religious communities and a dynamic growth in religious practice². This has been interpreted as an argument against the formerly widely accepted theories about the on-going and irreversible secularization of modern societies and placed Russian (or, more generally, “post-socialist”) religious scene in opposition to the secularized or secularizing “West”. Due to the fact that the time of the establishment of the community of Vissarion coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the question of the validity of such theories of “religious revival” seems particularly relevant here. Before going any further into the matter, however, I will briefly describe the LTC community, its history and beliefs, to provide the necessary context for the discussion.

The Last Testament Church is the official name of a group more widely known as the community of Vissarion – Russian indigenous new religious movement with its main centre in Siberia, in the south of Krasnoyarski krai. The community was founded at the beginning of the 1990s by Sergey Torop, an amateur painter and a former policeman, now the group's leader known as Vissarion, the living Word of God, or simply the Teacher (*Учитель*). As he explains in one of the recorded interviews³, his soul is the soul of Christ that has incarnated in a new body. He realized who he really was in May 1990, and he describes the event as an awakening. In 1991 he began to preach in various cities and towns of Russia and in other states of the former Soviet Union⁴. He preached kindness to all, non-aggression and the need for love, compassion and understanding among people, and during such meetings he gained his first followers. Initially, the community's centre was located in Minusinsk – a town near the Yenisei River – to which Vissarion moved with his parents as a child⁵. In 1994, however, the community started to build a new centre in taiga, near Lake Tiberkul. The area is often referred to as “the new Promised Land” and is supposed to be the home of a new, model society of the future – United Family (*Единая Семья*) – free from violence, greed, aggression and fear, a community whose members will “live with each other by the laws of Harmony, Love and Goodness, in chime and with joy”⁶, as we can read in the LTC album.

The number of Vissarion's followers living in Kuraginski and Karatuzki regions in Krasnoyarski krai is estimated at between 4 and 5 thousand people⁷. Several hundreds of them live in villages between the town of Kuragino and Lake Tiberkul – four main villages being Pietropavlovka, Cheremshanka, Guliayevka and Zharovsk – but the most devoted members of the church (currently, about 50 families/250 people) and Vissarion with his family live in the Abode of Dawn (*Обитель Рассвета*) near the lake, on Suhaya mountain. “The City” or “the Mountain”, as the place is usually referred to by the community members, is still under construction as there exists a very ambitious and detailed plan what it should look like with 14 streets converging in the circular centre, wooden houses, vegetable gardens, greenhouses and well-groomed flower beds.

The movement's doctrine is highly syncretic, which, according to some scholars, reflects a general characteristic of the religiousness of contemporary Russia⁸. Apart from Christian elements it includes such concepts as reincarnation, cosmic energies (positive and negative), close bonds between man and the Mother-Earth or the existence of extraterrestrial civilizations, to mention only some of them. According to Vissarion's teaching presented in the Book of Preannouncement (*Предвозвешение*) of the first volume of the Last Testament⁹, man has been created in two separate acts of creation, that is, in fact, we have two beginnings. As we can read in the book, human body and the material world – i.e., the entire universe with all the planets and all civilizations inhabiting them – have been created by the Great Father of the Universe, *Единый* or the Absolute, who is “the Source of the Spirit of Life” (material life-force). As he does not possess the spiritual tissue, he is neither good nor evil. Our souls, on the other hand, are creations of the Son of *Единый* – the Heavenly Father (or God-the Son) – who is the creator of the spiritual world and “the Source of the Holy Spirit” (spiritual life-force). As we are told in the Preannouncement, the Heavenly Father emerged when “the Spirit of

Life” united with the unique energy flowing from “the Heart of the Mother Earth” and he is an entity that encompasses all the good that takes place on the Earth. As members of the community explained to me, in the entire universe only human beings have souls, which are immortal spiritual entities and incarnate in bodies, thus gaining the possibility to act upon the material world, develop and get cleaned of any negative energy that they have gathered during their former lives. According to Vissarion’s followers, the final goal of such a process is immortality in a physical body when no more incarnations will be needed. Interestingly, according to the Last Testament’s teachings, Satan or devil is a creation of men – it is an accumulation of negative information, or negative energy of humankind, which is a result of people’s negative emotions, thoughts and deeds. All these teachings, as we are informed, “are presented in order to accomplish a Great and Holy Unification of all existing religions”¹⁰, therefore, they are referred to as the Unified Faith (*Вера Единая*).

An important role in Vissarion’s teaching is also ascribed to Mother-Earth (*Земля-Матушка*). The community’s members strive to live without harming the planet, maintain ecological balance and, instead of exploiting nature, they try to peacefully cooperate with the environment. They are all vegetarians as they believe that the suffering of killed animals inscribe the “code of death” in their meat. Interestingly, the community is officially a member of an ecological association and is sometimes referred to as “ecopolis Tiberkul”, for example, on its official website in English¹¹. The main goal of the community is self-sufficiency, i.e., becoming independent of the outside world so that, as I was told, they could easily survive, for instance, without electricity or when the whole financial system collapses. The community members believe that, if they succeed and produce all they need by themselves, no such calamity will affect them.

Let us go back now to the initial question of the validity of the “religious revival” thesis and its relevance for the research concerning the LTC. While, undoubtedly, the breakthrough of the 1990s was crucial for the emergence of the Last Testament Church – and Vissarion himself claims that it would have been impossible to establish such a community in the Soviet period – I strongly agree with those who point to the “revival thesis” as a potential source of over-simplification¹². Personal narratives of the movement’s members confirm that the reality – especially when analysed at the level of individual biographies – is much more complex and diverse.

Obviously, we may find some personal narratives that very accurately illustrate the “revivalist vision” of “atheised” Soviet citizens who only after the collapse of the old system felt a sudden need for an active religious engagement. Interestingly, I came across such an account only after my return from the fieldwork – in the booklet *Свет истины из Сибири*¹³ its editor describes his family’s “search for the Truth” (*поиск Истины*) that began in 1989. As a current follower of Vissarion the author mentions such previous affiliations or subjects of interest as, for example: Supramental Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Orthodox Church, Sahaja Yoga, Buddhism, Lamaism, Sai Baba teachings, Buteyko system (Buteyko Breathing Technique), Qigong and rebirthing-breathwork¹⁴. According to my preliminary research, such a complex “path” towards becoming a follower of Vissarion is far from exceptional as the involvement in the LTC is most often preceded by various religious affiliations and attempts at healthy living and self-development.

Still, without dismissing such cases as the above, it is crucial to emphasize the fact that the atheization of the Soviet period was not so in-depth and thorough as it is sometimes presented. In fact, many inhabitants of the Soviet Union engaged in religious practice of various kind and, despite the authorities' efforts, religion remained an important element of their everyday life¹⁵. Moreover, if we are determined to stick to the "revival" terminology, it has been suggested by many scholars that its beginning should be rather located in the late 1970s and 1980s than as late as the 1990s¹⁶. This was also confirmed by the narratives of many LTC members whom I met during the summer visit in Pietropavlovka and at "the Mountain". When asked about the circumstances of their joining the LTC, they gave accounts of their often very long and quite diverse spiritual search that preceded the decision to settle in the community. There was, for instance, a large group that revealed a strong interest in esotericism, which dated back to, at least, the early 1980s, when they gathered in esoteric clubs – some in Russia, others in Germany.

Among the people whose "spiritual quest" began much earlier than the breakthrough events of the early 1990s was one of the community's craftsmen – born in Ukraine, now in his 40s and currently living in the village of Cheremshanka. He said he had been interested in various religions, in yoga, scientology and dianetics, and presented quite a long history of his various religious or spiritual affiliations, pointing to Zen Buddhism as one of the most important among them. Before joining the LTC he tried to establish two communities of a similar type with other people but both projects failed. He also mentioned Osho, Indian mystic and guru, as his previous teacher. He explained that it was important to have a living teacher, and because Osho died in 1990, he came to Vissarion. Interestingly, he did not reject the possibility that Vissarion was not his last teacher.

There is also a numerous group of young followers, now in their early 20s, and in their case the question of the influence of the changes accompanying the collapse of the Soviet Union becomes much less relevant, if relevant at all. I met, for example, a girl from Germany who had first come to the LTC Siberian villages as a participant of an NGO project promoting peaceful coexistence between people. Now, she is in the middle of the procedure of changing her citizenship to Russian as she wants to permanently settle in the community and follow the Last Testament teachings.

There are, of course, also young Russians, who decide to abandon their relatively comfortable life, often in large cities, in search of – as some put it – spiritual development and more harmonious coexistence with natural environment. They have grown up already in a Russia of religious freedom and plurality incomparable with the Soviet period, having the possibility to choose from among various religious groups and systems, and many of them have taken advantage of this possibility. One of such young followers of Vissarion, a girl from Krasnoyarsk, shared with me the story of her "search" that led her to the LTC. Before she came to Petropavlovka to join the community she had read some Orthodox literature, she practised yoga and studied teachings of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, a spiritual leader from India and founder of the Art of Living Foundation, whose teachings concern a stress-free and violence-free society. She also spoke of her interest in meditation

and Qigong exercise system which, as she put it, is supposed to help to sense the energy circulation between the Earth, body and skies.

What was characteristic of her narrative (and many others that I heard during this fieldwork) was that it presented human existence as a path of development and an accumulation of experience that broadens one's perspective and deepens the understanding of the world around. Therefore, as she explained, her choice to follow Vissarion did not mean that she rejected or dismissed her previous spiritual experience as irrelevant or false. She did not replace one system of belief with another. Like many other members of the Last Testament community she presented her former experience as a preparatory stage that made her ready for Vissarion's teaching. She perceived life as a continuous self-development – and an active one, as she stressed her engagement in reading numerous books and looking for more information. Several times she stressed that this “path” was not universal but everybody had one of his/her own and these were our personal feelings of what is good for us that should lead us on this way. When asked whether she thought that she might have another teacher after Vissarion, the young woman said that he was a man who could give her more information for which she was prepared at that time, that all she wanted was to absorb it, but she did not know what the future would bring. Significantly, the same motif of a highly individual character of each “spiritual path” (*духовный путь*) occurred also in the above mentioned account of the booklet's editor.

It is only an extremely brief and general but, I believe, representative sample of the personal narratives of “spiritual search” that the LTC members shared with me during my summer visit in the community. It is obvious that they have to be analysed within their local context without which they would be stripped of much of their meaning. Due to my previous research experience, especially concerning various Christian religious communities in Poland, I had a good sense of local specificity when I juxtaposed the personal narratives of the LTC members with the accounts of “spiritual search” of the members of various Polish Catholic and Protestant charismatic groups. While, for instance, in both cases I was often presented with long lists of subsequent affiliations of my interlocutors to diverse religious communities and movements, a closer look at what these groups and most frequent subjects of interest were reveals a radical discrepancy between the two contexts.

On the other hand, I could not ignore a frequent feeling that the narratives I heard in Petropavlovka and those I had earlier heard in Warsaw shared some common elements, one most prominent being the theme of a highly individual character of the person's “spiritual path”. The role of personal tastes, needs and feelings as well as an individual pace of a highly personalized “spiritual development” that recurred in the narratives of the LTC members certainly rang a familiar bell. Obviously, it could have been a superficial feeling of similarity to be dismissed during further, more in-depth research.

Nevertheless, it seems justified to ask about the lifespan of the theses that draw a thick division line between the religious scene of the post-Soviet region and the so-called West (i.e. Western Europe, which has all too often played a role of the model point of reference for comparisons). Already a decade ago Chris Hann

suggested waving “farewell to the socialist ‘other’” and pointed out that “we must not privilege the common distinctive features of the socialist countries to the extent that we lose sight of the many features shared all along with other parts of the world”¹⁷. The appeal seems still valid as it remains invariably tempting (and easy) to present particular phenomena or areas as peculiar exceptions to some supposedly universal rule (and new religious movements as such inspire relatively large numbers of publications focused on “difference” and “peculiarity”) and the “socialist other” has been often dismissed only to be replaced with the “post-socialist” one.

No region can be entirely isolated from the wider global processes, including villages in the central Siberian taiga, and the personal narratives of the followers of Vissarion may serve as a good example here. Therefore, as the classical Western secularization theories claiming that modernization and religion do not go together were undermined, and those that replaced them in response to the break-up of the communist bloc have been criticized for constructing a too radical and simplistic opposition between the so-called “West” and so-called “post-socialist region” – it seems there is a need for new ideas and concepts. Such that would keep a very difficult-to-obtain balance between the global-scale similarities and the exclusively local characteristics and will allow us to describe the ever-dynamic reality without blurring the differences but also without constructing artificial, exoticized “others”. I hope my upcoming ethnographic research in Central Siberia will prove a valuable contribution to this discussion.

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- ⁷ *Ibid.* and Panchenko A. 2004. *Op. cit.*: p. 121.
- ⁸ See, e.g., Borowik I. 2000. *Odbudowywanie pamięci: przemiany religijne w Środkowo-Wschodniej Europie po upadku komunizmu*, Nomos, Kraków: p. 191.
- ⁹ Предвозвещение. In *Последний Завет*, Церковь Последнего Завета, Санкт-Петербург, 1997.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*: Предв. 1:122.
- ¹¹ Official website of the Community of Vissarion (English version): <http://www.vissarion.eu/en/>.
- ¹² Hann C. 2010. Broken Chains and Moral Lazarets: the politicization, juridification and commodification of religion after socialism, In C. Hann (ed.), *Religion, Identity, Postsocialism. The Halle Focus Group 2003-2010*. Halle/Saale: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology: p. 6.

- ¹³ 2000. *Свет истины из Сибири*, К.Ф. Комаровских (ed.), Издатель О.А. Николаев, Балашов.
- ¹⁴ *В 1989 г. наша семья начала активный поиск Истины. Вначале было изучение Супраментальной Йоги Шри Ауробиндо под руководством П. Г. Зорина, в 1991 г. – приход к Богу и принятие православия, позже участие во встречах в Тосно с Л. В. Быстровой, одной из первых принявшей информацию Высшего Разума Вселенной о предстоящем периоде мутации клеток и последующих событиях на нашей Планете; далее общение с группами Матушки Серафимы и Алены в Вырице, ведомыми Иерархией; затем – Сахаджа-Йога, довольно активное знакомство с буддизмом, ламаизмом, феноменом Саи-Бабы. Параллельно шла интенсивная оздоровительная работа: еще в 1985 г. по инициативе сыновей – отказ от употребления алкоголя, в 1989 г. – переход на вегетарианство, шаталовский лагерь на берегу Азовского моря, занятия в оздоровительных группах в Санкт-Петербурге – сначала с шаталовской группой, затем система Бутейко, Ци-гун, ребефинг (Ibid.: p. 3).*
- ¹⁵ See, e.g., Panchenko A. 2011. Morality, Utopia, Discipline. New Religious Movements and Soviet Culture. In *Multiple Moralities and Religions in Post-Soviet Russia*, J. Zigon (ed.), Berghahn Books: p. 120 f.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Tomka M. 2001. Religious Change in East-Central Europe. In *Religion and Social Change in Post-communist Europe*, I. Borowik and M. Tomka (eds.), Nomos, Kraków: pp. 12 f.
- ¹⁷ Hann C., Humphrey C., Verdery K. 2002. Introduction: postsocialism as a topic of anthropological investigation. In *Postsocialism. Ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia*, C. Hann (ed.), Routledge, London and New York: p. 9.

Kopsavilkums

Rakstā atspoguļota daļa no etnogrāfiskā lauka pētījuma Pēdējās Derības Baznīcā Sibīrijā. Viena no būtiskākajām problēmām lauka pētījuma pašreizējā stadijā ir nepieciešamība ievērot līdzsvaru starp pētījuma objektam piemītošajiem elementiem ar globāli līdzīgu raksturu un lokāli specifiskajiem elementiem. Rakstā analizēts “reliģiskās atdzimšanas” jēdziena saturs un nozīme Pēdējās Derības Baznīcas izpētē.

Atslēgvārdi: *Krievija, Sibīrija, jaunās reliģiskās kustības, Pēdējās Derības Baznīca, Visarions.*

Obsequium Christi Alberta Avogadro Karmela rēgulā

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Viens no Jeruzalemes Alberta (1149–1214) sastādītās Karmela rēgulas pamatjēdzieniem ir *obsequium Christi*, kas rēgulas tulkojumos dažādās valodās nereti tiek interpretēts kā ‘sekošana Kristum’ vai ‘paklausība Kristum’. Abos gadījumos *obsequium Christi* ir tulkots anahroniski. Karmela rēgulas autors savā Jaunās Derības citātiem pārpilnajā darbā atsaucas uz apustuļa Pāvila 2. vēstules korintiešiem latīņu tulkojumu, nevis grieķu oriģināltekstu. Būtiski papildinot sv. Benedikta monastisko tradīciju, kas no saviem sekotājiem pieprasīja paklausību, Avogadro savā rēgulā seko Pāvila vēstuli tulkotāja sv. Hieronīma eksaģētiskajai tradīcijai, kas šķir pakļautību (*obsequium*) un paklausību (*oboedientia*). Paklausība jābola prioram (Rēg. 4), bet pakļautība Jēzum ir uzskatāma par dievveltītas dzīves pamatprincipu (Rēg. 2). Pāvila vēstules grieķu oriģinālteksta izmantošana Karmela rēgulas tulkošanai ir izraisījusi pakļautības jēdziena aizstāšanu ar paklausību. Savukārt dažus gadsimtus pēc Avogadro dzīvojušā Kempenes Toma darba *Imitatio Christi* populārie tulkojumi ir sekmējuši jēdziena *sekošana* izplatīšanos un nepamatotu pakļautības jēdziena aizstāšanu ar sekošanu.

Atslēgvārdi: Karmela rēgula, sv. Jeruzalemes Alberts, sv. Hieronīms, pakļaušanās Kristum, sekošana Kristum, paklausība, *obsequium Christi*, *imitatio Christi*, *oboedientia*.

Karmela rēgula ir vēstule¹, ko Karmela kalnā² apmetušos vientuļnieku saimei pēc tās lūguma sūtīja Jeruzalemes latīņu rita patriarhs Alberts Avogadro jeb sv. Jeruzalemes Alberts, viena no izglītotākajām un izcilākajām personībām Palestīnā 13. gs. sākumā. Dzimis Itālijā, Parmā (ap 1149), kļuvis par Mortaras klostera sv. Augustīna kanoniķu prioru (1180) un Bobio bīskapu (1184), sv. Alberts Avogadro divdesmit gadus vadīja Verčelli bīskapiju (1185–1205), un bieži vien pāvests viņam uzticēja sarežģītu jautājumu risināšanu. Šajā laikā, kad Palestīnas kristieši bija atspiesti šaurā piekrastes joslā starp Jafu un Akri, Jeruzalemes Svētā Kapa kanoniķi ievēlēja Albertu par Jeruzalemes patriarhu (1205). Tā kā Jeruzaleme atradās arābu karaspēka ielenkumā, Alberts apmetās Akrē³, kur dzīves svētuma dēļ viņu cienīja ne vien kristieši, bet arī musulmaņi. Viņu nogalināja reliģiskas procesijas laikā (1214. gada 14. septembrī)⁴.

Karmela kalna iemītnieki no vientuļniekiem pamazām kļuva par koinobītiem⁵ – ievēlējuši prioru, viņi kopā rūpējās par iztiku un dzīvei nepieciešamo. Šīs pārmaiņas atspoguļojas Alberta vēstulē, kurā pārsteidzošā veidā apvienota gan vientuļnieku krasā savrupība, kas izpaudās klusēšanā un ceļļu izklieidētībā, gan koinobītu dzīvesveida sabiedriskais raksturs, ko iezīmēja pakļaušanās kopīgi ievēlētā

priora vadībai un kopējā saimniecība. Šāds daļēji vientuļnieku, daļēji koinobītu dzīvesveids tika īstenots priora Brokarda laikā († ap 1221–1224), un tieši viņam ir adresēta Alberta vēstule, kas rakstīta, ievērojot visus viduslaiku epistolārā žanra noteikumus. Rēgulā skaidri izšķirams ievada sveiciens (*salutatio* vai *prologus*), kodolīgi formulēts pamatprincips (*exordium*), kurā balstās un no kura izriet izklāsta daļa (*narratio*) – priekšraksti, kas jāievēro Karmela saimei. Seko vēstules saņēmējiem – gan toreizējam, gan nākamajiem prioriem, gan visiem kopienas locekļiem adresēts lūgums (*petitio*). Vēstules noslēgumā (*conclusio*) var saskatīt netiešu atsauci uz līdzību par žēlsirdīgo samarieti. Tāpat kā samarietis (Lk 10,35) arī Alberts aicina vēstules adresātus darīt vēl kaut ko vairāk par nolīgto, proti, rēgulā paredzēto. No otras puses viņš atgādina, ka nepieciešams ievērot apdomību, kas garīgajā dzīvē uzskatāma par tikumu mērauklu.

Kaut arī rēgulas uzdevums bija “regulēt”⁶ brāļu sadzīvi, jau Alberta vēstules struktūrā ir ietverta karmelītu garīgās dzīves izaugsmes programma. Visa pamatā ir pakļautība Jēzum Kristum (*obsequium Christi*) un kalpošana viņam ar skaidru sirdi pēc vislabākās sirdsapziņas – šie kristīgās dzīves pamatprincipi ir minētas vēstules ievadā (*Rēg.* 2). Savukārt vēstules nobeigums aicina raudzīties eshatoloģiskā perspektīvā – dzīvot saskaņā ar rēgulu, apzinoties Jēzus Kristus gaidāmo nākšanu (*Rēg.* 22). Vēstules uzbūvē iekļautā virzība – no pakļaušanās Jēzum līdz viņa atgriešanās sagaidīšanai – raksturo karmelītu mūžu, kura laikā īstenojama garīgā pārtapšana. Ārējos apstākļus šai pārtapšanai nodrošina askētiska dzīve, kas sākas ar karmelītu dzīves pamatkārtības ievērošanu (*Rēg.* 4–9), proti, priora ievēlēšanu un apmešanās vietas izvēli (gan visai kopienai, gan ikkatram karmelītam atsevišķi), un turpinās ar rēgulā noteiktā dzīvesveida īstenošanu: atteikšanos no īpašuma, uzturēšanos cellē, lūgšanām, gavēni, atturēšanos no gaļas ēdieniem u. tml. (*Rēg.* 10–17). Šī askētiskā dzīve nav pašmērķis, bet gan līdzeklis, lai sasniegtu sirds skaidrību (*Rēg.* 2), kas nepieciešama Dieva gribas izprašanai un mistiskai pārtapšanai, ietērpjoties Dieva bruņās (*Rēg.* 18–19). Lai mistiskajā pārtapšanā iegūtā kontemplācija saglabātos un tiktu aizvien dziļāk izdzīvota, ir jānodrošina ārējie apstākļi – klusēšana un darbs (*Rēg.* 20–21). Karmela rēgula ir garīgās dzīves ceļš: no vienkāršu, ikdienas dzīvi regulējošu noteikumu ievērošanas uz pilnīgu un bezgalīgu dvēseles atvērtību Dievam⁷.

Sākot ar 1239. gadu, aizvien draudīgākā arābu sirotāju spiediena un kristiešu vajāšanu dēļ Karmela kopiena bija spiesta pamazām aizceļot, bet 1291. gadā islāma fanātiķi nogalināja pēdējos Karmelā palikušos mūkus un nopostīja kopienas dzīvesvietu. No Palestīnas savulaik izceļojušie karmelīti apmetās Kiprā, Sicīlijā, Anglijā, Francijā, kur pamazām daļēji pielāgojās Rietumos izplatīto ubagotājordeņu – franciskāņu un dominikāņu – dzīvesveidam. Karmela atstāšana nozīmēja līdzšinējās ekonomiskās neatkarības zaudēšanu. Pārmaiņas dzīvesveidā izraisīja karmelītu diskusijas, jo daļa brāļu bija pārliecināti, ka rēgula jāievēro burtiski arī jaunajos apstākļos, citi uzskatīja, ka rēgulā nepieciešamas izmaiņas. Karmelītu ģenerālkapituls lūdza pāvestu precizēt un uzlabot rēgulu. Šo darbu Innocents IV uzticēja diviem dominikāņu mūkiem. Viņu sagatavotos labojumus pāvests aizsūtīja ģenerālkapitulam, kas savukārt izsūtīja rēgulu visām karmelītu kopienām ar rīkojumu izlabot pēc jaunā parauga visus senākos norakstus, kādi bija brāļu rīcībā. Innocenta IV apstiprinātie labojumi uzsvēra koinobītu dzīves

elementus un ietvēra atvieglinājumus, kas bija nepieciešami, pielāgojoties ubagotājordeņu dzīvesveidam⁸.

Nepieciešamību noskaidrot šī izteiciena nozīmi Avogadro vēstulē ir radījusi tendence interpretēt *obsequium* (lat. ‘pakļaušanās’, ‘paklausība’, ‘pakļautība’, ‘piekļāvība’, ‘izdabāšana’) kā *sekošanu*, neņemot vērā sekošanas jēdziena polivalentumu. Kristīgajā literatūrā sekošanas jēdziens ietver gan Kristus izraudzīšanu par savu skolotāju un sekošanu viņa piemēram krusta ceļā (“Kas neuzņemas savu krustu un neseko man, nav manis cienīgs” – Mat 10,38), gan sekošanu Kristus rīcības piemēram dažādās dzīves situācijās (lat. *imitatio* – ‘atdarināšana’). Savukārt dažos rēgulas tulkojumos citās valodās *obsequium* ir tulkots kā ‘paklausība’ (pol. *posłuszeństwo*, liet. *paklusnumas*), par pamatu izvēloties nevis Jeruzalemes Alberta latīņu valodā rakstītās vēstules oriģināltekstu, bet gan šajā vēstulē citētās apustuļa Pāvila 2. vēstules korintiešiem pirmtekstu grieķu valodā. Taču jāievēro, ka Alberta citētajā variantā, proti, latīņu valodā, Pāvila izteiciens bija piedzīvojis būtisku semantisku transformāciju, kuras rezultāts bija kļuvis par normatīvu gan rēgulas rakstītājam, gan adresātam.

Lai gan 2. vēstulē korintiešiem apustulis Pāvils trīs reizes bija lietojis vārdu *paklausība* (gr. *hypakoē*, kas parasti latīņu valodā tulkota kā lat. *oboedientia* (piem., 2. kor 7,15; 2. kor 10,6; Rom 16,19; Filem 1,21) vai *oboeditio* (piem., Rom 16,16.26), sv. Hieronīms (ap 347–429), revidējot senākos Jaunās Derības tulkojumus latīņu valodā, par atbilstošāko ekvivalentu 2. kor 10,5 gadījumā atzina latīņu vārdu *obsequium*. Tas bija izņēmuma gadījums, jo ar *obsequium* viņš citviet tulkoja grieķu vārdus *leitourgia* – ‘kalpojums’ (Rom 9,4; Filip 2,17.30) un *latreia* – ‘pielūgšana’, ‘dievkalpošana’ (Rom 12,1; Jņ 16,2). Izvēlētais darbības vārds *obsequi* – ‘pakļauties’, ‘piekāpties’, ‘izdabāt’ – norāda uz labprātīgu pakļaušanos rīkojumam (visdažādāko iemeslu dēļ), turpretim *ob(o)edio* – ‘paklausīt’ (< *ob* + *audio*) norāda uz ieklausīšanos rīkojumā, kam seko piekrišana un rīkojuma apzināta izpilde. Iespējams, ka ar savu tulkojumu sv. Hieronīms vēlējās uzsvērt paklausības un kalpošanas ciešo saistību kristieša dzīvē, bet visdrīzāk gan – iekšējo garīgo cīņu, kas izriet no apustuļa Pāvila mudinājuma “sagūstīt” ikvienu domu, lai tā – kaut vai piespiedu kārtā – nonāktu “Kristus pakļautībā” (gr. *eis tēn hypakoēn* > lat. *in obsequium Christi*). Tieši paklausība Kristum nodrošina uzvaru garīgajā cīņā (2. kor 10,5). Kā norāda vēstules turpinājums (1. kor 10,6), *obsequium* rezultāts ir paklausība (*oboedientia*). Jāievēro, ka divos blakus esošos teikumos grieķu vārds *hypakoē* latīniski tulkots atšķirīgi gan kā *obsequium*, gan kā *oboedientia*. Nedrīkstam aizmirst, ka Jeruzalemes Alberts citēja un izmantoja tieši šo Svēto Rakstu versiju, kur minētā atšķirība pastāv ne vien vārda formā, bet arī nozīmē.

Monastiskajā dzīvesveidā paklausība ieguva fundamentālu nozīmi – par to liecina gadsimtos un gadu tūkstošos pārbaudītā Baznīcas tēvu tradīcija, ko vairākus gadsimtus pirms sv. Jeruzalemes Alberta savā koinobītiem rakstītajā *Rēgulā* bija apkopojis vientuļnieks un abats sv. Nursijas Benedikts (ap 480–547). Šo *Rēgulu*, bez šaubām, labi pazina arī sv. Alberts. Taču – tāpat kā apustulis Pāvils un sv. Hieronīms – Alberts Avogadro Karmela kalna kopienai adresētās *Rēgulas* pamatprincipos vispirms norāda uz kristieša pamatpienākumu dzīvot Jēzus Kristus pakļautībā – *in obsequium Christi* (*Rēg* 2). Šī pienākuma izpilde kļūst par pamatu, uz kura balstās gan sv. Benedikta (5. nod.), gan sv. Alberta rēgulā (*Rēg* 4) iekļautā

prasība pēc paklausības, ko brāļi sola prioram. Taču Benedikta rēgulā ir prasīta un aprakstīta tikai paklausība, turpretim sv. Alberta norāda arī uz tās pamatā esošo kristīgo pamatprincipu, kura lomū, iespējams, bija aktualizējusi toreizējā vēsturiskā situācija. Jeruzalemes Alberta *Rēgulas* tapšanas laikā krusta karotāji ar pakļautību saprata ne vien garīgu pakļaušanos Kristum, bet arī ārēju stāšanos viņa dienestā un uzticīgu kalpošanu viņam kā Svētās zemes dzimtajam valdniekam (Cicconetti 1973; 447–448; Dobhan 1990; 12–17). Šis *obsequium Christi* aspekts ir izcelts *Rēgulas* tulkojumā angļu valodā (*allegiance to Christ*). Tomēr jāatzīst, ka, neskatoties uz vēsturisko apstākļu iespējamo lomu termina *obsequium* popularizēšanā, feodālajā vasaļu sistēmā sakņotā *obsequium* izpratne nav uzskatāma par noteicošo sv. Alberta vēstulē, jo tās sākumdaļā (*Rēg* 2) ir runa par *obsequium Christi* kā par *visiem* kristiešiem kopējo pamatprincipu, kas jāievēro, lai kādai garīgās dzīves kārtai tie piederētu un lai kādu dievvēlīto dzīvesveidu būtu izvēlējušies (Waaijman 1997; 43–45) – proti, *obsequium Christi* ir jāievēro arī tiem, kas nepieder Karmela koinobītu un citu reliģisko ordeņu saimei. Savā īsajā vēstulē Alberta Avogadro tieši vai netieši citē vairāk nekā 30 Svēto Rakstu izteicienus (sal. Priede 2008; 80–83), bet izteicienu *in obsequium [Iesu] Christi* pārņem no Pāvila 2. vēstules korintiešiem latīņu tulkojuma, kuru izmantoja, rakstot vēstuli.

Tā kā latīņu valodas vārds *obsequium* ('pakļaušanās', 'paklausība', 'pakļautība', 'pieklāvība', 'izdabāšana') ir atvasināts no tās pašas saknes kā *sequi* ('sekot'), dažos rēgulas tulkojumos vērojama kļūda: *in obsequium Iesu Christi* tulkots kā "sekojot Jēzum Kristum", piem., vāc. *in der Nachfolge Jesu Christi* (Deckert 1959). Šī tulkojuma kļūda ieviesusies radniecisko latīņu vārdu šķietamās līdzības dēļ, un tai nav nekāda pamata nedz Jaunās Derības grieķu tekstā, nedz sv. Alberta vēstulē. Vārdu *sekot* (grieķiski *akoloutheō* 'sekoju') apustuļa Pāvila vēstulēs varam atrast tikai vienu reizi (1. kor 10,4), bet sv. Alberta (*Rēg* 2) citētajā 2. vēstulē korintiešiem šī vārda vispār nav. Gan Pāvils, norādot uz nepieciešamību pakļaut domu un iztēles pasauli, gan sv. Alberts, norādot uz kristīgās dzīves pamatprincipiem, runāja nevis par *sekošanu*, bet *pakļaušanos* Kristum.

Nepareizā tulkojuma ieviešanos, iespējams, ir veicinājis vārda *sekot* plašais lietojums – gan evaņģēlijos, gan tā dēvētās modernās dievbijības (*devotio moderna*) askētiskajā terminoloģijā (galvenokārt ģermāņu un ģermāņu ietekmēto valodu grupā). Dažus gadsimtus pēc sv. Alberta *Rēgulas* tapšanas par modernās dievbijības izplatītājiem kļuva holandieša Gērtas Grotes (1340–1384) dibinātie Kopējās dzīves brāļi. Īpaši populārs kļuva Kempenes Toma († 1471) darbs *De imitatione Christi*. Šī darba tulkojumos ģermāņu valodās latīņu valodas termins *imitatio* (burt. 'atdarināšana') tika atveidots kā *sekošana* (vāc. *Nachfolge*; nīderl. *navolging*; zviedr. *efterföljelse*) un pēc analogijas arī latviešu valodā: gan senākajos tulkojumos (Kristus pakalstaigāšana 1881), gan jaunākajā tulkojumā no franču valodas (Sekošana Kristum 1999). Ar pakalstaigāšanu jeb sekošanu šajā gadījumā saprotama nevis pakļautība (*obsequium*) vai paklausība (*oboedientia*), bet gan sekošana ļoti specifiskā un šaurā nozīmē, proti, *sekošana* [Kristus] *paraugam*.

Iespējams, minēto iemeslu dēļ arī *Rēgulas* tulkojumos vērojama tendence pārvērst pakļautību (*obsequium*) par sekošanu (piem., vācu valodā) un par paklausību (poļu valodā). *Rēgulas* jaunākajā vācu tulkojumā (Smet – Dobhan 1981; 22–23; tulkojums aprobēts 1998) lietotais vārds *Gefolgschaft* (burt. 'svīta', bet arī 'sekošana' un

‘pakļautība’) mēģina vienā terminā ietvert un sakausēt visas nozīmes – gan Pāvila 2. vēstulē korintiešiem minēto un sv. Alberta citēto pakļaušanos jeb pakļautību (*obsequium*), gan ar Rēgulas ievadu nesaistīto Kristus aicinājumu “Seko man!”, gan askētiskajā teoloģijā populāro jēdzienu – *sekošana Kristus paraugam (imitatio Christi)* (Klueting 2004; 17). Taču, kā redzējām, iedziļinoties sekošanas jēdziena vēsturiskajās peripetijās, nedz evaņģēlijos iekļautajam Kristus aicinājumam “seko man!” (*akolouthei moi*; piem., Mt 8,22; 9,9; 10,38; 19,21; Mk 2,14; 10,21; Lk 18,22 u. c.) un “nāciet man pakaļ” (*deute opisō mou*; piem., Mt 4,19; 16,24; Mk 8,34; Lk 9,23 u. c.), nedz Kempenes Toma mudinājumam vadīties pēc Kristus parauga nav nekādas saiknes ar nonākšanu vai atrašanos Kristus pakļautībā (*in obsequium Christi*), kura minēta sv. Hieronīma tulkotajā Pāvila 2. vēstulē korintiešiem (10,5 [Vulg.]) un netieši citēta sv. Alberta Rēgulā (2). Semantiska saistība iespējama vien tiktāl, cik nonākšana pakļautībā vai pakļaušanās ietver arī sekošanu: pakļautībā nonākušie gūstekņi un vergi seko savam kungam⁹.

Lai gan semantisko lauku atšķirības dēļ ideāla tulkojuma nav arī latviešu valodā, visprecīzāk Rēgulā citētā latīņu valodas termina *obsequium* nozīmei atbilst latviešu valodas daļēji lokāmais atgriezeniskais lietvārds *pakļaušanās*. Ar izteicienu *in obsequium Iesu Christi – Jēzus Kristus pakļautībā* ir jāsaprot stāvoklis, kura pamatā ir *pakļaušanās Jēzum Kristum*. Latviešu tulkojumā lietotais vārds *pakļautība* atšķirībā no sekošanas ietver ne vien Kristus izraudzīšanu par savu skolotāju un sekošanu viņa piemēram krusta ceļā, bet arī no pakļaušanās izrietošo paklausību, labprātīgu un uzticīgu kalpošanu ar visu savu sirdi, dvēseli un prātu. Pakļaušanās priekšnoteikums ir sirds šķīstība, skaidra sirdsapziņa un neliekuļota ticība (1. Tim 1,5), bet mērķis – mīlestība, kas paver mistiskās dzīves apvāršņus.

Vārdkopas *in obsequium Christi* dažādās interpretācijas rēgulas tulkojumos ģermāņu valodās, kā arī valodās, kurās atsevišķu nozaru terminoloģijā ir vērojama stipra ģermāņu valodu ietekme, skaidri liecina, ka tradicionālie tulkojumi nereti ietver sevī jēdzieniskus anahronismus, jo tulkotāja uzdevums nav pielāgoties citu reģionu vai valodu grupu tradīcijām, kas šai gadījumā viduslaiku tekstu interpretē, izmantojot vēlākos gadsimtos populārus, bet ar oriģinālu nesaistītus jēdzienus. Tikpat anahroniska, tikai pretējā virzienā, ir *obsequium* interpretācija, izmantojot latīņu tulkojumā citētās 2. vēstules korintiešiem (10,5) oriģinālvariantu grieķu valodā (*hypakoē* – ‘paklausība’), kurš atšķiras no autora izmantotā Vulgātas varianta (šādu metodoloģiski neprecīzu pieeju redzējām Alberta Rēgulas poļu tulkojumā). Būtiski ir noskaidrot un lasītājam atklāt jēgu, kādu konkrētajam jēdzienam piešķirīs teksta autors.

Rēgulā ir skaidri izšķirami divi atšķirīgi jēdzieni – kopš sv. Benedikta laikiem monastiskajā tradīcijā uzsvērtā paklausība prioram (*oboedientia*) un pakļaušanās Kristum (*obsequium Christi*). Kā liecina rēgulas struktūra, pakļaušanos Kristum Alberts uzskatīja par monastiskās paklausības pamatu. Lai gan rēgulas tapšanas laikmetā terminu *obsequium Christi*, iespējams, bija aktualizējusi toreizējā feodālajā vasaļu sistēmā un krusta karotāju mentalitātē sakņotā *obsequium* izpratne, Alberts Avogadro sekoja sv. Hieronīma bibliskajai *obsequium Christi* izpratnei, atzīstot to par ikviena kristieša dzīves pamatprincipu.

PIELIKUMS: KARMELA RĒGULAS TULKOJUMS

ALBERTA TEKSTS (1206–1214)	INNOCENTA TEKSTS (1247)
1 (SVEICIENS)	<p style="text-align: center;">Alberts, ko Dieva žēlastība aicinājusi par Jeruzalemes baznīcas patriarhu, mīļotajiem dēliem Kristū – Brokardam¹⁰ B. un pārējiem viņam paklausīgajiem vientuļniekiem, kas apmetušies pie Karmela kalna avota, – sveiciens Kungā un Svētā Gara svētība!</p>
2 (PAMAT-PRINCIPS)	Svētie tēvi <i>daudzkārt un daudzējādi ir mācījuši</i> ¹¹ , kā ikvienam – lai kādai garīgās dzīves kārtai tas piederētu un kādu dievveltītu dzīvesveidu būtu izvēlējušies ¹² – ir jādzīvo Jēzus Kristus pakļautībā un ar skaidru sirdi pēc vislabākās sirdsapziņas viņam jākalpo,
3 (IZKLĀSTS)	bet, tā kā jūs lūdzat, lai mēs jums dotu jūsu garīgajiem centieniem ¹³ atbilstīgu dzīves rēgulu, kas turpmāk būtu jāievēro,
4 (I)	mēs, pirmkārt, nosakām, lai viens no jums būtu jūsu priors, kurš šai amatā jāievēl vai nu vienprātīgi, vai arī ar lielākās un saprātīgākās daļas piekrišanu ¹⁴ ; ikvienam ir jāsoļa viņam paklausība un jācenšas solīto patiešām ievērot –
5 (II)	<p>līdz ar šķīstību un atteikšanos no īpašuma.</p> <p>Tomēr – vadoties no tā, kas prioram un brāļiem šķīstu vēlam, – jūsu īpašumā drīkstēs būt vientuļas vai arī dāvinājumā saņemtas, jūsu dievveltītā dzīvesveida īstenošanai piemērotas un ērtas dzīvesvietas.</p>
6 (III)	Turklāt – atkarībā no vietas, kur būsiet iecerējuši apmesties, – ikvienam no jums lai ir atsevišķa, savrupa ¹⁵ celle, iedalīta saskaņā ar priora rīkojumu un pārējo brāļu vai to apzinīgākās daļas piekrišanu,
7 (IV)	tomēr tā, lai – kur vien tas ērti īstenojams – jūs varētu kopīgi ēst jums izsniegto kopējā ēdamzālē, klausoties Svēto Rakstu lasījumu ¹⁶ ,
8 (V)	un bez tobrīd amatā esošā priora atļaujas neviens no brāļiem nedrīkst mainīt savu apmešanās vietu vai arī samainīties ar kādu citu ¹⁷ .
9 (VI)	Priora celei jāatrodas pie izejas, lai viņš pirmais varētu satikt nācējus un pēc tam viss veicamais notiktu saskaņā ar viņa lēmumu un norādījumu.
10 (VII)	Ikvienam – ja vien tas nav aizņemts, pildot citus pienākumus, – ir jāuzturas savā cellē vai tās tuvumā, <i>apcerot Kunga likumu dienu un nakti</i> ¹⁸ un <i>paliekot nomodā lūgšanā</i> ¹⁹ .
11 (VIII)	<p>Tie, kas prot lasīt psalmus, katrā atsevišķajā lūgšanu stundā lai recitē psalmus, kas ir paredzēti šai lūgšanu stundai pēc svēto tēvu iedibinātās kārtības un Baznīcas apstiprinātās ierašas. Tie, kas neprot lasīt,</p> <p>Tie, kas prot recitēt kanoniskās stundu lūgšanas kopā arī garīdzniekiem, lai dara to pēc svēto tēvu iedibinātā nolikuma un Baznīcas apstiprinātās ierašas. Tie, kas neprot,</p>

lai recitē *Tēvs mūsu*: nakts vigilijās²⁰ – divdesmit piecas reizes, izņemot svētdienas un svētku dienas, kad nosakām divkāršu skaitu, – piecdesmit reizes *Tēvs mūsu*. Rīta slavinājumos²¹ šī lūgšana recitējama septiņas reizes. Arī pārējās lūgšanu stundās šo lūgšanu lai recitē septiņas reizes pēc kārtas, izņemot vesperes, kad jums tā jārecitē piecpadsmit reizi.

- 12 (ix) Neviena no brāļiem lai neko nesauca par savu, bet *viss lai ir jums kopīgs*²², un no tā, ko *Kungs jums būs devis*²³, katrs lai saņem no priora rokām, proti, no šim uzdevumam priora pilnvarotā cilvēka rokām, tik, cik, ievērojot vecumu un vajadzības, tam nepieciešams. Taču tam jānotiek tā, ka ikviens paliek – kā jau minēts – viņam izraudzītajā cellē un pārtiek no tā, ko viņam iedala.
- 13 Jums ir atļauts turēt ēzeļus vai mūļus ne vairāk, kā to prasa nepieciešamība, kā arī nedaudz lopu un putnu uzturam²⁴.
- 14 (x) Ceļļu kopuma vidū – ja vien tur ērti iespējams – lai tiek celts oratorijs, kur jums ik dienas jāsapulcējas rīta agrumā, lai – kur vien tas ērti īstenojams – piedalītos euharistiskajā dievkalpojumā.
- 15 (xi) Turklāt svētdienās vai – ja nepieciešams – citās dienās pārrunājiet iekšējās kārtības ievērošanas un dvēseļu svēttapsmes jautājumus. Tad ar saudzīgu mīlestību labojiet arī brāļu pārspīlējumus un vainas, ja tās būtu kādam ievērotas.
- 16 (xii) No Svētā Krusta godināšanas svētkiem²⁵ līdz Kunga Augšāmcelšanās dienai ik dienas, atskaitot svētdienu, ievērojiet gavēni, ja vien slimība, miesas nespēks vai kāds cits attaisnojošs iemesls nemudinātu to pārtraukt, jo nepieciešamība atceļ likumu.
- 17 (xiii) Vienmēr atturieties no gaļas ēšanas, ja vien tā nav jālieto neveselības un pārlieku liela nespēka dēļ. Atturieties no gaļas ēšanas, ja vien tā netiek ēsta neveselības dēļ vai kā līdzeklis pret nespēku. Un, tā kā ceļojot jums biežāk nākas ubagot, tad, lai neapgrūtinātu tos, kas jūs uzņem, ārpus savām mājām jūs drīkstat ēst ar gaļu vārītus ēdienus, bet jūrā ir atļauts ēst arī gaļu.
- 18 (xiv) Bet, tā kā *cilvēka dzīve zemes virsū ir kārdinājumu pilna*²⁶ un visi, kas vēlas dzīvot dievbijīgi Kristū, ir pakļauti vajāšanām²⁷, un *jūsu pretinieks velns kā rūcošs lauva staigā apkārt, meklējot, ko aprīt*²⁸, jums ar vislielāko rūpību jāapliek Dieva bruņojums, lai varētu stāties pretī ienaidnieka viltīgajiem uzbrukumiem²⁹.
- 19 Jūsu gurni apjozami ar šķīstības jostu³⁰. Ar svētām domām ir aizsargājamas krūtis, jo ir rakstīts: *svētas domas tevi pasargās*³¹. Ir jāapliek *taisnīguma bruņas*³², lai Kungu, jūsu Dievu, jūs *mīlētu no visas sirds, no visas dvēseles un visa sava spēka, bet savu tuvāko kā sevi pašu*³³. Ikvienam ir jāsatver sevī *uzticēšanās vairogs, ar ko varat nodzēst visas ugunīgās negantnieka bultas*³⁴, jo *bez uzticēšanās nav iespējams patikt Dievam*³⁵, bet jūsu uzticēšanās – tā ir uzvara.
- Galvā liekama *pestīšanas bruņucepure*³⁶, lai jūs cerētu saņemt glābiņu no vienīgā Glābēja, *kas glābj savu tautu no grēkiem*³⁷. Savukārt Gara zobens, proti, Dieva vārds, *lai bagātīgi mīt* jums uz lūpām un jūsu sirdīs, – un it viss, kas jums jādara, lai notiek *Kunga vārdā*³⁸.

- 20 (xv) Jums ir kaut kas jāstrādā, lai velns jūs vienmēr atrastu nodarbinātus un negūtu iespēju iekļūt jūsu dvēselē jūsu bezdarbības dēļ. Šai ziņā tiklab mācību, kā piemēru jums ir sniedzis svētīgais apustulis Pāvils, ar kura lūpām runājis Kristus³⁹ un kuru Dievs ir iecēlis un dāvējis pagānu tautām par skolotāju ticībā un patiesībā⁴⁰. Sekojot viņam, jūs nenomaldīsities. *Naktīm un dienām mēs pūlējāties, – viņš teica, – un strādājām savu darbu, lai nevienu no jums neapgrūtinātu. Nevis tālab, ka mums nebūtu tiesības tā rīkoties, bet gan – lai mēs paši jums rādītu priekšzīmi, kurai sekot. Tādēļ, kad bijām pie jums, jums aizrādījām: ja kāds negrib strādāt – lai neēd. Jo mēs dzirdējām, ka jūsu vidū daži dzīvo nemierīgi, neko nestrādājot. Bet tiem, kas tādi ir, mēs aizrādām un piekodinām Kunga Jēzus Kristus vārdā, lai, strādājot klusībā, ēd savu maizi⁴¹.*
- Šis ir svēts un labs ceļš, to ejiet!⁴²
- 21 (xvi) Apustulis ieteic klusēšanu, norādīdams, ka jāstrādā klusējot⁴³, tāpat kā pravietis apliecina: *Klusums kopj taisnīgumu*,⁴⁴ – un atkal: *Jūsu spēks būs klusumā un cerībā*.⁴⁵
- Tādēļ mēs nosakām, lai jūs ievērotu klusumu no vakarlūgšanas stundas⁴⁶ līdz nākamās dienas trešajai rīta stundai, ja vien liela nepieciešamība, pamatots iemesls vai priora atļauja nepārtrauc klusēšanu.
- Tādēļ mēs nosakām, lai, pabeiguši nakstlūgšanu⁴⁷, jūs ievērotu klusumu līdz nākamās dienas pirmās rīta stundas lūgšanai.
- Kaut arī pārējā laikā klusēšana nav jāievēro tik stingri, ir rūpīgi jāizvairās no plāpības, jo ir rakstīts un ne mazākā mērā pieredze māca: *Pļāpāšana nepaliks bez grēka*⁴⁸ un *Kas neapdomīgs runā, tas piedzīvos nelaimi*⁴⁹. Vēl: *Kas runā pārlietu, kaitē savai dvēselei*⁵⁰. Un Kungs Evaņģēlijā: *Tiesas dienā cilvēki atskaitīsies par katru nevajadzīgi runātu vārdu*.⁵¹
- Tādēļ –
- Tad nu –
- savās gaitās līdz ar pravieti uzmanoties, lai negrēkotu ar mēli, – *ikviens lai darina svarus un mērus, ar ko izsvērt un mērot savus vārdus, bet mutei – pareizus iemauktus, lai viņš stipri nesaļodzītos un nepakluptu ar mēli un nedziedināmi nāvīgs neizrādītos kritiens*⁵², turpretī ikviens lai cenšas uzcītīgi un modri ievērot klusumu, kas kopj taisnīgumu⁵³.
- 22 (LŪGUMS) Bet tu, brāli Brokard⁵⁴,
- Bet tu, brāli B.,
- un ikviens, kas pēc tevis tiks iecelts par prioru, vienmēr paturiet prātā un īstenojiet darbos to, ko Kungs saka Evaņģēlijā: *Kas vēlētos būt lielākais jūsu vidū – lai ir jūsu kalps, un, kas jūsu vidū vēlētos būt pirmais, – tas būs jūsu vergs*.⁵⁵ Arī jūs, pārējie brāļi, pazemīgi cieniet savu prioru, vairāk domādami nevis par viņa personu, bet gan par Kristu, kas iecēlis viņu pār jums un kas vietējo Baznīcu vadītājiem saka: *Kas jūs klausā, tas mani klausā, un kas jūs nicina, nicina mani*,⁵⁶ – lai nicināšanas dēļ jūs nenonāktu tiesā, turpretī ar savu paklausību nopelnītu atalgojumā mūžīgo dzīvi.
- (NOSLĒGUMS) To mēs jums rakstījām īsi, nosakot rēgulu, pēc kuras jums jādzīvo. Bet, ja kāds būs uzņēmies vēl lielākus izdevumus,
- Dievs
- Kungs
- pārnākdams pats viņam atlīdzinās⁵⁷, tomēr viņam ir nepieciešama apdomība – tikumu mēraukla.

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ATSAUCES UN PIEZĪMES

¹ Alberta vēstules oriģināls ir gājis zudumā. Senākais zināmais noraksts atrodams Katalonijas karmelītu provinciāla F. Ribo († 1391) sarakstītajā karmelītu vēsturē (Philip Ribot. *Decem libri de istitutione et peculiaribus gestis religiosorum carmelitarum in lege veteri exortorum et in nova perseverantium ad caprasium monachum*, VIII, 3.). Arī Innocenta IV vēstules un pievienotās rēgulas oriģināls nav saglabājies, bet Vatikāna arhīvā ir atrodams vēstules un rēgulas noraksts (Registrum Vaticanum 21, ff. 465v–466r). Lai atspoguļotu rēgulas tapšanas vēsturisko norisi, mūsdienu izdevumos parasti līdzās ir atrodams gan Alberta, gan Innocenta IV teksts. Latviešu valodā tulkotais un komentētais rēgulas teksts pirmo reizi publicēts J. Priedes rakstā *Karmela rēgula kultūrvēsturiskā kontekstā // Humanitāro zinātņu vēstnesis Nr. 14 – Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitāte 2008*. 78.–86. Lai atvieglotu Alberta un Innocenta tekstu līdztekus lasīšanu un savstarpēju salīdzināšanu, savā rēgulas tulkojumā latviešu valodā J. Priede piedāvā būtiski jaunu rēgulas izkārtojumu (Priede 2008; 78–86). Atšķirībā no iepriekšējo pētnieku lietotā rēgulas teksta sinoptiskā izkārtojuma (Waaijman 1997; 22–33), kas paredzēja gan vienādā, gan atšķirīgā teksta izvietojumu divās paralēlās ailēs, J. Priedes latviešu tulkojums novērš identisko

fragmentu lieku atkārtošanos, paralēlās slejās izkārtojot vienīgi atšķirīgos teksta fragmentus. Latviešu tulkojuma piezīmēs norādītie Svēto Rakstu citāti, no vienas puses, apliecina vēstules autora Alberta Avogadro erudīciju, no otras puses, palīdz atrisināt jautājumu, kā pareizi saprast un tulkot izteicienu *in obsequium Jesu Christi*.

- ² Karmela kalns, kas par 'svēto' (*raš-qadeš* – burt. 'svētā galva') dēvēts jau faraona Tutmosa III (1490.–1436. pr. Kr.) iekaroto pilsētu un vietu uzskaitījumā Amona templī Karnakā (*ANET*, 234), kopš sendienām vilinājis Dieva meklētājus – gan auglības dievību pielūdžējus (ap 1000. pr. Kr.), gan viendievības sludinātājus, piem., Jahves pravieti Ēliju (1. ķēn 10; 19,1–18) un viņa mācekli Elišu (2. ķēn 2,25; 4,25). Kopš Ēlijas un Eliša laikiem kalnā apmetās daudzi, kas vēlējas vientulībā iepazīt Dievu, tāpēc Vecās Derības pravieti Ēliju kristieši vēlāk nereti dēvēja par mūku kustības aizsācēju. Hellēniskajā un romiešu periodā Karmela kalnā uzturējās Zeva priesteri, šeit meditējis Pītagors, upurējis romiešu imperators Vespasiāns un Trajāns (Plīnijs, *Nat. hist.* 5,75; Tacits, *Hist.* 2:78). Uzplaukstot kristietībai, Karmelu par savu dzīvesvietu labprāt izvēlējās kristīgie vientuļnieki. Kad, sākot ar VII gadsimtu, arābu iekarotāji ar militāru un ekonomisku spēku (nodokļi, pārdošana verdzībā u. tml.) centās panākt Palestīnas kristiešu pāriešanu islāmā, daudzi meklēja patvērumu Kīprā, Sicīlijā, Francijā, Anglijā u. c. Projām devās arī Karmela vientuļnieki (Cicconetti 1984; 34–64). Karmela kalnu par savu svētvietu atzina vietējie musulmaņi, kam Ēlija, proti, Korānā minētais Iljāss, šķita dzīvinātājs un zaļuma dāvētājs (Augustinovič 1972, 13–45). Ebreju leģenda par Ēliju un rabīna Jošua ben Levi ceļojumu (Jellinek, V. 133–135) pārtop Korānā par stāstu (xviii. 60–82), kura galvenais varonis ir vārdā nenosaukta persona, ko islāma tradīcijā parasti dēvē par Zaļo (arāb. *al-Khaḍīr*) – kaila zeme sazaļojot viņa soļos. Šī islāma tradīcija nepārprotami liecina par Korānā minētās personas ciešo saistību ar Vecās Derības pravieti Ēliju, kuram bijusi vara pār lietavām, kas dabai ļauj sazaļot (1. ķēn 17–18). Turpretim citviet Korānā Iljāss (Ēlija) un al-Kadirs (Zaļais) ir divas dažādas personas, kas abas dzērušas no dzīvības avota, kļuvuši nemirstīgi, ik nakti kopā lido no Aleksandrijas uz Jeruzalemi un pēc Muhameda rīkojuma palīdz jūrasbraucējiem un tuksneša ceļotājiem. Šie aspekti, iespējams, aizgūti no sīriešu teiksmas par imperatoru Aleksandru un no Gilgameša eposa elementiem (sal. Wensinck 1994; 164–145; 232–235). Monastiskā dzīve Karmela kalnā pilnībā atjaunojās tikai xi–xiii gs., kad īsu laiku kristīgās ticības brīvību Palestīnas kristiešiem nodrošināja krusta karotāji. Daudzi svētceļnieki apmetās Karmelā, lai klusumā un vientulībā pēc Ēlijas parauga mēģinātu pieredzēt Dieva tuvumu mistiskās pieredzes ceļā.
- ³ Apustuļa Pāvila laikā pilsētu sauca Ptolemaja II vārdā par Ptolemaīdu (Ap. d 21,7). Musulmaņu iekarotāju laikā tika atjaunots iepriekšējais, no semītu valodas aizgūtais nosaukums – Akre. Tā kā franču valoda bija viena no oficiālajām un plašāk lietotajām sv. Jeruzalemes Jāņa hospitāliešu ordeņa valodām, krusta karotāji nocietināto ostas pilsētu dēvēja sv. Jāņa vārdā – par Senžendakri (*Saint-Jean-d'Acre*), saīsinājumā – Akre. Ebrejiski – Ako.
- ⁴ Piemiņas diena senāk – 8. aprīlī, mūsdienās – 25. septembrī (atbilst 16. septembrim pēc Jūlija kalendāra). Sv. Jeruzalemes Alberta kults oficiāli apstiprināts 1609. gadā.
- ⁵ Gr. *koinobiōtēs* un *koinobios* < *koinos* – 'kopīgs', *bios* – dzīve.
- ⁶ Lat. *rēgula* 'rēgula' < *regolare* 'vadīt', 'valdīt'.
- ⁷ Savu augstāko literāro izpausmi rēgulas mistiskā ievirze rod spāņu karmelītes Avilas Terēzes (1515–1582) un Krusta Jāņa (1542–1591) darbos.
- ⁸ Pēdējos rēgulas atvieglinājumus noteica pāvests Eugenijs IV (1432), atļaujot mūkiem brīvi uzturēties ne vien cellēs, bet arī klosteru apkaimēs, kapellās un krustejās, kā arī ierobežojot visai stingro atturēšanos no gaļas ēdieniem uz trim dienām nedēļā. Innocenta IV un Eugenija IV ieviesto izmaiņu dēļ karmelītu rēgula ietver ne vien vientuļnieku un koinobītu, bet arī ubagotājordeņu mūku dzīvesveidam raksturīgās iezīmes.
- ⁹ Atzīstot savu pakļautību Kristum, apustuļi sevi sauca par Kristus vergiem (gr. *doulos Christou*; lat. *servus Christi*), bet, norādot uz savu kalpošanu, – par Kristus kalpiem (gr. *diakonos Christou*; lat. *minister Christi*). Daudzos Bībeles tulkojumos (diemžēl arī latviešu) šī būtiskā atšķirība dažkārt paliek nejauši vai apzināti neievērota. Iespējams, ka senākajos tulkojumos vārdu izvēli, domājams, iespaidoja "kalpu tautas" un koloniālās vergu sistēmas līdzīgums: pēc Kurzemes statūtu tiesībām (1617) latviešu zemnieks bija vergs, vēlāk – vairs tikai pērkama

- un pārdodama lieta (*res in commercio*). Mūsdienās latviešu teologu neprecīzās vārdu izvēles pamatā, domājams, ir vēlme izvairīties no jēdziena, kas varētu šķist esam pretrunā ar tulkotāja vai lasītāja izpratni par personas neatkarību un brīvību kristietībā.
- ¹⁰ Jeruzalemē dzimušais franču izcelsmes mūks Brokards, kam bīskaps Alberts, jādama, rakstīja šo vēstuli, ir minēts karmelītu prioru sarakstos, bet senākajos saglabājušajos vēstules norakstos ir minēts tikai vārda sākumburts.
- ¹¹ Sal. Ebr 1,1.
- ¹² Garīgās dzīveskārtas: laji un garīdzniecība (bīskapi, priesteri, diakoni). Gan laji, gan garīdznieki varēja izvēlēties vai nu laicīgu, vai dievvelītu dzīvi (*vita religiosa*). Dievvelītu dzīvi dzīvoja koinobīti, anahorēti (vientuļnieki) un nabago un slimo aprūpētāji. Koinobīti dzīvoja kopienā, kopā rūpējoties par iztiku un paklausot savam vadītājam. Anahorēti dzīvoja vientuļībā, cīnoties ar ļaunā gara kārdinājumiem. Žēlsirdības darbu darītāji centās tikties ar Kungu, rūpējoties par slimajiem un nabagajiem (sal. Mt 25,34-35).
- ¹³ Garīgie centieni – viduslaiku garīgajā literatūrā latīņu valodas vārdu *propositum* ('iecere', 'nodoms') lietoja grieķu vārda *askēsis* ('garīgie centieni') vietā.
- ¹⁴ Ja nebija iespējams visiem vienprātīgi ievēlēt prioru, tika norīkoti trīs balsu noteicēji, kas slepenībā aptaujāja visus brāļus, par ko un kāpēc katrs no viņiem balso. Lai ievērotu ne vien kvantitatīvo (absolūtais vairākums), bet arī kvalitatīvo balsošanas principu, tika sastādīts "saprātīgākās" – burtiski: [spriedumos un rīcībā] "veselīgākās" – daļas saraksts saskaņā ar amatu, vecumu, nopelniem utt. Kandidātam bija jāiegūst balsu vairākums abos sarakstos.
- ¹⁵ Nikolass Gallus rakstīja: "Sienas nedrīkst būt kopīgas – kā gan citādi varētu skaļi lūgties!" Kad brāļi bija spiesti atstāt Karmela kalnu un apmetās pilsētās, vairs nebija iespējams izbūvēt katram karmelītam savrupu, proti, no citām atstatu, celli, tāpēc nereti mūkiem bija divas apmešanās vietas: viena pilsētā, otra ārpus pilsētas. Rēgulas piesacījums iekārtot savrupas celles vairs nav minēts 13. gs. beigās rakstītajās *Konstitūcijās*.
- ¹⁶ Pirms Innocenta iekļautā rēgulas piesacījuma mūki ēdienu saņēma katrs savā cellē.
- ¹⁷ Ar dievvelītai dzīvei paredzētās celles saņemšanu jaunais kopienas loceklis kļuva par vienu no brāļiem. Atteikšanās no savas celles vai patvaļīga apmešanās vietas maiņa liecinātu par atteikšanos no savas vietas brāļu vidū.
- ¹⁸ Ps 1,2; Joz 1,8.
- ¹⁹ 1. Pēt 4,7 (citēts pēc *Vulgātas: et vigilate in orationibus* – 'un esiet nomodā lūgšanās').
- ²⁰ Stingri aizliedzot pārspīlējumus, dažādās kopienās koinobīti atšķirīgi saīsināja nakts atpūtas ilgumu atkarībā no gadalaika, dažkārt līdz četrām stundām. Šis miegam atrautās stundas viņi veltīja Svēto Rakstu lasīšanai, lūgšanai, dažkārt ieklausījās gudra mūka pamācībās vai strādāja. Savukārt nakts vigīlija sadalīja atpūtu divās daļās. Vigīlijas laikā koinobīti cēlās no miega, lai lūgtos dažus psalmus.
- ²¹ Latīņu valodā dažos stundu lūgšanu nosaukumos izpaužas senais ieradums skaitīt laiku nevis no pusnakts, bet gan no rītausmas. Pirmā rīta stunda (ap 6.00) jeb pīma (lat. *prima* – 'pirmā') – rītausmas lūgšana. Trešā rīta stunda (ap 9.00) jeb terca (lat. – *tertia* 'trešā') – priekšpusdienas lūgšana. Sestā dienas stunda (ap 12.00) jeb seksta (lat. *sexta* – 'sestā') – pusdienas lūgšana. Devītā dienas stunda (ap 15.00) jeb nona (lat. *nona* – 'devītā') – pēcpusdienas lūgšana. Vakarlūgšanas stunda jeb vesperes – lūgšana, iestājoties vakara krēslai (ap plkst. 18.00). Naktslūgšanas stunda jeb kompletorijs (< lat. *completus* – 'piepildīts', 'pilns') – lūgšanas pirms naktsmiega (ap 21.00).
- ²² Sal. Ap. d 4,32.35 un sv. Augustīna *Rēgulu*, 10.
- ²³ Sal. Mt 6,25-32.
- ²⁴ Atļaujas pamatā ir pāvesta Gregora IX vēstule *Ex officii nostri* (1229).
- ²⁵ 14. septembris.
- ²⁶ Sal. Īj 7,1 (pēc *Vetus Latina* tulkojuma: *quia vero temptatio est vita hominis super terram*). Par kārdinājumiem šeit dēvēti pārbaudījumi tāpat kā *Tēvs mūsu* lūgšanā: "Un nieved mūs kārdināšanā".
- ²⁷ Sal. 2. Tim 3,12.
- ²⁸ Sal 1. Pēt 5,8.

- ²⁹ Sal. Ef 6,11.
- ³⁰ Josta ir ne vien kareivju un ceļotāju (svētceļnieku, grēknožēlnieku) neaizstājams apģērba piederums, bet arī viņu nedalītās uzticības zīme. Pieminot Kristus kareivja “patiesuma jostu” (sal. Ef 6,14), apustulis Pāvils atsaucas uz pravieti Jesaju: “Taisnīgums būs josta ap viņa gurniem un uzticība apjozīs viņa sānus” (Jes 11,5). Gurnu apjošana tēlainajā Bībeles valodā nereti ietver norādi uz atturību. Uzticība un šķīstība savā starpā ir nesaraucjami saistītas. Būdam uzticīgi savai tautai, Dievs apjožas ar saviem izredzētajiem kā ar jostu (Jer 13,11).
- ³¹ Sal. Sak 2,11.
- ³² Sal. Ef 6,14.
- ³³ Sal. Atk 6,5; Lev 19,18; Mt 22,37-39.
- ³⁴ Sal. Ef 6,16
- ³⁵ Sal. Ebr 11,6. Lat. *fides*, gr. *pistis* nozīmē ‘ticību’, ‘uzticēšanos’, ‘paļāvību’, proti, uzticēšanos Dievam, kas pats ir uzticams (Ps 31,6). Uzticēšanās trūkums liecinātu par Dieva uzticamības apšaubīšanu.
- ³⁶ Sal. Ef 6,17; Jes 59,17; 1. tes 5,8.
- ³⁷ Mt 1,21.
- ³⁸ Sal. Ef 6,13-18; Kol 3,16-17.
- ³⁹ 2. kor 13,3.
- ⁴⁰ 1. Tim 2,7.
- ⁴¹ 2. tes 3,7-12.
- ⁴² Sal. Jes 30,21; 35,8; Jer 25,5.
- ⁴³ Sal. 2. tes 3,12.
- ⁴⁴ Jes 32,17 (citēts pēc *Vulgātas*: *cultus iusticiae silencium* ‘klusums – taisnīguma kults’ vai arī ‘klusums – taisnīguma kultivēšana’). Pamatojoties uz pravieša Ēlījas mistisko pieredzi, vientuļnieki labi zināja, ka Dievs ir rodams nevis vēja brāzmās, zemestrīces dārdos vai uguns liesmās, bet gan klusumā (1. ķēn 19,11). Klusums ļauj apjaukt lielās aplūsinātājas – nāves – tuvumu, savu niecīgumu un Dieva diženumu (Ps 39,5-7). Varenākā priekšā ir jāapkust. Tam, kas apzinās savu niecīgumu, Dievs kļūst par cerību, uz ko paļauties, par visa piepildījumu, pēc kā ilgoties un tiekties (Raud 3,26). Dievs apveltī ar spēku to, kam viņš ir cerība. Tieši tādēļ Jesaja ieteic klusu cerību Jeruzalemes iedzīvotājiem (Jes 30,15). Klusums, kas, cilvēkam apzinoties savu niecīgumu, šķietami visu atņem, pārvēršas klusā piepildījumā, Dieva slavinājumā. Sv. Alberta izmantotajā Sv. Rakstu latīņu tulkojumā *cultus iusticiae silencium* ir ietvertas abas nozīmes: pirmkārt, taisnīgums izkopjams klusumā (‘klusums – taisnīguma kultivēšana’) un, otrkārt, ar klusumu tiek godināts taisnīgums un tātad – Dievs (‘klusums ir taisnīguma kults’).
- ⁴⁵ Jes 30,15.
- ⁴⁶ Sk. 21. zemsvītras piezīmi.
- ⁴⁷ Sk. 21. zemsvītras piezīmi.
- ⁴⁸ Sak 10,19 (citēts pēc *Vulgātas*).
- ⁴⁹ Sak 13,3 (citēts pēc *Vulgātas*).
- ⁵⁰ Sīr 20,8 (citēts pēc *Vulgātas*).
- ⁵¹ Mt 12,36.
- ⁵² Sīr 28,25-26 (citēts pēc *Vulgātas*: Sīr 28,29-30).
- ⁵³ Sk. 44. piezīmi.
- ⁵⁴ Sk. 10. piezīmi.
- ⁵⁵ Mt 20,26-27.
- ⁵⁶ Lk 10,16.
- ⁵⁷ Sal. Lk 10,35.

Summary

Composing the rule for cenobites, Albert Avogadro (1149-1214) used the Latin translation of the Bible citing from it more than 30 excerpts. One of the basic notions of the letter is *obsequium Christi*, which is often anachronistically interpreted as 'following of Christ' or 'obedience to Christ'.

Though the Latin word *obsequium* ('submission') is derived from the same root as *sequi* ('follow'), neither Christ's evangelical summon "follow me!" (Gk. *akolouthei moi*) nor "come after me" (Gk. *deute opisō mou*) is related to coming into or being in submission to Christ (in *obsequium Christi*) as mentioned by Albert (*Rēg.* 2) when citing the Latin version of 2 Cor 10:5. The rather frequent interpretation of *obsequium* as 'following' was probably induced by the wide use of the word *follow* in the texts of Gospels as well as the ascetic terminology of the modern devotion (*devotio moderna*) several centuries after Albert's Rule was written. When translating the book *De imitatione Christi* by Thomas à Kempis, the Latin term *imitatio* (literally, 'imitation') was substituted in Germanic languages with *following* (Germ. *Nachfolge*; Nethrl. *navolging*; Swed. *efterföljelse*; by analogy also Latv. *pakaļstaigāšana* and *sekošana*), understanding it not as submission (*obsequium*) or obedience (*oboedientia*), but *following* in a rather narrow sense, i.e. *following the example [of Christ]*. In the most recent translation of the Rule into German, the word *Gefolgschaft* (literally 'following' but also 'suite', 'allegiance') includes all meanings: both *obsequium* as 'submission' mentioned in the Latin translation of 2 Corinthians and cited by Albert, and Christ's summon "follow me!" (not related to the introduction of the Rule), as well as the notion *following the example of Christ* (Lat. *imitatio Christi*).

The translation of *obsequium* as 'obedience' in some other translations (Poln. *poslušność*; Lith. *paklusnumas*) is likewise anachronistic, only in the opposite direction, because it originates from the 1st century Greek version of 2 Cor 10:5 (*hypakoē* – 'obedience') and not from its interpretation as *obsequium* in the Latin tradition as cited by Avogadro. Two different notions *obedience* and *submission* are clearly discerned in the Rule, i.e. *obedience to the prior* (*oboedientia*), emphasized in the monastic tradition since the times of St. Benedict, and *submission to Christ* (*obsequium Christi*) paid by all Christians. The structure of the Rule gives evidence that *submission to Christ* was considered by Albert the basis of monastic obedience. Though the term *obsequium Christi* had probably been promoted by the understanding of *obsequium* rooted in the feudal vassalage system and crusader mentality of that time (hence *allegiance to Christ* in the English translation of the Rule of Carmel), Albert followed St. Jerom's biblical understanding of *obsequium Christi* regarding *submission to Christ* as the basic principle of the Christian life.

Keywords: Rule of Carmel, St. Albert of Jerusalem, Albert Avogadro, St. Jerome, submission to Christ, following of Christ, imitation of Christ, obedience, *obsequium Christi*, *imitatio Christi*.

IV
BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:
BUDDISM AND ISLAM

Dandaron Mandala: Unofficial Buryat Buddhist Sangha during the Soviet Era¹

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The origination of a new form of Buddhism within the traditional Buryat sangha dates back to the middle of the 20th century. After World War II, the so-called first restoration emerges, consisting in the effort to rescue religious life following a decade of reprisals. In the 1930s, all monasteries were closed down, some of the monks were executed, some imprisoned, and the rest had to disrobe. In the mid-1960s, during the period of the first criticism of the Stalin cult, a small, nevertheless important Buddhist community originated in Ulan-Ude. An unofficial or clandestine micro-sangha formed around Bidia D. Dandaron, a Buryat Buddhist scholar, which existed until 1972, the year of Dandaron's imprisonment. Subsequently he was sentenced to five years in the gulag, where he died in 1974, at the age of sixty. One of his first disciples was A. I. Zheleznov, a painter. After the death of his teacher, he painted Vajrabhairava mandala. His innovative way of depiction did not conform to the rooted tradition and the painting exceeded all the standards. The aim of the paper is to show by means of the painting the formation of a new religious group, its perception of the outside world and incorporation of such a vision into the mandala. It is surprising how much can be told about Dandaron from this image; what cannot be identified here, is the Dandaron cult, which now as well as during his life has been met with certain disconcertion by the official sangha.

Keywords: Buryat Buddhist Sangha; Soviet Union; Bidia D. Dandaron; Vajrabhairava mandala; collective memory; anti-Buddhist reprisals.

'Although some mandalas – for instance the symbolic representation of the Universe made of heaped grains – can be openly explained, most are related to Tantric doctrines which are normally supposed to be kept secret. Consequently, many speculative and mistaken interpretations have been published by people who viewed them simply as works of art or had no access to reliable explanations. Because of severe misunderstandings that can arise are more harmful than a partial lifting of secrecy, I have often encouraged the writing of more accurate accounts.'

H. H. the XIV Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso
*Foreword to Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism*²

1. Dandaron's sangha

Dandaron's sangha represents a unique phenomenon of intermingling of the West and the East behind the iron curtain in the period of Khrushchev's "melting" in the beginning of the 1960s and Brezhnev's "neo-Stalinism" at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s.

If it holds true that the collective memory consists of parts formed by other collective memories, then Dandaron's thangka may be perceived as the collective

memory of one particular group of Buddhists in Buryatia. This group includes both the members of Dandaron's group who got acquainted with the mandala shortly after its origination, and its present interpreters. The mandala also contains features that suggest suppression of religion in the Soviet Union and the defeat of the theocratic state of Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov³ (see Fig. 6–8)*. The context of its origination is remarkable from the point of history of anti-religious action: the image was finished by Dandaron's disciple, who was the subject of reprisals as well.

The first anti-Buddhist reprisals by the Soviet power began during the civil war, when the fighters of Buryat theocratic state waged war against the Bolshevik revolution. Their defeat and subsequent imprisonment and death of Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov marked the next development of religious situation in the Soviet Russia. There were some attempts of the reforming part of Buryat sangha led by Agvan Dorzhiev to reconcile Buddhism and communism in the first half of the 1920s. However, such attempts failed and, when Stalin seized power in 1929, the antireligious politics were launched openly. At the end of the 1930s, all monasteries were closed down, the monks were forced to leave and the decade lacking official religious life began for the first time in Buryat history.

B. D. Dandaron represents a Buryat victim of anti-Buddhist reprisals in a particularly pronounced form. He was their subject both in the Stalinist period of the 1930s, and in the neo-Stalinist period of the 1970s. Dandaron's destiny was unique in this respect; none of the lamas had such a harsh life as he did. Buryat lamas were a subject of reprisals as a religious and social group. The Soviet power differentiated its attitude to them on the basis of monastic hierarchy and wealth, and divided them into three groups.

The first group included rich lamas and representatives of the highest hierarchy. These people were either executed without a trial or they were sentenced to death, which in a few cases changed into decades in the gulag (which was also Dandaron's fate).

The second group included older lamas and those in the mid-level hierarchy. These were usually sentenced to long-term imprisonment in gulags, not to death. Only a few of them avoided arrest and embarked on a lay life.

The third, most numerous group, included young lamas and novices (*khuvaraks* in Buryat). Their future was the most favourable of all the three groups. Usually, they were not tried, but they had to leave monasteries, start a civil life and become standard Soviet citizens building socialism. Some of them got married and thus fully embraced their new status.

Following almost a decade of non-existence of sangha in Buryatia, lamas asked Stalin if they could renew their activity. In fact, they pleaded for mercy with the authority that oppressed them most, but there was no other way. As far as we know, their appeal letter has never been published.

It is important to note that until the period of the so-called *perestroika* and *glasnost*, Buryat official sangha could not afford to speak about or even criticize the reprisals of the 1930s, which applied to the entire Soviet society. Despite, or maybe because of that, in October 1974 a mandala originated, which captured the reprisals or at least contained references to them. The fact that Dandaron is dressed in striped prisoner's clothes (see Fig. 9) is a paradox in itself: prisoners usually did not wear

* See the Appendix on p. 186-190.

such clothes in Russia; this is a Western symbol, which is comprehensible all over the world. That is probably the reason why A. Zheleznov depicted Dandaron in the clothes which he most probably never wore. This is not the only feature: Dandaron is also depicted in a tantric robe in the mandala (see Fig. 9); however, it is not his ritual robe, but an object from a museum collection (see Fig. 10). Back to our story: We may ask whether Zheleznov hoped the mandala would get out of the Soviet Union and hence the “Western” prison clothes. It may be the fact; we must not forget that Dandaron’s case was the object of attention of the Keston Institute, Amnesty International, and was covered by *Radio Liberty*, *Radio Free Europe*, *the Voice of America* and others. Thanks to people like Alexander Piatigorsky or Elena Semeka, the West was informed of the existence of persecuted European Buddhists led by the Buryat teacher.⁴

There was one basic prerequisite for the mandala to function as an externalized collective memory: Everyone who used it as a meditation aid was aware of its historical content. In other words: if the mandala portrayed certain historical figures (legendary or really existing), the meditating people were able to identify them. You may ask how they could match images with names. They knew photographs of historical persons and depictions of legendary or mythical figures in thangkas and miniatures. Both types of figures were known from home altars, where both the photographs and thangkas were displayed. Dandaron Mandala captures the dominant line of reborns, Jayag Lamas, and we may assume that this line was well-known to the members of Dandaron’s group.

There exists a very interesting testimony from Tsyvan-lamkhai (Lama Tsyvan Dashitsyrenov, the youngest participant in Dandaron’s case:

“When highly educated people, coming from the western USSR, started to visit B. D. Dandaron, the authorities (i.e. KGB, author’s note) began to worry; they faced a new phenomenon, which, for them, was difficult to comprehend. Once, when I came from Irkutsk to see my father Anchin Dashitsyrenov for the holidays, I met with his teacher, Bidia D. Dandaron. It was then that Bidia D. Dandaron said Buddhism was going to spread through geometric progression throughout Russia. (...) After Dandaron and his disciples were imprisoned, many, especially older people, were frightened and imagined another year of 1937 was coming... I was convinced that we had to adhere to our belief and plunge into the centre of events. They begged me, threatened with imprisonment, and thereby confirmed my belief more than ever. That year was decisive for me and predestined my later life.”⁵

2. Description and analysis of Dandaron Mandala

Most information about this way of reading, or more precisely of “using” Dandaron Mandala can be found in an extensive book written by Vladimir Montlevich, one of the first disciples of Bidia D. Dandaron. The author mentions certain circumstances of the origination of the mandala, in particular the date of its completion (19th October 1974, i.e. a week before Dandaron’s death); however, he does not mention any concrete description of the subject of depiction. The partial description of the mandala to be found on the Internet does not contain explanation of Dandaron’s line and individual figures either.

Dandaron Mandala (see Fig. 1–5) is a circular painting with multiplied depiction of the deity which gave it its name, Vajrabhairava, in the center.⁶ This type of mandala is aptly characterized below by David Morgan. Of course, he does

not refer to Dandaron Mandala, which he was not familiar with. He speaks about those mandala depictions that comprise both natural, e.g. historical figures, and supernatural beings, usually known from various Tibetan Buddhist pantheons.

“A host of divine figures and lamas are pictured around the outer circle, which contains a pictorial narrative of teachings that circumscribe the central, symmetrical feature of the mandala, inside which are located the deity and his consort. Devotees prepare for mediation by careful study of the image, learning the procedure and meaning of its stages and undergoing an initiation rite to prepare them for union with the god, whose sexual union with emptiness, or no soul, signifies the goal of the meditator. Careful study of the mandala, as one study put it, helps devotees visualize themselves within the realm of the deity. Once inside the perfected universe of the deity, the practitioner can move a step closer towards spiritual enlightenment.”⁷

The mandala itself may be “read” in several ways; the main approaches being the following: the religious or theological approach represents the basic manner of interpreting the mandala. This was the main reason for creating the mandala, a meditation aid of one particular group of Buddhists in a particular place and time. The academic approach means the knowledge of the previous approach; it attempts to describe, analyze and include into religious and historical context both Dandaron’s sangha and his mandala, which is its expression. The first prerequisite for the academic interpretation of the mandala is the knowledge of its religious background (traditional Vajrabhairava mandala in Tibet, Mongolia and Buryatia). The second prerequisite is the knowledge of history and historical characteristics of Buryat sangha in the Russian state and the international context of spread of Buddhism in South-East Siberia.

Such an approach is expressed in David Morgan’s work: “To investigate an image as a social reality means to regard its significance as the result of both its original production and its ongoing history of reception.”⁸

If you want to understand Dandaron Mandala, you must first know the historical context, because the mandala, beside others, represents the visual history. Due description and analysis of the mandala may only be performed on the basis of the knowledge of the history of Tibetan Buddhism and Buryat religious history.⁹ In order to perform an academic description and analysis, you must know in what manner the believers use the mandala and what their attitude to and understanding of the mandala are. Also very important is the knowledge of events in Dandaron’s life (and mythology or recent hagiography) and particular circumstances of mandala’s origination:

“Everyone knew what had happened (Bidia D. Dandaron’s death on 26th October 1974, author’s note), but no one spoke about it. Not a single word. Everyone dealt with it alone and without words. The teacher left us on the 26th day and the Vajrabhairava mandala was finished and the first print made on the 19th day of the month of October. This concordance allowed us to say: ‘The teacher became united with the *zhinkhor* (mandala)’.”¹⁰

2.1. Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov

Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov, depiction based on a photograph from 1891

There are very probably only three photographs of Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov still known. The first one is dated 1891, the pair of the second and third is dated 1919. The first photograph (see Fig. 7) presents a typical atelier picture, very popular

in the 19th century. Tsydenov, then aged 41 (he was born 1850), sits in a traditional monastic robe, his hair is cut and he has a moustache. Traditional Buryat boots are also noteworthy. No decorations or luxury things; Tsydenov looks very calm and humble; he holds a Buddhist rosary in his left hand. His arm is resting on a round table; there is also probably a Tibetan book wrapped in cloth under his hand. The painted depiction on the mandala is executed accurately to the photography; the monk's robe is of orange or red colour (see Fig. 6).

In fact, this photograph is used in Dandaron Mandala twice – firstly it is the mentioned coloured copy of the photograph (cf. Fig. 6 and Fig. 7) and in the second case the painter depicted only Tsydenov's face (see Fig. 4). What is very interesting is that in this image Tsydenov wears civil clothes, a thick stick, a briefcase and a bowler hat. How should we interpret it? It probably depicts Tsydenov traveling; he allegedly visited Italy.

“As for *modernization* of Buddhism in the yoga community of Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov, we can say there were certain circumstances that would not be possible in a traditional monastery. According to A. M. Zheleznov's words, Soorchoj's residents had subscriptions for journals, including international ones. Lamas studied foreign languages and literature; Soorchoj had a rich Russian language library focused on belle-lettres. Once, when Buddhist laymen came to order a ritual with the lamas, they were surprised to see Sandan Lama reading a European book in European clothes. Some say Soorchoj was illuminated with electric lamps using batteries brought from Warsaw. (...) A well-known Orientalist Prof. A. M. Pozdnev visited Soorchoj and discussed with Sandan Lama.”^{11, 12}

Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov, depiction based on a photograph from 1919¹³

Besides the 1891 picture, there exist two photographs from 1919 (see Fig. 8). Tsydenov is on the left, he holds a very thin stick in his right hand and again a rosary in the left hand. He is aged 69, dressed in traditional Buryat civil clothes, with long hair and a rich goatee. We can see Dorzhe Badmaev to his left. Despite the fact that both persons are standing side by side, a kind of hierarchy is apparent – Badmaev is in the background, Tsydenov is standing a little bit ahead. The photograph is not taken in the atelier but inside a wooden house; the white canvas does not cover the whole background and timber is visible on the right-hand margin.

There are some differences between the photograph (Fig. 8) and the mandala paintings (Fig. 6). The main difference is in Tsydenov's clothes – there is a huge crown decorated with small human skulls on his head as well as a decorative wrap over his shoulders. His left hand with a rosary is placed more in front of his body. The crown and the wrap symbolize the insignia of the *Dharmaraja*, i.e. of the alleged theocratic ruler of the then Buryatia, whom he himself proclaimed in 1919.

2.2. Bidia D. Dandaron

Bidia D. Dandaron, depiction based on a photograph from 1965¹⁴

According to Vladimir M. Montlevich, the set of pictures was made by the well-known Ulan-Ude photographer A. I. Ponomariov in 1965. He was commissioned to prepare pictures for a propagandistic brochure on the bloom of Buddhism in the USSR. In the depository of the Ethnographic Museum on the outskirts of Ulan-Ude, he found, besides other objects, a tantric attire, worn by lamas. The photographer asked the museum staff to dress in this attire and to stand as models

for the brochure. All of them refused, either from fear or out of respect for the monastic robe. B. D. Dandaron, who was invited as a consultant, was the only one, who dared to put it on. “Thus the magnificent Dandaron’s portrait with the tantric Kalachakra crown was created. The brochure was published, and the face of Dharmaraja Dandaron became famous all over the Buddhist world.”¹⁵

3. Conclusion

Dandaron Mandala is an updated version of the ancient traditional Vajrabhairava mandala used in Tibet, Mongolia and Buryatia in a particular period, i.e. the last third of the 20th century, in a particular place, i.e. Buryatia. The mandala has several levels:

1. It represents illustrations to several texts;
2. It is a meditation aid for a particular group;
3. It is the collective memory of Dandaron’s sangha;
4. The mandala also lives its virtual life on the Internet.

The primary purpose of creation of the mandala was not to visually represent the collective memory of anti-Buddhist reprisals; however this feature is present in it, and both its authors and “users” were well aware of the fact. What are the concrete features that we speak about? It is the depiction of Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov, a victim of the Soviet regime; B. D. Dandaron on a bench in prison clothes and, last but not least, the Lenin mausoleum as part of charnel grounds, an impure place.

For a group of unofficial Buddhists it was a dangerous and courageous venture to create a mandala during the years of neo-Stalinism. To create a mandala that *expressis verbis* refers to reprisals was an extraordinary deed. Although anti-Soviet symbols are not primarily present, prosecuting authorities could easily decipher its content with the help of experts and draw relevant consequences, as we could see in Dandaron’s process.

In fact we are lucky that this visual illustration of the time has survived and we can both express admiration and try to identify its interpretation.

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Kopsavilkums

20. gadsimta vidū tradicionālās Burjatijas sanghas ietvaros izveidojās jauna budisma forma. Tā dēvētā pirmā budisma atjaunotne pēc Otrā pasaules kara izpaudās centienos atjaunot reliģisko dzīvi pēc vairāk nekā desmit represiju gadiem. 1930. gadā visus klosterus slēdza, daļu mūku nonāvēja, daļu ieslodzīja, pārējiem bija jāatsakās no mūku kārtas. Kad sākās Staļina kulta kritika, Ulanudē sešdesmito gadu vidū izveidojās neliela, bet nozīmīga budistu kopienu, ko vadīja Burjatijas budisma pārstāvis un pētnieks Bidija D. Dandarons. Neoficiālā jeb pagrīdes mikrosangha pastāvēja līdz viņa apcietināšanai 1972. gadā. Izciešot tiesas piespiesto piecu gadu ieslodzījumu Gulagā, 1974. gadā Dandarons mira sešdesmit gadu vecumā. Viens no viņa pirmajiem mācekļiem bija gleznotājs A. Žeļznovs, kas pēc sava skolotāja nāves uzgleznoja Vadžrabhairavas mandalu. Viņa inovatīvs gleznojums neatbilda iesakņojušās tradīcijas principiem un pārkāpa visus pastāvošos standartus. Analizējot gleznojumu, autors apraksta jaunās reliģiskās grupas izveidošanos, tās skatījumu uz apkārtējo pasauli un šī skatījuma iestrādi mandalā. Attēls atklāj pārsteidzoši daudz par Dandaronu, taču nav atrodams iezīmes, kas liecinātu par viņa kultu, kas gan tagad, gan viņa dzīves laikā ir izraisījis zināmu apmulsumu oficiālajā sanghā.

Atslēgvārdi: Burjatijas budistu sangha, Padomju Savienība, Bidija Dandarons, Vadžrabhairavas mandala, kolektīvā atmiņa, represijas pret budistiem.

“Near” East, “Far” East: Imagining and Accepting Islam and Buddhism in France

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France, the “elder daughter of the Church”, although self-considered as a country of “religious freedom” according to the principles of secularism (*laïcité*), has recently framed new legal codes for the public expressions of religiosity, targeting especially foreign religions, such as Islam. The tolerance of national institutions towards this “repulsive” eastern religion is somewhat declining – despite its presence since decades and the attempts of Muslim communities for “integration”. On the contrary, Buddhism as an “eastern” and “exotic” tradition that has settled more recently, is embedded in very appealing images and is not challenged by social and political resistances to establish itself in France. Both religions have nevertheless undertaken the same processes of expansion and rooting: migration or mission, (re) building community links (for expatriates or converts), relocation and building of places of worship, and so on. This paper aims at highlighting the internal division of “far” and “near” East in the moral geography of French orientalism, as a key ideological factor (among more sociological ones) explaining the dissimilar acceptance of Islam and Buddhism in the French cultural and religious landscape. Both are “eastern” traditions but definitely stand at the opposite poles of this orientalism: they are accordingly associated with different conceptions, location and values of the “Otherness”.

Keywords: France; *laïcité*; toleration; Islam; Buddhism; moral geographies.

This paper aims at exploring the issue of religious tolerance in a country which has not been affected by dramatic changes in its political system: France. France ranges among the first countries of the world to have established a secular model, namely “*laïcité*” in 1905. One century later, *laïcité* is still a political principle, but a contested social model in a country which has been compelled to the recognition of its ethnic and religious diversity. “Eastern” traditions are nowadays recognized as such in the newly considered mosaic of religious traditions, but France is still called “the elder daughter of the Roman Catholic Church”. Yet, in the two last centuries, the country has undertaken a process of massive secularization (for instance, Willaime, 2004). Yet, Christianity remains the yardstick by which the changes in religion are measured. Secularization in France has had two different effects: the progress of secularism but, in the same period, a religious revival or effervescence (Hervieu-Léger, 1993), that have both been framed in the values of cultural and philosophical universalism that France likes to speak of as roots (heritage) and routes (direction) (Baubérot, 1996). The 1905’s law on separation of Church and State makes France a singular model of secularism, *laïcité*, which is, in

principle, somewhat different from the 19th century idea of secularization (Kosmin, 2007). The *laïcité* which has sometimes been considered as cultural programme, only entails the political separation between Church and State, with economic and social consequences: the autonomization of religion rather than the withdrawal of it from public sphere (Willaime, 1998). Moreover, *laïcité* had an unforeseen but finally expectable after-effect: the pluralisation of religion in secular settings (Liogier, 2010). In a country like France, despite widespread adherence to the values of secularism (as a political model), and the on-going progress of atheism (as cultural standards), the religious landscape has indeed witnessed profound changes, while undertaking a process of *cultural* or *ethnic* and *religious* diversification. The religious landscape of France is henceforth a complex mosaic of ancient traditions and new religious movements, of local and foreign systems of beliefs organized by the parallel dynamics of intercultural mixing (hybridization) and religious coexistence (pluralism) (Blanquart, 1987). The principles of *laïcité* have nevertheless been challenged by a sudden takeover, in the late 20th century, of public spaces by religious expressions, whereas *laïcité* was supposed to refrain from it. Religious and ethnic claims, especially coming from the migrants' side, nourished the sense of community bonds and confessional identity, and "community", in the context of France, is a synonymous of parochialism and sectarianism, habits and values contradictory with the universalist values of citizenship. Since then, French state authorities have been compelled to rethink the legal frames of *laïcité*, allowing for the multicultural features of the religious landscape (Liogier, 2010). Issues in religious tolerance and pluralism are therefore, in France, concerned by the acceptance of foreign traditions, and this acceptance is logically related to the imagination of the Otherness. In French collective imagination, two different religion traditions epitomize "the East" (the Orient) in the "West" (the Occident) in the religious landscape but in very dissimilar ways. In the context of postcolonial France, one (Islam) stands for an alien, aggressive and repellent religion, rejecting the values of secularism, the other one (Buddhism) typifies, on the contrary, a foreign but peaceful, admirable and secular-friendly spirituality (Liogier, 2010; Obadia, forthcoming). This paper puts emphasis upon the moral geographies underlying the opposite images and dissimilar tolerance of France towards two "oriental" religions.

Buddhism westward and the issue of cultural acceptance

Among the different "foreign" traditions that have rooted in France, Buddhism enjoys a highly positive image (Obadia, 1999). Asian traditions, as a whole, have been constructed historically as peaceful spiritualities, and the pleasant images they are associated with have therefore facilitated their acceptance and reception in the religious landscape of France – contrary to other groups or traditions, especially Islam. The Path of Buddhism in France (Lenoir, 1999), in Europe (Batchelor, 1994) or in the West (Obadia, 2007) has already been retraced, and the settlement in the West, of this 2500-year old religion, born in the valleys of the Indus, has since then been an important subject-matter for the understanding of the changing landscape of Western and "modern" countries. But the available literature on Buddhism in the West and in Europe allows little room for the issue of *politics*, which is nonetheless

a crucial conceptual key. In his *How the swans came to the make* Rick Fields (1992) only mentions the problem with the Japanese presence during World War II while, paradoxically, Zen Japanese "boomed" in the 1950s–1960s and became a fashionable spiritual item for the American counterculture movement. In the case of Germany, Martin Baumann (2000) recalled that Buddhism, which quickly turned out a religion for converts rather than a tradition imported by migrants, was seen by national-socialist authorities as a "strange" religion during the same period, and the temples were closed. But in the case of France, and despite a colonial relationship between South-East Asia and the French, political aspects of Buddhist diffusion seem to have been expunged from the history of Buddhism Westward. Dennis Gira is among the few ones to address Buddhism political issues, but mainly in the scope of integration and acculturation processes. Gira, for instance, wonders to what extent "French Buddhism" can be "French" and whether Westerners have to assume the Asian heritage (Gira, 1997). But there is one crucial question that few scholars have until now addressed in both Western societies and social sciences about Buddhism "here": why is it so *easy* to build a Buddhist temple in secular Europe (and especially France), and, furthermore, why is it so *difficult* for a Mosque in the same area?

Foreign religions and tolerance: the case of France

The quick settlement and openly sympathetic welcoming of Buddhism in France and in the West are in stark contrast with the problems encountered by Islam, which is considered as a source of problems. Islam is supposed to be "distant" from the mainstream cultural values and norms in France, and, consequently, an eternal "foreign" element in the religious and cultural landscape, regardless of the centuries of Muslim presence in Europe (Goody, 2004). Consequently, the case of Islam raises a broader question, which goes far beyond Islam itself, but, as we will see afterwards, brings the controversies back to the Eastern tradition: the issue of acceptance and integration of non-Western religions in "the West". Case-studies recorded in the Americas and in Europe, unveil a wide range of reactions towards "foreign" religions, but, interestingly, whatever the context is, Islam habitually more or less epitomizes a culturally repulsive icon – the violence of fanatics and the values of intolerance – whilst, on another side, Buddhism exemplifies one of the newly arrived soft and attractive spiritualities. As for Europe, the resistance against Turkey's political and economic integration had been justified in religious terms and concomitantly to the search of the religious roots of Europe. Europe was "Christian" in origins and could not accept a Muslim country as a peer. Nonetheless, "Europe" is not viewed in a national context but a continental one, and there are different attitudes towards "foreign" cultures and religions, and different legal frames by which the nations of Europe have coped with the issue of tolerance and integration of foreign religions.

The case of France, whose position for the comparison between Buddhism and Islam I attempt to outline here, offers very specific political and cultural horizons for the reception of foreign religions in France. Despite a long-lasting engagement with the Roman Catholic Church, France is one among the first secularized countries of Europe – in 1905, after an extended ideological conflict

between lay and religious forces. Moreover, the country has witnessed a shift in its political models. After having been under an “assimilationist” regime for decades, it recently turned towards multiculturalism. Under the first regime, *citizenship* has been the main and mainstream identity reference – however, under a different label. French people, whatever their ethnicity, colour or religion, were expected to align along the mainstream norms and values. The second regime, which has not been established officially, calls for another attitude to culture and ethnicity, as the cultural landscape was not a uniform one, but a mosaic of regional and foreign cultures. Inspired by the North-American experience of recognition of cultural diversity, French authorities have attempted to allow more room to the claims for cultural singularity – for instance, in promoting “positive discrimination” for ethnic or social minorities. Multiculturalism, lacking a firm political basis in France, has failed to be established as a social model, but its principles are nowadays widely recognized, and ethnic minorities that have claimed for recognition of their specificities, can nowadays benefit from the principles of “positive discrimination”.

Concerning religion, France is also the first country of Europe where the separation between State and Church, initiated in 1905, has been established as the political basis of secularism, *laïcité*. The legal and cultural principle of *laïcité* (the autonomy and above all, privatization) presupposes, in its first expression, the State’s neutrality towards religion, but later a political control over religious expression in public spaces (Liogier, 2010). Even though the principles of *laïcité* supposedly apply equally to *all* religions, however, they affect differently two important religions in France: Islam (which demographically ranks the 2nd) and Buddhism (ranks the 5th, before Judaism). According to French Administrations, Asians “do not create a problem” while North-Africans “do”: besides, Asian cults have settled more or less discreetly and offer “exotic” and colourful buildings, while African cults exemplify more “unfamiliar” images of distinctive traditions, in striking contrast with Christianity. Obviously, Buddhism and Islam both are culturally “foreign” religious traditions in France, but each stands at the opposite pole of the French imagination of the Other. Strangely, Buddhism and Islam arrived in France at the same period and, to a certain extent, have rooted and expanded by means of similar processes.

Buddhism and Islam in France: parallel histories

If we draw a short historical sketch of the settlement and integration of Islam and Buddhism in France, contrasts are as striking as similarities. The two traditions came following similar channels of migration processes, and as “foreign” religions they have quickly settled in France but have been torn between the need for integration and the temptation to maintain distinctive features – or, put in other terms, torn between acculturation and cultural claims, between the alignment of foreign traditions with dominant cultural values and social norms (especially those of *laïcité*) and the aspiration to sustain cultural distinctiveness.

Islam has settled in France in the 1960-1970s, and came initially alongside working migration. In the 1980s, the workers, who had been living in France for years, began to express ethnic and religious claims. They therefore shifted from the label “North African migrants” to “Muslims” (Etienne, 1989). This conversion of identity labels, from ethnic to religious belonging, is concomitant with the rise of

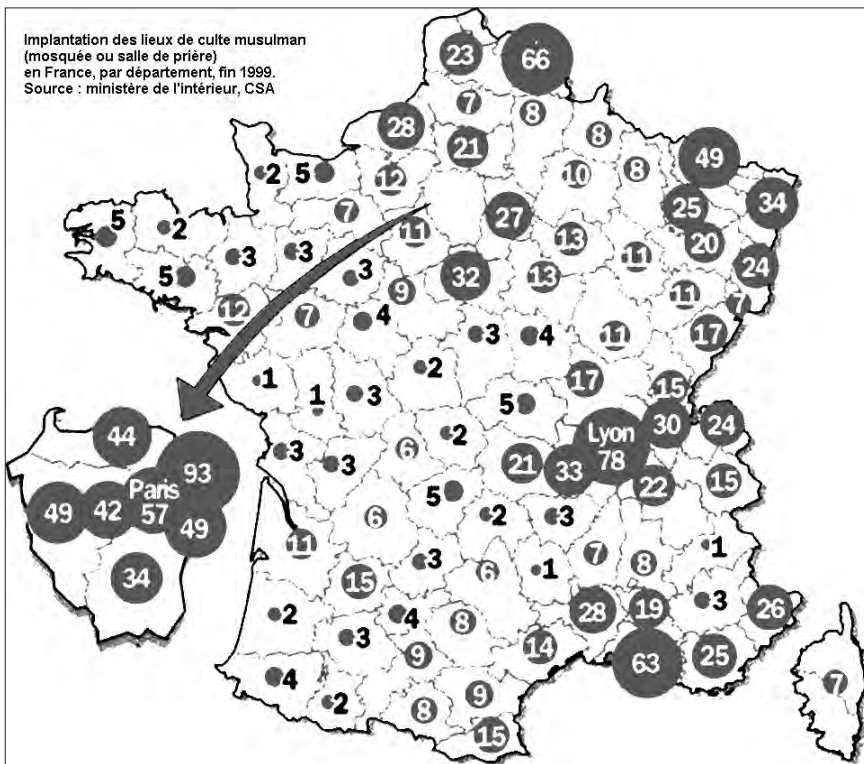
a religious consciousness and the first community claims. Muslims used to pray in discreet secular places (often basements or a warehouse) but wanted proper mosques and set up their own organizations. Unsurprisingly, in the 1990s Islam of France was allowed to challenge the official norms and values of French society: the decade of disputes over the "veil" and in the late 1990s, the evidence of the relocation of African forms of polygamy in a country, France, where it is culturally banned and legally prohibited, range among the main "affairs" that have entangled the milieu of Islam in France. Moreover, Islam has increasingly become a missionary religion, and the number of converts from Christian and secular backgrounds quickly grew in numbers in the 1990s. Wavering between the longing for integration and recognition, as well as the ethnic claims and the rejection of secular norms of French society, Islam has paradoxically succeeded in settling in France but problematically adapted to France. Hence it is not surprising to observe, in the 2000s, the rise of political and social arguments over "national identity" that have targeted Islam's integration "failures".

As for Buddhism, it has landed in France in more or less the same historical area. In the 1960s and 1970s, migrants and refugees ("boat people" from South East Asia) attained the soil of France by numbers, while the "touring" masters from Zen and Tibetan traditions, in the same time period started spreading the Buddhist message – and migration processes have thus been accompanied by missionization strategies (Obadia, 1999). As a result, Buddhism turns out to be both a (Northern Mahayana) "spirituality" or a religious option for, first, "counter-culture" generations, and later for "modern" French citizens, *and* the religious and cultural heritage of migrants originating mainly from Theravada (Southeast Asian Buddhist) countries. In the 1980s, hundreds of meditation centres and temples have been established on the French soil (most of them in order to host French converts), and these communities have attempted to afford Buddhism a stable institutional frame. Like Islam, Buddhism has been structured in official organizations (like associations and an umbrella Federation in 1986). In the 2000s, Buddhism has apparently become a recognized and respected component of French religious landscape. With their contemporaneous historical contexts, similar channels and processes of settling for the two "foreign" religions, Buddhism and Islam could resemble each other; but the reality is quite the reverse: they have undertaken different challenges and adopted different strategies.

Islam in and of France torn between secularization and revitalization

In 2009, the debate in Switzerland on the prohibition of building new minarets has raised the issue of the visibility of Islam in European countries, and the tolerance of host societies. The issue is questioned a bit differently in France, where the largest Muslim community in Europe is established: they are between 2 to 3 million and 4 to 5 million people (of a total population of 65 million in France), and most of them are from migrant extraction (North Africa, Africa), with more and more people from Christian cultural and religious background being converted (around 60 000, according to an estimation). Bruno Etienne, who was a famous

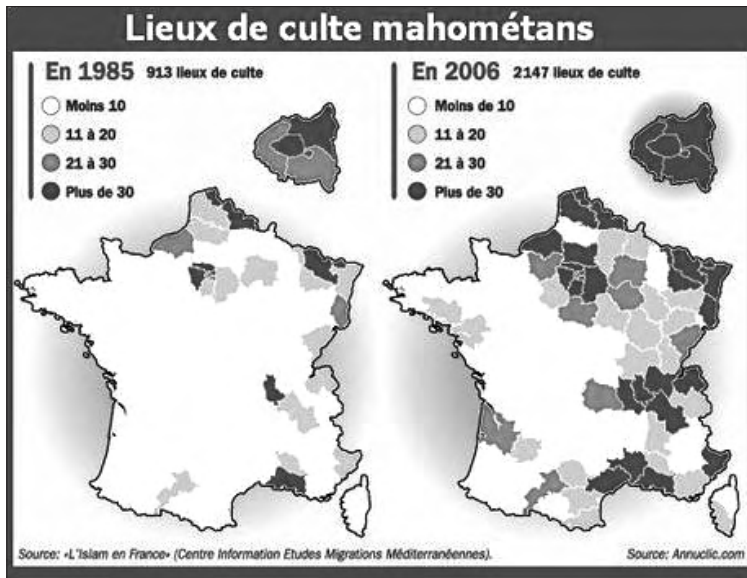
French political scientist, raised the issue of the conditions under which a shift from “Islam in France” to a “ French Islam ” could occur (Etienne, 1989). The first generations of Muslims in France have been widely secularized and Islam is regaining its position and new generations, in search of identity, under the influence of transnational networks or in reaction to integration difficulties, are “returning” to religion. The need for an organization of French Islam has exposed the internal tensions and conflicts between the different components of Muslim communities. Otherwise, the attempt of French political administration to control Islam is a challenge for secularism – indeed, according to the principles of *laïcité*, the French government must not be engaged in the economic support for religious organisations and buildings. There are nevertheless more than 2000 mosques in France, whose geographic distribution has been depicted – as seen in the maps – as the settlement of migrant communities in the areas where they were employed in industry.



Picture 1. Settlement of Muslim places of worship (mosque or prayer room) in France, by department, end of the 1990s. Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, CSA

The visibility of Islam in the French cultural urban landscape hence depends on the ability of Muslims to negotiate specific spaces for cultic activities, and a way of living in conformity to their (revivified) religious tradition. But African-styled cultures that have been carried by migrants alongside Islam seemed to challenge the integration of Muslims: religion had become a crucial factor in the reinvention

of ethnicity, and had a major influence upon the integration of African people in France.



Picture 2. Demographic variations of Muslim places of worship by region: comparison between two decades. Source : Centre d'Information – Etudes Migrations Méditerranéennes

In France, Islam (the source of ethnic and religious identity) is suspected of producing cultural resistance against the mainstream values of secular France. According to a 2007 survey (n = 1000), for a large part of sample of French people, Muslim practices are seen as a “problem” for the integration of North African migrants in France. The ostensible signs of religiosity or belonging range in the following order of aversion (n = 1000): “Integral Veil” (*burqa* style) comes first (88%) just before “Islamic Veil” (*hijab*) (68%). Far beyond, but still at a significant rate, comes sheep sacrifice at the *Aïd El Kebir* ritual (34%) and prayers in public (28%). The fast of *ramadan* (20%) and religious diet restrictions (prohibition of pork and alcohol, 16%) are the last in the list.

Debates concerning the *Islamic veil* have crystallized the “problems” of Islam facing the yardstick of *laïcité*. Actually, more demands are expressed in terms of legal recognition of religious specificities – especially in ethnic and religious minorities, and especially among Muslims. During the 1990s, the reported cases of ostensible use of *hijab* in schools led to the 2004s legal ban of religious signs in education. Next, a law prohibiting the “integral veil” (*burqa*) in public spaces was adopted in May 2011, and one year later from three hundred to two thousand women were supposed to be wearing *burqa* in public. In spite of the risk to be legally sanctioned for such a habit (women can be charged with a fine), the number of women with integral veil in public spaces is increasing (see Picture 3) – the meaning of the veil in this context is much more than a religious custom: it is a claim for ethnicity recognition.



Picture 3. Integrally veiled women in France, late 2000s.

Source: ministry of domestic affairs / Le Figaro

Chart of integrally veiled women in France. Estimated figures: 1900 women (3 per 100 000 inhabitants), 90% of them are below 40 years of age, 65% of them have the French citizenship and 25% of them are converts (not born in a Muslim family).



Picture 4. Source: the right-wing oriented blog "Français de France".

<http://francaisdefrance.wordpress.com/2010/10/06/instinct-de-conservation-en-avez-vous-encore/>

Women in veil or individual actors wearing traditional but forbidden clothes in order to affirm their Muslim identity are definitely the most noticed and commented aspects of Islam's public visibility in France since the 1990s. But in 2010, in Paris,

hundreds of Muslims have been seen praying in the streets: the usual cultic place was henceforth unavailable and there was no mosque to welcome them in this district with high rates of migrants from North and West African Muslim countries (see *Picture 4*). Very recently (on 14 September 2011), the "problem" of Muslims praying in the streets of Paris has been partially solved by the allocation of a specific place for worship, before further reflexion on the issue of the number of mosques and the demographics of adherents. Twenty-four hours later (on 15 September 2011), the ministry of domestic affairs announced that, henceforward, collective prayers in public spaces would be forbidden, as they were "contrary to the principle of *laïcité*" (in newspapers like *Le monde* and *Liberation*).

Anti-Muslim reactions

Veiled Muslim women and public prayers have logically stimulated harsh political controversies. The extreme-right parties (*Front National*) and nationalist movements (*identitaires*) have been prompt to point at these facts, as the evidence of an "Islamization" of French society. The quick and unexpected visibility of Islam in the public spaces, and especially in a series of sporadic expressions made the "peril of islamization", a right-wing ideological theory, broadcasted by a wide media coverage and have given rise to political controversies. To sum up the arguments against the presence of Islam on the French soil and, moreover, against the integration of Muslims and Muslim beliefs in Roman Catholic France (which is actually less "Catholic" each year), opponents to Islam have pointed out:

- The problem of the "Islamic veil" as seen as a rejection of French secular or "values";
- The increasing number of conversions of previously Catholic French people to Islam (around 3500 each year) – the more radical opponents (especially the right-wing "Riposte laïque" – *lay riposte*) extrapolate France as a future "Muslim country", and demographic projections suggest that in a near future more than 8% of the French population should be Muslims. This assertion echoes the same claims but from the opposite side – radical Imams or promoters of the *Charia* (Islamic law);
- The public exposure of praying in the streets (as seen previously);
- Terrorist attacks or threats against France for not having "respected Muslim laws" on their own soil;
- Connections with transnational fundamentalism: the 1990s attacks in the subway in Paris, bombing of buildings over the same decade, the 2000s recruitment among young French underprivileged people in the suburbs for enrolling in *Djihad* abroad... have led the national authorities as well as right-wing parties to suggest that French Islam was not so "integrated" but constituted also the grounds for intolerant and bellicose Muslim fundamentalist movements;
- The specific diet exigencies and the claim for gender separation during sports classes in schools also raised harsh debates on the way Islam (mainly, but Judaism too) overstepped the egalitarian principles of secularism, and were accused of creating a sense of separatist community *against* national citizenship.

In 2010, as a reaction, these right-wing movements supported anti-Islam “wine-and-sausage” parties, specifically targeting the diet rules of Muslims, which are interpreted in this case as a rejection of two cultural symbols supposed to be typical of France (far beyond French cuisine). The problem of Islam in France was initially a problem of cultural acceptance of Muslim people who arrived in the 1960s. It has been, since then, the issue of social recognition and economic integration of the so-called “second generations” in the 1980s. In the 2000s, mainly because the integration processes are considered by national authorities and by intellectuals (surprisingly, from the extreme left to the extreme right wing) as partially failed, the third generation of African migrants nowadays reinvent themselves by means of Muslim references, even many of the new offspring have not been socialized in religion and know little – if any – about the beliefs of their grandparents. The social and scholarly problem about Islam in France is not only an issue of integration but also an issue of visibility. The fact that Islam has moved from the clandestine to the highly-visible sectors of French society made the situation more problematic and the problems more critical. As a result,

- African and Muslim immigration has become a crucial issue at the very heart of political controversies in the last two decades, and the point is expressly used by the right and extreme right political parties;
- The extreme right wing of the *Front National* is consequently gaining more popularity in France: it was credited between 18% and 22% vote intentions before the presidential elections in 2012, but finally the leader of the *Front National*, Marine Le Pen, has “only” had almost 18% of the votes;
- As mentioned earlier, ultranationalist movements organized Anti-Muslim manifestations, such as “wine-and-sausage” parties;
- Moreover, both violence against Muslim people (mostly verbal, sometimes physical) is slowly increasing but still remains low; violence in places of worship and cemeteries, on the contrary, has witnessed rapid intensification.

Observably, the “trouble” with Islam comes first with clothes, second with collective acts of religiosity, and finally takes the form of bodily restrictions of individuals – it becomes obvious that the more public the symbols of Islam are there, the more they create violent reactions in France. For instance, a recent survey on islamophobia in France (*Rapport sur l'islamophobie en France*, CCIF, 2010) has demonstrated that the number of profanations against mosques and Muslim tombs has risen to more than 200%: in the decades after their arrival and settlement on the French soil, Muslims still face the suspicion and rejection of a part of the population. This is true, though, that the violence against Islam in France is concomitant with the recollection of the colonial past of France (especially in Algeria, a Muslim country) and with the recent intensification of Muslim claims and resistance against secular legal norms. Generally speaking, the violence against religious buildings is an explicit way for the defenders of the theory of “Islamization” of France to express anonymously an ideological position which is strictly forbidden by the 1990s Gayssot law against racism and anti-Semitism. In 2009 and 2010, the Mosque of Clastres (*Picture 5*) has, for instance, been tagged with racist and fascist slogans. It is one among the many cases recorded at the time, even if the census of anti-immigration and anti-racist acts reveals a lower rate in 2010 (26%) than in 2009.



Picture 5. Mosque of Clastres tagged with racist slogans

Source: *Le Figaro*, 2009

The 2010s inquiry on the perceptions of French people on secularism and religion (on a sample of 979 persons) by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights or CNDCH (compared with 2007 Human Rights report) reveals that French people have a positive view on *Laïcité* (secularism) (for 65%, - 2 points), on Religions (for 36% , - 3 points), and, among them, on Catholicism (45%, stable), on Protestantism (37%, - 2 points), on Judaism (36%, - 2 points) and, finally, on Islam (24%, - 3 points). No reference was made to Buddhism. The same study demonstrates that 48% of people of the cluster think that Muslims make up a separated group in the whole society (+4 points comparatively to 2009), but 74% believe that French Muslims are French like any other ones (-5 points), 68% assert that wearing the Muslim scarf is a problem for living in a secular society. French people express a growing feeling of rejection against “foreigners”: 56% deem that they are “too many” (+9 points), and from them 61% believe that their life has become more difficult for that reason. 67% consider that most of the migrants come to France to benefit from the social security advantages. Finally, 59% consider that integration of foreigners is a fiasco, and even 14% of them think it is a “complete failure”. Moreover, Muslim religious practices are seen as a “problem” for the integration of Islam in France, according to the same sample, in the following hierarchy: Integral Veil (for 88% of people in the sample), the Veil (*Hijab*) (68%), sheep sacrifice at the *Aïd El Kebir* ritual (34%), public prayers (28%), *Ramadan* (20%), religious diet and other restrictions (pork and alcohol) (16%).

Islam’s response: Muslim ‘pride’ and ethnicism

As a reaction to these anti-Islam movements or feelings, Muslims first opted (in the 1970s) for a strategy of reserve, self-control and invisibility, but shifted to a more explicit and public demand for integration (in the 1980s and 1990s), and finally ended up in the concept of a “Muslim pride” in the 2000s: the signs of religious belonging, adherence or observance, previously hidden.

Religious ethnic claims of Islam followers have changed the social semiotics of “Muslim identity” in public spaces: not only the veils have increased in number

and have become synonymous of a resistance against the French State's prohibition, but bodily and language attitudes (for instance, accent and salutation gesture) have pervaded ordinary behaviours (especially among the teenagers and in youth culture), and above all, religious belonging has become an explicit message in fashion. A French Muslim rap-singer has promoted, in the late 2010s, a campaign of Muslim pride, and fashioned a T-Shirt with the slogan "I'm Muslim, Don't Panik.". This campaign, among others, encouraging Muslims to render discernible the signs of their religiosity, is the result of a process of identity crystallization, compelling Muslims to favour (ethnic and religious) "community" against (civil and global) "society", to establish a hierarchy between confession and citizenship (which ranks lower).



Picture 6.

Source: picture taken by Jonathan Melloul, student in anthropology of Lyon 2, Master degree on "Les convertis à l'Islam en France", 2011

It is not the place here to discuss all the causes and social impacts of such strategies of "islamization" of North-African migrants' identity, the above-mentioned evidence demonstrates that one of the main problems with the practice of Islam in France has therefore something to do with its public visibility. The more it comes to private practice, the less Islam is seen as "offending" for other people. Quite the reverse, the more a practice is shared and socially perceptible for the non-Muslim others, the more it becomes "offending" for the surrounding environment and global society. In France, as mentioned before, the principle of *laïcité* inhibits the public expression of religiosity and faith. Depending on their nature and content, public religious manifestations or public exhibition of religious belonging can generate suspicion or prejudice. But this is not exactly true for *all* religions in France, and Buddhism epitomizes the perfect counter-example to Islam.

Buddhism

Buddhism might be considered in France as the exact opposite of Islam. While Islam embodies the image of an authoritarian old-styled tradition, Buddhism, quite the reverse, has long been – and still is – seen as "wisdom", perfectly fitting with the values and the norms of Western modernity. The "wisdom" of Buddhism, an image built by a two-century process of reinterpretation (Obadia, 2007), is the cult

practised partially or entirely by two categories of individuals: "Asian" (migrants from South East Asia and their descendants) and "French" (converts). The number of Asian or "ethnic" Buddhists is estimated between 600 000 and 700 000 individuals, while the number of converts is up to 150 000. "Ethnic" Buddhism, because it came through migrations\ processes, is represented by South East Asian Theravada schools and Vietnamese Mahayana schools of Buddhism, i.e., the areas from which migrants originate. Converts, however, are engaged in traditions whose presence on the French soil is related to missionary activity (by Asian monks) and "importation" (by French sympathizers), in Zen and Tibetan traditions. The Buddhist landscape in France is a complex mosaic of communities and places of worship, including New Religious Movements (lay-oriented) monastic traditions (maintaining ecclesiastic structures). But the influence of Buddhism largely sidesteps the boundaries of communities: in France, like elsewhere (Lopez, 1998), Buddhist themes have indeed pervaded different sectors of society: popular culture and music, cinema and literature, fashion (clothes) and therapeutic techniques... For that reason, even if less than one million do practice Buddhism in a community context, a census in the mid-1990s revealed that five million persons in France felt "close to Buddhist ideas". Buddhism is not only highly appealing, it is also culturally acceptable – the values of inner, self-made, "rationalistic" experience of spirituality makes it a more "secular-friendly" tradition than others, especially Islam.

The settlement of Buddhism in France

As previously said, Buddhism has not only become a "fashionable" item in French popular culture, the Asian tradition has also rooted physically in France. Hundreds of meditation centres and temples have been established since the late 1960s and are nowadays scattered throughout the country. Most of the Buddhist places of worship target a convert audience in urban settings, although great temples have been built in the rural areas, where the local conditions are more favourable for the transposition of architectural models of monastic complexes. The presence of Buddhism is, at least in this very visible form of social and material communities (groups and temples), divided into two different geographic modes of settlement. Buddhism is rather discrete but massively rooted in the urban landscapes (most of the groups are located in cities or nearby). Quite the reverse, only a few Buddhist temples and monasteries have rooted in rural settings where they attempt to reproduce, *mutatis mutandis*, the architecture and material culture of their country of origin – Tibet, Vietnam, Burma, Japan.

Moreover, Buddhist temples or meditation centres are increasing in number, due to the missionary zeal of converts (Obadia, 1999, 2000): there was only one Buddhist place of worship in the 1960s, and around 400 in the 2000s, including Japanese *Dojos*, Southeast Asian *Viharas* or Tibetan *Gompas*. Contrary to Muslim places of worship, no damage against a Buddhist temple has been recorded so far: they are not subjected to violence. A Vietnamese Buddhist sanctuary in Lyon has been destroyed by a fire in 2006 (rebuilt since then), but it was an accident. Buddhism is, as a matter of fact, a much more accepted religion than Islam on the French soil. As a result, the social and material visibility of Buddhism is far less problematic than other traditions. The foundation of a Tibetan temple in the rural



Picture 7.

Source: Lionel Obadia “Transplantation religieuse et aménagement de l'espace : l'exemple du bouddhisme en Occident”, in : Servais, Paul, Hagelstein, Roger, (Eds), *Perception et organisation de l'espace urbain : une confrontation Orient - Occident*, Louvain la neuve : Academia-Bruylant, 2001, pp. 301-324

region of Lozère, in 2008, was preceded by a public celebration. Famous guests were invited, among them Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, who was at the time the wife of the president of the French Republic. She welcomed Tenzin Gyatso, the fourteenth Dalai-lama, the head of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism and former spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan nation. A few other *foreign* religious dignitaries have been paid homage in France (Picture 8).



Picture 8.

Source: Le dalaï-lama reçoit Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, Le Figaro, August 22, 2008

Discreet in the urban *architectural* context, the *social* visibility of Buddhism in public spaces is much more discernible: the presence of Buddhism is as much an affair of semiotics of the body as the establishment of sites and temples. German Buddhologist Edward Conze augured in the 1950s that monks in saffron robes would saunter in the streets of cities of Europe (Conze, 1951). Considering nowadays presence of Buddhist monks in the streets of Paris, Nantes or elsewhere, the robe is not only saffron but also purple, the colour of Tibetan schools of Mahayana Buddhism, which is more popular than South-East Asian Theravada Buddhism among converts.

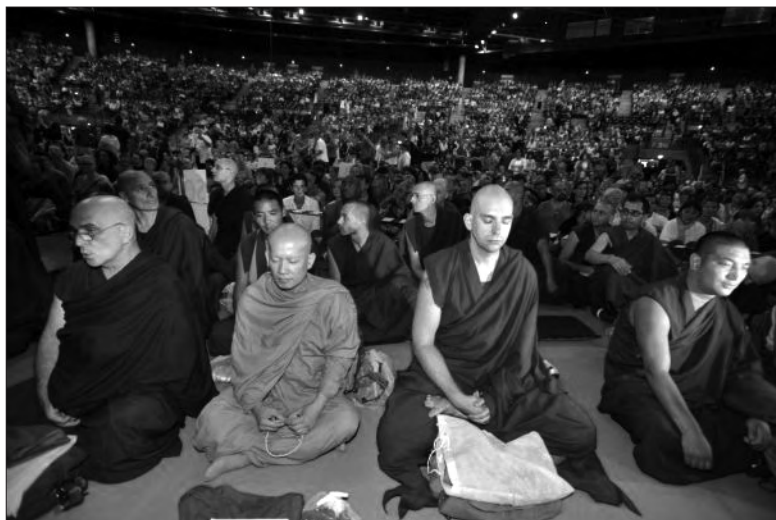


Picture 9. Three French Buddhist monks in the Zénith of Nantes to attend a conference of the Dalai-lama, 15 August 2008

Source: “La France à l’heure bouddhiste”, Jean-Marie Guénois, Le Figaro, 05/06/2009

When Buddhists gather by the thousands in public spaces, not only is the meeting addressed by very few critics – if any – but it receives a sympathetic media-coverage (*Picture 12*):

The French people's respect for Buddhism hence contrasts with the contained aversion the same people, media and institutions, nourish towards Islam.



Picture 10. In a large auditorium in Paris

Source: “Le Dalaï-Lama douze jours en France”, L’Express, Web edition (22/08/2008) (accessed 13th Sept 2011)

Orientalist imagination and the issue of the Other

Why do Buddhists and Muslims, both “foreign” and minority religious groups in the French landscape, experience such obvious differences? Islam and Buddhism seem unambiguously located at the opposite poles of the religious and cultural landscape of France. But the *imagined* positions are in contrast with the *effective* position of Islam and Buddhism, respectively. In the repertoire of projective imagination it is subjected to, Islam is a “problem”, especially for the social and cultural integration of its adherents. It stimulates liturgical observance, community bonds, sense of identity, and of ethnicity. As such, Islam is located at the “traditional pole” of religion, i.e. outmoded tradition. Quite the reverse, Buddhism is a “solution”, and especially for the ailments of modern societies. Buddhism generates a sense of the individual, introspection and, finally, a sense of universalism. As such, it is located at the “modern pole” of religion, i.e. as fashionable spirituality.

The effective position of the two traditions in the cultural and social landscapes calls for a valuation of these somewhat stereotyped representations. Islam is indeed a monotheistic religion, like Christianity, the dominant religion of France. If Muslims claim for a specific ethnicity in multicultural France, they primarily attempt to integrate. There are otherwise two hundred (officially recognized) mosques for 4 million persons and, as a consequence, there is one Muslim place

of worship for 20 000 potential practitioners. French Islam is torn between the attraction of fundamentalism (Kepel, 1991) and also being affected by secularization processes (Babès, 2000), and experiences inner tension between reformists and traditionalists. On the contrary, Buddhism is a polytheism and, despite the pleasant images of a neutral spirituality, had prejudicially been blemished by the political and social issue of "sects" in France, and the stigmatization of groups like Soka Gakkai or the government's assaults against neo-orientalism sectarian cults. Nevertheless, Buddhism succeeded in establishing between 350 and 400 temples for 750 000 practitioners (2010s figures), and thus has one place of worship for 1845 persons. Lastly, though imagined as "secular-friendly" and individually-oriented, communities reproduce the traditional structures of monastic asceticism.

The two foreign religions are accordingly in the very heart of sociological debates on religion and multiculturalism in France. The former historian and nowadays ecologist, senator Esther Benbassa points at the issue of integration of migrants. In her words, "Muslims, like Jews before them..." violently experience the ideological resistance of French society against the Other: the contemporary challenges for Muslims are the same Jews have been, though in anti-Semitic environment a century ago (Benbassa, 2004). Sociologist Raphael Liogier believes that the contrasts between the two relate to modernity. In other words, the question is: "which one looks more secular?" Liogier suggests that both religions epitomize two rather contrasting models in reference with the yardstick of the "modern" and "secular" values of the State in France. The first one, Buddhism, offers the image of a "soft", "non-theistic" spirituality that has broken with its ethnic roots and aligns with the ideals of individualistic modern society. The second one, Islam, quite the opposite, is still associated with the image of "traditional", anti-modernist, community-oriented and coercive tradition reluctant to embrace secularism (Liogier, 2006). As an anthropologist, I am inclined to believe that the gaps observed in the acceptance of Buddhism and Islam in France have also something to do with orientalism, in Edward Said's meaning of the term, i.e., with moral geographies of "the East". Contrary to Said (since Said only emphasized the situation of the Middle-East and Islam), I suggest, however, that the cases of Islam and Buddhism epitomize two different *topographies of the Otherness*.

As the symbol of a physical and imaginary *Near East*, Islam evokes a geographic proximity and a cultural familiarity with France, but it is far from being an advantage. Indeed, the image of the Muslim has historically shifted from the sophisticated "Persian", depicted by Montesquieu, to the dangerous "Arab", as it is broadcasted by modern medias. Hence, the image of Islam in France has been reallocated from positive values (in the 18th century–early 19th century) to a negative symbolic charge projected on Arab-Muslim countries (in the 20th–21st centuries, especially since the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre). On the contrary, Buddhism is the symbol of *Far East*, associated with geographic distance and cultural "strangeness", a chance to nourish the Western appeal for Eastern exoticism. The representation of Buddhism, like Islam, has assumed an historical shift. The barbarian "Asian" of the 17th and 18th centuries has been replaced by the "fascinating" Buddhist (20th century) and, whilst it was previously ambivalent (in the 18th–19th centuries), the image of Buddhist countries has become a positive

one (20th–21st centuries). As a result, the geographically closer Islam is considered from the point of view of Europe, the farther it is seen culturally speaking; on the contrary, Buddhism's geographical and cultural distance makes it paradoxically more familiar and acceptable to French people. One reason, among others, to be taken seriously into account is the role of moral geographies in the fabric of the ethnic and religious Other (and consequently, the way the Other reinvent him/herself in the mirror of this orientalist figuration).

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Kopsavilkums

"Baznīcas vecākā meita" Francija, kas sevi uzskata par valsti, kurā saskaņā ar laicīguma principiem valda "reliģiskā brīvība", nesen ieviesa jaunus likumus, kas regulē reliģiozitātes izpausmes publiskajā sfērā un it īpaši skar svešzemju reliģijas, piemēram, islāmu. Valsts institūciju iecietība pret "uzticību neraisošajām" austrumu reliģijām mazinās par spīti gadu desmitus ilgajai šo reliģiju praktizēšanai Francijā un musulmaņu kopienu mēģinājumiem "integrēties". Savukārt ne tik sen ienākušajam budismam ar tā "austrumnieciski eksotiskajām tradīcijām" ir raksturīgs ļoti pievilcīgs tēls, un budisma nostiprināšanās Francijā neizraisa nekādu sociālu vai politisku pretestību. Abas reliģijas ir vienā un tai pašā ekspansijas un iesakņošanās procesā, ko raksturo migrācija un misija, reliģiskās kopienas saišu izveide un pārveide (ieceļošanas vai konversijas gadījumā), kulta centru pārdislokācija un jaunbūve. Šī raksta mērķis ir norādīt uz Francijas orientālismā valdošo, no psiholoģiskās attieksmes izrietošo ģeogrāfisko iekšējo dalījumu "tālajos" un "tuvajos" Austrumos. Tieši šis dalījums (līdz ar virkni socioloģisko faktoru) ir uzskatāms par galveno ideoloģisko cēloni, kas ir pamatā atšķirīgajai attieksmei pret islāmu un budismu Francijas kultūras un reliģiskās dzīves kopainā. Abas reliģijas pārstāv divas "austrumu" tradīcijas, bet vienlaikus arī divus pretpolus jau pieminētajā orientālisma variantā, kas ar šīm reliģijām saista atšķirīgu izpratni par "citādības" jēdzienu, atrašanās vietu un vērtībām.

Atslēgvārdi: Francija, laicisksums, tolerance, islams, budisms, morālā ģeogrāfija.

Vello Vaartnou: Nyingmapa from Estonia

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This work casts a brief glance at the activities of Vello Vaartnou, the Nyingmapa Buddhist, who has been active in Estonian culture, science, Buddhism, art, architecture, politics and social life for decades.

Keywords: Vello Vaartnou; Nyingma; Estonia; Buddhism; Thangkas; Buddhist Brotherhood; Tallinn; Estonian National Independent Party; Stupas; KGB; Buryatia; Temple; Ivolga; Hambo Lama Zhimba Erdineev; Hambo Lama Munko Tsybikov; International Conferences; Sweden; University; Encyclopedia of Buddhism; Estonian Nyingma; Australia; Prayer wheels.

Vello Vaartnou was born on 17.07.1951 in Estonia (former Soviet Union). He is the founder of Estonian practical Buddhist tradition, builder of stupas and master of thangkas, an internationally recognized artist, founder of Estonian National Independence Party and author of its programme. He is the author of the first Buddhist Encyclopedia in the Estonian language, an online Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia, the author of international Buddhist conference series “Buddhism & Nordland” and “Buddhism & Australia”. He is also the founder and leader of the Estonian First Buddhist Brotherhood and Head of Estonian Nyingma.

When talking about the Estonian-born and now Swedish citizen Vello Vaartnou, one must keep in mind that the starting point for all his actions has always been based on the principles of Buddhism and that he has never let society or the ruling regime dictate his way.

Vaartnou was the only one in the socialist Estonia of 1970 who publicly called himself a Buddhist. Moving around in Tartu and Tallinn, in cultural circles, he enjoyed having disputes with Christians and philosophy students and, what is interesting, many of his conversation partners are nowadays leaders of different religious institutions in Estonia, for example, the archbishop of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Andres Pöder.

There are many ship captains and the Republic of Estonia military officers in Vaartnou's family. Many of them were killed or imprisoned for several years when the soviet occupation began. The family history set a base also for Vaartnou's political views. When he was 17, he tried to escape to the West to study Buddhism there. This attempt ended with 3 years of imprisonment in Vuktõl prison camp and a lifetime of KGB interest in him. The KGB colonel Movtshan later made a statement that in his case it was obvious that genes had played a greater role than the soviet discipline.¹

Many people in Estonia have tried to depict Vaartnou in different ways, completely ignoring his actions. But, on the other hand, the results of his actions talk for themselves, because they are visible and tangible to everybody. For example, during the Soviet era, the KGB named him a traitor of his homeland. ‘Crazy Buddhist’ and ‘schizophrenic’ were the labels he got from a committee headed by Dr. Saarma, his reasoning being that a person who is trying to establish a Buddhist monastery cannot be anything but crazy.² The orientalist Linnart Mäll (Tartu University) named him a village mystic and in the 1970s explained to Vello that Buddhism and Buddhists are of no interest to him.³

The two head lamas of Russia, Hambo Lama Erdineev (Picture 4 on p. 192) and Hambo Lama Tsybikov, with whom Vaartnou studied for 8 years, had a different opinion. Also professor Pent Nurmekund from Tartu University wrote proudly in his newspaper articles about his students in Tallinn and Vaartnou, namely, that he was teaching the old Mongolian language to the Estonian Buddhist Brotherhood, which was established by Vaartnou in the 1980s.⁴

The Finnish writer Harri Sirola, who was a frequent visitor of the Brotherhood, wrote articles about Vaartnou as the establisher of Estonian Buddhist tradition in Finnish magazines and later published a novel “Two Cities”.⁵ After deportation from Estonia in 1988, Vaartnou was received in Sweden as a freedom-fighter and was named a national hero and a political refugee.⁶

Vaartnou’s actions describe him as a person with unusual capabilities and knowledge in Buddhism, science, politics and art. His activities in Estonia for over 40 years are usually characterized using such expressions as ‘the first one’, ‘the only one’, founder’, leader’ etc. In 1982, when all religious activities were forbidden under the communist regime, Vaartnou established the first Estonian Buddhist Sangha and Nyingma movement, the Estonian Buddhist Brotherhood in Tallinn.

Under his guidance the Brotherhood or Taola (meaning something like Tao’s place) set the beginnings to practical Buddhist tradition and Nyingma tradition in Estonia. Having studied in Ivolga monastery from 1978 to 1986, he made use of his studies in Estonia: under his guidance four stupas were built in Western Estonia between 1983 and 1985, constituting the first northern stupas and the only stupas erected in the Soviet Union during this time (Picture 2 on p. 191).

Books and other texts (mostly from Buryatia) were obtained and copied, and over 20 voluminous books were translated from French, English and German as more than 40 books were copied into hundreds of copies and a remarkable library was also set up.⁷

Vaartnou’s gift in art was put to use in Buddhist thangkas and statues, which were made by him and by the Taola dwellers under his guidance in their Kadrioru apartment.⁸ Vaartnou spread Buddhist teachings to the Brotherhood and conducted the first Buddhist rituals in Estonia, planned and personally led Taola’s life and activities during the six years.

It must be mentioned that the wider public in Estonia was unaware of these activities, but the Brotherhood place was popular among the cultural elite. Since officially all kinds of religious activities and propagating religion were banned, public appearance would have also been bad for the Ivolga monastery. The connection was tight between the Brotherhood and the Ivolga monastery – already in the 1980s lamas visited Estonia secretly and the monastery was often visited by the Brotherhood members. Vaartnou recalls:

Taola members were outlaws in the communist-lead occupation of Estonia, since officially no one recognized Taola. On the other hand, the constant presence of KGB cars in front of the house and other surveillance by the authorities hinted that the official system was keenly following every step and word made by Taola. Now the ex-communists say that they had done all this to restore independent Estonia.⁹

In January 1988, Vaartnou established the Estonian National Independence Party, which was the first openly declared opposition party in the Soviet Union. It was an act of bravery unheard of during the absolute soviet rule and a depictive example of the accuracy and proficiency of Buddhist way of thinking. Years later, Tunne Kelam, an Estonian politician and Member of the European Parliament, stated in a speech that timing of this kind of national political alternative was only possible through good instinct and personal risks.¹⁰

Many of today's parliament members refused to sign the application in 1988 saying that the Estonian people would be murdered because the party openly declared to be the first opposition party in the history of the Soviet Union, whose goal was to establish independent Estonia.

“Everyone was afraid to sign. I told them that they don't understand the situation. In the autumn of 1987 I realized that something had to be done. Lagle Parek and others started collecting signatures to create a memorial for the victims of Stalinism. Then I thought it was like writing a letter to the czar: may I set up a memorial. And then I thought that this did not help the Estonian people to move on politically. First, let's create a state and then start creating memorials...”¹¹

Estonian authorities have ignored Vaartnou's national actions, since much of the state's power is in the hands of the former communists, who were in power 20 years ago.¹²

In 2010, in the newspaper “Sirp”, Jaak Allik asked why Vaartnou was the only one with whom there was no interview in the voluminous book about the history of ENIP¹³, although he was the founder of this party, and why the public was still in the dark about his heroic journey to Moscow in 1988, where he held a press conference for foreign newspapers announcing the creation of the first opposition party, the ENIP, and publicized its programme.¹⁴

This event was broadcast around the world, marking the first signs of the fall of the Soviet Union. It was broadcast by international magazines and newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and others at that time, but not a word appeared in the local press, although the news spread around Estonia very fast.¹⁵

Vaartnou's home and Taola were constantly searched, and thangkas, slides, manuscripts etc. were confiscated. The final result was his deportation in February of 1988 by the personal directive of Gorbachev. After deportation, for five years Vaartnou lived in Nepal and later in Stockholm.

During the last 12 years, Vaartnou has again been educating people in the eastern culture and Buddhism in Estonia, as he had done in the 1980s at Taola, where studying was the main activity and always has been so to say *obligatorily popular*.

In 2005, Vaartnou started the first Estonian Buddhist Encyclopedia online, where by now there are more than 3200 articles containing terminology, explanations, travelogues and scientific articles that make it possible to deal with materials through different approaches.¹⁶ An important Buddhist principle must be mentioned here – Vaartnou has never taken money for his efforts, from his first

activities in the 1970s until today. This principle is applied also to his work with the Buddhist Encyclopedia, which he has been creating for many years till 2005, and also to his work with the series of international conferences “Buddhism & Nordland” of which he is the author and main organizer.

Already during the soviet times Vaartnou was cherishing the idea of scientific conferences at which scientists and Buddhists would work together, researching Buddhism in the Northern countries, but it was impossible to organize such cooperation at the time. So, the first international conference “Buddhism and Nordland” took place in 2007 and now every year it has brought together scientists and Buddhists in Tallinn from the Nordic countries and also from the East.¹⁷

Since 2007 old and new Nyingmapas have been operating under the name of Estonian Nyingma with its roots in the Buddhist Brotherhood under the guidance of the same teacher, Vello Vaartnou. In 2008, Vaartnou built a new big stupa, the fifth in Estonia, with a temple and prayer wheels at the Estonian Nyingma Centre in Pärnumaa.¹⁸

Vaartnou’s gift as an artist can be best appreciated in his thangkas, where his gift as an artist and his knowledge of Buddhism come together perfectly. Vaartnou studied in the Estonian Art Academy with master Sarri and was an acknowledged artist in Estonia already in the 1970s–1980s; some of his thangkas were also exhibited at Tokyo World Exhibition in 1980. Later he had numerous exhibitions in Europe, Asia and America, and he is a member of the Swedish Graphics Union (Picture 1 and 3 on pp. 191–192).

In the last decade he has created thangkas using computer graphics. They have already found their way into the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm, MC University in Thailand, and the royal family of Thailand has Vaartnou’s thangkas. Many people are producing thangkas by copying them; it is like a certain industry in the eastern countries, but original thangkas, grown from the understanding of Buddhism, can only be made by teachers with a deep knowledge, and Estonia is very lucky to have Vaartnou make their first Estonian thangkas.

In 2011, Vello Vaartnou organized the first annual international conference “Buddhism & Australia” that was held 1–5 February 2012 in Australia at Murdoch University, Perth. The conference involved 32 speakers from 16 countries, the key speaker being Lewis Lancaster from the University of California, Berkeley. The conference was free of charge for the participants and contributed 32 new research papers that are available to the public on the conference website. Vaartnou’s future projects in Australia include an Encyclopedia of Buddhist Australia, an online Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia, establishing Buddhist studies in Perth universities, building Buddhist architecture and the founding of the International Buddhist Educational Centre, Nyingma Monastery in Western Australia.¹⁹

In conclusion, we can say that Buddhism, which reached Estonia over a hundred years ago with Karl Tõnisson, has taken a big step ahead and obtained features of proper Buddhist traditions – there are 5 stupas, temples, thangkas, literature, a Buddhist Encyclopedia and an international conference “Buddhism and Nordland”.

All this has been achieved by one man, Nyingmapa Vello Vaartnou. As Vaartnou says:

I may look like an Estonian, but I’m really more like an Asian in the way of thinking and lifestyle...and I have always buried all my money in Buddhism. I believe that people should get part of this grand cultural heritage offered to us by the Orient. This is my passion, my addiction. These are the only symptoms I have”.²⁰

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Kopsavilkums

Raksts sniedz ieskatu Nyingmapa budista Vello Värtnu (Vello Vaartnou) ieguldījumā Igaunijas kultūrā, pētniecībā, mākslā, arhitektūrā, politikā un sabiedriskajā dzīvē vairākos gadu desmitos.

Atslēgvārdi: Vello Värtnu, Igaunijas Njingma, budisms, thangka, Budistu brālība, Igaunijas Nacionāla neatkarības partija, stupas, KGB, Budisma enciklopēdija, Burjatija, Ivolga; hambo lama Žambo Erdiņejevs, hambo lama Munko Cibikovs.

Latvijas budisma kopienu aktivitātes vērtējums

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Budisms pašlaik ir viena no pasaules populārākajām reliģijām, kurā cilvēki mēģina rast garīgumu un dzīves jēgu. Līdzīga situācija ir vērojama arī Latvijā, kur budisma idejas sāka ieplūst kopš pagājušā gadsimta 80. gadu vidus. Tās pārstāvēja personas, kas, praktizējot budismu, mēģināja rast savu reliģisko identitāti un atbildes uz eksistenciāliem dzīves jautājumiem. Līdz ar politiskās situācijas maiņu – neatkarības atgūšanu – Latvijā kļuva iespējams brīvi praktizēt budismu, un, pieaugot interesentu skaitam, sāka veidoties pirmās budistu kopienas, kuru skaits ar laiku pieauga, un pašlaik Latvijā darbojas vairākas oficiāli reģistrētas budisma kopienas. Balstoties uz lauka pētījuma gaitā (2008–2011) savāktu materiālu, rakstā tiek aplūkotas budistu veiktās aktivitātes, ka arī sniegts to vērtējums.

Atslēgvārdi: budisms, Karma kagju, Drikung kagju, *Ganden*, “Padmalinga”, kopiena, aktivitāte, skolotājs.

Ir grūti izsekot, kad pirmo reizi Latvijā nonākušas ziņas par budismu. Balstoties uz rakstiskiem avotiem, varam pieņemt, ka 19. gs. beigās līdz Latvijai nonāk pirmās atskaņas par budismu, bet 20. gs. pirmajā pusē budisms ienāk kā reliģija, ko popularizē Kārlis Tennisons (1873–1962). Lai gan viņa darbība Latvijā apstājas, 20. gs. beigās – 21. gs. sākumā budisms piedzīvoja uzplaukumu. Budisma idejas sāka aktīvi ieplūst Latvijā 80. gadu beigās, kad brīvāk kļuva pieejama dažāda reliģiskā literatūra, tai skaitā autentiski budisma teksti. Sāka darboties personas, kas grāmatās izklāstīto mācību mēģināja lietot savas dzīves praksē, kā arī centās iepazīstināt ar to citus. Pieaugot interesentu skaitam, Latvijā sāka veidoties pirmās budistu kopienas, kuru darbība veicināja budisma iesakņošanos un attīstību Latvijas reliģiskajā un kultūras telpā. Budisma pastāvēšanu Latvijā var iedalīt trīs laika posmos:

- 19. gs. beigās – 20. gs. 30. gadu sākums: K. Tennisona darbības laiks;
- 80. gadu beigās – 90. gadu sākums: budisma uzplaukums Latvijā un neformālo budistu kopienu veidošanās;
- 90. gadu beigās – 21. gs. sākums: oficiālo budisma kopienu dibināšana, budistu sociālās aktivitātes pieaugums.

Tieši ar budisma kopienu darbību un tiem piederīgo cilvēku aktivitāti ir saistīta budisma pastāvēšana Latvijas kultūrvēsturiskajā vidē. Pašlaik Latvijā darbojas vairākas oficiāli reģistrētas budisma kopienas: “Padmalinga”, Karma kagju (to veido Rīgas centrs un neliela cilvēku grupa darbojas Daugavpilī), *Ganden* meditācijas centrs, Drikung kagju budisma kopiena (Drikung Jamze Ling Dharmachakra centrs

Baltezerā un Rīgas Drikung Ngaden Choling), Theravadas budisma biedrība, kā arī Rīgas Dzen centrs.

Vidēji budisma kopienās darbojas 30–35 cilvēki, izņemot Rīgas Dzen centru, kuru veido aptuveni 6 cilvēki¹. Locekļu skaita ziņā visām budisma grupām raksturīga tendence, ka tajās reģistrēts lielāks cilvēku skaits, nekā tas ir vērojams iknedēļas praksēs, kuras kopienas locekļi veic kolektīvi.

Pētījumā laikā gūtā informācija un novērojumi liecina, ka budisms Latvijā piesaista visdažādāko profesiju pārstāvjus, kā arī izraisa dažāda vecuma cilvēku interesi. Mēģinot noteikt vidējo vecumu, nākas secināt, ka kopienās lielākoties darbojas ap 30–40 gadus veci cilvēki, kaut gan sastopamas arī vecākas un jaunākas personas. Cilvēku vecums katrā kopienā ir atkarīgs no piedāvātā budisma veida, kā arī no kopienas darbības uzsākšanas gada, piemēram, tā kā *dzogchen* kopiena “Padmalinga” darbojas kopš 90. gadiem, vidējais locekļu vecums pašlaik sasniedz jau 40–45 gadus². Vecuma ziņā visjaunākais pašlaik ir Rīgas Dzen centrs, kur locekļu vidējais vecums ir ap 30 gadu.³ Dažu budisma grupu locekļi apliecina, ka meditācijās piedalās arī bērni, jo bieži vien tos ņem līdzī budismu praktizējošie vecāki.

Neatņemama budisma kopienu darbības sastāvdaļa ir viņu veiktās aktivitātes, kurās budistu kopienas sāk organizēt, sasniedzot noteiktu attīstības posmu. Kopumā tās var iedalīt vairākās grupās.

1. Izglītojošie pasākumi

Tie ir gan publiskas lekcijas, gan arī budisma centru realizētie pasākumi un iesaistīšanās starptautiskajos projektos. Katru gadu Latvijā tiek aicināti dažādi budisma mūki un skolotāji. Parasti viņu vizīte aprobežojas ar mācību sniegšanu noteiktā kopienā, bet dažkārt tiek rīkotas arī publiskas lekcijas, kuru vajadzībām tiek īrētas plašākas telpas. Šīm lekcijām ir vispārīgs raksturs, un to mērķis – sniegt informāciju par budismu un tā mācību, kā arī tās izmantošanu ikdienas dzīvē.

Kopš 1997. gada, kad Rīgā tika izveidota Karma kagju budisma kopiena, Latvijā vizītē ierodas lama Ole Nidāls, bet kopš 2001. gada Karma kagju centrs organizē lamas publisko lekciju, kura pulcē ap 400–500 cilvēku⁴. Šajās lekcijās lama Ole Nidāls iepazīstina klātesošos ar ievadu Budas mācībā, stāsta par budisma praksi, kā arī skar sabiedrībai aktuālas tēmas un pievēršas mūsdienīgām parādībām un notikumiem pasaulē.

Arī citas kopienas ielūdz savus skolotājus vadīt savas mācības, piemēram, 2010. un 2011. gadā Drikung kagju kopienas ir apmeklējis viens no viņu skolas galvenajiem skolotājiem – lama Nupa Rinpoče, kurš veselu mēnesi uzturējās Latvijā un sniedza mācības. Drikung kagju kopienas visiem interesentiem organizēja viņa publisko lekciju, kā arī vēlāk tika piedāvāts apmeklēt viņa vadītās mācības Drikung kagju Dharmachakras templī Baltezerā un piedalīties retrītā⁵.

Viens no nozīmīgākajiem budistu pasākumiem ir Budisma dienas Latvijā, kuras kopš 2006. gada organizē Karma kagju centrs. Rīgā notiek lekcijas par budismu. To mērķis dot visiem interesentiem iespēju plašāk uzzināt par budisma tradīcijām un budisma izpausmēm mākslā, zinātnē un filozofijā. Budisma dienās piedalās ceļojošie skolotāji, kuri stāsta par budismu, par tā praksi, kas palīdz un attīsta cilvēka garīgās spējas.

2011. gada oktobrī šis pasākums notika jau sesto reizi, un, salīdzinājumā ar iepriekšējiem gadiem, kad aktivitātes notika tikai Rīgā, divas lekcijas tika organizētas arī Daugavpils Universitātē. Pasākumā bija iespēja skatīties ne tikai Karma Kagju skolas veidotās dokumentārās filmas par budisma vēsturi un tā funkcionēšanu Rietumeiropā, apmeklēt Baltijas valstu budisma skolotāju lekcijas un fotogrāfiju izstādi “Laimīgais cilvēks”, bet arī piedalīties divu dienu ilgā lekciju kursā kopā ar lamu Oli Nidālu.

Ne vienmēr kopienas organizē savu skolotāju un mūku lekcijas publiskās vietās, jo tas prasa lielus finansiālus līdzekļus. Tāpēc lekcijas bieži notiek kopienu telpās, kur tiek aicināti visi interesenti neatkarīgi no viņu reliģiskās pārliecības. Gandrīz katru mēnesi šādas lekcijas vai skolotāju mācības organizē *Ganden* meditācijas centrs, Drikung kagju grupas. Katru gadu uz kopienu “Padmalinga” brauc instruktori vadīt seminārus, Jantra jogu, Vadžras deju, ka arī sniegt mācību⁶. Karma kagju kopienā tās ir ceļojošo skolotāju lekcijas, kuras tiek plānotas katru gadu⁷.

Ganden centrs savās telpās ir rīkojis arī citus pasākumus, piemēram, tur varēja skatīties DVD filmas par budismu. Tās ir FPMT filmas, pārsvarā lamu Ješe un Zopan Rinpoče ieraksti ar mācībām⁸. Informācija par šādiem pasākumiem parasti ir atrodamā kopienu mājaslapās, dažreiz tā tiek publicēta arī presē vai interneta portālos.

Kopš 2011. gada maija *Ganden* meditācijas centrs uzsāka 2 gadu mācību programmu “Atklājot budismu”, kas ir vairāku FPMT (*Foundation for the Preservation of Mahayana Tradition*)⁹ skolotāju un programmas koordinatoru izveidota budisma mācības programma, kura ir tapusi lamas Zopas vadībā. Programma ilgst 2 gadus, un to veido 14 tēmas, kur katra ietver 4–5 lekcijas, meditācijas prakses, iepazīšanos ar tekstiem un piedalīšanos retrītos. Pēc pilna kursa beigšanas studenti saņems sertifikātu. Programmas mērķis ir sniegt dalībniekiem stingru pamatu Mahajānas budisma praksei, ka arī dziļāku izpratni par budisma mācību un meditāciju¹⁰.

2. Izdevējdarbība

Dažas budisma kopienas nodarbojas ar savu skolotāju grāmatu tulkošanu un izdošanu latviešu valodā. Karma kagju centrs tulko un izdod latviešu valodā lamas Oles Nidāla grāmatas, tādējādi dodot iespēju plašākam sabiedrības lokam iepazīties ar budisma mācību. Pašlaik ir iztulkotas visas meditācijas un Oles Nidāla galvenā grāmata “Par lietu dabu. Laikmetīgs ievads Budas mācībā”¹¹. Ir plānots tulkot un izdot pārējās lamas grāmatas.

Arī citi centri mēģina tulkot savu skolotāju grāmatas latviešu un krievu valodā: Drikung kagju kopienā ir divi cilvēki, kuri nodarbojas ar grāmatu tulkošanu,¹² arī *Ganden* centra nākotnes plānos ir izdot vienu no lamas Zopas grāmatām, kuru ir tulkojis centra dibinātājs Uldis Balodis.¹³

3. Sociālā aprūpe

No 2007. g. 1. septembra līdz 2008. g. 29. februārim Theravādas budistu biedrība ar Ziemeļu Ministru padomes biroju Latvijā atbalstu realizēja projektu “Sociālā

integrācija ar meditācijas palīdzību”. Šis projekts tika īstenots, sadarbojoties ar Latvijas invalīdu un viņu draugu apvienību “Apeirons” un Ziemeļvalstu partnerorganizāciju *Wat Thai Norway un Thailāndska Buddhistika Föreningen i Sverige*. Projektu līdzfinansēja Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds.¹⁴

Projekta mērķi – integrēt dažādas sociālās grupas (cilvēkus ar un bez kustību traucējumiem, dažādu sociālo grupu un kultūru pārstāvjus); apgūt meditācijas metodes, kas palīdz uzlabot dzīves kvalitāti, mazināt depresiju un novērst stresu; veicināt iecietību un līdzjūtību; veicināt dzimuma līdztiesību un vienādas iespējas; izmantot inovatīvu pieeju sociālās integrācijas veicināšanai.

Projekta ietvaros notika 8 izglītojoši semināri, kas tika apvienoti ar meditācijas praksi un tradicionāliem apzināšanās un koncentrēšanās vingrinājumiem. Projektu īstenoja dažādos Latvijas novados, kā arī Rīgā, lai pēc iespējas lielākam Latvijas iedzīvotāju skaitam palīdzētu izprast jautājumus, kuri saistīti ar sociālo integrāciju, un veicinātu līdzcievību un savstarpējo izpratni. Projekta ideja balstījās uz pieņēmumu, ka indivīds, kurš attīsta un kultivē sevī tādas vērtības kā iejūtība, līdzjūtība un pieņemšana, spēj ieviest izmaiņas savā vidē, savukārt tas rosina izmaiņas sabiedrībā kopumā. Šī projekta mērķis nebija aicināt dalībniekus pievērsties budismam un iepazīties ar tām budisma vērtībām, kas var palīdzēt veidot demokrātisku, sociāli atbildīgu vidi Latvijas sabiedrībā. Kopumā šajā projektā piedalījās 134 cilvēki.¹⁵

4. Dziedniecība

Blakus “Jamzeling” budisma kopienai Baltezerā ir uzbūvēts Tibetiešu jogas un dziedniecības centrs, kurš nodarbojas ar dziedniecību un jogu un kura darbībā ir iesaistīti daži Drikung kagju kopienas dalībnieki. Centrā regulāri ierodas Tibetas dziednieki, kas veic pacientu diagnostiku un korekciju, kā arī piedalās centra mācību programmās. Šeit tiek piedāvātas arī dažādas procedūras, piemēram, vairāki masāžas veidi.¹⁶

Tibetiešu jogas un dziedniecības centrā ir iespēja iegūt izglītību vairākās programmās: “Jogas speciālists”, “Jogas meistars”, kā arī “Jogas terapija”. Izglītības programmas izstrādē piedalījās *International Yoga Healing Federation*, Baltijas jogas federācijas speciālisti, Latvijas Profesionālās jogas federācijas pārstāvji un citi starptautiska līmeņa jogas speciālisti. Tibetiešu jogas un dziedniecības centrs ir pirmā izglītības iestāde Eiropas Savienībā, kam ir pilnvaras valsts atzītā līmenī apmācīt jogas speciālistus. Nodarbības vada sertificēti ārsti un Tibetas dziednieki. Apmācība notiek gan praktisko nodarbību, gan semināru veidā, kā arī tiek izmantota neklātienē un interaktīvā apmācība. Studijas beidzot, jaunie speciālisti saņem profesionālās kvalifikācijas apliecību, kura ļauj strādāt kā pašnodarbinātajam.¹⁷

5. Labdarība

Labdarības pasākumus mēdz rīkot *Ganden* meditācijas centrs un Drikung kagju budisma kopiena. Ziemassvētkos *Ganden* centrs vāca apģērbus un rotaļlietas, kas bija domātas bērnam un veco ļaužu pansionātam, ka arī sadarībā ar vienu no Latvijas bērnu darziem vāca bērnu grāmatas.¹⁸ Arī Drikung kagju grupas rūpējas

par maznodrošinātajiem un bāreņiem¹⁹. Gan no Drikung kagju, gan no *Ganden* kopienas cilvēki dodas uz dzīvnieku patversmēm un ziedo tām pārtiku un naudu²⁰.

Latvijas budisti iesaistās starptautiskajos budistu projektos, kam parasti ir labdarības mērķis. Viens no šādiem projektiem, kas piesaistīja Latvijas sabiedrības uzmanību, ir Maitrejas projekts, kura organizēšanu koordinēja *Ganden* centrs, bet palīdzēja arī citu budistu kopienu pārstāvji.²¹ Maitrejas projekta ietvaros jau divreiz (2007. un 2009. gadā) notika relikviju izstāde. Projekta mērķis ir savākt līdzekļus nākotnes Budas Maitrejas 152 metrus augstas statujas būvniecībai Indijas pilsētā Kušīnagarā, kur ir plānots uzcelt templi un klosteri, meditācijas zāli un izstāžu paviljonu, bibliotēku un viesnīcu. Savāktie līdzekļi domāti arī trūcīgo ģimeņu bērnu izglītošanai un bezmaksas ārstēšanai ārzemju slimnīcās.²²

2010. gada 12.–15. septembrī Eiropas koncertūres (“No Himalaju sirds”) laikā Latvijā viesojās Tibetas budisma mūki no Ladakas, viņus uzņēma Drikung kagju kopiena. Tūres mērķis – dot iespēju cilvēkiem iepazīties ar Himalaju un Tibetas budisma kultūru, kā arī veicināt starpreliģiju dialogu. Programmā ietilpa šādi pasākumi:

1. Ikviens interesents varēja aplūkot budistu sakrālo gleznu – *thanku* – izstādi.
2. 12. septembrī Rīgā, kinoteātrī *Splendid Palace*, notika Tibetas budisma svēto deju un rituālu koncerts. Grupu veidoja 10 profesionāli mākslinieki: 8 mūki un 2 laicīgie cilvēki. Priekšnesums tika veidots kā stāsts par budisma galvenajām pamatvērtībām: mīlestību, līdzjūtību un mieru.
3. Rīgas kongresu namā 3 dienas mūki veidoja Dzambalas, turības un labklājības dievības, smilšu mandalu.

Visi tūres laikā iegūtie līdzekļi bija paredzēti labdarības projektiem Himalajos, piemēram, veco ļaužu nama celtniecībai, izglītības nodrošināšanai bāreņiem un bērniem no trūcīgām ģimenēm, kā arī materiālās palīdzības sniegšanai veciem cilvēkiem, bērniem, mūkiem un mūķeņiem no tibetiešu bēgļu klosteriem.²³

Izvērtējot budisma kopienu darbību, nākas secināt, ka budisms veiksmīgi pastāv Latvijas reliģiskajā telpā. Budisma kopienas un viņu veiktās aktivitātes piesaista dažāda vecuma un dažādu sociālo slāņu iedzīvotājus. Kopienu veiktās aktivitātes, kuras ir orientētas uz dažādu mērķauditoriju, aptver dažādas cilvēka dzīves jomas: izglītību, veselību, labdarību utt.

Pētījums liecina, ka visaktīvāk darbojas trīs kopienas: Rīgas Karma kagju centrs, *Ganden* meditācijas centrs un Drikung kagju kopiena.

Rīgas Karma kagju centrs nodarbojas ne tikai ar publisko pasākumu rīkošanu, piemēram, Budisma dienas rīkošanu, kas lielākoties ir adresētas jauniešu auditorijai, bet arī ar lamas Oles Nidāla grāmatu tulkošanu un izdošanu. Ar informatīvajiem pasākumiem nodarbojas arī *Ganden* meditācijas centrs, kas ne tikai piedalās Maitrejas projekta īstenošanā, bet arī rīko dažādus informatīvus pasākumus par budismu kopienas telpās, kā arī Drikung kagju grupas, kuru sociālā aktivitāte ir īpaši augusi 2010. gadā. Viena no Drikung kagju grupām līdzās budisma praktizēšanai nodarbojas arī ar komerciāliem pakalpojumiem – dziedniecību un jogas speciālistu apmācību. Mazāk aktīva ir Theravādas budisma biedrība, savukārt Rīgas Dzen centrs un “Padmalinga” pagaidām sevi nav pieteikušas sociālajā laukā.

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Summary

Some new religious ideas came to Latvia since independence. Between them is mentioned also Buddhism. People began to come together which had close this religious ideas and they practice of Buddhism by creation the first religious communities of Buddhism. Already at the end of 90th its activity began several Buddhism communities but at the beginning of 21st century its number has increased.

Original the main activity was oriented to renovation of inner life community where one of main elements was fulfillment of religious practice. At the moment communities of Buddhism more and more are engaged into different social activities which involve not informative activities but also education, healing, charity etc. Thank to it Buddhism gains the biggest acknowledgement and recognition form society. The aim of research is based on gained information during field research (2008-2011) to provide a valuation of activity of Buddhism communities.

Keywords: Buddhism, Karma kagju, Drikung kagju, Ganden, "Padmalinga", community, teacher.

Latvian Buddhist Centres and Teachings of Visiting Tibetan Masters (1991–2011)

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The article presents an informative overview of teaching activities in Latvian Buddhist communities after 1991 when the country regained independence and opened up to the world. The main emphasis lies on teachings given by visiting Tibetan Buddhist masters. At first the main Dharma centres in Riga and other places of Latvia are mentioned, thereupon follows an introduction to Tibetan Buddhist teachers who have regular contacts with Latvian Buddhist communities and who have visited Latvia with lectures on Buddhism. They have been presented in sequence according to school divisions and lineages. The second part of the article describes core teaching topics: commentaries on classical treatises, general Buddhist concepts, lectures about definite Buddhist divinities with or without empowerments, as well as Tantric and other practices.

Keywords: Tibetan Buddhism, Buddhist practices, Buddhist masters, Dharma centres, Latvia, religion.

The year of 1991 marks the borderline between two cardinaly different periods in the history of Latvia. Not only did the political status of the country change, but cultural and social values were also transformed in an unexpected way. International contacts and globalization processes embraced the country, bringing a diversity of new influences and activities. Democratic government system created beneficial effects in social and cultural life, but also many undesirable ones, like the use of narcotics, economic chaos and fruitless political controversies. Meanwhile, Tibetan Buddhism gained ground in Latvian minds as well. In other European countries it had already begun to spread in the early 1970s, when the Baltic countries were still under atheist communist rule.

After half a century of soviet time religious silence, a new period of diverse religious activities started, perhaps as a counter-reaction to the long stagnation. Among other religions, Buddhism, and especially Tibetan Buddhism, spread remarkably. It is interesting to observe that Tibetan Buddhism, in essence being quite contrary to communist ideas, has always had a close interaction with communism. In 1959, because of the arrival of Chinese communists, the main body of Tibetan Buddhism was relocated India and soon thereafter reached the Western world. Prior to that Tibetan Buddhism had a character of a rather local and secluded tradition, not at all eager to open up to the outside world. Now in Latvia a reverse interchange of the totalitarian communist rule and Tibetan Buddhism can be observed.

The first Latvian Buddhist community was registered in 1989.¹ However, only after 1991 did a whole range of activities break into blossom. Books about Tibetan Buddhism were translated (mostly from English and by members of the Karma Kagyu centre). Tibetan monks came several times to perform the creation and destruction ritual of the sand mandala – symbol of transience and the temporal phenomenal world, in which, however, the heart of Buddha is to be found; there were exhibitions of Buddhist relics in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Several years ago the Karma Kagyu centre started offering Buddhism days with lectures, teachings, films and meditation sessions. Ritual dances and songs have been performed for the general audience by Ladakhi and other monks. Also the domelike sacred monuments – stupas – have been planned and being built here as a symbol of progression to Buddhahood. This broad spectrum of Buddhist activities even nowadays reminds us of the traditional Tibetan religious culture, which penetrated nearly all aspects of human life, including not only literature, art and medicine, but also economics and politics.

This article will not include a detailed explanation of all the above mentioned activities, but will mainly concentrate on the contents of the teaching itself. The author has chosen to look more closely at the main topics of teachings given by visiting Tibetan masters, although excluding Tibetan medicine, which is too specific and therefore suitable to be examined separately. Because of the pragmatic approach of Vajrayana, some of the Tibetan Dharma teachings are inseparably connected with initiations and empowerments for definite meditation and ritual practices, as well as with the visualization of deities, therefore they will be mentioned, too.

A large part of the information included in the article comes from the personal experience of the author, derived from direct contacts with Tibetan Lamas (Nubpa Rinpoche, Drubpon Kunsang Rinpoche, Lama Sangye, Tsering Norbu etc.) as well as with the main representatives of Buddhist centres in Riga, Baltezers and Drusti, who provided valuable information about visiting Tibetan teachers in their communities.² The history, archives and facts about Latvian Tibetan Buddhist centres are mostly contained in their homepages in electronic version, which has been a world-wide practice of all social and religious organizations over the last 20 years; for this reason printed publications are extremely scarce and do not offer any substantial material.

Tibetan Dharma centres in Latvia

There are four main Tibetan Buddhist centres in Latvia, representing four lineages: Drikung Kagyu³, Karma Kagju, Gelug and Nyingma (Dzogchen). Together with the affiliates eight communities will be mentioned.

The largest of them is Drikung Kagyu with three centres. *Drikung Jamze Ling*⁴ in Baltezers (20 km from Riga) forms a complex which includes three buildings situated between two lakes, incorporating a prayer and practice hall, as well as a healing and yoga centre (established in 2005). The place has been blessed by Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche in 2006. The spiritual leaders of the European Drikung Kagju Order and also of the Latvian Drikung Centre are the 36th and the 37th throne holders of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage: Chuntsang Rinpoche and Chetsang Rinpoche. Garchen Triptrul Rinpoche and Nubpa Konchog Tenzin Rinpoche are also supremely important root lamas of this organization. The Tibetan

Healing Centre works closely with Latvian Professional Federation of Yoga and European Academy of Tibetan Medicine and Yoga, sheltering two academic study programmes (yoga physician and yoga master), administered by Erik Terehov and Sergej Ivanov Galvins.⁵ Still, it must be mentioned that there have been controversial evaluations of the results of the yoga implementation in this academy. Two other Buddhist centres developed out of Jamze Ling around 2005: *Drikung Ngaden Choling* in Riga (Tērbatas Street 74)⁶ and *Sorig Centre* (Kr.Barona Street 136)⁷. As can be seen from the name of this third community⁸, the main activities are closely related with Tibetan medicine, health recreation and healing. The spiritual leader of both affiliated organizations is Nubpa Konchog Tenzin Rinpoche.

Another community of the Kagyu tradition is based in *Karma Kagyu Centre*, which was established in 1997 and now has two affiliates (in Riga and in Daugavpils).⁹ The spiritual leader is the 17th Karmapa Thaye Dorje.¹⁰ He has never been to Latvia yet, thus the actual root teacher of Latvian Karma Kagyu is the Danish Lama Ole Nydahl who visits Latvia regularly every year.

The Gelug tradition can be considered as the second largest in Latvia. It is represented by *Ganden Buddhist Meditation Centre*¹¹ (situated in Riga, Miera Street 11-1), which is an affiliate of the international *Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition* (FPMT)¹². The current spiritual leader of the FTMP and also of Ganden is Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. Yet the founder and the most active teacher of Latvian Gelug community is the experienced Buddhist teacher Uldis Balodis, an Australian-Latvian, presently residing in Nepal. He and his father Jānis Balodis have made a significant contribution to Latvian Buddhism, also in the translation of Buddhist texts.¹³ Uldis Balodis has established an FPMT retreat centre, *Yiga Chodzin*, in the picturesque village of Drusti (Cēsu district).¹⁴

The earliest Buddhist community in the new state of Latvia was *Padmaling*¹⁵ (Riga, Ģertrūdes Street 5) which belongs to the Dzogchen lineage of the Nyingma tradition. It was already started in 1989, two years before the proclamation of political independence from the USSR. The spiritual leader of the organization is Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

To continue, let us take a closer look at the Tibetan Buddhist masters who have visited Latvia from 1991 until now, giving teachings, empowerments and initiations. Many of them also conducted meditation sessions, tantric practices and retreats. Most of them were invited by the Drikung Kagyu centre in Baltezers; however, they may also have visited other centres and given public lectures to general audience.¹⁶ These masters represent three main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism: Gelug, Kagyu and Nyingma (Dzogchen). In the framework of this article a selection of masters will be offered on the basis of quantitative and qualitative choice criteria: 1) representatives of all Buddhist lineages were included to depict the whole spectrum of religious practices, and 2) those teachers who have had a closer and more frequent connection with Latvia were selected to show the prevalence of definite schools and beliefs.

Gelug masters

There have been five eminent masters of the largest Tibetan Buddhist School who have visited Latvia.

It is necessary to start with the **14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso** (born 1935), the 74th incarnation of the compassion Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and the leader of the Gelug tradition, who is deeply respected by all schools.¹⁷ He visited Latvia in 1991 and in 2001, however, in the following decennial tour of the Baltics of 2011 Latvia was excluded on account of absence of invitation. Such an excuse seems strange enough for a non-political and non-governmental leader who tends to strengthen cultural and religious ties. In answer to this the deputy of Riga City Council and the representative of the Association Latvia for Tibet, Mārtiņš Skuja invited His Holiness to pay a visit to Latvia in the coming year.¹⁸ It would be superfluous to introduce biographical data about Dalai Lama, as there are innumerable publications about and by him. Even in Latvia he has become a “super-star” of life wisdom, and one can find dozens of books about him that have been translated into the Latvian language, whilst translations of other Tibetan Buddhist masters are comparatively scarce. During his visits in Latvia Dalai Lama gave lectures on general topics, meant for a large audience. His themes are distinctive with their direct connection to modern science, education, Western cultural values and other topical problems of the modern man (e.g. education and culture, the Buddhist approach to ethics and science, compassion and mutual dependence).

Two other teachers from the Gelug School who gave teachings in Riga were Choden Rinpoche and Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, who are recognized as high incarnations (Tib. *Rinpoche* – great jewel). **Choden Rinpoche** (1933) taught several times in the Ganden centre and audio files of his and other masters’ teaching are available in the online audio archive.¹⁹ On the 19th.September he also gave a public lecture “Making Life Meaningful” in the World Trade Centre. Choden Rinpoche was born in Khampa region of Eastern Tibet and was officially recognized as a living incarnation by Reting Rinpoche, the regent of Tibet. At the age of seven he took novice ordination from Pabongka Rinpoche, and at the age of seventeen travelled to Central Tibet and enrolled in Sera Je Monastery where he learned Tibetan grammar, Sanskrit, poetry, literature, astrology, five canons of Buddhist philosophy, received complete pith instructions and ear-whispered transmissions, as a result completing a twenty-five-year course of study and earning the title *pandita*.²⁰ Rinpoche experienced also the dark period of the Cultural Revolution when he was forced to abandon his religious practice in the monastery and return to his Lhasa household. Thereafter he spent 19 years in solitary retreat. In 1985 he escaped Tibet, travelling through Nepal to South India. For the next twenty years he taught the Buddhist canon to thousands of monks in the diaspora’s monastic communities. Rinpoche is regularly invited abroad to teach in monasteries and Dharma centres, so he has travelled extensively throughout South Asia, Mongolia, Europe, America and Australia.²¹

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche (1926–2006) is known not only as a prominent Gelug teacher, but also as a lineage holder of Kadam tradition which was a foundation stone for the later development of the Gelug School. He is a very important lineage holder in the Kalachakra tradition, as well. Born in Amdo region of Eastern Tibet at the age of eight he was recognized by the tenth Kirti Rinpoche as the first reincarnation of Khensur Kramcho Phuntsog (the former abbot of Kirti gompa in Amdo). In the 1950s, in order to avoid the political instability posed by the Chinese in Amdo area, he went for studies to Drepung Monastery in Lhasa. After

the unsuccessful Lhasa revolt in 1959, he fled to India, where he taught Tibetan orphans at the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala. At the age of 45 he went into a 15-year-meditation retreat, spending seven years in meditation on *lamrim*²², three years on the seven-point thought transformation, two years on generation and completion stages of tantra, and the final three years repeating all of the above mentioned. Serving as the abbot of Kirti Monastery in Dharamsala he has even been a teacher of the 14th. Dalai Lama.²³

Two other Tibetan masters of the Gelug School who were invited by Ganden Centre possess Geshe degrees which can be equated with the doctoral degree in Western education system. *Geshe Thubten Soepa*²⁴ (1955) is a Tibetan born in Zanskar (North India). He completed Buddhist studies at Sera Je monastery in India; his education included not only the Gelug, but also Kagyu, Nyingma and Sakya traditions. Later he went to Germany and worked nine years as the main teacher of Aryatara Institute in Munich. He came to Latvia in 2011, lecturing about the following topics: what to do with this human life; how to meditate on the mind of clear light; how to develop the great compassion and bodhicitta; how to benefit from the process of death; what are benefits from the reliance on the guru – spiritual teacher. *Geshe Thubten Sherab* (1967) has frequent contacts with the Ganden Centre and visited Latvia several times. He was born in Nepal and at first studied at the Kopan monastery near Kathmandu, later he also went for studies to India (Sera Jey monastery and Gyume Tantra College)²⁵. Kopan monastery serves as the core centre for the FPMT, therefore Buddhist practitioners of the Ganden Centre also have close relations with teachers of this place and often go there on pilgrimage or retreats. Geshe Thubten Sherab took up the post of the main teacher in Kopan; in the meantime he also travelled abroad and gave teachings in the FTMP centres in the USA, Canada and other countries.²⁶

Kagyu masters

The most wide-spread Tibetan Buddhist School in Latvia is Drikung Kagyu, although it is not so big in number in the rest of the world. One of the reasons of its popularity in Latvia could be personal preferences and acquaintances of individual Buddhist followers. The main centre of activities of Kagyu teaching is of no doubt Drikung Jamze Ling in Baltezers, and the largest part of Tibetan masters have been invited by this organization. Most of them belong to the Drikung Kagyu School and follow the teaching of Jigten Sumgon (1143–1217), who continued Phagmo Dru lineage (one of four major Kagyu divisions) and (according to some classifications) founded one of eight minor Kagyu divisions – Drikung Kagyu.²⁷

Numerous incarnated Lamas of Drikung Kagyu have visited Latvia, they conducted religious practices in the Baltezers Centre and also gave public lectures in other places. First of all the root lama of Jamze Ling *Garchen Triptral Rinpoche* (1936) is to be mentioned. He was born in Eastern Tibet and recognized as an incarnation of Siddha Gar Chodingpa (a heart disciple of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon who was the founder of the Drikung Kagyu). At the age of seven he entered Lho Miyal Monastery where he received profound instructions on preliminary practices (*ngondro*), the fivefold practice of mahamudra and six yogas of Naropa. Then, at the age of twenty-two, after completing a two-and-a-half-year retreat, he was

imprisoned for twenty years (during the China's Cultural Revolution) and was released only in 1979. While in the labour camp, Rinpoche received Dzogchen teachings and meditation instruction from his root lama Nyingma Khenpo Munsel. Garchen Rinpoche holds two lineages – Nyingma and Drikung Kagyu, he is also being highly praised for having realized the inconceivable wisdom mind of his lama and reached complete realization of Buddha's teachings. Garchen Rinpoche made great effort to rebuild Drikung Kagyu monasteries of Eastern Tibet and to re-establish the Dharma teachings there. He is presently involved in the establishment of a monastic college at Gar Monastery and two boarding schools for the children of nomadic families. In the United States, Rinpoche has recently established Ari Gar Zangchup Choling and Drikung Mahayana Centres.²⁸ There are many accounts that Rinpoche's blessing helped people of all faiths quit drinking or smoking, and his lectures always attract the biggest number of people of all religions. Garchen Rinpoche visited Riga a couple of times, last time he gave Chakrasamvara empowerment and teachings on phowa.

The second important master, who has a special connection with Latvia, is *Nubpa Konchog Tenzin Rinpoche* (1942). He visited Riga already several times, meeting also representatives from the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Latvia. Nubpa Rinpoche was born in Tibet as the 12th incarnation of Gambo Gyaltsen, emanation of the protector Mahakala. He studied in Drikung-thil monastery and later experienced the hard times of the Cultural Revolution. After the change of regime, he resumed his work as a Buddhist teacher and in 1989 joined the Beijing Buddhist College of Higher Studies. He has received two highest academic degrees in Buddhism and has four times gone on three-year solitary retreats.²⁹ Thus he can be considered as one of the last practitioners of the Tibetan ascetic yogi tradition.

He and his assistant *Lama Tsering Norbu* reside in Nepal, Rinchen Ling monastery. They conduct annual retreats to Labchi mountain, where the Tibetan poet and yogi Milarepa used to meditate. It is one of the three holiest mountains, considered to represent the speech of Chakrasamvara³⁰ (Kailash representing the body and Tsari – the mind of this deity). Buddhists of the Latvian Kagyu lineage also regularly make pilgrimages to this place as well as participate in retreats there. The assistant lama of Nubpa Rinpoche deserves special attention. He came to Latvia for the first time in 2010, together with his master. However, from April until October 2011 he lived permanently in Latvia and conducted regular practices and meditation sessions in Drikung Jamze Ling Centre. Perhaps he was the first Tibetan Buddhist who received a permanent residence permit in Latvia and who stayed here for a relatively long period of time.

The teacher who has also visited Latvia several times is *Drubpon Kunsang Rinpoche* (1976). He was entrusted by Drikung Gyabgon Chetsab Rinpoche to transmit Tibetan yoga practice in Latvia. Tibetan yoga exercises combine practices for strengthening body with meditation and mental practice, including also secret transmissions that help opening chakras and channels. These teachings constitute a part of a larger attempt to resurrect ancient yogi tradition which has nowadays become rare even in the Tibetan society.³¹ Thus, following the request of Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche, Lama Kunsang takes part in preserving and structuring of these precious yoga exercises. Besides, he has an excellent knowledge

of English and acts also as a Dharma-translator for other masters. His skills of thangka and mandala painting also should be mentioned. Born in 1976 in Ngari, near mount Kailash, he came to India during the Tibetan uprising of 1989. There he studied at Drikung Kagyu Institute in Dehra Dun, as well as made a three-year retreat on six yogas by Naropa and the fivefold mahamudra path. In 2001 Rinpoche moved to Switzerland and started teaching at the Tibetan Institute in Rikon, later joining the Ratnashri Meditation Centre in Sweden.³²

Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche (1946) visited Latvia several times, the last being in 2011, giving lectures that were based on the text “Samsara and Nirvana – two sides of one hand”, composed by himself. Here he explained some aspects of “Gongchig: The single intent” as taught by Jigten Sumgon. Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche is the only teacher of Drikung Kagyu who has received the title *mahapandita*.³³ He was born in Tsari region in Tibet, but was forced to emigrate to India during the Tibetan revolt in 1959. After completing his studies at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies of Varanasi, he moved to America in 1983, where he lives now and gives a broad spectrum of teachings. He has also translated many books and texts in English and established several centres throughout the US and Chile. Rinpoche frequently visits Southeast Asia and Europe, especially Germany and Austria.³⁴ **Dagpo Chenga Rinpoche** (1968), the 8th incarnation of Dagpo Chenga Tulku (honoured as the heart son of Gampopa) was born in a village below the picturesque Drikung-Thil monastery, later he studied Kagyu classical texts – six yogas of Naropa and four dharmas of Gampopa in Lhasa and also emigrated to India. Already at a young age he began to write papers on different subjects under the name of Rase Konchog Gyatso, later he made a significant contribution to the spread of Buddhism by publishing many books on history, mahamudra and gongchig.³⁵

Besides the already mentioned there were many other Kagyu masters (Drupon Trinley Yeshe Rinpoche, Gyabra Tritsab Rinpoche, Khenpo Konchog Tamphel, Lho Kunsang Rinpoche, Tenzin Sherab Barma, Yudra Rinpoche) who visited Latvia for a short time to hold lectures, conduct religious practices or give empowerments. Topics of their teachings will be discussed in greater detail later in the article.

Nyingma and Dzogchen masters

Drikung Jamze Ling in Baltezers has hosted not only Kagyu followers; this organization welcomes also teachers from other lineages, like above already mentioned Dagpo Chenga Rinpoche (incarnation of the heart son of Gampopa, whose teaching unified Kadam and Kagyu schools), like Lho Ontul Rinpoche (whose lineage is connected not only with Nyingma school, but also with the non-buddhistic Bon), Dza Patrul Rinpoche (who represents both Dzogchen and Rimed schools) or Ganteng Tulku (who holds Pema Lingpa lineage of Nyingma and Dzogchen schools). Common teaching topics of many of these masters are *nyingthig* practices, *powa* transmission and *wang shitro* practices³⁶. The following will introduce just three of the above mentioned persons.

Lho Ontul Rinpoche (1950) is considered to be the incarnation of one of the 25 main disciples of Guru Padmasambhava, stemming from the inner lineage of Loden Nyingpo, who is also one of the four ancient tulkus of Bon religion. Besides

he also shares a common Dzogchen lineage with Drikung Orgyen Nuden Dorje, a great discoverer of hidden teachings (Tib. *gter-ston*) of the 18th century. Lho Ontul Rinpoche was born in Kham Nangchen in Eastern Tibet and fled to India in 1959. There he received instructions by Nyingma and Kagyu masters on *longchen nyingthig ngondro* practice³⁷, as well as *Mahamudra* and *Dzogchen* teachings. 1971 he moved to Ladakh in north India and built a monastery near the Lotus Lake, one of the sacred places where it is believed that Guru Padmasambhava demonstrated his miraculous powers.³⁸ During his visit in Latvia (2009) Rinpoche explained transformations of the rainbow body, whereby the body becomes clear light leaving no trace of the physical form. *Dzogchen Ranyak Dza Patrul Rinpoche* (1963) visits Riga regularly since 2005, giving teachings about “Bodhicharyavatara” of Shantideva and about phowa³⁹ practice. Born in Kham region of Eastern Tibet, he entered Dzogchen monastery at the age of 14, later he continued studies at the Dzogchen Shri Singha Monastic University, one of the most renowned Nyingma education centres. However he follows the example of the 1st Patrul Rinpoche who called himself *rimed* (without school affiliation), thus also Dza Patrul Rinpoche honours every school and gives teachings from different points of view. Like many of Drikung Kagyu and Dzogchen teachers, he also specializes in phowa transmission techniques. *Ganteng Tulku Kunsang Pema Namgyal* (1955) comes from Central Bhutan and has been recognized as the 9th incarnation of the tertön Pema Lingpa. He studied in Ganteng Monastery in Bhutan and learned Dzogchen tradition from eminent teachers in Nepal. Furthermore, he also underwent an eight-year retreat in mountains near Thimphu valley. He is the main lineage holder of Pema Lingpa and nowadays he works actively in developing Pema Lingpa lineage in Bhutan, building monasteries there, retreat houses and teaching centres. He also gives teachings in Western countries, mostly about the *khandro nyingthig* cycles of three heart practices.⁴⁰

A different lineage is represented by *Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche* (1938), who is the spiritual head of the Latvian Dzogchen community Padmaling. His lineage goes back to Garab Dorje, being the incarnation of Pema Karpo, great master who in his time united several feudal clans and found Bhutan kingdom. However, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has no direct connection with this country. He was born in Eastern Tibet, near Derge monastery and later worked in Chinese Sichuan, Chengdu city as a Chinese-Tibetan interpreter. In 1958 he went to India to visit holy places and could not return because of uprisings in Tibet 1959. In 1960 the Italian tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci invited him to Napoli, where he was engaged in the academic work teaching the Tibetan language, Mongolian and Tibetan culture. He wrote several books on Buddhism and in 1976 he began to transmit Dzogchen in the West. He has visited the Baltics several times, introducing the main divisions of Dzogchen teaching, his followers in Padmaling being also engaged in *yantra* and *wang shidro* practices.⁴¹

Concluding the first part of this article, the introduction of the Tibetan Buddhist masters who visited Latvia in the period between 1991 and 2011, it can be said that, on one hand, the oldest Buddhist masters come from different parts of Tibet (Drikung-thil in Central Tibet, Ngari in the West or Kham in the East). During their teachings they speak mostly Tibetan (translated first into English and then into

Russian or Latvian), many of them possess also a good knowledge of the Chinese language. After the spread of Chinese communist rule they all emigrated to Nepal or India. On the other hand, younger Tibetan Buddhist teachers were born and recognized as incarnations in Bhutan, Nepal or India. Some of them have also a permanent residence in Western countries (Switzerland, the USA, Estonia); these lamas give teachings in fluent English.

Most of the invited Tibetan teachers belong to the Kagyu school, which is not surprising for the Kagyu tradition represents a more flexible teaching and practice system for lay Buddhists, mostly the case in Western societies and in Latvia as well. Already the founder of the Kagyu lineage in Tibet – translator Marpa – set an illustrious example, combining family life with a perfect Buddhist wisdom. The Kagyu lineage is famous for the combination of two approaches – freedom of Nyingma and the scholastic approach of Gelug, it offers a variety of methods to suit any capabilities and abilities of students. In the second half of the 20th century the activities of the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje played also a major role in establishing and popularizing Kagyu teaching in the West. Due to the custom of lay practitioners, the role of the teacher is extremely important. In Tibetan *bK'a-brgyud* means “the lineage of the oral transmission”. Many textual and ritual studies can be omitted if there is a chance to receive initiations and empowerments by lamas. This may be another reason why exactly Kagyu followers make every effort to invite authoritative masters.

Main themes of teachings

For the convenience of the analyses the contents of teachings could be divided into four thematic groups:

- Commentaries on classical texts;
- General topics (including public lectures on different concepts and principles);
- Initiations and empowerments (mainly practices of special deities);
- Other practices and rituals.

However, this is only an arbitrary division, and in some cases the contents may overlap. Besides, there is no analogous classification in the Buddhist tradition.

Commentaries on classical texts include both scriptures of Indian Mahayana masters, as well as standard works of each Tibetan Buddhist school. It must be said the main ones have been mentioned here. Following a chronological order, works of Indian Buddhists are listed as first:

- *“Letter to a Friend”* by Madhyamika philosopher Nagarjuna (2nd–3rd cent.). The text, written in a verse form, includes an easy readable and understandable introduction to the basics of Buddhism theory.
- *“Bodhicharjavatara”* (Guide to the Bodhisattva’s way of life) by Shantideva, a great master of Mahayana, important teacher at Nalanda monastic university in the 8th century.
- *Six Yogas⁴² of Naropa*, who lived in 10th–11th centuries, also wide-spread as separate religious practices (will be introduced later in the text).

Besides, there are the standard works of Tibetan Buddhist schools Nyingma, Kagyu, Kadam and Gelug. Early Tibetan Buddhist practices of the Nyingma School

in the case of Latvia are mostly connected with Dzogchen teaching. Besides, there are some masters of Kagyu who also specialize in Dzogchen:

- Instructions on the main scriptural and lineage **divisions of Dzogchen**: *Semde* (tib. *sems de*: mind division), *Longde* (tib. *klong sde*: space division), *Menngade* (tib. *man ngag sde*: secret instruction division).⁴³
- **Kandro nyingthig** (Heart essence of Dakinis), the most important class of teachings of the secret instruction division (mentioned above). This profound collection of Dzogchen teachings was transmitted through Padmasambhava to Princess Pema Sal (daughter of the king Trisong Detsen) and later discovered by tertön Pema Ledrel Tsal (13. cent.).⁴⁴
- **Cycles of three Heart practices**, a summary of teachings revealed by tertön Pema Lingpa (15.–16. cent.): 1. The union of Samantabhadra's⁴⁵ intentions; 2. The Lama – jewel ocean, 3. The great compassionate one – the lamp that illuminates the darkness.⁴⁶

Writings of the Kagyu masters are represented by two leading authorities – Milarepa (11th cent.) and Jigten Sumgon (12th–13th cent.):

- Meditatively profound and biographically informative **Songs of Milarepa** (who was the second lineage holder of Tibetan Kagyu tradition, the heart disciple and successor of Marpa Lotsawa) are known to everyone and do not need an introduction.
- However, more could be said about **Vajra Songs** and **“Gongchig: The single intent (of the United Enlightened Thought)”** of Jigten Sumgon. This most distinctive teaching of the Drikung Kagyu lineage represents the culmination of Jigten Sumgon's study and realization of sutra and tantra teachings as bestowed exclusively on his heart-son Chenga Sherab Jungne. It is said that Jigten Sumgon's teaching was identical with Buddha's intentions. Gongchig consists of 152 main vajra statements with 64 supplement vajra-statements⁴⁷. They are divided into eight chapters (Wheels of Dharma, Dependant Origin, Vinaya Pratimoksha, Bodhisattva training etc.).

Kadam and Gelug writings include three masters: Atisha (10th–11th cent.), Gampopa (12th cent.), and Lama Tsongkhapa (14th–15th cent.):

- **“Jewel Rosary”** by Atisha (Buddhist scholar from Bengal, who taught in Tibet for 13 years, forefather of Kadam and Gelug traditions). His text is a poem, giving useful advice for practice and formation of the correct view.⁴⁸
- **“The Jewel Ornament of Liberation”** by Gampopa the successor of Milarepa and the third lineage holder of Kagyu. Besides, he was also a scholar of the Kadam School, which later transformed into the Gelug monastic order. His personality represents a link between tantric lay practices of Kagyu and the monastic order of Gelug. The book is a *lamrim* kind of text, giving a systematic explanation of Madhyamika Buddhist path, but also including teachings on Mahamudra and Anuttarayogatantra.
- **“Three principal aspects of the path”**, text by the founder of the Gelug School, Lama Tsongkhapa. By the three aspects the following is meant: abandoning the cyclic existence *samsara*, wish to help all sentient beings to reach enlightenment – *bodhicitta*, absolute wisdom of the *emptiness*, which is also the real essence of all phenomena.⁴⁹

As next the teachings include **general topics**, which introduce topical questions of the Buddhism theory, e.g. *teaching about patience, compassion or Buddhist approach to ethics and science*. Moreover, many themes are aimed at a larger public and tend to offer a solution to problems of men in the modern society. Having only a look at books by Dalai Lama, translated into Latvian⁵⁰, one can notice the core question of all times: *How to be happy? What is happiness?* In their public lectures teachers pose also other questions: *How to make life meaningful? How to awake love in oneself?* These and other topics are then explained from the Buddhist point of view.

For a more competent audience of Buddhist practitioners, usually in Dharma centres, Tibetan teachers introduce also the main concepts of Buddhist philosophy, e.g. *karma, bodhicitta, samsara un nirvana, four noble truths*. The usual themes discussed and practiced in the Kagyu and Dzogchen Schools are *phowa, bardo states, rainbow body, mahamudra* etc.⁵¹

There is also a part of teachings connected with **practices of deities and empowerments**. These include explanations about symbolism of definite Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other divine beings, and their scope of influence upon the human body and mind. Usually such teachings are followed by initiation⁵² or empowerment^{53,54} and by a common visualization practice. Most often teachers introduce the compassion Bodhisattva – *Avalokiteshvara*⁵⁵; two consorts of Avalokiteshvara – *Green and White Tara*⁵⁶, *Medicine Buddha*⁵⁷, *Manjushri*⁵⁸ and *Vajrasattva*⁵⁹. Moreover, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism – *Guru Padmasambhava* and the mystic founder of Dzogchen – *Garab Dorje* are also common meditation objects.

Besides there are also many practices based on wrathful emanations of deities and protectors of the teaching. Very often they are depicted in *yab-yum*⁶⁰ form together with the tantric consort. However, their attributes, symbolism and manifestations vary from lineage to lineage. Among these the first to mention is *Jambhala* – the guardian of the North and deity of wealth and prosperity. No wonder that the belief in his manifestation has reached Latvia, a country to the northwest of Tibet, nowadays struggling with an acute financial crisis. His mandala, built by Ladakhi monks in 2010 in the Congress Hall surely attracted numerous local people who wanted to benefit from the help of this deity. There are a number of tantric divinities mentioned in the teachings of Tibetan masters, e.g. *Chakrasamvara, Vajravarahi*⁶¹, *Garuda*⁶², *Hayagriva*⁶³, *Mahakala*⁶⁴, *Vajrapani*⁶⁵, *Kurukulla*⁶⁶, *Yamantaka*⁶⁷. Drikung Kagyu followers often perform also practices connected with *Achi Drolma* who is believed to have been a real person in the 11th century and is revered as Dharma protector of Drikung Kagyu and manifestation of Vajravarahi.

Finally, there are also teachings related to **other practices** and not connected with a specific deity. They are at first introduced and explained by Tibetan masters and thereafter regularly performed by Latvian practitioners in common Dharma sessions or individually at home. Most wide-spread among these are *guru yoga*⁶⁸, *shamatha and vipashyana meditation*⁶⁹, *ngon-dro* (preliminary exercises)⁷⁰, *nyung-ne retreat*⁷¹, *tsa-lung*⁷², *tummo*⁷³ and *torma offerings*⁷⁴. Besides, there are other teachings on exclusively tantric practices, like *dream yoga, phowa practice*⁷⁵, *wang shitro practice*⁷⁶ and *kusali offering*⁷⁷.

After having looked through this list of teachings, one notices that they do not follow the system of the traditional Tibetan monastic education, where first of all there would be preliminary practices and rituals, then an introduction into Buddhist logic, Perfection of Wisdom sutras (Prajnaparamita), Middle Way philosophy (Madhyamika), Treasury of Knowledge treatises (Abhidharma) and Vinaya. Thereafter arrangements of the way of reasoning would be learnt, bases of this are formed by Indian authors (Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Maitreya, Chandrakirti, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu) and their Tibetan commentaries. Only then comes tantra practice, where one should learn mandala rites of the Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara, and Yamantaka, recite from memory the entire Pratimokṣa Sutra and other texts.⁷⁸ The difference between the knowledge of monastic and lay Buddhists can be clearly distinguished also in Tibetan society, only monks (and also not in all cases) receive systematic education, but lay Buddhists choose an individual approach, according to the needs of personal life, usually recommended by a lama.

Among the teachings listed above there are segments of totally diverse topics and also many blank spaces yet to be filled out. The whole programme of Latvian Dharma centres is adapted for the Western lay society, very individually orientated and without high demands. It is quite understandable that 10 or 20 years are far too short a time to draw all basic lines of the nearly 1500 year-old continuous religious tradition. Besides, the introduction of Buddhism in Latvia is no orderly planned scheme by governmental institutions, as it was during the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet in the 7th and 8th centuries. Moreover, the choice of the invited teachers depends on individual initiatives and acquaintances, attracting masters from different places and traditions. The chances of any state level support are scarce, also because of the current pro-Chinese policies. Thus we can expect that in the future these tendencies will create an untraditional, modern Latvian set of Tibetan Buddhism, defined by personal contacts and values of the Latvian mind.

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- ² Interview with Uldis Balodis. Yiga Chozin, Drusti. 24.08.2011; Interview with Erik Terehov. Drikung Jamze Ling, Baltezers, 11.06.2011.
- ³ The correct transcription of this word, according to international Wylie system, is “Drigung” (‘bri gung), however, in this article the name “Drikung” will be used which is officially registered by the religious organizations referred to in this article.
- ⁴ Drikung Jamze Ling Dharmachakra Centre, 2009, www.drikung.eu [05.04.2012]
- ⁵ Tibetan Healing and Yoga Education Centre, 2009-2011, www.healing.lv [05.04.2012]
- ⁶ Riga Drikung Ngaden Choling, www.drikung.lv [05.04.2012]
- ⁷ SORIG: Meditācijās un dziedniecības centrs, 2010 www.sorig.lv [05.04.2012]
- ⁸ *Tib.gso-rig*: science of healing.
- ⁹ Karma Kagyu Buddhist Centre in Riga, 2003-2009, www.buddhism.lv [05.04.2012]
- ¹⁰ This incarnation is recognized by the second highest ranking Karma Kagyu tulku Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche, who as the first became extremely popular in the West, establishing numerous religious practice centres and gaining many Western followers. Supporters of his lineage do not acknowledge the incarnation of the 17th Karmapa Orgyen Trinley Dorje, who in his turn is recognized by the 3rd highest ranking Karma Kagyu tulku Tai Situ Rinpoche, by the 14th Dalai Lama and the government of the PRC. Orgyen Trinley Dorje

- escaped Tibet six years after Karmapa Thaye Dorje, in 2000. (The Karmapa Conflict: The Controversy in the Kagyu Lineage. <http://www.karmapa-issue.org/> [05.04.2012]
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- ¹² Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, 2012, www.fpmt.org [05.04.2012]
- ¹³ Buddhadharma.lv: buddhisma mācības, teksti, padomi un informācija latviešu valodā, www.buddhadharma.lv [05.04.2012]
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- ¹⁶ Dates of visits are not given because many of them came several times, even several times a year.
- ¹⁷ Biography in: bsTan 'dzin rGya mtsho (Dalai Lama, XIV): Freedom in Exile: The autobiography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet. New Delhi, Rupa & Co, 1993.
- ¹⁸ Viņa Svētība Dalai Lama apmeklēs Latviju. Rīgas domes deputātu frakcija “Demokrātiskie patrioti”. – Rīgas pašvaldības portāls / Rīga municipality portal, 19.08.2011, www.riga.lv/LV/PostingData/News/2011/8/dalai-lama-apsekles-latviju.htm [05.04.2012]
- ¹⁹ Budisma centrs Ganden: Mācību arhīvs, www.gaanden.lv/macibu_arhivs.htm [05.04.2012]
- ²⁰ From Sanskrit – scholar.
- ²¹ Biography in: Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition: Teachers: Rinpoche's Teachers, 2012, www.fpmt.org/teachers/lineage_lamas.html [05.04.2012.]
- ²² Gradual Path, basic teaching of the Gelug School derived from Tshonkhapa and Atisha texts.
- ²³ Biography in: Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition: Teachers: Rinpoche's Teachers, 2012, www.fpmt.org/teachers/lineage_lamas.html [05.04.2012]
- ²⁴ Biography in: FPMT Jamyang Buddhist Centre: Talkingbuddhism.com, London, 2005-2011, www.talkingbuddhism.org [05.04.2012]
- ²⁵ Originally in Lhasa, but relocated in India in 1959.
- ²⁶ Biography in: Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition: Teachers: Touring Lamas, 2012, www.fpmt.org/teachers/touring/pdf/Geshe%20Thubten%20Sherab.pdf [05.04.2012]
- ²⁷ More about the Drikung Kagyu history and Jigten Sumgon see in: Dkon mchog rGya mtsho: 'Dri gung chos 'byung. Beijing, Minzu cbs., 2004, p. 282-283.
- ²⁸ Biography in: Official Website of the Drikung Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism: Eminent Teachers, 2005-2012, www.drikung.org [05.04.2012]
- ²⁹ Biography in: Official Website of the Drikung Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism: Eminent Teachers, 2005-2012, www.drikung.org [05.04.2012]
- ³⁰ Tantric meditation deity which represents the wheel of union and mother Tantras.
- ³¹ More detailed about Tibetan yogis see: Borack, Phil and Jo (dir.): The Yogis of Tibet: A Film for Posterity. Jehm Films, 2002.
- ³² Biography in: Ratnashri Meditation Centre, Sweden: Our precious Drikung teachers, 2012, <http://home.swipnet.se/ratnashri> [05.04.2012]
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- ³⁵ Biography in: Official Website of the Drikung Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism: Eminent Teachers, 2005-2012, www.drikung.org [05.04.2012]
- ³⁶ Detailed explanation see in the text below under: Other practices.
- ³⁷ Detailed explanation see in the text below under: Commentaries on classic texts.
- ³⁸ Biography in: Official Website of the Drikung Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism: Eminent Teachers, 2005-2012, www.drikung.org [05.04.2012]

- ³⁹ Detailed explanation see in the text below under: Other practices.
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- ⁴¹ Namkhai Norbu: *Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State*. Ithaca NY, Snow Lion Publications, 1996, p.17-18.
- ⁴² Inner heat, illusory body, dream yoga, clear light, consciousness transference, forceful projection.
- ⁴³ Namkhai Norbu: *Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State*. Ithaca NY, Snow Lion Publications, 1996, p.16.
- ⁴⁴ Dargyay, Eva M.: *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, p.25, 26, 186, 187.
- ⁴⁵ This name generally refers to the nature of all Buddhas, translated as: all good, ever perfect, however, it has also different meanings in every Buddhist tradition, e.g. primordial Buddha in Tantrayana, from whom diverse images of Buddhas and lineages arise.
- ⁴⁶ Harding, Sarah (transl.): *The Life and Revelations of Pema Lingpa*. Ithaca NY, Snow Lion Publications, 2003, p.24-26.
- ⁴⁷ Vajra, meant as a symbol for the ultimate nature of phenomena. The statements are not to be separated from the ultimate nature of all phenomena, therefore called “vajra statements” (tib. *rdo rje'i gsung*).
- ⁴⁸ Text see: Atisha Dipamkara; Pearcey Adam (transl.): *The Jewel Rosary of the Bodhisattvas*. In: Lotsawa house: *Free Translations of Tibetan Buddhist Texts: Indian Masters*, 2008, www.lotsawahouse.org [05.04.2012]. Audio commentary by Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche see: buddhadharma.lv: *mācību ieraksti*, www.buddhadharma.lv [05.04.2012]
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- ⁵⁰ Laimes māksla: *Kā būt laimīgam darbā (The Art of Happiness at Work)*. Rīga: Atēna, 2004; Laimes māksla: *Dzīves rokasgrāmata (The Art of Happiness: Handbook of the Living)*. Rīga: Atēna, 2002.
- ⁵¹ In Kagyu this concept refers to an advanced meditation practice, but generally in every tradition possesses diverse connotations, e.g. Sutra class explains mahamudra as the comprehension of emptiness; Tantra class explains it as a state of Buddhahood, supreme perfection. But as a preliminary for authentic Buddhists recognition there are four Mahamudra principles (four great seals): All causes are impermanent; all defiles are suffering; all things are non-self; nirvana is pacification.
- ⁵² A promissory rite for empowerment, giving permission for the recitation of a specific mantra and for the meditation on a specific deity.
- ⁵³ Full permit to perform a definite practice.
- ⁵⁴ Initiations and empowerments are divided further in several levels.
- ⁵⁵ Main Bodhisattva in Tibetan Buddhism, most eagerly worshiped by locals, with Dalai Lama representing the emanation of this Bodhisattva.
- ⁵⁶ Taras are believed to have arisen from two tears of Avalokiteshvara's compassion, they are also an extremely wide-spread meditation object of Tibetans.
- ⁵⁷ Medicine Buddha is usually meditated upon for health recreation purposes.
- ⁵⁸ Wisdom Bodhisattva symbolizes the fully enlightened mind of Buddha.
- ⁵⁹ Personal meditation deity, his mantra means purification.
- ⁶⁰ From Tibetan: father-mother, resp. union of masculine and feminine divinities.
- ⁶¹ Wisdom dakini, Samantabhadra's emanation and Chakrasamvara's consort.
- ⁶² Flying deities in the form of mystic vultures.
- ⁶³ Horse-headed meditation deity.
- ⁶⁴ Main protector, wrathful manifestation of Avalokiteshvara.
- ⁶⁵ Holder of vajra, embodiment of power and skilful means.

- ⁶⁶ Female deity, used for subjugation of passions and of the evil.
- ⁶⁷ Guardian of the East, wrathful aspect of Manjushri.
- ⁶⁸ A worship and meditation ritual on the main spiritual leader of the lineage.
- ⁶⁹ Two basic meditation levels: 1) calm abiding (Tib.*gzhi-gnas*), means pacification of thoughts and 2) penetrating insight (Tib.*lhag-gthong*), refers to analytical meditation and visualization.
- ⁷⁰ Tib. *sngon-gro*, preliminary exercises prior to engaging in tantric practice: also called 400 000: 100 thousand prostrations, 100 thousand recitations of Vajrasattva mantra, 100 thousand mandala offerings and 100 thousand times of guru yoga performance.
- ⁷¹ Tib. *nyung-gnas* (abiding in the little), fasting ritual, which lasts for several days and is usually performed with meditation on Avalokiteshvara.
- ⁷² Tib. *rtsa-rlung* (channels and winds, Skt.*nādi-prāna*), yoga and breathing exercises, connected to energy control and physical functions of the body. There are 9 cleaning breath exercises for opening chakras and channels, normalizing fine energy flow, harmonizing spirit and body, balancing 5 elements etc.
- ⁷³ Tib. *gtum-mo* (inner heat), creating of the inner heat by rising the energy through chakras, one of the main exercises among Tibetan ascetic yogis, contained also in six yogas of Naropa.
- ⁷⁴ Tib. *gtor-ma*, sacrificial cakes made of dough, usually resplendently decorated with coloured butter and having different symbolic functions. They represent an embodiment of deities and clear away negative emotions.
- ⁷⁵ Tib. *pho-wa* (transference), practised in the case of death, in order to help the dying or the dead person to guide the consciousness to a favourable rebirth.
- ⁷⁶ Tib. *dbang-zhi-khro*, ritual connected with 100 peaceful and wrathful deities.
- ⁷⁷ Tib. *ku-sa-li* (begger or a man completely absorbed in meditative concentration), a symbolic offering ritual of one's own body to all sentient beings, including animals and ghosts, in order to help them to reach enlightenment. This is a kind of *chod* meditational practice (Tib.*gchod* – cut off), going back to yogini Machig Labdron.
- ⁷⁸ Lectures on Tibetan Religious Culture 02A. In: The Tibetan & Himalayan Library: Collections, 2012, <http://www.thlib.org/> [05.04.2012]

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Kopsavilkums

Rakstā sniegts aprakstošs pārskats par reliģisko mācību galvenajām tēmām Latvijas budistu centros pēc 1991. gada. Pēc neatkarības atgūšanas Latvija atjaunoja sakarus un sadarbību ar ārvalstīm, tāpēc šai laikā Latvijā sāka ierasties arī tibetiešu budisma skolotāji. Rakstā galvenokārt tiek analizētas tieši viņu sniegtās lekcijas un mācības. Ievadā minēti svarīgākie Dharmas centri Rīgā un citās Latvijas pilsētās, pirmā raksta daļa iepazīstina ar izcilākajiem tibetiešu lamām, kuriem ar Latvijas budistu centriem izveidojušies cieši un regulāri sakari. Skolotāji minēti tradīcijas līniju secībā. Raksta otrajā daļā tiek analizētas tibetiešu skolotāju sniegto mācību būtiskākās tēmas: klasisko tekstu komentāri, skaidrojumi par budisma jēdzieniem, lekcijas un iesvētības par atsevišķām dievībām, kā arī mācības par tantrās un citām praksēm.

Atslēgvārdi: *Tibetas budisms, budisma prakses, budisma skolotāji, lamas, dharmas centri, Latvija, reliģija.*

Lubos Belka

Dandaron Mandala: Unofficial Buryat Buddhist Sangha during the Soviet Era



Fig. 1. Dandaron Mandala, author Alexandr Ivanovich Zheleznov, 1974, actual size, material and dyes unknown.



Fig. 2. Dandaron Mandala, right upper corner.



Fig. 3. Dandaron Mandala, right bottom corner.



Fig. 4. Dandaron Mandala, left bottom corner.



Fig. 5. Dandaron Mandala, left upper corner.



Fig. 6. Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov; left: depiction based on a photograph from 1891 (see Fig. 7); right: based on a photograph from 1919 (see Fig. 8); Dandaron Mandala



Fig. 7. Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov, photograph, 1891



Fig. 8. Lubsan Sandan Tsydenov, photograph, 1919



Fig. 9. Bidia D. Dandaron, left: depiction based on a photograph from 1965 (see Fig. 10); right: based on a photograph from 1956; Dandaron Mandala



Fig. 10. Bidia D. Dandaron, photograph by A. I. Ponomariov, 1965, Ulan-Ude

Marju Broder

Vello Vaartnou: Nyingmapa from Estonia



Picture 1. Guru Mandala. Vaartnou 2005



Picture 2. Stupas built by Vaartnou in 1984–1885



Picture 3. VI Dalai lama. Vaartnou 2003



Picture 4. Vello Vaartnou and Hambo lama Erdineev (Head of Russian Buddhists). Ivolga monastery 1983 (By courtesy of Estonian Nyingma archive)

V

**BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:
TOWARDS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

Reducing Antagonism over Anti-New Religious Movements Moral Panics in Selected Countries in Central and Eastern Europe¹

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This paper attempts to analyze conflictual interplay between new religious movements (NRMs) and adherents of traditional churches in selected countries of post-communist Central and Eastern Europe in the perspective of agonistic democracy that emphasizes the role of conflict among different normative assumptions within the contemporary pluralist societies. Further, it will be tested how the theoretical insights drawn from the post-foundational debate could be applied to the empirical study of religious occurrences in CEE countries. Precisely, this paper will map the application of the agonistic framework into qualitative inquiry that shows the possibilities of reducing conflicts over the position of minor religious groups in post-communist Europe.

Keywords: new religious movements, democracy, pluralist societies, post-communist Europe.

The framework of post-foundational society

The problem I discuss in this paper should be located against the backdrop of social theory situating antagonism and contingency in the centre of the social field. In this respect I primarily draw on School of Essex scholarship, most notably on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's² work stating that the peculiarity of modern society rests in its irreducible pluralism of values which radically differs from the pre-modern monolithic society which was built on the same concept of substantive common good. This insight is clearly interconnected with a broader field of academic scholarship, to mention just the classical sociological argument offered by Durkheim³ on the demise of mechanistic bound of pre-modern society and the advent of organic bound of a functionally differentiated society. Another possible view that put in its centre irreducible clash of values as a sign of modernity comes from MacIntyre's⁴ moral philosophy that demonstrates the failure of rational justification of universal ethics that has been postulated by the advocates of Enlightenment principles since the 1700s. This problem is particularly instructive while dealing with the semiological turn in social sciences, that is to say, with the gradually increasing awareness of the significance of language in the construction of social structures. The semiological turn, as Rasinski⁵ noted,

is interdisciplinary in nature and has not received an all-encompassing systematic assessment, probably due to its embeddedness in the various traditions drawing on such distinct sources as linguistic structuralism of de Saussure, analytic philosophy articulated by Wittgenstein and Searle, Derridian and Foucaultian poststructuralism and linguistic psychoanalysis as elaborated by Lacan and his followers. This paper certainly cannot cover this spacious field, so I will narrow this paper's discussion to Laclau and Mouffe's post-structuralist approach, which is usually associated with Ferdinand de Saussure's⁶ idea that the field of language consists of negative differences. This seminal insight leads to a crucial premise, stating that the meaning of the word is not determined by its inherent content but by the external system of differences. The Saussurian model blended with Gramscian hegemony, Derridian deconstruction, and psychoanalysis resulted in ontological implications assuming that the differential nature of language applies also to any field of significance, including the social, "insofar as no object is given outside every discursive condition of emergence"⁷. Within this conceptual perspective any social position is deprived of the ultimate literality, because as Laclau and Mouffe⁸, following Althusserian notion of overdetermination, assert – "it is impossible to reduce them to the moments of their necessary immanence"; thus for semiotic approach: "there are not two planes, one of essences and the other of appearances, since there is no possibility of fixing an ultimate literal sense for which the symbolic would be a second and derived plane of signification". This is the conceptual base for the recognition of irreducible plurality of contemporary post linguistic-turn society and its all pervading sites of conflict – any particular social entity cannot be perceived as a privileged moment in the field of negative differences. Consequently, the abolition of the transcendental centre – as Derrida demonstrated – embodied historically by different categories of privileged objects (e.g. telos, principle of economic primacy) redefined the position of any social objectivity that cannot be managed by the objective rationality (e.g. the necessity of historical progress etc.), which would pose an external and motionless instance above the differences of language⁹.

Agonistic approach

The major task for empirical explorations informed by post-foundational stance involves the task of elucidating the means of managing the inevitable conflicts between various normative forces that occur in a pluralist social field, including the conflicts between proponents of main-stream churches, social control agents and NRMs in post-Communist countries. This issue gains certain clarity while following Mouffe's critique of the deliberative and aggregative models of democracy. Her argument challenges the position of advocates of political liberalism who (e.g. Rawls), while acknowledging the irreconcilable normative pluralism of modern societies, postulate the necessity of separation between the public sphere where metaphysical views are not allowed, and the private sphere where comprehensive views including religious should be located¹⁰. The latter position according to this statement cannot enter the rational public sphere where neutrality is maintained¹¹. This type of rational public square that is advocated, among others, by Rawls¹² allegedly prevents contemporary democratic regimes from irrational violence embedded in e.g. fundamentalist interpretative frameworks, that are transferred to

the non-public domain. This assumption is not flawless however, and the postulated separation does not shield public domain from relegated comprehensive views that tend to radicalize themselves and return in the form of populist views which poses a menace to democratic societies. There is a large empirical data that bring compelling examples of the inflow of antagonism informed by religion into public domain. We currently observe a “de-privatization” of religion that does not unfold harmonious logic of peaceful coexistence but instead spurs conflicts that assume multi-forms, including anti-cult moral panic and intercultural and interethnic tensions. For example, there is an upsurge of the intertwine of religious fundamentalism and nationalism, also the turbulent emergence of anti-cult movements and their links with social control agents that were appearing in certain CEE countries indicates that the concept of smooth separation between public and private is far from being achieved. Religion nowadays, as Karner and Aldridge¹³ argued, rather acts as a powerful symbolic resource that can be used selectively in pursuit of identity projects.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, social theory needs to acknowledge the constitutive position of power enmeshed in social relations, that is to say, the adequate analysis of pluralist societies cannot be abstracted from exclusion/inclusion practices carried out by individuals and institutions that ultimately render social objectivity inherently political¹⁴. The political nature, on the one hand, subverts the ideal of antagonism free society, but on the other, introduces the possibility of negotiating normative differences. The crucial aspect of identity/difference approach implies the deployment of Schmittian distinction we/they in such a way that it resonates with pluralist society without posing a menace to its stability. Mouffe accentuates the necessity of developing particular representational channels that might provide the means of mobilizing collective identities which would be compatible with the ideal of a stable pluralist society that focuses on negotiation of differences and avoids fundamental clash of antagonistic positions that ruin the whole polity¹⁵. This aspect is crucially important for this paper for it is linked with the possibility of transformation antagonism into agonism within the context of social conflicts related to religious projects. According to Mouffe¹⁶, opposition between antagonism and agonism provides the distinction between the relation of enemies (antagonism) and relation of adversaries (agonism). Agonistic formulation seeks to introduce “conflictual consensus” based on a common symbolic terrain among legitimate opponents. Agonistic approach acknowledges the existence of social conflict which cannot be mastered by rational deliberation, but at the same time it demonstrates the possibility of relation where adversaries recognize legitimacy of their opponents.

Reducing conflicts over NRMs

This is the moment when the conflicts over NRMs in CEE enter the scene. As empirical data show, due to not available mechanism of taming sacred and value-oriented conflicts (also conflicts related to national identities), they have been prone to turn into antagonistic level. Barker¹⁷ argued that religious tolerance was a novelty in post-Communist countries where people tended to act in line with “us” and “them” division, attempting to win a one-side victory. She pointed at traditional

churches in CEE countries that triggered antagonistic competition with NRMs. Borowik¹⁸, in turn, added that the common indicator for this region was involvement of religion in politics, which clearly institutionalized the antagonistic clash. Indeed, despite the competition between religious denominations, it is important to note that after the demise of Communism in CEE there were also other more powerful actors at work that utilized religious imagery in their political strategies. Goldberger et al.¹⁹ in detailed study on anti-NRMs moral panic in Poland, Slovakia and Croatia demonstrated how various institutions, including governmental bodies, mainstream churches, the mass media, civic organizations, anti-cult movements managed to alter the law regulating the position of NRMs in varying degree in respective countries during the 1990s. Particularly Polish anti-cult moral panic has achieved hegemonic position in the 1990s, namely, anti-cult proponents constructed persuasive ideology informed by medicalized discourse of social control that led to institutionalization of power-relations which imposed certain constraints on the public appearance of NRMs in public sphere. Polish anti-cult moral panic has influenced authorities with the result that legal regulations have been amended and several religious groups have been refused registration. Also in Slovakia during the 1990s the legislation was introduced that governed the registration of religious organizations with its high minimum membership requirements of 20,000 adult members. This census policy was widely considered as discriminatory for minor religions. Goldberger et al. emphasized that practices of exclusion of NRMs in these Catholic majority countries were underpinned by nationalist sentiments: "The NRMs while being depicted as a menace towards Catholicism, were at the same time presented as threat towards the nation"²⁰. The connection of Catholicism to nationalist sentiments occurring in Lithuanian public life has been recently analyzed by Alisauskiene and Schroeder²¹.

The question remains what are the means of transforming antagonistic relations related to NRMs in CEE into legitimate agonistic interplay. The existing empirical data do not bring sufficient number of comprehensive case studies that would answer this question. There is no doubt that this problem requires further empirical research, but there are some examples that shed some light on this problem and offer empirical observations which aim at identifying, although implicitly, the conditions of a possibility of transforming antagonism into agonism within the terrain of social conflict related to NRMs in CEE. I will briefly focus on two instances of reducing antagonistic relations in CEE. One is based on REVACERN research in Poland and the second builds on Richardson's analysis on the position of NRMs in Hungary.

Smoczynski²², drawing on REVACERN data analysed by Marinovic Jerolimov and Marinovic on evolving societal reactions towards ISKCON in Poland during the 1990s and 2000s, suggested that the dislocation of the anti-NRMs moral panic in Poland was not dispersed by the sudden single event. The anti-cult moral panic has rather been challenged by the logic of small interventions that have been gradually unfolding during a longer period of time: "legal battles, public relation policy, adoption of certain symbols, marking boundaries, establishing distinct categories of social relations etc"²³. For example, Hare Krishnas stopped appearing in the media programs where the anti-cult moral panic proponents were invited. They regularly sued individuals and institutions that distributed anti-ISKCON defamatory

information. Polish Hare Krishnas through this fighting back strategy (among other factors) slowly decomposed the moral panic ideology of the 1990s, and managed to constitute new collective identities that transformed antagonistic relations of the former enemies (NRMs – Catholic majority) into relations of opponents. Smoczynski argued that as a consequence of this deliberative strategy Polish media have changed their attitude towards ISKCON, which significantly contributed to diminishing the presence of anti-cult stereotype in broader social field: “Former idioms popularly used by the anti-cult formations (“destructiveness”) etc. were not able to influence wider public and were losing their universal signification. [...] The stereotype which described ISKCON as a destructive sect has lost its efficiency and since the late 1990s it occurs rarely in the Polish media.”²⁴

A similar legal strategy of Hare Krishnas has been put into practice in Hungary, where in the beginning of the 1990s Hungarian parliament proposed legislation under which several religious groups, including ISKCON, were refused financial support from the Government. Richardson²⁵ showed that active strategy of Hungarian Hare Krishnas, which involved also legal actions against individuals who produced anti-cult pamphlets, has contributed to unintended processes of changing attitudes of Hungarian media from the early 1990s negative to mid-1990s positive. The most visible case was when ISKCON sued a protestant pastor who used against them anti-cult themes (e.g. brainwashing) and eventually they won the case. Richardson considered this moment as a turning point in the process of changing the climate towards ISKCON in Hungary: “The Krishna case became a symbolic issue of some import and they garnered a number of unexpected supporters. Significant criticism developed also from outside the country, as well as a number of people interested in religious freedom from around the world made their opinions known about the proposed legislation by writing letters to leading politicians in Hungary. [...] The upshot of all the attention and pressure brought to bear on the Parliament was that the proposed law revising statutes concerning religious registration and support of approved religious groups was not passed. The Hare Krishna were apparently left on the list of approved religious groups and now continue to get some state support for their activities”²⁶.

Conclusion and further research

What we see in both Polish and Hungarian cases is a deliberative political strategy employed by minor religions in order to fight back stigmatization constraints; this strategy clearly confirms earlier mentioned post-foundational insight about the political nature of social. The antagonistic social relations can be translated into an agonistic dimension only through the employment of relevant power relations efforts, and legal battle in the contemporary societies represent one of the most effective political measures. Of course, legal battles do not exclude possible strategies, this field requires further explorations that would in more detail highlight the interplay between antagonism and agonism within the context of conflicts over NRMs in CEE. It is recommended to pursue a qualitative research that would look at the evolving dynamics of antagonistic/agonistic patterns as occurring during anti-NRMs moral panic in CEE. The data collected should cover a lengthy period of time and should be analyzed in order to decipher some

of the following problems: (i) delimiting the historical field of the emergence of cultural transformations influenced by both anti-cult and NRMs ideology that have changed or stabilized the way particular NRMs were perceived, (ii) establishing the particular themes which have been resonating with cognitive structures of actors (why particular themes have been successful in influencing a behaviour) and moral panic actors have been able to constitute distrust towards NRMs and, further, what themes and discursive frameworks have been established which helped to transform antagonism into agonism and develop sources of legitimacy for NRMs, (iii) interpreting how NRMs were able to solve the legitimating problems, reduce social uncertainty and align other cognitive structures with their agenda. Underlying these problems is an attempt to capture the justificatory ideological accounts of actors engaged in moral panic events. At the final stage a “manifest analysis” of the accounts is required, identifying the core discursive dynamics which have created surface of inscription for historically evolving social practices²⁷

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Kopsavilkums

Pētījumā analizētas konfliktuālās attiecības starp jaunajām reliģiskajām kustībām un tradicionālajām konfesijām atsevišķās postkomunistiskās Austrumeiropas un Centrāleiropas valstīs. Īpaša uzmanība šajā analizē veltīta agonistiskajai demokrātijai ar tai raksturīgo izteikto konfliktu, ko rada atšķirības tajā, ko mūsdienu plurālistiskajās sabiedrībās mēdz uzskatīt par normu. Darbā pētīts, kā reliģiskos fenomenu empīriskajos pētījumos Centrāleiropas un Austrumeiropas valstīs ir izmantojamas teorētiskās atziņas, ko raisījušas diskusijas par sabiedrības postfundamentālo raksturu (post-foundational debate). Šis raksts analizē sabiedrības agonistiskās dimensijas izmantošanu kvalitatīvajos pētījumos, kuros atklājas konfliktu mazināšanas iespējas jautājumā par reliģisko minoritāro grupu stāvokli postkomunistiskajā Eiropā.

Atslēgvārdi: jaunās reliģiskās kustības, demokrātija, plurālistiska sabiedrība, postkomunistiskā Eiropa.

An Introduction to the History of Religious Freedom in Bulgaria¹

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After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria redefined a new model of relations between Church and State, focused on a privileged status of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. This new model was completed after World War II, with the communist revolution that introduced a forced model of atheism, with the terrible collateral consequences of intolerance and religious persecutions.

Keywords: religious freedom, freedom of conscience, Bulgaria, history, Orthodox Church, religious minorities, communism, democracy.

Historical antecedents

Bulgaria experienced the strong influence of Byzantium, because it was always in a dangerous cross-roads location.² The origin of Bulgaria may be dated to 681, when the Byzantine Empire was forced to recognize its existence. Bulgarians were converted to Christianity, after the conversion of Boris I (852–889). In 865, this faith was officially imposed in the Bulgarian lands. On 4 March 870, at a Great Church Council in Constantinople, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was set up under the jurisdiction of the Constantinople Church. After a great victory over Byzantium, Tsar Simeon proclaimed the independence of the Bulgarian Church. In 927 the Orthodox Archbishopric of Bulgaria was officially proclaimed Patriarchate. During the reign of Simeon's son, Tsar Peter, Bulgaria was integrated in the Byzantine Empire between 1018 and 1185. The weakness of the Byzantine Empire was capitalized on by two boyars, brothers Peter and Ivan Asen, who liberated Bulgaria from the influence of the Byzantine Empire. They proclaimed the Second Bulgarian Empire (1185–1396). At the time of Ivan Asen II, (1218–1241), the Orthodox Patriarchate of Bulgaria was recovered in 1235. In 1396, the Ottoman Empire conquered Bulgaria, but a large part of the population preserved the Christian Orthodox faith. The main exception to this general rule was the south-western part of the country where there was a significant minority of people converted to Islam, the so-called *pomacs*. During the five centuries of Ottoman domination, the Orthodox Church was one of the key institutions for the preservation of national Bulgarian identity and culture.³

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire was an especially evident fact during the second half of the nineteenth century. The strengthening of Bulgarian nationalist feelings was promoted by the Orthodox Church. The Turkish pressure

became weaker, and Turkey lost the effective control of the country. In 1870, the new Bulgarian Orthodox Exarchate was created, headed by Antim I. This fact was rejected by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. His answer was a Decree of excommunication. The Treaty of Saint Stefan, of 3 March 1878, and the Treaty of Berlin of 13 July 1878, foresaw the constitution of a Bulgarian autonomous principality. A Constituent Assembly, which met in 1879 in Tarnovo, adopted a new democratic Constitution, and elected a new Prince, Alexander of Battenberg.⁴

During the monarchy, until the communist revolution at the end of World War II, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church enjoyed a legal privileged treatment. This privileged position was reflected in the Constitution of 1879:⁵

- 1) Its position of dominant religion was recognized.⁶
- 2) The King of Bulgaria and his family had to profess the Christian Orthodox faith.⁷
- 3) The freedom of faith for the non-Christian Orthodox believers was recognized, with the only limits established in the legislation in force.⁸
- 4) Religious beliefs could not justify failure to comply with the Law.⁹
- 5) Religious activities of other religious denominations were under the supervision of the appropriate ministry.¹⁰

With the *coup d'état* of 9 September 1944, the communists took power. Monarchy was abolished in a national referendum, and on 15 September 1946 the Popular Republic of Bulgaria was proclaimed. A new Law on religious denominations was passed by the Parliament on 24 February 1949, and it was published on 1 March 1949. This Law was *strongly limited and strictly jurisdictionalist*.¹¹ The new Law regulated the religious phenomenon in a very restrictive way:¹²

- 1) This Law formally recognized the right of freedom of conscience, and worship,¹³ and the separation between Church and State.¹⁴ Orthodox worship was granted the character of *traditional religion* of the Bulgarian people.¹⁵ But nevertheless, this Law established strict control of the internal statutes of religious denominations.¹⁶ On the other hand, the mere recognition of religious freedom in this communist Constitution did not have the same meaning as nowadays, in our legal terminology.¹⁷ From an *orthodox* Marxist perspective, it meant liberation from the oppression of religion, *the opium of the masses*, in accordance with Codevilla.¹⁸
- 2) The status of a minister of worship should be acquired only by Bulgarian citizens who were honest and loyal. The candidates should enjoy full recognition of their civil rights.¹⁹
- 3) Religious denominations had to subject their budgets to the supervision of the Bulgarian Foreign Office, for *its information*.²⁰

The statutes of the religious denominations (to be passed by the Bulgarian Foreign Office, within a period of 3 months after the Law has come into force) had to regulate in detail all aspects related to their material maintenance and internal administration.²¹ The Bulgarian Foreign Office should be informed by the central religious authorities of each religious group, of the list of ministers of worship, and representatives of each religious belief.²² This Ministry also had to approve the organization and programmes of activities of the religious seminaries.²³

- 4) The Bulgarian Foreign Office had to be informed of all religious documents, such as pastoral letters, circulars, and all other ecclesiastical documents, and it was authorized to suspend or interrupt their distribution, at any moment.²⁴ It also had to be *informed* about their denominations, symbols and official seals.²⁵
- 5) The central executive organs of religious denominations had to be registered in the Bulgarian Foreign Office, and their respective ramifications in the local Popular Councils.²⁶ This Ministry had the right to supervise the relations between the Bulgarian religious authorities and any other institution with a foreign residence.²⁷ Religious denominations settled in Bulgaria could not be financed from abroad, without previous permission of the Bulgarian Foreign Office.²⁸
- 6) Youth education was a state competence, specifically excluded from the competence of religious denominations.²⁹ Religious denominations could not open hospitals, orphanages, or other similar institutions. The already created institutions of this type had to be administrated by the Ministry of Health, and their properties were to be nationalized.³⁰
- 7) Religious denominations and their members were not allowed to spread propaganda against the existing power. In case of infraction, heavy penalties were imposed.³¹ Nevertheless, the freedom of atheist propaganda was protected.³²

The *official* Bulgarian Orthodox Church would be under the absolute control of public authorities, without any margin of opposition. Public authorities had to make known the public interventions of Patriarch Cyrill, the highest Orthodox authority, supporting, (... or at least not in contradiction with ...), the official thesis. The State did not allow any margin of dissidence.³³ On 11 November 1952, the Bishop of Nicopoli, Monsignor Eugene Bosilkov, was executed, along with other three ecclesiastics, after a summary process which condemned them on 3 October 1952. 34 ecclesiastics and laymen were condemned to severe custodial sentences. Bishop Romanov was sentenced to 20 years of hard labour. He died 3 months later. Monsignor Kurtev, Exarch of the Byzantine Rite was expelled from his episcopate, and subsequently arrested in 1952. Pope Pius XII condemned all these abuses in his Encyclical *Orientales Ecclesias*, of 15 December 1952.³⁴ 70,000 Bulgarian Catholics, who were organized in two Latin Dioceses and one Exarchate of the Oriental Rite, suffered terrible circumstances and isolation. The situation underwent a small advance after the diplomatic contacts of the Holy See in the middle of the sixties, the audience of Pope Paul VI with Todor Zivkov, Head of State, on 27 June 1975,³⁵ and the visit to Bulgaria by Monsignor Casaroli from 3 to 10 November 1976.³⁶

When Gorbachov took power in the Soviet Union, the communist regimes of the satellite countries of the USSR collapsed. The popular demonstrations reflected the social discontent.³⁷ On 10 November 1989, Todor Zivkov, who had been in charge as the First Secretary of the Communist Party from 1954, lost his absolute power. On July 1991, a new democratic Constitution was passed. Religious freedom was recognized. The Sentence of the Constitutional Court 5/1992, of 11 June, declared the unconstitutionality of the most restrictive articles of the

Law of Religious Freedom of 1949, which nevertheless remained partially in force (as an anachronism), until the new Religious Denominations Act³⁸, published on 29 December 2002,³⁹ came into force, which took the basic European standards and international legal tools in account.⁴⁰ It was modified on 21 April 2006,⁴¹ 20 July 2007,⁴² and 15 September 2009.⁴³

Social reality

According to the *International Religious Freedom Report* of 2011,⁴⁴ elaborated by the State Department of the USA, the country has an area of 42,855 square miles and a population of 7.6 million. Eighty-five percent of the population identify themselves as Orthodox Christian. Orthodox Christianity, Hanafi Sunni Islam, Judaism, and Roman Catholicism are generally understood as holding a historical place in the country's culture. Muslims comprise the largest minority, estimated at 13 percent. Groups that in total constitute less than 5 percent of the population include Catholics, Armenian Christians, Jews, evangelical Protestants, and others. There are 107 registered religious groups in addition to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (BOC).

Some religious minorities are geographically concentrated, for instance, in the Rodopi Mountains (southern most part of the country, bordering on Greece and Turkey), where we can find an important contingent of Muslims, including Turks, Gipsies and *Pomacs* (descendents of Bulgarian Slavs, converted to Islam during the Turkish Empire, especially on the western side of the mountains, while in the eastern part, Turks are predominant). Muslim Turks and Gipsies are strongly represented in the northeastern part of the country, in cities such as Shumen and Razgrad, and on the Black Sea coast. We cannot forget the important cultural difference between Muslims of Turkish origin and *Pomacs*, descendents of communities of Slav origin who were forced to convert during the period of Turkish domination.⁴⁵

The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences estimates that only 50% of the 6,000,000 Bulgarian Orthodox believers participate in regular religious services. This percentage is 90% among the 70,000 Catholics. 30% of Catholics belong to the Oriental Uniate Rite. The 750,000 Muslims are mostly Sunnies and 50,000 are Shi'a. Evangelicals are 50,000, and there are 3,500 Jews. Approximately 100,000 Bulgarians profess *non traditional* religions.⁴⁶

Constitutional principles

Principle of religious freedom. This principle is established by article 13.1 of the Bulgarian Constitution. It is complemented by article 37.1 of the same text, which recognizes the principle of tolerance and mutual respect between believers, and between believers and non-believers. Article 37.1 of the Bulgarian Constitution points out that *freedom of conscience, thought, choice of religion, and religious or atheistic beliefs, are inviolable. The State will collaborate in the maintenance of tolerance and mutual respect between the believers of the different religious denominations, and between believers and non-believers.*⁴⁷

The fundamental right of religious freedom is defined in article 2 of the Religious Denominations Act of 29 December 2002, as a *fundamental, absolute, subjective,*

personal and inviolable right.⁴⁸ Article 4.3 of the Religious Denominations Act establishes that the State has the duty to promote free exercise of the right of religious freedom, the maintenance of tolerance, and full respect between believers of different beliefs, and believers and non-believers.⁴⁹

Bulgarian society has developed a deep culture of religious tolerance. This is the reason why Bulgaria did not undergo the tragic experience of the countries which were members of the former Republic of Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, there was also a certain number of isolated episodes of intolerance, such as the violation of Turkish tombs in Haskovo in 2005, or the nationalist ideas of *Ataka*, an extreme right-wing party, during the electoral campaign of the same year.⁵⁰

Principle of equality and non discrimination. This principle is recognized in article 6 of the Bulgarian Constitution of 12 July 1991.⁵¹ This article prohibits the recognition of privileges and the restriction of rights because of religious beliefs. Nobody may be prosecuted because of their religious beliefs. It will not be possible to establish limits or privileges based on the grounds of religious affiliation.⁵²

The Law of Defense against Discrimination of 30 September 2003⁵³ insures every individual or legal entity the right to non-discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, ethnical belonging, citizenship, religion or belief, education, convictions, political affiliation, personal or social circumstances, incapacity, age, sexual orientation, marital status, personal wealth, or any other circumstance, determined by the Law, or an International Treaty signed by Bulgaria.⁵⁴ This Law also creates a Commission of Defense against Discrimination,⁵⁵ seated in Sofia, with a special function of control and monitoring of this Law and any other Law on equal treatment.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, in several cases all this legislation is not enough. The European Court of Human Rights, in the case *Ivanova v. Bulgaria*, of 12 April 2007, investigated a case of labour discrimination for religious reasons of a woman, follower of the new religious movement *World of Life*, losing her job.⁵⁷

Principle of separation between state and religious denominations. This principle is included in article 13, paragraphs 2⁵⁸ and 4⁵⁹ of the Bulgarian Constitution, and in article 4.1 and 2 of the Religious Denominations Act. This principle prohibits any state interference in the internal organization of religious denominations. Nevertheless, it is necessary to make a more strict scrutiny of the legal and sociological situation in Bulgaria, because we cannot forget the important role played by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in a country where 85% of the population professes this religion. Even from a legal point of view, it is convenient to be more cautious, because article 28 of the Religious Denominations Act, foresees public financial support for all *registered* religious denominations.⁶⁰ The constitutional idea of neutrality is developed in several legal provisions:

- 1) Article 11.4 of the Bulgarian Constitution prohibits political parties with an ethnical, racial or religious orientation, or with a violent ideology. The Sentence of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court 4/1992, of 21 April, declared that the *Movement for the Rights and Liberties*, especially supported by the Bulgarian Turkish minority, was constitutional.⁶¹
- 2) Article 13.4 of the Bulgarian Constitution prohibits the use with political aims, of religious denominations, religious institutions and religious beliefs. This provision is based on a vague fear of the possible creation of

an Islamic fundamentalist party, in a country with an important Muslim minority.

But the idea of separation between Church and State is diffused by two important aspects:

- 1) Article 13.3 of the Bulgarian Constitution says that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is the *traditional religion of the Bulgarian Republic*. This provision does not give any legal preference for the Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, when we read that, we think automatically of a certain sensation of sociological denominationalism.⁶²

Krussteff⁶³ thinks that this is a possible trace of the old legal tradition of the Tarnovo's Constitution of 1879, in force until the end of World War II. Santos Diéz thinks that this is not a declaration of *denominationalism*, it is only a *social consideration in the historical life of the country*.⁶⁴ But if we read the literal text of the Religious Denominations Act of 29 December 2002, there is a diffuse gradation in the legal treatment. This fact may put at risk a rigorous configuration of the idea of neutrality. In our opinion, these sociological considerations should be omitted, for a better definition of the idea of neutrality. There are several differences in the Law, between:

- a) The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, cited in the Preamble, where its *special and traditional role in Bulgaria's history, and in the formation and development of its spirituality and culture* is underlined. There is also a special mention in article 10, where it is defined as the *traditional religion of the country, obtaining an ex lege recognition of legal status*.⁶⁵
 - b) Christianity, Islam and Judaism, merely cited in the Preamble, without any additional reference.⁶⁶
 - c) The other religious denominations, where it is possible to establish a difference between *registered* and *not registered*.
- 2) On the other hand, the possibility of public financial support for all *registered* religious denominations is not compatible with the very idea of separation between Church and State.⁶⁷

The Religious Denominations Act is an important step in the framework of the full recognition of the right of religious freedom in Bulgaria, especially if we establish a comparison with the restrictive communist period. But, according to Panov, there are already many pending questions, such as the role of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as the *traditional country's religion*,⁶⁸ and the role of the limits foreseen in article 7 of the Law.⁶⁹

We find a certain contradiction between the *radical* declaration of *separation* included in article 13.2 of the Bulgarian Constitution, and other provisions:

- 1) The consideration of the Orthodox faith as the *traditional religion of Bulgaria*, established in article 13.3 of the Bulgarian Constitution itself.⁷⁰
- 2) The extraordinary competences of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in order to certificate the Bulgarian citizenship of the Bulgarian citizens that reside in a foreign country, regulated in article 3.1.3 of the Law of Bulgarians resident outside the Republic of Bulgaria, of 11 April 2000. This prerogative is not recognized for any other religious group.⁷¹

- 3) According to article 87.1 of the Rules for the implementation of the Law of state Protocol of 2 February 2011, the Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, has the 5th rank in the public protocol, in official ceremonies. He will be placed only after the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister and the Vice-president of the Republic.⁷²
- 4) Article 36.2.3 of the Decree of the internal organization chart of the Bulgarian Foreign Office, stipulates that the General Direction of Consular Affairs will *preserve and develop ... the cultural and religious traditions, and will assist the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in its foreign activities*.⁷³
- 5) The Order of 1 July 2005, about reciprocal medical assistance in foreign countries, foresees the reciprocal full medical assistance, of the religious ministers of the Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox Church, in Bulgaria and Romania. There is no reference to the religious ministers of other religious denominations.⁷⁴

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- ² Bogomilova, Nonka. *Religion, Law and Politics in the Balkans at the End of the 20 th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Sofia. 2005. Page 162.
- ³ Peteva, Jenia. *The Legal Status of Church and Religion in the Republic of Bulgaria*. In: *The Status of Religion Confessions of the States Applying for Membership to the European Union*. Ed. F.Messner. Milano. 2002. Pages 223-250. Peteva, Jenia. *Church and State in Bulgaria*. In: *Law and Religion in Post-Communist Europe*. Peeters. Leuven. 2003. Pages 37-39.
- ⁴ He was nephew of the Russian czarina. He was forced to resign when he tried to reject Russian tutelage. In 1887, the Assembly elected a new Prince, Ferdinand of Saxony-Coburg, who was proclaimed King of Bulgaria on 22 November 1908. He abdicated in 1918 in favour of his son Boris III, who died in 1943, in strange circumstances. He was succeeded by his son Simeon II, who at that time was only 6 years old.
- ⁵ Licodu. <http://licodu.cois.it/> In: Bulgaria/Costituzione/Generale.
- ⁶ Article 37.
- ⁷ Article 38. This article foresees that if the King belongs to another religion, before his coronation, he might preserve his religion.
- ⁸ Article 40.
- ⁹ Article 41.
- ¹⁰ Article 42.
- ¹¹ Barberini, Giovanni. *L’ostpolitik della Santa Sede. Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*. II Mulino. Urbino. 2007. Page 119.
- ¹² With the same orientation as the Constitutions of 6 December 1947 and 18 May 1971. Barberini, Giovanni. *Stato socialista e Confessioni Religiose*. Giuffrè Editore. Milán. 1973. Pages 337 to 342.
Licodu. <http://licodu.cois.it/> In: Bulgaria/Confessioni e libertà religiose/Leggi.
- ¹³ Article 1, of the Religious Denominations Act of 1949.
- ¹⁴ Article 2, of *idem*.

¹⁵ Article 3, of *idem*.

¹⁶ These statutes had to be ratified by the Bulgarian Foreign Office. This administrative office enjoyed the widest discretionary powers. Article 6, of *idem*.

¹⁷ Barberini, stated: *ovviamente nell'interpretazione marxista-leninista*. Barberini, Giovanni. *L'ostpolitik della Santa Sede. Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*. Il Mulino. Urbino. 2007. Page 119.

¹⁸ Codevilla, Giovanni. *Dalla rivoluzione bolscevica alla Federazione Russa*. Franco Angeli. Milán. 1996. Page 268. Another interesting works are: Codevilla, Giovanni. *Stato e Chiesa nell'Unione sovietica*. Edizioni Jaca Nook. Milano. 1972. Codevilla, Giovanni. *Le comunità religiose nell'URSS. La nuova legislazione sovietica*. La Casa di Matriona. Coop. Ed. Milano 1978. Codevilla, Giovanni. *La libertà religiosa nell'Unione Sovietica*. La Casa di Matriona. Milano. 1985. Codevilla, Giovanni. *Stato e Chiesa nella Federazione Russa. La nuova normativa nella Russia postcomunista*. La Casa di Matriona. Bérghamo. 1998. Codevilla, Giovanni. *Laicità dello Statu e separatismo nella Russia di Putin*. In: Chizzoniti, Antonio G. *Chiesa católica ed Europa centro-orientale. Libertà religiosa e proceso di democratizzazione*. Vita e Pensiero. Milano. 2004. Pages 137 to 454.

¹⁹ Article 10, of the Religious Denominations Act of 1949.

The condition of religious minister could be revoked by the mere *violation of the Law, public order and good customs, or in the case of behavior against the democratic regime of the State*. Article 12, of *idem*.

²⁰ Article 13, of *idem*.

²¹ Article 30, of *idem*.

²² Article 31, of *idem*.

²³ Article 14, of *idem*.

²⁴ Article 15, of *idem*.

²⁵ Article 19, of *idem*.

²⁶ Article 16, of *idem*.

²⁷ Article 22, of *idem*.

The religious denominations and their institutions, (religious orders, religious congregations, etc.), with their headquarters in a foreign country, would not be allowed to open new affiliate institutions in Bulgaria, (missions, religious orders, charitable institutions), and those already opened had to be closed in the period of one month, after the entry in force of the Law. Article 23, of *idem*.

²⁸ Article 24, of *idem*.

²⁹ Article 20, of *idem*.

³⁰ It was foresees an *equitable compensation*, fixed by a Commission integrated by a representative of the Foreign Office, the Treasury, and the Local Popular Council. Article 21, of the Religious Denominations Act of 1949.

³¹ Article 28, of the Religious Denominations Act of 1949.

³² Article 53.1 of the Constitution of 1971.

Barberini says:

a) These provisions gave a bigger protection for atheism than for religious beliefs.

b) The legitimacy of religious propaganda was not foreseen.

c) Religious education was strongly restricted. Religious education was only allowed in a *private* context, only by families, and in relation to their own sons and daughters.

d) Public authorities would have a wide margin of discretion in order to define the idea of *not permitted religious propaganda*.

Barberini, Giovanni. *La libertà del pensiero religioso negli Stati socialisti europei*. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane. Naples. 1985. Pages 22 and 60.

³³ Barberini, Giovanni. *Al di là della cortina di ferro. Ricordi di un viaggiatore solitario*. Volumnia. Perugia. 2005. Page 73.

- ³⁴ Barberini, Giovanni. *L'ostpolitik della Santa Sede. Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*. Il Mulino. Urbino. 2007. Page 121.
- ³⁵ This event makes possible the appointment of 2 new Bishops, and permits to cover the 3 Bulgarian Dioceses.
- ³⁶ Silvestrini, A. *La Santa Sede nella Ost-Politik e nella C.S.C.E*. In: Barberini, Giovanni. *La politica internazionale della Santa Sede. 1965-1990*. Atti del Seminario di Studio. Perugia. 8-10 novembre 1990. Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane. Page 50. Barberini, Giovanni. *L'ostpolitik della Santa Sede. Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*. Il Mulino. Urbino. 2007. Page 122.
- ³⁷ Barberini vibrantly relates the regime's end, in first person, during the popular demonstrations in Sofia at the end of October 1989. Barberini, Giovanni. *Al di là della cortina di ferro. Ricordi di un viaggiatore solitario*. Volumnia. Perugia. 2005. Pages 74 and 75.
- ³⁸ Krussteff, Atanas. *La Ley búlgara sobre religiones de 2002 – Primeras impresiones*. Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Eclesiástico. Iustel. Number 1. January 2003. Pages 1 and 2. In: www.iustel.com
- ³⁹ Official Journal number 120 of 2002.
- ⁴⁰ Bogomilova, Nonka. *Religion, Law and Politics in the Balkans at the End of the 20 th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Sofia. 2005. Page 138.
- ⁴¹ Official Journal number 33 of 2006.
- ⁴² Official Journal number 59 of 2007.
- ⁴³ Official Journal number 74 of 2009.
See at: <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135462355>
- ⁴⁴ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/171687.pdf>
- ⁴⁵ Only 2% of these Bulgarian Muslims are ethnic Bulgarians. Most of the Muslims in Bulgaria are *Sunni*, but there are some *Shia* and some *Alevi (cazalbashi)* Muslims too. Catholics are a relevant group in Plovdiv, Assenovgrad, and alongside the Danube. There are Catholics of oriental rite in Sofia and Smolyan, and small Jewish communities in Sofia, Ruse and alongside the Black Sea coast. A Protestant minority is dispersed throughout the country, and they have developed a special work of evangelization among the Gipsy minority. 2,600 Bulgarians belong to the Jewish community, and there is also a group of Bulgarian Uniates. The Armeno-Gregorians are 20,000 in number. There is also a specific religious movement founded in 1920s named "White Brotherhood" or "Dunovists". Only 1% of citizens have converted to new religious movements.
Fantelli, Paola. *Le minoranze islamiche nella Bulgaria post-comunista: ingerenze statali e libertà confessionale*. In: *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*. Luglio 2007. Page 6. In: www.statochiese.it Peteva, Jenia. *The Legal Status of Church and Religion in the Republic of Bulgaria*. In: *The Status of Religion Confessions of the States Applying for Membership to the European Union*. Ed. F.Messner. Milano. 2002. Page 227. Peteva, Jenia. *Church and State in Bulgaria*. In: *Law and Religion in Post-Communist Europe*. Peeters. Leuven. 2003. Pages 39.
- ⁴⁶ Barberini estimates: 7,000,000 Orthodox, 1,000,000 Muslims, 70,000 Catholics, (55,000 of Latin rite and 15,000 of Byzantine rite), and 50,000 Protestants, (Pentecostals, Adventists, Methodists and Baptists). Barberini, Giovanni. *Il fenomeno religioso confessionale nel processo di democratizzazione negli Stati dell'Europa centro-orientale*. In: Tedeschi, Mario. (A cura di). *La Libertà Religiosa*. Tomo III. Rubbettino. Catanzaro. 2002. Page 909.
Another calculations are: 1,000,000 Muslims, 150,000 Evangelicals and between 20,000 and 30,000 Armenians. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71373.htm>
- ⁴⁷ This approach is very similar to the most developed international texts and declarations on religious freedom and freedom of conscience, but a stricter scrutiny of lower level legal norms, and the sociological reality of the country is necessary.

The constitutional text offers compatibility between the protection of religious freedom and freedom of worship, and the idea of state neutrality, with respect to all the ideological positions, including atheism and agnosticism, a very important sociological point in a country that was under communist rule for almost all the second half of the nineteenth century. This is a very important step, in order to obtain full recognition of freedom of conscience. Nevertheless, this enthusiasm for the idea of neutrality is diluted by the specific mention of the Orthodox Church, in the constitutional text.

Santos Diez, José Luis. *El factor religioso en Bulgaria y Rumanía, nuevos miembros de la Unión Europea*. In: *UNISCI Discussion Papers, N° 14, (Mayo 2007)*. Page 133.

In: <http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI-Revista14.htm>

⁴⁸ That includes the right of every person to the free formation of their own religious convictions, and to choose, change and practice their own religion, individually or collectively, in public or in private, through worship, rites and rituals. Article 2 of the Religious Denominations Act.

⁴⁹ The practice of the right of religious freedom and the freedom of conscience, according to article 37.2 of the Bulgarian Constitution, must be compatible with ideas of national security, public order, public health and public morals, and the freedoms and rights of other citizens. It is a very wide drafting, and a little bit risky. The exercise of this right, does not justify a violation of the Law, according to article 58.2 of the Bulgarian Constitution. This idea is repeated in article 3.2. Barberini, Giovanni. *Il fenomeno religioso confessionale nel processo di democratizzazione negli Stati dell'Europa centro-orientale*. In: TEDESCHI, MARIO (A cura di). *La Libertà Religiosa*. Tomo III. Rubbettino. Catanzaro. 2002. Page 914.

⁵⁰ *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*.

In: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71373.htm>

⁵¹ <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc.php?IDNA=521957377>

⁵² Article 3.1 of the Religious Denominations Act of 20 December 2002. Its article 4.1 says: *Religious denominations are free and equal in rights. Religious denominations will be separated from the State*. <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc.php?IDNA=2135462355>

Published at the Official Gazette 120/2002, Of December 29, 2002. Alterations were published at the Official Gazette 33/2006, of April 21.

⁵³ <http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc.php?IDNA=2135472223>

Published at the Official Gazette 86/2003, of September 30. In force from January 1, 2004.

Alterations were published at the Official Gazette 30/2006, of April 11, 2006.

⁵⁴ Article 4.1 of the Law against discrimination.

This Law includes specific provisions in order to fight against any eventual educational discrimination, in articles 29 and the following. In this sense, any segregation because of race is forbidden, in educational institutions. Article 29 of the Law against discrimination.

The educational authorities must supervise any possible discriminatory act. Article 31 of the Law against discrimination.

It is forbidden to make any arbitrary discrimination in order to become a member of any trade union, or professional organization, and any discriminatory refusal of goods and services, or their provision at a lower quality, or under more onerous conditions. Articles 36 and 37 of the Law against discrimination.

⁵⁵ Article 40 and concordant of the Law against discrimination.

⁵⁶ This Commission will present in the National Assembly, every year, before the end of March, a report of activities, including information about the activity of its specialized and permanent organs. Article 40 of the Law against discrimination.

The principal competences of this Commission are:

1) The determination of an eventual violation of this Law or any other similar legislation.

- 2) The prevention and interruption of any illicit action, and the restoration of the previous situation.
- 3) The imposition of legal sanctions and administrative measures.
- 4) The instruction of compulsory prescriptions for the right performance of the legal order on equal treatment.
- 5) The appeal of any administrative act that violates this Law or any other similar legislation on equal treatment, the interposition of appeals in the competent courts and tribunals.
- 6) To make proposals and recommendations before public institutions in order to abolish any kind of discrimination, and the replacement of any discriminatory act.
- 7) The maintenance of a public register, with all its resolutions in force, and compulsory prescriptions.
- 8) The emission of reports about normative projects on equality and non discrimination. The preparation of recommendations about the abolition, amendment, and addition of legal norms.
- 9) To supply help for the victims of discrimination.
- 10) To do independent research about discrimination.
- 11) To publish independent reports and recommendations about discrimination.
- 12) Other legal competences.

Article 47 of the Law against discrimination.

⁵⁷ The discrimination was dressed as a modification in the requirements for this employment. Bulgaria was condemned for violation of articles 9 and 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights. The arguments of the Bulgarian government were very ambiguous, because the Bulgarian authorities argued the implication of Mrs. Ivanova in activities of proselytism, and at the same time they denied dismissal for religious reasons. *Ivanova v. Bulgaria*, § 82. On the other hand, there was a *temporal* coincidence between the dismissal, a press campaign against this religious minority, and a previous interview with two public employees who tried to coerce her to change her beliefs. Another fundamental point was that for 2 decades, this job was covered without the *new* strict requirements. *Ivanova v. Bulgaria*, § 83. <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>

Celador Angón, Óscar. *Libertad de conciencia y Europa. Un estudio sobre las tradiciones constitucionales comunes y el Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos*. Dykinson. Madrid. 2011. Pages 105 and 106.

⁵⁸ Religious institutions must be separated from the State.

⁵⁹ Religious denominations, religious institutions, and religious beliefs, may not be used with political aims.

⁶⁰ This situation is not compatible with a full system of separation, and it is a clear symptom of denominationalism. On the other hand, the constitutional recognition of these principles of separation and neutrality is a very positive step, if we compare with the previous experiences of hostile separation during communism, and intense denominationalism and cooperation between Church and State during the Monarchy, from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War II. Santos Diez, José Luis. *El factor religioso en Bulgaria y Rumanía, nuevos miembros de la Unión Europea*. In: *UNISCI Discussion Papers, N° 14, (Mayo 2007)*. Page 134. In: <http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI-Revista14.htm>

⁶¹ The Bulgarian Constitutional Court analyzed the prohibition of article 11.4 of the Bulgarian Constitution, and understood that this political party has not been created and was not working under a limited ethnic or religious inspiration. The Bulgarian Constitutional Court argued that this political party was not focused on the values or ideas of a limited social community because its internal statute foresees the freedom of affiliation, without a previous commitment to ethnical membership.

The Bulgarian Constitutional Court considered that the Movement for Rights and Liberties was not focused on a limited ethnical minority. Its program had a wider

perspective, similar to other political parties. This program would include the country's democratization in the framework of a market economy, and would not be focused only on an ethnic or religious community. For all these reasons, the Constitutional Court rejected the appeal, and did not declare the unconstitutionality of the Movement for Rights and Liberties, under article 11.4 of the Bulgarian Constitution, and declared the legitimacy of the election of deputies in the elections of October 13, 1991. The Bulgarian Constitutional Court pointed out that this party had a liberal inspiration, far away from a possible violent Islamic ideology, and was available in order to make the State's Government possible.

Torres Gutiérrez, Alejandro, Hristov Kolev, Angel, Nikolov Dobrev, Emil, Petrova Angelova, Iliana. *El derecho a la libertad religiosa y de conciencia en la legislación búlgara postcomunista*. In: *Laicidad y Libertades*, n 6, 2006. Pages 555 to 558. Roger, Antoine. *Economic Development and Positioning of Ethnic Political Parties: Comparing Post-Communist Bulgaria and Romania*. En: *Southeast European Politics*. June 2002. Vol. III, Number 1. Pages 20 to 42.

⁶² This (politically incorrect) *suspicion*, appears to be formally corrected in article 10.3 of the Religious Denominations Act of 29 December 2002. This article establishes that this specific mention (of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church) does not guarantee a privileged position. But for a final conclusion we must wait for a more detailed analysis of the legal and administrative praxis. The Constitution does not specifically state that it is an established church, a majority church or any other such term, which would give it a privileged legal status. Petkov thinks that this was a recipe for disaster, because it gave the opportunity to various parties from the rather wide Bulgarian political spectrum to treat the Orthodox Church as established or not-established, according to circumstances. The Orthodox Church considers itself as an established church with the argument of protecting traditional Christian values. Petkov, Peter. *The Law on Religion in Bulgaria in the Light of European Integration*. In: *Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Europe*. Eds. J.Sutton, Wil van den Bercken, Peeters. Leuven, Paris, Dudley. 2003. Pages 487-488. See also: Ferrari, Silvio. *Church and State in Post-Communist Europe*. In: *Law and Religion in Post-Communist Europe*. Peeters. Leuven. 2003. Pages 418 and 420.

Our premonition has been reiterated by many authors. Torres Gutiérrez, Alejandro, Hristov Kolev, Angel, Nikolov Dobrev, Emil, Petrova Angelova, Iliana. *El derecho a la libertad religiosa y de conciencia en la legislación búlgara postcomunista*. En: *Laicidad y Libertades*, n 6, 2006. Page 541. Santos Diéz, José Luis. *El factor religioso en Bulgaria y Rumanía, nuevos miembros de la Unión Europea*. In: *UNISCI Discussion Papers, N° 14, (Mayo 2007)*. Page 135. In: <http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI-Revista14.htm>

⁶³ Krussteff, Atanas. *An Attempt at Modernization: The New Bulgarian Legislation in the Field of Religious Freedom*. In: Brigham Young University Law Review. 2001. Number 2. Page 586. In: <http://lawreview.byu.edu/archives/2001/2/kru7.pdf>

⁶⁴ Santos Diéz, José Luis. *El factor religioso en Bulgaria y Rumanía, nuevos miembros de la Unión Europea*. In: *UNISCI Discussion Papers, N° 14, (Mayo 2007)*. Page 135. In: <http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI-Revista14.htm>

⁶⁵ Something similar happens in Russia, where the Preamble of the Law of freedom of conscience and religious denominations, passed by the Parliament or *Duma* on 19 September 1997, recognized the *particular role* played by *orthodoxy* in *Russia's history*. Confirmed by the Council of the Federation in September 24, and signed by the President Boris Yelsin, on 26 September 1997. Codevilla, Giovanni. *Stato e Chiesa nella Federazione Russa. La nuova normativa nella Russia postcomunista*. La Casa di Matriona. Bérgamo. 1998. Page 60.

⁶⁶ The Preamble of the Russian Law of freedom of conscience and religious denominations of 1997, included Christianity, Judaism, Islam and also Buddhism, and added a generic reference to *other religions*, that *constitute an integral part of the historical inheritance*

of the Russian peoples. Codevilla, Giovanni. *Stato e Chiesa nella Federazione Russa. La nuova normativa nella Russia postcomunista*. La Casa di Matriona. Bérghamo. 1998. Pages 60 and 61.

⁶⁷ Article 28 of the Religious Denominations Act.

⁶⁸ Panov, Luben. *The New Law on Religious Denominations in Bulgaria*. In: <http://www.efc.be/cgi-bin/articlepublisher.pl?filename=LP-SE-06-03-1.html>

⁶⁹ Such as national security, public order, public health, public morals, and the rights and freedoms of other persons, or the prohibition of the use of religious convictions for political aims. These questions are already opened, and the answer is not easy from the perspective of the ideas of religious freedom, neutrality and separation. Critics of the Law pointed out that the notion of “national security”, “public order”, “morals”, are too vague and imply subjective construing. Bogomilova, Nonka. *Religion, Law and Politics in the Balkans at the End of the 20 th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Sofia. 2005. Page 223. Llamazares Fernández, Dionisio. *Derecho de la Libertad de Conciencia. I. Libertad de Conciencia y Laicidad*. Editorial Civitas. Madrid. 2002. Pages 314 and next.

⁷⁰ Fantelli, Paola. *Le minoranze islamiche nella Bulgaria post-comunista: ingerenze statali e libertà confessionale*. In: *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*. July 2007. Page 3. In: www.statochiese.it

⁷¹ Cimbalo, Giovanni. *Laicità come strumento di educazione alla convivenza*. In: Canestrari, Stefano. (A cura di). *Laicità e Diritto*. Bononia University Press. 2007. Page 302.

⁷² Licodu. In: <http://licodu.cois.it/> In: Bulgaria/Confessioni e libertà religiosa/Leggi/ Presenza chiesa ortodossa cerimonie pubbliche. Official Gazette of April 18, 2000.

⁷³ Licodu. In: <http://licodu.cois.it/> In: Bulgaria/Confessioni e libertà religiosa/Decreti/ La religione ortodossa bulgara elemento identità nazionale. Decree published in the Official Gazette of August 29, 2003, alterations published in the Official Gazette of July 15, 2005.

⁷⁴ Licodu. In: <http://licodu.cois.it/> In: Bulgaria/Confessioni e libertà religiosa/Leggi/ Emigrazione e lavoro/Regolamenti/Assicurazione sanitaria ministri culto stranieri. Published in the Official Gazette of July 12, 2005.

Kopsavilkums

Pēc Osmaņu impērijas sabrukuma Bulgārija izveidoja jaunu Baznīcas un valsts attiecību modeli, kurā tīpaša loma bija Bulgārijas pareizticīgās Baznīcas privileģētajam stāvoklim. Pēc Otrā pasaules kara komunistu režīms šo modeli aizstāja ar uzspiestu ateisma modeli, kas veicināja reliģiskās neiecietības izplatīšanos un reliģiskās vajāšanas.

Atslēgvārdi: *reliģijas brīvība, sirdsapziņas brīvība, Bulgārija, vēsture, pareizticīgā Baznīca, reliģiskās minoritātes, komunisms, demokrātija.*

The New Legislation on Religious Freedom in Bulgaria¹

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The end of the communist age brought a new wave of legal changes, and currently the model of religious freedom in Bulgaria is a paradigm of tolerance. This conclusion is clearer if we compare with the situation in other Balkan countries, devastated by bloody wars that had opened terrible social wounds. In this paper we will try to learn more from the Bulgarian model.

Keywords: Religious freedom, religious denominations, Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Alternative Synod, religious minorities, Bulgaria, communism, democracy, process of restitution.

1. The content of the right of religious freedom

Article 5 of the Religious Denominations Act of 29 December 2002² establishes that the right of religious freedom will be exercised through the free formation and expression of religious convictions, the establishment and participation in a religious community, the free organization of religious institutions, education and religious teaching, orally or in writing, or by electronic media, with lectures, seminars, courses and programs, etc.

The freedom of public and private worship was recognized.³ The religious freedom includes also all these rights:⁴

- 1) The establishment and maintenance of:
 - a) Religious communities and organizations, with an accurate structure and representatives.⁵
 - b) Places of worship and religious meeting.
 - c) Charitable and humanitarian institutions.
- 2) The production, acquisition and use, of goods and objects for the religious rite.
- 3) To write, publish and disseminate religious publications⁶.
- 4) To give and receive religious education in the freely chosen language.
- 5) To preach and indoctrinate, in appropriate places, according to their own religious tradition and the legal provisions.
- 6) To collect voluntary financial help, and private or public donations.
- 7) To respect the days of religious rest, and religious festivities.⁷
- 8) To establish and maintain relationships with other people and communities⁸, about religious aspects and beliefs, in Bulgaria and other foreign countries.

Arbitrary interferences in religious freedom by public authorities were recently condemned in the case *Boychev et autres c. Bulgarie*, of 27 January 2011.

Parents and legal representatives may define the religious instruction of their children, according to their own convictions.⁹ Religious communities and institutions may not indoctrinate minors under the age of 18, against the wishes of their parents or legal representatives. Minors may participate in religious activities, the only exception being the opposition of their parents or legal representatives.¹⁰

The Family Law legislation defines a model of compulsory civil marriage. The former religious rites would not produce legal effects.

A wide internal autonomy for all religious denomination is also recognized;¹¹ the secret of the confessional,¹² the objection of conscience to the military service, and a substitute social service was foreseen.¹³

Religious denominations are not allowed to attack national security, public order, public health, public moral and the rights and freedoms of others.¹⁴ Religious communities and institutions, and religious ideas, may not be used with political aims.¹⁵

The rights and freedoms of all members of a religious group may not be limited by internal bylaws, rituals and ceremonies, of this religious group or religious institution.¹⁶

The right to religious freedom is not defined as an absolute or unlimited right, by article 8.1 of the Religious Denominations Act. This right may be limited in case of legal violation through:¹⁷

- 1) The seizure of written publications.
- 2) The full prohibition of any publishing activity.
- 3) The restriction of public activities.
- 4) The closure of educative, health and social centres.
- 5) The paralysation of activity for a period of 6 months.
- 6) The cancellation of registration as a religious group.

Article 8.1 of the Religious Denominations Act of 2002 is somewhat *laconic*, and does not give much information about the limits and conditions for that cancellation. The wording is too open, especially for this *sensitive* matter.

The mention of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church as the *traditional* religion of Bulgaria, in article 13.3 of the Bulgarian Constitution and article 10.1 of the Religious Denominations Act of 2002 is also problematic. This is not compatible with a full recognition of the idea of separation between Church and State.¹⁸ Nevertheless, article 10.3 of the Religious Denominations Act of 2002 adds that it does not mean a privileged position for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

2. Registration and internal organizational autonomy of religious denominations

2.1. Registration of religious denominations

Religious denominations may acquire legal status according to the conditions and legal procedure established by the Religious Denominations Act.¹⁹

Nevertheless the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is exempt from this requirement,²⁰ because, according to article 10.2 of the Religious Denominations Act, this religious

group will enjoy legal status *ex lege*. This registration is not *compulsory* in any case, because the right of religious freedom may be exercised also through private legally non-registered entities.

The registration of religious denominations will be done in the Tribunal of the City of Sofia. The legal existence of more than one religious group with the same name and the same headquarters is not allowed.²¹

Paragraph 3 of the Transitory Dispositions of the Religious Denominations Act of 2002, established that the individuals separated from a religious institution that has been registered with a violation of its internal bylaws, may not use the same name, and may not use or enjoy its property. This was appealed before the Constitutional Court in February 2003, by 50 deputies.²² The division of the members of the Constitutional Court in two equal parts blocked the appeal. The magistrates that supported the constitutionality of this provision argued a motivation based on the principle of legal security. The other magistrates argued that this legal solution was favourable for one of the sectors of a divided religious group, and harmful for the other.²³

These clauses, and the special mention of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in article 10 of the Religious Denominations Act, have these consequences:

- 1) It is not possible to recognize a legal status for the *Alternative Synod*, a *dissident* group, in conflict with the Bulgarian Patriarch.
- 2) It is not possible for the members of the *Alternative Synod* to make a possible claim for properties and assets.

Since 1992, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church has been in a state of painful schism. The origin of the problem is very well described by Bogomilova,²⁴ and it is directly connected with the democratic changes experienced in the early 1990s, when the party Union of Democratic Forces proclaimed the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church had been a collaborator with the communist authorities. Three of the bishops belonging to the circle of associates of the Patriarch Maxim founded a new *authentic* synod, which received legal status under the administration of the UDF. This was a clear example of state intervention in the religious affairs of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. None of the canonical Orthodox Churches in the world recognized the new synod. The communists came back to power in 1993, but they lost it in 1997, and then the UDF took power again, and recognized it. In 1996 a schismatic ecclesiastical council elected Pimen patriarch.

Bogomilova thinks that there are religious, political and economic factors which must be considered in order to understand this situation. The political causes are connected with the political interest of the parties coming to power to exercise control over the Church. The economic interests involve ownership of the property of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In 2004, the police cleared religious ministers and lay people from 250 churches and ecclesiastical properties under the control of the *Alternative Synod*.²⁵

The *Alternative Synod* appealed before the European Court of Human Rights. The Court accepted the claim on 22 May 2007.²⁶ On 16 September 2010, the European Court of Human Rights adopted a judgment that is a continuation of the decision in the same case on 22 January 2009,²⁷ in which the Court held *...that there had been a violation of all the applicants' rights under Article 9 in*

that the pertinent provisions of the 2002 Religious Denominations Act, which did not meet the Convention standard of quality of the law, and their implementation through sweeping measures forcing the community to unite under the leadership favoured by the Government went beyond any legitimate aim and interfered with the organisational autonomy of the Church and the applicants' rights under Article 9 of the Convention in a manner which cannot be accepted as lawful and necessary in a democratic society, despite the wide margin of appreciation left to the national authorities²⁸... After the first decision, the Court gave notice to the parties to reach an agreement on damages, but this was not achieved. Therefore the European Court of Human Rights finally decided that the respondent State was to pay the applicant organization, within three months from the date on which the judgment becomes final in accordance with Article 44 § 2 of the Convention, EUR 50,000) in respect of non-pecuniary damage, plus any tax that may be chargeable, to be converted into Bulgarian leva at the rate applicable at the date of settlement.²⁹

According to the standard set by the Court, the Orthodox believers who do not want to be part of the Synod of Patriarch Maxim, should be able to register separately. It is also necessary to change the Religious Denominations Act, which requires uniform guidelines for all religions and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in particular.

There are several signs of a possible successful solution of the claim:

- 1) A church or religious group may exercise the rights of religious freedom, meeting and association recognized by articles 9 and 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights without a previous legal requirement of their inscription in a register, or the previous recognition of their legal status by an administrative authority.³⁰
- 2) There is no reason for the refusal of the employment of a denomination such as: "Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church", if: "represented by Metropolitan Inokentiy", is added, for instance.³¹

The Tribunal of the city of Sofia, may require the legal advice of the General Direction of Religious Affairs, for the registration³² of a religious group.³³ The Law does not give much information about the reasons for a possible refusal or concession.

The Tribunal of the city of Sofia must carry a public register of religious denominations with legal status.³⁴ The local institutions of the religious denominations must be registered in the respective municipal register,³⁵ under requirement of the local leader or legal representative.³⁶

2.2. The internal organizational autonomy of religious denominations

The internal problems of organization in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church because of the *Alternative Synod* are reproduced among Muslims. The European Court of Human Rights studied those problems of the Muslim community in the cases *Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria*, of 26 October 2000, and *Supreme Holy Council of the Muslim Community v. Bulgaria*, of 16 December 2004.³⁷

Fantelly³⁸ pointed out the problems caused by the heterogeneous composition of Islam. The European governments need a valid interlocutor, and it is not always easy to find one. The Spanish case is particularly interesting, because in 1992 the

social democratic government, during the negotiations of the Agreements with minority religious denominations, (Evangelicals, Muslims and Jews), *forced* them to create three *federations*. This is the origin of the Spanish *Comisión Islámica*, the valid Islamic interlocutor with the Spanish Government in order to subscribe the Agreement of Cooperation with the Spanish State, incorporated in the Law 26/1992, of 10 November 1992.³⁹ The cleverness during the process of negotiation of the Spanish General Director of Religious Affairs, Dionisio Llamazares, played an important role. Fantelli says that in the Balkans region the old Islamic presence has a very complex history. There is an *old* Islamic movement, *tolerant, without political implications, and heterodox*, in opposition to the *new* Islamic one, associated with the ideas of *jihād* and *wahabism*.

The European Court of Human Rights, in the cases *Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria*, and *Supreme Holy Council of the Muslim Community v. Bulgaria*, analysed the interferences of the Bulgarian authorities in the appointment of the leaders of the Bulgarian Islamic community.

The European Court of Human Rights said that national governments cannot favour any faction of any religious group. The State cannot interfere in the internal autonomy of an organization or a religious group.⁴⁰ These interferences were not admissible because they were *arbitrary* and *unlimited*. The Court found, therefore, *that the interference with the internal organization of the Muslim community and the applicants' freedom of religion was not "prescribed by law" in that it was arbitrary and based on legal provisions which allowed an unfettered discretion to the executive and did not meet the required standards of clarity and foreseeability.*⁴¹

The Court reiterates that the autonomous existence of religious communities is indispensable for pluralism in a democratic society. While it may be necessary for the State to take action to reconcile the interests of the various religions and religious denominations that coexist in a democratic society, the State has a duty to remain neutral and impartial in exercising its regulatory power and in its relations with the various religions, denominations and beliefs.⁴² As a result, one of the leaders of denominations was favoured and the other excluded and deprived of the possibility of continuing to manage autonomously the affairs and assets of that part of the community which supported it.⁴³ The Government has not stated why in the present case their aim to restore legality and remedy injustices could not be achieved by other means, without compelling the divided community to unite under a single leadership.⁴⁴

Fantelli thinks that the bigger *visibility* of Muslims in Bulgaria must not be interpreted as a new process of *Islamization*. There was simply a process of *Renaissance*, after communist persecution, and the communist campaign of compulsory *Bulgarization* of Turkish surnames, which started in 1984. The main consequence was a forced exodus of many Bulgarian Muslims from Bulgaria to Turkey at the end of the communist period, because of the prosecution campaign against minorities.⁴⁵ There are other *ghosts*, such as the Bulgarian authorities' fear of a latent secessionist nationalism of the Turkish minority, or the challenge of a complex integration of Turkey into the European Union, in the near future.

3. Property rights and funding

Religious denominations and their local sections, with legal status, may enjoy the right of property. This right may include rents and fruits of their own patrimony, stocks, benefits and dividends, rents, intellectual property, public subsidies, donations, inheritances, etc. The central and local authorities may transfer the right of use of public properties to religious authorities. Public authorities may approve subsidies for religious denominations. This is a shadow in the principle of separation of Church and State.⁴⁶

Religious denominations may administer their properties, in the way established in their own bylaws.⁴⁷ They may also produce and sell objects related to their own religious activity.⁴⁸

The places of worship, temples, monasteries, objects and people related to religious activities, may not be used for advertising campaigns, without the previous consent of a competent religious authority.⁴⁹ Religious denominations may be owners and may administer cemeteries.⁵⁰ Paragraph 4 of the Additional and Final Dispositions of the Religious Denominations Act of 2002 regulates the rights of religious groups about the properties of their pre-communism ownership. The General Director of Religious Affairs may certify these rights of property.⁵¹ The representatives of a religious group must present their applications over these property rights to the Tribunal of the city of Sofia. These applications will include such certificates.⁵²

With the Labour Land Property Act of 1921, 25 000 acres of monastery property land were forfeited. In 1924 a new act provided for restitution of the property. It was not until 1930 that the Orthodox Church succeeded in reclaiming these properties. After World War II, the government started a continuous process of forfeiture of property. After the collapse of communism, the religious denominations could recover the rights of property of nationalized properties.⁵³ The process of restitution is regulated by the Law of Restitution of Nationalized Properties of 21 February 1992⁵⁴ and the Law of Restoration of Ownership of the Confiscated with Decree No. 88 of the Presidium of the National Assembly (unpublished) Immovable and Movable Property Belonging to the Catholic Church within the Borders of the People's Republic of Bulgaria.⁵⁵

The State may support and stimulate the religious, social and educative activities of all the registered religious denominations. These incentives may consist of tax benefits, credits, customs exemptions and other economic help, according to the legal conditions. In these cases, the religious denominations should audit their accounts.⁵⁶ These tax benefits are not specified in the Religious Denominations Act, and they will be regulated in additional legislation.⁵⁷

Article 24.9 of the Law on municipal taxes of 10 December 1997 regulates the taxation of religious urban properties.⁵⁸ This article establishes the tax exemption of the Houses of Worship of registered religious denominations.

The religious denominations, with legal status, may create mercantile societies.⁵⁹ They may also create non-profit organizations, for the support and dissemination of their beliefs.⁶⁰

The Religious Denominations Act of 2002 foresees the possibility of public funding for registered religious collectives, according to the Law of national

budget.⁶¹ Labour relations between religious denominations and religious ministers will be regulated by their own bylaws, and the specific legislation on this matter.⁶²

4. Medical, social, educative, and welfare activities of religious denominations

The registered religious denominations may create institutions of health, education⁶³ and social assistance, according to the legal provisions. The Ministries of Health, Employment, Social Security and Education⁶⁴ will supervise that these activities are developed in compliance with current legislation. The religious denominations may not subordinate the benefits of these activities to a previous religious membership.⁶⁵

The registered religious denominations may open educative centres, according to the current legislation in this matter.⁶⁶ The entry into these centres will require the previous permission of the parents, if the candidate is a minor.⁶⁷

Article 166 of the Law about implementation of penalties and detention of 3 April 2009 points out that the regular running of prisons may not be modified for the satisfaction of religious necessities. This law foresees that religious ministers may be authorized to enter. In the case of the *traditional* Bulgarian religion, these ministers may be designated with a permanent character, and will be paid by the State. No prisoner may be forced to participate in a religious ceremony without his free consent.

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- ² Official Journal number 120 of 2002.
- ³ Article 5.2, and article 5.3, of the Religious Denominations Act.
- ⁴ Article 6.1, of *idem*.
- ⁵ The arbitrary cancellation of residence permits of Jehovah's Witnesses, by the Bulgarian authorities, was appealed before the European Court of Human Rights. A friendly solution was finally found, with a compromise of the Bulgarian authorities in order to admit them, with an economic compensation. *Lotter and Lotter v. Bulgaria*, of May 19, 2004. In: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>
- ⁶ Article 53.1 of the new Law of radio and television, published on 24 November 1998, guarantees the *right of access* to the public Bulgarian radio and television of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and all the other registered religious denominations, in order to transmit religious ceremonies and to keep in contact with their own believers.
- ⁷ Ilieva, Irena. *The Rights of the Individuals belonging to the Minorities in Bulgaria*. Paper presented in the International Symposium organized by Professor Giovanni Cimbalò: "Workshop multidisciplinare Est Europa. Libertà religiosa e diritti umani nell'Est Europa". Bologna. Italy. September 21-22, 2007.
- ⁸ Article 11 of the Religious Denominations Act of 29 December 2002 establishes that the usual language in the relations between the public authorities and the religious

denominations will be the official Bulgarian language, but this does not prevent the use of other languages during the rites and worship.

⁹ Article 6.2, of *idem*.

¹⁰ Article 7.5, of *idem*.

¹¹ Article 12.1, of *idem*.

¹² The secret of confession is inviolable. No minister of worship may be forced to testify or inform about facts or circumstances known through the sacrament of confession. Article 13 of the Religious Denominations Act.

¹³ Licodu. In: <http://licodu.cois.it/> In: Bulgaria/Confesión e libertà religiosa/Leggi/Obiettori di coscienza.

¹⁴ Article 7.1 of the Religious Denominations Act.

¹⁵ Article 7.2, of *idem*.

¹⁶ Article 7.4, of *idem*.

¹⁷ Article 8, paragraphs 2 and 3, of *idem*.

¹⁸ Krussteff, Atanas. *La Ley búlgara sobre religiones de 2002 – Primeras impresiones*. Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Eclesiástico. Iustel. Number 1. January 2003. Page 7. In: www.iustel.com

¹⁹ Article 14, of *idem*.

²⁰ Bulgarian authorities denied the concession of residence permits to the Missionaries of Mother Theresa of Calcutta and the Salesians, because after the entry in force of the new Law, the previous registration in a *Register*, that was not yet created, was necessary. Iustel. Number 1. January 2003. In: www.iustel.com

²¹ Article 15 of the Religious Denominations Act.

²² Paragraph 4^o of the Epigraph *Relevant domestic law (and practice)*, in *The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and others v. Bulgaria*. In: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>

²³ The Sentence of the Bulgarian Constitutional Court 12/2003, of July 15, resolves the appeal No. 3/2003, of February 3, 2003, interposed by 50 Deputies of the 39th National Assembly, against several dispositions of the Religious Denominations Act. The most questioned point was the mention included in article 10 that considered the Orthodox Church as the *traditional* religion of Bulgaria. They suspected that under this expression an unjustified privileged position for the Bulgarian Orthodox Church might be covered. The Constitutional Court made a systematic interpretation of this mention, because according to the same article 10, the recognition of personality and the mention of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, might *not be the base of any privilege or any other legal advantage*.

Nevertheless, the suspicion about a particular – empty – *Bulgarian* interpretation of the principle of separation of Church and State will only disappear in the future, if it is possible to check an effective equal treatment among all religious denominations. According to the historical comparative experience, our suspicion is not necessarily unfounded.

Torres Gutiérrez, Alejandro, Hristov Kolev, Angel, Nikolov Dobrev, Emil, Petrova Angelova, Iliana. *El derecho a la libertad religiosa y de conciencia en la legislación búlgara postcomunista*. In: *Laicidad y Libertades*, n 6, 2006. Pages 563 and 564.

²⁴ Bogomilova, Nonka. *Religion, Law and Politics in the Balkans at the End of the 20 th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Sofia. 2005. Pages 223 and 224.

²⁵ Bogomilova, Nonka. *Religion, Law and Politics in the Balkans at the End of the 20 th and the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Sofia. 2005. Pages 224. *International Religious Freedom Report Year 2006*. Department of State. USA. In: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71373.htm>

- ²⁶ *The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and others v. Bulgaria*. In: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>
- ²⁷ A very critical paper is: Ponkin, Igor and Kouznetsov, Mickail. *Los cismas religiosos y la postura del Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos en el asunto "El Santo Sínodo de la Iglesia Ortodoxa Búlgara (Metropolitana Innokenty) y otros contra Bulgaria*. In: *Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Eclesiástico*. Iustel. Number 21. 2009.
- ²⁸ *Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Metropolitan Inokentiy) and others v. Bulgaria*. § 2. In: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>
- ²⁹ *Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Metropolitan Inokentiy) and others v. Bulgaria*. In: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>
- ³⁰ The Court reiterates that a Church or ecclesiastical body may, as such, exercise on behalf of its adherents the rights guaranteed by Articles 9 and 11 of the Convention and that registration or legal personality is not a pre-condition for exercising such rights or for filing an application before the Court under Article 34 of the Convention (see *Cha'are Shalom Ve Tsedek v. France* [GC], no. 27417/95, § 72, ECHR 2000-VII, *mutatis mutandis*, *Stankov and the United Macedonian Organisation Ilinden v. Bulgaria*, nos. 29221/95 and 29225/95, ECHR 2001IX, *Supreme Holy Council of the Muslim Community v. Bulgaria*, no. 39023/97, 16 December 2004 and *Metropolitan Church of Bessarabia and Others v. Moldova*, no. 45701/99, ECHR 2001XII). Therefore, the applicant organisation has *locus standi* before the Court.
- ³¹ As to the applicant organisation's name, the Court notes that this question is closely linked to the merits of the complaints under examination. At the present stage of the proceedings, the Court considers that there is no valid reason for refusing to use the name the applicant organisation had chosen for itself. In order to avoid confusion, in the present case, when using the name "Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church" by reference to the applicant organisation, it is sufficient to add words such as "represented by Metropolitan Inokentii".
- ³² The statutes of the religious group must include: (1) the name and seat of the religious group; (2) a short explanation of the religious doctrine and practice; (3) the structure and organs of the religious group; (4) executive organs; (5) the person with power of representation, and their appointment; (6) the decision making process; (7) finances and properties; (8) procedure of extinction and liquidation. Article 17 of the Religious Denominations Act.
- ³³ Article 16, of *idem*.
- ³⁴ This register will include: (1) the judicial resolutions on this matter; (2) the name and seat; (3) the executive and representative organs; (4) the names of the legal representatives of the religious group. Article 18 of the Religious Denominations Act.
- ³⁵ This local registration has a merely *formal* nature, but the Jehovah's Witnesses denounced delays in Dimitrovgrad, Veliko Tarnovo and Smolyan, as being against the spirit of the Law. *Rapport of Religious Freedom Year 2006*. HRWF, *Human Rights Without Frontiers*. In: <http://www.hrwf.net>. Also in: *Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Eclesiástico*. Iustel. Number 10. February 2006. In: www.iustel.com
Khristiansko Sdruzhenie "Svideteli na Iehova" v. Bulgaria. In: <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>
- ³⁶ Article 19.2 of the Religious Denominations Act. This application must include:
(1) The resolution of the Tribunal of the city of Sofia about the registration of the religious group, and its central executive organ. The power of representation of the person who makes the application.
(2) A certificate of the central executive organ of the religious group, the local representatives, and the address of the local section. Article 19.3, of *idem*.

- ³⁷ <http://www.echr.coe.int/echr>
- ³⁸ Fantelli, Paola. *Le minoranze islamiche nella Bulgaria post-comunista: ingerenze statali e libertà confessionale*. In: *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*. Luglio 2007. Pages 15 and next. In: www.statochiese.it
- ³⁹ Official Gazette of November 12, 1992.
- ⁴⁰ *Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria*, § 78. This case repeats the arguments of *Serif v. Grecia*, of September 14, 1999. Torres Gutiérrez, Alejandro. *La libertad de pensamiento, conciencia y Religión. Artículo 9 CEDH*. In: García Roca, Javier Y Santolaya, Pablo. *La Europa de los Derechos: El Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos*. Centro de Estudios Constitucionales. Madrid. 2005. Page 511.
- ⁴¹ *Hasan and Chaush v. Bulgaria*, § 86.
- ⁴² *Supreme Holy Council of the Muslim Communiti v. Bulgaria*, § 93.
- ⁴³ *Supreme Holy Council of the Muslim Communiti v. Bulgaria*, § 95.
- ⁴⁴ *Supreme Holy Council of the Muslim Communiti v. Bulgaria*, § 97.
- ⁴⁵ Barberini, Giovanni. *Il fenomeno religioso confessionale nel processo di democratizzazione negli Stati dell'Europa centro-orientale*. In: Tedeschi, Mario (A cura di). *La Libertà Religiosa*. Tomo III. Rubbettino. Catanzaro. 2002. Page 922. Fantelli, Paola. *Le minoranze islamiche nella Bulgaria post-comunista: ingerenze statali e libertà confessionale*. In: *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*. July 2007. Page 21 and next. In: www.statochiese.it
- ⁴⁶ Article 21 of the Religious Denominations Act.
- ⁴⁷ Article 22, of *idem*.
- ⁴⁸ Article 23, paragraphs 1 and 2, of *idem*.
- ⁴⁹ Article 23.3, of *idem*.
- ⁵⁰ Article 24, of *idem*.
- ⁵¹ § 4.1 of the Additional and Final Regulations of the Religious Denominations Act.
- ⁵² § 4.2 of the Additional and Final Regulations, of *idem*.
- ⁵³ With respect to the Catholic Church, a Law of property's restoration was passed in 1992. Licodu. In: <http://licodu.cois.it/>
In: Bulgaria/Confessioni e libertà religiose/leggi/Restituzione beni ecclesiastici chiesa cattolica 1992. Official Gazette of December 24, 1992.
- ⁵⁴ Peteva, Jenia. *Church and State in Bulgaria*. In: *Law and Religion in Post-Communist Europe*. Peeters. Leuven. 2003. Pages 49 and 50.
- ⁵⁵ § 5.1 and 2 of the Additional and Final Regulations of the Religious Denominations Act. Article 1 of the Law of Restitution of Nationalized Properties belonging to the Catholic Church, located within the Popular Republic of Bulgaria.
- ⁵⁶ Article 25, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Religious Denominations Act.
- ⁵⁷ Krussteff, Atanas. *La Ley búlgara sobre religiones de 2002 – Primeras impresiones*. Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Eclesiástico. Iustel. Number 1. January 2003. Page 5.
In: www.iustel.com
- ⁵⁸ Licodu. In: <http://licodu.cois.it/>
In: Bulgaria/Enti e beni ecclesiastici/Leggi/Esenzione da tasse locali per case religiose. Official Gazettes 153/1998 and 105/2005.
Article 38 of the Law of municipal taxes of 10 December 1997 prescribes the tax exemption of properties acquired by inheritance by the registered religion denominations.
- ⁵⁹ Article 26 of the Religious Denominations Act.

⁶⁰ Article 27.1, of *idem*.

⁶¹ Article 28, of *idem*.

⁶² Article 29, of *idem*.

Article 4.8 of the Social Security Code of 17 December 1999 regulates the social security of the non remunerated employees of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and other religious denominations. These employees are put at the same level as autonomous workers.

⁶³ In the academic year of 1997, the optional subject of Christian religious education was introduced for the first time. In 1999, the curriculum was opened to Islam and the values of other religions. *International Religious Freedom Report* year 2006.

In: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71373.htm>

⁶⁴ The optional subject of religion does not have any impact on the qualification to be obtained in ordinary public or private schools. The subject is taught with textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education. The financing of denominational schools is among the most controversial issues about the right of the parents to choose the education for their children in conformity with their own religious convictions as guaranteed under article 2 of Protocol 1 of the ECHR. There is a theological Faculty at Sofia University. Candidates must present a certificate of baptism, issued by the Bulgarian Christian Orthodox Church, as a pre-requisite for admission. Peteva, Jenia. *The Legal Status of Church and Religion in the Republic of Bulgaria*. In: *The Status of Religion Confessions of the States Applying for Membership to the European Union*. Ed. F.Messner. Milano. 2002. Pages 240-241. Peteva, Jenia. *Church and State in Bulgaria*. In: *Law and Religion in Post-Communist Europe*. Peeters. Leuven. 2003. Page 47.

⁶⁵ Article 30 to 32, of *idem*.

⁶⁶ Article 3 of the Law of Higher Education of 27 December 1995 says that Higher Education is secular, neutral, and independent of ideologies, doctrines, and political ideologies. Article 22 of this Law, recognizes and protects the autonomy of these centres. This autonomy may not be violated by the creation and activities of political or religious organizations in the Universities and Institutions of Higher Education. And article 56.4 also says that the members of the Academic Council of Universities are not allowed to develop political and religious activities in Universities and High Schools.

⁶⁷ Article 33, of *idem*.

Kopsavilkums

Komunisma režīma krišana izraisīja daudzas izmaiņas likumdošanā, un šobrīd Bulgārijas reliģiskās brīvības modelī izpaužas tolerances paradigma. Vēl skaidrākas atklājas salīdzinājumā ar citām Balkānu valstīm, kuras postījuši asiņaini kari, kas atstājuši dziļas sociālas brūces. Raksts cenšas sniegt dziļāku ieskatu Bulgārijas modelī.

Atslēgvārdi: reliģiskā brīvība, konfesijas, Bulgārijas pareizticīgā Baznīca, Alternatīvā sinode, reliģiskās minoritātes, Bulgārija, komunisms, demokrātija, restitūcijas process.

The Novel Catalan Regulation of Cult Centres

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The freedom of religion is the only right developed of the three rights in art. 16.1 of the Spanish Constitution by the Freedom of Religion Law (*Ley Orgánica de Libertad Religiosa*), Law 7/1980, of July 5th. In the case of Spain, the capacity to create Law includes not only Laws promulgated by Parliament, but a normative hierarchy of the Spanish State of autonomous nationalities, named “Spanish Communities” (*Comunidades Autónomas*). In Spain we have a decentralized State, divided into Autonomous Communities or nationalities, which have certain legal powers that include a wide normative capacity, among which the matter is the content of our subject.

In this respect, the new Statute of Autonomy (2006) in Catalanian Autonomous Community significantly expanded the powers of the Catalanian Government as regards the matter exclusively related to religious confessions. Its legislation has been characterized as having a more secular legislation than the rest of the Spanish Autonomies.

Within this context, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (“*Generalitat de Catalunya*”), and the Spanish State signed an Agreement on 22 September 2010, in which the attributions of the Catalanian governmental Administration in religious matters were clearly established. In addition to its role in subsidizing different projects and providing religious assistance and education, the Catalanian General Direction of Religious Affairs (*Direcció General d'Afers Religiosos*) has elaborated several Studies (i.e., Islamic sacrificial feast) and monographic Guides concerning funerary, penitentiary and burial issues, as well as related to the management of religious diversity in schools.

Additionally, Catalonia has been a pioneer force in Europe in the process of producing legislation on Centres devoted to adoration and worship. Such is the case of the Law of Worship Centres (*Llei de centres de Culte*) (Llei 16/2009) which was regulated and introduced on 22 July 2010, and developed by its Regulation (Decret 94/2010) and the Ministry Order VCP/405/2010. All these regulations were created during the socialist Government in Catalonia. The current centre-right Government promised in the political campaign to reform the Law of Worship Centres and, indeed, it has prepared a draft amendment of the Law, approved by the Government of Catalonia on 13 September 2011. This reform is currently before Catalanian Parliament to discuss amendments.

Keywords: Cult Centres, Worship Centres, Catalonia, Licenses, *Llei de centres de Culte*.

The territorial organization of the Spanish State is based on Autonomous Communities provided with specific legal and institutional powers. Catalonia is a territory that has enjoyed, during an important part of its millenary history, important attributions in terms of self-legislation and self-government.

With the promulgation of the Spanish Constitution of 1978, and on the basis of the Statute of Autonomy of 1979, Catalonia recovered its autonomy and self-government. The new Catalan Statute, which was voted in 2006, came into force recently, after the Spanish Constitutional Court decided upon different actions of unconstitutionality. This Statute has amplified, in the text of articles 149 and 161¹, Catalonia's attributions in the regulation of religious freedom².

In Spain the regulation of all matters concerning religion, including the exercise of religious freedom among different denominations and affiliations, is a legal competence of the Ministry of Justice. This regulatory capacity is exercised through the General Sub-direction of Relations with Religious Denominations (Subdirecció General de Relacions con las Confesiones), which was formerly named General Direction of Religious Affairs. For many years Catalonia has been the only Autonomous Community in Spain whose government has an administrative entity or General Direction specialized in dealing with religious issues.³

Since the year 2000, the "Direcció General d'Afers Religiosos" (General Direction of Religious Affairs) of Catalonia (DGAR) has generated a considerable amount of legislation, and has carried out authoritative studies. Among the legislation that has been generated, the "Llei de centres de culte" is particularly important and will be addressed in this document. This Law was highly polemical and short-lived.

After the elections to the Parliament of Catalonia held on November 16, 2003, a coalition of left-wing and nationalist Catalan political parties (the so-called "tripartito" PSC-ERC-ICV) obtained political majority. This left-wing coalition ruled until 2006, with P. Maragall occupying the Presidency of the Generalitat. The internal fractures, generated in the coalition by the discussion of the new Statute of 2006, led to parliamentary elections which were held on the first day of November. The three left-wing political parties that formed the "tripartito" entered a new coalition, this time under the leadership of Mr. Montilla, which came to be known as Government "d'Entesa". On 28 November 2010, new elections were held. In this new electoral process CiU, a conservative and nationalist political party, obtained majority and its candidate, A. Mas, was invested as President of the Generalitat.

These political processes implied changes in the conduction of the DGAR. During most of the two governmental administrations of the left-wing coalition, Montserrat Coll headed the DGAR (López Camps was in charge only during the second semester of 2006). Since 15 February 2011, the DGAR has been headed by Xavier Puigdollers.

Initial attempts to regulate cult centres in Catalonia

The DGAR, is a groundbreaking European initiative through which cult centres are regulated on the basis of a specific body of legislation (Llei 16/2009, de 22 de julio) implemented by the 94/2010 governmental decree, and by the administrative order VCP/405/2010, which was issued on July 28. This legal framework establishes the basis for providing public support to those religious entities which, according to the new regulations, have to adapt their cult centres. All the information related to the background of the Law of Cult Centres (Ley de centros de culto) is kept in a two-volume dossier kept in the Catalan Parliament⁴.

On 13 September 2011, the newly established conservative administration approved an initiative for the reformulation of the Law that is currently under legislative process and, in virtue of the actual composition of the Catalan Parliament, it shall be approved albeit with some amendments.

Before the end of 2003, Montserrat Coll proposed the creation in Catalonia of a legislative framework regarding cult and gathering centres. Such a framework was absent at the time⁵, and its introduction was deemed necessary, given the bad structural conditions of many buildings, the frequent complaints of religious entities, and the need to provide adequate response to the enquiries put forward by some Catalan municipalities⁶.

In November 2004, the DGAR signed a Collaboration Agreement with the Rovira i Virgili University in Tarragona, on the basis of which a monographic study regarding the status of cult and worship centres, was to be carried out in order to support a proposal regarding their adequate regulation⁷. This innovative and progressive study provided a solid foundation for the internal analyses carried out by the DGAR in order to put forward concrete proposals regarding urban, policing and public gathering issues that were considered at the time by the generic legislation applicable to cult centres.

These studies and proposals were incorporated in an “Ordinance Type Project” (“Proyecto de Ordenanza Tipo”) that was intended to serve as a model for those Catalan municipalities interested in the regulation of cult centres⁸. Nevertheless, this project did not work out and, in November 2005, the DGAR decided to produce a preliminary legislative project. This project was left unfinished as a result of the changes implemented at the top of the DGAR in mid-2006. The return of Mrs. Coll to the DGAR allowed the reactivation of the project by the end of 2006. In April 2007, the General Secretary of the Department of the Vice-presidency of the Generalitat drafted a memoir entitled “Memòria per a l’elaboració de l’Avantprojecte de Llei sobre els centres de culte o de reunió amb fins religiosos”⁹. Depending on the favourable reception by the Catalan government, the DGAR was finally able to produce the preliminary legislative project¹⁰.

Article 5 envisaged the constitution of land reserves for the establishment of religious premises in the communities. Article 7 regulated the cession of public spaces for sporadic religious events through specific ordinances developed by the concerned municipalities. Article 9 foresaw the elaboration of compulsory norms that could be of municipal range, on matters of hygiene and security. Finally, the project also envisaged the joint processing of a municipal license for religious activities, along with other administrative authorizations regarding different types of activities (article 15). Among these, a municipal license for adequate utilization and maintenance of sites intended for public activities was considered.

The Administration consulted about this draft with the principal religious entities or denominations, with municipal federations and with other institutions and, as a result of this process, a minor set of amendments was introduced into the text of the preliminary legislative project. The different religious denominations valued the preliminary project in two ways: on the one hand, they were satisfied with the fact that the legal project imposed upon the municipal governments the obligation to make provision in their ordinances for urban planning of the constitution of land

reserves for religious purposes and because they were authorized to participate in the elaboration of those plans and in the sporadic cession of public spaces and public premises to religious communities. On the other hand, they were worried by the possibility that the new administrative requirements regarding the physical status of cult centres would end up generating economic costs and financial expenses that would have to be confronted by the denominations themselves. Additionally, some religious denominations – particularly the Catholic one – along with the Federation of Catalan Municipalities, felt threatened by the administrative interventionism that could derive from the system of licences and authorizations. Such an interventionism, in their view, could even affect the fundamental right of religious freedom (art. 16), in a way that would make the Law unconstitutional¹¹.

A new draft¹², dated October 22, 2007, was produced. As soon as it was concluded, this new document became the new preliminary legislative project. The new proposal obtained the approval of the Technical Council of the Generalitat in a session celebrated on November 13, 2007, and then passed to the Government which authorized it in a reunion held on November 20. As a result of this process, the proposal was ready to be presented to the Parliament in order to be formally discussed as a Legislative Project or Draft Law.

The project in parliament

The Draft Law on Cult Centres and Gathering Places with Religious Purposes (Proyecto de Ley sobre los centros de culto o de reunión con fines religiosos)¹³, was included in the legislative works of the VIII Parliament. A specific commission was accordingly created and a deadline for the presentation of amendment proposals regarding the totality of the project was established. On 6 February 2008, the members of the Parliament discussed the totality of the project and rejected the proposed amendments. A set of presentations and hearings was proposed, and those that were accepted in four parliamentary sessions. After this, a set of amendments to specific articles was presented. These proposals were published on 19 January 2009. The members of the drafting commission produced a report that was published on June 26, 2009. The plenum of the Catalan Parliament deliberated on the project that was drafted by the Commission of Institutional Affairs (Comisión de Asuntos Institucionales), as well as on the amendments that the different political groups represented in the Parliament kept in reserve for the final discussion. After the definitive text was finally approved, the Law (Llei 16/2009, del 22 de juliol, dels centres de culte), was published in the Official Bulletins of the Parliament (Boletines Oficiales del Parlamento – BOPC-), the Generalitat Catalana (DOGC), and the Spanish State (BOE).

The Comissió d'Affers Institucionals (Commission of Institutional Affairs) on the session held on the first day of July, 2009, studied the text of the final legislative project, as well as the text of the presentation upon which it was based and, after considering a series of modifications, issued a pronouncement (Dictamen de la Comissió) that was followed by the amendments that the different parliamentary groups held in reserve in order to discuss them in the Plenum of the Parliament. The Plenum of the Parliament finally introduced some amendments that satisfied the expectations of the CiU nationalists¹⁴, and this made them change their vote in

favour of the Legislative Project. The conservatives of the Popular Party (PP) voted against the Law.

Some religious denominations, like the Catholic Church, expressed their doubts about the necessity, opportunity and utility of the Law. On the other hand, the Muslims and, in particular, the Evangelicals, received it with enthusiasm, given the fact that some of their proposals were effectively introduced in the final text of the Law.

The basic novelty of the Law rested on the establishment of the municipal obligation to assign specific plots of land for religious purposes, and on the need to obtain, before the initiation of activities, a municipal license or authorization for the opening and operation of cult centres. In relation to the already existing centres that were not openly excluded by the Law, a term of five years was granted in order for them to become adapted to the basic safety conditions stipulated in the new regulatory framework.

Once the Law was approved, the Generalitat established an institutional help line for those cult centres that needed to introduce security and hygiene modifications in their premises¹⁵.

The recent legal project for reforming Llei 16/2009

Although CiU was initially against the idea of passing legislation on these matters, it ended up voting in favour of the Law in the Plenum of the Catalan Parliament as a result of the amendments that were introduced in its final text. Nevertheless, in its electoral programme for the autonomic elections of November 2010, CiU proposed the revision of the *Llei* and its rules of procedure. After their electoral victory they decided to reform both. The new head of the DGAR opened a new dossier on the matter. After the generation of several preliminary drafts, the legal project for reforming *Llei* 16/2009 was finally approved on 13 September 2011.

Only a handful of religious denominations presented allegations regarding the preliminary project. While the Catholic Archbishop of Barcelona considered the proposed changes as positive, the Evangelicals expressed their radical opposition to the modification of the *Llei*. The preliminary project was not modified and, finally, the Catalan government approved, on the 13 September 2011, the Draft Law aimed at modifying *Llei* 16/2009. This new legislative instrument is currently under deliberation within the Catalan Parliament¹⁶. Given the actual composition of the Catalan Parliament, it is anticipated that the Draft Law will be approved albeit with several amendments. The Draft Law has a brand new preamble, seven articles¹⁷ and two final provisions.

The new administration has alleged that the reason behind the modification of the Law results from its problematic enforcement. The main change that has been put forward in the new Legislative Project or Draft Law consists in relieving the municipalities from the obligation to consider, within their plans of urban organization and development, the provision of land for religious purposes, if they consider that there is no need to introduce new cult centres within their jurisdiction. In addition to this, the legal obligation of adjusting municipal planning to the content of the Law within a term of 10 years is also waved, thus making it unnecessary for the municipal government to adjust its urban planning in the absence of a specific

demand or existing social need. Any adjustments will therefore be discretionary and not compulsory. The new project considers the degree of implantation and rooting of a specific religious denomination within a given community as the basic criteria for granting municipal access to urban premises and urban equipment, bearing in mind the importance of not incurring discriminatory practices. In relation to the minimum technical and material conditions that must be satisfied by cult centres, the new legislation introduces provisions aimed at preserving architectonic characteristics, cultural elements, historical traditions, and artistic elements. The new legal framework also demands from cult centres the satisfaction of the general provisions contained in the legislation that is currently in force in the matters of acoustic protection and contamination. This implies taking measures in order to acoustically isolate the premises in order to prevent nuisance against the community. Finally, the Legislative Project extends the time scope offered to pre-existing cult centres for adapting to the new regulatory requirements to a maximum of ten years. This term will start on the day on which the rules of procedure of the Law (Reglamento 94/2010) come into force.

REFERENCES

- ¹ 1. The regulation of all religious entities operating in Catalonia is an attribution of the local autonomous government (Generalitat). This includes the establishment and regulation of specific mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration between religious entities within its jurisdiction. 2. The Generalitat has, within its jurisdiction, executive power over all issues related to the exercise of religious freedom in Catalonia. This executive power includes the right to: a) Participate in the management of the information contained in the Public Registry of Religious Entities concerning the churches, creeds, affiliations, and religious communities that exist and operate in Catalonia; b) Establish cooperation agreements and covenants with churches, creeds and religious communities; c) Promote the development and execution in its territory of all those agreements and covenants signed by the Spanish State with churches, creeds and religious communities, that have been inscribed in the Public Registry of Religious Entities. 3. Collaborate with all those governmental agencies and institutions that have specific attributions in relation to the management of religious entities (art. 161).
- ² The September 22, 2010, Agreement was established in order to allow the participation of the Department of the Vice-president of the Generalitat (Departamento de la Vicepresidencia de la Generalitat) in the Public Registry of Religious Entities, in the Consulting Commission of Religious Freedom, and in the exchange of information between local and central administrations.
- ³ The DGAR was created in the year 2000 under the name “Secretaria de relacions amb les confessions religioses”. The following year it was renamed as “Secretaria General d’Afers religiosos”.
- ⁴ Volume 1 contains 193 pages with the full texts of the drafts, the initial and final version of the project, along with the memoirs, reports and institutional communications that were issued by all the consulted entities, and the specific amendment proposals that were finally made. Volume 2 (pp.194-441) contains the blueprint that was discussed along with its memoir and previous studies, and the initial enquiries that were made to governmental entities and administrative departments.

- ⁵ There was only a generic legislation regarding places of public gathering – mainly concerned with the policing of public spectacles (Llei 10/1990, de 15 de juny, sobre policia de l'espectacle, les activitats recreatives i els establiments públics and its Decret 239/1999, de 31 d'agost)-, and security and hygiene issues (Llei 3/1998, de 27 de febrer, d'intervenció integral de l'Administració ambiental and its Decret 136/1999, de 18 de maig). Some municipalities demanded authorizations, while others did not. In sum, this legal uncertainty led to arbitrary conducts that demanded the fulfilment of strictly detailed requisites to some religions (particularly the evangelical), while being lax to others in order to avoid social and political unrest (particularly with the Muslims which created cultural centres that operated like worship spaces).
- ⁶ It is interesting to observe that the initiative to introduce legislation aimed at guaranteeing the dignified external manifestation of religious values through the compulsory provision of a land reserve for the establishment of cult centres by the municipalities, was carried out by a left-wing governmental administration. The conservative members of parliament criticized these initial legislative exercises on the basis of their ideological bias in favour of secularism. At the time there were 2.534 catholic cult centres, and 1.830 pertaining to other churches and creeds in Catalonia (Mapa de les religions a Catalunya).
- ⁷ Various professors of Catalan universities known for their secular ideological tendencies participated in the elaboration of the study. They partially concluded the first part of the analysis in a document entitled “Informe relativo a la aproximació jurídica-teòrica sobre locals de culte o oratoris”. It is unclear what is understood under the concept of oratories (“oratorios”). The concept probably refers to Muslim premises and facilities many of which, as a result of the existing legal vacuum, were not constituted as mosques but as cultural centres. Even so, chapters 4 and 6 of the study do not make reference anymore to “oratorios”, but to “centres de oratorio” (centres for oratory), a concept that might include the protection of those humanistic phenomena that the “Lye Organic de Libertad Religiosa” (Lye 7/1980) (Organic Law of Religious Freedom) had omitted for considering them alien to religious phenomena (art. 3.2).
- ⁸ A. Seglers Gomez-Quintero, *Urbanismo y libertad religiosa: el proyecto de ordenanza tipo de la Generalitat de Catalunya para regular los lugares de culto*, en RGDCDEE 10 (2006) 1-21.
- ⁹ As we can observe, the text doesn't propose anymore the regulation of oratories, it proposes the regulation of gathering places with religious purposes, and cult places. This duality is to be maintained for as long as the Catalan Parliament doesn't arrive at a final decision by producing a Law dealing exclusively with places of cult and worship, and excluding places of public gathering.
- ¹⁰ The “Esborrany” of June 2007 defines both, the centres of cult and the centres dedicated to public gathering with religious purposes, as “those buildings or premises of public gathering, under private or public ownership, that are permanently and mainly used for the collective exercise of cult activities and/or for religious education and assistance.”
- ¹¹ The internal reports of the DGAR, on the contrary, held that the licenses were aimed exclusively at guaranteeing the security of cult and public gathering centres and that, by no means, their object was to regulate religious practices as such, or the way in which the right of religious freedom is exercised, bearing in mind that these two basic freedoms do not require of any governmental authorization or regulation. From the total number of cult centres, 3.249 centres –mainly Catholic- were registered in the inventory of the Catalan Cultural Heritage (patrimonio cultural catalán), and therefore were subject to the application of the Law.
- ¹² The so called “Esborrany Confidencial”.

- ¹³ Dossier n° 200-00031/0873 was entered on November 27, 2007, under registry number 18.490, and followed an ordinary processing.
- ¹⁴ The term “laicidad” (secularism) was considered exclusively from the perspective of positive Law; the provision of land to religious denominations was not considered compulsory but dependent upon the needs and resources of each municipal government; cult places situated in social and educational centres were excluded from the coverage of the Law and, finally, it was established that in those places where public gathering for religious purposes didn’t reach a certain level, the licence requirement could be waived and substituted by a simple communication.
- ¹⁵ Resolution 2723/2010, (August 3). From the 500.000 € that were originally budgeted, a total of 269.346 € were assigned to 34 projects. It is worth noting that, despite the fact that the Law was mainly intended to produce the improvement of Islamic cult centres, in reality 17 of the financed projects belonged to the Catholic Church (122.914 €), 14 to Non-Catholic Christian Communities (mainly evangelical) (133.584 €), and only 2 pertained to Islamic communities (12.859 €).
- ¹⁶ A period of public information hearings was established as a novelty, and 31 religious entities participated.
- ¹⁷ Article 1 modifies article 1 of the *Llei* 16/2009; art. 2 modifies art. 4; art. 3 modifies art. 6; art. 4 modifies art. 8; art. 5 modifies art. 10; art. 6 modifies the 1st DT (transitory provision), and art. 7 modifies the third DT. The full text of the Draft Law including all of its articles and transitory provisions can be obtained from the Official Bulletin of the Catalan Parliament (BOPC – Number 147; October 3, 2011).

Kopsavilkums

Reliģijas brīvība ir vienīgā no trim Spānijas konstitūcijas 16.1 deklarētajām tiesībām, kas ir izvērstas 1980. g. 5. jūlija likumā Nr. 7 “Reliģijas brīvības likums”. Spānijā tiesības izdot likumus ir ne vien parlamentam, bet arī Spānijas autonomajiem apgabaliem. Spānijā valsts ir decentralizēta un autonomajām apgabaliem ir tiesības izdot likumus arī reliģiskajos jautājumos.

Katalonijas autonomā apgabala jaunie pašnoteikšanās statūti (2006) ievērojami paplašināja ar reliģiskajām konfesijām saistītās likumdošanas tiesības. Katalonijai ir raksturīga daudz sekulārāka likumdošana salīdzinājumā ar pārējām Spānijas autonomajām kopienām.

2010. g. 22. septembrī Katalonijas valdība un Spānijas valsts noslēdza vienošanos, kas skaidri reglamentē Katalonijas administrācijas pienākumus reliģiskajos jautājumos. Līdzās dažādu projektu subsidēšanai un reliģiskās palīdzības un izglītības sniegšanai Katalonijas Reliģisko lietu pārvalde ir izstrādājusi vairākus pētījumus (piem., par upursvinībām islāmā) un rokasgrāmatas par kapu, cietumu sistēmas, apbedīšanas un ar reliģisko daudzveidību saistītajiem skolu pārvaldības jautājumiem.

*Eiropas mērogā Katalonija ir izvirzījusies vadībā arī ar savu likumdošanu, kas attiecas uz lūgšanu un kulta centriem. Kulta centru likums (*Llei de centres de Culte*) (*Llei* 16/2009) līdz ar Noteikumiem (*Decret* 94/2010) un ministrijas rīkojumu *VCP/405/2010* stājās spēkā 2010. gada 22. jūlijā. Visi šie noteikumi tika izstrādāti laikā, kad vara Katalonijā bija sociālistu valdības rokās. Pašreizējā centriski labējā valdība, kas politisko kampaņu laikā solīja pārstrādāt Kulta centru likumu, sagatavoja likuma izmaiņu priekšlikumu, ko Katalonijas valdība atbalstīja 2011. g. 13. septembrī. Izmaiņas ir jāapstiprina Katalonijas parlamentam.*

Atslēgvārdi: *kulta centri, lūgšanu centri, Katalonija, tiesības, Kulta centru likums.*

Religion in Post-Soviet Belarus

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The changes in the religious situation in Belarus of the last 20 years are analysed in the article based on statistics. The transformation of the religion-related situation in the country is considered as a systematic process. The conclusion is the following: the transformation of the religious situation in Belarus nowadays is highly dependent on the political changes.

Keywords: transformation, religious situation, religiosity, political changes.

We would like to point out the specific features of the religious situation in Belarus. There is a reason to believe that it is largely determined by the transitory state of the country, which can be viewed in two interrelated aspects: spatial and temporal. The former is external and is determined by the geographical location of Belarus between the EU and Russia. As a result, all kinds of political and cultural influences interact here. It is necessary to point out that such transitory state is traditional for Belarus. Throughout most of its history the Belarusian lands were positioned between two political, cultural and religious powers – Russia and Poland, which fought for influence here. At present we can talk about European and Russian vectors of development in Belarus. Nowadays society is acutely aware of its country being in some kind of an interim state, and this factor is the first to be taken into account when analysing our national specifics. It is claimed that Belarus is “neither Russia nor Europe”¹. However, most modern researchers² agree that this statement is not valid and does not answer the question of what determines the specificity of Belarus. In our opinion, we should proceed from the fact of interaction rather than antagonism of different political, cultural and religious traditions on the territory of this country and the need for their synthesis.

Temporal aspect of the intermediate state of Belarus is explained by the provisional nature of the historical period, through which country is going now³. It is also clear that the transition from the Soviet system to some other formation – referred to as a “civilized society” by reforms adherents – is taking place. However, it should be emphasized that the definite shape of the future formation of Belarusian society is still largely unknown; moreover, the transition itself has barely started. The subject of discussion is the mechanism of the transition that can substitute or change the status quo in society and religion. Discussions on this matter are conducted on an informal level, basically by the members of Belarusian opposition. This is again a manifestation of Belarusian specifics, as the current government decided on its development policies long ago, and is just carrying them out now.

Changes in the religious situation in Belarus should be considered in the context of the overall fundamental transformation of society. In our opinion, we should distinguish between two related but essentially different processes: firstly, it is the rejection of any elements of the Soviet legacy, and, secondly, it is the formation of an independent state. The latter process is becoming more and more topical for Belarus in the course of its historical development. After the collapse of the vast political entity called the “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” in the early 1990s a number of the former Soviet republics declared their independence. Immediately each of them faced an acute problem of what way of further development to choose. It was necessary to identify the set of values and the structuring elements that would define their future. Now it is clear that the difference in the development of the former Soviet republics is largely due to the historical and cultural heritage of each of them. Previously it was stated that there existed a single Soviet nation with a common mentality, political and economic system. But now we see how dissimilar the Baltic republics are and, for example, Central Asian states, mostly because of the religious traditions of these countries. The differences between the three Slavic nations – Belarus, Russia and Ukraine – are also becoming increasingly clear. The peculiarities of the social situation in these states gradually manifest themselves in various spheres, including religion. For the Republic of Belarus the understanding of its religious specificity is currently a very urgent task, because the idea of spiritual unity of the East Slavs is still prevalent in the public mind. However, this statement contradicts the present situation and the problems existing in the relationship among these three countries in particular. In our view, the knowledge of the specifics of the religious situation in Belarus will help create a better understanding of the social processes that take place in the country, and their relation to the processes taking place in the neighbouring countries.

We can distinguish two phases in the modern history of Belarus. The first began with the adoption of the Declaration on State Independence by the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR in July 1991, which gave rise to changes in all spheres of public life and led to the formation of an independent state. The second phase began after the July 1994 presidential election and the victory of A. G. Lukashenko, whose policy still determines the social situation in Belarus, as well as its perception as “the last dictatorship in Europe” by the world community.

We must differentiate between two aspects in the processes of transformation in Belarus, which affect the religious sphere. The first of them is the successful formation of the Belarusian state institutions. There are authorities responsible for cooperation with religious organizations at the state level: the Office of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities under the Council of Ministers, at local levels there are Departments of Religious and Ethnic Affairs in the Executive Committees of each region. They successfully cope with their task of implementing the state policy towards religion. The second aspect of transformation is the formation of the Belarusian society. Here exist a lot of problems, which are mainly due to the current attitude of the country’s leaders who seek total control over every aspect of life. This inevitably results in impaired or delayed social and political development.

If we talk about the period of 1991-1994, the transformation in the religious sphere of Belarus was an obvious and important part of social processes. It was

radical in nature and had a significant impact on changes in other areas of social consciousness as the attitude towards religion in public mind changed to the opposite. Previously religion was seen as a relic of the past and the only legal form of the existing anti-communist ideology. Now it has become the basis of spiritual life and “foundation of Belarusian nation”⁴.

Besides, the freedom of religion, as well as market economy and political democracy, were incompatible with the old Soviet system. The very perception of religion as part of the existing social system rather than some marginal phenomenon implied a significant transformation of the system as a whole. It should be noted that transformation processes take place in Belarus with great difficulty; we actually are a post-Soviet society, the government focuses more on the old patterns of behaviour that were acceptable earlier, rejecting or avoiding new forms of social life. In the religious sphere this is reflected in the fact that the authorities are trying to build all contacts with religious organizations following the old Soviet style, although atheistic attitudes have been repudiated. Religion (mainly Orthodox) is used by the current Belarusian government for ideological and political ends.

Comparing modern Belarus and other former Soviet republics, it is safe to say that the elements of the Soviet legacy are preserved in our country to the greatest extent. This is determined, firstly, by the fact that much of the population remains attracted by the typical socialist slogans promising justice, equity and some distant prosperous future, and, secondly by a very rigid policy of the authorities. However, it is obvious that the Soviet legacy nowadays can not serve as a basis for further development and should be abandoned. Therefore, the situation in the present-day Belarus is characterized by the state “between the times” when the old ways have lost their efficiency, but the new ones have not yet been formed. Specific feature of the social situation in today’s Belarus is that state control over social and religious life has acquired exaggerated forms. In fact, any independent initiative is suppressed, which causes tension in society and slows down the pace of its development.

A period of transition through which Belarus is going now is most evident in religious life. However, the changes become apparent only when we compare the current religious situation with that under Soviet rule. The policy of state atheism has been rejected, and the authorities seek to establish a dialogue with religious organizations. Since about 1989 there has been gradual revival of religion in Belarus. The main objective indicator of this is the growth in the number of registered religious organizations. Since 1988 and up to the beginning of 2012 it increased 4-fold (from 768 to 3210), and the number of religions grew 3-fold⁵.

However, the authorities have kept Soviet control system of religious life, which is part of the state control over society. It is the policy of the state that defines the current religious situation in the country. Belarusian authorities have undoubtedly achieved success in this field. There is a gradual return to normal relations between the government and religious organizations. The policy of the Belarusian authorities is aimed at preventing conflicts in the religious sphere. Destructive religious tendencies and attempts to sow sectarian strife are harshly suppressed. The government carefully avoids conflicts with religious organizations, especially

those which have demonstrated the ability to assert their rights, and conflict with which the authorities deem inappropriate.

It should be noted that the attitude of the authorities is largely determined by the actual state of the religious sphere in Belarus. In the history of the country religion has played disintegrative rather than integrative role so far. Historically, the territory of Belarus lay at the intersection of the interests of two countries: Orthodox Russia and Catholic Poland, which sought to use religion as a political instrument. Therefore, when some Belarusians converted to the Orthodox faith, it pushed them to side with Russia, and, when they became Catholics, they were inclined to support Poland. This peculiarity was pointed out back in the early 20th century by one of the most famous figures of Belarusian culture, the poet Yanka Kupala, who wrote:

In addition to political and economic dependence there was another reason, which dazzled the world view of Belarusians – that is antagonism of the two Christian rites in our region: Catholicism and Orthodoxy. These two Churches, Eastern and Western, leading eternal dispute between themselves, divide our nation in two, oppose children of the same motherland, sometimes forcing them to fight over the holy symbol of Christianity - the Cross ... This struggle between the two faiths not only splits Belarusians into two parts on the basis of religion, but, most importantly, kills in their minds the sense and feeling of national unity. Belarusian Catholics are taught that once they are Catholics, they are Poles who should not fraternize with those of other faiths, Belarusian Orthodox believers are told that being Orthodox means being Russian, and Belarusian Catholics are to be avoided, because they are Poles.⁶

Kupala wrote about the real problems of his time (these words were published in the newspaper “Nasha Niva” in 1914). There is another example that illustrates the same situation. When the Toleration Act of 1905 allowed teaching catechism in “the native language of the students” a question immediately arose in Belarus: what language was to be considered native for the local Catholics. Most of the Catholic clergy traditionally believed that it was Polish, while Russian officials proposed Russian. The Belarusian language was not even considered as an option.

Such situation is the result of using religion for political purposes: Orthodoxy was the state religion in the Russian Empire, and those who sought to restore Rzeczpospolita (not only Poles but Belarusians as well), opposed it to Catholicism.

During Soviet atheistic repressions, when all religions were persecuted, this kind of opposition lost its meaning. In the present-day Belarus there are tendencies to give national flavour both to Catholicism and Orthodoxy. In the Catholic Church it is connected with the decisions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) on the conduct of worship in national languages⁷. In Belarusian Catholic churches religious services in the Belarusian language are mostly held in the Eastern regions, because in the Western parts of the country it is traditionally assumed that all Catholics are Poles, therefore the Polish language is used. But even if the service is conducted in Belarusian, a sermon, as a rule, is preached in Russian. This is explained by the specifics of the language situation in the country - the majority of Belarusians do not use their own language and Russian is more understandable for them. Benevolent attitude to the Belarusian language in the Orthodox Church is due to the wise policy of its leaders in this matter. For example, the Patriarch

of Moscow and All Russia Kirill quoted Belarusian poets while making a speech during his visit to Belarus in late September 2009, which in our case was seen as an absolute sign of respect for Belarusian culture.

In today's globalized society not only the geographical position of Belarus directly affects religious situation in the country, but also the interaction of many different interests. Control over religious organizations is mainly due to the political interests of the authorities. Despite the seemingly benevolent attitude toward religion, the mechanism of this control is similar to that of the Soviet society.

The Constitution of Belarus contains no principle of separation of church from the state, which raises the question of a secular nature of the latter. Art. 16 of the Constitution says: "Relations between the state and religious organizations are regulated by law with regard to their influence on the formation of spiritual, cultural and state traditions of the Belarusian people." This actually proclaims unequal treatment of religions, depending on their impact on "the formation of spiritual, cultural and state traditions."

This Constitutional provision was confirmed in the revised edition of the law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations", adopted in 2002. Its adoption drew sharp criticism from almost all religious movements in the country (the Orthodox Church being an exception), as well as human rights organizations. The Preamble to the revised law on freedom of conscience says: "This law regulates relations in the field of human and civil rights to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion ... based on ... the recognition of the decisive role of the Orthodox Church in the historical formation and development of spiritual, cultural and state traditions of the Belarusian people, spiritual, cultural and historical role of the Catholic Church in Belarus, the inseparability of the general history of the people of Belarus from the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Judaism and Islam. "

Thus, from 25 denominations, which are now operating in Belarus, only five are referred to in the Preamble, the crucial role being assigned to the Orthodox Church, while the other four are just mentioned. In our view, this approach rather reflects Russian realities, where, indeed, the Orthodox Church played a significant role in shaping the historical and cultural traditions. But in the history of Belarus many of its public and cultural figures belonged to the Catholic Church. Among them was Francis Skaryna, the first printer in the East Slavic lands and an iconic figure for the culture of Belarus. In addition, unlike in Russia, Reformation was very strong in our land. Such well-known figures of Belarusian culture as Symon Budny and Basil Tyapinsky were Protestant preachers. The preamble of the new law on freedom of conscience does not take into account many Protestant movements (for example the Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) - the second religious denomination in Belarus by the number of registered religious communities). Although the legislation does not use the term "non-traditional religions", virtually all denominations, not mentioned in the Preamble, are perceived as such.

However, it is necessary to say that those state agencies that are responsible for the religious organizations in the country pursue a fairly flexible policy adapted to the Belarusian realities. Currently the religious situation in the country requires an interfaith dialogue. To illustrate this statement, we present statistics on the number of registered religious organizations in Belarus at the beginning of 2012⁸.

Obviously, none of the denominations currently existing in Belarus, is dominant or can claim dominance. It should be stressed that Belarus is traditionally a multi-confessional country, where representatives of different religions coexist peacefully. There have been neither serious clashes nor persecutions on religious grounds. Belarusians are characterized by religious tolerance. At present an Orthodox church, a Catholic church and a Jewish synagogue can be seen standing next to each other in the squares of many Belarusian towns.

		01.01.2011	01.01.2012	increase during 2011
1.	Orthodox Church	1545	1567	22
2.	Old Believers	32	33	1
3.	Roman Catholic Church	475	479	4
4.	Latin Catholic ⁹	1	1	0
5.	Greek-Catholic Church	15	15	0
6.	Reformed Church	1	1	0
7.	Lutheran Church	27	27	0
8.	Evangelical Christians-Baptists	275	286	11
9.	Armenian Apostolic Church	1	1	0
10.	Johannite Church	1	1	0
11.	New Apostolic Church	21	21	0
12.	Presbyterian Church	1	1	0
13.	Evangelical Christians	505	512	7
14.	Full Gospel Christians	55	55	0
15.	Apostolic Christians	9	10	1
16.	Church of Christ	5	5	0
17.	Messianic communities	2	2	0
18.	Seventh-Day Adventist	72	73	1
19.	Jehovah's Witnesses	27	27	0
20.	Mormons	4	4	0
21.	Judaism	35	36	1
22.	Progressive Judaism	17	17	0
23.	Islam	25	25	0
24.	Baha'i	5	5	0
25.	Hare Krishna movement	6	6	0
	Total	3162	3210	48

However, it is essential to be aware of the difference between the actual religious situation in Belarus and the ideological interpretation which is given to it by the authorities.

Officially, it is claimed that approximately absolute majority of the population (93.5%) are believers, of whom 81% are Orthodox, 10.5% are Catholics, and 2% are other¹⁰. The difference between the percentage of adherents of Protestantism and the number of registered communities is attributed by the authorities to the fact that the latter are very few. But in this case different indicators are compared. The statistics is based on self-determination which has a different meaning Orthodoxy and Protestantism. Typically, belonging to the Orthodox Church denotes not religious,

but cultural identity. People call themselves Orthodox simply because they were baptized in it in childhood, or because they believe that Orthodoxy is an “Eastern Slavic religion.” If a person in Belarus declares being Protestant, it means that he or she regularly visits the community, actively takes part in its life, studies the Bible and tries to live according to the Gospel. Therefore further studies are required to get a fair view of the religious situation in Belarus.

In conclusion we can state that modern religious situation in Belarus is stable and is also pegged by the authorities. Any political changes in the country will inevitably entail significant changes in the religious situation.

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Kopsavilkums

Pamatojoties uz statistiskajiem datiem, autors analizē izmaiņas Baltkrievijas reliģiskajā situācijā pēdējo 20 gadu laikā. Reliģiskās situācijas transformācijai Baltkrievijā ir sistemātiska procesa raksturs. No analīzes izrietošais secinājums: mūsdienās Baltkrievijā reliģiskā situācija ir būtiski atkarīga no politisko izmaiņu ietekmes.

Atslēgvārdi: transformācija, reliģiskā situācija, reliģiozitāte, politiskās izmaiņas.

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