

Format de citation

Puto, Artan : recension de : Cecilie Endresen, Is the Albanian's Religion really "Albanianism"? Religion and Nation according to Muslim and Christian Leaders in Albania, Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz, 2012, dans : Südost-Forschungen, 73 (2014), p. 651-654, <https://recensio-stag.lorax.syslab.com/r/6186704106d547b383ce406d84e9db69>



copyright

Cet article peut être téléchargé et/ou imprimé à des fins privées. Toute autre reproduction ou représentation, intégrale ou substantielle de son contenu, doit faire l'objet d'une autorisation (§§ 44a-63a UrhG / German Copyright Act).

Athen, Wien

Walter Puchner

¹ Aristeidēs N. DULAVERAS, *Η Ανθρώπινη Ομορφιά στο Δημοτικό Τραγούδι, Α' . Η γυναικεία ομορφιά*. Athen 2007.

² Vgl. dazu den Aufsatz zu den Konnotation des Schönheitslobes des Verstorbenen in den Klageliedern bei Eleutheria GIAKUMAKI, *Η συνδήλωση του 'κάλλους' στα ελληνικά δημοτικά τραγούδια (μοιρολόγια)*, in: Eleutheria GIAKUMAKI / Emmanuelle MOSER-KARAGIANNIS (Hgg.), *Κανίσκιον Φιλίας, Τιμητικός τόμος για τον Guy-Michel Saunier*. Athen 2002, 313-347; die Studie von Fanca ANGELIEVA, *L'ideal de beauté feminine dans les chants populaires grecs*, *Studia in honorem Vaselini Bašiliev*. Sofia 1978, 117-125; die Dissertation von Konstantinos GOTSIS, *Les représentations du corps humain dans la société „traditionnelle“ Grecque: Chansons populaires, proverbes, rites*. Paris 1987, 7-53.

³ Walter PUCHNER, *Groteskkörper und Verunstaltung in der Volksphantasie. Zu Formen und Funktionen somatischer Deformation*, in: Burkhard PÖTTLER u. a. (Hgg.), *Innovation und Wandel. Festschrift für Oskar Moser zum 80. Geburtstag*. Graz 1994, 337-352; auch in DERS., *Studien zur Volkskunde Südosteuropas und des mediterranen Raums*. Wien, Köln, Weimar 2009, 541-556.

⁴ Charles STEWART, *Nymfomania: Sexuality, Insanity and Problems in Folklore Analysis*, in: Margaret A. ALEXIOU / Vassilis LAMBROPOULOS (Hgg.), *The Text and its Margins*. New York 1991, 219-252.

⁵ Gesammelt im Studienband Aristeidēs N. DULAVERAS, *Μελετήματα για το δημοτικό τραγούδι*. Thessaloniki 2013.

⁶ Walter PUCHNER, *Studien zum griechischen Volkslied*. Wien 1996.

Cecilie ENDRESEN, Is the Albanian's Religion really "Albanianism"? Religion and Nation according to Muslim and Christian Leaders in Albania. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2012 (*Albanische Forschungen*, 31). IX, 275 S., ISBN 978-3-447-06561-0, € 56,–

The European historical academic studies on Albania and Albanians are relatively few. In this sense, Albania and Albanians have a long tradition of having been hidden from view and solidifying through time the image of being "a mysterious and exotic land". This perception was further accentuated by the almost half-century Stalinist communist regime, which lasted from 1944, or the end of the World War II, until its fall in 1990. The rule of an ideologically orthodox, fanatic, paranoiac, and radically isolationist type of communism, put Albania out of the reach of the eyes of foreigners, let alone of scholars who are in need, more than anyone, of longer stays on the ground in order to have a fuller sense of "the spirit" of the country. Consequently, the fall of the regime created the favorable conditions for Albanian scholars to open the heavy "gates" of the Albanian archives and for foreign scholars to open both, the country and then the archives, too.

However, the opening of Albania offered more: the possibility not only to search in the archives, but also to investigate among officials and common people, to talk freely with them, a possibility which was severely prohibited in the communist past, especially between locals and foreigners. Apart from isolationism and the difficulty of penetrating a local society very much frustrated by half a century of harsh repression and lack of freedom, we should not

forget that there are very few European scholars who have mastered the Albanian language well enough to have direct access to all forms of information.

During the last 25 years of the post-communist period, an increasing number of books have been published on Albania, of which some have been substantial contributions to the history of the country. Among them, the book by Cecilie Endresen, "Is the Albanian's Religion really Albanianism? Religion and Nation according to Muslim and Christian Leaders in Albania", stands out as an important and interesting contribution of historical research.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I offers the reader a general historical background of the country from the 19th century to the present day. It gives an overview of the Albanian religious communities in the Ottoman Empire and of religious institutions in the country after it declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, comprising here World War I and the period of independence (1912-1939), World War II (1939-1944), the communist (1944-1990) and post-communist period (since 1990). It also presents the main religious institutions in the country such as a) the Muslim community, which includes small Sufi orders, b) the Bektashi community, an independent Islamic sect, c) the Roman Catholic Church, and d) the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania. This section of the research also includes a theoretical section, which underlines the symbolic and constructivist approach of the author. With regard to academic discipline, this work falls into the inter-section of history of religion and nationalism studies.

Part II presents the views of Albanian clergy on topics such as the past, the concept of religious tolerance, salvation and theology, and religious diversity in practice. The author also dwells in this chapter on the definitions of ethnic and national concepts and their specific articulations by the various religious clerics.

Part III deals with the notions of "myths" and "identities" and how various religious communities draw the boundaries between "us" and "we" groups.

The final section, Part IV, concludes the work.

The author's research begins with a phrase from the famous patriotic poetry by Pashko Vasa (1825-1892), an important figure in the Albanian National Movement (1878-1912). The phrase "the religion of Albanians is Albanianism", from the poem "Lament for Albania" (1880), exhorted Albanians to leave aside religious divisions and regard each other as brothers. It was the period immediately following the Congress of Berlin (1878) when unity among Albanians was considered by Albanian leaders of the time as an element of utmost importance in resisting the expansionism of the Balkan states. This phrase was turned into a political creed, especially during communism, when the communist leaders banned all religious institutions in 1967, turning Albania the first "atheist" country in the world.

The general concern of the author is to tackle the relationship between religion and nation with a focus "on the symbolic universes of the clerics" (C.E.: 4). Some of the more important questions the author engages with include: "while the concept of 'Albanianism' arose as an effort to reconcile Albanians across religious divides, what does it mean to today's clerics? Is Albanianism a concept they identify with, and in what way? What does religion, or God, have to do with the nation? What does it mean to be Albanian? Is there any conflict between nation and religion? How and in what way are religious differences relevant? What do they think about interreligious relations in Albania?" (C.E.: 4).

The author engages a methodology, which focuses on the interviewing of “the religious leaders, who are professionally engaged in questions of meaning and interpretation”. (C.E.: 5). Apart from the fieldwork and interviews the author conducted with religious officials, the research is based upon analysis of newspapers, books and religious periodicals. The author’s mastering of the Albanian language is an important advantage, especially in the case of the interviews which are conducted directly without the intermediary of a translator.

This study is important as it has been carried out through direct interviews with clerics, which makes it a pioneering work in Albanian studies and an example of research conducted through the use of oral history techniques rather than the single use of archival documents.

Cecilie Endresen’s research is a relevant input to Albanian studies as it challenges one historically predominant public discourse, according to which, and due to the religious division of Albanians into Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics, the Albanians are superficially religious people, and nation and national unity have always superseded religion.

As the author rightly explains, this credo had to do at first with a call launched by the Albanian nationalist intellectuals during the Albanian National Movement (1878-1912), then with the Albanian state secularist policies since the period of consolidation in the 1920s and 1930s, and finally with the atheist communist propaganda of the communist state after the Second World War. The final aim was to carve out a compact and culturally homogenous Albanian “nation”, from the diverse regional and religious communities of the pre-nation-state period.

This work demonstrates the common and diverging approaches of the religious leaders with regard to the articulation of the notions of “nation”, “fatherland”, “the past”, etc. As an example of fieldwork, it brings the reader a much more complex picture of the relations between religion and nation, and clearly points out the centrality and importance of religion. On the other hand, the author convincingly argues that often the discourse over religion and nation is contextual, depending on the topic discussed. The latter is one of the most influential factors in defining the place and role of “religion” and “nation” in the whole discourse.

The author should also be commended for including a substantial amount of material with regard to the Albanian religious communities from an historical point of view. This inclusion of historical material places the research into an indispensable historical perspective explaining the major events, such as Albanian independence from the Ottoman Empire 1912, the creation and consolidation of the Albanian state in 1920s and 1930s, the period of the communist dictatorship 1944-1990, as fractures of the Albanians’ history, and not a progressive historical evolution, as the Albanian public is accustomed to. This is a very important conceptual approach.

Due to the long time-span that this study covers, from nineteenth century until the present day, it sometimes falls into generalizations. It would be more complete if it would dedicate additional attention to the social products of communism, which was one of the longest periods in the history of modern Albania (1944-1990). The most significant being, in this regard, the “atheist socialist culture”, and generations of Albanians that were brought up under the influence of that culture and how it has affected the current public discourse about religion.

The study by Cecilie Endresen has an important theoretical component, which follows the author's stance in viewing religion as a "cultural construct". The author believes this approach would better fit the study of local variations of the world religions, such as Islam and Christianity, and it would improve investigations into how Islamic and Christian traditions are integrated into Albanian history, culture and society. On the other hand, the author sharply discards the possibility that "functionalist definitions" of religions would serve as an appropriate theoretical tool to deal with the Albanian case.

It is the opinion of the author of this review that a combination of the two concepts would be a better basis from which to study the Albanian case. The "cultural dimension" of religion is surely a kind of analysis, which aids in the understanding of the Albanian particularities with regard to religion-nation discursive patterns, but it cannot avoid the "functionalist" role of religion. In the end, religion, like nationalism, also serve as a strong bond creating, linking and keeping together human communities that resemble and diverge from each other.

The book "Is the Albanian's Religion really 'Albanianism'" by Cecilie Endresen is a further enrichment of the academic studies curricula on Albania and Albanians and it will no doubt become a point of reference for future authors who enter the complex and intricate sphere of nationalism and religion studies.

Tirana

Artan Puto

Alekos E. FLORAKIS, *Μαρμαρογλυπτική στη Νάξο. Από τον 15^ο αιώνα μέχρι σήμερα* [Marmorglyptik auf Naxos. Vom 15. Jahrhundert bis heute]. Athen: Ekdoseis Filippotis 2014. 346 S., 430 Abb., ISBN 978-960-295-051-7, € 19,91

Alekos Florakis ist ein bekannter Volkskundler des Inselraums, ehemaliges Mitglied des Verwaltungsausschusses der Griechischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde, der sich vorwiegend mit der Steinmetzkunst, der Marmorglyptik und anderen traditionellen Berufen im Ägäisraum beschäftigt, speziell auf seiner Heimatinsel Tinos und in den Kykladen.¹ Seine letzten Publikationen weisen ebenfalls in diese Richtung.² All diese Veröffentlichungen sind zugleich ein Schaugenuss, weil sie nicht nur ausreichend, sondern vielfach sogar opulent bebildert sind. Dies gilt auch für die hier zu besprechende Geschichte der Marmorglyptik auf der Hauptinsel der Kykladen seit dem 15. Jh. Naxos mit seiner französisch-katholischen Oberschicht in der „Burg“, erst 1566 dem Osmanischen Reich zugeschlagen, aber weiterhin mit Sonderprivilegien und einer Halbautonomie bedacht, war für viele Reisende ein Anziehungspunkt, vor allem auch wegen des reichen Jagdangebots in den waldigen Bergen. Somit flossen die Quellen für die Steinmetzkunst und Marmorglyptik auch in früherer Zeit relativ reichlich. Dies wird in einem Hauptkapitel, „Wege und Einflüsse der naxiotischen Marmorglyptik“ (17-78) ausführlich und mit Quellen belegt dargestellt. Die Wurzeln dieser Kunst stammen aus der Zeit der Lateinerherrschaft im Archipelagus (1207-1566), aus der