NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS PLURALITY

—

PANDEMIC AND THE DIGITISATION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

POLIGRAFI

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P O L I G R A F I

NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS PLURALITY
—
PANDEMIC AND THE DIGITISATION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE ACCELERATED
DIGITISATION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE /
PANDEMIJA COVIDA-19 IN POSPEŠENA DIGITALIZACIJA
RELIGIJSKEGA ŽIVLJENJA

REGULAR PAPERS / DRUGE RAZPRAVE

TSUNEKO KONDŌ KAWASE/ MARIJA SKUŠEK: A CASE STUDY IN NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS PLURALITY

TAISHŌ PERIOD DIVINATION AS TSUNEKO KONDŌ KAWASE'S PERSONAL ITEM

Klara Hrvatin

Introduction

Tsuneko Kondō Kawase (近藤常子, 1893–1963) was a Japanese woman who lived in Slovenia from the 1920s onwards. She was a key figure in cultural exchange and the first important promoter of Japanese culture and language in the country, leading a life that could be described as a "roller coaster." Research into her photographs and other documents reveals that her life shows great shifts and changes, especially in the years before she came to Slovenia. Born in the Japanese prefecture of Gifu, she later lived in Kwantung, China,[1] and subsequently moved to north-east China, where she met Austro-Hungarian naval officer Ivan Skušek (1877–1947) in Beijing, with whom she came to Slovenia. From her first marriage to German official Paul Heinrich Schmidt, she had two children: Matthias Schmidt (1912–1933) and Erika Schmidt (1914–1958). Her efforts to promote Japanese culture, as well as the largest Chinese collection in Slovenia today[2]–which she

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[1]   This is evident from the photographic material from the archive at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. There are two photos showing Tsuneko Kondō Kawase with her mother and father, and one with just her mother, both with the name of a photo studio in Kwantung. From this, we can conclude that she lived there in her early youth, between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, regarding the supposed age in the photo.

[2]   For the insight into the original scope of the Skušek Collection, see Tina Berdajs, "Retracing the Footsteps: Analysis of the Skušek Collection," *Asian Studies* 9, no. 3 (2021): 141–66, https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2021.9.3.141-166, and Ralf Čeplak Mencin, *V deželi nebesnega zmaja (350 let stikov s Kitajsko)* (Ljubljana: cf., Zbirka Varia, 2012).

and Ivan brought from China–began mainly in the period after her church wedding, when she received all Christian sacraments in 1927 and also adopted her Slovenian name, Marija Skušek.[3]

The archive recently rediscovered at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum contains various documents that Tsuneko Kondō Kawase kept, collected, or considered important. Notable among them are her lecture manuscripts in German and Slovenian,[4] newspaper clippings about her activities in Slovenia–including lectures she gave in Slovenia, in the former Yugoslavia, Austria and elsewhere between 1920 and 1930– which she collected herself, etc.[5] All the objects provide insights into her and her interests, how she portrayed Japan, and her visions, knowledge and convictions at the time. As her "biographical objects,"[6] they can shed light on her life's journey, which is still largely unexplored and unknown.

This article focuses on one such object: a sheet of rice paper with a thicker strip of paper woven through two holes to form a knot on the back, with calligraphic inscriptions, the large headings standing out from the main text, and a large red stamp extending across the joint covering the sides of the paper (see Figures 1 and 2).

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[3]   For her activities after she came to Slovenia, see Klara Hrvatin, "The First 'Mrs Japanese' of Slovenia, Between the Two World Wars: Marija Skušek and Her Series of Lectures on Japanese Women," *Asian Studies* 9, no. 3 (2021): 169–97, https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2021.9.3.169-197.
[4]   For details, see Hrvatin, "The First 'Mrs. Japanese' of Slovenia Between the Two World Wars," 169–97.
[5]   Interesting are, for example, photos from various press photography agencies showing the life, culture and customs in Japan (be it from the photo agency Scherl Bilderdienst, Japan Press Illustrating Service from 1926, Pacific & Atlantic Photos Berlin, or Slavia Press Belgrade). Also of interest is a small booklet measuring 13 by 19 centimeters, titled *The Primary School Songbook* (小学唱歌集, Shōgaku shōka shū) from 1883 (second edition), compiled by the Music Investigation Committee of the Japanese Ministry of Education, which represents the first music notation system in Japanese music textbooks and was used for school lessons from 1881.
[6]   Janet Hoskins, "Agency, Biography and Objects," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, 74–84 (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2006).
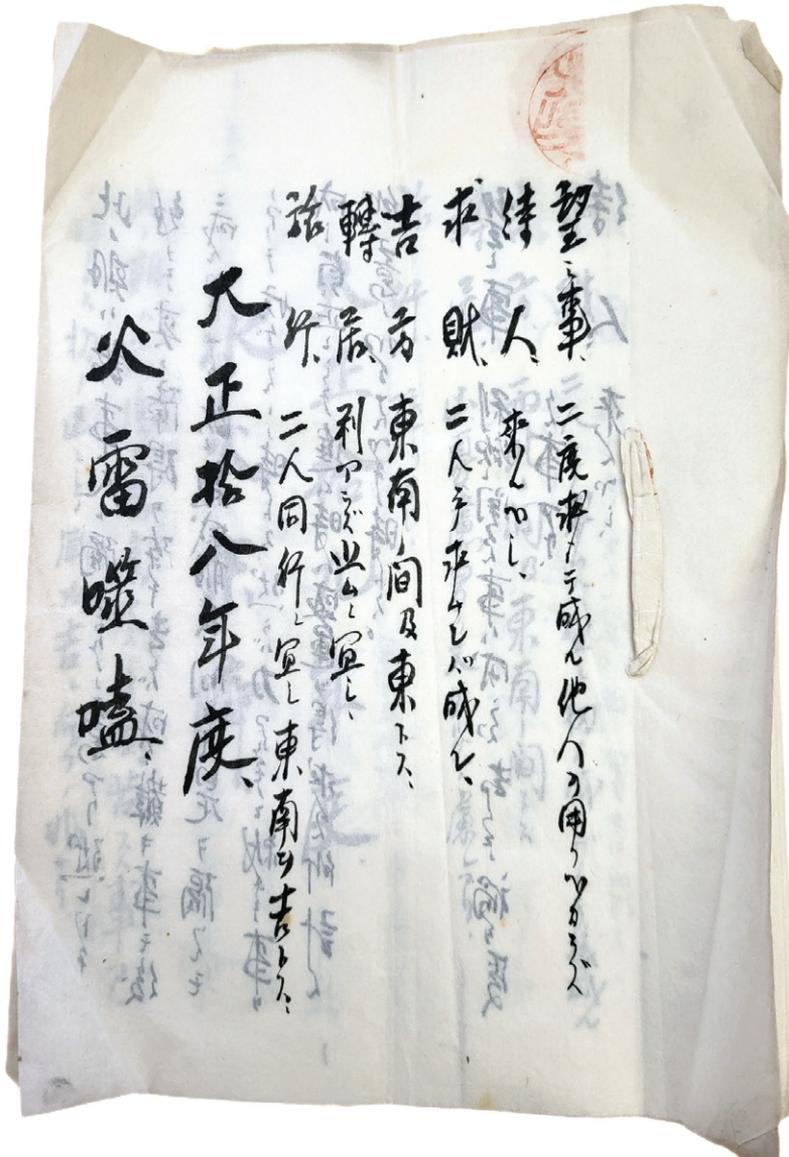
Figure 1: The first page of the document bound with a paper string made of twisted Japanese paper (*koyori* こより). Photo by the author. (Source: Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum)
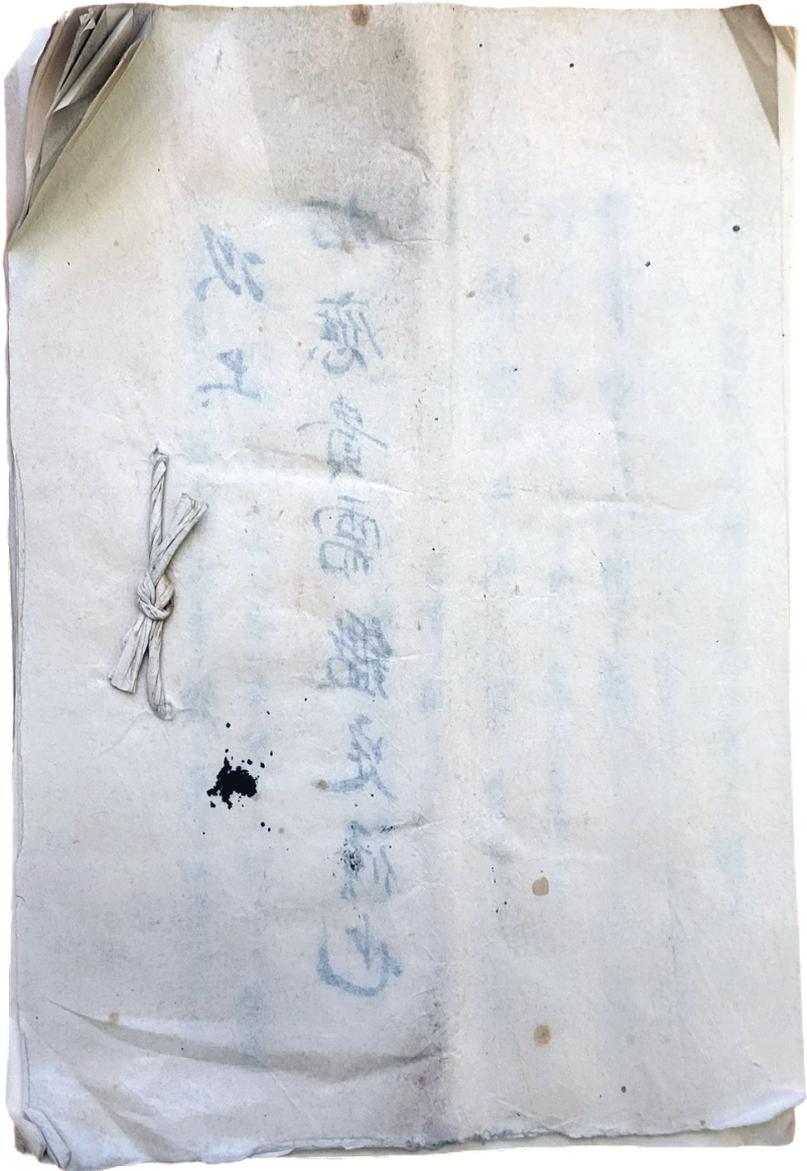
Figure 2: The back of the document with the binding knot. Photo by the author.
(Source: Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum)

The document, which Tsuneko kept until her death, is a handwritten piece of calligraphy depicting a prophecy based on the *Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes* or *Takashima ekidan* 高島易斷, an important divination book based on *Yijing* or *I Ching* 易経 (易經) or *Ekikyō* (The Book of Changes). Firstly, to reflect on the characteristic of the divination–what kind of divination is it and what can it tell us about Tsuneko Kondō Kawase? Was it customary to receive it at the beginning of the 20th century, when Tsuneko probably received it, and how common was this type of divination in China, where Tsuneko stayed in the early 20th century? Secondly, we will be interested in what kind of document it is; its form–the style of calligraphy and the significance of its stamps–its precise dating, as well as its content. The transcription and translation of the first year of the forecast is presented, in order to show the characteristics of the whole composition of the document. Moreover, this paper highlights its content's characteristics, and according to the summary of the whole prediction, it attempts to reflect on Tsuneko's life. And thirdly and most importantly, what does this item say about Tsuneko? Why did she feel the need to order this type of document? Was it before she left China, or when she visited Japan for the last time? Did she perhaps order the divination before she got married in Slovenia in 1927, received all the Christian sacraments and also took the Slovenian name Marija Skušek? Did she perhaps even make some decisions in her life in relation to this prophecy?

Characteristics of the divination in the document:
Takashima Ekidan (高島易断) or
Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes

Looking at contemporary Japan, divination consumerism[7] is very much alive and manifests itself in various forms. Walking through the entertainment districts in the streets of Tokyo at night, one can find fortune tellers sitting quietly in their furnished stores, which usually

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[7]   Kentarō Suzuki , "Divination in Contemporary Japan: A General Overview and an Analysis of Survey Results," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 3/4 (1995): 249, http://www.jstor.org/stable/30234454.

consist of a table, two chairs, a billboard, and paper-covered oil lamps, or sitting in front of their closed offices. There are a variety of divination techniques, including palm reading, tarot cards, geomancy (divination based on the interpretation of geographical features, *ti li* "geography", *feng shui*, "wind and water", or *kasō* "house divination"[8]), astrology, physiognomy (face reading), Chinese augury (fortune telling by analysing the parts and number of strokes in Chinese characters of personal names) and Eastern astrology; while palmistry and physiognomy are most often found in street fortune telling.[9] From what we can observe from the Japanese culture of fortune-tellers, we can agree: "Divination in its various forms is a subject that is truly close to the awareness of the general public. Indeed, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that fortune-telling in all its diverse manifestations comprises a distinct culture of its own, particularly in the nation's urban areas."[10]

The same applies to the divination of Tsuneko's document–the Yijing divination, *ekisen* 易占い or *shūeki* 周易, one of the oldest forms of divination in the world, which is still used today as the main tool of the divination corners described above. It is based on the philosophy derived from the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes* (in Japanese *Ekikyō* 易経) or the *Classic of Changes*, an ancient Chinese divination text among the oldest of the Chinese classics, which has a long and interesting history in Japan. It is often seen as a guide to understanding the natural world, human experience and the cosmos. It uses a system of trigrams and hexagrams, which are essential for divination. A trigram consists of three lines, each of which can be either broken or unbroken. These lines are stacked on top of each other so that there are eight possible combinations of these three lines–trigrams. Hexagrams are also used, which are formed by combining two trigrams, one on top of the other, giving

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[8]   See Mary Picone, "The ghost in the machine: Etiology and divination in Japan," in *Beyond Textuality: Asceticism and Violence in Anthropological Interpretation*, edited by Gilles Bibeau and Ellen E. Corin, 249–270 (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1995), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110903010.249.

[9]   Suzuki, "Divination in Contemporary Japan," 252; Audrius Beinorius, "On the Religious and Cultural Aspects of Divination in Japanese Society," *Scholarly Papers University of Latvia,* 813 (Oriental Studies Managing Cross-Cultural Communication: Asia, Europe and Latvia) (2006): 94, 104.

[10]   Suzuki, "Divination in Contemporary Japan," 249.

a total of six lines. In total, there are 64 unique hexagrams in the Yijing, each of which represents a particular situation, energy or concept and is used to interpret different life situations or questions.[11] Divination often involves asking a question or focusing on a specific topic and then casting a series of lines to determine a hexagram. There are several methods for this process, but the most common are the coin method (tossing three coins six times to create a hexagram, with heads and tails representing the yin and yang lines) and the yarrow stick method (a set of 50 yarrow sticks to obtain lines for the hexagram). Each hexagram is then interpreted by reading the corresponding text in the *Yijing*.[12]

The Yijing divination theory and method is of particular importance in East Asian history. Both the philosophy and the divination derived from it were integral components of Chinese civilization, which Japan sought to introduce into its own cultural sphere. It came to Japan around the sixth century and was rarely studied in ancient Japan (539–1186), but in the Middle Ages (1186–1603) it enjoyed great popularity among Zen Buddhist monks, courtiers, and high-ranking warriors.[13] The Yijing reached Japan as a part of the Chinese cultural wave and had a long period of interest in Japan, while its popularity peaked in the Tokugawa period (1603–1868). In his study, Wai-ming Ng emphasizes a statistical analysis of the text itself and its popularity, which, according to him, included 1085 texts written by at least 416 Tokugawa scholars on the Yijing during the Tokugawa period, thus surpassing the other Confucian classics of the period according to these parameters.[14] The textual study demonstrates as well an extensive use of the text in divination.[15] It was supported well by the military government which ruled Japan between 1192 and 1868.[16] Closely associated with Confucianism, the work was mainly commented on by the scholars in this field. To a much lesser extent (about 10%), it was used in schools of thought

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[11] John Blofeld, *I Ching: The Book of Change* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 59–72; for details, see also *Yijing* [*Knjiga premen*], trans. Maja Milčinski (Ljubljana: Domus, 1992).
[12] Ibid.
[13] Wai-ming Ng, "Study and Uses of the I Ching in Tokugawa Japan," *Sino-Japanese Studies* 9, no. 2 (1997): 24.
[14] Ibid., 26.
[15] Ibid., 27.
[16] Ibid., 25,

and religions such as Shintō, Buddhism, Shingaku, and national learning, while it was also used in medicine, science, art, and the military. The authors and the uses of the text varied, but indicates the extent of the text's importance in the Tokugawa period (1603–1867), with Confucianism as its dominant force.

The prediction of the future for Tsuneko Kondō Kawase belongs to one of the most important schools of Yijing divination in Japan during the Edo and early Meiji periods–the Takashima School of divination (or *Takashima eki* 高島易).[17] At that time, it was the largest organization of Yijing practitioners in Japan, using the *Book of Changes* as the basis for divination. The school's methods were used by Meiji leaders as a guide for political and military decisions. At the same time, it served as a tool to promote conservative political goals. Wai-ming Ng describes these goals as "imperial state ideology, pan-Asian colonialism, the political and moral implications of Shinto, and aspects of traditional morality."[18]

The school used *Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes* (or *Takashima ekidan* 高島易断, 1901) as its most important publication. This work was authored by Takashima Kaemon 高島嘉右衛門 (1832–1914), who is best known for his contributions to the modernization of Japan by launching modern industries and businesses, and advocating the development of public institutions and modern enterprises such as electricity, railroads, Western education, and experimental agriculture.[19] At the same time, was also known as a prominent traditional scholar with a focus on the Book of Changes. Takashima was also known as a semi-official soothsayer who was called "the sage of the Book of Changes"[20] (*eki sei* 易聖) during the Meiji period, because he advised prime ministers, generals, high-ranking officials, and others. He was most famous for his prediction

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[17]   The style of divination of Tsuneko Kondō Kawase's document was examined and verified with the help of Dr Zhou Weiqiang (維強敬上), an expert on Chinese art and history, and curator of the Palace Museum in Beijing (Forbidden City) and Hong Kong.

[18]   Wai-Ming Ng, "Divination and Meiji Politics: A Reading of Takashima Kaemon's *Judgments on the Book of Changes* (*Takashima Ekidan*)," Dao Companion to Japanese Confucian Philosophy vol. 5, ed. Huang Chun-chieh and Johan Allen Tucker (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 329.

[19]   Ibid., 317.

[20]   Ibid.

of the outcome of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the assassination of Meiji leader Itō Hirobumi. The use of divination by the leader was not a new practice. Japan had a tradition of using oracles in politics and the military, and the Confucian-educated Japanese were also familiar with the *Book of Changes* as a tool to promote their ideology.

As such, Takashima was an influential *Book of changes* diviner. Above all, he popularised the *Book of Changes,* while also simplifying its method, making it more practical for divination, as well as easier to apply to political, military, business, and agricultural affairs in the country.[21] He also promoted it as overseas by ordering an English translation[22] by the head of the Tokyo English School, Sugiura Shigetake 杉浦重剛 (1855–1924). It was first edited in 1893 and a Chinese edition was prepared by Wang Zhiben (1835–1907), which increased the book's popularity also in China.[23]

Analysis of the divination document: its form

The document consists of a bundle of nine thin, folded sheets of Japanese rice paper (commonly used for calligraphy) written from the first page onwards, with the last, reverse side left blank (see Figures 1 and 2). It is written in the classic *bungotai* 文語体 style, a Japanese writing style used from the Meiji to the beginning of the Shōwa period, which developed on the basis of the Japanese language from the Heian period (794–1185).[24]

That this is a formal document is also evident from the seals stamped over the pages of the text. The smaller seal (see Figure 3), stamped directly over the text, indicates that the text is official and demonstrates the responsibility of the person in charge of description. This seal is often used in cases of correcting and deleting parts of the text.[25]

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[21]   Ibid.
[22]   Kaemon Takashima, *Takashima Ekidan*, trans. Sugiura Shigetake (Tokyo: Keigyōsha, 1893).
[23]   Ng, "Divination and Meiji Politics," 317.
[24]   Segawa Yumi, E-mail correspondence, 20 September 2024, August 2021.
[25]   The form of the paper and the contents were examined and transcribed by Segawa Yumi 瀬川結美, through correspondence with the author from 2 February 2021 to 20 Septem-

The characters of the seal are 泉川 (see Figure 3), which could be read as Izumikawa or Izumigawa and might represent the name of the person who prepared the description, though this remains uncertain. Another seal, larger in size, appearing in the document is so called *kei-in* 契印 seal (see Figure 4). It is stamped across the crease portion between the page edges and the binding tape on the upper or lower part of the document. It is used when a single document consists of multiple sheets and shows that the multiple papers are an official set.[26]
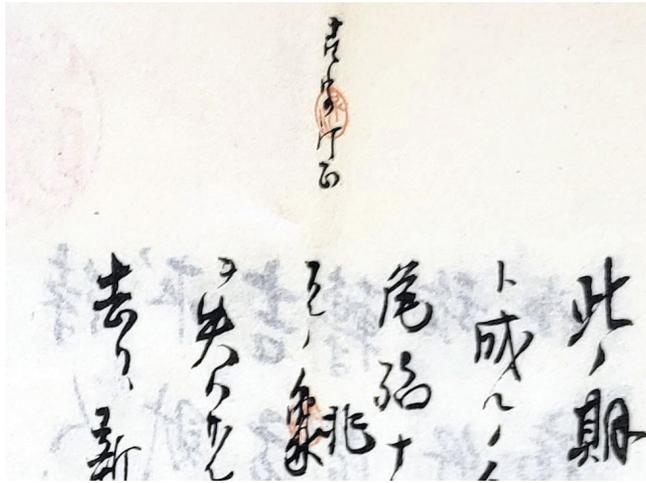
Figure 3: The seal with the characters 泉川 stamped over the text, used for corrections and deletions. Photo by the author. (Source: Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum)

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26   Ibid.
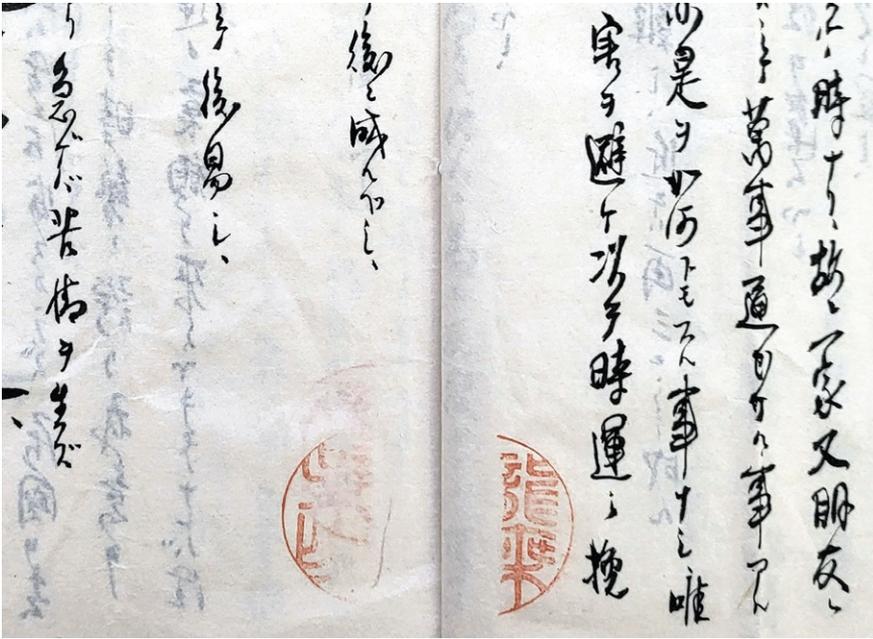
Figure 4: *Kei-in* 契印 seal stamped across the crease portion between the pages in order to show that the document is official and consists of multiple sheets. Photo by the author. (Source: Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum)

It is used mainly in order to prevent falsification of the document, document replacement and extraction, or to prove that the document has one copy.[27] It demonstrates that it is one document, and may correspond to the Western page numbering. The character of the seal is 龍乘[28] which could be read as Ryūjō or Tatsunori, 龍 (ryū) meaning "dragon", an auspicious symbol in Chinese culture, often representing strength, vitality, and good fortune, while 乘 (jō) means to "get on," "ride on," or "to get on a vehicle."

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[27]   See "Keiin to wa? Ōin basho to keiyakusho no fukurotoji seihon hōhō, wariin to no chigai wa? 契印とは？押印場所と契約書の袋とじ製本方法、割印との違いは？ (What is a seal? What is the difference between the place of stamping, covered binding method of the contract, and the stamp?)," GMOsain burogu, accessed July 11, 2024. https://www.gmosign.com/media/work-style/keiin/.

[28]   Zhou Weiqiang 維強敬上, E-mail correspondence, 15 November 2024.
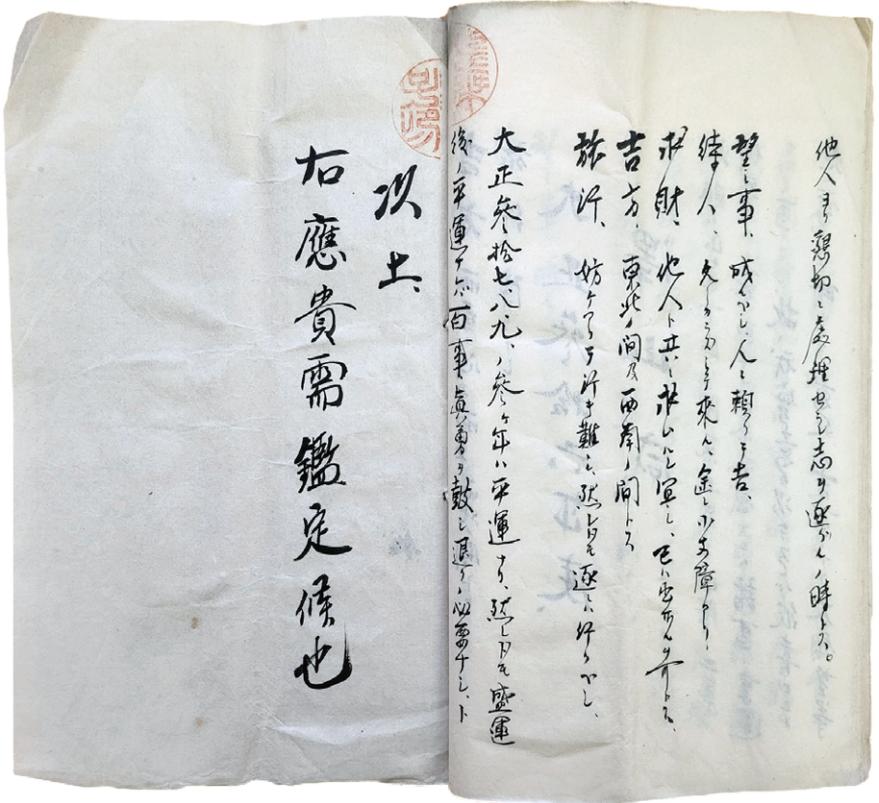
Figure 5: The last page (left) showing the closing sentence of the document. "以上、右応貴需鑑定候也" (With this, I appraised your fortunes at your request and wrote it down on previous pages). Photo by the author. (Source: Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum)

As can be seen from the first page of the document (see Figure 1), where only one half of the *kei-in* stamp is visible, this is an indication that there may have been more pages in the document, or that the first page of the document is missing. This is also evident from the content of the document, which will be presented below. On the other hand, the end of the document is very clearly indicated. On the last written page (see Figure 5), after the document is finished, the expression *ijō* 以上 is used to indicate the end or the conclusion of the paper. Followed by the last line in the document–written in classical Chinese, indicating that the paper was prepared in accordance with the order for the document, with the phrase 以上、右應貴需鑑定候也 which could be transcribed into Japanese (以上、右、貴の需に應じ鑑定候也 I jō, migi ki no ju ni ōji kantei sōrō nari) as meaning "With this, I appraised your fortunes at your request and wrote it down on the previous pages."[29]

According to Wang Jianyu (National Palace Museum in Taipei), the seal belonged to a famous soothsayer in Japan whose divinations were based on *Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes*. Below (see Figure 6) is an advertisement[30] for his services in Taiwan titled "The Incredible Prophet is here!" According to his advertisement, which is kept in the National Museum of Taiwan History, the fee is one gold yuan per person (equivalent to 750 milligrams of gold).[31]

Analysis of the divination document: its dating

The document is missing its first page, where it would have explicitly stated for whom the prediction was made and the date the document was given. However, what is evident from the document is the years for which the prophecy was commissioned and made. Based on the transcription of the document, we can determine that the prediction

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[29]   Segawa Yumi, E-mail correspondence, 15 February 2021.
[30]   Advertising flyer "The Incredible Prophet is here!" (Taiwan: National Museum of Taiwan History (Registration Number: 2018.024.0076)), https://collections.nmth.gov.tw/Collection-Search01.aspx?a=112.
[31]   Zhou Weiqiang 維強敬上, E-mail correspondence, 15 November 2024.

Figure 6: Advertisement for the services of a fortune teller consulted by Tsuneko Kondō Kawase (Source: Archives of National Museum of Taiwan History).

was made for at least the years between the 18th and the 39th year of the Taishō period. This indicates that the prediction was made for the years 1929 to 1950 in the Western calendar. What is striking is that the prediction was pre-calculated for the years of the Taishō period that do not exist in the Japanese calendar, which also gives clues to the period in which the prediction was made. The Taishō period ended with Taishō 15, which is the year 1926 according to the Western calendar, since the Emperor Taishō died in the beginning of 1926. Despite this, the prediction shows the years up to Taishō 39.

This suggests that the prediction was probably written before the year 15 of the Taishō period, that is before the Showa period (beginning in 1926), or at least in the year 15 of Taishō period. The fact that the document is from an earlier period is also evidenced by the content of the text and the half-stamp on the first page of the document, as mentioned earlier. The text has neither an introduction to the text nor a title. In all other parts of the prediction, the inscription of the year and the names of the hexagram are mentioned for each year. This is also

evidenced by the *kei-in* stamp on the first page of the document, which is only half the size, while the other half, which usually extends across both pages, is missing (see and compare Figures 1 and 4). From this it can be concluded that at least one of the pages is missing from the text and therefore, the prediction dates of an earlier period are missing.

The fact that the prediction was written in the Taishō period is also proven by an advertisement of a soothsayer (see Figure 6), whose stamp can be found in the document. The document shows that the fortune teller was active in Taishō 9 (1920).

Analysis of the divination document: its content

The content of the document follows a certain pattern. It is structured in such a way that a future forecast is described for one year up to a total of three years: first, a general forecast is given, summarising the content of the prediction, followed by a forecast according to selected points concerning aspects of one's life, including 1) *nozomigoto* 望み事 (one's wish or desire), 2) *machibito* 待人 (person you are waiting for), 3) *kyūzai* 求財 (wealth), 4) *kippō* 吉方 (direction of luck), 5) *tenkyo* 転居 (relocation or change of residence), 6) *ryokō* 旅行 (travel). When predicting each year (or several years in total), the text begins with the year(s) for which the prediction is made, followed by the name of the hexagram predicted for that year. In the sixth example, the title of the prediction tells us the year for which the prediction was made. Taishō 18 (which we know is the year 1928) corresponds to the hexagram number 21, *karai zeigō* 火雷噬嗑 (see Figure 7 and Diagram 1).

望ミ事ハ二度来リテ成ル他人ヲ用ヒ申ニ及バズ

待人ハ来ヤシ

求財ハ二人ニテ平ラバ成ル

吉方ハ東南ノ間及ビ東下ス

話シハ辰ニ利アラヂ当シ宜シ二人同シ宜シ東南ヲ吉トス

大正拾八年度、

火雷噬嗑
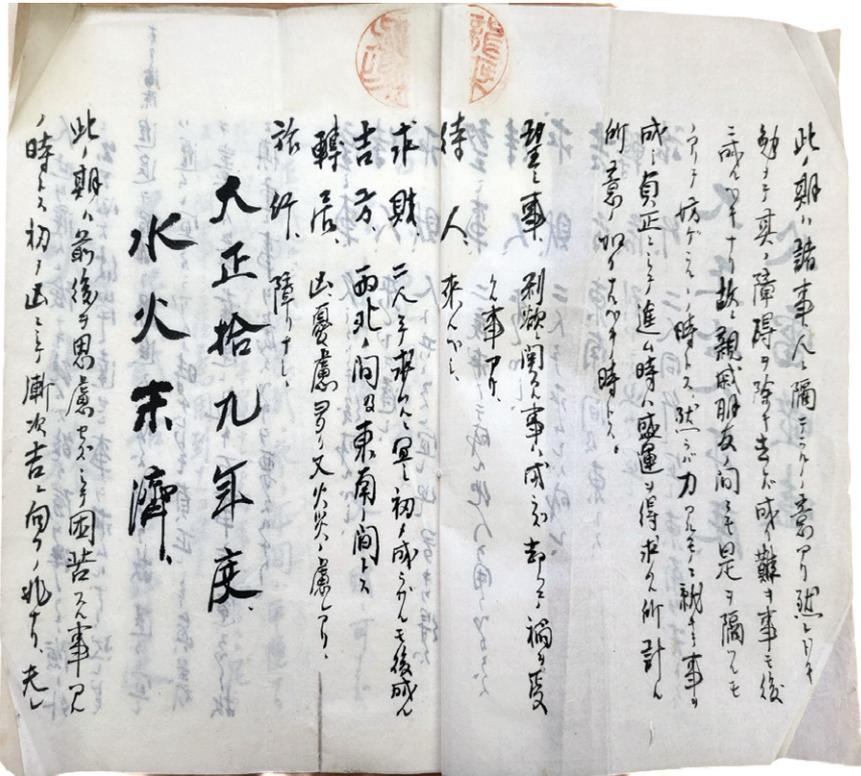
Figure 7: The first page of the divination document (on the right), featuring a divination likely for the year *Taishō 17* (1927) (the previous page is missing). A complete divination for the year *Taishō 18* (1928) starts at the end of the page on the right side and continues on the left of the figure.

Heading of the fortune telling for a certain period. The first line is the period of the fortune. The second presents the hexagram in I Ching.

大正拾九年度

水火未済

Trans.

大正拾八年度 (Taishō 18 nendo):

the 18th year of Taishō

火雷噬嗑 (Karai zegō)]:

21ˢᵗ hexagram (噬嗑 (shi kè)) of I Ching.

Descriptions about the fortune of the period.

此の期は諸事人に隔てられゝの意あり
勉めて其の障碍を除き去れば成り難き事も後
成のありて坊げらるゝ故に親戚朋友の間にも是を隔つるも
貞正として進む時は盛運を得て然らば力ある所求めんに就きて事を
所意の如くなるべき時とす。

Trans.
See Figure 8.

Descriptions about the fortune of the period for selected points*.

望み事、利欲に関らん事は成らず
却つて禍に変ん
待人来るべし。
求財 二人子求むると宜し切めらざれんも後成ん
吉方 西北自東南の間より又火災の憂あり
転居 凶自の慮あり
旅行 障りなし。

Trans.
See Figure 9.

*Selected points include:

1) *nozomigoto* 望み事 (one's wish or desire),

2) *machibito* 待人 (person you are waiting for),

3) *kyūzai* 求財 (wealth),

4) *kippō* 吉方 (direction of luck),

5) *tenkyo* 転居 (relocation or change of residence),

6) *ryokō* 旅行 (travel).

Diagram 1: Transcription and translation of the divination document for one year (the year *Taishō 18* or *1928*)[32]

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[32]　The transcription and the rough translation was prepared by Segawa Yumi (Segawa Yumi, E-mail correspondence, 20 February 2021).

Kono ki wa shoji hito ni hedateraruru no i ari. Shikaredomo
tsutomete sono shōgai wo nozokisareba narigataki koto mo nochi
ni narubekinari. Yue ni shinseki hōyū no aida nimo kore wo hedatsurumo-
-no arite samatageraruru no toki to su. Shikaraba chikara aru mono ni tsukite koto wo
nashi teisei to shite susumu toki wa seiun wo e motomen tokoro hakaru
tokoro i no gotoku narubeki toki to su.

This period will be a time when you will be disturbed by others in many ways (with various things).
But if you diligently remove the obstacles, the difficult things will later become possible to achieve.
Because there are times when even among relatives and companions, there are those who stand in your way.
In this case, you should follow someone who has power (could be interpreted as "ability, influence and power"). So, it is a time when you are hindered by obstacles even among relatives and friends.
If you proceed with discipline and the right mind, you should be able to achieve the great fortune you seek.

Figure 8: Transcription and approximate English translation for the broad prediction for the year Taishō 18 (1928).

1) 望み事 (*nozomigoto*) one's wish or desire:
利欲に関はる事は成らず却つて禍を受ける事あり。(Riyoku ni kakawaru koto wa narazu. Kaette wazawai wo ukeru koto ari.)
Things related to profit and desire will not work, instead they may even lead to misfortune.
2) 待人 (*machibito*) person you are waiting for: 来るべし。(Kitaru beshi)
Should come.
3) 求財 (*kyūzai*) wealth: 二人子求むるに宜し初め成らざるも後成る（Futari ko motomuruni yoroshi. Hajime narazaru mo nochi naru.）
What you wish two children? you shall find, even if it does not happen at first, it will happen later.
4) 吉方 (*kippō*) direction of luck: 北の間及東南の間とす (Kippō seihoku no aida oyobi tōnan to su.)
Between the northwest and the southeast.
5) 転居 (*tenkyo*) relocation or change of residence: 凶、憂慮冒り又火災の慮れあり。(Kyō, yūryo kaburi mata kasai no osore ari.)
There is a risk of bad luck, concern (trouble?) or a fire.
6) 旅行 (*ryokō*) travel: 障りなし (Sawari nashi.) *No obstacle.*

Figure 9: Transcription and approximate English translation for prediction of selected points from 1) to 6) for the year *Taishō 18* (1928).

This is the earliest year (see Figure 7) for which we have a complete forecast, both for the general forecast and for the summary by selected points, whereas for the year before, 1927, we have a forecast without a title, without the year and without a general forecast, only a forecast for selected points.[33] So the content of the beginning of the document indicates that it is probably the first part of the document and at least the title of the document and the part of future forecast is missing, as already mentioned in the text.

Looking at the overall prediction, the most favourable year is 1927, which has a positive prediction in many respects. That is for love, health, change of residence, a trip for two as well. The following year, if we see from the above translation, 1928 show difficulties between relatives and partners, bad luck, and even dangers of fire. The years 1929 and 1930 also point to hardship, unsuitability for travel and the acquisition of wealth, and warn above all to act very cautiously. The following years up to 1932 are calmer and show no major anomalies. Selecting one of the years with a really bad forecast that could be described as a turning point is 1932–33, which shows clear changes and a negative mood. The forecast points out that "you will feel like you are in a foreign country," and warns of problems in terms of where you live and your home address. In addition, only to this year is a new item added to the prediction of the selected items, namely shippei 疾病 or illness (急に治し難し。然れども治す。 *Shippei kyū ni naoshigatashi. Shikaredomo naosu.* (Diseases that are difficult to cure quickly, but can be cured). The prediction for the years 1933–1934 encourages change, the search for something new and fresh, and advises to relate her desires to others or to do things for the sake of others. The year 1934–35 heralds a mediator of financial gain or the possibility of losing money and advises not to try to make a profit and go public. Later years are more promising: the prediction for 1937–38 encourages working with others in the pursuit of wealth and realising one's dreams by being treated kindly by others and in 1950, fortune and peace is predicted.

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[33] Those points are similar to what we find today on the random divinations *omikuji* お御籤/御神籤, widely recognised and practised random fortunes on the small slips of paper you can buy in Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines.

If we compare the prediction with her real life, we can point to two points where the prediction corresponds fairly well with her life, namely 1927 is the year in which she marries, and the year 1923-1933, for which the gloomiest prediction is made, is the year in which her son Matthias falls ill and dies in 1933.

<div align="center">

Tsuneko Kondō Kawase's recourse
to the traditional practises of divination

</div>

Tsuneko's life went through many phases and changes, often including hard times, which she had to endure even before her arrival in Slovenia. From the photographic material, most of which comes from the archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum, we can conclude that she moved with her family to the Liaodong Peninsula, Kwantung,[34] which was under Japanese concession at the time. She arrived in Slovenia on 8 September 1920, together with her children–son Matthias Schmidt and daughter Erika Schmidt from her previous marriage to the German official Paul Heinrich Schmidt. She probably met the first husband in Beijing, where she probably moved between 1905 and 1906, but this requires further research.

There were probably many moments in Tsuneko's life when she sought the advice of fortune-tellers. Her life–particularly the period before she came to Slovenia, as well as her visits to Japan, Kwantung, and later Beijing–remains unclear. Since the document suggests that the prediction was written at least in the 15th year of the Taishō period (before 24 December 1926) or earlier, the following deductions can be made.

One of the most likely occasions when she could obtain or order the divination would have been before she left China (see Figure 10). In this case, this would be the period before she travelled to Slovenia and visited Japan for the last time (see Figure 11), more precisely, when she applied for her Swiss visa. This was to be her last visit to Japan. On her visa for the trip to Europe, it is noted that she travelled as Tsune Schmidt and applied for and received her visa (a document entitled *Certificate*, which was issued in lieu of a passport) at the Swiss legation

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[34]   See Footnote 1.

Figure 10: Tsuneko in Beijing on a trip to Badaling, the site of the most visited section of the Great Wall of China, with two Japanese women (Source: Photo archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum).

which was in charge of German interests at the time in Tokyo, on 5 March 1920.[35] The decision to travel to a completely unknown country with a new partner, Ivan Skušek Jr., was probably not easy for her and marked a new turning point in her life. She left behind her life in Japan and also in China, her job and the greenhouse flower shop where she had lived for many years, and set off with her two children Matis, then 8 years old, and Erika, then 5 years old, to unknown Europe.

Interestingly, she commissioned a forecast for a period of at least more than 20 years, which probably indicates that she knew that she would not have the opportunity to contact a forecaster when she wanted or needed to, because she knew that this would not be possible in the new world. Given that this fortune prediction was ordered, we can also assume that she could order it from China, already when she was left

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[35]   *Certificate*, Tokyo: Legation de Suisse, March 5, 1920.

Figure 11: A photograph of Tsuneko with her children in front of the Muge Bridge (Mugebashi 武藝橋) at that time in Atobe, Gifu prefecture (probably in 1920, her last trip to Japan), bearing the mark Minō Japan, Minō Ōgaki 美濃大垣, Seinō insatsu sha 西濃印刷寫 (Seino Printing Co.) (Source: Photo Archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum).

alone with two children when her first husband probably had to leave for Europe due to war circumstances.

If the prediction had been ordered from Slovenia, it could be due to her marriage in 1927, when she married in Church, accepting all Christian sacraments in 1927, and adopted the Slovenian name Marija Skušek, while her children were converted from the Protestant to the Catholic religion. This is probably a little less likely. It was a big change in her life, but according to Ivan Skušek in the manuscripts of František Skušek, this step was the wish of Ivan Skušek, who thought that in this way he would win the opportunity to be accepted into the navy.[36] The

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[36]   "Ivan wanted to return to the navy, where he had served for so many years. He also relied on the help of Dr Korošec, who was a priest and then a minister in Belgrade. In his opinion,

family records also show that in the early years of her stay in Slovenia she did not have much contact with Japan,[37] which is of course less relevant and requires further study of her documentation.

The fact that she could have received the document in China or ordered it to China could also be a possibility. At that time divination used in the document: *Takashima Ekidan* (高島易断) or *Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes* was popular in China as well, and the translation into Chinese well known. Tsuneko Kondō Kawase received her divination in Japanese, and, even if she lived in China at the time, she consulted in Japanese in order to obtain the fortune prediction. Her consultation of a Japanese fortune-teller, who was very popular in Japan at the time, indicates that she had very good connections to Japan and events there. The formality of the document and the price of the forecasting service also indicate that Tsuneko Kondō Kawase came from a society that could afford such services.

Concluding thoughts

Despite the transcription and rough translation of Tsuneko Kondō Kawase's divination document, the prediction's dating is difficult to evaluate. Since the present analysis indicates that the beginning of the document or probably some pages are missing, it is difficult to determine the exact date of the document. However, we can assume that it was written entirely for the Taishō period, as it dates back to at least 1926, the last year of the Taishō period. It is also likely that her name or the name of the commissioner of the prediction would have been at the beginning of the document, which would have definitively confirmed that she herself was the commissioner of the document.

The transcription and the seal on the document also suggest that the prediction uses *Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes*, which was common in late 19th and early 20th century Japan. It was used

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this required Tsuneko's conversion to the Catholic faith, a church wedding, the 'Mary call' and all the rest of the circus. Everything she did was Ivan's idea, and she did it for Ivan, who believed that this would give him a chance to join the navy." (Franci Skušek, Rokopisni zapiski Francija Skuška [Handwritten notes of Franci Skušek], Ljubljana: Slovenski etnografski muzej, n.d.).
37 Ibid.

by one of the most important schools of Yijing divination in Japan at that time–the Takashima School of divination, which used the *Book of Changes* as the basis for divination. The publication was authored by Takashima Kaemon, a businessman and an intellectual who, by popularising the *Book of Changes* and simplifying its method, made it more practical for divination and apply it to political, military, business and agricultural affairs in the country. It is likely that Tsuneko was familiar with this divination technique, or divination was something she was already familiar with, a practice related to her costumes? We can hardly guess, but given her life circumstances; she travelled a lot, changing her place of residence and the circle of people around her,[38] she could turn to ask for fortune teller guidance. Considering the fact that she commissioned a forecast for a period of at least more than 20 years, and that this was one of her important steps in life, we can assume that she ordered the divination before leaving for Europe, i.e., before 1920.

The seal on the document (龍乘) shows that the divination was prepared by a well-known soothsayer active in the Taishō period Japan, known by the name 龍乘子, who around 1919 and 1920 visited Taiwan, which was at the time under Japanese rule. No matter where Tsuneko Kondō Kawase lived or from where she ordered the divination, this indicates that she had a strong lineage and connection to Japan and her Japanese cultural background.

Acknowledgements

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[38] This also brought about changes in religious practice: she herself, a Japanese woman who belonged to the Buddhist and Shinto religions, married a German who adhered to the Protestant faith and then joined the Christian religion years later.

I would like to thank Ms Segawa Yumi for her help with the transcription and translation of the document, as well as to Gerlad Kozicz for his writing suggestions. My sincere thanks also go to Dr Zhou Weiqiang 維強敬上, an expert in Chinese art and history and curator of the Palace Museum in Beijing and Hong Kong for his help in verifying the divination method as well as the diviner's stamp of the document.

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THE ADAMANTINE TERRIFIER ON THE DRESSER

Gerald Kozicz,
Di Luo

In 1957, a team from Filmske novosti was invited to produce a documentary of a well-known resident of Ljubljana, Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase / Marija Skušek (1893–1963).[1] The film was a portrait of the woman who called herself »the first Japanese Slovenian« as well as a documentary of her flat at Strossmayerjeva 3 in the centre of Ljubljana (Fig. 1). At the beginning of the film, Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase, dressed in a kimono, opens a double-wing glass door and invites the audience into her living room. As the camera follows her, the viewer's attention is directed towards a collection of small metalwork pieces displayed on a dresser in front of a mirror (Fig. 2). The arrangement is reminiscent of an altar, as the religious nature of the sculptures is immediately perceivable. Buddhas depicted in monk's robes and seated on lotus bases constitute the majority of the sculptures, while Bodhisattvas and Cosmic Buddhas adorned with crowns, jewelled ornaments and silken garments are also present.

One sculpture is particularly highlighted and singled out in a separate frame (Fig. 3). The commentator calls the figure a »Buddha«. The sculpture actually consists of two deities in an embrace – Vajrabhairava, the Adamantine Terrifier (lit. Lord of Wrath), and his consort Vajravetālī, the Adamantine Corpse, standing on two rows of smaller crouching figures.

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[1]   Zanimiva zbirka, avtor Vladimir Perišić ©Filmske novosti Beograd, 1957, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFDnA8UzBr0.

Fig. 1: Still from the 1957 film, Filmske novosti.

Fig. 2: Still from the 1957 film, Filmske novosti.

Vajrabhairava, or Vajramahābhairava (Tib. rdo rje 'jigs byed chen po, Great Lord of Wrath), is also commonly addressed as Yamāntaka, 'the ender of death' (death = Yama). Vajrabhairava is the highest and most potent form of the Yamāntaka group of deities of tantric Buddhism, all of whom share the central buffalo head as a key feature, which is derived from buffalo-headed Yama, the Lord of Death. It is a common practice in esoteric Buddhism, or more traditionally Vajrayāna and Secret Mantrayāna, that an obstacle encountered along the path towards enlightenment is brought down by using the obstacle as a weapon against itself.

Fig. 3: The wrathful couple. Skušek collection, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana (inv. no. 216 MG). © H. Motoh.

The iconographical representation of wrathful deities is the standardised method of visualising this concept. In this specific case, the Buddhist response to death is to adopt the same form, absorb and transform, and eventually subdue the obstacle.[2] The addition of the female consort reflects the aspect of wisdom (Skr. *prajñā*), which completes and directs the aspect of compassion (Skr. *karuṇā*) and skilful means (Skr. *upayā*) associated with the male figure. Thereby, this sculpture–just as tantric Buddhist art in general–is a direct reflection of a psychic process.
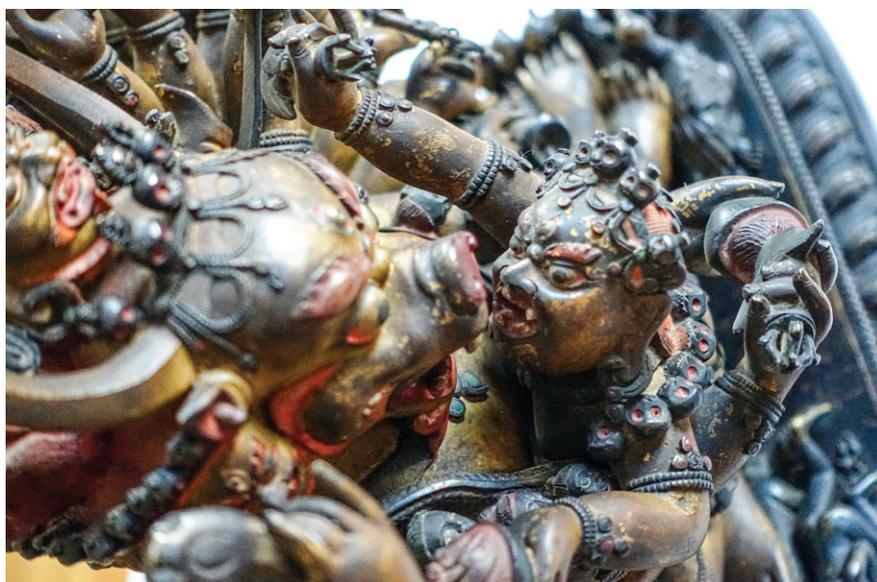
Fig. 4: The wrathful facial expression of Vajravetālī, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana (inv. no. 216 MG). © G. Kozicz.

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2   One Tibetan myth tells the story of a murdered (decapitated) monk who transforms into a demon and replaces his head with a buffalo head. He devastates the country until the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī adopts the same form and overcomes the demon.

Vajrabhairava stands in an active pose with 16 legs on various small figures, while his 17 pairs of arms, holding weapons and attributes (except for the central pair which embraces his female partner), create a radiating aureole. Vajravetālī clings to him with her left leg around his back. Both of her hands are raised while she leans back, looking upwards (Fig. 4). Vajrabhairava is nine-headed. In addition to the three frontally-oriented heads, he has three additional heads on the left and three on the right (Fig. 5). With the exception of the head at the top centre, all heads express extreme wrath, with protruding eyes and exposed fangs. The same applies for the single head of Vajravetālī.

Fig. 5: Rear and lateral heads of Vajrabhairava, Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Ljubljana (inv. no. 216 MG). © G. Kozicz.

To the visitors of Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase's home in the 1950s, the representation of the terrifying couple must have made quite an impression. The sculpture's immediate visual impact is certainly a good reason for placing it in the centre of the altar-like arrangement. At first sight, the configuration of the figures on the dresser seems to follow a visual logic, as the figures are simply placed according to size and

design rather than a specific iconographic or ideological structure that would be expected for an actual altar set. The order applied by Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase appears to be derived from the visual principles and qualities of the individual objects in the first place, if not exclusively based on representational considerations. Even placing the sculpture close to the mirror makes sense, because otherwise it would have been impossible for the visitors to see the horizontally arranged faces at the back of the piece. (Fig. 6a and 6b). This placement is reminiscent of museum exhibitions where multi-headed Indian statues–both Buddhist and Brahmānic ones such as the Maheśvara form of Śiva or Viṣṇu Vaikuṇṭha–are often displayed in front of mirrors allowing visitors to see the wrathful faces at the rear (Fig. 6a/b).

From a museological perspective, the documentary by Filmske novosti presents the collection as a part of a small but well-curated exhibition. Every exhibition, however, reflects a concept and the intention of the curator. In other words, it also tells us something about the curator. But who was the curator of this lived-in museum? So far, little is known about the pieces that actually came into the possession of the Skušeks. Ivan Skušek has been entitled the »collector,« but there is no evidence at all that he had acted as a collector in the sense of a specialist or an amateur scholar in Asian art. He had been a commissioner to the sea of the Austro-Hungarian navy with special training in economics, who, under unfavourable circumstances, spent several years in China. His activities rather resembled those of an art dealer.

The situation is completely different for Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase. By the time the film was produced, she had been a widow for ten years, and it had been 30 years since she was baptised. Born in Japan as Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase, she spent her youth in Northeast China, years that must have had a long-lasting impact on her intellect and cultural identity.[3] After relocating to a completely different cultural environment in Europe, she not only maintained but even cultivated her identity as the first Japanese woman in Ljubljana. It is quite obvious that she adopted

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[3]   See Klara Hrvatin, »The 'First Mrs Japanese' of Slovenia between the two World Wars: Marija Skušek and Her Series of Lectures on Japanese Women,« *Asian studies* 9 (25), no. 3 (2021): 169-197, https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2021.9.3.169-197.

Fig. 6a and b: Four-headed Viṣṇu Vaikuṇṭha in front of a mirror, Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, India. © G. Kozicz.

the role of the curator of the collection and shaped the stage wherein she began to play a central role, though this was of course never made official. It can be fairly assumed that both the traditional education received by Japanese women as well as the patriarchal system of Slovenia at that time determined that her position remained in the background.[4] In this context, the question arises whether or not the arrangement of the figures resulted from a deliberate creation of a Buddhist house altar. Even if not created as such on purpose, to what extent might the

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[4]   In 1930, Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase gave a number of public lectures about the role of women in Japanese society focusing on the strict subordination in marriage (ibid. 180). One such lecture was held at Graz Urania on 8 October (*Tagespost* 8. Oktober, 1930, Graz).

arrangement reflect a Buddhist perspective or even ideology? And how would a Buddhist practitioner at the time experience the presentation? Any inspection through the buddhological lens must naturally focus on the centrepiece: Vajrabhairava and Vajravetālī in an embrace.

A Matter of Wisdom

The presence of Vajrabhairava with Vajravetālī on the dresser requires as much explanation as their position in the centre. The terrifying couple expresses a motif that has never really gained a strong foothold in classical (Han) Chinese Buddhism which largely rejected the theology and explicit art of the Yoga- and Higher Yoga-tantras, two later traditions of Tibetan tantric Buddhism. However, the practice of these tantras has been documented in the case of several Chinese emperors, most prominently the powerful Qing ruler Qianlong (r. 1735–1796). It is not a surprise that a stylistic comparison with other pieces of metalwork suggests that this sculpture was likely produced by an imperial workshop in Beijing at the end of the 18th century.[5]

What we see on the dresser in the 1957 documentary might be read as a short history or visual summary of an impactful facet of Buddhism in China. The reconstruction of the possible meaning of the Vajrabhairava sculpture under discussion in its socio-cultural and religious context requires a retrospection into the long history and ambivalent interaction of the figure with Chinese culture. The origin of this history can be traced to the Vedic tradition of South Asia and back to Yama, the first of humankind. As the first to live on Earth, Yama is also the first to die and who then becomes the Lord of the Dead and the Ruler of the Underworld, the sovereign to all who follow him.[6] There, Yama serves as the judge for those who enter the intermediate state between death and rebirth. He represents the Final Judgement in the Vedic and Brahmānic concepts of reincarnation and rebirth. He knows

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[5]   We are thankful to Ulrich von Schroeder, Gerd Mevissen and Norbert Deuchert for their assessments regarding the approximate date and place of the production.
[6]   See Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple, Vol. 1* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1946 [repr. 1976]), 12.

the dharma, the cosmic order or law in Indian religion and philosophy, and decides which scenario of rebirth will become effective. Eventually, he is identified with the dharma and is referred to as Dharmarāja (»dharma king«), being elevated to the status of the ruler of the world. This promotion was based on the belief that he had the ability to move freely and swiftly between the various hells and heavens of the cosmos.[7]

In the Buddhist context, dharma was expressed to a large extent in a textual corpus entitled the *Perfection of Wisdom*, or *Prajñāpāramitā* in Sanskrit, which found its visual expression in the anthropomorphic form of a goddess with the same name. The compilation of Prajñāpāramitā sutras in the 2nd century CE marked the so-called Second Turning of the Wheel or Second Revelation of the Buddhist Teaching in the history of the religion. About the same time, the male Bodhisattva of Wisdom, Mañjuśrī, appears on the stage and soon gains significance as a major figure in the growing Buddhist pantheon. When Buddhism spread to China in the first half of the first millennium, Mañjuśrī seems to have become the more prominent representation of wisdom. David Quinter notes that the Bodhisattva was soon identified as a Buddha[8]; he was even addressed as the »Mother of Buddhas«, an epitaph which according to Conze was originally given to the goddess Prajñāpāramitā.[9] This transfer of the salutation hints at a shift from female to male, which might have also been a response to the cultural preferences of the Chinese patriarchal society. During the Tang dynasty in the late 7th–8th century, Mañjuśrī was elevated to the centre of Chinese Buddhism and politics. He was promoted to the position of a state protector and became associated with Wutai Shan, the Five-Terrace Mountains which rose in significance as his earthly residence and the paramount Buddhist pilgrimage site of East Asia (Quinter ibid. 594).

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[7]   Ibid. quoting from the *Śatapatha Brāhmana*, XI. 2.3.5.
[8]   David Quinter, »Mañjuśrī in East Asia,« in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, Vol. II*, ed. Jonathan A. Silk et al. (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019), 591–599.
[9]   Edward Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (London: Mouton&Co, 1958 [repr. 2008]), 15.

Fig. 7: Stele of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī with dwarfish Yamāntaka (viewer's left), ASI Site Museum, Bodhgaya, India. © G. Kozicz.

The Yamāntaka Category

In eastern India, Yamāntaka, the Buddhicised form of Yama, started to appear at the beginning of the 9th century as a companion to Mañjuśrī in the form of a dwarf-like *yakṣa* leaning on a club (Fig. 7). While Yamāntaka was depicted in anthropomorphic form, a bull was sometimes included as his vehicle (Skr. *vāhana*). A 6th-century text, the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, paved the way for this configuration as it »unequivocally identifies Yamāntaka as Mañjuśrī's wrathful emanation«.[10] He was transformed into an independent, full-scale Buddhist deity in its own right by the 9th–10th century.[11]

At the same time, tantric texts such as the *Vajramahābhairava Tantra* took shape. Various historical sources locate the origin of this text in Oḍḍiyāna, in the Swat district of modern Pakistan.[12] The tantras were composed after (or rather in response to) the theological concept of Bhairava, the terrifying form of Śiva and Brahmānic manifestation of destructive wrath (Fig. 8). While the first Buddhist mention of Bhairava in the *Mañjuśrīnāmasamgīti*, a text roughly dated to the 8th century, already links Mañjuśrī, Yamāntaka and Vajrabhairava together, the 10th-century monk Lalitavajra from Nālandā Monastery in East India is credited as the receiver of the tantras during his study in Oḍḍiyāna.[13]

Lalitavajra then transmitted the text to his disciple Līlavajra of Vikramaśila Monastery, the major tantric centre in northern India at the time, who then established the Vikramaśila lineage of transmission.[14] When invasions by the Turks, more precisely armies of the Islamic Ghaznavid kingdom, threatened Vikramaśila soon after the turn

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[10] Rob Linrothe, *Ruthless Compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art* (London: Serindia), 64. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* was translated into Chinese by Amoghavajra in the 8th century (ibid. 65).

[11] Ibid., 27; 167–168, Fig. 148–150.

[12] Bulcsu Siklós, *The Vajrabhairava Tantras: Tibetan and Mongolian Versions. English Translation and Annotations. General Presentations of the Classes of Tantra, Captivating the Minds of the Fortunate Ones*, trans. M. J. Boord and Losang Norbu Tronawa (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives,1996), 5.

[13] Ibid., 8, refers to Alex Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī: The Mañjuśrī-nāmasamgīti* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1985), 83, who critically notes that this might be a later interpolation to the original text.

[14] Ibid., 10.
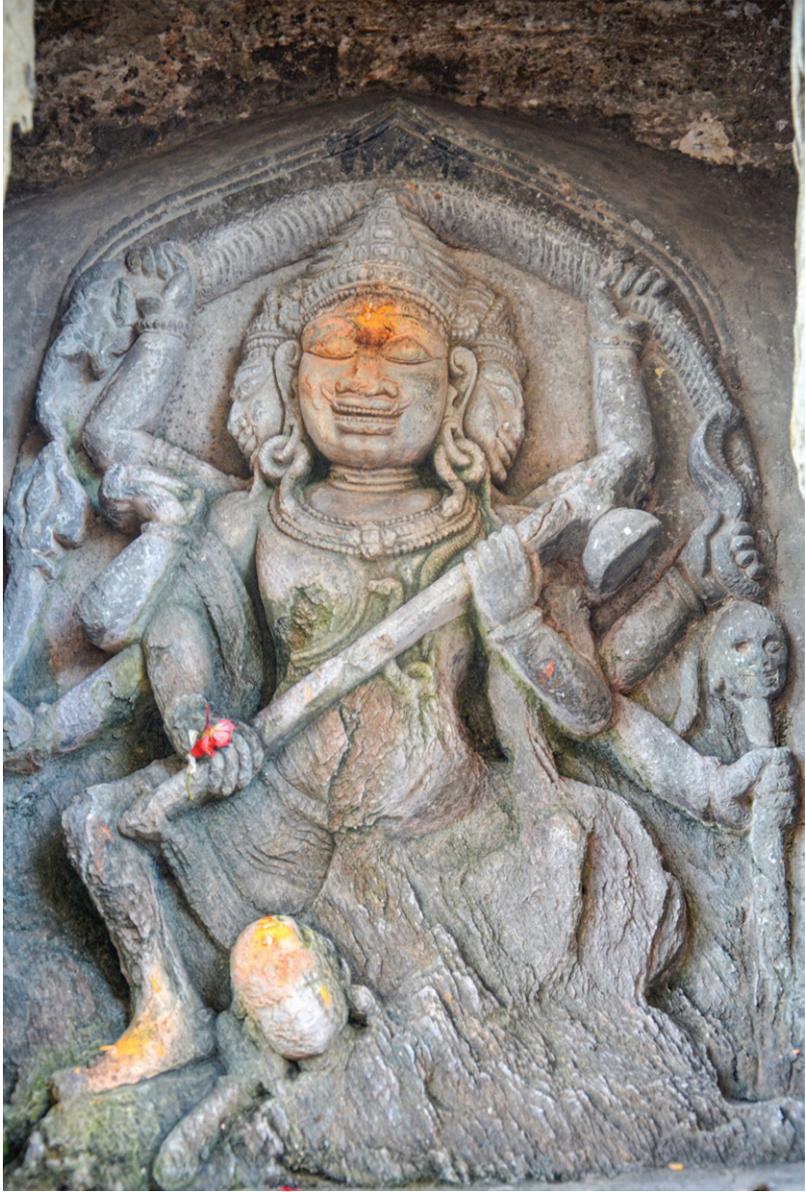
Fig. 8: Bhairava as the terrifying aspect of Śiva, Gaurīśankara Temple, Chamba, India. © G. Kozicz.

of the first millennium, rites of Vajrabhairava were performed to repel the invaders. As the 17th-century Tibetan historian Tārānātha notes, »a storm rose up and a mysterious band of black men emerged from the clouds, stabbing the Türk soldiers with daggers«.[15] Similarly, the Tibetan tantric practitioner Nup Sangye Yeshe successfully »applied Yamāntaka rites to defend against and subjugate his anti-Buddhist rivals« in the tenth century.[16] Apparently, tantric ritual which had been a matter of personal practice in meditation was applied against external threats in India and beyond. Rites and magic were then regularly used in religious and also political conflicts, and this would continue in the centuries to follow.

In 1264, at a time when the Mongol Yuan dynasty was firmly established in China, Kublai Khan designated Chögyal Phagpa (1235–1280) of the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism as his spiritual advisor. This is how the Yamāntaka category of deities entered the religious stage in the Chinese heartlands. The 'Ender of Death' and wrathful form of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom was a major tutelary deity or yidam (Tib. yi dam) of the Sakya Order of Tibetan Buddhism. By the 13th century, Chinese Buddhism had very well accepted the concept of the various hells and King Yama as their lord and judge, but it almost completely rejected tantric concepts that were reflected in visually explicit art. By contrast, however, the wrathful depiction of fierce deities, Vajrabhairava in particular, matched the self-perception of the Khan and his army as warriors of the steppes conquering the world. A woven tapestry (*kesi*) of a Vajrabhairava mandala probably produced by an imperial workshop in Hangzhou provides a stunning testimony to the significance of the practice of the Vajrabhairava tantra at the Yuan court (Fig. 9).[17] In contrast, tantric Buddhism continuously faced great scepticism among the broader society in China.

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[15]   Siklós, *Vajrabhairava Tantras*, 10.

[16]   Bryan J. Cuevas, »The Politics of Magical Warfare,« in *Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism, ed. Karl Debreczeny* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2019), 172–174.

[17]   The MET tapestry is the largest of its kind from the Yuan Dynasty and has been recently dated to 1329 by Tsangwa Gendun Tenpa (2019: 118–122). See also James C.Y. Watt and Anne E. Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 95–100.

Fig. 9: Vajrabhairava mandala, woven silk tapestry, c. 1330–1332 (Yuan dynasty), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, accession no. 1992.54. (public domain), https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/37614.

When the Yuan Dynasty was overthrown in the middle of the 14th century, the religious and political power of the Sakya collapsed immediately. Although the succeeding Ming Dynasty showed continuous interests in Tibetan Buddhism and maintained contacts with various Tibetan schools and religious authorities, Buddhism lost its status as a state religion and faced harsh criticism and even iconoclasm, particularly by Confucian scholars and Daoist priests, into the middle of the 16th century.[18]

Vajrabhairava and the Manchu Emperors

The situation changed with the invasion of the Manchus and the establishment of the Qing Dynasty with Beijing as its capital in the middle of the 17th century. The Manchu leaders particularly popularised Mañjuśrī and Vajrabhairava for two reasons. The first reason appears simply phonetic. The two first syllables of Mañjuśrī are phonetically identical to Manchu.[19] It could easily be used by the Manchus to legitimise their rule over China by relating themselves to the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, the long-established Buddhist state protector. Since the Yuan dynasty, emperors of China identified themselves as reincarnations of Mañjuśrī. Considered an embodiment of the Mañjuśrī, the Qing emperors would incorporate also the wrathful manifestations of that Bodhisattva, including the Conqueror of Death with his ability to carry out ultimate judgement. It is hardly possible to imagine a better choice of religious authorisation for kingship. Religious legitimisation, however, had to be confirmed by an established religious authority–which directly takes us to the second reason that favoured the rise of the cult of Vajrabhairava: The Fifth Dalai Lama and highest authority of the Gelug order of Tibetan Buddhism addressed Hong Taiji (r. 1626–1643), the first emperor of the Qing dynasty, as »Mañjughoṣa-emperor«.[20] The

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[18]   Karl Debreczeny, »In the Shadow of the Khan: Tibetan Buddhist and Political Legitimation in the Ming Dynasty,« in *Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Karl Debreczeny (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2019), 148.

[19]   Siklós, *Vajrabhairava Tantras*, 14–15.

[20]   Wen-Shing Chou, »Bodhisattva Emperors of the Manchu Qing Dynasty,« in *Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Karl Debreczeny (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2019),191.

founder of the order, Tsongkhapa Lozang Drakpa (1357–1419), had already been recognised as a reincarnation of Mañjuśrī, and the Vajrabhairava tantra became one of that order's three fundamental teachings (Fig. 10).

The veneration of Mañjuśrī and Wutai Shan as a pilgrimage site reached a highpoint under the most powerful Qing emperor, Qianlong. Although he was also supporting Confucianism, he strongly propagated Buddhism, had new Buddhist temples constructed, and stimulated the production of Tibetan Buddhist art.

The multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Manchu empire covered a vast portion of East Asia. Although Qianlong succeeded in stabilising the state using military force, he also followed the tradition of securing the empire through metaphysical measures. To the west of the Forbidden City in Beijing, within the Palace precinct, he built the Shanyin Dian (Hall of Good Causes) and dedicated it to Yamāntaka Vajrabhairava in 1751.[21] Enshrining a large statue of Vajrabhairava, the temple stands on an islet overlooking the imperial park and the palace. Moreover, the grid-based plan of Beijing can be equated with the layout of a Vajrabhairava mandala.[22]

Perhaps even more important than the statue is the mandala painted in the dome and covering its entire space (Fig. 11). The significance of the ceiling is the cosmic notion that comes with the round, domical shape and the vertical axis of the temple (axis mundi) that coincides with its apex. The ceiling is exclusively dedicated to Vajrabhairava as the main deity of the temple, which is itself at the very centre of a protective »hidden (or secret)« urban-scale mandala that was superimposed with the urban fabrics of the imperial city.

In the end, however, these efforts did not save the empire from coming to an end in 1911 following years of internal turmoil and the continuous external pressure from the colonial powers. Three years later, Word War I broke out, and the events around the German trading

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[21] Siklós, *Vajrabhairava Tantras*, 15. See also Esther Bianchi »Protecting Beijing: The Tibetan Image of Yamāntaka-Vajrabhairava in Late Imperial and Republican China,« in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Vol. 1*, ed. Monica Esposito (Paris: EFEO, coll. Études thématiques, 2008), 340.
[22] Siklós, *Vajrabhairava Tantras*, 15; Bianchi, »Protecting Beijing,« 329.

Fig. 10: Vajrabhairava and Vajravetālī to the proper right of the Buddha's head, mural inside the main niche of the Gelugpa White Temple of Hunder in Nubra, India. © G. Kozicz.

port of Qingdao became the preface of the history of the Skušek collection. Involved in the battle of Qingdao was the Austrian-Hungarian navy vessel Kaiserin Elisabeth by which Ivan Skušek had travelled to the China. He was not on board when the battle began but among a group of officers and soldiers who had been ordered to stay at the Austro-Hungarian trading post at Tianjin where he was then practically stranded.[23]

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[23]   For a summary of the events around the battle of Qingdao and the vessel Kaiserin Elisabeth see Gerd Kaminski, »Arthur von Rosthorn, Österreich, China und der 1. Weltkrieg,« in *China Report 166* (Vienna: ÖGCF, 2014), 17-20.

Fig. 11: *Mandala* of Vajabhairava in the centre of the dome, Shanyin Dian, Beijing. © R. Linrothe/Northwestern University Libraries.[24]

The Boxers and the God of War

The circumstances of Ivan Skušek's acquisition of the Vajrabhairava sculpture are unknown. While Qing-dynasty sculptures of Vajrabhairava are not rare, it is still remarkable that this piece found its way to the home of the Skušek couple in Ljubljana. This sculpture displays more than just refined craftsmanship. It represents the zenith of Tibetan tantric Buddhism in China. It resonates with the long history of Buddhist theology, its interplay with politics and its application in conflicts during epochs that saw some of the largest empires in human history. That history however, has so far been mostly linked to the imperial court and the aristocratic upper class.

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[24]   See also Rob Linrothe Image Collection, North Western University Libraries, https://dc.library.northwestern.edu/items/f8a9e6b2-c3ff-4ad1-b4aa-9c0cbd693d78.

This takes us back to the initial question: How should we interpret the configuration on the dresser? What might have been Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase's intention? To answer this question we might have a look at her life story. She came to Northeast China–the region where the Manchus had their ancestral roots–in around 1905. Although she officially declared her family to be followers of Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion, in her certificate of marriage,[25] one has to keep in mind that regular visits to Buddhist temples and even participation in Buddhist ceremonies were customary for all Japanese people.[26] Since she had left Japan at an early age, these temples in Manchuria must have provided the major visual source that shaped her idea of a Buddhist sacred space.

To maintain their cultural roots, the family probably visited and sought service for auspicious festivities at Buddhist temples that were either built or renovated by order of the Qing emperors. One temple of interest near Mukden (modern-day Shenyang), the former capital of the Manchus, was dedicated to Guan Yu, the Han Chinese legendary general and God of War whom the Manchus incorporated into their ideology and established as a state protector of the Qing. Guan Yu was related, if not conflated, with the yidams of the Gelug order–in particular with Yamāntaka.[27] It is exactly this conflation that finally created a link between the religious history of the God of War and the circumstances whereby the majority of the objects now in the Skušek collection first became available on the art market.

The Boxer Rebellion that broke out in China in 1899 eventually led to the extensive looting and demolitions of aristocratic buildings in Beijing by the foreign armies in the aftermath of the Boxers' defeat. A report by Paula von Rosthorn (1873–1967) sheds light on a so-far overlooked aspect of this traumatic moment in Chinese history–a note that is most relevant to the current discussion. Paula was the wife of Arthur

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[25]   Poročni list, Archdiocesan Ordinariate in Ljubljana, St. Nicholas Cathedral, vol. 1927, p. 137, no. 9.

[26]   Document from the personal archive of Janez Lombergar, the great-nephew of Ivan Skušek jr.

[27]   Bianchi »Protecting Beijing,« 344, fn. 67 referring to Xiangyun Wang, »Tibetan Buddhism at the Court of Qing. The Life and Work of lCang-skya Rol-pa'i rdo-rje (1717–1786)« (PhD diss., Boston: Harvard University 1995), 137–139, 315–316.

von Rosthorn (1862–1945), then Diplomat at the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Beijing. Paula von Rosthorn had accompanied her husband, who had studied Chinese literature at Cambridge University before entering the imperial diplomatic service in Vienna from where he was assigned to the position in China. The beginning of her journal states:

»Sie [Die geheime Gesellschaft der Boxer] gewann rasch eine große Verbreitung, weil die Führer versicherten im Besitze von überirdischen Kräften zu sein und jedem, der sich der Bewegung anschließen würde, den Schutz des Kriegsgottes versprachen, der ihn für Schuß- und Stichwunden unverwundbar machen würde. Es waren Exerzitien vorgeschrieben, welche durch heftige rhytmische Bewegungen bei den betreffenden Individuen eine Art hypnotischen Zustandes erregten, der den Zuschauern stets als Einwirken höherer Mächte erklärt wurde.«[28]

Paula von Rosthorn explains that the successful spread of the Boxer Movement was due to the claim by their leaders that they had supernatural powers and the promise that all followers would be protected by the God of War and become invulnerable to bullets and swords. She further mentions compulsory rites that included wild, rhythmic body movements–like wild dances–that generated a hypnotic state of mind.[29] We cannot say which God of War she refers to. The mention of the rites including frantic dances and a kind of state of ecstasy, however, reflected a borrowing from Tibetan Buddhist Cham dances rather than Confucian or Daoist practices. We may assume that the Boxers created a fusion of ritual practices from several cultural strata to stand up against the colonial powers and the increasing influence of Christian missionaries. It would be only natural if they employed a conflation of Yamāntaka-Vajrabhairava and Guan Yu to enhance the impact of their propaganda and stabilise the alliance between the various parties that joined the movement. But first of all, such rites should motivate

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[28]   Paula von Rosthorn, *Peking 1900*, ed. Alexander Pechmann (Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), 21.
[29]   We assume that the observations are widely accurate as the whole book, which is practically a journal, provides a precise documentation of the events and is free of colonial and anti-Chinese prejudice. Although the von Rosthorns both joined the defence forces of the diplomatic quarter during the besiege by the Boxers, they were full of admiration of Chinese culture and the people. After her return to Vienna, Paula von Rosthorn was the first woman to receive the medal of honour for bravery in combat by the Emperor (Kaiser) Franz Joseph.

and prepare their followers for battle. It is possible that the beginning of the Boxer Rebellion was the moment when the concept of tantric Buddhist ritual–perhaps in a heavily modified form–reached also the non-Buddhist members of the Chinese society. Paula von Rosthorn's comments establishes a link between the rituals of the Boxers and the long tradition of wrathful deities. Her comment is a sketch that super-imposes the aforementioned magical performances in Buddhist ritu-als with the actual fighting on the battleground. Religious goals like purification, enlightenment and nirvana, and scenarios of afterlife and rebirth were pushed into the background while survival and victory in times of conflicts despite their purely mundane nature became the most urgent. And even though the momentum was short-lived and the Boxer Movement failed, the memory of the rites must have lingered at least for a while. Even a young girl like Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase could have hardly been unaware of the growing popularity and significance of these deities as reflections of the precarious socio-political situations in both China and East Asia in the beginning of the 20th century.

At this point, mention must be made of two minor sculptures among the set on the dresser–Vajrapani and Begtse[30] (Fig. 12). Though significantly smaller than the Vajrabhairava couple, these two deities stand out from the set because of their wrathful appearance. Vajrapani's relevance to the present discussion derives from his function as a state protector of the Mongol-Yuan dynasty. Begtse, who widely shares his physical features with Vajrapani, is the Mongolian Buddhist warrior deity. Placed centrally in front of Vajrabhairava, they establish a triadic configuration with a clear message: protection, victory in warfare and the destruction of obstacles. Thus, the configuration on the dresser pre-sents a long religious tradition and at the same time pictures the socio-cultural climate of the period from the late 19th century to the end of the Qing dynasty.

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[30]   Begtse is not listed on any inventory list. This is not surprising because in the past this deity was often mislabelled as Vajrapani or some other protector or *yidam*. However, except for that one photograph, no evidence of this figure is found in the archives and neither is it among the pieces of the present collection in the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.
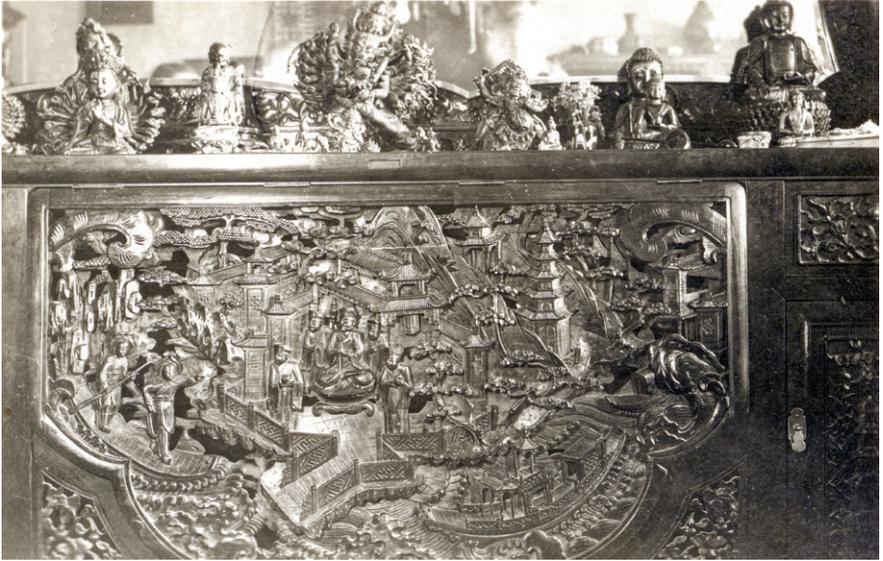
Fig. 12: Begtse holding his scorpion handle sword in front of Vajrabhairava. ©
Photographic archive of the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

The Mirror

Three archival photographs show the collection presented in differ-
ent flats and different spatial settings.[31] Although in one case the view is
partly blocked, the configuration seems always the same: Vajrabhairava
and Vajravetālī claim the centre. Whether or not such a consistency
hints at an ideological concept remains a matter of speculation at pre-
sent. However, the arrangement of the other figures changes. The pho-
tographs are not clear enough to provide all details, but some of the
larger Buddhas and one multi-armed Bodhisattva can still be identified
with certainty. They can be found in different positions in the different
places where they were presented. Only the wrathful couple appears in

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[31]   See e.g. Tina Berdajs, »Retracing the Footsteps: Analysis of the Skušek Collection,« in
Asian Studies 9, no. 3 (2021): 157, Fig. 2, https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2021.9.3.141-166.

the same position throughout the history of this part of the Skušek collection–even when Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase became a widow.

A comparison of the archival documents testifies that the Vajrabhairava sculpture was not the only constant element in this setting. The second unchanged component was the dresser itself, which was always used to display the collection of the metalwork pieces in all the photographs. Obviously the Skušeks considered it ideal for practical and aesthetic reasons, but we might ask again: Was there a specific intention behind this choice? The frontal face of the main body of the dresser displays fine woodcarvings of Daoist motifs. Although the carvings attract the viewer's attention, the focus is also directed to the mirror. Besides the documentary, the dresser can be seen in at least four archival photographs. In two of them the mirror is visible, while in the other two the frame is covered by a textile. The reason for the cover was that the dresser had been shipped to Europe without the mirror. Following the installation of the mirror, the textile was removed.[32]

In general, the idea of placing the metalwork pieces in front of a mirror–or placing a mirror behind them–might have purely representational reasons. However, if viewed from a Buddhist perspective, the broader Yama-Yamāntaka context stimulates an alternative interpretation related to Yama's function as a judge and king of the underworld and hell. In most cases, the attributes of Buddhist deities reflect a mental process, for example the sword of Mañjuśrī cutting the roots of ignorance and duality. In addition, a weapon may also directly refer to a certain action, such as Yama Dharmarāja' club representing the physical action of crushing an opponent. While this destructive quality is well presented in Tibetan Buddhist art, the iconography of Yama Dharmarāja seems to lack attributes that express his function as a judge. To compensate that, his entourage of demonic creatures and wardens of the underworld were employed. While these terrifying creatures again display punishment in a vivid manner, they may also signify the moment of final judgement through specific hand-held objects and weapons–in this case a pair of dice and a mirror (Fig. 13a/b).

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[32]   The textile was recently identified by Tina Berdajs in the storage room of the SEM. It has never been inventoried.

Fig. 13a: Three companions of the Buddhist Yama Dharmarāja–the left one holding two dices, the central one piercing the head of a man, and the right one holding a mirror, Sakya Temple of Skidmang, Upper Ladakh, 16th–17th century.
© Q. Devers.

Fig. 13b: The three companions. Line drawing © G. Kozicz.

A thangka (scroll painting) of the Bhavacakra (Wheel of Life) now at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts depicts a pot-bellied Yama holding a mirror and presiding over hell.[33] A series of hanging scrolls showing the Ten Kings of Hell painted by Lu Xinzhong sheds light on the role of the mirror in the Chinese vision of hell in the 12th century[34] (Fig. 14). There, Yama appears as a Confucian official who oversees the judgement of those entering the sphere of the underworld. Three wardens of hell assist him as they force two men begging for mercy in front of a large round mirror. The mirror symbolises the truth as it will show the true nature of the indicted.

The conception is certainly based on the Buddhist model but bespeaks a purely Chinese context. It is clearly pedagogical rather than ideological in nature. The narrative and visual representations of this scene became well-known outside the Buddhist context and much accepted by non-Buddhist communities in China at the time, having even found their way to Japan. Either in China or already in Japan, Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase most likely came across this tradition and the meaning of the mirror associated with truth and judgement. The decisive moment when one faces his or her deeds must have been one of the crucial points of the narrative.

At its core is the connection between the mirror and Yama Dharmarāja. The placement of Yamāntaka-Vajrabhairava on the dresser might be understood as a reference to this narrative. This is admittedly hypothetical. Mirrors are devices of multifaceted symbolism in the East Asian religious context.[35] What appears to be a rather insignificant background element to us nowadays might have conveyed a clear message to a contemporaneous Buddhist practitioner from East Asia.

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[33] See Jeffrey Durham and John Henry Rice, *Awaken: A Tibetan Buddhist Journey Toward Enlightenment* (Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Art, 2019), 13 and 92, Cat. No. 4 and Fig. 13. The thangka is also accessible on the Himalayan Art Resources Website: https://www.himalayanart.org/items/85113/images/primary#-2363,-4178,5343,-145.

[34] For a full set of the Ten Kings of Hell, see the Nara National Museum website: https://www.narahaku.go.jp/english/collection/1013-0.html.

[35] See e.g. Gina Barnes, »Chokkomon and the 'Art of Death',« *East Asia Journal* 1, no. 2 (2003): 45–67; Schuyler Cammann, »The 'TLV' pattern on cosmic mirrors of the Han dynasty,« Journal of the American Oriental Society 68, no. 4 (1948): 159–167.

Fig. 14. Yama and mirror, from Lu Xinzhong, Ten Kings of Hell series, 13th century (Southern Song dynasty), China. Nara National Museum, https://commons. wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ten_Kings_of_Hell,_Yanluo_Wang_(Enra_%C5%8C)_by_ Lu_Xinzhong.jpg (CC BY 4.0).

For the time being we have no evidence that the mirror was part of Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase's original concept of the presentation. We do not know the specific intentions behind her choice of order, but we can recreate a historical context within which it is possible to interpret the arrangement on the dresser from different perspectives. One day, if we learn more about her life, we might get a better idea which of the perspective had been hers. Ultimately, the connection between the mirror and the arrangement of the sculptures was lost when the collection was moved first to the Goričane Museum outside Ljubljana in 1963 and later to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum where the objects were separated.

The Vajrabhairava-Vajravetālī became part of the Tibetan display in the permanent exhibition, while the dresser was disassembled and taken into storage. The significance of the sculpture for the Skušeks and their visitors can only be reconstructed through an understanding of the context in which it was displayed, a context which has only survived in archival photographs and a documentary film.

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SEEING MARY AND BECOMING MARIJA: TSUNEKO KONDŌ KAWASE'S BRIDGING RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL BOUNDARIES [1]

Helena Motoh,
Gašper Mithans

The events began on the morning of Easter Monday, 16 April 1927, at 9:30 with a baptism and concluded at 10:30 with a marriage ceremony.[2] The woman who entered the chapel of the Bishop's Palace in Ljubljana that morning was Tsuneko Kondō Kawase. Upon exiting, she was Marija Skušek, now married to Ivan Skušek Jr., a former officer of the Austro-Hungarian navy.[3] Within the span of an hour, she had changed her name and surname and received all the Catholic sacraments. Her two children from a previous marriage had been baptised the previous day and then received Confirmation on the same day as their mother.[4]

This notably swift procedure attracted significant attention from the press at the time. Daily and weekly newspapers, as well as journals, extensively covered the ceremony, publishing details about the wedding,

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[2]   »Marija jo je poklicala [Mary Called Her],« *Bogoljub* 26, no. 1 (1928): 7.
[3]   Archdiocesan Archives of Ljubljana (NŠAL), ŽA Ljubljana – sv. Nikolaj, Poročna knjiga [Marriage Registry] 1921–1940, 137.
[4]   Tsuneko's children received a conditional baptism, because it was not clear if they had been baptised correctly in China (»Pet zakramentov v eni uri,« *Jutro*, April 20, 1927: 3; Blaž Otrin and Marija Čipić Rehar, eds., *Jegličev dnevnik: znanstvenokritična izdaja* (Celje: Celjska Mohorjeva družba, Društvo Mohorjeva družba, 2015), 967). Their father was Paul H. Schmidt, a German official in China, so the children were initially baptised in the Lutheran tradition.

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including a large photograph of the couple and the guests, descriptions of her kimono, and a comprehensive list of wedding guests.[5]

Figure 1. Wedding photograph (Tsuneko and Ivan seated on the right and left side of Bishop Jeglič; Franc Kimovec stands behind the bishop). Source: Photo archive of Janez Lombergar.

Despite the overall positive and fascinated reception, the urgency of the ceremony raised questions. Numerous articles touched upon this rapid process, suggesting the need for further explanation. In January of the following year, an intriguing article appeared in the bi-weekly religious journal *Bogoljub*. Entitled »Mary Called Her,« the article presented what was purportedly a translation of a letter from Tsuneko to

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5   *Novice v slikah*, 1 May 1927 (wedding photograph); »Izredna slovesnost v Ljubljani,« *Slovenec*, May 1, 1927, 5 (description of the photograph).

Herman Hoffmann, the headmaster of the Catholic University in To-kyo. In this letter, Tsuneko provided a detailed and deeply personal account of her conversion to Catholicism, in which of Mary played a central role. These apparitions reportedly began during the winter prior to her conversion and were pivotal in her transformation.

This paper aims to examine this remarkable narrative through vari-ous analytical lenses. First, we conduct a detailed analysis of her testi-mony to identify its key elements. Next, we contextualise her conver-sion within the broader religious landscape of interwar Yugoslavia, a period marked by increasing conversions and the standardization of conversion procedures. Following this, we turn our attention to the apparitions of Mary, a crucial aspect of her conversion story, consider-ing their typology and possible contextual meanings. Finally, we place Tsuneko's conversion narrative in a wider framework of the interwar period and from that viewpoint explore the potential insights into the multireligious, intercultural, and transformative religious dynamics.

Mary Called Her

The introduction to Tsuneko's letter is penned by an anonymous author. The introductory passage indicates that the article was prepared by a priest who corresponded with Tokyo on Tsuneko's behalf. Based on the content of the letter, this individual is likely to be Franc Kimovec (1878–1964), the priest who played a pivotal role in Tsuneko's conver-sion, or someone closely associated with him who managed the for-malities related to her conversion, including correspondence with the Catholic University in Tokyo. Kimovec, a renowned church musician and composer, was, at the time the bishop's canon in Ljubljana and thus also the landlord of Ivan Skušek's family,[6] who resided in the canonical house opposite the bishop's palace.

Tsuneko begins her letter by recounting her initial scepticism toward Catholic rituals during the first years after their arrival in Ljubljana in September 1920. She and Ivan Skušek initially lived with his parents in the canonical house, and she recalls being terrified the first morning she

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[6]   Cf. »Marija jo je poklicala,« 7.

was awakened by the loud ringing of the cathedral bells.[7] She reflected at that time that if they ever found a place of their own, it would have to be far from any church. She goes on to describe her first experience attending Sunday mass, where, despite observing others solemnly performing the rituals, she »did not find it very holy« compared to her experiences in Japanese temples, where »her head instinctively knew when to bow.« With a touch of humour, she describes how, to her, Sunday had previously been the only morning to rest, whereas being Catholic required waking up early for church, even if it is raining or snowing outside.[8] Moreover, she found the obligation to confess her actions to someone other than her husband inappropriate. For these reasons, she resisted invitations from »some priests« to convert, citing her upbringing in Buddhism as a reason she could not change her faith. This detail is intriguing, as it almost suggests that she used her Buddhist identity as a convenient excuse to avoid pressure to undergo baptism, which she resisted for other reasons. Buddhism, not requiring exclusive religious identification like Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, likely did not present an insurmountable obstacle from her original religious perspective.

Nevertheless, she continues, she sometimes felt »somewhat lonely« in her soul, prompting her to attend church services occasionally, though she remained unable to experience the »joy and comfort others felt there.« This sentiment may reflect the social exclusion frequently described in studies on conversion. She then briefly mentions that her children were Protestants before turning to the central narrative of the article: the apparitions of Mary. The »Mother of God« [Mati božja] began appearing to her »every night starting in November« of the previous year (1926) »as soon as she went to bed and closed her eyes.« Mary appeared in the »right corner of the bedroom« in what Tsuneko describes as a »living figure of the Mother of God,« »tall and strangely beautiful.« She further recalls a moment of worry over what might happen to her upon death and where she would be buried, given that her children

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[7]   All the references and quotes from Tsuneko's letter: »Marija jo je poklicala,« 6–8.
[8]   The style of these humoristic segments is not unlike the rhetorics of the missionary publicism at the time and does not match the otherwise rather serious rhetorics of the letter, which could hint at some stylistic inputs by the editors, or alternatively, that Tsuneko herself had some knowledge of this type of texts in missionary publications in Slovenia.

were Protestant and her husband[9] Catholic. Upon this reflection, she »suddenly saw the figure of the Mother of God.« In January, Tsuneko realised that Mary wanted her to be baptised, which explained why the apparitions had occurred. This realization brought her great joy, and when she shared the news with her husband's parents, his mother cried »tears like pearls.« Notably, Tsuneko does not mention her husband's or his father's reaction to her decision.[10] After informing her mother-in-law, she contacted Franc Kimovec[11], asking if he would »guide her onto the right path,« which he gladly agreed to do. Her two children also expressed their desire to join her in converting to Catholicism.

Tsuneko then describes the religious instruction provided by Kimovec, who taught them for 2 to 3 hours daily on weekdays and at least 5 hours every Sunday, continuing this schedule until 15 April. Through his teachings, Tsuneko notes that she began »to realise with full clarity that there is only one true God« and eagerly awaited the »happy day« of baptism.

The day arrived on Monday, 18 April, when, thanks to the »bishop's kind benevolence,« the ceremonies took place in his chapel. Tsuneko does not mention him by name, but the bishop of Ljubljana at the time

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[9] The couple claimed that they had already been civilly married in China before departing to Europe in the summer of 1920. The date which is stated in the marriage register is 12 June 1920 (NŠAL, Poročna knjiga, 137). June 1920 was the month they departed from China to Europe and several documents still exist from the voyage. In all of them, however, Tsuneko is still identified with the surname Schmidt, which most probably means that no marriage took place before their departure. The date of 12 June is also quite unlikely, as just five days before that she was obviously in Yokohama, where she received the French transit visa and other travel documents for their journey to Europe (all dated 7 June). Even today, the sea journey can take a few days between ports alone, while with addition of land travel, which in the years following World War I was slow and unreliable, it is very difficult to imagine that they could return to Beijing in time for the alleged wedding.

[10] The diary of Bishop Jeglič adds a dry remark on the potential reason for her not telling the husband: »This Skušek never invited anyone into the Catholic religion. I think he's not a good Catholic.« He adds that the husband later changed his mind and after Tsuneko's conversion »during the confession claimed that he was now also very happy about it« (Otrin and Čipić Rehar, *Jegličev dnevnik*, 967).

[11] The role of the article's author and/or the editors can only be speculated (see above), but as the preparation of the article was most probably somehow connected to Kimovec, it is also understandable that several footnotes were added (in the third person), where it is stressed that he »never dared to mention to her that she should join the Catholic Church« and that upon her decision »he only did what any other priest would do in his place.«

was Anton Bonaventura Jeglič. She explains that the »baptism ceremony began at 9:30, followed by the matrimony, confirmation, and communion during the wedding mass.« None of the guests–who included her husband's family, relatives, and acquaintances–»prayed without tears.« In a deeply personal tone, she describes how baptism made her feel as though »her whole world lit up,« transforming her into a different person. She humorously revisits the earlier image of herself, now eager to leap out of bed and rush to church to avoid missing mass. When illness or another urgent matter prevents her from attending mass on Sundays, she claims to feel »lonely for the entire day.« In the concluding paragraph, she expresses her gratitude to Kimovec and to Hoffmann for sending her Catholic books in Japanese.

Regrettably, no such books have so far been found among her remaining possessions, and there is no further archival information about her letter to Hoffmann. These materials would shed light on other individuals involved in this unusual correspondence and provide insight into whether parts of her original letter were edited to fit the rhetorical style of the time and the journal. Thus, the letter must be analyzed »as is,« based solely on the published version, without the analytical luxury of distinguishing between Tsuneko's original text and the published adaptation.

The details of Tsuneko's conversion story open several possibilities for theoretical interpretation. What Rambo and Farhadian argue in their overview of views on religious conversion[12] is that it is possible to see a change in the conversion styles and related narratives in the contemporary world, with important theoretical shifts also marking the studies on the topic. Contemporary conversions, the authors claim, show a tendency to be more gradual and follow complex trajectories, the theoretical approaches to the topic also show a change from subjectivist interpretations such as those of James and Nock,[13] to a multi-faceted and contextualised landscape of the contemporary views on what conversion means and how it can be interpreted. Tsuneko's conversion

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[12]   Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[13]   Cf. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902); Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

in the 1920s forms a transitional case between different typologies and views on the religious conversion, not only by the era in which it happened, but also by the characteristics of how it happened and–much more importantly–how it was narrated. Her conversion story largely fits into the framework of subjectivist interpretations, understanding the conversion as a deeply personal and individual transformative experience where emotional states play a crucial role. We see these playing out in Tsuneko's narrative when she repeatedly recalls the feelings of loneliness, fear, worry, and subsequent joy and happiness–with fear and loneliness being the decisive motivation for her personal decision to convert. The commentator of the published letter also joins the narrative framework by pointing out that she was not pressured to convert.

What makes Tsuneko's story a more transitional case when it comes to the views on religious conversion, is that the nuances of it can lead us to ask many questions about what Rambo and Farhadian would list as »contemporary perspectives on conversion.«[14] First, the sociocultural context of Tsuneko's conversion is unique not only because of her individual story as the first Japanese person[15] permanently residing in Slovenia but also due to the lack of a pre-existing sociocultural framework to help her or others navigate this situation. Moreover, there were not many similar narratives of intercultural contact to which she or others could refer. It is also notable due to the sociocultural context of the multireligious Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia), particularly in its northernmost region, which at the time was predominantly religiously homogenous. This period marked one of the first instances of conversions occurring among the Slovenian population in relatively larger, though still limited, numbers.

In this unique situation, the individual active agency, another important marker of contemporary conversions described by Rambo and

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[14] Rambo and Farhadian, *The Oxford Handbook*, 7.
[15] The complexity of her life story, though, can lead us to see her as already having a rather hybrid ethnic and religious identity even before arriving to Europe with her husband. She was born in Japan, grew up in a Japanese family in Chinese Manchuria, lived in the multicultural and multilingual 1910s Beijing, was married and had children with a German official – speaking at least four different languages and having lived in several different cultural and religious environments before leaving for Europe with Skušek.

Figure 2. Tsuneko in prayer, unknown location.
Source: Photo archive of Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

Farhadian, played a radically more important role. This is something which can be seen not only in Tsuneko's conversion narrative but also in a lot of other biographical details about how she lived her life in the otherwise very monocultural landscape of interwar Ljubljana. We also see her actively engaging in negotiations around her identity as a »Japanese woman in Ljubljana«[16] and using it as a welcome entry point into social and intellectual networks. The conversion narrative seems to point to a related phenomenon–the conversion providing a solution to the realistic fears and challenges she was facing in the intercultural situation she was in. Her description of her fears about how she might be buried away from her loved ones is probably only the most severe example among many related challenges.

The religious landscape and interwar conversions to Catholicism in the Ljubljana diocese

Interwar Yugoslavia was a multi-ethnic and multireligious state, therefore the incorporation of the Slovene lands into this new entity in 1918 brought many changes to this environment,[17] including religious ones. From the majority Catholic Habsburg monarchy, the Slovenians – 6.6% of whom were Catholic according to the 1921 census – entered a (multi-)national framework with three major religious communities: the Serbian Orthodox Church (46.6% of the population), the Catholic Church (39.4%), and the Islamic Religious Community (11.2%).[18] The Serbian Orthodox Church enjoyed special privileges despite the constitutionally guaranteed equality of recognised religions.

The religious composition in the Slovenian part of the kingdom did not change markedly in numbers in the interwar period with around

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[16]   The Slovenian press almost univocally called her »our Japanese« (Cf. »Domače vesti,« *Jutro*, July 1, 1933; »Domače vesti,« *Mariborski večernik »Jutra«*, March 6, 1935: 4, etc.).
[17]   Jože Pirjevec, *Jugoslavija 1918–1992. Nastanek, razvoj ter razpad Karadjordjevićeve in Titove Jugoslavije* (Koper: Lipa, 1995).
[18]   Milivoja Šircelj, *Verska, jezikovna in narodna sestava prebivalstva Slovenije: popisi 1921– 2002* (Ljubljana: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, 2003).

97 % identifying as Catholics in 1921 and 1931,[19] but, especially in the cities, the beginnings of religious plurality were already visible in this strongly conservative milieu. Judaism and Protestantism were already present in certain regions and major cities, the latter being the largest minority religion. The religious community that gained the most visibility and converts after the end of World War I was the Serbian Orthodox Church, which soon after the unification of the country established Orthodox parishes and later, with the support of the state authorities, built the first Orthodox churches in the largest Slovenian cities, although – despite being the third largest religion – only comprised 0.6 % of population in 1931.[20] Old Catholicism was a new phenomenon in the area as well, while the number of Muslims was minimal in this period, although their numbers were slightly growing and comparable to the number of Jews. In the context of this paper, it is of interest that only 15 people were recorded in 1921 as being of »other religions« and none of them were women.[21] Henceforth it can be assumed that Tsuneko was probably listed as having no religion in this census, which could give another dimension to how »uncommon« her presence was in Slovenia.

Despite the relatively low numbers of non-Catholics and the consequently lower interest in this topic by the scholarship,[22] there are differences in the slowly changing religious landscape, not forgetting the importance of non-believers in relation to the Communist Party, given the events of World War II.[23]

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[19]   However, we do not have data from 1941, as the census was not performed due to the beginning of World War II.
[20]   Cf. Bojan Cvelfar, *Srbska pravoslavna cerkev na Slovenskem med svetovnima vojnama* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, Ljubljana: Arhiv Republike Slovenije, 2017).
[21]   *Statistički godišnjak* 1929 (for the census of 1921), 1933 in 1937 (for the census of 1931); Šircelj, *Verska, jezikovna in narodna sestava*, 2003; Janez Cvirn, *Boj za sveti zakon: prizadevanja za reformo poročnega prava od 18. stoletja do druge svetovne vojne* (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2005).
[22]   Zorica Kuburić and Srđan Sremac, eds., *Konverzija i kontekst. Teorijski, metodološki i praktični pristupi religijskoj konverziji* (Novi Sad: CEIR, 2009).
[23]   See Gašper Mithans, »Religious communities and the change of worldviews in Slovenia (1918–1991): historical and political perspectives,« *Annales: anali za istrske in mediteranske študije. Series historia et sociologia* 30, no. 3 (2020): 415–434, https://doi.org/10.19233/ASHS.2020.27.

The dominant Catholic Church and its political exponents have either associated the presence of »old« and especially »new« religious minorities with other, non-Slovenian nationalities (e.g., German Evangelicals, Orthodox) or publicly labelled them as very rare, inconsequential and in majority pragmatic decisions by people who have never been good Catholics anyway. However, in 1928 the Diocesan ordinariate of Ljubljana requested the municipality of Ljubljana to send them the data on conversions of Catholics to Serbian Orthodoxy as well as the reasons for the conversions, which indicates that the phenomenon did raise some discomfort and should certainly not be disregarded.[24] Such conversions were almost unknown in this area before 1918, if we exclude the »Away from Rome Movement« (orig. Los-von-Rom-Bewegung[25]) of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that was limited to the German Catholics and in some form re-occurred after the Great War to consolidate the German minority within one religious community.

As proselytism–to which Catholic circles reacted most negatively– was mostly practised by representatives of religious communities from

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[24]   The Historical Archives Ljubljana (ZAL), LJU 489, box 2012. According to these statistics based on the leavings of religious communities that had to be (although were not consistently) announced to the civil authorities, in the years from 1918 to 1927, 274 people converted from Catholicism to Serbian Orthodoxy in the municipality of Ljubljana. Conversions to Serbian Orthodoxy were also the most frequent, in the interwar period reaching 1,434 conversions in the two of three Serbian Orthodox parishes in the Drava banate for which we have data (Cvelfar, *Srbska pravoslavna cerkev*, 125), followed by conversions of Catholics of German minority to so-called German Evangelical Church (in the largest of three parishes in Maribor, it is estimated that close to 1,000 people converted in the interwar period) (The Regional Archives Maribor (PAM), 1821060/2 Evangeljska verska občina Maribor 1862–1945, Izstopi iz rimokatoliške cerkve, 1911–1918; PAM, 1821060/3 Evangeljska verska občina Maribor 1862–1945, Izstopi iz rimokatoliške cerkve, 1919–1945).

[25]   »Away from Rome« movement was a movement founded in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy by the Pan-German politician Georg Ritter von Schönerer aimed at conversion of all Roman Catholic German-speaking people in Austria to Lutheran Protestantism or, more rarely, an Old Catholic Church. It started with the introduction of the Language decrees issued by Prime Minister Count Badeni in 1897, requiring of civil servants in the Czech lands to be fully bilingual in German and Czech, which was strongly opposed by the Austro-German radical nationalists. With a few years of delay, the movement reached also Slovenian lands, especially lower Styria, resulting in 1,796 people leaving the Roman Catholic Church in the Maribor diocese in the period 1897–1914, of that predominantly German Catholics joining the German Evangelical Church (Franc Kovačič, *Zgodovina Lavantinske škofije: (1228–1928)* (Maribor: Lavantinski kn. šk. ordinariat, 1928), 419).

other parts of the country, or religious conversions were otherwise linked to ethnicity, the opposition went beyond the boundaries of the religious field. Thus, Mahnič's slogan »only a committed Catholic can be a true Slovene« came to the fore once again. That happened even in the case of Tsuneko entering Catholicism. Even the liberal newspaper *Jutro* accompanied her action with the words: »This unusually intelligent lady took this step to document her love for her family and to manifest her belonging to our nation in the most determined way,«[26] thus emphasizing the perception of close ties between Slovenehood and Catholicism, while also expressing some reservations if not a discomfort towards her descent at least by exoticizing her.

Figure 3. Excerpt from the Book of Converts on Tsuneko's conversion. Source: Archive of the St. Nicholas Cathedral of Ljubljana.

Given the religious composition, it is unsurprising that most conversions were »apostasies,« meaning people leaving the Catholic Church. However, there were also conversions to Catholicism. Even in these cases, the motives were primarily »pragmatic,« despite the requirement for religious instruction and the Catholic Church's active encouragement of conversions. Additionally, with Austrian laws still in force at the time, legal frameworks favoured the Catholic Church in such matters. Children of former Catholics between the ages 7 and 14 were not

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26   »Pet zakramentov v eni uri,« *Jutro*, April 20, 1927: 3.

allowed to convert with their parents,[27] which meant that in school they were not allowed to follow religious education of their parents' volition, but were mostly forced to receive Catholic teachings, which obviously also affected their final decision. Also in some religiously mixed marriages, even where the children did not belong to the faith of the Catholic spouse, they attended Catholic religious instruction.[28] However, Tsuneko's daughter, a Lutheran by her father, was conditionally baptised and received confirmation when she was still 13.[29] This was unusual, but not the only example of an »early« conversion that was formally initiated when the person registered the conversion with the state authorities after turning 14.[30]

It is also unclear whether Tsuneko was indeed a widow at the time of her marriage to Skušek, since various versions of this story exist in the family.[31] In any case, no indication was found that a specific verification of her widowship had been carried out before her marriage to Skušek.

It is possible to reconstruct concrete examples of individual religious entries into the Catholic Church at least partially on the basis of the material of the diocesan ordinariate kept in the Archdiocesan Archives of Ljubljana. Explaining the formalities that determined the procedure of conversion, but also the personal experiences of other converts, which were in many instances similar to those of Tsuneko's, but also diverged from it, gives us a necessary framework to better understand

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[27] An interconfessional law of 1868 stipulated that the children under the age of 7 directly converted with their parents, while when reaching 14 years, the decision was theirs alone. The law had been–even if not adapted to the new situation–upheld and enforced by the courts until the kingdom was dissolved (Cvelfar, *Srbska pravoslavna cerkev*, 133).

[28] NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.

[29] NŠAL, ŽA Ljubljana – sv. Nikolaj. Krstna knjiga [Baptism registry] 1896–1930, 218.

[30] Cf. NŠAL, sp. V, 101 Konvertiti 1938–1963.

[31] According to the memories of Ivan Skušek jr.'s brother Franci Skušek, Tsuneko's first husband Paul Heinrich Schmidt left China in 1917 when China entered World War I and left Tsuneko a flower shop so she was then able to make her living. Due to the very common surname, the information about Schmidt is difficult to verify with greater certainty, but we do find only one »P. H. Schmidt« listed in pre-war registries of foreigners in China between 1910 and 1912 as a staff member of the German legation in Tianjin. (*The Directory & Chronicle for China, Japan, Corea, Indo-China, Straits Settlements, Malay States, Sian, Netherlands India, Borneo, the Philippines,* Hongkong Daily Press Office 1910, 1911, and 1912). In 1913 and after he disappears from the list, which unfortunately does not help confirm either of these two versions of the story.

this act. We cannot find Tsuneko there–most likely as she was accepted to Catholicism by the bishop and hence no permission or consultation was needed–still her conversion was exceptional enough to find its way into the Prince-Bishop Anton Bonaventura Jeglič's diary. [32] Neither the Jeglič's diary nor the official note of conversion in the *Book of Converts*, still kept in the archive of the Cathedral of Ljubljana,[33] mentions the apparitions of Mary. Many explanations are possible: either he was not told about them, he dismissed them or the story was narrated–or created–subsequently.

A prerequisite for the initiation of the process of conversion to the Catholic Church is the teaching of the doctrine of the Catholic faith, a kind of condensed adult religious education. The priests thus found themselves in the role of evaluators, having to assess whether the convert was converting with pure intentions (i.e., the right inclinations) before the lessons even began, and later to give an assessment of the person's knowledge and moral character.

After a sufficient knowledge of the fundamental doctrines and values of the Catholic Church had been demonstrated, the priest wrote to the diocesan ordinariate for authorization to admit the candidate to the Catholic Church (authorization to absolve from excommunication or authorization to baptise or conditionally baptise the convert) and for instructions on the conversion if needed. In such letters, the priests (rarely the converts in person, but in each case, priests also gave an opinion) briefly introduced the candidates, and the converts had to fill in a declaration that they wished to be received into the Catholic Church voluntarily and with pure intentions. After receiving the authorization, the priests performed the ceremony in front of two witnesses, wrote a report on it, which was kept in the parish archives, entered the converts in the baptismal register without a serial number (if they had already been baptised), and the converts had to inform the state authorities of their withdrawal from the previous religious community. The procedure was simplified in cases where there was a risk that the convert

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[32] Otrin and Čipić Rehar, *Jegličev dnevnik*, 967.
[33] Cf. Archive of the St. Nicholas Cathedral of Ljubljana, *Knjiga konvertitov*.

would soon pass away.[34] If the bishop performed the baptism–as was also Tsuneko's case–he also conferred the sacrament of confirmation on the candidate, otherwise, the priest should have reminded the newly baptised person to receive the sacrament of confirmation as soon as possible.[35]

As far as the official aspect of conversion to the Catholic Church is concerned, the Ljubljana Diocesan Rite was in force until 1933, and then *Zbirka obredov* (Eng. The Compendium of the Sacred Rites) for the Diocese of Maribor and Ljubljana, which is a translation of the Roman Rite, while also the textbook for theology students *Pastoralno bogoslovje* (Eng. Pastoral Theology) by Franc Ušeničnik is mentioned in the replies from the diocesan ordinariate to the parish priests asking for the directions concerning particular converts.[36]

Religious instruction was provided through the priest, but often also on an ad hoc basis through parents, spouses in cases of mixed marriages, by attending Catholic masses, reading Catholic religious books, following Catholic newspapers, participating in Catholic religious activities, associations, etc.

As with the children, the teaching of the converts was based on the Catechism. Each priest individually judged what to give more emphasis to, determined the choice of the level of difficulty and the duration of the religious instruction. This is explained in *The Compendium of the Sacred Rites* as follows:

> If necessary, [the priest] should instruct the convert until he has sufficiently understood what a Catholic must believe and how he must live. If, however, he must give the doctrines in a different order, as the education of the individual convert varies, he should not, however, omit in his teaching any of what is contained in the Tridentine Creed and in the deliverances of the [First] Vatican Council.[37]

As expected, teaching took longer with non-Christians. Interestingly it seems that the period of 3 to 4 months of religious education

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[34]   See NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.
[35]   Franc Ušeničnik, *Pastoralno bogoslovje* (Ljubljana: Jugoslovanska knjigarna, 1919–1920), 790.
[36]   NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.
[37]   *Zbirka svetih obredov za lavantinsko in ljubljansko škofijo* (Ljubljana: Lavantinski in ljubljanski ordinariat, 1933), 308.

was quite common for non-Christians, including Tsuneko, and the religious instructions she received from Kimovec seem to have followed the standard procedure.

More precise instructions on the teaching of converts are given in the textbook Pastoral Theology:[38]

If necessary, he will speak to the heretic 'de praeambulis fidei', that is, depending on his education and his state of mind. Among the Christian truths, we must thoroughly expound especially those which the heretics suppress or misunderstand. The easiest way to teach is on the basis of the Catechism. But, priests, avoid controversy, as well as any harsh judgment of other believers. Speak to the catechumen with kindness, in warm, persuasive words.[39]

In the case of converts from a non-Christian faith, Ušeničnik gives the following guidance:

Begin the lesson with the prophecies of the Old Testament and show how in Jesus Christ all things were fulfilled. /.../ Thoroughly explain the religious and moral truths of Christianity: the Most Holy Trinity, salvation, the Church, the sacrifice of the New Testament, the sacraments, the commandments, sin, grace. The main formularies: The Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the Divine and Ecclesiastical Commandments, the formulary for the renewal of repentance, faith, hope and charity must be memorised from the Catechism. Instruct him also to prepare for Holy Baptism by an immaculate life, by prayer and good works, by repentance of the sins he has committed up to now. He must have a firm will to live a good Christian life after Holy Baptism. Finally, the priest also explains the rites of Holy Baptism.[40]

In religious ritual and teaching, differences between the Catholic faith and other Christian faiths are highlighted, such as the interpretation of the Trinity of God, papal infallibility, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the existence of the purgatory, the indissolubility of marriage, the seven »true« sacraments, the veneration of saints and their images, the recognition of the stipulations of all councils, and the understanding of Scripture solely as interpreted by the Catholic Church.[41] These »truths« are particularly emphasised in the teaching of converts

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38   Ušeničnik, *Pastoralno bogoslovje*, 782–790.
39   Ibid., 783–784.
40   Ibid., 789.
41   *Zbirka svetih obredov*, 310–311.

from Protestantism, the Old Catholic Church or Orthodoxy. There was no manual in the Slovenian language dedicated specifically to converts– there was no need for it, given the small number of converts.[42]

The whole process of conversion was intended to ensure that the converts would remain Catholics until death, which is what they committed to. The convert was also assigned a spiritual guide, most often a priest, who welcomed him/her into the Catholic Church, who was to encourage them to practise »fidelity and to good works worthy of a Catholic«[43] and to watch over them »so that he does not go into the society where it would be dangerous for him, who is not yet established in the faith«.[44]

In the Catholic Church the ritual of conversion–accepting new members of other religions–is precisely defined and can be performed in three ways:

1) Baptism, which, as »the sacrament of rebirth, cleanses all« in which case there is no need for confession or absolution.

2) Conditional baptism, i.e. in cases where, despite investigation, the priest was not sure if baptism had been performed and it was not possible to obtain reliable confirmation, or finds or suspects that the baptism was not valid (e.g., as was often the case with Jewish conversions during World War II)[45]. The converts had to renounce the error and make a profession of faith, the priest conditionally baptised them, conditionally absolved them from ecclesiastical penances, then sacramentally confessed them and granted conditional sacramental absolution.

3) When it was certain that the baptism was valid, the converts– or reconverts–renounced the error and professed the faith; then the priest absolved them from ecclesiastical penalties, confessed them, and granted them sacramental absolution. (Re)converts

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[42]   Contrary to some German editions, such as: Franz Bitter, *Konvertiten-Unterricht. Praktische Anleitung zur Unterweisung oder zum Selbstunterricht im Glauben der heiligen katholischen Kirche für solche, die zu ihr übertreten wollen* (Dülmen: Laumann Verlag, 1921), a manual that was recommended to the priests also by F. Ušeničnik.

[43]   NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.

[44]   Ušeničnik, *Pastoralno bogoslovje*, 790.

[45]   NŠAL, sp. V, 101 Konvertiti 1938–1963; Arhiv župnije Marijinega oznanjenja [The Archive of the Annunciation of Mary parish], Knjiga konvertitov.

were also required to make extra-confessional penances, such as charitable work. The penance required was particularly strict for reconverts, but no religious instruction was necessary.[46]

The first mode of conversion was open to non-Christians, in this area these were mostly Muslims and Jews.[47] It has already been mentioned that in these cases the teaching was most thorough and lengthy, as these persons were mostly unfamiliar with the Catholic faith. Priests, according to Ušeničnik, were even more careful in assessing the motives for conversion of these converts.[48] There is a case from 1938 where a Muslim was taught by a priest for four months.[49] A year later, a well-off Jewish woman originally from Heidelberg, who wanted to convert and marry a Catholic, was praised by the parish priest in Bled as being so far advanced in her studies that she »knew almost the whole of the Small Catechism by heart«. The convert also asked if she could be baptised, confirmed, and given communion by Bishop Gregorij Rožman in the chapel of the Bishop's palace, and the priest signed »a certificate of sufficient knowledge of the Catholic faith«.[50] The similarity with the case of Tsuneko is apparent.

Which Mary appeared?

Despite the apparent regularity of Tsuneko's conversion procedure, the Slovenian press repeatedly stressed how rapid the ritual was, perhaps simply due to the fact that Tsuneko was – compared to the converts mentioned above – a rather well-known public figure, which contributed to the conversion reports being more sensationalistic. Nevertheless, the *Bogoljub* article published early the following year was set to dispel any remaining doubts about the motivation and justification of her conversion. Tsuneko's account of Mary's apparition served as valuable proof that her conversion was a result of an unquestionable spiritual transformation.

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[46] *Zbirka svetih obredov*, 308–309. NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.
[47] NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.
[48] Ušeničnik, *Pastoralno bogoslovje*, str. 789.
[49] NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.
[50] NŠAL, sp. V, 100 Konvertiti 1874–1938.

At the time that Tsuneko had her experiences of Mary's apparition, this phenomenon was already widely present in the discussions about popular aspects of religion in the European context, especially following the famous apparitions in Fatima in Portugal which occurred just a decade before.[51] Mary's status of the *mediatrix*, an intermediary between people and God was also a matter of vivid debates from the late 19th century onwards.[52] Mary's apparitions go back to the times of antiquity and were present in Medieval Europe, but took on a large-scale socio-cultural framework in the times of counter-reformation. The popularity of many of the 16th and 17th-century apparitions, the Guadalupe being the most prominent example, were providing welcome support for the Catholic cause in their struggle with the reformation.[53] The early 19th century, and especially the apparitions of Mary in the Chapel of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Paris[54] in 1830, mark the beginning of »the Age of Mary«,[55] where the Marian phenomena run parallel to the enormous new complex changes in the social, cultural and political realities of that time. After the Paris apparition, the apparitions of Mary became more numerous than ever before,[56] with La Salette in 1846, Lourdes in 1858, and many others. The Lourdes apparitions occurred just four years after Pope Pius IX issued the apostolic constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*, defining the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The doctrine claimed that Mary was preserved from both original and actual sin in becoming the mother of Jesus, what was popularly seen as an honour

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[51] E.g. an interesting short mention about how these phenomena are becoming more prominent as »far from the noise of the world, the Mother of God, Mary, chooses the places where she wants to grant special graces to miserable humanity« was published in another issue of *Bogoljub* in autumn of the same year (»Iz življenja cerkve [From the life of the Church],« *Bogoljub* 26, no. 11 (1928): 259.

[52] Gloria Falcão Dodd, *The Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces: History and Theology of the Movement for a Dogmatic Definition from 1896–1964* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012).

[53] Sally Cunneen, *In Search of Mary: The Woman and the Symbol* (Toronto: Random House, 1996), 183–224.

[54] Today, the chapel bears a name Chapel of our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

[55] Deirdre de la Cruz, *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 7–8.

[56] Ibid.

given to Mary.[57] In the decades following the Apostolic Constitution, another previously sporadic practice gained a new prevalence. In July 1876, with the approval of Pope Pius IX, the image of Our Lady of Lourdes was formally crowned, sparking a wave of similar coronation ceremonies at numerous pilgrimage sites across France and more broadly throughout Europe.[58]

This brings us back to Mary's apparition recorded by Tsuneko Kondō Kawase. In her account, Mary appearing to her in the corner of the bedroom does not have many specific features. In the letter itself, Tsuneko only describes her as »tall and unbelievably beautiful.« Interestingly, a slightly more detailed description is then provided in the footnote, written by the unsigned author of the article, which adds a more detailed description Tsuneko allegedly gave »upon being asked by the reporter.« The description is not much more thorough but still provides some important details. »She never took her eyes off me.« Tsuneko's description begins, »She was all adorable and tall and incomprehensively beautiful.« She adds that she does not know what Mary was wearing, because she always looked into her beautiful face and her eyes, so she only saw her »somehow above the knees.« She finishes the description, reported by the author, with a surprisingly firm statement: »What I know for certain, is that she was wearing a crown.« This little detail strongly stands out in her otherwise vague and dreamy account of apparitions.

As Deirdre de la Cruz points out in her exploration of the images of Mary in the Philippines, an important difference should not be overlooked when reflecting on the images of Mary in different contexts and with different cultures, a difference which can also be described in the terminological scope between the term »Mary's« and »Marian«. When speaking about »Mary's apparitions« or about »Marian apparitions«, the Marian presupposes a universality of this holy personage. Simply put,

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57   Chris Maunder, *The Oxford Handbook of Mary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 505.
58   Cf. Claude Langlois, »Liturgical Creativity and Marian Solemnity: The Coronation of Pilgrimage Virgin Maries in France (1853–1964),« in *Marian Devotions, Political Mobilization, and Nationalism in Europe and America*, ed. Roberto Di Stefano and Francisco Javier Ramón Solans (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

it views all apparitions as being a series of the same universal »Marian« apparition. The opposite view would stress what de la Cruz calls »highly place-specific Mary«, an apparition which is essentially grounded in the local, cultural and personal specificity of the seer and the community.[59] From another perspective, Sandra Zimdars-Swartz, in her book *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje*, comes to a similar conclusion. She claims that the appearance of Mary in a specific place at a specific time reflects the social and cultural dynamics that frame the visionary's understanding of the apparition.[60] In his detailed theological study on this topic, Christopher John Maunder interestingly describes this duality by saying that through the providence of God the objective existence of Mary when present in a subjective apparition is clothed in subjective material.[61]

The specificity of the Mary's apparition described by Tsuneko therefore can be understood to reveal some of the locally and personally specific traits. However, of the whole description, the only decidedly specific part seems to be the firm claim that Mary definitely wore a crown. The crowned Our Lady of Lourdes was well known to Slovenian Catholic readership,[62] but this Tsuneko's »subjective material« in her vision of Mary could also be reflecting some other sources specific to her personal context.

Tsuneko was Japanese by birth, but the scarce evidence we have of her early years[63] shows that already as a child she moved with her parents to the northern Chinese region of Manchuria, more precisely in the Kwantung Leased Territory at the tip of Liaodong peninsula in today's Liaoning province. As a young adult, she already lived in Beijing. It is

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[59]   De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 7.
[60]   Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 25.
[61]   Maunder, *The Oxford Handbook of Mary*, 359.
[62]   The popular account on the Lourdes case, *Notre-Dame de Lourdes*, written by Henri Lassere in 1869, was translated to Slovenian and published with great success in 1881. Cf. Fran Levec, »Lurška Mati Božja,« *Ljubljanski zvon* 1, no. 9 (1881): 576.
[63]   The only source for her early life are two framed photographs (with photo studio markings) of Tsuneko and her parents kept in the archive of Slovene Ethnographic Museum. One, taken in Gifu, Japan, shows Tsuneko as a small child, the second one, taken already in the Kwantung Leased territory, shows her in early teenage years.

therefore possible to claim that any potential previous experience she might have had with the Catholic religion before her arrival to Ljubljana would mostly be marked by Catholicism in China. The image of Mary in the context of Catholic communities in China is a complex topic on its own, but the figure of Mary most often associated with it is Our Lady of Sheshan (佘山圣母). Sheshan near Shanghai used to be a Buddhist sacred mountain with a monastery and a temple of (female-figured) Guanyin, the boddhisatva of Mercy.[64] After the Buddhist complex was destroyed by the Taiping rebellion in 1860, Jesuits bought land there and erected a small chapel dedicated to the Our Lady of Victories. In 1870, when saved from the occurring massacres, Jesuit father Agnello Della Corte made a vow to build a church and then first built it in 1873. The church was dedicated to Mary Help of Christians, and the hill became an important pilgrimage site.[65] The sculpture of the Sheshan Mary was still based on the altar statue of crowned Mary in the Paris church of Our Lady of Victories, replaced in 1935 by a completely different sculpture of Mary holding baby Jesus above her head and standing upon a dragon.[66] When Tsuneko was in China, the original Sheshan Mary was the most venerated image of Mary by the Chinese Catholics.

But apart from the Sheshan Mary Help of Christians another crowned Mary could be the source for the specificity of Tsuneko's vision. In 1907 another crowning event happened in Slovenia, at the pilgrimage site in Brezje, where the Mary Help of Christians Basilica attracted pilgrims since the miraculous healings that first happened in 1863. A 17-year-old girl was said to be healed in Mary's chapel in Brezje. Among the witnesses of these events was a 13-year-old boy from the nearby village of Begunje[67] who later went on to become the bishop of Ljubljana, no other than the already mentioned Anton Bonaventura Jeglič. Jeglič was also the main advocate of the crowning, while the

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[64]   Imagery of Guanyin was often reflected in the imagery of Mary and vice versa.
[65]   Thomas Coomans, *Missionary Spaces: Imagining, Building, Contesting Christianities in Africa and China, 1830s-1960s* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2024), 55–56.
[66]   Benoît Vermander, Liz Hingley and Liang Zhang, *Shanghai Sacred: The Religious Landscape of a Global City* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 70.
[67]   Robert Bahčič, ed., *Po Mariji podarjene milosti* (Brezje: Romar, 2014), 24.

Figures 4, 5 and 6: The origin and development of the old Sheshan Mary image (the statue from the Paris church of Our Lady of Victories; a postcard of the old Sheshan Mary from the middle of the 20th century; the current statue inside the Sheshan Basilica). Source: Wikimedia Commons.

permission for this special honour was then granted by Pius X in June 1907. In the special article announcing the upcoming coronation in Brezje, *Bogoljub*[68] compared the coronation in Brezje with two similar events when images of Mary were coronated in two important churches in the region, the 1715 coronation of the Mary of Trsat and the 1717 coronation of Mary at Sveta Gora near Gorica. The 1907 coronation in Brezje was, interestingly for our study, led by bishop Anton Bonaventura Jeglič himself, while the music for the ceremony was organised and partly also composed by no other than Franc Kimovec. The significant contact Tsuneko had with these two dignitaries during her conversion process–Kimovec, notably, being the first priest she approached after her visions–both of whom were deeply devoted to the image of the crowned Mary in Brezje, may have influenced how her vision was expressed in language and narration.

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[68]   »K slavnosti kronanja Marijine podobe na Brezjah,« *Bogoljub* 5, no. 9 (1907): 266–271.

Figure 4. Crowned Mary's image in Brezje. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Conclusion

Whether the specific apparition of Mary seen and described by Tsuneko was indeed influenced by one or the other image of Mary is, of course, outside the scope of this research as we also do not know if the published conversion narrative that included presented apparitions was indeed genuinely hers or was already modified by the unknown author. It does however shed some light on how complex the process of conversion from one (or more) cultural context to another was for an individual like her, bridging the different religious and cultural frameworks of Europe and East Asia while also negotiating different languages and imagery in which these different religious realities were presented. In this complexity, her experience was indeed very unique. At the same time, her conversion is not as unusual as it might seem. The diverse cultural contexts of several converts, including those who had little or no knowledge of the Slovenian language and who could not read the Latin alphabet (e.g., Russian refugees), often required a good deal of adjustment on the part of the priests who introduced the converts to the new faith, and yet a non-European convert was a true rarity. Tsuneko's conversion followed a common procedure, although most converts typically received only baptism on the same day. However, having the opportunity to receive the sacraments alongside her children in the bishop's chapel was a special privilege, likely due to their close relationship with Franc Kimovec. In this aspect as well as in many other ways, we see her conversion as importantly marked by her social network and the environment she lived in.

The uniqueness of Tsuneko's conversion story lies unmistakably in her account of the apparitions of Mary. This narrative not only provided her with an irrefutable foundation for her decision to convert but also allows us to comprehend the complex realities she navigated through her conversion experience.

Having already been shaped by numerous intercultural and interreligious encounters, she actively engaged in negotiating her intricate circumstances, even initiating the conversion process partly in opposition to what appears to have been her husband's sentiment. While adhering to the established conversion protocol, her narrative

reveals elements of personal agency within the rigidity of the prescribed structure. This dynamic is similarly evident in her account of the apparitions, where the codified narrative trope is interwoven with unexpected personal reflections. The Mary she envisioned is simultaneously archetypal and uniquely personal. She interpreted the paradigmatic vision of Mary as addressing her deepest fears and offering a resolution, yet she also individualized it to align with both her foundational framework of Catholic imagery in Asia and the preferred representations of her new religious mentors–thus bridging religious and cultural divides through the narration and interpretation of her spiritual experience.

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THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE ACCELERATED DIGITISATION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

PANDEMIJA COVIDA-19 IN POSPEŠENA DIGITALIZACIJA RELIGIJSKEGA ŽIVLJENJA

RELIGIJA, DIGITALNI MEDIJI IN EPIDEMIJA COVIDA-19

Marcus Moberg,
Aleš Črnič

Uvod

Človekova duhovnost in religioznost sta se skozi zgodovino zmeraj razvijali v povezavi s siceršnjim kulturnim in tehnološkim razvojem. Velike prelomnice v tem razvoju so povzročile tudi korenite, včasih revolucionarne spremembe v načinih religioznosti. Omeniti velja vsaj izum pisave, ki pripelje do prej nezamisljivih oblik religioznosti; izum tiska omogoči reformacijo z vsemi njenimi revolucionarnimi posledicami; množična raba televizije prek pojava teleevangelistov ter vseh nadaljnjih korakov stikanja in mešanja religije in popkulture pa pripelje do megacerkva, v okviru katerih danes svoje religijske dejavnosti združuje najbrž večina Američanov, običajnemu Evropejcu pa vzbujajo predvsem čudenje. Sodoben, izjemno hiter tehnološki razvoj spletnih in drugih digitalnih tehnologij v marsičem občutno presega domet prejšnjih medijev in odpira številne popolnoma nove razsežnosti. Nove tehnologije, ki so že postale običajen del vsakdana večine prebivalcev (vsaj zahodnjaškega) sveta, so posebne vsaj v tem, da omogočajo tudi interaktivno dvo- in večsmerno komunikacijo. Njihov bliskovit razvoj pomembno določa načine človekovega bivanja v začetku 21. stoletja, ki v marsičem postajajo (včasih tudi radikalno) drugačni od tistih, ki smo jih bili vajeni doslej. Področje religije in duhovnosti pri tem ne more biti izjema.

V tem članku strnjeno zarišemo osnovne konture soočanja religijskih skupnosti s hitro razvijajočimi se digitalnimi tehnologijami, potem predstavimo razvoj raziskovanja še relativno mladega področja religije

in digitalnih medijev s pregledom temeljne literature in raziskav, pri čemer se posebej osredinimo na intenzivirano rabo digitalnih tehnologij v tudi z religijo povezane namene, ki jo je med letoma 2020 in 2021 povzročila svetovna pandemija covida19. Na koncu na kratko predstavimo še mednarodni raziskovalni projekt Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi, iz katerega izhaja ta tematski blok.

Odzivi religijskih skupnosti na razmah spleta in digitalnih medijev

Religijske skupnosti so razmah digitalnih tehnologij sprejele na različne načine, raziskave kažejo, da vzbujajo pri njih enako mero optimizma kot skrbi. Po eni strani jim splet in digitalne tehnologije zagotavljajo prej nepredstavljive možnosti za komunikacijo s privrženci in interakcije med njimi, hkrati pa tudi za prenos sporočil širši javnosti, ne le v lokalnih in regionalnih okoljih, temveč praktično po vsem svetu. Po drugi strani splet sodobnemu globaliziranemu posamezniku omogoča (prav tako prej nepredstavljive) možnosti, da pride v stik s tako rekoč vsakim obstoječim religijskim ali duhovnim naukom ali/in prakso. Posledično se številne religijske skupnosti soočajo s številnimi – tako namišljenimi kot dejanskimi – načini, na katere lahko digitalni mediji ogrožajo tradicionalne strukture religijskih avtoritet[1], saj širijo in demokratizirajo dostop do informacij, s tem pa tudi odpirajo prostor za pojav novih, uradno nepriznanih avtoritet.[2]

Svetovni splet že od začetkov splošne javne rabe uporabljajo različne krščanske skupnosti, njihovi odzivi pa so zelo raznoliki. Že v zgodnjih devetdesetih letih 20. stoletja so številne katoliške in protestantske skupnosti vse intenzivneje uporabljale razvijajoči se splet, od takrat je

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[1]   Heidi Campbell, »Understanding the Relationship between Religion Online and Offline in a Networked Society,« *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, št. 1 (2012), 64–93, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfr074; Pauline Hope Cheong, »Authority,« v *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, ur. Heidi Campbell (London: Routledge, 2013), 72–87.
[2]   Cheong, *Authority* in *Digital Religion*, 72; Ruth Ilman in Sofia Sjö, »Religion and the Media: Continuity, Complexity, and Mediatization,« v *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries*, ur. Inger Furseth (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 193–250.

»krščanska raba digitalnih medijev močno prežeta s protehnološkim diskurzom, ki spodbuja posebne oblike sodelovanja«.[3]

Nasprotno je v številnih islamskih okoljih širjenje spleta in digitalnih medijev naletelo na veliko več sumničavosti in zaskrbljenosti, zlasti glede ohranjanja tradicionalnih islamskih avtoritativnih in oblastnih struktur[4]. Že od začetkov in vse do danes je med muslimani močno prisotna zaskrbljenost zaradi širjenja »zavajajočih informacij« o islamu na spletu[5]. Resni pomisleki so med drugim vzniknili po pojavu in širjenju spletnih mujtahidov, tj. avtoritativnih razlagalcev religijskih vprašanj, predvsem razlage Korana ali hadisa (ijtihad), ter po pojavu izrekanja spletnih fatev (odločitev o nekem vprašanju na podlagi islamskega prava)[6]. A čeprav muslimanski diskurz o spletu še vedno zaznamuje določena stopnja zaskrbljenosti in sumničavosti, smo v zadnjih desetletjih vendarle priča eksplozivni rasti spletnih vsebin, povezanih z islamom, skupaj z opaznim povečanjem prisotnosti različnih vrst islamskih akterjev v vseh vrstah digitalnih medijev, vključno z družbenimi omrežji[7].

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[3] Heidi Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 136; glej tudi Marcus Moberg, in Sofia Sjö, ur., *Digital Media, Young Adults, and Religion: An International Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2020); Knut Lundby idr., »Religion and the Media: Continuity, Complexity, and Mediatization,« v *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere: Comparing Nordic Countries*, ur. Inger Furseth (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 193–250.

[4] Gary R. Bunt, *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Marcus Moberg, Sawsan Kheir in Habibe Erdis Gökse, »Religion and Internet Use among Young Adult Muslims in Israel and Turkey: Exploring Issues of Trust and Religious Authority,« *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture* 9, št. 3 (2020), 347–367, https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-BJA10015.

[5] Ruziana Z. Wan-Chik, »Information Credibility Assessment of Islamic and Quranic Information on the Web,« v *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Ubiquitous Information Management and Communication – IMCOM '15*, https://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2701126.

[6] Jon W. Anderson, »The Internet and Islam's New Interpreters,« v *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, ur. Dale E. Eickleman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media,* 32–33; Wan-Chik, »Information Credibility Assessment of Islamic and Quranic Information on the Web,« 1–10.

[7] Dale F. Eickleman, ur., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Gary R. Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age: E-Jihad, Online Fatwas and Cyber Islamic Environments* (London: Pluto Press, 2003); Bunt, *Hashtag Islam*; Mohammed El-Nawawy, *Islam Dot Com: Contemporary Islamic Discourses in Cyberspace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Raziskovanje področja religije in digitalnih medijev

Že od začetkov uporabe svetovnega spleta in digitalnih medijev v religijskem življenju je bilo to predmet religiološkega zanimanja. Hitro so se pojavile fokusirane tematske raziskave, kmalu je vzniknila tudi specializirana znanstvena literatura. Najprej je treba omeniti knjižno zbirko založbe Routledge z naslovom Študije religije in digitalne kulture (*Studies in Religion and Digital Culture*) in specializirano znanstveno revijo založbe Brill (*Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*). Pojavili so se številni obsežni zborniki in posebne tematske številke različnih znanstvenih revij, ki podajajo ključne razprave, koncepte, vidike in vrste analiz na tem področju,[8] ter tudi množica monografij, ki se osredinjajo na odnos med digitalnimi mediji in določenimi vrstami religij ali religijskih skupnosti.[9] Nekaj publikacij se je natančneje osredotočilo na družbena omrežja oz. družbene medije,[10] analizirajo predvsem različne vrste religijskih vsebin, ki jih je mogoče najti na velikih in široko uporabljenih platformah, in raznovrstne dejavnosti religijskih skupnosti na družbenih medijih.

Resno sistematično in poglobljeno raziskovanje presečišč religije in digitalnih medijev se pojavi na prelomu iz 20. v 21. stoletje. Razvoj tega raziskovanja je mogoče analitično spremljati skozi štiri glavne (čeprav deloma prekrivajoče se) zaporedne faze ali valove, pri čemer vsak izraža ter se odziva na postopno širjenje spleta in kontinuiran razvoj digital-nih tehnologij.[11] Raziskave prvega vala, ki se začne že v devetdesetih

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[8]   Glej Campbell, *Digital Religion*; Marcus Moberg in Sofia Sjö, ur., *Digital Media, Young Adults, and Religion.*
[9]   Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media*; Tim Hutchings, *Creating Church Online: Ritual, Community and New Media* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age*; Gary R. Bunt, *iMuslims: Rewiring the House of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Bunt, *Hashtag Islam*; Marta Kołodziejska, *Online Catholic Communities: Community, Authority, and Religious Practice in the Internet Age* (London: Routledge, 2018); Giulia Evolvi, *Blogging My Religion: Secular, Muslim, and Catholic Media Spaces in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2018).
[10]   Cheong idr., »Critical Methods and Theoretical Lenses in Digital Religion Studies,« 5–14.; Marie Gillespie, David Herbert in Andy Greenhill, ur., *Social Media and Religious Change* (London: Routledge, 2013).
[11]   Campbell, *Digital Religion,* 64–65; Mia Lövheim in Heidi A. Campbell, »Considering Critical Methods and Theoretical Lenses in Digital Religion Studies,« *New Media & Society,* 19,

letih, so se večinoma osredinjale na prisotnost religijskih skupnosti in akterjev na spletu (npr. uradne spletne strani religijskih skupnosti) in mapiranje različnih vrst religijskih vsebin na spletu. Proučevale so predvsem načine, na katere splet religijskim skupnostim zagotavlja nove forume za komunikacijo, izmenjavo informacij in tudi za prozelitizem.[12] Te zgodnje raziskave so potekale v času, ko je splet šele začel postajati široko dostopen. Pogosto so vsebovale precej daljnosežne napovedi o tem, kako bo širjenje spleta in digitalnih tehnologij revolucionarno spremenilo načine religioznosti v prihodnosti,[13] in čeprav te niso bile popolnoma neutemeljene, so se vendarle izkazale za preveč ambiciozne.

Drugi val raziskovanja (okvirno med letoma 2000 in 2008) je pomenil pomemben korak naprej, ko je razširil analitično pozornost na konkretne načine dejanskih konfiguracij religijskih skupnosti in izvajanja religijskih praks na spletu.[14] V tem obdobju se izoblikuje razlikovanje med »religijo na spletu« in »spletno religijo«, ki ga je že leta 2000 uvedel kanadski sociolog Christopher Helland.[15] V osnovi se religija na spletu nanaša na vse vrste vsebin ali informacij o religijah in raznovrstnih duhovnih praksah, ki jih je mogoče najti na spletu, spletna religija pa označuje religijske in duhovne prakse, ki obstajajo primarno ali izključno na spletu. Primeri spletne religije, če jih navedemo le nekaj, vključujejo spletne krščanske skupine za študij Svetega pisma in molitev, spletna mesta za izvajanje hindujske *pudže* (temeljnega daritvenega obreda), spletno branje iz kart za tarot ipd. V tem obdobju so digitalne tehnologije začele tehnično omogočati več novih oblik ne-

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št. 1 (2017): 5–14, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816649911.

[12]   Jeffrey K. Hadden in Douglas E. Cowan, ur., *Religion on the Internet* (London: Elsevier Science and Technology Press, 2000).

[13]   Npr. B. E. Brasher, *Give Me That Online Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004); David Holmes, *Communication Theory: Media, Technology, Society* (London: Sage, 2005).

[14]   Mia Lövheim, *Intersecting Identities: Young People, Religion and Interaction on the Internet* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2004); Lorne L. Dawson in Douglas Cowan, ur., *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet* (London: Routledge, 2004); Morten T. Højsgaard in Margit Warburg, ur., *Religion and Cyberspace* (London: Routledge, 2005); Heidi A. Campbell, *Exploring Religious Community Online: We Are One in the Network* (Bruselj: Peter Lang, 2005).

[15]   Christopher Helland, »Online Religion/Religion Online and Virtual Communitas,« v *Religion on the Internet: Research Prospects and Promises*, ur. Jeffrey K. Hadden in Douglas E. Cowan (London: Elsevier Science and Technology Press, 2000), 205–24.

posredne spletne interakcije, zato so tudi uradna spletišča religijskih skupnosti postopoma začela vključevati vse več interaktivnih elementov in spleta ne uporabljajo več kot le še eno vrsto enosmerne platforme za komunikacijo in širjenje informacij. Proti koncu prvega desetletja 21. stoletja je razlikovanje med religijo na spletu in spletno religijo postalo manj enopomensko, saj je vse težje ločiti zagotavljanje religijskih informacij od dejanskega izvajanja religije na spletu. Raziskave drugega vala so zato zaznamovale splošen prehod s predhodnega glavnega poudarka na vsebinah na spletu, povezanih z religijo, na trajnejši poudarek na to, kako digitalne tehnologije oblikujejo načine religijskih dejavnosti religijskih skupnosti in posameznikov[16]. Zaradi tega premika fokusa so raziskovalci začeli posvečati vse več pozornosti povezavam med spletnim in *off-line* religijskim/duhovnim življenjem in dejavnostmi ljudi. Splošno spoznanje teh raziskav je bilo, da so spletne religijske dejavnosti ljudi običajno tesno zrcalile njihove dejavnosti v fizičnem življenju. Kadar gre za verovanja in religijske prakse, je torej pomembno ugotoviti, da se spletni svet po navadi v veliki meri ujema z *off-line* svetom. Z razvojem spleta in digitalnih tehnologij, ki so postopoma postale sestavni, rutinski in samoumeven del našega vsakdana, spletni svet ni več tako jasno ločen od »fizičnega«, kot je morda bil nekoč. Kot se je izrazil Floridi, »vse bolj živimo *onlife*«.[17]

Vedno večji poudarek na povezavi med digitalnim svetom in svetom zunaj spleta je postavil temelje za raziskave tretjega in četrtega vala, ki se večinoma osredinjajo na raznolika hibridna religijska okolja, tudi na vključevanje digitalnih elementov v različne vrste religijskih praks v fizičnem svetu[18]. Raziskovalci poskušajo na različne načine koncep-

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[16]   Npr. Lövheim, *Intersecting Identities;* Campbell, *Exploring Religious Community Online.*

[17]   Luciano Floridi, *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere Is Reshaping Human Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 43; glej tudi J. Sage Elwell, »The Transmediated Self: Life between the Digital and the Analog,« *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 20, št. 2 (2014): 233–49, https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856513501423.

[18]   Heidi Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding the Intersection of Digital Media and Religion* (London: Routledge, 2013), 60–61; Heidi Campbell in Alessandra Vitullo, »Assessing Changes in the Study of Religious Communities in Digital Religion Studies,« *Church, Communication and Culture* 1, št. 1 (2016): 74, https://doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2016.1181301; Campbell in Lövheim, *Digital Religion: Understanding the Intersection of Digital Media and Religion.*

tualizirati širjenje in hkratni obstoj niza spletnih platform, ki delujejo tako, da so meje med spletnim in nespletnim (in posledično tudi med javnim in zasebnim) vse bolj prepustne. Evolvi[19] je na primer uvedla koncept »hipermediiranih religijskih prostorov« – z njim opisuje digitalne medijske platforme, ki delujejo na način zameglevanja ali mešanja prejšnjih kategorij prostorov za družbeno interakcijo, ki se nahajajo znotraj, zunaj ali na mejah uveljavljenih religijskih skupnosti. Hoover in Echchaibi sta vpeljala koncept »tretjih prostorov«, s katerim označujeta spletne »konceptualne projekte ustvarjanja pomenov, ki nastopajo, kot da so ustvarili prostore konstruktivnega delovanja«.[20]

Pomembna raziskovalna pozornost četrtega vala je religija in/na družbenih omrežjih. To je seveda posledica razvoja družbenih omrežij iz prej nišne teme v glavno raziskovalno temo v splošnih študijah digitalnih medijev,[21] kar ne more biti posebno presenečenje glede na to, da so družbena omrežja že skoraj dve desetletji sestavni del vsakdanjega življenja velikega števila ljudi po vsem svetu.[22] Pri tem pa velja opozoriti, da čeprav so družbeni mediji posebna (in po tukaj predstavljeni tipologiji doslej zadnja) faza v širšem razvoju mobilnih digitalnih komunikacij, ostaja »očitno s prejšnjimi uporabami spleta toliko diskontinuitet kot kontinuitet«.[23] Omeniti velja tudi, da je splošna »datafikacija« družbe, h kateri je dodatno prispevalo širjenje družbenih medijev, spodbudila obrat k »digitalnim metodam« in bistveno spremenila »načine izvajanja humanističnih in družboslovnih raziskav«.[24]

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[19]   Evolvi, *Blogging My Religion: Secular, Muslim, and Catholic Media Spaces in Europe.*

[20]   Stewart M. Hoover in Nabil Echchaibi, ur., *The third Spaces of Digital Religion* (London: Routledge, 2023).

[21]   José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[22]   Caroline Tagg in Philip Sargeant, »Negotiating Social Roles in Semi-public Online Contexts,« v *Social Media Discourse, (Dis)identifications and Diversities,* ur. S. Leppänen, S., E. Westinen in S. Kytölä (New York: Routledge, 2017), 213.

[23]   Daniel Miller idr., *How the World Changed Social Media* (London: UCL Press, 2016), 11.

[24]   David M. Burgess idr., *Digital Methods: Introduction and Implementation* (London: Routledge, 2017), 1–2.

Izraz »družbena omrežja« oz. »družbeni mediji« se je širše populariziral in vključil v pogovorni jezik okoli leta 2008.[25] Čeprav družbeni mediji zajemajo množico različnih tipov in oblik platform in mobilnih aplikacij,[26] ostajajo povezani predvsem z velikimi in globalno razpršenimi tako imenovanimi »družbenimi omrežnimi mesti« (SNS – *Social Networking Sites*), kot sta Facebook in X, in platformami, ki so namenjene predvsem razširjanju »uporabniških vsebin« (UGC – *User Generated Content*), npr. YouTube, Instagram, TikTok. V najširšem pomenu torej izraz družbeni mediji označuje »tiste digitalne platforme, storitve in aplikacije, ki so zasnovane na povezovanju izmenjave vsebin, javnega komuniciranja in medosebnega povezovanja«.[27] Ker ljudje običajno komunicirajo prek več oblik družbenih medijev, je današnje okolje družbenih medijev najustrezneje razumeti kot polimedijsko okolje.[28]

Raziskave o religiji v različnih kontekstih družbenih medijev so se doslej večinoma osredinjale na številne specifične teme. Kot nadaljevanje »tradicionalnega« glavnega poudarka v raziskavah religije in digitalnih medijev sta precejšnje pozornosti deležna prisotnost in udejstvovanje religijskih skupnosti na platformah družbenih medijev.[29] Številni raziskovalci proučujejo vse večjo vlogo, ki jo lahko imajo družbeni mediji pri oblikovanju in krepitvi povezav in (pogosto namišljenih) skupnosti.[30] Več študij primerov se osredinja na to, kako lahko družbeni mediji posameznikom omogočajo prostore za izražanje različnih vrst individualnih stališč, povezanih z religijo (vključno z nereligioznimi

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[25]   Jill Walker Rettberg, »Self-Representation in Social Media,« v *The SAGE Handbook to Social Media*, ur. Jean Burgess, Alice Marwick in Thomas Poell (London: SAGE Publications, 2017), 429–43.

[26]   Burgess idr., *Digital Methods*, 3.

[27]   Prav tam, 1.

[28]   Miller idr., *How the World Changed Social Media*, 4.

[29]   Npr. Moberg in Sjö, ur., *Digital Media, Young Adults, and Religion*.

[30]   Mark D. Johns, »Voting 'Present': Religious Organizational Groups on Facebook,« v *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures*, ur. P. H. Cheong idr. (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 151–68; Tim Hutchings, »Creating Church Online: Networks and Collectives in Contemporary Christianity,« v *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture: Perspectives, Practices and Futures*, ur. P. H. Cheong idr. (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 207–25.

stališči), ter kako lahko ustvarijo možnost za ponovne premisleke, spremembe in preoblikovanja danih religijskih identitet in vlog.[31]

Podobno kot pri raziskovanju družbenih medijev na splošno je bil doslej tudi večji del raziskav religije in družbenih medijev osredinjen na tako imenovane populacije WEIRD (*Western, Educated, Industrialised, Reach, Developed*), tj. »na tiste, ki prebivajo v zahodnjaških, izobraženih, industrializiranih, bogatih in razvitih državah«.[32] Tako je danes na voljo veliko podatkov o uporabi spleta in družbenih medijev zahodnjaškega prebivalstva za namene, povezane z religijo,[33] podrobnejši podatki o nezahodnjaškem prebivalstvu pa so še vedno precej redki.

Raziskovanje vpliva epidemije covida-19 na z religijo povezano uporabo digitalnih medijev

V zadnjih štirih letih so bile objavljene številne raziskave o vplivu pandemije covida-19 na religijske skupnosti – osredinjajo se na dostopnost,[34] religijsko avtoriteto,[35] duševno zdravje,[36] pripadnost,[37]

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[31]   Npr. Koen Leurs, Eva Midden in Sandra Ponzanesi, »Digital Multiculturalism in the Netherlands: Religious, Ethnic, and Gender Positioning by Moroccan-Dutch Youth,« *Religion & Gender* 2, št. 1 (2012): 150–75, http://dx.doi.org/10.18352/rg.36; Elif Kavakci in Camille R. Kraeplin, »Religious Beings in Fashionable Bodies: The Online Identity Construction of Hijab Social Media Personalities,« *Media, Culture & Society* 39, št. 6 (2017): 850–68, https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443716679031; Evelina Lundmark, »'This is the Face of an Atheist': Performing Private Truths in Precarious Publics« (PhD dissertation, Uppsala University, 2019).

[32]   Burgess idr., *Digital Methods*, 3.

[33]   Npr. Pew Research Center, *Social Media Use in 2018* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2018).

[34]   Giuseppina Addo, »Join the Holy Spirit on Zoom: African Pentecostal Churches and Their Liturgical Practices during COVID-19,« *Approaching Religion* 11, št. 2 (2021): 45–61. https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.107728.

[35]   Amin Al-Astewani, »To Open or Close? COVID-19, Mosques and the Role of Religious Authority within the British Muslim Community: A Socio-Legal Analysis,« *Religions* 12, št. 1 (2021): 11, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010011.

[36]   Simon Dein, Kate Loewenthal, Christopher Alan Lewis in Kenneth I. Pargament, »COVID-19, Mental Health and Religion: An Agenda for Future Research,« *Mental Health, Religion & Culture* 23, št. 1 (2020): 1–9, https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1768725.

[37]   Rebecca Duncan in Johan Höglund, »Decolonising the COVID-19 Pandemic: On Being in This Together,« *Approaching Religion* 11, št. 2 (2021): 115–31, https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.107743; Rivi Frei-Landau, »'When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get–Creative': Israeli Jewish Religious Leaders Find Religiously Innovative Ways to Preserve Community Members' Sense of Belonging and Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic,« *Psychological Trauma:*

družbene odnose,[38] potrošniško izbiranje in zapuščanje cerkva,[39] živečo (*lived*) religioznost,[40] krščanski nacionalizem[41] itd. Na področju digitalne religiologije odnos med religijskimi skupnostmi in pandemijo obravnavamo zlasti ob upoštevanju teoretičnih spoznanj komunikologinje Heidi A. Campbell.[42]

Raziskave obravnavajo tudi različne vidike obrednih in drugih religijskih dejavnosti: obredno avtoriteto,[43] komunikacijo[44] in elastičnost[45] ter spremembe/prilagoditve religijskih dejavnosti, da bi bolj ustrezale virtualnim prostorom.[46] Kot pokaže Campbell,[47] so religijski voditelji med pandemijo pri oblikovanju religijskih dejavnosti na spletu uporabljali zlasti tri strategije: najpogostejša je bila bolj ali manj neposreden »prenos« dogodkov na splet, druga je bila strategija »prevajanja«, tj. kako so akterji poskušali obredje prilagoditi spletu, tretja pa je bila »preoblikovanje«

Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy 12, S1 (2020), S258–S260, https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000822.

[38] Helen Parish, »The Absence of Presence and the Presence of Absence: Social Distancing, Sacraments, and the Virtual Religious Community during the COVID-19 Pandemic,« *Religions* 11, št. 6 (2020): 276, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11060276.

[39] Nicholas J. Higgins in Paul A. Djupe, »Congregation Shopping during the Pandemic: A Research Note,« *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 61 (2022): 726–36, https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12802.

[40] Eline Huygens, »Practicing Religion during a Pandemic: On Religious Routines, Embodiment, and Performativity,« *Religions* 12, št. 7 (2021), 494, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070494.

[41] Samuel L. Perry, Andrew L. Whitehead in Joshua B. Grubbs, »Save the Economy, Liberty, and Yourself: Christian Nationalism and Americans' Views on Government COVID-19 Restrictions,« *Sociology of Religion* 82, št. 4 (2020): 426–46, https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/sraa047.

[42] Glej Heidi A. Campbell, *Exploring Religious Community Online: We Are One in the Network* (Bruselj: Peter Lang, 2005); Heidi A. Campbell, *When Religion Meets New Media* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[43] Loïc Bawidamann, Laura Peter in Rafael Walthert, »Restricted Religion: Compliance, Vicariousness, and Authority during the Corona Pandemic in Switzerland,« *European Societies* 23 (2020): 637–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2020.1833068.

[44] Kyle K. Schiefelbein-Guerrero, ur., *Church after the Corona Pandemic: Consequences for Worship and Theology* (Cham: Springer, 2023).

[45] Monica Cornejo-Valle in Borja Martin-Andino, »Elastic Rituals: A Multi-Religious Analysis of Adaptations to the COVID-19 Crisis,« *Religions* 14, št. 6 (2023): 773, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14060773.

[46] Addo, »Join the Holy Spirit on Zoom,« 45–61; Campbell, *Digital Religion*; Schlag in Nord, *The Corona Pandemic and Dynamics of Digital Innovation and Transformation*.

[47] Campbell, *Digital Religion*.

tradicionalnega obredja na bolj ekspliciten način, na primer v bolj dialoško smer. Pri tem pa ne gre zmeraj brez konfliktov – v primeru danske evangeličanske luteranske cerkve je na primer javna razprava o alternativnem virtualnem obhajilu ustvarila eno od oblik obrednih konfliktov.[48]

Mednarodne raziskave so se doslej večinoma osredinjale na učinke pandemije na krščanske skupnosti. Verjetno največji tovrstni raziskovalni projekt je CONTOC – Cerkve na spletu v času korone (*Churches Online in Times of Corona*), ki je se je osredotočil zlasti na spremembe in nove prakse digitalnega komuniciranja znotraj raznovrstnih krščanskih skupnosti v posebnih okoliščinah pandemije. Končno poročilo,[49] objavljeno konec leta 2023, analitično predstavlja empirične podatke iz kar štiriindvajsetih držav – prvotna raziskovalna pozornost je bila usmerjena na nemško govoreča območja Nemčije, Avstrije in Švice, potem pa so raziskavo razširili še na Madžarsko, Malto, Nizozemsko, Dansko, Finsko, Švedsko, Veliko Britanijo, ZDA in Kanado ter na Avstralijo, Singapur, Hongkong in Južno Korejo, kot tudi na Argentino, Brazilijo, Čile, Paragvaj in Urugvaj ter Gano, Namibijo in Južnoafriško republiko.

Z vidika geografskega zajema neprimerno manj, z vidika širše vsebinske pozornosti na raznolike religijske tradicije pa občutno bolj ambiciozen je triletni (2022–2025) multidisciplinarni raziskovalni projekt RECOV-19 – Spreminjajoča se vloga religije v družbah, ki so prestale pandemijo covida-19.[50] Osredinja se na s pandemijo povezane religijske spremembe v petih okoljih: v Kanadi, Nemčiji, Republiki Irski/Severni Irski, Poljski ter Rusiji in Belorusiji. Raziskovalna pozornost je poleg diskurzov o zdravju, bolezni in znanosti ter spreminjajočih se odnosov med religijami in državo usmerjena tudi na prilagoditve religij digitalnemu svetu.

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[48]   Lene Kühle in Tina Larsen, »'Forced' Online Religion: Religious Minority and Majority Communities' Media Usage during the COVID-19 Lockdown,« *Religions* 12, št. 7 (2021): 496, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070496.
[49]   Thomas Schlag, Ilona Nord in Wolfgang Beck, ur., *Churches Online in Times of Corona: Die CONTOC-Studie: Empirische Einsichten, Interpretationen und Perspektiven* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2023).
[50]   https://recov19.uni-bremen.de/, dostop 14. 9. 2024.

Na z digitalizacijo povezane spremembe v religijskih skupnostih različnih tradicij pa se osredinja tudi naš projekt RECOVIRA.

Projekt RECOVIRA – Religijske skupnosti
v virtualni dobi

Mednarodni projekt RECOVIRA[51] smo zasnovali raziskovalci iz sedmih evropskih držav (poleg Slovenije še iz Velike Britanije, Danske, Finske, Švedske, Nemčije in Poljske), da bi v svojih državah in primerjalno med njimi proučili učinke sprememb intenzivirane rabe digitalnih tehnologij, v katero je religijske skupnosti potisnila pandemija covida-19. Zanima nas predvsem, kako se oblike, vloge in izkušnje religijskega življenja v Evropi spreminjajo zaradi pospešene rabe sodobnih digitalnih tehnologij.

Raziskava temelji na etnografskih, tako klasičnih kot digitalnih metodah. Izdelali smo študije primerov, ki vključujejo religijske skupnosti različnih tradicij, prepričanj in porekel – izbrali smo jih na način, ki nam je omogočil tako etnografsko poglobljenost kot tudi mednarodno primerljivost. V vsaki od sodelujočih držav smo se osredinili na: 1. prevladujoče, 2. že dolgo uveljavljene manjšinske religijske skupnosti ter 3. mlajše in šele uveljavljajoče se religijske skupnosti. V Sloveniji smo tako raziskovali odzive na pandemijo v: 1. Rimskokatoliški cerkvi (RKC), 2. Islamski skupnosti v Republiki Sloveniji in 3. Skupnosti za zavest Krišne, znani tudi kot gibanje Hare Krišna. Po enotnem ključu so se v drugih državah raziskovalno osredinili na strukturno podobne religijske skupnosti, v Nemčiji skoraj enako kot pri nas na RKC, muslimansko skupnost in hindujsko skupnost, na Poljskem na RKC, judovsko in muslimansko skupnost, na Danskem na dansko evangeličansko luteransko cerkev, muslimansko in budistično skupnost, na Švedskem na švedsko evangeličansko luteransko cerkev, judovsko skupnost in afriške diasporične cerkve in skupnosti, na Finskem na finsko evangeličansko

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luteransko cerkev, Jehovove priče in budistično skupnost, v Veliki Britaniji pa na anglikansko cerkev, budistično skupnost ter afriške diasporične cerkve in skupnosti.

Poleg strukturno poenotene izbire treh tipov religijskih skupnosti smo nadaljnjo mednarodno primerljivost poskušali zagotavljati s premišljeno izdelano podlago za polstrukturirane intervjuje, ki smo jih izvajali z vodilnimi in običajnimi predstavniki izbranih religijskih skupnosti. Svoje raziskovanje načinov in učinkov hitre digitalizacije religijskega življenja v Evropi za večinske in manjšinske religijske tradicije smo tako natančneje strukturirali v jasneje osredinjene tematske sklope. Podrobneje nas je zanimalo, kako nove razmere spreminjajo področja religijske avtoritete, pripadnosti skupnostim in članstvo v njih, kako se spreminjajo (digitalna) občutenja svetih prostorov, kako (hibridna) raba spleta vpliva na oblikovanje smiselnih in čustveno močnih obrednih dejavnosti ter kaj to pomeni za odnose religijskih skupnosti z okolico in širšo družbo. V skladu s temi glavnimi tematskimi poudarki smo po opravljenih intervjujih izdelali tudi obsežen kodirni list, ki vsebuje skupne krovne kode, znotraj njih pa na ravni podkod fleksibilno omogoča tudi osredinjanje na nacionalno specifične teme.

Poleg tega projekt sestavljajo še trije primerjalni sklopi: 1. kvantitativni sklop strnjeno in primerjalno analizira razpoložljive kvantitativne raziskave o vplivu pandemije na religijsko življenje v sodelujočih državah; 2. sklop o družbenih medijih s pomočjo orodja Pulsar proučuje, kako se izbrane skupnosti predstavljajo in kako so prikazane na družbenem mediju X (v času raziskovanja še Twitter); 3. sklop estetskih analiz z metodologijo performativnih študij analizira spremembe estetike (vizualne, zvočne, izvedbene ...) obrednih in drugih religijskih dejavnosti, ki so posledica prestavitve na splet oz. v hibridna okolja.

Slovenski del raziskave smo še pred etnografskim opazovanjem in intervjuji začeli z netnografijo. Ta je specializirana oblika etnografskega empiričnega raziskovanja, ki se osredinja na skupnosti v digitalnih okoljih. Eden izmed naših prvih raziskovalnih ciljev je bilo mapiranje spletne prisotnosti izbranih treh religijskih skupnosti. Z netnografijo smo zajeli in nato analizirali podatke o tem, kako so izbrane religijske skupnosti v času zaprtja družbenega življenja poskušale vzdrževati svoje religijske dejavnosti s pomočjo spleta in drugih digitalnih tehnologij.

Najprej smo se osredinili na osrednja spletna mesta religijskih institucij, nato pa smo pregledali še profile religijskih skupnosti v družbenih medijih (Facebook, Twitter/X in YouTube) in podrobneje analizirali za naše raziskovalne cilje relevantne vsebine. Skupaj z etnografskimi opazovanji in intervjuji smo tako kar se da celovito zajeli kompleksne načine in učinke intenzivirane rabe spletnih tehnologij med pandemijo in po njej – rezultate slovenskega dela raziskave predstavljamo v naslednjih dveh člankih.

Sklep

Če je bilo religijsko življenje še do pred kratkim mogoče nekakšno zatočišče pred intenzivno digitalizacijo zahodnjaških družb, je pandemija covida-19 to korenito spremenila. Zaradi omejitev družbenega življenja, ki jih je povzročila, so bile tudi religijske skupnosti prisiljene v pospešeno rabo digitalnih tehnologij, da bi lahko v nastalih kriznih razmerah vsaj delno nadaljevale svoje temeljno delo. To je imelo raznovrstne posledice, nekatere se kažejo z zamikom, številne med njimi šele začenjamo razumeti.

Tudi po epidemiji ostaja velik del digitalnih tehnologij v rabi raznovrstnih religijskih skupnosti. Vse bolj se širi hibridna raba, ki dele religijskih dejavnosti v fizičnem okolju tudi digitalno prenaša v najrazličnejše medije. To prinaša zelo različne izzive in tudi dolgoročnejše spremembe. V naši raziskavi Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi smo tako rekoč v vseh sodelujočih državah zabeležili številna pričevanja, ki poudarjajo ključni pomen kontinuiranega skupinskega fizičnega deleženja za vzdrževanje smiselnih in vitalnih religijskih skupnosti, ki ga digitalne tehnologije ne morejo nadomestiti. Kljub temu pa bi bilo prehitro sklepanje, da njihova rastoča raba ne more bistveno spremeniti tradicionalnih religijskih dejavnosti, ki potekajo primarno v cerkvah, džamijah, templjih in drugih svetiščih. Te dejavnosti namreč že danes marsikje s pridom dopolnjuje hibridna raba digitalnih tehnologij, ki v nekaterih skupnostih tudi že zaznavno zmanjšuje udeležbo pri fizičnih religijskih dejavnostih. Opazen je tudi porast spletnih religij, ki črpajo iz uveljavljenih religijskih tradicij in delujejo primarno ali izključno na spletu. Ko temu prištejemo množico novih alternativnih duhov-

nosti, ki se pojavljajo v virtualnih sferah, slika postane še pestrejša. Pa dodajmo še umetno inteligenco, glede katere že nekaj časa poteka neusmiljena tekma med največjimi svetovnimi centri moči. In ko pomislimo na nove generacije, rojene v 21. stoletju, za katere se je uveljavila oznaka digitalni domorodci, ker v nasprotju s starejšimi generacijami te tehnologije uporabljajo tako rekoč od rojstva, postane očitneje, da bodo danes ustaljeni načini življenja le težko ostali nedotaknjeni, in to gotovo velja tudi za religijo. Živimo v razburljivem obdobju, za katero bo čas verjetno pokazal, da je vsaj v nekaterih pogledih prelomno. Za njegovo razumevanje bodo potrebne še številne poglobljene raziskave – delne rezultate ene prvih predstavljamo v nadaljevanju.

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MEDIATIZACIJA RELIGIJE IN ZAMIKANJE RELIGIJSKIH AVTORITET: NETNOGRAFSKA RAZISKAVA DIGITALIZACIJE IZBRANIH SLOVENSKIH RELIGIJSKIH SKUPNOSTI MED EPIDEMIJO

Katja Koren Ošljak

Uvod

V okviru mednarodnega projekta Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi (Recovira) je bil eden izmed raziskovalnih ciljev mapiranje spletne prisotnosti treh religijskih skupnosti v vsaki izmed sodelujočih držav, in sicer večinske religije, ene uveljavljene manjšinske in ene manj prominentne manjšinske. V Sloveniji zato omenjeni projekt proučuje Rimskokatoliško cerkev, Islamsko skupnost v Republiki Sloveniji in Skupnost za zavest Krišne. Posebno pozornost smo namenili obdobju zaprtja javnega življenja v času epidemije covida19, ki je pomenila svojstven izziv za pripadnike religijskih skupnosti, prav tako so rez v stiku s svojimi občestvi obravnavale tudi religijske institucije oz. njihove avtoritete.

Zasnovali smo netnografsko raziskavo, s katero smo nameravali zajeti različne dejavnike oz. zaznati čim več »neznanih neznank« glede digitalizacije in mediatizacije slovenskih religijskih skupnosti v času epidemije covida-19. Študija je izhajala iz predpostavke, da je epidemija povečala potrebo po digitalni prisotnosti religijskih skupnosti. Digi-

talne medije smo tako razumeli kot kanal in kontekst za premoščanje prekinitve fizičnega združevanja religijskih skupnosti.

Namen tega besedila je predstavitev študije morebitnih učinkov digitalnih oz. digitaliziranih praks religijskih skupnosti v odnosu do religijskih avtoritet.[1] Študijo sta usmerjali dve raziskovalni vprašanji: 1. kako so religijske institucije v času zaprtja javnega življenja med epidemijo s pomočjo digitalnih medijev premoščale izgubo stika s svojimi občestvi ter 2. kako so v kontekstu digitalnih medijev vodstva religijskih skupnosti v času zaprtja javnega življenja izražala avtoriteto oz. svojo vlogo v razmerju do pripadnikov skupnosti in v družbi nasploh.

Od leta 2020, ko je prišlo do disrupcije vsakdana, s katero smo ostali fizično izolirani od svojih skupnosti, je upadlo tudi religijsko udejstvovanje v živo. Epidemija je odnesla gotovost vsakdanjega življenja in prizadela tudi religijske skupnosti, zaradi česar so nekateri vodje iskali načine za tolažbo in pomoč ljudem, drugi pa so podžigali delitve in promovirali samozdravljenje,[2] ugotavlja Abby Day v predgovoru k učbeniku sociologije religije. Raziskava prakticiranja religije med belgijskimi pripadnicami RKC med epidemijo poudarja vidik žensk, ki sta jim umanjkala fizično izkustvo obiskovanja cerkva in sodelovanje v religijskem obredju, zaradi česar so med drugim še posebej ob verskih praznikih občutile izoliranost.[3] Da je epidemija močno spremenila vsakdanje življenje in povzročila pomembne spremembe v vedenju, vključno z načinom, na katerega religijske skupnosti opravljajo svoja obredja, ugotavljajo tudi v pregledni analizi študij latinskoameriških religij: »Intenzivna uporaba interneta (družbenih medijev) v religijske namene [je bila], zlasti s strani krščanskih cerkva in skupin za prozelitizem, izvajanje in deljenje religijskih aktivnosti, pred krizo zelo pogosta. Implementacija zapor in strogih protokolov za družbeno distanciranje je ustvarila močen pritisk na religijska gibanja in njihove vodje, da so

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[1]   Članek je rezultat raziskovalnega projekta Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi (https://chanse.org/recovira/), ki je potekal med 1. novembrom 2022 in 31. oktobrom 2024 in ga je v okviru programa CHANSE ERA-NET Co-fund financiral program Evropske unije Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation (na podlagi pogodbe št. 101004509).

[2]   Abby Day, *Sociology of Religion : Overview and Analysis of Contemporary Religion*, 1. izd. Let. 1. (Routledge, 2020), vii–viii, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429055591.

[3]   Eline Huygens, »Practicing Religion during a Pandemic: On Religious Routines, Embodiment, and Performativity,« *Religions* 12, št. 7 (2021): 6. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070494.

še več vlagali v platformo za prenos bogoslužij prek spleta.«[4] Zaprtje javnega življenja in prepoved fizičnega druženja sta bila velik izziv tudi za religijska gibanja, ki delujejo v diasporah, ugotavlja Heidi A. Campbell. Pri tem osvetli iznajdljivost religijskih vodij v ZDA, ki so, kot piše, razmeroma lahko migrirali iz fizičnih v spletne prostore, pri čemer so inovirali oblike izražanja pripadnosti svoji religiji – npr. s civilno nepokorščino in kršenjem odlokov o prepovedi združevanja.[5] Afriška študija[6] pa raziskuje, kako so videokonferenčne platforme nadomestile nekatere čutne oz. zaznavne vidike religijskih praks med bogoslužji. Konceptualno se opre na zmogljivosti[7] medijev in opazuje npr. uporabo pogovornih oken in emotikonov za ustvarjanje mrzlice (angl. hype), s čimer občinstvo na Zoomu v vlogi občestva podpira duhovnika pri poustvarjanju afektivnega okolja, digitalni mediji pa so razumljeni kot duhovna orodja.

Zaradi možnosti »večterenskega« (angl. multi-sited)[8] zbiranja podatkov, vzporednega raziskovanja na več lokacijah hkrati[9] in zbiranja podatkov o skupnosti ter njihovega povezovanja skozi več digitalnih medijev smo v svoji raziskavi izbrali netnografski pristop. Netnografija namreč kot posebna oblika kvalitativnega raziskovanja družbenih medijev prilagaja metodološke postopke za opazovanje »subkultur, skupin

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[4]   Donizete Rodrigues, »How to Study Religion? Notes on Research Methodology in the Context of Latin American Religions,« *International Journal of Latin American Religions* 7, št. 1 (junij 2023): 243, https://doi.org/10.1007/s41603-022-00188-0.

[5]   Heidi A. Campbell, »Religion Embracing and Resisting Cultural Change in a Time of Social Distancing,« v *Religion in Quarantine : The Future of Religion in a Post-Pandemic World*, ur. Heidi A. Campbell (Digital religion publications, 2020), 12, https://doi.org/10.21423/religioninquarantine.

[6]   Giuseppina Addo, »Join the Holy Spirit on Zoom,« *Approaching Religion* 11, št. 2 (2021), https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.107728.

[7]   Elisabetta Costa, »Affordances-in-Practice: An Ethnographic Critique of Social Media Logic and Context Collapse,« *New Media & Society* 20, št. 10 (2018): 3641–56, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444818756290.

[8]   George E. Marcus, »Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography,« *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, št. 1 (1995): 95–117, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523.

[9]   Robert V. Kozinets, *Netnography : the essential guide to qualitative social media research* (Sage, 2020); Robert V. Kozinets, »Management Netnography: Axiological and Methodological Developments in Online Cultural Business Research,« v *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods*, ur. Cathy Cassell, Cunliffe, Ann, in Gina Grandy (London: SAGE, 2015), https://doi.org/10.13140/rg.2.1.3029.4487.

in virtualnih skupnosti ter socialnih interakcij, ki potekajo v računal-
niško posredovanem komuniciranju,« pri čemer so objavljeni zapisi v
obliki besedil, slik, videoposnetkov in v drugih formatih primarni vir
informacij za razumevanje opazovanih fenomenov. [10] V eni od novejših
netnografskih študij religije so tako analizirali osrednji spletni ultraor-
todoksni judovski forum, ki odpira hibridni »tretji prostor digitalne
religije, ker se v njem prepletajo religijske in sekularne vsebine, zaradi
česar služi tudi kot družabni prostor, v katerem člani izražajo osebnosti
in mnenja, kažejo sposobnosti in se celo igrajo.[11] V katalonski raziskavi
potrošnje religijskih vsebin v kontekstu digitalnih medijev so ob struk-
turiranem anketnem vprašalniku in poglobljenih intervjujih za zbiranje
podatkov prav tako uporabili netnografijo.[12] Ena izmed glavnih ugo-
tovitev katalonskih raziskovalcev je, da verujoči možnosti digitalnega
konteksta ne izkoriščajo za spoznavanje lastne religije in oblikovanje
fleksibilnejših oblik verovanja niti za premoščanje razlik med različnimi
religijskimi skupnostmi oz. spoznavanje teh.[13]

Netnografija kot metoda za proučevanje religijskih skupnosti

Netnografija je specializirana oblika etnografskega empiričnega razi-
skovanja, ki se osredinja na skupnosti v digitalnem okolju. Njena krov-
na empirična disciplina je, kot je razvidno že iz poimenovanja, etnogra-
fija. Kot pravi Robert Kozinets, gre za obliko »digitalne antropologije,«
[14] ki je podobna »medijski antropologiji«.[15] Etnografijo kot antropo-
loško in sociološko raziskovalno metodo zanimajo »odnosi med druž-
benimi akterji, posamezniki ali skupinami ter položaji in družbenimi

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[10]   Rodrigues, »How to Study Religion?,« 242.
[11]   Sarit Okun in Galit Nimrod, »Online Ultra-Orthodox Religious Communities as a Third Space: A Netnographic Study,« *International Journal of Communication* 11(2017): 2825–2841, https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/6515/2085.
[12]   Míriam Díez Bosch, Josep Lluís Micó Sanz in Alba Sabaté Gauxachs, »Typing My Religion. Digital Use of Religious Webs and Apps by Adolescents and Youth for Religious and Interreligious Dialogue,« *Church, Communication and Culture* 2, št. 2 (16. junij 2017): 121–43, https://doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2017.1347800.
[13]   Díez Bosch, Micó Sanz in Sabaté Gauxachs, 134–35.
[14]   Kozinets, *Netnography*, 21.
[15]   Prav tam, 22.

vlogami, ki jih akterji zasedajo in imajo v družbenem okolju, v katero so vključeni«.[16] Z vidika Simmla in Webra naj bi omogočala izvedbo empirije za namen »mikrosociologije,« vendar ima »dejansko širši pristop, ki se osredinja na razumevanje družb in skupin na podlagi poglobljenih in natančnih opisov družbeno-kulturnih in religijskih praks«.[17] Etnografija si tako prizadevata razložiti, kako opazovane prakse, izkušnje in družbena dinamika ustvarjajo pomene za posameznike in skupnosti, zaradi česar se je verjetno uveljavila že v zgodnjih raziskavah internetnih oz. virtualnih oz. digitalnih skupnosti.

Ena izmed pionirk na tem področju je Christine Hine z delom Virtualna etnografija (2000). V njem ugotavlja, da je internet nova oblika etnografskega terena, saj je prizorišče kulture in hkrati njena materializacija oz. kulturni artefakt, ki ga oblikujejo razumevanja in pričakovanja ljudi.[18] Po njenem mnenju je digitalne medije treba proučevati kot kulturo in kot prostor, v katerem se (re)konstituira kultura.[19] Zato je vloga etnografa, da »v neposrednem stiku s sogovorniki proučuje pojave in kulturne prakse, ki potekajo v virtualnih skupnostih«.[20] Po avtoričinem mnenju so digitalni mediji tudi prizorišče uprizarjanja, zamikanja oz. rekonstituiranja kulture in s tem religije, zaradi česar je prek njih mogoče digitalnoetnografsko opazovanje religijskih skupnosti.

Digitalni mediji lahko dopolnjujejo zbiranje etnografskih podatkov o opazovani skupnosti ali pa so primarni prostor opazovanja, podatke je tako mogoče zajemati med spremljanjem vsakdanjega življenja skupnosti na različnih spletnih mestih in prek aplikacij družbenih omrežij Facebook, X (Twitter), YouTube, TikTok itd. Kot ugotavlja Rodrigues,[21] se je že v 90. letih kot odgovor na potrebo po prilagoditvi klasične etnografske metode proučevanju virtualnega sveta pojavilo več metodoloških konceptualizacij in pristopov, poleg netnografije in virtualne

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16   Rodrigues, »How to Study Religion?,« 238.
17   Prav tam, 242.
18   Christine Hine, *Virtual Ethnography* (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 14, https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857020277.
19   Rodrigues, »How to Study Religion?,« 243.
20   Prav tam.
21   Prav tam, 242.

etnografije tako še digitalna etnografija, spletna oz. *online* etnografija, spletnografija (angl. *webnography*)[22] in kiberetnografija.[23]

Aplikacija netnografske metode na področju raziskovanja religijskih skupnosti je torej v skladu s konceptualizacijo digitalnih medijev kot prizorišč kulture in kulturnih artefaktov na eni strani, na drugi pa tudi s Kozinetsovo opredelitvijo metode, namenjene raziskovanju skupnosti. S popularizacijo in komercializacijo interneta, ki je informacijski in komunikacijski temelj digitalne medijske infrastrukture, je ta *metadigitalni medij* vse pomembnejši tudi v religijskem življenju. Internet niso s pridom prevzela le nova religijska gibanja z izključno medijiranim delovanjem, npr. v obliki »virtualnih cerkva,« katerih pripadnice in pripadniki se fizično ne srečujejo, ampak so njegov potencial prepoznale tudi tradicionalne religije.[24] Digitalni mediji so danes za religijske skupnosti pomemben komunikacijski kanal za organizacijo religijskih dogodkov in širjenje njihovih sporočil.[25]

1. Digitalizirane ali digitalne religijske skupnosti?

Več aktualnih študij religijskih skupnosti[26] ločuje med 1. religijami, ki so izvorno sicer nedigitalne, ampak so iz različnih potreb po dosegu sodobnih občinstev, ki so lahko zanje potencialna občestva, posegle po internetu oz. digitalnih medijih, ter 2. sodobnimi religijskimi sku-

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[22] Glej npr. tudi Larissa Hjorth, Heather Horst, Anne Galloway in Genevieve Bell, ur. *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography* (New York, London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315673974.

[23] Katie J. Ward, »Cyber-Ethnography and the Emergence of the Virtually New Community,« *Journal of Information Technology* 14, št. 1 (1999): 95–105, https://doi.org/10.1080/026839699344773.

[24] Rodrigues, »How to Study Religion?«, 243.

[25] Prav tam.

[26] Glej npr. Christopher Helland, »Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communities,« *Religion and the Social Order* 8 (2000): 205–23, https://www.academia.edu/86647261/Online_Religion_Religion_Online_and_Virtual_Communitas; Christopher Helland, »Online Religion as Lived Religion. Methodological Issues in the Study of Religious Participation on the Internet,« *Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet* 1 (2005), https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:147573014; Ateeq Abdul Rauf, »An Islamic Revivalist Group's Unsuccessful Attempt to Find Meaning on WhatsApp: A Case Study of Understanding Unsustainable Asymmetrical Logics between Traditional Religion and the Digital Realm,« *Religions* 13, št. 9 (5. september 2022): 823, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090823.

pnostmi, ki so vzniknile na internetu in je njihovo delovanje vezano izključno na digitalne medije. Prosto po Hellandu[27] bi prve lahko imenovali *digitalizirane* religijske skupnosti, druge pa *digitalne* religijske skupnosti.

Tradicionalne religijske skupnosti so digitalne medije začele domačiti kot hierarhične, avtoritarne ali vsaj organizacijsko močne institucije. Helland jih opisuje kot religijske skupnosti, ki delujejo »od zgoraj navzdol«. Internet je zanje zunanji prostor, v katerega vstopajo zaradi izvajanja svojih dejavnosti, poleg tega pa pri komuniciranju skozi digitalne medije ohranjajo hierarhije svojih organizacij.[28] Gre torej za idejo razširjanja prisotnosti religijskih avtoritet na splet, kjer ohranjajo obliko »množičnega« komuniciranja avtoritete z občestvom oz. članom religijske skupnosti.[29] Hellandov koncept spletne religije (angl. *online religion*) se nanaša na »novo obliko religijskega udejstvovanja« na spletu, pri katerem so posamezniki v interakciji z religijskimi sistemi verovanja, predstavljenimi na internetu. Po Hellandovem razumevanju se spletna religija formira od spodaj navzgor (angl. *bottom-up*), saj njeni pripadniki vanjo prispevajo z izrazi osebnega verovanja, na te pa prejemajo prav tako osebne odzive drugih pripadnikov. Gre torej za dialektični proces, v katerem se spletna religija rekonstituira – verovanje se razvija, spreminja, prilagaja in fluktuira v smeri, ki jo uravnavajo pripadniki spletne religije.[30] Kot pravi Helland, se koncept spletne religije kot religijske skupnosti, formirane od spodaj navzgor, nanaša na Turnerjevo razumevanje skupnosti, v katerih prevladuje družbena nedorečenost in so v njih mnogi družbeni označevalci članov skupnosti odsotni.

2. Zlitje spletnih in »fizičnih« religijskih sfer

V študiji, ki jo je opravil čez dobrih deset let (2016), se tudi Helland ne sklicuje več izrecno na odsotnost družbenih kazalnikov, še vedno

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[27] Helland, »Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communities.«
[28] Christopher Helland, »Digital Religion,« v *Handbook of Religion and Society*, ur. David Yamane (Springer International Publishing, 2016), 177–96, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31395-5_10.
[29] Prav tam, 178–81.
[30] Helland, »Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communities,« 214.

pa velja, da jim digitalni mediji omogočajo vzajemne interakcije med religijskimi avtoritetami in laiki ter tudi med laiki samimi.[31] Poleg tega digitalni mediji pripadnikom spletnih religij omogočajo ustvarjalno oblikovanje religijskih praks, kot so molitve ali meditacije prek spleta.[32] Kot piše Campbell,[33] podobno pa kažejo tudi rezultati te študije, so v času zapiranja javnega življenja med epidemijo tudi tradicionalne religijske skupnosti izkoristile možnosti digitalne mediacije religijskih praks. Vendar je poleg empiričnih razlogov treba opozoriti tudi na konceptualne premisleke o tipologiji digitalnih religij in digitaliziranih religijah. Vseprisotnost digitalnih medijev in njihovo gosto prepletanje z vsakdanjimi praksami sta za raziskovalce religije, kulture, medijev itn. znak, da več kot tri desetletja stara binarna ločevanja *online-offline* med digitalnimi in »fizičnimi« prostori niso več ustrezna. Ko je bila internetna povezava ekskluzivna dobrina ter smo se z njo zaradi tehnično-infrastrukturnih in ekonomskih omejitev povezovali redko in praviloma z zelo specifičnimi nameni (da bi recimo preverili, ali smo prejeli odgovor na zadnje elektronsko sporočilo, ali pred spanjem klepetali na IRC-u), smo bili »na internetu,« sicer pa ne. Danes pa smo »na internetu« neprekinjeno ter smo prek pametnega telefona in digitalnih medijev nasploh soprisotni v »fizičnem« in digitalnem prostoru. Na zlitje oz. integracijo spletnih in fizičnih religijskih sfer opozori tudi Campbell.[34] Raziskovanje digitalne religije opredeljuje kot proučevanje, »kako digitalni mediji in tehnologije vplivajo in oblikujejo religijska verovanja, prakse, skupnosti in izražanje« v združenem in zmešanem tehnološko-kulturnem prostoru. Digitalna religija torej črpa tako iz spletne kulture, za katero sta značilni interaktivnost in konvergenca, kot iz tradicionalne religije z ustaljenimi sistemi verovanj, zaradi česar ni samo replika na tradicionalne religijske prakse s pomočjo oz. prek digitalnih medijev, ampak vključuje »transformacijo in adaptacijo teh praks v digitalnem kontekstu«.[35] Tako je tudi mogoče opazovati religijske avtoritete v digitalnem konte-

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[31] Helland, »Digital Religion.«
[32] Prav tam.«
[33]   Heidi A. Campbell, »Looking Backwards and Forwards at the Study of Digital Religion,« *Religious Studies Review* 50, št. 1 (2024): 83–87, https://doi.org/10.1111/rsr.17062.
[34] Campbell, »Looking Backwards and Forwards,« 86.
[35] Prav tam, 83.

kstu in kako se te soočajo z digitalno kulturo ter z njo vežejo in zlivajo svoje ustaljene organizacijske religijske prakse. Netnografijo, ki jo zanimajo manifestacije družbenosti in kulturnih karakteristik v družbenih medijih,[36] tako preizkušamo kot metodo za proučevanje razmerij moči med institucionalnimi avtoritetami in posamezniki. Omogoča namreč raziskovanje »moči korporacij, podjetij in skupin v današnjem tehnološko prevladujočem družbenem svetu« ter tudi kako so digitalni mediji in z njimi povezane prakse vpletenih akterjev prispevali k »preoblikovanju političnega, korporativnega in osebnega vpliva, kako so ga vsilili in okrepili«.[37]

Mediatizacija religije v digitaliziranem vsakdanu

V konceptualnem smislu je za analizo razmerij moči med religijskimi institucijami oz. avtoritetami na eni strani ter pripadniki religijskih skupnosti na drugi mogoče poseči po teoretizacijah mediatizacije. Po svoje je to nehvaležno početje, saj celostne in zaključene teorije mediatizacije ni,[38] vendar pa hkrati nudi teoretični okvir za sistematično raziskovanje družbenega komuniciranja tako da sami (digitalni) mediji niso v središču raziskovalne pozornosti,[39] ampak so obravnavani v vlogi dejavnika ter hkrati konteksta kulturnih konstrukcij in transformacij. Andreas Hepp npr. razume mediatizacijo na ozadju socialnega konstruktivizma

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[36] Greiciele Morais, Valdeci Santos in Carlos Gonçalves, »Netnography: Origins, Foundations, Evolution and Axiological and Methodological Developments and Trends,« *The Qualitative Report*, 18. februar 2020: 444, https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4227.

[37] Kozinets, »Management Netnography.«

[38] Andreas Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization* (WILEY, Polity Press, 2013), 46.

[39] Glej npr. Stig Hjarvard, »Mediatization and Cultural and Social Change: An Institutional Perspective,« v *Mediatization of Communication*, ur. Knut Lundby (De Gruyter Mouton, 2014), 199–226, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110272215.199; Sonia Livingstone in Peter Lunt, »Mediatization: An Emerging Paradigm for Media and Communication Research?,« v v *Mediatization of Communication*, ur. Knut Lundby (De Gruyter Mouton, 2014), 703–24, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110272215.703; Knut Lundby, *Mediatization of Communication. Handbooks of Communication Science* (Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2014), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110272215; Kim Christian Schrøder, »Towards the 'Audiencization' of Mediatization Research? Audience Dynamics as Co-Constitutive of Mediatization Processes,« v *Dynamics of Mediatization*, ur. Olivier Driessens, Göran Bolin, Andreas Hepp in Stig Hjarvard (Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62983-4_5.

kot družbeno konstrukcijo realnosti skozi različne forme in transformacije komuniciranja, ki izhajajo iz dialektičnih razmerij med subjekti in medijskimi institucijami.[40] V okviru mediatizacije je tako mogoče opazovati učinke spreminjajoče se medijske krajine na religijske skupnosti tudi v daljšem časovnem obdobju, in sicer na eni strani ločeno medije in spremembe v njihovem delovanju, obliki, organiziranju, poslovanju itd., kar so gradniki t. i. *medijske logike*, in drugi, kako se religijska institucija oz. njena *institucionalna logika* spreminja ne glede na medije ter tudi kot posledica sprememb medijev in v medijski krajini.[41] Stig Hjarvard, eden izmed prominentnejših raziskovalcev mediatizacije, ki pa v nasprotju s Heppom in drugimi predstavniki konstruktivistične teorije uporablja institucionalno teorijo mediatizacije, se posveča fenomenoma resakralizacije in desakralizacije družbe in med drugim ugotavlja, da religijske prakse postajajo vse bolj odvisne od medijev.[42]

Z oporo v Lundbyjevem razumevanju mediatizacije[43] se raziskovalni interes mediatizacije religije lahko izraža tudi v vprašanju, kako se religija spreminja, ko se zaradi digitalnih medijev preoblikujejo nekdaj ustaljeni komunikacijski vzorci. Če tukaj mislimo na razumevanje struktur moči, potem lahko gre za razmerja med vodstvi in vodilnimi kot avtoritetami religijskih institucij ter laičnimi pripadniki skupnosti, kadar pa nas zanima oblikovanje morebitnih novih religijskih avtoritet, pa je relevantno opazovati to triado: 1. institucionalno vodstvo kot tradicionalno avtoriteto, 2. vzhajajočo novo oz. alternativno avtoriteto in 3. laike.

V kontekstu digitalizacije religije je o občestvu religijskih skupnosti smotrno misliti tudi kot o občinstvu digitalnih medijev, saj religijska skupnost z njihovo pomočjo ohranja stik in povezanost ter skrbi za moralne in duhovne usmeritve. Zato je smiselno, kot to stori Kim Christian Schrøder, teorijo mediatizacije dopolniti, da vključuje tudi razmislek o vlogi občinstva. Schrøder[44] izhaja iz Hjarvardovega modela institu-

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[40] Hepp, *Cultures of Mediatization*; Andreas Hepp, *Deep Mediatization (Key Ideas in Media & Cultural Studies)* (London: Routledge, 2019).
[41] Livingstone in Lunt, »Mediatization,« 706.
[42] Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*.
[43] Lundby, *Mediatization of Communication*, 3.
[44] Schrøder, »Towards the 'Audiencization' of Mediatization Research?«

cionalne mediatizacije,[45] v katerega ob: a) *medijski logiki*, ki jo gradijo a1) tehnološka infrastruktura, a2) žanri, vsebine, naracija idr. elementi estetike ter a3) institucionalni oz. organizacijski okviri in regulacija, ter b) *religijski logiki* kot logiki te specifične institucionalne domene, ki se izraža v b1) materialnih in simboličnimi virih ter b2) formalnih in neformalnih pravilih religijskih skupnosti, vključi še *dinamiko občinstva*, ki vključuje izbiranje iz medijske ponudbe, interpretacijo in participacijo v medijih in prek teh. Umesti jo torej tako, da je vezana na medijsko logiko kot specifično raven dejavnikov in konteksta, s čimer postavi v ospredje prepletanje in transformacije med medijsko logiko in dinamiko občinstva. Tako *občinstveno* razumevanje mediatizacije uporabljamo tudi v tej študiji. Pripadniki religijske skupnosti so v digitalnem kontekstu tudi občinstvo digitalnih medijev, ki ima aktivno vlogo in s tem določeno moč. Kot individualni (posamezen član občinstva) in/ali kolektivni družbeni akter se občinstvo udeležuje medijsko posredovanih družbenih interakcij, pogaja s sporočevalci o pomenu sporočil in lahko tudi participira v procesih oz. praksah, ki jih prenašajo institucionalni mediji[46] – v tem primeru digitalni mediji religijskih skupnosti.

Metoda zbiranja in analize podatkov

Praksa netnografskega raziskovanja pogosto kot vstop na teren oz. izhodišče vključuje spletni iskalnik, v katerega raziskovalec ali raziskovalka vpiše iskalno frazo, ki kar se da natančno opredeljuje vsebino oz. skupnost, s katero se spoznava, prav tako uporablja orodja za iskanje, listanje in brskanje po družbenih omrežjih in drugih digitalnih medijih, ki bi lahko postali relevantni viri podatkov o proučevanem.[47] V primeru projekta Recovira smo tri opazovane religijske skupnosti na spletu iskali z iskalnikom DuckDuckGo, pri čemer smo želeli najti digitalno prizorišče, ki je najbolj prominentno za vsako od religijskih skupnosti. Z iskalnimi frazami »katoliška cerkev v sloveniji,« »slovenska islamska

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45 Hjarvard, *The Mediatization of Culture and Society,* 1. izd. (Routledge, 2013), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203155363.
46 Kim Christian Schrøder, »Audience Reception Research in a Post-Broadcasting Digital Age,« *Television & New Media* 20, št. 2 (2019): 155–69, https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476418811114.
47 Morais, Santos, in Gonçalves, »Netnography,« 445.

skupnost« in »skupnost za zavest krišne slovenija« sta bili ustrezni spletni mesti dveh skupnosti hitro identificirani (katoliska-cerkev.si in islamska-skupnost.si), medtem ko je bilo nekoliko več truda potrebnega za identifikacijo osrednjega spletnega mesta skupnosti za zavest Krišne (iskcon-slovenija.blogspot.com/p/iskcon-slovenija.html), saj je bilo med zadetki več spletišč v slovenskem jeziku, ki so sugerirala osrednjo vlogo – npr. zaradi domene harekrisna.si.

Zajemanje netnografskih podatkov je potekalo pozimi 2022 in spomladi 2023, in sicer tudi na kanalih religijskih skupnosti na družbenih omrežjih Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube in drugih spletnih mestih (npr. novičarski ali t. i. *life-style* portali), kjer so nas zanimala predvsem komunikativna dejanja institucij, manj pozornosti pa je bilo usmerjene v prostore, ki so namenjeni izključno laikom. Primarno smo se osredinili na objave v času epidemije (februar 2020–junij 2022), spremljali pa smo tudi objave prednjo in po njej (do junija 2023), da bi bolje razumeli morebitne spremembe, do katerih je prišlo pri komuniciranju religijskih skupnosti na spletu.

Raziskavo smo usmerili v komuniciranje religijskih avtoritet, torej organizacij oz. njihovih predstavnikov, ki oblikujejo in pripravljajo objave na spletu in družbenih omrežjih oz. poskrbijo zanje. Zanimalo nas je namreč, kako se na institucionalni ravni soočajo z digitalizacijo in epidemijo in torej kakšna je njihova vloga v procesih mediatizacije religije.

Pregledali smo več sto različnih digitalnih vsebin različnih formatov in žanrov (največ je bilo spletnih strani in novic s spletnih mest in objav na družbenih omrežjih), ki pa večinoma niso prispevali k raziskovalnemu cilju, zato jih nismo vnesli v podatkovno zbirko niti jih nismo analizirali. V preglednico, v kateri smo strukturirali relevantne objave oz. strani, smo vnesli okrog 80 enot vsebine, ki smo jih podrobneje pregledali in kategorizirali oz. opisali glede na več meril, med katerimi so bili religijska skupnost, naslov in povzetek vsebine, tematiziranje digitalne religijske prakse itn. Vsaka enota analize oz. pregledane vsebine je tako postala vrstica, zapisana v preglednici (tabela 1).

V fazi zbiranja podatkov smo tako vsako enoto (izbrana vsebina oz. objava) opisali, kot je prikazano v tabeli 1. V naslednjem koraku smo vsebine podrobneje pregledali in analizirali za opredelitev digitalnih praks religijske skupnosti, razumevanje upravljanja skupnostnega

Tabela 1: Izsek iz netnografske podatkovne zbirke z izbranimi tremi primeri (zaradi omejitev prostora pri tiskanju so tukaj predstavitve posameznih enot namesto v vrsticah urejene v stolpcih).

Primeri enot iz podatkovne zbirke:	1. Rimskokatoliška cerkev	2. Islamska skupnost	3. Skupnost za zavest Krišne
Lokacija/URL	https://evharistija.eu/PrenosiSvetihMas.html	https://www.islamska-skupnost.si/2020/03/muftijev-nagovor-v-casu-epidemije-v-sloveniji/	https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10163466511310553&set=pb.100064574723146.-2207520000
Religijska skupnost	rimskokatoliška	islamska	Hare Krišna
Slovenski naslov	Prenos svete maše v živo	Muftijev nagovor članom Islamske skupnosti	Prvo vabilo k udeležbi prek spleta od razglasitve epidemije
Datum objave	marec 2020	marec 2020	16. marec 2020
Tema	Seznam župnij in drugi viri, ki prenašajo maše prek spleta.	Muftijev nagovor ob začetku epidemije, o ukrepih itd.	Spletni dogodek za zaščito zdravja bhakt in drugega prebivalstva.
Opis/razlog za vključitev v vzorec	Spleto mesto je nastalo med epidemijo. Ob ponudbi povezav do prenosov maš je opozorilo, da je udeležba pri mašah na daljavo primerna samo za bolne in starejše.	Vzpostavlja povezave med ukrepi za varovanje zdravja in vrednotami islamske vere.	Odziv na novo resničnost; prvi pristop je premoščanje razdalje med živečimi v templju in celotno skupnostjo itd.

Primeri enot iz podatkovne zbirke:	1. Rimskokatoliška cerkev	2. Islamska skupnost	3. Skupnost za zavest Krišne
Ali obravnava digitalne religijske prakse ipd.?	da	ne	da
Se navezuje na epidemijo?	da	da	da
Institucionalna ali uporabniška vsebina	polinstitucionalna	institucionalna	institucionalna
Producent /izdajateljevo ime ali naslov	Ni jasno: »Spletna stran www. EVHARISTIJA.eu z vsemi povezanimi podstranmi je prostočasno – PROSTO-VOLJNO, NEPROFITNO in LJUBITELJSKO delo.«	Islamska skupnost v Republiki Sloveniji.	ISKCON Slovenija
Recepcija/odziv, komentarji, všečki …	S pokroviteljstvom oz. podporo Slovenske škofovske konference.	/	/

življenja s pomočjo oz. prek digitalnih medijev ter interpretiranje razmerij moči znotraj religijske skupnosti in navzven oz. avtoritete v kontekstu digitalnih medijev (tabela 2).

Rezultati analize spletne prisotnosti treh slovenskih religijskih skupnosti

Predstavitev rezultatov netnografske študije je osredinjena na učinke oz. odzive treh slovenskih religijskih skupnosti ob razglasitvi epidemije covida-19. Najprej so nas zanimala osrednja spletna mesta religijskih institucij, ki služijo kot neke vrste »digitalni okvir« komunikativnega delovanja predstavnikov teh institucij kot religijskih avtoritet, sledil pa je pregled profilov na družbenih omrežjih.

Epidemija covida-19 je nedvomno pospešila domačenje digitalnih medijev v kontekstu religijskega življenja. To med drugim potrjuje spletna zbirka s številnimi povezavami do spletnih prenosov maš RKC, ki je bila objavljena takoj ob razglasitvi zapore javnega življenja 13. marca 2020.[48] S tem ko se je dostop do religijskega obredja liberaliziral tako, da pripadnikom ni več bilo treba do lokalne cerkve in so lahko mašo spremljali ne le od doma, ampak so se lahko priključili maši katerega koli duhovnika, so se lahko pospešile tudi transformacije v razmerjih moči znotraj skupnosti. Občinstva digitaliziranih religijskih praks so tako morda pridobila nekaj vzvodov moči, ki je pred tem pripadala lokalnemu župnišču in vsaj posredno tudi RKC kot religijski instituciji. Prišlo je torej do neke vrste prenosa moči cerkve oz. odvzema njene avtoritete kot izključne pristojnosti za religijske obrede, s tem ko je prejem obhajila postal mogoč tudi na daljavo oz. blagoslov na daljavo itd. Dodatno pa so razmerja moči znotraj skupnosti zamikali tudi digitalni medijski zvezdniki, npr. duhovniki z že oblikovano afiniteto do digitalnih medijev, ki so agilno pograbili krizo kot priložnost in so se medijirali neposredno v domove svojih občestev – digitalnih občinstev.

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[48]   Slovenska škofovska konferenca, »Prenos svete maše v živo,« 13. marec 2020, https://evharistija.eu/PrenosiSvetihMas.html.

Tabela 2: Izvleček ključnih ugotovitev netnografske analize premoščanja izgube stikov s pomočjo digitalnih medijev v treh slovenskih religijskih skupnostih

Religijska skupnost	1. Rimskokatoliška cerkev	2. Islamska skupnost	3. Skupnost za zavest Krišne
Identificirana spletna prisotnost	Spletno mesto in družbena omrežja: Facebook, Instagram, x/Twitter.	Spletno mesto v slovenskem in bosanskem jeziku.	Več spletnih mest in profilov na družbenih omrežjih: Facebook in Youtube.
Osrednje spletno mesto religijske institucije	katoliska-cerkev.si je institu-cionalni digitalni medij SŠK in osrednji digitalni medij RKC.	islamska-skupnost.si je institucionalni digitalni medij SIS in praktično edini digitalni medij islamske skupnosti.	iskcon-slovenija.blogspot.com je osrednje spletno mesto Skupnosti za zavest Krišne.
Digitalni komuni-kator	Institucionalni: SŠK.	Institucionalni: Islamska skupnost v RS.	Skupnostni: vodstveni in drugi člani SZK.
Digitalne prakse religijske skupnosti	Prenosi maš – novo spletno mesto evharistija.eu. Cerkvena srečanja na daljavo (duhovne vaje), tudi kateheza na daljavo. Duhovno obhajilo – kot nadomestek obhajila izjemoma zunaj cerkve. Iskanje novih kanalov za povezovanje skupnosti, kot je specializirano spletno mesto za mlade.	Pred epidemijo deluje spletno mesto kot vir za informiranje skupnosti in vabljenje na dogodke. Z začetkom epidemije se vabljenje prek spleta na dogodke preneha in digitaliziranih rel. praks skoraj ni, saj so skupne molitve in zbiranja v islamskih centrih odpovedani. Edina praksa poleg nekaj objav videoprenosov prazničnih molitve in pridige v prvem letu epidemije ostane obveščanje pripadnikov skupnosti prek spletnega mesta, ki se bolj ali manj navezuje samo na epidemijo.	Že pred epidemijo so na spletnih kanalih objavljali vabila na obredje, izobraževanja in druge dogodke in fotografije s skupnostnih dogod-kov. Po razglasitvi epidemioloških ukrepov so dodali redno dnevno oddajanje tempeljskih vsebin prek spleta, izvajanje religijskih obredov na daljavo, možnosti darovanja na daljavo in foto-/videoobeležja dogajanja.

Religijska skupnost	1. Rimskokatoliška cerkev	2. Islamska skupnost	3. Skupnost za zavest Krišne
Upravljanje digitaliziranega življenja skupnosti	Priporočila za spoštovanje epidemioloških ukrepov. Prenosi maš, ki pa ne nadomeščajo osebne udeležbe – dobijo pa verniki »spregled dolžnosti«. Praktični napotki, kako voditi domačo cerkev, kakšno naj bo domače življenje in odnosi med zakonci ipd., in pozivi k povezovanju z drugimi prek Skypa pri skupinski nedeljski molitvi.	Spodbujajo k spoštovanju vladnih navodil in zdravstvenih priporočil, poleg tega skrbijo za navodila glede izvajanja molitev, telesne in duševne higiene.	Z objavami na družbenih omrežjih je od začetka epidemije poteklo obveščanje o urnikih obredja in drugih dogodkov, deljenje povezav za sodelovanje prek spleta. Razvila se je torej praksa skupnih religijskih obredov na daljavo.
Avtoriteta v kontekstu digitalnih medijev	Digitalizirana tradicionalna avtoriteta – SŠK komunicira hierarhično, predvsem pa enosmerno, saj daje navodila. Hkrati se pozicionira kot vmesnik, ki interpretira epidemiološke oz. vladne ukrepe za pripadnike religijske skupnosti.	Digitalizirana tradicionalna avtoriteta – SIS ni na družbenih omrežjih, na spletišču pa delujejo bolj kot potrjevalec oz. prenašalec vladnih ukrepov pripadnikom skupnosti.	Mehka, sproščena avtoriteta – vodstvo SZK oz. komunikator v imenu skupnosti se postavi na raven članov. Pojasnjuje okoliščine, ponuja prostor oz. ga čim bolj odpira prek spleta, da bi se lahko izvajale religijske dejavnosti.

1. Napetosti RKC pri prilagoditvah religijskega vsakdana ob epidemioloških ukrepih

Zdi se, da se je RKC ob zaprtju javnega življenja znašla v zahtevnih okoliščinah. Iz objav na spletnem mestu je namreč mogoče sklepati, da ni želela nasprotovati vladnim ukrepom glede preprečevanja širjenja okužb[49], hkrati pa je zahtevala možnost izvajanja religijskega obredja in združevanja pripadnikov religije v cerkvah, kar je interpretirala kot pravico do uresničevanja verske svobode. Sklepati bi bilo mogoče, da je digitalizacija religijskih praks, zagotavljanja moralnega in duhovnega vodstva in povezovanja religijske skupnosti ustvarila določene napetosti v RKC. Tako je kot religijska institucija na eni strani pristajala na prepovedi fizičnega združevanja med religijskimi obredi v cerkvah, na drugi pa je opozarjala na začasnost in izjemnost sodelovanja pri mašah na daljavo. Prav tako je iskala ustrezen odziv na dilemo glede cepljenja z domnevno etično spornimi cepivi.

Na uradnem spletnem mestu Slovenske škofovske konference (SŠK; www.katoliska-cerkev.si), ki je tudi osrednji digitalni medij slovenske RKC, je nastalo več objav in poleg njih tudi specializirano spletno mesto z zbirko povezav do spletnih prenosov maš. Hkrati z odpiranjem dostopa do obredja prek spleta so bili izraženi tudi zadržki, da takoj po prenehanju izrednih razmer digitalno obiskovanje obredja ne bo ustrezno – npr. da bodo spletni prenosi po prenehanju izrednih razmer »namenjeni le bolnim in ostarelim«.[50] Poleg tega se je ob povečevanju digitalizacije religijskih praks s spletnimi prenosi v času epidemije na uradnih in drugih spletnih mestih rimskokatoliške skupnosti pojavilo tudi več prispevkov o t. i. »duhovnem obhajilu,« ki lahko, podobno kot velja za maše, nadomesti običajno prejemanje zakramenta obhajila pri maši – torej le v času izrednih razmer.[51] Tretja tema oz. področje

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[49]   Katoliška cerkev, »Izredna navodila slovenskih škofov za preprečevanje širjenja COVID-19: odpoved svetih maš do preklica,« 13. 3. 2020, https://katoliska-cerkev.si/izredna-navodila-slovenskih-skofov-za-preprecevanje-sirjenja-koronavirusa-covid-19-odpoved-svetih-mas-do-preklica.
[50]   Slovenska škofovska konferenca. »Prenos svete maše v živo.«
[51]   Frančiškanski samostan NM, Župnija NM – sv. Lenart, »Duhovno obhajilo – kaj je to?,« 13. 3. 2020, https://www.nm-kloster.si/duhovno-obhajilo-kaj-je-to/.

pogajanj za ohranjanje avtoritete RKC v času epidemije je odnos do cepljenja oz. cepiv, testiranih s tehnologijo, ki je v preteklosti uporabila tudi fetalne celice splavljenih zarodkov. SŠK v objavljeni izjavi navaja »moralno dopuščanje« cepljenja s takimi cepivi, če ni »etično sprejemljivejše« možnosti.

Kot največja religijska skupnost je RKC prisotna na številnih digitalnih kanalih, ki jih, kot kaže, uporablja za ohranjanje stika s pripadniki religijske skupnosti. Poleg spletnega mesta SŠK ter župnijskih in redovniških spletišč upravlja (ali je v času epidemije upravljala) še specializirane digitalne medije, npr. namenjene mladim, kot je (bilo) v času pisanja tega prispevka že nedostopno spletno mesto skozivihar.si,[52] ter tudi tri priljubljena omrežja Facebook[53], Instagram[54] in X/Twitter,[55] ki večinoma le obveščajo o vsebinah, izvorno objavljenih na osrednjem spletišču SŠK. Za vse identificirane digitalne kanale je značilno hierarhično oz. enosmerno komuniciranje predstavnikov institucije s pripadniki religijske skupnosti oz. digitalnim občinstvom nasploh – morda tudi z željo po ohranjanju avtoritete. Tudi pregledane objave na družbenih omrežjih ne vsebujejo nobenih kazalnikov dialoga, ne sprašujejo po mnenju, prav tako se uredniki omenjenih profilov ne odzivajo na sicer zelo redke komentarje.

2. Poudarjanje skladnosti epidemioloških ukrepov z vrednotami islamske skupnosti

V primerjavi z RKC je Islamska skupnost v svoji spletni komunikaciji zadržana in uradna. Sicer tako kot RKC sprejema ukrepe, povezane s preprečevanjem epidemije, vendar le izjemoma nekajkrat prenaša molitev prek spleta. Prav tako SIS razen na uradnem spletnem mestu pravzaprav ni digitalno prisotna, saj tudi na družbenih omrežjih skoraj

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52   Matevž Mehle, »Nova spletna stran za mlade www.skozivihar.si,« Katoliška cerkev, 31. 3. 2020, https://katoliska-cerkev.si/nova-spletna-stran-za-mlade-wwwskoziviharsi.
53   https://www.facebook.com/skofovskakonferenca/ (poleg tega je vsaj na Facebooku še nekaj profilov, ki jih je glede na ime mogoče povezati z rimskokatoliško religijsko skupnostjo, ki pa niso predmet te študije).
54   https://www.instagram.com/katoliskacerkev/.
55   https://twitter.com/katoliskacerkev.

ni mogoče najti vsebin oz. profilov, posvečenih tej skupnosti. Ima pa dve različici uradnega spletnega mesta, in sicer v slovenskem (www.islamska-skupnost.si) in bosanskem jeziku (www.islamska-zajednica.si), cilj katerih bi lahko bilo preseganje morebitnih jezikovnih omejitev, enakovredno naslavljanje in vključevanje v Sloveniji živečih muslimanov v enotno skupnost.

Z razglasitvijo epidemije so bile v takrat popolnoma novem ljubljanskem islamskem centru z džamijo odpovedane vse dejavnosti,[56] na splet pa so leta 2020 prenesli le izvajanje mektebskega pouka (verouka). Vodstvo je pripadnike skupnosti pozvalo, naj molitve izvajajo doma in upoštevajo institucionalne pozive k spoštovanju ukrepov za preprečevanje epidemije: »Menimo, da je pomembno spoštovati navodila pristojnih organov in zdravstvenih strokovnjakov zaradi ohranjanja človeškega zdravja. V islamskem učenju je vrednota življenja, telesno in duševno zdravje posameznika in ljudi na splošno na visoki hierarhični lestvici vrednot.«[57] Odločitev za spoštovanje zunanje avtoritete (vlade) je tako pospremljena s komentarjem o skladnosti epidemiološke politike z vrednotami islamske tradicije. Spodbujanja k spoštovanju vladnih navodil in zdravstvenih priporočil ter navodil pripadnikom glede načinov izvajanja molitev, opravljanja telesne in duševne higiene se tako zlivajo v komplementaren proces. V nasprotju z RKC oz. SŠK kot njene institucionalne predstavnice SIS v spletnih objavah ni iskala načinov za čimprejšnje fizično druženje oz. vračanje pripadnikov v džamije.

3. Intenzivnejše domačenje digitalnih medijev za vključujoče komuniciranje SZK

Skupnost za zavest Krišne (SZK) ima v primerjavi z rimskokatoliško in islamsko skupnostjo veliko manj profesionalno izdelano digitalno podobo. Spletno mesto SZK ne gostuje na lastni spletni domeni,

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56   Islamska skupnost v Republiki Sloveniji, »Islamska skupnost odpoveduje vse aktivnosti v prostorih islamske skupnosti,« marec 2020, https://www.islamska-skupnost.si/2020/03/islamska-skupnost-odpoveduje-vse-aktivnosti-v-prostorih-islamske-skupnosti/.
57   Islamska skupnost v Republiki Sloveniji, »Muftijev nagovor v času epidemije v Sloveniji,« marec 2020, https://www.islamska-skupnost.si/2020/03/muftijev-nagovor-v-casu-epidemije-v-sloveniji/.

ampak svoje vsebine ponuja na poddomeni blogpost.com (iskcon-slo-venija.blogspot.com). Verjetno je SZK zaradi svoje organiziranosti od spodaj navzgor, sklepajoč po objavah na spletnem mestu, najživahnejša med opazovanimi skupnostmi. Gre za redna vabila na obredje in druga srečanja ter foto- in videoobeležja dogodkov, med njimi je tudi spletni dokument za podajanje predlogov za teme srečanj. Navedeno je bilo na spletnem mestu ter tudi na profilih SZK na družbenih omrežjih Instagram in Facebook prisotno že pred epidemijo. Morda se del razloga za živahno digitalno dejavnost skriva v samoorganizirani oz. od spodaj navzgor organizirani skupnosti, ki je že izvorno vezana na medijsko dejavnost (založništvo knjig) ter je digitalne medije prepoznala kot nov način za organiziranje skupnostnega življenja in širjenje svojega duhovnega izročila.

Analiza je pokazala še eno razliko v primerjavi s tradicionalnima religijskima skupnostma: SZK se prek digitalnih medijev komunicira veliko bolj dialoško in vključujoče. Ne gre za enosmerno institucionalno sporočanje, ampak je na podlagi spletnih objav mogoče sklepati, da SZK poskuša dajati prostor svojim pripadnikom – npr. z objavo osebnih izkušenj.[58] Da pri svojem spletnem komuniciranju ne teži k centralizaciji moči v religijskih avtoritetah vodstva ljubljanskega templja, je mogoče sklepati tudi na podlagi objavljenih povezav do spletnih profilov številnih centrov in programov, ki jih samostojno ustanavljajo in vodijo pripadniki v več slovenskih krajih.

Z netnografskim pregledom se je prav tako izkazalo, da ob siceršnji visoki stopnji delovanja religijske skupnosti prek digitalnih medijev v času zaprtja javnega življenja ni prišlo do drastičnih sprememb. Kot kaže, je bila pravzaprav edina večja razlika to, da so bili obredje, izobraževalni in drugi dogodki za širšo skupnost v večji meri medijsko posredovani, saj ena izmed novic z začetka epidemije pravi, da dnevno ponujajo šest ur videoprenosov tempeljskih vsebin prek spleta in druge

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58   ISKCON SLOVENIJA / Mednarodna skupnost za zavest Krišne v Sloveniji, »MOJ ISK-CON - Osebna izkušnja duhovnega življenja v templju in skupnosti / Jaśoda-dulal dasa,« 8. 3. 2023, https://iskcon-slovenija.blogspot.com/2023/03/moj-iskcon-moja-izkusnja-duhov-nega.html.

vsebine.[59] Poleg tega so v tem obdobju najavljali urnike in izvajali religijske obrede na daljavo prek videokonferenčnih platform, na Facebooku pa objavljali fotografije darovanja, ob začetku zaprtja javnega življenja pa so začeli izdajati tudi e-bilten. Vodstvo oz. spletni komunikator v imenu skupnosti SZK je tudi v izrednih razmerah deloval vključujoče, tako da je pojasnjeval okoliščine, na spletu oz. prek digitalnih medijev pa je ponujal prostor oz. ga čim bolj odpiral, da bi se lahko izvajale dejavnosti religijske skupnosti.

4. Alternativne religijske avtoritete v kontekstu slovenskih religijskih skupnosti

Z mapiranjem spletne prisotnosti treh religijskih skupnosti z metodo netnografije smo naleteli vsaj na dva primera alternativne religijske avtoritete, oba znotraj rimskokatoliške skupnosti: prvi je duhovnik, za katerega lahko ugotovimo, da ima precejšnjo podporo pri grajenju svoje digitalne religijske avtoritete, drugi je primer laika in samonikle religijske avtoritete v kontekstu digitalne skupnosti njegovih sledilcev na spletu. Duhovnik[60] je tako že pred epidemijo redno nagovarjal katoliško občestvo prek lastnih profilov na družbenih omrežjih in religijske spletne revije za življenjski slog. K njegovi priljubljenosti je nato po svoje prispevala tudi epidemiološka prepoved združevanja, saj je takrat že vsaj dve leti s podporo katoliškega medija objavljal videoposnetke jutranjih molitev. Na podlagi rezultatov te študije ni mogoče sklepati, s kolikšno institucionalno podporo SŠK lahko posamezen duhovnik tako podomači digitalne medije in onkraj svojega župnišča pooseblja religijsko avtoriteto znotraj rimskokatoliške skupnosti. Njegovega dosega pa kljub vsemu ne smemo spregledati, saj ima med drugim 51.900 sledilcev na Instagramu, več kot 50.000 všečkov na omrežju Facebook, od oktobra 2018 do oktobra 2024 je objavil okrog 150 zapisov in

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[59] https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=10163760659925553&set=pb.100064574723146.-2207520000.
[60] Alojz Grčman in Martin Golob, *Na spletni prižnici: misli in spodbude Martina Goloba*, 2. ponatis (Ljubljana: Družina, 2022).

vlogov na straneh rimskokatoliškega medija Aleteia, poleg tega je tudi redni gost priljubljenih domačih ustvarjalcev podkastov.

V drugem primeru gre za laika, ki si prek spletnega mesta[61] in različnih drugih digitalnih medijev prizadeva za retradicionalizacijo in repatriarhalizacijo družbe. Kot je mogoče razumeti iz njegovih objav na družbenih omrežjih, vidi vzvod za to v oživljanju nekdanjih religijskih praks znotraj RKC, npr. izvajanje maš v latinščini in pokrivanje žensk s tančicami. Kot je mogoče sklepati iz objavljenih vlogov, mu nekaj mlajših duhovnikov RKC namenja pozornost z razpravami o modernizmu in tradiciji v rimskokatoliški skupnosti. Vendar pri tem ni mogoče reči, ali to počnejo s pooblastili vodstva RKC kot jedra slovenske katoliške skupnosti oz. katere druge institucije ali na lastno pest.

Sklepna diskusija

Z netnografijo smo zajeli in nato analizirali podatke o premoščanju izgube stika med religijskimi institucijami in njihovimi občestvi v času zaprtja javnega življenja, ko so se bile tudi slovenske religijske skupnosti RKC, SIS in SZK bolj ali manj primorane zanesti na digitalno medijirano delovanje. Zmogljivosti interneta naj bi zaradi prikritosti osebnih označevalcev omogočale nestrukturiranost družbenih interakcij. Zaradi tega naj bi internet deloval kot socialni izenačevalec članov in omogočal oblikovanje homogenih religijskih skupnosti.[62] S popularizacijo in komercializacijo interneta skozi upodatkovane vrtove digitalnih platform, ki spletno prisotnost vse bolj strukturirajo na ozadju osebnih podatkov, zajetih prek uporabniških profilov, pa je vprašanje, koliko še drži teza o nestrukturiranosti spletnih religij. Tudi če se tukaj navežemo na zaznani pojav alternativne religijske avtoritete kot načina »mikrozvezniškega«[63] ustvarjanja občutka bližine in pristnega stika s sledilci, bi lahko razvili tezo, da so digitalni mediji lahko kljub vsemu družbeni izenačevalec oz. opolnomočevalec članov religijskih skupno-

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[61]   https://scutumfidei.si/.
[62]   Helland, »Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communities,« 215-16.
[63]   Alice E.Marwick in danah boyd, »I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience,« *New Media & Society* 13, št. 1 (1. februar 2011): 114–33, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810365313.

sti, vendar na ozadju priložnosti za oblikovanje in izražanje glasu ter s tem akumulacije moči v odnosu do vodstva institucije ali/in drugih članov. V primeru duhovnika je mogoče reči, da ima vsaj delno ali neformalno podporo institucionalnega vodstva RKC, medtem ko v primeru samonikle religijske avtoritete laika, ki si prizadeva za retradicionalizacijo družbe in RKC, glede na zbrane podatke tega ni mogoče trditi. V splošnem pa v digitalnem kontekstu vodstvo RKC tako kot SIS vztraja v hierarhičnih razmerjih[64] tradicionalnega množičnega komuniciranja, v katerem je občestvo kot digitalno občinstvo zreducirano na prejemnike sporočil institucionalnih avtoritet, ki s tem ohranjajo svojo moč.

Z vidika razumevanja mediatizacije religije bi bilo treba pojav alternativnih avtoritet podrobneje proučiti, npr. z netnografskim zbiranjem podatkov, pri katerem bi s kritično diskurzivno analizo,[65] analizo uokvirjanja[66] ali drugo ustrezno metodo opazovali razmerja moči med institucionalno religijsko avtoriteto in alternativnimi. Vsekakor bi bilo treba pojav novih avtoritet obravnavati tudi v kontekstu SIS in SZK, vendar jih v tej študiji nismo našli. Poleg omejenosti virov, ki smo jih imeli na voljo, je razlogov za to gotovo več, tukaj pa bi poudarili strukturno in organizacijsko ozadje. V primeru SIS gre za strukturni razlog; islamska skupnost združuje osebe s specifičnim etničnim, kulturnim in družbenim ozadjem, ki je manj spodbudno za akumulacijo kulturnega in socialnega kapitala. Organizacija SZK je manj centralizirana, omogoča svobodnejše organiziranje religijskega vsakdana, njena skupnost pa je tudi manjša, zaradi česar so alternativni glasovi morda že dovolj slišani.

Na spremenjene okoliščine, ki glede na izsledke raziskave belgijske katoliške skupnosti vodijo v pomanjkanja religijskega občutenja in izoliranost članov skupnosti,[67] so se RKC, SIS in SZK promptno odzvale s spletnimi prenosi obredja, spletnimi dogodki, pozivi k pomoči članom

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[64] Helland, »Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communities,« 219–20.

[65] Npr. Jasmina Šepetavc in Natalija Majsova, »Slovenska narodnozabavna glasba kot nesnovna kulturna dediščina: kritična analiza diskurzov in praks dediščinskih vratarjev v Sloveniji in slovenskih diasporah,« *Dve domovini*, št. 58 (2023): 79–101, http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:doc-S333GTOY.

[66] Daniel Thiele, Mojca Pajnik, Birgit Sauer in Iztok Šori, »Borderless Fear?,« *Journal of Language and Politics* 23, št. 2 (2024): 176–96, https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.22026.thi.

[67] Huygens, »Practicing Religion during a Pandemic.«

skupnosti v stiski itd. Nobeno od vodstev treh opazovanih religij ob tem ni pozivalo k nepokorščini v odnosu do vladnih epidemioloških ukrepov, ki jo je zaznala študija v ZDA.[68]

Nekatere religije bolj, druge manj so odpirale prostor v kontekstu digitalnih medijev, da bi religijske dejavnosti v času epidemije lahko potekale v prilagojeni obliki. SZK je ob tem najbolj odprla digitalne kanale tudi laičnim članom skupnosti za predstavitev svojega dela, izkustev in pogledov na delovanje skupnosti, kar bi bilo mogoče razumeti kot eno od značilnosti »spletne religije.«[69] Tako za SZK in še bolj za RKC bi bilo mogoče reči, da sta z epidemijo prejeli digitalizacijski pospešek in omogočili, da so digitalni mediji vsaj začasno prevzeli tudi vlogo »duhovnih orodij,«[70] kot opisuje afriška študija in s katerimi skupnosti s pomočjo spletnih prenosov obredja ustvarjajo čutna religijska doživetja.

SIS je kot druga največja religijska skupnost v državi na internetu prisotna samo s spletnim mestom v slovenskem in bosanskem jeziku[71], njeno komuniciranje o aktualnih zadevah v času epidemije (in tudi sicer) je relativno omejeno, medtem ko RKC poleg prenosov maš na spletu ponuja celo praktične napotke, kako voditi domačo cerkev in organizirati družinski religijski vsakdan. S spodbujanjem digitalizacije vsakdanjih religijskih praks in legitimizacijo njihovega izvajanja zunaj cerkve pa se zdi, da se RKC ujame v napetost. Po eni strani skrbi za premoščanje vrzeli do pripadnikov skupnosti, po drugi pa, da se bo religijsko življenje po epidemiji vrnilo v ustaljene tirnice, ljudje pa v cerkve.

Predstavljena študija prispeva k razumevanju mediatizacije opazovanih religijskih skupnosti v slovenskem prostoru s teoretičnega vidika občinstvene institucionalne mediatizacije.[72] Gre za eno prvih tovrstnih domačih raziskav na področju religiologije, saj z izjemo diplomskega dela, ki primerja spletno komuniciranja slovenskih krščanskih skupnosti in bi ga lahko razumeli kot zametek raziskovanja mediatizacije

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[68] Campbell, »Religion Embracing and Resisting Cultural Change.«
[69] Helland, »Online-Religion/Religion-Online and Virtual Communities.«
[70] Addo, »Join the Holy Spirit on Zoom.«
[71] Zavedamo se, da lahko islamska skupnost – in enako velja za drugi opazovani religijski skupnosti – uporablja digitalne medije zunaj javno dostopnih spletnih kanalov (skupine na omrežjih, kot sta Viber ali WhatsApp, e-pošta ipd.), ki jih predvsem zaradi omejenih raziskovalnih virov nismo uspeli identificirati.
[72] Schrøder, »Towards the »Audiencization« of Mediatization Research?.«

slovenskih religijskih skupnosti,[73] drugih podobnih študij nismo na-
šli. Predstavljeno raziskavo bi zato hoteli nadaljevati s poglabljanjem
razumevanja razmerij v trikotniku med digitalnimi mediji, njihovimi
občinstvi/občestvi in institucionalnimi logikami delovanja religij.

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[73]   Martina Maglica, »Primerjava spletnega komuniciranja slovenskih krščanskih skupnosti«
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»VSI SMO MALO VIDELI, DA BOG TUDI PREK SOCIALNIH OMREŽIJ DELUJE«: VPLIV INTENZIVIRANE RABE DIGITALNIH TEHNOLOGIJ NA IZBRANE SLOVENSKE RELIGIJSKE SKUPNOSTI

Aleš Črnič,
Taja Fortuna

Uvod

V začetku 2020 je svet preplavila epidemija koronavirusa covid-19, kar je močno vplivalo na različne ravni družbenega življenja. Države so v naslednjih dveh letih zaradi zaščite javnega zdravja večkrat omejile javne dejavnosti, kar je korenito poseglo tudi na religijsko področje. Tako kot drugi družbeni podsistemi so si tudi religijske skupnosti v izrednih razmerah za premoščanje formalnih omejitev delovanja intenzivneje pomagale z digitalnimi tehnologijami. Tako nastale razmere so ob svetovni pandemiji izjemno pospešile že potekajoče procese prisvajanja digitalnih tehnologij tudi za religijske in duhovne dejavnosti, kar je imelo in še ima večplastne posledice za religijsko življenje. O tem je bilo v zadnjem času objavljenih nekaj raziskav,[1] ta članek dopolnjuje ta po-

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[1]   Širši razvoj proučevanja religije in digitalnih medijev smo podrobneje predstavili v uvodnem članku tega tematskega bloka, za vpliv epidemije covida-19 na pospešeno rabo digitalnih tehnologij religijskih skupnosti pa glej Kyle K. Schiefelbein-Guerrero, ur., *Church after the Corona Pandemic: Consequences for Worship and Theology* (Cham: Springer, 2023); Nicholas J. Higgins in Paul A. Djupe, »Congregation Shopping during the Pandemic: A Research Note,« *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 61, št. 3-4 (2022), https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12802:

časi rastoči korpus z rezultati slovenskega dela mednarodnega razisko-
valnega projekta Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi (RECOVIRA),[2]
v okviru katerega smo v sedmih evropskih državah (poleg Slovenije še
v Veliki Britaniji, Nemčiji, na Danskem, Finskem, Švedskem in Polj-
skem) proučevali, kako se oblike, vloge in izkušnje religijskega življenja
v Evropi spreminjajo zaradi intenzivirane uporabe digitalnih tehnolo-
gij, ki so posledica zadnje epidemije.

Metodologija raziskovanja je v vseh sodelujočih državah temelji-
la na etnografiji, ki je vključevala tradicionalne in digitalne metode.
Etnografske raziskave smo povsod izvajali v treh tipih religijskih sku-
pnosti: najprej v prevladujočih religijskih institucijah, potem v že dol-
go uveljavljenih manjšinskih skupnostih, na koncu pa še v novejših,
manj rašíirjenih in uveljavljenih religijskih skupnostih. Prva slovenska
študija primera se tako osredinja na Rimskokatoliško cerkev (RKC).
Kot manjšinsko, že dolgo prisotno, široko prepoznavno in uveljavljeno
smo izbrali Islamsko skupnost v Republiki Sloveniji. Za tretjo študijo
primera pa smo izbrali eno najaktivnejših in najprepoznavnejših novih
religijskih gibanj pri nas Skupnost za zavest Krišne, splošno znano tudi
kot gibanje Hare Krišna.

Za vsako od izbranih skupnosti smo najprej izvedli netnografsko
analizo prisotnosti na spletu (načine in rezultate te analize predstavlja-
mo v sosednjem članku tega tematskega bloka), hrati pa smo izvedli
serijo opazovanj relgijskega življenja in več intervjujev. Tako smo si pri-
zadevali spoznati in čim bolje razumeti, kako se je vsaka od skupnosti
prilagodila zahtevnim izzivom epidemije, predvsem pa koliko in kako

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726–36; Lene Kühle in Tina Larsen, »'Forced' Online Religion: Religious Minority and Major-
ity Communities' Media Usage during the COVID-19 Lockdown,« *Religions* 12, št. 7 (2021),
https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070496; Giuseppina Addo, »Join the Holy Spirit on Zoom: Af-
rican Pentecostal Churches and Their Liturgical Practices during COVID-19,« *Approaching
Religion* 11, št. 2 (2021): 45–61, https://doi.org/10.30664/ar.107728; Eline Huygens, »Practic-
ing Religion during a Pandemic: On Religious Routines, Embodiment, and Performativity,«
Religions 12, št. 7 (2021): 494, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070494; William Parish, *Social
Relations and Religion During the Pandemic* (Čikago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

[2]   Članek je rezultat raziskovalnega projekta Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi (https://
chanse.org/recovira/), ki je potekal med 1. novembrom 2022 in 31. oktobrom 2024 in ga je v
okviru programa CHANSE ERA-NET Co-fund financiral program Evropske unije Horizon
2020 Research and Innovation (na podlagi pogodbe št. 101004509).

so si pri tem pomagale z digitalnimi tehnologijami ter kakšne začasne in dolgotrajnejše vplive je to imelo na religijsko življenje.

V tem članku predstavljamo predvsem rezultate intervjujev. Izvedli smo jih 19 z voditelji oz. uradnimi predstavniki izbranih religijskih skupnosti, njihovimi običajnimi pripadniki in oblikovalci digitalnih vsebin. V vzorec smo si prizadevali zajeti moške in ženske sogovornike iz različnih starostnih skupin. V RKC smo opravili sedem individualnih intervjujev, vključno s predstavnikom Slovenske škofovske konference, od tega pet z moškimi in dva z ženskami. Sogovorniki so bili stari med 21 in 74 let, njihova povprečna starost je bila 46,5 leta. V Islamski skupnosti smo izvedli štiri individualne intervjuje, vključno z muftijem, od tega tri z moškimi, in skupinski intervju z devetimi članicami Ženskega združenja Zemzem. Sogovorniki so bili stari med 36 in 48, v povprečju pa 43 let. V skupnosti Hare Krišna smo izvedli šest individualnih intervjujev, od tega pet z moškimi, in dodatno še skupinski intervju z dvema ženskama in dvema moškima. Starost sogovornikov je segala od 32 do 57 let, povprečje pa je bilo 47,6 leta.

Tako zbrano gradivo smo kodirali s pomočjo enotnega kodirnega lista oz. kodirne sheme, merskega instrumenta, ki smo ga vsi raziskovalni partnerji skupaj zasnovali za poenotenje izhodišč za analizo prepisov intervjujev. V vsaki od sodelujočih držav sicer analize opravljamo samostojno, s skupnimi konceptualnimi izhodišči pa smo ustvarili podlago za medsebojno primerljivost rezultatov (primerjalne analize načrtujemo v naslednjem koraku). V nadaljevanju predstavljamo slovenski del rezultatov.

Intenzivirana raba digitalnih tehnologij v času epidemije covida-19

Med epidemijo so imele digitalne tehnologije zelo pomembno vlogo v življenju religijskih skupnosti, predvsem v času formalnih omejitev družbenega življenja in prepovedi zbiranj, ki so zelo otežila ali celo onemogočila tudi velik del njihovih dejavnosti. Čeprav so se pristopi in načini uporabe med proučevanimi skupnostmi razlikovali, so vsem trem omogočili vsaj delno nadaljevanje religijskih praks in z njimi povezanih dejavnosti, predvsem obveščanje in komunikacijo v skupnosti, s tem

pa ohranjanje vsaj minimalnega občutka povezanosti med pripadniki. Kljub v naši raziskavi večkrat zaznanim implicitnim in redkeje tudi eksplicitnim zadržkom pred intenzivno rabo digitalnih tehnologij so se vodstva vseh proučevanih skupnosti (in tudi velik del intervjuvanih pripadnikov) s pridom in po najboljših močeh potrudila izkoristiti njihove potenciale. Strokovni sodelavec Slovenske škofovske konference je glede tega povedal: »Cerkev je skozi zgodovino razvila številne metode ohraniti stik z verniki, danes je to pač internet.« (RE_425_RKC)[3] Tako so se med epidemijo zmanjšali ali pri nekaterih posameznikih celo popolnoma odpadli predsodki pred njihovo rabo. Kot pravi drugi katoliški duhovnik: »Vsi smo malo videli, da Bog tudi prek socialnih omrežjih deluje. In spoznali smo, da se lahko nagovarja tudi preko medijev, da je to prostor oznanjevanja.« (RE_418_RKC)

Med epidemijo so tako vse tri skupnosti pospešeno uporabljale digitalne tehnologije, vendar so med njimi opazne razlike. RKC in skupnost Hare Krišna sta močno izkoristili družbena omrežja in druge spletne platforme za neposredni stik z verniki, pripravljali so tudi spletne prenose obredov in drugih religijskih dejavnosti.[4] V RKC so že pred epidemijo dosegli visoko raven digitalizacije, večina njihovih spletnih dejavnosti je institucionalno organizirana in nadzorovana. Drugače je v skupnosti Hare Krišna, kjer so se zelo intenzivne rabe samoiniciativno in neodvisno od vodstva lotili predvsem posamezni pripadniki, ki so odprli nove in predvsem intenzivirali obstoječe kanale za prenos jutranjih predavanj in večernih petij (ki delujejo tudi po koncu epidemije). Kot pravi eden aktivnejših ustvarjalcev digitalnih vsebin: »Smo praktično neodvisni, se pravi nas skupnost ne podpira v tem smislu, da bi nam pomagala pri tem početju. Jaz, recimo, se obračam na druge bhakte[5] za

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[3]   V članku sogovornike in sogovornice navajamo z oznako RE (projekt Recovira), identifikacijsko številko in označeno skupnostjo, ki ji pripadajo (RE_številka_skupnost). Če navajamo sogovornika ali sogovornico iz skupinskega intervjuja, je na začetku oznaka SI (tj. SI_številka_skupnost).

[4]   RKC je uspela organizirati prenose velikega števila maš in nekaterih drugih religijskih dejavnosti tudi prek lokalnih in kabelskih programov ter nacionalne televizije (in radia). Drugi skupnosti do klasičnih medijev nimata niti približno podobnega dostopa, kljub temu pa obe poročata o povečani prisotnosti na nacionalni televiziji, predvsem v oddaji Duhovni utrip.

[5]   Pripadniki Skupnosti za zavest Krišne uporabljajo zase izraz *bhakta* (oziroma *bhaktin/i* za ženske pripadnice), kar označuje osebo, ki prakticira *bhakti-jogo*, tj. jogo predanega, ljubečega

pomoč pri določenih stvareh, ko objavljam določene slike, /…/ ampak to je čisto privat in ne nek projekt skupnosti.« (RE_420_HK)

Na drugi strani je Islamska skupnost digitalne platforme uporabljala veliko bolj zadržano. Vodstvo jih je uporabilo predvsem za obvešča-nje članov skupnosti, sestanke vodstva in izvajanje spletnega verouka, uporabe za neposredne religijske dejavnosti pa so se večinoma vzdržali. Izjema so bili spletni prenosi branja Korana med ramazanom in tudi posnetek bajramske molitve, ki so ga leta 2020 objavili na družbenem omrežju Facebook. Član Islamske skupnosti in občasni sodelavec vod-stva je glede tega povedal: »Islamska skupnost deluje v realnosti, ni vir-tualnega občinstva. Tako da ima realno občinstvo. Ni potrebe, da bi se potegovalo po neki virtualnosti, pa po nekem dosegu.« (RE_630_IS) Veliko zadržanost uradne in daleč največje skupnosti muslimanov v Sloveniji gre vsaj delno pripisati zavestni distanci njenega vodstva do nekaterih radikalnejših interpretacij islama na spletu, o tem priča tudi izjava muftija, tj. vodje Islamske skupnosti v Republiki Sloveniji:

Ko govorimo o islamu in muslimanih, posebej v Bosni in Hercegovini, in tudi v Sloveniji se to pojavlja – veliko je teh ljudi, ki izkoriščajo te platforme za nagovarjanje ljudi in večinoma je to malo, vsaj za mene, deviatno razumevanje vere. Nekako so nagnjeni k temu bolj radikalnemu pristopu. /…/ Ogromno je teh ljudi, ki izkoriščajo te digitalne platforme za nagovarjanje ljudi in za povzročanje, da rečem neke zmede pri razumevanju same vere. Ker v islamu je to bolj tako liberalno, ni strogo kot je pri katoliški cerkvi, da mora biti iz Vatikana neko določeno pravilo itd. Pri nas so ljudje bolj svobodni pri tem in včasih pri tej svoji razlagi povzročijo ogromno zmede, ker včasih upoštevajo recimo neko drugo okolje, iz katerega prinesejo v naše okolje razumevanje določenega vprašanja. (RE_310_IS)

Sklepamo, da je očitna zadržanost večine pripadnikov te skupno-sti pri uporabi digitalnih tehnologij za religijsko življenje v veliki meri povezana tudi s skrbjo, da bi s kakršnimi koli spletnimi dejavnostmi odpirali prostor za dodatne stereotipizacije in negativno prikazovanje islama in muslimanov. Anonimna članica združenja Zemzem npr. pra-vi: »Ostalim ljudem poskušamo razbiti stereotipe, da vidijo, da ni vse

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čaščenja osebnega boga Krišne, ki vse od začetkov v 16. st. tvori jedro duhovnosti gibanja Hare Krišna (glej Aleš Črnič, *V Imenu Krišne: Družboslovna študija Gibanja Hare Krišna* (Ljubljana: Založba FDV, Zbirka Kult, 2005)).

res, to je slaba stran tega online prikazovanja islama, z osebnim stikom poskušamo razbijati stereotipe.« (SI_610_IS)

Hkrati pa se zdi, da bi lahko bile digitalne tehnologije zaradi strukturnih razlogov najbolj uporabne za skupnost Hare Krišna, ki jo v nasprotju z drugimi proučevanimi skupnostmi ključno določa geografska razpršenost članstva ob radikalno manjšem številu lokalnih in regionalnih centrov. Intervjuvani pripadnik je o tem povedal: »Tukaj na spletno sangho6 so se priključile bhakte iz čisto različnih koncev Slovenije, od Koroške, Štajerske, Primorske, kar je sicer nemogoče pričakovati v živo. Tako da se je odprla ena dodatna možnost, o kateri prej nismo razmišljali.« (RE_420_HK) Kljub končni opazki je treba ugotoviti, da so v svojem religijskem življenju že pred epidemijo občutno pogosteje uporabljali digitalne tehnologije kot pripadniki drugih dveh skupnosti.

Pri vseh treh skupnostih, nemara še najbolj opazno pri gibanju Hare Krišna, je pospešena raba digitalnih tehnologij med epidemijo še pospešila mednarodno komunikacijo med pripadniki oz. predvsem transnacionalno spremljanje religijskih dejavnosti. Anonimni udeleženec skupinskega intervjuja je o tem povedal:

Imamo pa še Iris, ona je iz Avstrije, je Slovenka, ki živi v Avstriji in se tako poveže z nami. Je to potem neka večja dostopnost, ampak ne more nadoknaditi tega v živo. Vsak bo to rekel. Mi smo imeli tako samo v živo zjutraj in potem niso mogli vsi priti, tako da zdaj preko tega lahko pridejo. (SI_244_HK)

V skupnosti Hare Krišna opažajo tudi več mednarodnega sodelovanja na ravni vodstev skupnosti. Pri RKC tega pravzaprav nismo zaznali. Tam so digitalne tehnologije na prej težko predstavljiv način odprle možnosti za prehajanje med župnijami (predvsem, ne pa izključno znotraj slovenskega prostora) in s tem se je prvič pojavila realna praktična možnost izbire med mašami različnih župnikov. O tem je starejši katoliški vernik povedal:

Tudi midva z ženo, ko sva šla kam drugam, sva lahko gledala te zadeve. /…/ Včasih kam greš in je pač omejeno z zmožnostmi /…/ in zdaj je možnost dostopa od koderkoli in lahko rečeš, ne vem, svojemu bratrancu, ej, zadnjič je

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6   *Sangha* je redno, praviloma tedensko srečanje manjšega števila pripadnikov, na katerem častijo Krišno.

bila pa noro dobra maša pri nas, tukaj imaš link, poslušaj, glej, če hočeš. /…/ Od koderkoli, tudi čez mejo. (RE_719_RKC)

Če organiziranost katoliškega življenja skozi stoletja temelji na matični pripadnosti župniji, digitalne tehnologije v tem pogledu prinašajo tudi radikalno drugačne možnosti. O tem zgovorno priča primer mlajšega župnika, ki je postal pravi vplivnež (primarno, toda nikakor ne izključno, med mladimi). Po besedah mlajšega frančiškana:

So se pa seveda izoblikovale neke nove osebnosti, ki so bile prodorne v tem času … recimo Martin Golob, … in so tudi postale neke nove avtoritete. /…/ Nato so družbena omrežja začeli intenzivneje uporabljati tudi različne cerkvene ustanove, škofje in nekateri ugledni duhovniki /…/ Dinamika se je spremenila in zdaj imajo cerkveni dostojanstveniki priložnost, da ta orodja bolje izkoristijo. Hkrati ta orodja seveda v središče pozornosti postavijo nekoga, ki prej morda ne bi bil v središču pozornosti, in te okoliščine so ga dejansko izpostavile kot uspešnega. Martin Golob se mi zdi dober komunikator. (RE_524_RKC).

Današnji grosupeljski župnik je postal širše opazen, ko je jeseni 2018 (takrat še kot župnik v Srednji vasi v Bohinju) začel na spletnem mestu Aleteia[7] redno objavljati videonagovore (vlog) o duhovniškem življenju. Ob začetku epidemije je na svojem že dobro obiskanem osebnem profilu Facebook najavil začetek spletnih prenosov svojih maš, ki so kmalu postale prava uspešnica, vmes pa so njegove molitve začeli predvajati še na Gold TV. Kot je v intervjuju povedal sam:

Maše sem imel, in potem smo naredili srečanje za vse, in so prišli iz cele Slovenije, in nas je bilo takole /…/ koliko nas je prišlo, tam 3000 ljudi, to je bilo doživetje. /…/ Ne vem, Bog to deluje, da je takole ljudi povezal med seboj. /…/ Vsak dan nas je bilo, ko je bila še Golica TV pa Televizija T2 pa moj Facebook, vsak dan nas je bilo sedem, osem tisoč v živo. Da o nedeljah ne govorim, to je bilo pa okoli štirideset, petdeset, šestdeset, sto tisoč. (RE_418_RKC)

Kmalu po izteku epidemije je založba Družina leta 2022 izdala knjigo pogovorov s pomenljivim naslovom Na spletni prižnici ter podnaslovom Misli in spodbude Martina Goloba (pogovore z njim je zapisal urednik

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[7] Aleteia je mednarodni laični katoliški spletni medij, ki objavlja v sedmih jezikih (poleg slovenščine še v angleščini, francoščini, portugalščini, španščini, italijanščini, arabščini in poljščini). Slovenska različica je dostopna na https://si.aleteia.org.

Aleteie). Prva naklada 2000 izvodov je bila kmalu razprodana, v času pisanja tega članka pa je bila poleg ponatisa na voljo tudi zvočna knjiga.

Martin Golob je najočitnejši primer novih avtoritet, ki so nastale z intenzivirano rabo digitalnih tehnologij med epidemijo, ko so nekateri digitalno spretni duhovniki in ustvarjalci spletnih vsebin v času covida-19 pridobili veljavo in ugled, nekateri tudi prek meja svojih lokalnih skupnosti. Postali so nove, lahko bi rekli digitalne avtoritete. Tudi v skupnosti Hare Krišna so nekateri predavatelji, ki so bili že pred epidemijo dejavni na spletu, s še več spletnimi vsebinami spretno zadovoljevali močno povečano potrebo skupnosti po digitalnih interakcijah, kar je seveda prispevalo h krepitvi njihove neformalne vloge.

Medtem pa je Islamska skupnost ostala veliko bolj zadržana in sumničava, tako vodstvo kot članstvo skupnosti sta tako med epidemijo kot po njej prevladujoče nastrojeni proti sprejemanju kakršnih koli digitalnih avtoritet. Mufti npr. v svojem intervjuju pravi:

Vedno se pojavijo neki, da rečem, kvazi učenjaki, ki poskušajo razlagat določeno stvar na svoj način, to obstaja pred epidemijo, posebej med epidemijo in po epidemiji. To še vedno obstaja in mi vedno ljudem svetujemo, da se ne učijo islama z interneta ali YouTuba ampak da se islam mora učit prek imamov, torej da se uči pred nekom, ki je kvalificiran za takšno delo. (RE_310_IS)

Med intervjuvanimi pripadniki nismo opazili bistveno drugačnih mnenj, eden izmed vprašanih je na vprašanje o pojavu novih digitalnih avtoritet odgovoril:

Zdaj ne, ne v Sloveniji, ampak tudi zdaj, ko se to prepleta, ker je pač ta cel bivši jugoslovanski prostor povezan, še posebej Bosna. Tako da so nekatere /…/ avtoritete, ki so tudi prisotne na internetu, ampak je to čisto na drugačen način. /…/ Na primer, že nekdo, ki bi bi posnet v džamiji že pomeni, da je šel čez neko sito. /…/, ker bi rekel, da je veliko teh ljudi,… /…/ ki v bistvu nimajo tega realnega znanja, ampak imajo mogoče to retorično privlačnost. /…/ Iz tega nekega, digitalna skupnost, težko prelevijo v realno skupnost. (RE_630_IS).

Enako je potrdila tudi članica združenja Zemzem: »Ne, ne, v Sloveniji ne. Ampak to obstaja. Ja, obstajajo določeni predavatelji, ki se večinoma promovirajo kot influenserji, če tako rečem, ampak znotraj Islamske skupnosti pa ne.« (SI_610_IS)

Ob intenzivirani rabi digitalnih tehnologij in pojavu novih digitalnih avtoritet pa je nujno treba opozoriti, da religijska občestva glede tega niti približno niso homogena. Na sprejemanje, način in intenzivnost rabe tehnologij vplivajo starost, izobrazba, socialno-ekonomski položaj itd. Predstavniki vodstev vseh treh skupnosti omenjajo problem digitalne pismenosti svojih predvsem starejših pripadnikov, ki so ga najbolj zaznali v Islamski skupnosti, manj v RKC in najmanj v gibanju Hare Krišna. Hkrati pa predstavniki vseh skupnosti poročajo tudi o spremembah, saj med svojimi pripadniki vsi opažajo intenziviranje rabe spleta in predvsem družbenih omrežij.

Ob tem pa ne gre spregledati dejstva, da so pri rabi digitalnih tehnologij tudi raznovrstne tradicionalne in doktrinarne omejitve ter zadržki pred izvajanjem obrednih in religijskih dejavnosti na daljavo. Tako se npr. pri katoliških mašah tradicionalno zahteva fizična prisotnost,[8] predvsem podeljevanje zakramentov in opravljanje spovedi po izjavah naših intervjuvancev naj ne bi bilo mogoče na daljavo. Podobno je v Islamski skupnosti z osrednjo petkovo molitvijo, ki se tradicionalno izvaja skupinsko v džamiji in je obvezna za moške vernike. Pri skupnosti Hare Krišna te omejitve niso tako eksplicitno izražene s tako jasnimi zapovedmi in pravili, je pa fizična prisotnost vseeno bistvena za skupinsko petje božjih imen in ples, kar ustvarja posebno energijo, ki je ni mogoče doseči prek spleta.

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[8]   Med epidemijo je vodstvo slovenske RKC dovolilo izjemo, na uradnem spletnem mestu so 13. marca 2020 so objavili ta zapis: »Škofje ordinariji do preklica podeljujejo slovenskim katoličanom spregled od dolžnosti udeležbe pri nedeljski sveti maši. Verniki naj nadomestijo odsotnost od svetega bogoslužja z molitvijo, postom, dobrimi deli, prebiranjem Božje besede, spremljanjem svete maše po radiu, TV oziroma spletu ter s prejemom duhovnega obhajila.« Dodali so: »Če nikakor ni mogoče, da bi sodelovali pri sveti maši in prejeli sveto obhajilo, je primerno, da ga prejmemo v duhovni obliki.« Prejetje v duhovni obliki zahteva posebno molitev, ki vsebuje tudi to prošnjo: »Ker Te ne morem prejeti zakramentalno, Te prosim, da prideš k meni duhovno: prosim Te, da vstopiš v moje srce in prebivaš v njem.« (Marjan Turnšek, »Kako prejemamo duhovno obhajilo,« Katoliška cerkev, 13. 3. 2020, https://katoliska-cerkev. si/kako-prejemamo-duhovno-obhajilo)

Domestifikacija religijskih dejavnosti
in povečanje pomena družine

V času epidemije prepovedi javnega zbiranja in druge omejitve družbenega življenja povzročijo prisilno domestifikacijo religijskega življenja. Ko v nekaterih časovnih obdobjih velikega dela religijskih dejavnosti ni več mogoče opravljati na običajne načine znotraj prostorov religijskih institucij, njihov prenos v domače okolje skupnosti podprejo s t. i. hibridno rabo digitalnih tehnologij. Predvsem v RKC in skupnosti Hare Krišna začnejo nekatere redne obredne dejavnosti prenašati prek spleta. Bolj zadržana je spet Islamska skupnost, ki pa vendarle med postnim mesecem ramazanom prek spleta prenaša branje Korana. S prenašanjem obrednih dejavnosti, ki tradicionalno potekajo v cerkvi, džamiji oz. templju, religijsko življenje prek digitalnih tehnologij intenzivno vstopi v domove vernikov. O tem govori intervjuvani predstavnik vodstva RKC:

Na eni strani so se zapirala vrata šol in fakultet in tudi cerkva, po drugi strani pa se je ta mrtev prostor naenkrat preselil domov oz. ti odnosi so se začeli spreminjati. In kar smo opazili in je tudi zelo pohvalno, da so se v domačem okolju vzpostavile domače cerkve. (RE_425_RKC)

Prisilno zaprtje v družinski krog je seveda povzročilo različne težave, hkrati pa je prineslo tudi neke nove dinamike znotraj družinskih okolij, kar je imelo raznovrstne vplive tudi na religijsko življenje. Kot poroča pripadnica muslimanskega ženskega združenja Zemzem:

No, če sem molila in tudi če ni nobeden zraven molil, oni so videli mamico, da moli in sin je takrat, leta 2020, ko se je začelo ... cel ramazan sva skupaj od začetka do konca naredila. In od takrat je mali začel molit, tako da hvala Bogu, da je bil covid. (SI_610_IS)

Vse tri skupnosti so ob radikalnih omejitvah družbenega življenja zaznale več individualnih možnosti za duhovnost v zasebnem okolju. Še posebej izrazito se je povečala možnost za dosledno izvajanje dnevnih molitev za muslimane, ki so jih neprimerno lažje in dosledneje (predpisano petkrat dnevno) izvajali med zaporami družbenega življenja in delom od doma.

O intenziviranih religijskih dejavnostih znotraj družin, ko je bilo javno zbiranje skrajno oteženo ali celo formalno prepovedano, konkretneje poročajo iz RKC:

Razne zgodbe so bile, kako so družine po domovih imele verouk. Starši so otroke učili verouk, stari starši so otroke učili verouk, čas so imeli, zaprti so bili, ni bilo zunanjih motilcev in spremljali so bogoslužja preko TV-ja, molili so skupaj in dejansko se je odkrila ta molitvena celica v domu. (RE_425_RKC)

Institucija se je trudila podpreti te dejavnosti, na uradnem spletnem mestu RKC je ponudila celo praktične napotke, kako voditi domačo cerkev in organizirati družinski religijski vsakdan.

O religijskih dejavnostih v domačem okolju so poročali tudi intervjuvani pripadniki gibanja Hare Krišna.[9] Zaradi že omenjenih strukturnih razlogov (geografska razpršenost pripadnikov in razmeroma centralizirana organizacija religijskih dejavnosti v glavnem templju v Ljubljani ob pomanjkanju regionalnih centrov z rednim kontinuiranim programom) so pripadniki že doslej opazno več od drugih dveh skupnosti uporabljali digitalne tehnologije. V vseh treh skupnostih smo opazili tudi prilagajanje domačih prostorov za religijske dejavnosti (najpogosteje s svečami, kadili ipd.). Ob prevladujoči indijski tradiciji domačih oltarjev s podobami božanstev, ki je zelo razširjena in že kar samoumevna tudi med pripadniki gibanja Hare Krišna, so imeli ti med epidemijo najmanj težav pri prenašanju (še večjega) dela obrednih in drugih religijskih dejavnosti v domače okolje. V drugih dveh skupnostih so artefakti za domačo religijsko rabo tudi pogosto prisotni, pri katoličanih tradicionalno kakšen kipec, religijska podoba, križ na steni, pri muslimanih preproga za molitev, vendar veliko manj kot pri skupnosti Hare Krišna. Predvsem pa zadnji v nasprotju z RKC in Islamsko skupnostjo niso posebej omenjali povečane vloge družine.

RKC in Islamska skupnost tradicionalno poudarjata fizično zbiranje in skupinske obrede, kar vključuje tudi družinsko udeležbo pri mašah, molitvah in drugih obredih. Ključno vlogo družine simbolno izraža ime osrednjega slovenskega katoliškega tednika (in založbe, ki izdaja

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[9]   Manjša stanovanjska skupina v Šempasu je npr. samoiniciativno uvedla hibridni model prenašanja predvsem jutranjih obredov, ki so tudi po končani epidemiji dostopni prek spleta vsem pripadnikom širom Slovenije in tudi v tujini.

tudi knjige in številne druge publikacije) – Družina. V Islamski skupnosti imajo sistem članstva, ki temelji na družinski pripadnosti, tudi članarino praviloma plačujejo po družinah in ne kot posamezniki, kar svojevrstno potrjuje osrednjo vlogo družine kot temelja skupnosti. Na sploh je v abrahamskih tradicijah izjemno pomemben doktrinaren in širši ideološki poudarek na družini kot temeljni družbeni celici.[10] Toda tudi hinduizem, matična kulturna in religijska tradicija, iz katere izhaja gibanje Hare Krišna, postavlja družino v samo jedro, saj velja za temelj štirih individualnih življenjskih obdobij (ašramov) ter zagotavlja kohezivnost religijske in celotne družbenega skupnosti.[11] Zato razlogov za z intervjuji ugotovljene razlike pri poudarjanju vloge in pomena družine med intenziviranimi domačimi religijskimi dejavnostmi v času epidemije verjetno ne gre iskati toliko v teoloških in tradicionalnih kulturnih razlikah med tremi proučevanimi skupnostmi, ampak v njihovem strukturnem položaju v slovenski družbi.

Gibanje Hare Krišna je v našem okolju veliko mlajše od drugih dveh skupnosti. Pri nas se pojavi v osemdesetih letih 20. stoletja, večje in v javnosti vidnejše pa postane ob prelomu stoletja. V tem razmeroma kratkem času njegov razvoj intenzivno poteka po za nova religijska gibanja razmeroma tipičnih razvojnih stopnjah[12] – ključen je prehod iz t. i. tempeljske faze delovanja, ko je večina pripadnikov živela meniško življenje v templju, v t. i. kongregacijsko ali družinsko fazo delovanja, ko se težišče skupnosti preseli najprej k posameznikom, ki živijo običajna študentska ali uslužbenska življenja, v tempelj pa prihajajo peri-

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[10] V abrahamskih tradicijah judovstva, krščanstva in islama je Abrahamova družina osrednji model celotne religije, vere in vedenja, je eden ključnih teoloških virov in eden najpomembnejših elementov pri oblikovanju identitete religijskih skupnosti. Med njimi pa so seveda razlike v interpretacijah osrednje vloge družine, kar izhaja iz raznolikih teoloških in kulturnih kontekstov med tradicijami in tudi znotraj vsake izmed njih (glej Carol Bakhos, *The Family of Abraham: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Interpretations* (Harvard University Press, 2014); Jan Lemanski, Abraham versus Jakub. *Collectanea Theologica* 88, št. 4 (2019): 35–51, https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2018.88.4.02).

[11] Glej Lakshmi Mullatti, »Families in India: Beliefs and Realities,« *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 26, št. 1 (1995): 11–25, https://doi.org/10.3138/JCFS.26.1.11; Dennis Chekki, »Family Values and Family Change,« *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 27, št. 2 (1996): 409–12, https://doi.org/10.3138/JCFS.27.2.409.

[12] Glej Eileen Barker, »Plus ça change…,« *Social Compass* 42, št. 2 (1995): 165-80, https://doi.org/10.1177/003776895042002002.

odično opravljat le obredna dejanja, potem pa se sčasoma prevesi še k družinam, ki z dvigovanjem povprečne starosti pripadnikov postajajo vse številčnejše.[13] Zaznana razlika glede percepiranega pomena družine tako vsaj delno izhaja iz empiričnega dejstva, da se strukturni prehod skupnosti Hare Krišna v t. i. družinsko fazo zgodi razmeroma pred kratkim (dokončno se v tej novi fazi ustali šele pred dobrima desetletjema). Najbrž zato pripadniki gibanja Hare Krišna veliko manj kot katoličani in muslimani prisilno domestifikacijo religijskih dejavnosti med epidemijo doživijo v obliki poudarjene vloge družine za religijsko identiteto in življenje. S tem je namreč povezana še ena zelo pomembna strukturna razlika: velik del pripadnikov skupnosti Hare Krišna lastne religioznosti ne deli s svojimi družinskimi člani. Zato je imela prisilna domestifikacija religijskega življenja za pripadnike večinske RKC in tudi tradicionalne manjšinske Islamske skupnosti zelo drugačne učinke in posledice kot za pripadnike občutno manjše, netradicionalne in v nekaterih pogledih alternativne skupnosti Hare Krišna.

O tem priča izjava pripadnika skupnosti Hare Krišna na temo razlik med izvajanjem religijskih dejavnosti v živo v templju ali doma prek spleta:

Je razlika, seveda, saj si prisoten še z drugimi akterji. Doma si pač izoliran. Dobro, imaš pač svojo družino, ampak si izoliran od drugih bhakt. In tudi ni te skupne energije. Doma si v nekem prostoru, kjer so tudi druge stvari navzoče. Pa tudi odklopiš se, lahko izklopiš svoj zvok, izklopiš svojo kamero, pa te ni, /…/ se pravi je druga dinamika. Medtem ko če si v templju /…/ je pa vseeno neka druga energija, če si skupaj z bhaktami na programu ali pa če si tam prisoten, ne pa tako doma, izoliran v bistvu, oddaljen. (RE_420_HK)

Ko so bili zaradi epidemijskih omejitev prisiljeni svoje religijsko življenje omejiti skoraj izključno na prostore svojih domov, so katoličani in muslimani svoje religijske dejavnosti in čustva večinoma delili s svojimi družinami, te so postale (še) poudarjen vir varnosti, utehe in religijske identitete. Hkrati pa je velik del pripadnikov Skupnosti za zavest Krišne v prisilni zasebnosti svojih domov ostal glede religioznosti osamljen, saj je ne deli s člani svojih družin, stik s skupnostjo pa je lahko ohranjal skoraj izključno prek digitalnih tehnologij. Sklepamo

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[13]   Glej Črnič, *V Imenu Krišne*.

lahko, da je za nekatere med njimi v izjemnih epidemioloških razmerah družina postala prav nasprotno, poudarjen vir nesoglasij, pritiskov in s tem dodatna grožnja njihovi marginalni religijski identiteti.

Pomen skupnosti

Ob poudarjenih prednostih digitalnih tehnologij so intervjuvani pripadniki vseh treh skupnosti opozarjali tudi na njihove omejitve in nezadostnosti. Izkazale so se kot koristne in dragocene predvsem pri ohranjanju povezav med pripadniki in delno tudi pri izvajanju religijskih obredov in praks. Župnik Martin Golob kljub zavedanju velikih omejitev digitalnih tehnologij poroča o nekakšni povezanosti, ki so jo omogočale spletne religijske dejavnosti:

Zanimivo pa je bilo, da so se povezali tudi prek interneta in oblikovali skupnost, zato moram reči, da se je med nami spletla posebna vez, edinstvena vez, ki nas je resnično močno povezala. (RE_418_RKC)

Vendar pa številni drugi intervjuvani pripadniki vseh treh skupnosti poudarjajo, da spletna dejavnost ne zmore ustvariti pravega občutka skupnosti, nadomestiti občutka povezanosti in druženja, vzajemne telesne prisotnosti in religijskega obredja v živo.[14] Članica združenja Zemzem npr. pravi:

Čisto drugačen občutek, da opravljaš molitev v džamiji ali pa doma. Kljub temu, da molitev lahko opraviš doma, imaš pač neposredni kontakt z vzvišenim Bogom. Vseeno je pa v islamu pomemben ta kolektivni duh in kolektivno opravljanje molitve. /.../ Enostavno, ta živi stik je za nas res pomemben, da se čutimo kot del skupnosti, ker to je za nas pripadnost. (SI_610_IS)

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[14] O tem poročajo tudi naši raziskovalni sodelavci v drugih državah. Na Danskem npr. na podlagi analize 23 intervjujev in terenskega opazovanja v krščanskih, muslimanskih in budističnih skupnostih ugotavljajo, da so pripadniki med zapori zelo pogrešali skupnost, saj razpoložljive digitalne možnosti za večino niso zmogle zadovoljivo nadomestiti fizične interakcije v skupinah, predvsem so pogrešali fizično, kompleksno čutno interakcijo (Anne Lundahl Mauritsen in Henrik Reintoft Christensen, »'Jeg var i akut fælleskabsmangel': En komparativ analyse af (non)digital fælleskabskonstruktion blandt danske religionsgrupper«, *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift*, 76 (2024): 1-18.

Član vodstva Skupnosti za zavest Krišne še bolj eksplicitno poudari skupinsko opravljanje religijskih obredov, pri čemer opozori na pomen vključenosti vseh telesnih čutil:

Vsekakor je boljše, če si v živo, zato ker so vključena še vsa ostala čutila, ne samo vid. Lahko tudi vohaš dišeče palčke, potem lahko komuniciraš z ljudmi okoli sebe, kjer se poje in to je v bistvu pomembno, skupinsko petje svetih imen. In neke raziskave so naredili, da če se dolgo poje mantro, se ljudem celo srčni utrip sinhronizira. /…/ Ne vem če to funkcionira tudi doma, bi bilo zanimivo narediti analizo – ampak potem je tu skupna pojedina, skupinski ples … ker gre za proces skupinskega petja svetih imen, ti lažje dosežeš z istim časom in trudom efekt pri skupinskem petju kot pri posamičnem petju, ker te ta energija ostalih povleče zraven./…/ Se pravi večja vključenost vseh čutil v to, ne samo čutil, tudi neke duhovne energije, ki se recimo generira na nekem prostoru. (RE_242_HK)

Intervjuvani (nadpovprečno aktivni) katoliški laik pa opozori na učinek epidemije na večje zavedanje pomena občestva:

Mislim, jaz sem začel samo še bolj cenit občestvo, kateremu pripadam, kjer se zdim sam sebi del, v katerega poskušam po najboljših močeh vračat, ker se mi zdi prav, da človek vrača, ker se mi zdi, da tudi zelo veliko dobimo od tega občestva. /…/ In morda je ta epidemija samo še malo bolj poudarila to zadevo ravno zaradi tega, ker smo bili prisiljeni v ta odmik. (RE_719_RKC)

Tako se je med epidemijo izkazalo, da digitalne tehnologije ne morejo popolnoma nadomestiti fizične soudeležbe pri obrednih in nekaterih drugih religijskih dejavnostih, fizična prisotnost je izjemno pomembna za ohranjanje občutka skupnosti. Obsežen korpus sociološke literature pojasnjuje kompleksne načine vzpostavljanja in vzdrževanja ter večplastne pomene različnih družbenih (med njimi tudi religijskih) skupnosti.[15] Družbene skupnosti posameznike opremljajo z identiteto, smislom, varnostjo, z eksplicitnimi in implicitnimi pritiski h konformnosti pa lahko tudi potencialno omejujejo posameznikovo svobodo. Za razumevanje naše raziskovalne teme je v marsičem ključen tako imenovani čutni oz. telesni obrat v družboslovju in humanistiki ter

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[15] Glej npr. Zygmunt Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001); Suzanne Keller, *Community: Pursuing the dream, living the reality* (Princeton University Press, 2003).

tudi v religiologiji, ki se primarno osredinja na to, kako svet temeljno doživljamo prek svojega fizičnega obstoja, kako ljudje medsebojne odnose večinoma doživljamo prek svojih teles in čutil.[16] Ta paradigma nam učinkovito pojasnjuje v naši raziskavi zaznano pogrešanje fizične skupne prisotnosti z drugimi sopripadniki in večkrat izraženo mnenje, da se uspešne in vitalne religijske skupnosti ne da vzdrževati samo prek digitalnih tehnologij, temveč so za to potrebne redne skupne dejavnosti v fizičnem prostoru. Digitalne interakcije so za naše respondente sicer dobrodošla pomoč, toda nezadosten nadomestek, saj ne omogočajo celovite kompleksne, tudi čutne in fizične prisotnosti, ki ne omogoča le videti in slišati, temveč tudi otipati, vonjati in drugače fizično čutiti skupni prostor in dejavnosti v njem. Brez tega je zelo težko vzpostaviti živo in za pripadnike smiselno skupnost.

V tem smislu rezultati naše raziskave večinoma pritrjujejo tistim sodobnim religiološkim pojmovanjem, ki religije ne razumejo primarno kot sklop doktrin in idej, ter opozarjajo, da ne gre samo za kognitivno dejavnost razmišljanja in razumevanja, temveč je za religijo ključna tudi (skupinska) fizična participacija s telesi in fizičnimi čutili.[17] Religija je v vsakdanjem življenju posameznikov in skupin zmeraj utelešena.

Vračanje v fizični prostor in dolgoročnejši učinki

Po končani epidemiji in prenehanju z njo povezanih omejitev se je tudi religijsko življenje začelo vračati v ustaljene tire. Anonimna pripadnica gibanja Hare Krišna to opiše tako: »Ko smo bili po dolgem času takole skupaj, smo res to vsi pogrešali, /…/ to je bilo izjemno doživetje, potem ko smo skupaj plesali, kar je tudi to del naše kulture, in to se ne da po spletu.« (RE_328_HK)

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[16]   Glej npr. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The corporeal turn: An interdisciplinary reader* (Andrews UK Limited, 2015); Paul Rodaway, *Sensuous geographies: body, sense and place* (Routledge, 2002).

[17]   Za strnjen pregled tovrstnih pojmovanj glej Igor Jurekovič, »Onkraj redukcije religije na verovanje: zakaj konceptualizirati telo v preučevanju religije,« *Družboslovne razprave* 39, št. 102 (2023): 37–62, https://doi.org/10.51936/dr.39.102.37-62.

Vendar se vrnitev v običajno stanje ni zgodila takoj in brez težav, predvsem pa so nekatere posledice izjemnih razmer opazne še danes. Intervjuvani župnik npr. poroča:

Jaz sem hrepenel in upal, da bo po koncu epidemije večje veselje po srečevanju. Pa ni bilo ravno tako. Se zdaj sicer prebuja, prihajajo ljudje in je ena taka pomlad. /…/ Mislim, da je bilo mnoge tudi strah, nekateri so se malo polenili in vse je bilo malo bolj na komot, tako da se zdaj to malo prebuja. (RE_418_RKC).

To potrjuje tudi predstavnik Slovenske škofovske konference: »Prvi moment, ki smo ga opazili takoj po rahljanju ukrepov, je bilo zelo sramežljivo vračanje nazaj, malo zaradi sramežljivosti, malo pa tudi zaradi udobja.« (RE_425_RKC).

Zato je vsaj del cerkvene hierarhije za vrnitev pripadnikov nazaj v fizični prostor kljub zavedanju nevarnosti očitno pripravljen še naprej uporabljati tudi digitalne tehnologije. Intervjuvani frančiškan poroča o tovrstnih dilemah in razmislekih:

Glede na to, ker veliko ljudi komentira, da s tem praznimo cerkve, ker imamo prenos maše, kakšen župnik kdaj očita, češ nam ste spraznili cerkev. Ampak tukaj se mi zdi vedno tako, zelo veliko smo se pogovarjali, veliko smo preučevali zadeve in se mi zdi, da tistim ljudem, ki je maša neka vrednota, tistim, ki jim je udeležba na nedeljskih obredih neka vrednota, tisti ljudje bodo gotovo prišli. In so tudi komaj čakali, da bo konec covida. Zdaj, za ljudi, ki so bolj vpeti v proces sekularizacije in izgubljajo stik s cerkvijo, pa da jim predstavlja spletno orodje neko bilko, pri kateri lahko ponovno pridejo v stik s cerkvijo, pa tudi če samo pri tem ostane, je to še vedno boljše kot nič. /…/ Mislim, če se ljudje želijo udeležiti nedeljskega obreda, bodo gotovo prišli. (RE_524_RKC)

Veliko manjši upad fizične prisotnosti po epidemiji opažajo v skupnosti Hare Krišna. Aktiven ustvarjalec spletnih religijskih vsebin je povedal:

Ne vidim, da bi bil zmanjšan obisk templja zaradi tega. Ljudje zdaj še zmeraj radi pridejo v tempelj, ravno tako kot prej. Razlika je samo v tem, da zdaj nismo opustili tega spletnega prostora. In da tam zdaj spremljajo na obeh koncih. (RE_420_HK)

Navedeno je potrdil tudi drugi pripadnik gibanja Hare Krišna: »Zraven je prišla ena oblika, malo bolj prisotna, ampak ni izpodrinila tistega, da se zdaj ne družimo več.« (RE_244_HK) Digitalne tehnologije, ki jih v tej skupnosti intenzivno uporabljajo tudi po koncu epidemije, torej niso toliko nadomestek za fizične religijske dejavnosti v skupnosti, ampak njihovo dopolnilo, ki prinaša tudi nove potenciale. Anonimna pripadnica skupnosti Hare Krišna je npr. opazila:

Kar se tiče podajanja tega znanja, /…/ ajuverdskega znanja, teh modrosti iz Ved, mislim da se je sedaj zelo povečalo število ljudi, ki so postali odprti do tega znanja in ki so prišli v stik z našimi predavanji, ravno zato, ker smo začeli toliko predavanj na spletu. Zelo zelo veliko več ljudi kot prej. (RE_328_HK)

V gibanju Hare Krišna so tako tudi po koncu epidemije obdržali večino novih spletnih kanalov. RKC pa je vsaj v župnijah, ki smo jih opazovali, zmanjšala svojo prisotnost na spletu. Vseeno pa neredki v RKC opažajo velike potenciale in spodbujevalni učinek digitalnih tehnologij. Intervjuvani katoličan je npr. povedal:

In tudi vidim pri svojih sorodnicah, ki prej mogoče niso šle vsak dan k maši, zdaj pa recimo vsak dan gledajo po TV-ju. Socialna omrežja so do neke mere zelo demokratičen prostor, si sam izbiraš kaj hočeš. In ljudje se velikokrat v tem počutijo varni. /…/ Ni te nevarnosti, da bi sedaj kdo opazil in to komentiral: o poglej, ta pa hodi sedaj v cerkev. (RE_524_RKC)

V Islamski skupnosti pa so že tako minimalno uporabo digitalnih tehnologij po končani epidemiji še zmanjšali. Namesto tega izrazito spodbujajo fizično prisotnost pri obrednih in drugih religijskih dejavnostih, kar je mogoče zaznati tudi v RKC. Včasih to vključuje tudi bolj ali manj eksplicitna svarila pred digitalnimi nadomestki (razen v izjemnih primerih, kot so potovanja, pri starejših in bolnih ipd.), hkrati pa vendarle iščejo tudi načine konstruktivne uporabe. Pri gibanju Hare Krišna pa so ob podobnih, čeprav manj pogostih pozivih pripadnikom k fizični udeležbi očitno še bolj prepoznali velik potencial digitalnih tehnologij, pred katerimi ne svarijo oz. nikakor ne zmanjšujejo njihove rabe.

Digitalne tehnologije, kot jih uporabljajo proučevane skupnosti po kočani epidemiji, praviloma ne nadomeščajo njihovih običajnih dejavnosti, temveč jih komplementarno dopolnjujejo. Pogosto pomagajo pri

vzdrževanju kohezivnosti skupnosti, tako na lokalni kot na nacionalni ravni, pomembno pa prispevajo tudi k večjemu povezovanju skupnosti na širši mednarodni ravni. Kot je povedal intervjuvani musliman:

Ima pa digitalno ta učinek globalizacije. Vse nam je blizu. /.../ Vse bolj se povezujemo. Vse bolj se spoznavamo. Dogajajo se nam zdaj res take neke mešanice, ki se nikoli niso dogajale. Ta svet je res zdaj še lažje povezan, kot je bil včasih. (RE_630_IS).

Ne gre skratka za nadomestek, temveč za vse bolj razširjeno dopolnilo religijskim dejavnostim v fizičnem prostoru. Kot je opozoril predstavnik Slovenske škofovske konference: »Vseeno, bi izpostavil, da so to podporna orodja verske dejavnosti. So segment verske dejavnosti, so vedno bolj pomemben člen tega, je pa po drugi strani gotovo pomemben tudi osebni stik.« (RE_524_RKC) S tem pa se postopoma pojavlja neka nova hibridnost, ki tudi trajneje vpliva na sodobne načine religioznosti.

Sklep

Ko je epidemija koronavirusa covid-19 onemogočila fizično srečevanje pripadnikov religijskih skupnosti, je s tem ogrozila tradicionalne načine njihovega konstituiranja in vzdrževanja. Predstavniki vseh proučevanih skupnosti so v naši raziskavi poudarjali ključno pomembnost rednega fizičnega stika za vzdrževanje pristne skupnosti, vendar so se njihove organizacije morale prilagoditi izjemnim razmeram tudi z uporabo digitalnih tehnologij. To je ob nekaterih težavah prineslo tudi pozitivne posledice: številni pripadniki, najbolj je to opazno med starejšimi, so pridobili nove digitalne veščine, komunikacija v skupnosti se je izboljšala, dostop do številnih religijskih vsebin pa je postal lažji.

V vseh treh skupnostih so med epidemijo uporabljali digitalne tehnologije in jih delno uporabljajo tudi po njenem koncu kot pomoč pri ohranjanju komunikacije in organizaciji religijskih dejavnosti, nikjer pa ni to nadomestilo neposredne fizične participacije v religijskem življenju. Edine potencialne zametke tega je morda mogoče najti v skupnosti Hare Krišna, kjer tudi po končani epidemiji številna digitalna orodja omogočajo spremljanje obredov in lažje komuniciranjeje med pripadniki ter s tem pospešujejo delovanje skupnosti. Čeprav se ne-

kateri njihovi pripadniki redkeje udeležujejo skupinskih dejavnosti v živo, pa tehnologije ne zmorejo v celoti nadomestiti osebnega druženja in celovitega duhovnega doživetja. Celo v Islamski skupnosti, v kateri so bili ves čas epidemije najbolj zadržani do rabe digitalnih tehnologij, so tudi ohranili sicer minimalno rabo nekaterih orodij za obveščanje in komunikacijo s člani, poročajo pa tudi o izboljšani digitalni pismenosti svojih članov.

Prisilna domestifikacija religijskega življenja med epidemijo je tako povečala rabo digitalnih tehnologij, pri obeh večjih in starejših skupnostih je tudi poudarila osrediščenost na družino. Epidemične omejitve splošnega družbenega in konkretno religijskega življenja so izostrile pomen skupnosti, ki jo ključno konstituirajo kontinuirane skupinske dejavnosti pripadnikov v realnem fizičnem prostoru. Vendar ti procesi niso enopomenski, po končani epidemije npr. zaznaven del pripadnikov gibanja Hare Krišna in tudi RKC kljub izraženi kritičnosti do primernosti digitalnih tehnologij za religijske potrebe nezanemarljiv del svojih dejavnosti vse bolj opravlja prek teh tehnologij in zaznavno manj v živo.

Nekateri ustvarjalci digitalnih vsebin so med epidemijo postali nove avtoritete v posameznih skupnostih – to velja za gibanje Hare Krišna in delno tudi za RKC, kjer so nekateri (redki) digitalno spretni duhovniki izjemno pridobili vidnost krepko prek meja svojih župnij. To je vsaj v enem od primerov privedlo do tradicionalno izjemnih okoliščin, v katerih je lahko običajen lokalni župnik s svojimi dejavnostmi neposredno nagovoril neprimerno širše občestvo, župljani pa so lahko po želji izbirali tudi pridige duhovnika zunaj uradno dodeljene župnije. V Islamski skupnosti vodstvo in tudi intervjuvani pripadniki ostajajo izrazito skeptični in odklonilno naravnani do novih digitalnih avtoritet.

V splošnem se torej digitalne tehnologije niso izkazale kot nadomestek religijskih dejavnosti, temveč večinoma kot zasilno orodje v izjemnih razmerah, ko so bile dejavnosti religijskih skupnosti močno omejene. Po končani epidemiji ostaja hibridna raba predvsem tistih digitalnih orodij, ki so komplementarna dejavnostim v živo. To pomembno vpliva na razvoj sodobnih načinov religioznosti – epidemija je v tem smislu prinesla tudi dolgotrajnejše spremembe v načinih prakticiranja religije, kjer se fizična prisotnost vse bolj dopolnjuje z digitalno poveza-

nostjo pripadnikov. Za natančnejšo oceno in poglobljeno razumevanje dolgoročnejših posledic intenzivirane rabe digitalnih tehnologij v religijskem življenju pa bodo potrebne dodatne empirične raziskave ter konceptualne in teoretske pojasnitve njihovih rezultatov.

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REGULAR PAPERS

DRUGE RAZPRAVE

THE BIBLE AND CINEMA: ARTISTIC-LITERARY CONVERGENCES

Petterson Brey

Introduction

The thematic proposal of this text covers two interrelated topics that have been attracting growing academic interest: the Bible as a literary work and the intersection between religion and cinema.[1] This essay analyzes these themes to identify methodological and narrative similarities between biblical narratives and film scripts. It implies a more careful look at the standard storytelling techniques of both universes. This perspective enriches the understanding of each field and deepens

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[1]   Regarding the Bible as literature, this essay is based on several studies, the main ones of which are cited throughout the introduction of this text. However, regarding the representation of the Bible in cinema (which is not the focus of this text specifically), it must be said that widespread good studies already address this relationship with a certain competence. However, regarding the comparative analysis between the artistic-literary methodologies of biblical narratives and film scripts, this essay presents itself as an original approach. However, such originality comes from insights arising from certain intuitive propositions raised by some scholars, such as: Robert Alter, who in his book "The Art of Biblical Narrative" established a comparison between the unfolding of the books of the Bible in ancient public readings with the unfolding of films in a cinema projection; David Bordwell, who in his book "Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema" talks about the correlation between biblical exegesis and film criticism, has as his main element of approximation the patterns of literary structure; Gary Yamasaki, who in his book "Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative" presents an essayistic study that compares narrative elements between cinema and biblical narratives. (Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011); David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Harvard Film Studies) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); Gary Yamasaki, *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative (Reading the Bible in the 21st Century – Insights)* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016).

the dialogue between biblical exegesis and literary criticism, allowing new theological interpretations to emerge from this methodological approach.

Northrop Frye stated that, despite its multiple functions, the Bible is undeniably a literary work.[2] Its importance in Western culture is such that it has shaped myths, beliefs, and ideologies that guide human cognition in the West.[3] Frye emphasizes that the Old Testament is not just a religious text but a complex narrative that permeates Western artistic and literary production. This recognition, as Erich Auerbach also noted,[4] transcends the philosophical wisdom of Ancient Israel, highlighting that the Bible offers a sophisticated narrative structure comparable to the great texts of world literature.

Furthermore, Vladimir Propp's analysis of the narrative structure of the Bible revealed similarities between the ethnopoetic narratives of the Old Testament and other mythical literature throughout history. By reinforcing Auerbach's conclusions, Propp showed that biblical narrative design applies to different literary genres.[5] Therefore, this focus on the literary form of the scriptures has impacted biblical exegesis. Since the 1940s, scholars such as Umberto Cassuto[6] have suggested that understanding the Scriptures can be enriched by a reading that values their literary dimension, promoting a dialogue between literature and theology.

In this way, the synchronic analysis of biblical texts, which contrasts with the traditional historical reading, highlights the thematic unity of the Scriptures, offering a new theological perspective.[7] This approach

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[2]   Northrop Frye, *The Educated Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 97. cf. Karl-Josef Kuschel, *"Vielleicht hält Gott sich einige Dichter..."*: *Literarisch-theologische Porträts* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1991).

[3]   Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York: Mariner Books, 2002), xi-xxiii.

[4]   Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis*: *The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3-23.

[5]   Pamela J. Milne, *Vladimir Propp and the Study of Structure in Hebrew Biblical Narrative* (Decatur / Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 263.

[6]   Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the composition of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Shalem Press, 2014), 6–17, 117–126.

[7]   John W. Rogerson. "Old Testament," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. John W Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6–10.

does not attempt to choose a superior methodology but proposes understanding the type of questions that each method seeks to answer.[8] By focusing on the interaction between the narrated world and the reader's world, literary analysis offers greater interpretative flexibility.[9] With this approach, the Bible begins to be seen not only as a religious text but as a narrative rich in meanings that invites the reader to reflect.[10]

In this sense, narrative analysis becomes a relevant exegetical methodology by inviting the reader to cooperate in the construction of theological meanings.[11] It creates a bond between the reader and the biblical text, which is fundamental to literary studies.[12] Thus, in a synchronous reading of the text, the meanings emerge from a network of textual components that reflect a pragmatic interaction with the listener.[13] This interaction allows for a more dynamic reading experience, where meaning is constructed jointly between the text and the reader.[14]

Robert Alter,[15] when studying the oral nature of biblical narratives, points out that they were designed to be recited. During public readings, the audience visualized the narrated scenes as if in a mental projection, similar to a cinematic experience.[16] For example, for Adele Berlin,[17] in biblical narratives, the form of expression is as vital as the content,

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[8]   David M. Gunn and Danna N. Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.

[9]   Jean L. Ska, "Sincronia: L'Analisi Narrativa," in *Metodologia Dell'Antico Testamento*, ed. Horacio Simian-Yofre (Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane Bologna, 2009), 139–145.

[10]   Danna N. Fewell, "The Work of Biblical Narrative," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna N. Fewell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 3–4.

[11]   Elisabeth Parmentier, "Dieu a des histories: La dimension théologique de la narrativité," in *La Bible en Récits*: *L'exégèse biblique à l'heure du lecteur*, ed. Daniel Marguerat (Genève: Labor Et Fides, 2005), 112.

[12]   Pierre Bühler, "La ise en intrigue de l'interprète: Enjoux herméneutiques de la narrativité," in *La Bible en Récits*: *L'exégèse biblique à l'heure du lecteur*, ed. Daniel Marguerat (Genève: Labor Et Fides, 2005), 94-95.

[13]   Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 1-19.

[14]   Daniel Marguerat, "L'exégèse biblique à l'heure du lecteur," in *La Bible en Récits*: *L'exégèse biblique à l'heure du lecteur*, ed. Daniel Marguerat (Genève: Labor Et Fides, 2005), 15.

[15]   Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 113–114.

[16]   Gary Yamasaki, *Watching a Biblical Narrative*: *point of view in biblical exegesis* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 44–65.

[17]   Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 13–21.

which reflects a careful construction between form and meaning. This balance between content and form is essential to capture the author's intended point of view and to construct a message with interpretative richness.

Therefore, for David Bordwell,[18] film scripts, although they follow established narrative conventions, are peculiar in their construction. A film script is designed to guide several professionals in the construction of a shared vision, where each narrative element is intentional.[19] Gary Yamasaki,[20] for example, observes that, as in biblical narratives, film scripts need to maintain strict control between form and content, which creates a methodological convergence between the two narrative forms. This connection allows biblical and cinematographic stories to offer sensory and reflective experiences.

Bordwell further explains that, in the same way that Greek philosophical thought systematized Homeric literature, traditions of biblical interpretation sought to integrate the scriptures with philosophical thought.[21] From the Renaissance onwards, Western literature began to explore freer and more sensorial hermeneutics, connecting emotion and reason. As the "seventh art," cinema intensifies this experience, promoting a hermeneutics of the senses that balances rationality and emotion. This sensorial perspective brings cinematic narratives closer to biblical literature, expanding the possibilities of interpretation and understanding.[22]

Finally, this essay aims to briefly demonstrate the artistic-literary convergences announced here between biblical narratives and film scripts. This exercise will be carried out using the analysis of narrative excerpts from the films *Pulp Fiction* and *Braveheart*, as well as the series *Succession* and *Breaking Bad*, highlighting the points of narrative intersection with biblical stories such as the story of Joseph of Egypt,

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[18]   David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 3–15.
[19]   David Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in Modern Movies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 21–26.
[20]   Yamasaki. *Insights from Filmmaking for Analyzing Biblical Narrative*, 35–37.
[21]   Bordwell, *Making Meaning*, 86, 139, 140, 196, 215.
[22]   Frank Kermode, *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 24.

Job and Jonah, and the speech of YHWH, a prelude to the legislation of Ancient Israel in the story of the Exodus. It should be clarified that the choice of these films and series, instead of so many other cinematographic products with direct biblical content, is due to the intention of making it clear that the artistic-literary convergences that we intend to demonstrate here are independent of thematic-religious aspects, but rather constitute universal narrative techniques.

Discursive Pragmatics, the Quinary Scheme, and the Five Fables

While all literary narratives invite the reader to imagine the narrated world, biblical stories and film scripts stand out for their minimalist but practical descriptive approach. Like in a film script, where each page represents one minute on screen,[23] biblical narratives use carefully selected words to bring the plot to life. This style not only builds the narrated world with precision but also organizes the layers of the plot and defines the narrative arcs of the characters.[24] By immersing themselves in this universe, the reader allows themselves to be guided by the rhetorical structure of the narrative, gradually discovering the profound themes that support each story.[25]

The journey of the characters in the Bible serves as a bridge between the narrator and the reader, facilitating the communication of central themes.[26] As pointed out by Cynthia L. Miller,[27] in his speech, biblical characters contribute to constructing meaning, functioning as an essential interpretative key. The fusion between the characters' speeches and the narrative pragmatics makes the character arc a supporting com-

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[23] Syd Field, *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* (New York: Delta Trade Paperbacks, 2005), 15–24.
[24] Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 197.
[25] Jan P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: an introductory guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 20–45.
[26] Yairah Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 74–82.
[27] Cynthia L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: a linguistic analysis*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 55 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 399–407.

ponent that supports the plot.[28] This dynamic brings biblical narratives closer to the structure of films, where dialogue and character actions also construct the plot, guiding the viewer in understanding the underlying messages.[29]

In the classical literary tradition, as described by Aristotle in "Poetics," narratives are structured by six main elements, the most important of which are the plot and the characters.[30] The sequence of actions shapes the plot, so any change in this order affects the message and the story's impact. Aristotle outlined a three-act structure – First, Second, and Third Act – essential in classical literary works and formats the narrative discourse. This classical structure provides a basis for the development of stories in literature and cinema, facilitating the unfolding of actions with clarity and intensity.

Within this three-act model, Paul J. Gulino[31] describes a dramatic curve divided into five points: (1) *misbehavior* (introduction of the characters and their preparation for the adventure); (2) *set up* (call to adventure); (3) *midpoint* (development of misbehavior); (4) *low point* (fall or failure); and (5) *moralizing correction* (correction and conclusion). Marguerat and Bourquin,[32] when analyzing biblical narratives, propose a very similar quinary scheme, with the following stages: (1) *initial situation*, (2) *node*, (3) *transformative action*, (4) *denouement*, and (5) *final situation*. This organization reveals a profound structural similarity between biblical narratives and the classical model, facilitating the analysis and interpretation of both.[33]

These narrative models can be superimposed and applied to various biblical narratives and hero's journey films, such as the stories of Jacob

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[28] George W. Savran, *Telling and Retelling: Quotation in Biblical Narrative* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), ix.
[29] Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting* (New York: Regan Books, 1997), 100–109.
[30] Aristóteles, 384-322 a.C. *Poética – Περὶ ποιητικῆς* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2017), 34–217.
[31] Paul J. Gulino, *Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 1–14.
[32] Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *Pour Lire les Récits Bibliques: initiation à l'analyse narrative* (Paris: Les Éditions Du CERF; Genève: Labor Et Fides, 2009), 58–66.
[33] Petterson Brey, "As narrativas da Bíblia Hebraica e os roteiros cinematográficos: convergências literário-metodológicas," in *A arte e a cultura e a formação humana*, ed. Fabiano E. A. Batista (Ponta Grossa: Editora Atena, 2022), 5–6.

and Esau[34] or Joseph of Egypt.[35] In such narratives, discursive pragmatics is guided by the sequence of actions, making the characters exist primarily to move the plot forward. The classical narrative structure applies to these stories to make the plot the center of the experience, while the characters serve the progression of events, as occurs in film scripts. This parallel between the Bible and cinema illustrates the narrative power of Scripture and its influence on modern visual storytelling.

The narrative of Joseph of Egypt exemplifies a narrative design structured in five parts that outline the protagonist's development and conflict. Initially, Joseph is introduced with distinct characteristics, such as his ability to interpret dreams and his potential leadership, which arouses the jealousy of his brothers. It is the first stage, in which the protagonist and the conflict are introduced. Next, Joseph is taken to Egypt, where he begins his journey and must hone these skills, symbolizing a point of no return in his adventure. From this point on, the story develops with dramatic parallels, such as the episode of Judah and Tamar, which adds a dimension of contrast and rhetoric to the plot.

Robert Alter[36] notes a structural parallel between Judah's discovery of Tamar and Jacob's news of Joseph's "death." This contrast helps to highlight underlying themes of deception and revelation. Inspired by this analysis, we can see the similarity in Jennifer Van Sijll's[37] interpretation when she points out a similar resource in the film *Pulp Fiction*,[38] where Quentin Tarantino uses juxtaposed scenes to create tension and dramatic complexity. These scenes involving Vincent (John Travolta), Mia (Uma Thurman), and Lance (Erich Stoltz) function in a similar way to the juxtaposition between Jacob, Judah, and Tamar, developing a layer of expectation and shock that allows the audience to grasp the thematic importance. This parallelism between the works reveals a technique shared between biblical and cinematic narratives.

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[34] Jan P. Fokkelman, "Genesis," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 36–55.
[35] Christoph Uehlinger, "Genèse 37-50," in *Introduction à L'Ancien Testament*, ed. Thomas Römer, Jean-Daniel Macchi and Christophe Nihan (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2009), 239–255.
[36] Alter. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 1–24.
[37] Jennifer V. Sijll, *Narrativa cinematográfica: contando histórias com imagem em movimento* (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2019), 100–103.
[38] Pulp Fiction, Quentin Tarantino, USA, Miramax Films, 1994.

As demonstrated in a previous publication,[39] in the structure of *Pulp Fiction*, the contrasting scenes create a psychological condition in the audience, favoring the understanding of the importance of the relationship between the characters and their actions. This type of construction is also identifiable in Joseph's narrative, where the opposition between deception and redemption shapes the theme of forgiveness and reconciliation. In both narratives, dramatic parallelism reinforces the emotional connection between the characters and the audience and allows for a deeper interpretation of the central theme. Thus, Joseph's narrative structure is multifaceted and oriented towards a more sensitive and psychological understanding.

The Protagonist's Direct Speech

In biblical narratives and films, characters play a fundamental role in conveying thematic ideas and values. In biblical stories, characters are constructed to reflect the narrative arc through characterization techniques. As Berlin states,[40] these representation techniques are standard in biblical narratives and other forms of literature. In the case of the Scripture, the actions and speech of the characters, in their various conflicts and challenges, help to convey the central theme, offering the narrator a powerful tool to communicate his narrative discourse in an indirect but very impactful way.[41]

The direct speeches of biblical characters are particularly important for understanding the narrative. Miller[42] emphasizes that the speeches of the main characters are crucial to understanding the discourse and intention of the narrator. Savran[43] complements this idea by stating that, when speaking, the characters rhetorically evoke the past, updating previous events and giving them new meanings. As Field[44] points out, dialogue also plays a similar role in cinema, as it helps to maintain

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[39]   Brey, *As narrativas da Bíblia Hebraica e os roteiros cinematográficos,* 5–6.
[40]   Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative,* 33.
[41]   Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives,* 74–82.
[42]   Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,* 399–407.
[43]   Savran, *Telling and Retelling,* ix.
[44]   Field, *Screenplay,* 23–24.

the cohesion of the plot and connect the past, present, and future, creating a narrative progression that engages the audience and reinforces the film's message.

In the Exodus narrative, for example, YHWH's speech on Mount Sinai (Ex 19:4-6) is loaded with historical and future meanings. At this point in the plot, YHWH evokes past actions to justify and reinforce his sovereignty and alliance with the Hebrew people. As Brey[45] points out, the appeal to YHWH's reputation–consolidated in the actions carried out in Egypt–serves as the rhetorical foundation of his speech, legitimizing the pact with Israel and projecting the promise of a sacred nation. This epic and persuasive speech exemplifies the use of past events as a guarantee of credibility for what is proposed in the present, something familiar in both the Bible and in cinematic narratives.[46]

The technique of evoking the past to give meaning to the present and project the future, used in YHWH's speech (Ex 19:4-6), is also employed in constructing heroic speeches in films. In *Braveheart*,[47] William Wallace (Mel Gibson) uses his fame and reputation to persuade his countrymen to fight for freedom. As Bordwell[48] notes, Wallace declared, "I am William Wallace!"[49] and uses the weight of his reputation to inspire courage and determination, just as YHWH invokes his history of protecting the Hebrew people to consolidate his authority and commitment. This rhetorical structure between past and future reinforces the legitimacy and thematic cohesion of the discourse in both narratives.

Thus, protagonists in biblical narratives and cinema are often portrayed in decisive moments of confrontation and collective motivation. In *Braveheart*, Wallace challenges the Scottish soldiers to fight against oppression, and in Exodus, YHWH encourages the Hebrews to em-

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45 Petterson Brey, "O SENHOR evoca o passado para reiterar o presente e anunciar o futuro: a retórica da configuração literária do discurso do SENHOR no Sinai (Ex 19,4-6a)," *Pesquisas em Teologia* v. 3, n. 6 (2020): 246, https://doi.org/10.46859/PUCRio.Acad.PqTeo.2595-9409.2020v3n6p228.

46 McKee, *Story*, 100–109.

47 Braveheart, Mel Gibson, USA, Paramount; 20th Century Fox, 1995.

48 Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, 121–-124.

49 Several of YHWH's speeches in the Pentateuch are introduced or concluded by the phrase, "I am the LORD!"

brace their role as the chosen people, elevating them from enslaved people to a nation of priests (Ex 19:6). Both scenes follow a similar rhetorical scheme, in which the character appeals to his reputation and past actions as justification for his speech.[50] This parallelism between the narratives shows the power of direct discourse in forming an emotional connection with listeners and validating the values presented.

This type of discursive structure reinforces the narrator's point of view, shaping the thematic unity of the narrative. In speeches like that of YHWH at Mount Sinai, the fusion between the narrator's and the character's voices is a resource for engaging the reader in the narrative context and directing them to understand the central themes. This technique of "giving voice" to the past connects the listener to the values of the narrative, effectively conveying a message of authority and belonging, strengthening both the biblical and the cinematic plot.

In addition, narrative construction and "impression points" are critical devices for anchoring the viewer's or reader's perception. Bordwell[51] and Kermode[52] point out that these structural points in the plot direct the audience's experience, providing milestones for the audience to understand the narrative's evolution and the characters' development. By establishing these impression points, the narrator controls the story's pace and gradually reveals thematic unity, allowing the audience to connect emotionally with the dilemmas and values presented.

These impression points also help to highlight essential themes, such as redemption and reconciliation, present in biblical stories such as Joseph of Egypt. In biblical narratives, this narrative technique allows the audience to identify with the characters' challenges and triumphs, perceiving the moral and spiritual themes that run through the story. Similarly, in cinematic narratives, these impression points give the audi-

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[50] This is one of the categories of rhetorical appeal for speeches, referenced by the Greek word ETHOS, where the speaker bases his argument on his own reputation. There is also the PATHOS rhetorical appeal, in which the speaker uses some type of emotional element, and also the LOGOS rhetorical appeal, where the speaker bases his argument on the very logic that arises from his statements in reference to his premises.
[51] Bordwell, *Making Meaning*, 208.
[52] Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 16.

ence a deeper understanding of the character's arc and journey, creating an engaging and emotionally rich narrative experience.

Therefore, analyzing the narrative structure and direct speeches reveals how biblical and cinematic narratives use similar techniques to reinforce their central themes and engage the audience. Solid characters and well-structured speeches in both the Bible and film provide a powerful window into understanding the values and message being conveyed, showing that, even in different mediums, stories share a narrative architecture that enriches the experience of listeners and readers.

Narrative Design: Plot-Driven and Character-Driven

For centuries, the narratives in the collective memory were shaped by the plot, focusing on a sequence of actions and events. Biblical narratives, for example, show this prevalence of the plot, reflecting traditional structures that align with elements of classical literature.[53] With the development of cinema, especially Hollywood, these structures were adapted under the influence of the rules of Aristotelian poetics, establishing a rigid and efficient standard of quality.[54] However, after the Second World War, Hollywood cinema began to incorporate modern drama, influenced by European narratives, which brought greater complexity to the characters, giving them prominence over the plot.[55]

In modern drama, the protagonist gains a more complex and prominent role, being not just someone who reacts to the events of the plot but a figure who brings psychological depth to the plot. This model is similar to some biblical narratives that, while maintaining the classical structure, reflect a complexity that approaches that of modern literature.[56] The harmony between biblical narrative and modern cinema is remarkable, as both begin to treat characters as vehicles of a human

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[53]   Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: ideological literature and the drama of reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 41–57.
[54]   Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It*, 21–26.
[55]   Tom Stempel, *Framework: A History of Screenwriting in the American Film* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 186–196.
[56]   Tremper Longman III, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 10.

depth that transcends mere action.[57] Biblical stories, such as those of Job and Jonah, exemplify literary characteristics found in contemporary storytelling techniques.

In classic narrative design, centered on the plot (plot-driven), the story is driven by the events and actions of the protagonist. Joseph of Egypt is an example of a plot-driven narrative, where the character's trajectory is defined by successive events that force him to react and adapt. Despite being the protagonist, Joseph does not have the freedom to narrate or comment on the events to which he is subjected. External situations transform his life, and he only responds to these challenges. This linear narrative style, where each action triggers another, reflects the classic structure in which the protagonist submits to the course of events.[58]

An example of a contemporary plot-driven narrative is the series *Breaking Bad*,[59] where the protagonist Walter White (Bryan Cranston) decides to enter the drug trade to secure his family's financial future after discovering he has cancer. In each episode, Walter finds himself in more dangerous and complex situations, facing moral dilemmas that intensify as the plot unfolds. Just like Joseph, Walter reacts to the plot's events, dealing with the consequences of his previous actions, which creates an effect of continuous action that keeps the viewer attentive to the sequence of events that make up the plot.

However, in character-driven narratives, the focus shifts to the psychological and emotional development of the characters. These stories prioritize the internal nuances of the characters, offering the reader or viewer a deeper understanding of who they are. Digressions about the protagonist's emotional state are as important as the plot events, creating a narrative where what matters is not what happens but how the characters feel about these events. It can be seen in the biblical narra-

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[57]   Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, *Poética do drama moderno: de Ibsen a Koltès* (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2017), 41–78.
[58]   Pamela Douglas, *Writing the TV Drama Series* (Los Angeles: Michael Wiese Productions, 2011), 31–34.
[59]   Breaking Bad, Vince Gilligan, USA, NETFLIX, 2013.

tives of Job[60] and Jonah,[61] which, unlike the stories of Joseph or Jacob, focus more on exploring the characters and feelings of the protagonists.

In character-driven narratives, the interest is less in the action and more in the internal reflections of the characters. Paul J. Gulino[62] states that commentary scenes are inserted between the action scenes in this type of narrative, allowing the characters to reflect on their feelings and internal dilemmas. These pauses for introspection deepen the viewer's understanding of the character's emotional complexity. In the Bible, Job's story exemplifies this structure, as there are several passages where Job reflects on his suffering, questioning his faith and the meaning of his life. This psychological depth is central to understanding the narrative.

A contemporary example of a character-driven narrative is the series *Succession*,[63] where the protagonist, Kendall Roy (Jeremy Strong), faces internal dilemmas while seeking his father's approval and the security of his position in the family. The series explores Kendall's psychological tension and his power struggle without the business succession promised in the first episode happening over the seasons. This narrative style allows the audience to engage with Kendall's emotional complexity, making him a multifaceted character who carries the weight of the plot without necessarily advancing it directly and constantly.

In *Succession*, the conflict of power and the search for acceptance are the center of the narrative, and this is sustained by the constant suspension of the action, which generates psychological and emotional tension in the viewer. The succession in the company is the plot that drives the series, but the narrative stasis that prevents it from happening is what deepens the exploration of the characters' characters. Each episode presents dialogues and situations that reveal new layers of the protagonist and the other characters, establishing a narrative that prioritizes internal development over direct action.

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[60]   Moshe Greenberg, "Job," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 283–304.
[61]   Ernest A Knauf, "Jonas," in *Introduction à L'Ancien Testament*, ed. Thomas Römer, Jean-Daniel Macchi and Christophe Nihan (Genève: Labor et Fides, 2009), 502–508.
[62]   Gulino, *Screenwriting*, 1–19.
[63]   Succession, Jesse Armstrong, USA, HBO, 2018.

Kendall's journey in *Succession* finds an echo in Job's suffering, where the stagnation in the development of the plot allows the depth of the protagonists' characters to be explored. The doubt about personal value and the search for redemption unites these stories, highlighting how psychological deepening becomes the main driving force of the narrative. This suspension of the action, paradoxically, makes the plot more engaging, as the audience becomes interested not in the outcome but in the process of the characters' self-discovery.

Thus, analyzing the differences between plot-driven and character-driven narratives shows how the narrative approach changes how the audience connects with the story and the characters. While plot-driven stories keep the audience attentive to the unfolding of the plot, character-driven stories involve the viewer in an emotional and psychological immersion. Biblical narratives and contemporary cinema exemplify these two approaches, showing that, throughout the centuries, stories continue to explore new ways of expressing the complexities of the human experience.

These approaches reveal that, by blending aspects of classical narratives with renowned modern drama, the Bible and contemporary cinema offer rich and varied experiences. Whether through the nonstop action of plot-driven plots or the introspective exploration of character-driven narratives, both narrative forms capture the audience's attention in different ways, proving that there are many ways to engage and move the audience. This narrative plurality is what makes literature, the Bible, and cinema timeless and universally impactful.

Conclusion

This paper sought to explore the technical convergence between biblical narratives and film scripts, proposing a dialogue between two narrative forms that, although separated by distinct historical and cultural contexts, share a literary and artistic basis. Although the discussion remained at an introductory level, it was possible to glimpse how these narrative forms complement each other. Future research could deepen this analysis, exploring specific examples that highlight the shared narrative techniques. The relationship between the Bible and cinema offers

a fertile field for a comparative analysis that reveals new layers of meaning in both expressions.

The central provocation of this work lies in the suggestion of a theological reflection that considers biblical texts not only as religious documents but also as works of literary art. Based on Vilém Flusser's thinking,[64] it is argued that the aesthetic experience of the Scriptures, in interaction with cinema, can reveal theological levels that transcend the traditional scope of religions. Flusser suggests that the artistic enjoyment of biblical texts allows for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding that goes beyond a strictly rational or dogmatic approach.

This perspective invites the reader to consider that biblical narratives have an artistic character. Biblical narratives were composed to engage the listener-reader in an experience that goes beyond the simple absorption of information.[65] By highlighting the role of narrative form, the text suggested that the aesthetic experience of biblical content is essential for fully understanding its message. Thus, biblical hermeneutics can benefit from approaches considering form and content inseparable elements of a single message.

The comparative analysis between Scripture and cinema broadens the technical understanding of narratives and enriches the aesthetic experience of biblical texts. The convergence between these two art forms offers a unique opportunity to explore how the biblical message can be understood more deeply. In this way, the text proposes an interdisciplinary approach that studies the Bible as literature or religion and as an aesthetic experience that dialogues with other artistic manifestations, such as cinema.

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[64] Vilém Flusser, *Vom Stand der Dinge: Eine kleine Philosophie des Designs* (Gottingen: STEIDL, 2019), 26–31.
[65] Petterson Brey, "Experiência de Deus no Pentateuco: existe mística na lei?," in *Diálogos sobre a Experiência de Deus – volume II: questões sobre mística*, ed. André Anéas (São Paulo: Editora Recriar, 2022), 193–195.

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Breaking Bad. Vince Gilligan. USA. NETFLIX, 2013.

Succession. Jesse Armstrong. USA. HBO, 2018.

ABSTRACTS

Klara Hrvatin
Taishō Period Divination as Tsuneko Kondō Kawase's Personal Item

The article examines a Taishō period (1912–26) divination document, a personal item of Tsuneko Kondō Kawase, preserved in the archive of her collected documents at the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. It is a handwritten piece of calligraphy depicting a prophecy based on *Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes*, an important text based on the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes*. This document, which Marija Skušek kept until her death, is characterized by its form, calligraphic style, and red stamps. The article aims to explore the transcription and translation of the divination, the form and dating of the document, and how it relates to Tsuneko's life choices. The author raises questions about when Tsuneko acquired the document and whether it influenced her crucial life decisions, particularly before her trip to Europe, during her last visit to Japan, or before her marriage to Ivan Skušek.

Keywords: Tsuneko Kondō Kawase (Marija Skušek), Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Taishō period, divination, Takashima's Judgments on the Book of Changes (Takashima ekidan), Yijing.

Gerald Kozicz, Di Luo
The Adamantine Terrifier on the Dresser

From 1920 to 1963, a collection of Chinese art–mostly from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)–was continuously presented at the changing addresses of Ivan and his wife Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase, who finally adopted the full Slovene name of Marija Skušek after her baptism in 1927. The collection had been assembled in Beijing where Ivan Skušek had arrived in 1914 and been a prisoner of war from 1917, and it was then shipped to Ljubljana after his release in 1920. Photographs and a film document how their private rooms were turned into exhibition rooms. They had quite a spectacular arrangement of metalworks on a dresser in front of a mirror. In all locations in Ljubljana where the Skušeks lived, one wrathful figure was always in the centre of the group: Vajrabhairava, the Adamantine Terrifier.

The following article examines the significance of this Buddhist deity in the context of Buddhism in China. It inspects the function and meaning of the dresser, in particular the symbolism of the mirror in relation to the Yamāntaka group of tantric deities, among whom Vajrabhairava assumes the highest position. It further addresses Marija Skušek's possible role as the actual curator, raising the question about a possible socio-religious concept behind the configuration of the figures.

Keywords: Skušek Collection, Qing Dynasty, Yamāntaka-Vajrabhairava, Yama, Mirror, Buddhism.

Helena Motoh, Gašper Mithans
Seeing Mary and Becoming Marija: Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase's Bridging Religious and Cultural Boundaries

This article examines the extraordinary conversion story of Tsuneko Kondō-Kawase, a Japanese woman who became Marija Skušek upon her baptism and marriage in Ljubljana in 1927. Within a single hour at the Ljubljana Bishop's Palace, Kawase was baptised, confirmed, married, and her two children were baptised and confirmed. Her swift conversion and claims of Mary's apparitions captured public attention. This study situates her testimony within the broader context of religious conversion, the rise of pluralistic beliefs in a predominantly Catholic society, and the socio-political climate of the era. Central to her narrative are visions of Mary's crowned image, shaped by Chinese Catholic traditions and Slovenian Marian devotion. Tsuneko's experience underscores the complexity of non-European conversions and the adaptability required by clergy to address diverse cultural identities. Tsuneko's case highlights personal agency in navigating religious transformation, blending her Japanese and Chinese heritage with Slovenian Catholic influences. Her reinterpretation of Marian imagery illustrates how converts with their understanding of religious symbols actively engage to forge new identities. As a transitional figure, Tsuneko's story sheds light on the interplay between personal experiences and broader cultural adaptations in conversion processes. This analysis enriches the understanding of religious transformation, emphasizing the significance of individual narratives in exploring themes of faith, identity, and integration across cultural and historical boundaries.

Keywords: religious conversion, Mary's apparitions, cross-cultural identity, Tsuneko Kondō- Kawase/Marija Skušek, interwar Yugoslavia.

Marcus Moberg, Aleš Črnič
Religion, Digital Media, and the COVID-19 Pandemic

This introductory paper to the thematic strand on religion and digital technologies during and following the COVID-19 pandemic begins with a brief outline of how primarily Christian and Islamic religious communities are grappling with rapidly developing digital technologies. A synoptic description of research developments in the relatively new field of religion and digital media follows, drawing on an overview of basic readings and research, with a particular focus on the surge in ICT use during 2020 and 2021 as a result of the global pandemic. The paper concludes with a brief presentation of the international research project Religious Communities in the Virtual Age, on which this thematic strand is based.

Keywords: religion and digital media, COVID-19, Roman Catholic Church, Islamic community, Hare Krishna.

Katja Koren Ošljak
Mediatisation of Religion and Shifts in Religious Authority: A Netnographic Study on Digitisation Within Select Slovene Religious Communities during the Epidemic

One of the research objectives of the Recovira international project was to map the online presence of three religious communities in Slovenia: the Roman Catholic Church, the Islamic Community in the Republic of Slovenia, and the Society for Krishna Consciousness. Particular focus was placed on the lockdown period during the epidemic, when most activities of religious communities shifted from sacred buildings to the internet. Since our research interest was exploring the different aspects of digitisation within these communities, we approached data gathering using the netnographic method. The principal objective of the study was to identify the digital or digitised practices of religious communities in relation to religious authority. Against the backdrop of an audience-centred understanding of mediatisation and analysis of digital religious practices during the epidemic, we observed the changes in power relations within the religious communities and reached three key conclusions: 1. In the Catholic community, adjustments in daily religious life caused tensions related to participation in religious activities outside churches and the appropriateness of the measures imposed; 2. In the Islamic community, most religious activities were cancelled, and the community was encouraged to comply with denoted measures; 3. In the Hare Krishna community, by far the most digitally engaged, highly inclusive digitisation practices were promo-

ted and used. Additionally, we identified two cases in which alternative religious authority emerged through digital media.

Keywords: netnography, digital ethnography, mediatisation, religion, Catholic community, Islamic community, Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Aleš Črnič, Taja Fortuna
»We Could All See That God Works Even Through Social Networks«: The Impact of Increased Use of Digital Technologies on Select Slovene Religious Groups

The paper presents an analysis of interviews with representatives of three Slovene religious communities: the majority Roman Catholic Church, the established minority Islamic community, and the newer and smaller International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). The study seeks to understand how these communities adapted to the complex challenges of the COVID-19 epidemic, specifically how they were aided by digital technologies; and the short- and long-term impacts on their religious lives. We find that forced domestic worship significantly increased the use of technology, although with some notable differences among the three communities. Generally, digital technologies did not prove to be efficacious substitutes for in-person religious activities, but simply as emergency tools during an extraordinary situation. After the epidemic, hybrid worship continues mostly where digital tools complement in-person activities.

Keywords: COVID-19 epidemic, digitisation, Roman Catholic Church, Islamic community, Hare Krishna.

Petterson Brey
The Bible and Cinema: Artistic-Literary Convergences

From Northrop Frye's perspective, which views the Hebrew Bible as the foundational imagination behind the literary ideologies that shaped Western thought, this discussion aims to highlight some points of convergence between biblical literature and the narrative structure found in contemporary cinema, one of the most sophisticated storytelling mediums today. The theoretical framework for this exploration draws on the works of scholars such as Robert Alter, Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, Gary Yamasaki, and David Bordwell. As Adele Berlin points

out, the narratives of the Hebrew Bible convey their message through both the form and content of the text. Building on this idea, the focus here is to demonstrate that beyond thematic parallels, the narrative structure of the Bible aligns methodologically with the storytelling techniques of modern cinema.

Keywords: Bible as literature, Bible and cinema, narrative analysis, synchronic exegesis, film scripts.

POVZETKI

Klara Hrvatin
Vedeževalska napoved iz obdobja Taishō kot osebni predmet Tsuneko Kondō Kawase

V članku je obravnavan divinatorični dokument iz obdobja Taishō (1912–26), osebni predmet Tsuneko Kondō, ki je ohranjen v arhivu njene zbirke dokumentov v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju. Gre za eno od vedeževalskih napovedi − napisano z roko in v kaligrafski pisavi − na podlagi *Takashimove razlage Knjige premen*, pomembnega besedila, ki temelji na *Knjigi premen* (kit. *Yijing*). Posebnosti tega dokumenta, ki ga je Tsuneko Kondō Kawase hranila do svoje smrti, so njegova oblika, kaligrafska pisava in rdeči žigi. Avtorica v članku preučuje zapis in prevod napovedi, obliko in datacijo dokumenta ter njegovo povezavo s Tsunekinimi življenjskimi odločitvami. Pri tem poskuša odgovoriti na vprašanja, kdaj je Tsuneko pridobila ta dokument in ali je kako vplival na njene najpomembnejše življenjske odločitve, zlasti pred njenim potovanjem v Evropo, med zadnjim obiskom Japonske ali pred poroko z Ivanom Skuškom.

Ključne besede: Tsuneko Kondō Kawase (Marija Skušek), Slovenski etnografski muzej, obdobje Taishō, vedeževanje, Takashimove razlage Knjige premen (Takashima ekidan), Yijing.

Gerald Kozicz, Di Luo
Diamantni strašni na komodi

Med letoma 1920 in 1963 je bila v vseh domovanjih Ivana Skuška in njegove žene Tsuneko Kondō Kawase, ki je po krstu leta 1927 prevzela slovensko ime in priimek Marija Skušek, ves čas na ogled zbirka kitajskih predmetov, večinoma iz obdobja dinastije Qing. Zbirka je nastala v Pekingu, kamor je Ivan Skušek prispel leta 1914 in kjer je bil do leta 1917 vojni ujetnik, po izpustitvi pa jo je leta 1920 dal prepeljati v Ljubljano. Fotografije in filmski posnetki dokumentirajo, kako sta z ženo svoje zasebne sobe preuredila v razstavne prostore. Na komodi sta pred ogledalom razstavila izjemen aranžma kovinskih predmetov. Na vseh ljubljanskih lokacijah, kjer sta bivala, je v središču tega aranžmaja vedno stala ista jezna figurica: Vajrabhairava, Diamantni strašni.

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V članku preučujemo pomen tega budističnega božanstva v kontekstu budizma na Kitajskem. Analiziramo funkcijo in pomen komode, zlasti simboliko ogledala v povezavi s tantričnimi božanstvi iz skupine Yamāntaka, med katerimi Vajrabhairava zaseda najvišji položaj. Posebno pozornost namenjamo možnosti, da je bila dejanska kuratorka zbirke Marija Skušek, kar odpira vprašanje, ali je razpostavitev figuric odražala specifičen družbeno-religiozni koncept.

Ključne besede: Skuškova zbirka, dinastija Qing, Yamāntaka-Vajrabhairava, Yama, ogledalo, budizem.

Helena Motoh, Gašper Mithans
Videti Marijo in postati Marija: Kako je Tsuneko Kondō Kawase presegla verske in kulturne meje

Članek osvetljuje izjemno zgodbo o konverziji Japonke Tsuneko Kondō Kawase, ki je po krstu in poroki v Ljubljani leta 1927 postala Marija Skušek. V eni sami uri je bila v ljubljanski škofijski palači krščena, birmana in poročena, obenem pa sta bila krščena in birmana tudi njena dva otroka. Hitra konverzija in Tsunekine trditve o Marijinih prikazovanjih so pritegnile pozornost javnosti. Članek umešča njeno pričevanje v širši kontekst verske konverzije, vzpona pluralističnih prepričanj v pretežno katoliški družbi in družbenopolitičnega ozračja tistega časa. V središču njene pripovedi so videnja Marijine kronane podobe, zaznamovana z vplivi kitajskega katoliškega izročila in slovenske marijanske pobožnosti. Njena izkušnja razkriva zapletenost konverzij posameznikov iz neevropskih okolij in prilagodljivost, ki so jo izkazovali duhovniki ob soočanju z različnimi kulturnimi identitetami. Primer poudarja Tsunekino osebno angažiranost v procesu religijske transformacije, pri čemer se njena japonska in kitajska tradicija mešata s slovenskimi katoliškimi vplivi. Njena reinterpretacija Marijinih podob ponazarja, kako konvertiti s svojim razumevanjem verskih simbolov prispevajo k oblikovanju novih identitet. Zgodba Tsuneko kot osebe v tej specifični tranziciji osvetljuje prepletanje osebnih izkušenj in širših kulturnih prilagoditev v procesih konverzije. Pričujoča analiza bogati razumevanje pojava konverzij in poudarja pomen individualnih pripovedi pri raziskovanju tem vere, identitete in integracije, ki presega kulturne in zgodovinske meje.

Ključne besede: verska konverzija, Marijina prikazovanja, medkulturna identiteta, Tsuneko Kondō Kawase/Marija Skušek, medvojna Jugoslavija.

Marcus Moberg in Aleš Črnič
Religija, digitalni mediji in epidemija covida-19

V tem uvodnem članku v tematski sklop o religiji in digitalnih tehnologijah ob in po epidemiji covida-19 predstavljamo kratek oris soočanja predvsem krščanskih in islamskih religijskih skupnosti s hitro razvijajočimi se digitalnimi tehnologijami, potem strnjeno opišemo razvoj raziskovanja še relativno mladega področja religije in digitalnih medijev s pregledom temeljne literature in raziskav, pri čemer se posebej osredinimo na intenzivirano rabo digitalnih tehnologij, ki jo je med letoma 2020 in 2021 povzročila svetovna pandemija. Na koncu na kratko predstavimo še mednarodni raziskovalni projekt Religijske skupnosti v virtualni dobi, na katerem temelji predstavljeni tematski blok.

Ključne besede: Religija in digitalni mediji, covid-19, Rimskokatoliška cerkev, Islamska skupnost, Hare Krišna.

Katja Koren Ošljak
Mediatizacija religije in zamikanje religijskih avtoritet: netnografska raziskava digitalizacije izbranih slovenskih religijskih skupnosti med epidemijo

V okviru mednarodnega projekta Recovira je bil eden izmed raziskovalnih ciljev v Sloveniji mapiranje spletne prisotnosti treh religijskih skupnosti – Rimskokatoliške cerkve, Islamske skupnosti v RS in Skupnosti za zavest Krišne. Posebno pozornost smo namenili obdobju zaprtja javnega življenja v času epidemije, ko se je večina dejavnosti religijskih skupnosti iz sakralnih objektov premaknila na splet. Ker je bil naš raziskovalni interes spoznati različne aspekte digitalizacije teh skupnosti, smo se zbiranja podatkov lotili s pomočjo metode netnografije. Osrednji cilj opravljene študije je identifikacija digitalnih oz. digitaliziranih praks religijskih skupnosti v odnosu do religijskih avtoritet. Na ozadju občinstvenega razumevanja mediatizacije in analize digitalnih religijskih praks smo opazovali spremembe v razmerjih moči znotraj opazovanih religijskih skupnosti in prišli do treh ključnih sklepov: 1. prilagoditve religijskega vsakdana so v katoliški skupnosti povzročile napetosti glede možnosti sodelovanja pri religijskih dejavnostih zunaj cerkva in ustreznosti ukrepov ob epidemiji; 2. islamska skupnost je v času epidemije odpovedala večino religijskih dejavnosti in pozvala k ravnanju, skladnemu z ukrepi; 3. skupnost Hare Krišna je bila v času epidemije daleč najbolj aktivna s praksami

digitalizacije, ki so bile izrazito vključujoče naravnane. Ob tem pa smo identificirali tudi primera alternativnih religijskih avtoritet, ki sta se formirali s pomočjo digitalnih medijev.

Ključne besede: netnografija, digitalna etnografija, mediatizacija, religija, katoliška skupnost, islamska skupnost, skupnost za zavest Krišne.

Aleš Črnič, Taja Fortuna
»Vsi smo malo videli, da Bog tudi prek socialnih omrežij deluje«: vpliv intenzivirane rabe digitalnih tehnologij na izbrane slovenske religijske skupnosti

Prispevek predstavlja analizo intervjujev s predstavniki treh raznovrstnih slovenskih religijskih skupnosti, večinske Rimskokatoliške cerkve, ustaljene manjšinske Islamske skupnosti ter mlajše in manjše Skupnosti za zavest Krišne. Raziskava si prizadeva spoznati in čim bolje razumeti, kako so se skupnosti prilagodile zahtevnim izzivom epidemije koronavirusa covid-19, predvsem pa koliko in kako so si pri tem pomagale z digitalnimi tehnologijami ter kakšne začasne in dolgotrajnejše vplive je to imelo na religijsko življenje. Ugotavljamo, da je prisilna domestifikacija religijskega življenja močno intenzivirala rabo digitalnih tehnologij, vendar so med proučevanimi skupnostmi pomembne razlike. V splošnem se digitalne tehnologije niso izkazale kot nadomestek religijskih dejavnosti v živo, temveč večinoma kot zasilno orodje v izjemnih razmerah. Po koncu epidemije ostaja hibridna raba predvsem tistih digitalnih orodij, ki so komplementarna dejavnostim v živo.

Ključne besede: epidemija koronavirusa covid-19, digitalizacija, RKC, Islamska skupnost, Hare Krišna.

Petterson Brey
Sveto pismo in film: umetniško-literarne konvergence

Cilj razprave je osvetliti nekatere stične točke med svetopisemsko književnostjo in narativno strukturo sodobnega filma, ki je danes eden izmed najbolj dovršenih pripovednih medijev, in sicer skozi perspektivo Northropa Frya, ki hebrejsko Sveto pismo obravnava kot temeljno imaginacijo literarnih ideologij, ki so oblikovale zahodno misel. Teoretični okvir te raziskave se naslanja na dela strokovnjakov, kot so Robert Alter, Daniel Marguerat in Yvan Bourquin, Gary Yamasaki in David Bordwell. Kot poudarja Adele Berlin, so v pripovedih hebrejskega Svetega pisma

sporočila posredovana tako skozi obliko kot skozi vsebino besedila. Na podlagi te ideje želimo pokazati, da poleg tematskih vzporednic obstaja tudi metodološko ujemanje med pripovedno strukturo Svetega pisma in pripovednimi tehnikami sodobnega filma.

Ključne besede: Sveto pismo kot književnost, Sveto pismo in film, narativna analiza, sinhrona eksegeza, filmski scenariji.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS /
O AVTORJIH IN AVTORICAH

KLARA HRVATIN

Klara Hrvatin, PhD in Humanities, Osaka University, Japan, works as a lecturer and researcher at the Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her research focus is mainly on Japanese music and music aesthetics, the Sōgetsu art movement, cross-cultural research in music, ethnomusicology, cultural history and art-related topics. Currently, she is involved in a research project entitled *Orphaned Objects: Examining East Asian Objects outside Organised Collecting Practices in Slovenia* and the project *The life of the Skušek Collection: From Living Room to Virtual Museum*.

Klara Hrvatin, doktorica humanističnih znanosti univerze v Osaki, dela kot lektorica in raziskovalka na Oddelku za azijske študije Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani. Področja njenega raziskovalnega zanimanja vključujejo japonsko glasbo in glasbeno estetiko, japonska povojna umetniška gibanja, medkulturne raziskave na področjih glasbe, etnomuzikologije, kulturne zgodovine in umetnosti. Trenutno sodeluje pri projektu *Osiroteli predmeti: obravnava vzhodnoazijskih predmetov izven organiziranih zbirateljskih praks v slovenskem prostoru* in projektu *Življenje Skuškove zbirke: od dnevne sobe do virtualnega muzeja*.

GERALD KOZICZ

Gerald Kozicz is an architectural historian specialised in the art and architecture of Northern India and the Himalayan Regions. He has conducted five research projects funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). His present project, The Life of the Skušek Collection, is a bilateral collaboration with the Science and Research Centre Koper, the University of Ljubljana, and the Slovene Ethnographic Museum.

Gerald Kozicz je zgodovinar arhitekture, specializiran za umetnost in arhitekturo severne Indije in himalajskih regij. Doslej je uspešno izvedel že pet raziskovalnih projektov, podprtih s sredstvi Avstrijskega znanstvenega sklada (FWF). V svojem aktualnem bilateralnem projektu z naslovom Življenje Skuškove zbirke sodeluje z Znanstveno-raziskovalnim središčem Koper, Univerzo v Ljubljani in Slvoenskim etnografskim muzejem.

DI LUO

Di Luo is Chu-Niblack Assistant Professor of Art History and Architectural Studies at Connecticut College. She is a trained architect and teaches Asian art and architecture with a specific focus on China and Central Asia. Her interest spans from miniature architecture to urban design. The application of digital media for the documentation and representation of architectural spaces and forms through open-access 3D models is at the core of her interests.

Di Luo je docentka za umetnostno in arhitekturno zgodovino na Connecticut Collegeu, kjer je zaposlena pod pokroviteljstvom sklada Chu-Niblack. Kot diplomirana arhitektka poučuje azijsko umetnost in arhitekturo, pri čemer se posebej osredotoča na Kitajsko in osrednjo Azijo. Njeno raziskovalno delo obsega širok spekter tem, od miniaturne arhitekture do urbanizma, v središču njenega zanimanja pa je uporaba digitalnih medijev za dokumentiranje in predstavitev arhitekturnih prostorov in oblik s pomočjo prosto dostopnih tridimenzionalnih modelov.

HELENA MOTOH

Helena Motoh is a Senior Research Fellow at the Science and Research Centre Koper and an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She holds a degree in Sinology and Philosophy and a PhD in Philosophy. Her research focuses on Asian collections in Europe, the history of contacts between Europe and Asia, and intercultural philosophy.

Helena Motoh je višja znanstvena sodelavka Znanstveno-raziskovalnega središča Koper in docentka na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Ljubljani. Je diplomirana filozofinja in sinologinja ter doktorica filozofskih znanosti. Raziskovalno se ukvarja z azijskimi zbirkami v Evropi, zgodovino stikov med Evropo in Azijo ter medkulturno filozofijo.

GAŠPER MITHANS

Gašper Mithans is as a Senior Research Fellow at the Science and Research Centre Koper. He was a Fulbright Scholar at UC Berkeley in 2020. His research primarily focuses on the fields of the history of religions, religion-state relations, historical anthropology, and the history of interwar Slovenia and Yugoslavia, including the research topics of religious conversions and processes of atheisation.

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Gašper Mithans je višji znanstveni sodelavec Znanstveno-raziskovalnega središča Koper. Kot Fulbrightov štipendist je leta 2020 raziskoval na Univerzi v Kaliforniji, v Berkeleyju. Njegove raziskave se osredotočajo na zgodovino religij, odnose med državo in religijo, zgodovinsko antropologijo ter zgodovino Slovenije in Jugoslavije v obdobju med obema vojnama, ožje tematsko tudi na raziskovanje religijskih konverzij in procesov ateizacije.

MARCUS MOBERG

Marcus Moberg je profesor religiologije na Univerzi Åbo Akademi na Finskem in namestnik direktorja Centra raziskovalne odličnosti ÅAU (2024–2028) Religija in družbena izključenost (RelEx). Raziskuje, predava in mentorira predvsem na področjih sociologije religije, diskurzivnega proučevanja religije, religije, medijev in popularne kulture, religije in socialne izključenosti, religije in mladih odraslih ter religioloških metod in teorij.

Marcus Moberg is Professor of Religious Studies at the Åbo Akademi University and Vice-Director of the ÅAU Centre of Excellence in Research (2024-2028) titled »Religion and Social Exclusion (RelEx)«. He is a researcher, lecturer, and supervisor mainly in the areas of sociology of religion; discursive study of religion; religion, media, and popular culture; religion and social exclusion; religion and young adults; and method and theory within the field of religious studies.

ALEŠ ČRNIČ

Aleš Črnič je profesor religiologije na Fakulteti za družbene vede Univerze v Ljubljani. Raziskovalno se ukvarja predvsem z znanstvenim proučevanjem sodobnih religijskih dogajanj ter s teoretskimi in metodološkimi osnovami religiologije, o čemer tudi predava na vseh treh stopnjah univerzitetnega študija. Je prvi predsednik Slovenskega religiološkega društva, pobudnik in koordinator Regionalne religiološke mreže in urednik Knjižne zbirke Kult.

Aleš Črnič is Professor of Religious Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. His research interests are mainly focused on the scientific study of contemporary religious developments and the theoretical and methodological bases of religious studies. He also lectures on these subjects at all three levels of university studies. Črnič is the first president of the Slovenian Association for the Study of Religions, the initiator and coordinator of the Regional Religious Studies Network, and the editor of the Kult Book Series.

KATJA KOREN OŠLJAK

Katja Koren Ošljak is an assistant and researcher of communication and digital media at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Her research focuses on digital culture and the interrelations between (digital) media education and mediatisation. Since 2020, she has participated in several national and international research projects that among other explore digitisation of religious communities, media repertoires and digital maturity of young people, as well as processes of scientific collaboration and knowledge production. Her doctoral thesis deals with the reconceptualisation of media education in the context of mediatised childhood.

Katja Koren Ošljak je asistentka in raziskovalka komuniciranja in digitalnih medijev na Fakulteti za družbene vede Univerze v Ljubljani. Zanimata jo digitalna kultura in prepletanje med (digitalno) medijsko edukacijo in mediatizacijo. Od leta 2020 sodeluje v več nacionalnih in mednarodnih raziskovalnih projektih, ki med drugim proučujejo digitalizacijo religijskih skupnosti, medijske repertoarje in digitalno zrelost mladih ter procese znanstvenega sodelovanja in produkcije znanja. Njena doktorska disertacija obravnava rekonceptualizacijo medijske edukacije v kontekstu mediatiziranega otroštva.

TAJA FORTUNA

Taja Fortuna is a PhD student of Religious Studies and a Junior Research Fellow at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. Her research interests include the study of lived religion and popular religiosity in contemporary society, specifically relating to the cult of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico.

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PETTERSON BREY

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