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## Alessandro Testa, Ritualising Cultural Heritage and Re-enchanting Rituals in Europe,

Durham (NC): Carolina  
Academic Press 2023, 270 s.

ISBN 978-1-5310-2673-8.

Ritual is one of the perennial subjects of religious studies or indeed of all social studies, since ritual does not belong to the province of religion alone. Further, anthropologists and ethnologists like Alessandro Testa have lately paid more attention to European societies, expanding their sights beyond the conventional bounds of “traditional” or “indigenous” peoples. Indeed, Testa has been writing about rituals and festivals in Europe for well over a decade, and much of that material is reproduced and updated here in a timely and welcome “systemization” of terms and concepts in this field.

The result is a short book (around 60,000 words) drawing on previously-published work dating from 2014 to as recently as 2020. The book is thus a sort of summary and capstone for nearly a decade of research (2010-2019) on questions of “heritage-making”, re-enchantment, and ritualization in general. The book consists of nine chapters, including an introductory chapter and a concluding chapter. In between are chapters as brief as 1,700 words but most around six thousand words, divided into two parts (the second, third, and fourth chapters constitute the first part).

As Testa humbly but accurately confesses, the second part, which is more ethnographic, not only comprises the bulk of the text but the “better informed” and “more mature” section. The chapters of the first part, by comparison, are more general and preliminary. The second chapter, based on a 2014 article in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* and by far the longest of the essays, introduces the issue of power

and politics in regard to public rituality, initially identifying the terrain of the various “dimensions” of public ritual (the public, the ritual, the festive atmosphere, the festive behavior, and the high rate of cultural codification)—a useful scheme for analyzing any ritual performance. It also acquaints the reader with major figures in the history of ritual studies like Durkheim, Eliade, Gramsci, Bakhtin, Turner, Geertz, Bourdieu, and Handelman. For scholars who are already familiar with this literature, there are additional references to lesser-known researchers who focused on European festival activity.

The third chapter presents what Testa calls his personal theory of rituality. Drawing again on august figures like Durkheim, Turner, Sahlins, and Handelman, he emphasizes such factors as formalization, tradition, transmission, and repetition, as well, of course, as symbolism and symbolic density. Also, as a form of communication, ritual action—which may and usually, if not necessarily, does entail ordinary objects, words, and gestures—must be an “extra-ordinary” form of action, setting the ritual moment apart from everyday behavior and thus instilling it with new and added meaning.

None of this is particularly earth-shattering, but it is put to good use in the fourth chapter and beyond, as we begin to dig into the ethnographic material, drawn from three major research projects that Testa has pursued throughout his career. Two of these case studies appear in the fourth chapter on the process of conversion from “folklore” to “cultural heritage,” namely, an Italian and a Czech festival. Now we finally hear what will be the primary theme of the rest of the project: how academic ideas and practices get absorbed into and circulated within the emic or local level of thought and action. For the moment, he raises the issue of UNESCO’s shift from a folklore discourse to an “intangible culture heritage” discourse—a discourse that local players listen to, adopt, and exploit in their own development or invention of “traditional” festivals.

This approach begins to pay dividends in the fifth chapter, which, despite its ex-

traordinarily short length (1,700 words), lays the groundwork for an understanding of contemporary “traditional” festivals as works of “re-interpretation, re-functionalization, and manipulation of all sorts.” The sixth chapter is the richest in the book, not only for its detailed historical and ethnographic descriptions of the two cases (the carnival of the deer-man in Castelnuovo al Volturno, Italy and the mummification festival of Masopust in Bohemia, Czech Republic) with a hint of a third case from Catalonia, Spain, but also for Testa’s fundamental notion of “popular Frazerism.” This is the clearest and most important process in his vision of the transformation of academic theorizing into vernacular thought and action. James Frazer, the renowned author of *The Golden Bough*, has apparently saturated local festivalization, especially his hypothesis about the relationship between much pre-modern festival activity and fertility. In agricultural societies, fertility is naturally a main preoccupation, but as Testa reminds us, agriculture has long been abandoned in many communities in Europe and around the world. Yet, in the Italian and Czech cases, fertility persists as a theme of the local festival, and Testa establishes that actors are explicitly conscious of Frazer’s writing. The result is a kind of post-secular re-enchantment, functioning through many processes including the reappropriation of things that were (or are believed to have been) believed and practiced in pre-modern times, the revival of paganism and magic, the appearance of “reiginoid” or novel religion-like forms of “civic rituality”, the rise of “spirituality” versus religion, and in some instances the outright invention of traditions and religions.

If for no other reason than Chapter 6, the book is worth reading. However, the final two chapters, each in the six thousand to seven thousand word range, extend the discussion. Testa risks granting festivals agency in the central question of the seventh chapter: “why do certain events want to become heritage?” Fortunately, he is referring to the “heritage sensibility” acquired by actors—from festival organizers and participants to political officials, tourists, and of course observant scholars—that gener-

ates the current Frazerian festival form. Another way to speak of this process is the “vernacularization of the heritage discourse and practices”, transferred from academic and institutional sources to local societies. The eighth and final chapter (not counting the conclusion) returns to three of his core concepts—re-enchantment, ritualization, and heritage-making—and applies them to his three ethnographic cases plus another brief fourth example (the famous Krampus tradition). While most of his book is focused on ritual, here he also highlights myth and its relation to a past or even primordial time and its symbolic creation and mobilization of a community’s or society’s imagination and self-identity.

*Ritualising Cultural Heritage and Re-enchanting Rituals in Europe*, as I said at the outset, is something of a summation of a decade of Testa’s research on European festival culture, which has taken him from pre-modern carnival to contemporary public rituals. Built out of previously-published material, it is slightly constrained by what he has written already, which affects the distribution and the flow of the book. On my first read, I thought there was too much preliminary material and not enough case detail, although on a second read I could see some point to the structure. However, if an all-new manuscript had been provided instead, the weight of the preliminary discussion could have been reduced in favor of the ethnographic discussion; alternatively, the book could have been expanded significantly with case material and still been of manageable length. A final question is the audience for the book. Scholars who specialize in ritual and religion will be well familiar with the surveys of the opening chapters, although they will still benefit greatly from the analyses of the second part. Of course, scholars who work in other areas can learn from the first chapters, and university students might find the book quite useful in courses on religion, festivals and public rituals, and European culture. Testa’s discoveries about the vernacularization of professional and international heritage discourse, and specifically about popular Frazerism, are by far the most important theoretical contribution of the book

and to scholarship in general. I hope that he develops these ideas further and that other academics pick them up and exploit their potential not only in religious studies but in politics and beyond.

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## Lukáš Dirga – Jan Váně, Náboženství za mřížemi: stále(é) i nestalé,

Brno: Lukáš a syn 2023, 224 s.

ISBN 978-80-7364-156-6.

Kolektivní monografie s názvem *Náboženství za mřížemi: stále(é) i nestalé* představuje velmi zdařilý pokus o organické propojení témat penitenciární sociologie a sociologie náboženství formou editované antologie příspěvků předních českých odborníků a odborníků – představujících různé pohledy společenskovedních disciplín – se společným zájmem o penitenciární tematiku. Česká kriminologická obci dobře zná má dvojice sociologů ze Západočeské univerzity v Plzni oslovila odborníky z oblastí historie, práva, penologie, antropologie, politologie či religionistiky a umně sestavila na více než dvou stech stranách zajímavou mozaiku pohledů na různé aspekty života za mřížemi vězeňských zařízení.

Úvodní příspěvky zabývající se dopodrobna historií vězeňské duchovenské a pastorační služby a jejím institucionálním legislativním ukotvením poskytují čtenáři dobrý základní vhled a kontextualizaci problematiky od doby Habsburské (potažmo rakousko-uherské) monarchie až k současné podobě stávajícího vězeňského systému. Pavlovo „kde se rozmohl hřích, tam se ještě mnohem více rozhojnila milost“ (Řím 5,

20) přesně ilustruje temné období obou totalit, kdy se vězni nezřídka stávali samotní duchovní pastýři.

Autorky kapitoly věnované kriminologické perspektivě „náboženských programů“ se nenechaly vlákat do pastí kvantitativně evaluativního měření efektivity, jakožto na výzkumnických datech a (přírodo)vědecky orientované evidenci založené legitimizaci evangelijní zvěsti a jejích hlasatelů v prostředí věznic, a spíše se soustředily na šíři možných kriminologicko-metodologických přístupů k danému tématu.

„Nebudete svá těla zjizvovat pro mrtvého ani si dělat nějaké tetování“ (Lv 19, 28) je důrazný příkaz z Bible, který nejenže není za zdmi věznic příliš znám, ale bývá zpravidla často porušován. Tetování vlastně k vězeňskému prostředí a kriminálnímu subkulturám od nepaměti neodmyslitelně patří. Jeho identitotvorným či krypticky emickým významem a symbolickou rovinou neverbálního přiznání se k (přínejmenším) určitě „privatizované“ formě religiozity se obsáhle zabývá samostatná čtvrtá kapitola.

Ve shodě s autory kapitoly k náboženské radikalizaci a extremismu ve vězeňském prostředí lze konstatovat, že otázka náboženského extremismu je v našem lokálním penitenciárním kontextu záležitostí spíše „izolovaných jednotlivců“ (s. 132) a celkově se z hlediska závažnosti nejedná o nepalčivější problém českého vězeňství. Na druhou stranu se – což lze názorně vidět na mnoha případech z Francie, Německa nebo Velké Británie – může situace velice rychle změnit. Současnou situaci, především s ohledem na zcela zásadní (především znalostní) nepřipravenost personálu českých a moravských věznic, nelze považovat za uspokojivou. S důrazným apelem autorů kapitoly na „potřebu vzdělávat vybrané [sic!] pracovníky v otázkách různých extremistických projevů“ (s. 135) se bude s největší pravděpodobností muset Vězeňská služba ČR rozhodně náležitě vypořádat.

Poslední dvě kapitoly věnované kategoriální pastoraci komplementárně propojující poskytovatele a příjemce duchovní péče a vedení elegantně rámuje a citlivě zasazuje téma „náboženství“ do reálné každodennosti vězeňského života v 21. století. S pozorovatelným úbytkem věřících ve farnos-