

Mandalà deals with the archive of the Parish and describes the condition of the documents including those of the confraternity which provided the basis for the research.

The two volumes edited by Persic provide a wealth of new material based on original documents written in Latin, Italian, Venetan, and Friulan, and add to our knowledge both of the veneration of St. George in Friuli and of one early confraternity in Udine in particular that bore at its inception some peculiar social characteristics. Carefully documented and detailed studies such as these are most welcome and indeed essential if scholars are to have the necessary data to be able to test general existing notions about lay confraternities and eventually to formulate new interpretations of them.

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Ethnology of Religion. Chapters from the European History of a Discipline, ed. Gábor Barna. Studies in Ethnology 1. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2004. 367 pp. ISBN 9-6305-8179-5

The subtitle is important, since it clarifies the essential nature of this book: a collection of histories by different authors, covering scholarship and research in the ethnology of religion in fourteen different geographical locations: Croatia, the Czech Lands, Flanders/Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden. Each chapter fulfils a common brief in a different way. We are presented with definitions of the field itself, discussions of its relationship with other fields (ethnology, anthropology, cultural studies, theology, philosophy, among others), information on specialist journals and newsletters, and accounts of the emergence of dedicated research institutes (or their absence). Most chapters include pen portraits of major scholars and their principal publications, and every chapter concludes with a detailed bibliography (with titles of publications often helpfully translated into English).

All of the authors contribute something towards a definition of their field. Even its name is not settled: ethnology of religion, anthropology of religion, the study of popular religion, of vernacular religion, of folk religion, of traditional religion. All agree that its auxiliary disciplines are the social sciences, though there is less unanimity concerning its relationship to theology. The common threads in ethnology of religion seem to be these: it is a study of popular religion as something distinct from official religion, less concerned with doctrine than with practice, always local and particular, often sensual and materialistic, with a predilection for concrete rites and actions over abstractions of doctrine and legislation. Nevertheless, the boundary between 'official' and 'popular' remains dynamic and porous: the Church adopts folk customs, and the people adapt ecclesiastical practices. (While most of the authors are

concerned with popular religion as it intersects with Christianity, attention is also given to Judaism and Islam.)

In earlier stages, 'folk' religion was equated with 'peasant' religion, something rural, oral, and uneducated. Today's scholars find 'popular' religion wherever there are 'people' doing religious things, which includes the educated, urban elites, the rich as well as the poor. Popular can mean 'of the masses', but the study of popular religion also embraces unpopular, heretical, and dissenting practices and customs. Since popular religion is not a fixed body of data, some scholars prefer to replace 'folk religion' with the literally unspeakable 'folk religiousness' ('folk religiosity' would hardly be better.)

In concrete, ethnologists of religion study miracles and magic, healing and exorcism, the role of 'holy persons', sacred time and space, prayers and prayer books, songs and hymns, saints and pilgrimages, icons, statues and other images, festivals and plays. The emphasis is, inevitably, on the religious activities of lay people and lay movements (though there is no detailed consideration of confraternities in this volume).

Questions of theory and methodology are raised in every chapter, usually beginning with the inadequacies of nineteenth century ethnological scholarship, then moving on to various -isms in the twentieth; the authors of the chapter on Spain note that the tide has now turned in favour of eclectic and functional methodologies (292).

Some indication of the breadth of the subject matter can be seen in the summaries of research offered in several of the chapters: the pre-Christian religion and mythology of the Magyars in Hungary (128–30), dominant images on grave-stones in Swedish and Norwegian cemeteries in the 1990s (362–65), the uses of blessed palm branches in early twentieth-century Lithuania (167), the psychological analysis of the experience of pilgrimage (75–76), the emergence of 'neopaganism' in Russia after perestroika (263–67). Hans Geybels offers a critique of 'Celtic Christianity', asserting that so much that is written on this topic fails to appreciate its complexity – not to mention the scarcity of evidence – and continues to cling to the 'armchair anthropology of the nineteenth century' (72).

A thread of nationalistic concern runs through the book. According to Hana Dvořáková, writing on the Czech Lands, 'The folklore movement [in the late nineteenth-century] was based on the postulate that traditional folk culture was the foundation on which the identification of the whole nation depended and was the touch-stone for the process of national self-realization which dominated the Europe of that period' (46). The impulse to preserve and study came at first from the educated elite regarding the peasant class; nowadays, scholars would want to follow a more socially inclusive model. Similarly, where occupation by a foreign power (Nazi, Soviet, Hapsburg) led to suppression, liberation leads both to a renewed expression of national customs and a corresponding academic study of them. Several of the authors explore the negative influence of atheistic (Marxist)

government on the study of religion and note a renewed vigour and support for such studies after the democratic changes of the early 1990s.

In a work of this kind, the absence of an index is rather disappointing. The English translations are uneven and the book is not free from typographical errors. Nonetheless, this book is a reference volume of considerable usefulness to ethnologists of religion, not least for the thorough bibliographies and the exhaustive contact details of scholars and research centres. But it is also a snapshot of a discipline that is still relatively youthful. According to several contributors, popular religion is 'on the rise', in terms both of practice and academic study, in Eastern and Western Europe. But a common lament is the relatively weak presence of the discipline in universities and other institutions of higher education. For many of the countries treated, this book offers the first ever report in English on the state of ethnology of religion within their borders; and for some of them, it offers the first in any language. This book is the first volume in the publisher's series of Studies in Ethnology, but it is unlikely to be the last.

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Nixon, Virginia. *Mary's Mother: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004. xiii, 216 pp., 36 illustrations. ISBN 0-271-02466-6

This book is a historical survey of the cult of Saint Anne in Northern Europe, specifically in Germany, from its beginnings in the early Middle Ages to its decline in the seventeenth century. Nixon focuses on the height of the cult in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Nixon argues that the cult of Saint Anne had four major aspects: first, that it represented a means of controlling female lay piety; second, that it was an important economic resource for churches and related institutions; third, that it was a means of defining and discussing models of marriage; fourth, that was an important part of the German pietistic use of devotional images.

The book is of interest to scholars working on confraternities because these are among the church institutions that Nixon argues saw particular importance in Saint Anne. For example, Nixon discusses the way in which the Sponheim Benedictine abbot Johannes Trithemius and his circle founded confraternities through which to spread the cult of Saint Anne throughout the Rhineland and the Netherlands (28–31). She also traces the relationship between the Saint Anne confraternities and others, such as the Rosary and Seven Sorrows confraternities, from which she shows the Saint Anne confraternities borrowed structures and goals (67–69). In one section, Nixon addresses the way in which the cult was later used by Luther as an example of an abuse, and how Luther's claims differed from