Traces of the Virgin Mary

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská



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Photo: Virgin Mary and religious statues in the sanctuary of Medjugorje (Bosnia & Herzegovina, 2008), Source: Alamy Stock Photo (Image ID: C53XCD) Redesigned by © Matúš Hnát, 2019

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Traces of the Virgin Mary in Post-Communist Europe

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská ^{Ed.}



Content Content

06 10	Acknowledgments List of Figures		172	Figures	
16	01 Traces of the Virgin Mary in Post- Communist Europe https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.16-55	Tatiana Zachar Podolinská	204	07 Vision and Video. Marian Apparition, Spirituality and Popular Religion https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.204-233	Hubert Knoblauch Sabine Petschke
56	02 Sacred Sites Reinterpreted: New Age Phenomena at a Hungarian Marian Shrine https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.56-74	Judit Kis-Halas	234	08 Travelling Through the Battle Fields. The Cult of the Bogorodica in Serbian Tradition and Contemporary Times https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.234-249	Aleksandra Pavićević
76	03 Manifestations of Marian Devotion in the Czech Republic – the Past and Present https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.76-94	Markéta Holubová	250	09 The Worship of Mary in the Region of Asenovgrad (Central Southern Bulgaria): Sites, Rituals and Narratives https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.250-282	Vihra Baeva Albena Georgieva
96	04 The Reception of Recent Marian Apparitions in the Czech Republic in the Field of Popular Religiosity – Two Examples https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.96-125	Vojtěch Tutr	284	10 'From Periphery to the Centre': Private Apparition of the Virgin Mary (An In- depth Qualitative Analysis of the Apparition's Narrative with Field Journal Notes) https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.284-326	Tatiana Zachar Podolinská
126	05 Contemporary Models of Marian Discourse in Slovakia https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.126-151	Roman Kečka	328	11 The Marian Apparition of Seuca/ Szőkefalva in the Context of Religious and Ethnical Interferences https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.328-350	Lehel Peti
152	06 Marian Dedications within the Current Cultural Space of Slovakia https://doi.org/10.31577/2019.9788022417822.152-170	Juraj Majo	352 376 396 404	References Executive Summary About the Authors Index	

10 'From Periphery to the Centre': Private Apparition of the Virgin Mary (An In-depth Qualitative Analysis of the Apparition's Narrative with Field Journal Notes)

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská

The overall research dataset used for the purposes of this chapter is part of my ongoing research on Roma folk beliefs (2006–2007), as well as on the activities of both traditional and non-traditional religious movements among the Roma¹ in Slovakia (2003–2004, 2010–2011).

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In the framework of the previous outputs from this research, I have attempted to create, with some generalisation, a typology of the elements of traditional rural *Romani Christianity* in Slovakia, elucidating the phenomena of the cultural and ethnic reinterpretation of mainstream Christianity into a Roma cultural context² (Podolinská 2009). In particular, I pointed out the phenomenon of *inculturation* in which the 'White' Virgin Mary is culturally and ethnically 'transcripted' and 'translated' into the 'Chocolate Mary' which physically, mentally and spiritually fits better in this context and corresponds to the hopes and needs of the particular 'peripheral' ethnic community.³

What is interesting about apparitions is that they occur on the *periphery* not only from the geographical point of view (peripheries of cities, rural areas) but also at peripheral levels of society: the seers are mostly children or (illiterate) women from socially deprived backgrounds (Turner 1974). This chapter offers an in-depth qualitative analysis of narratives on private Marian apparitions of

a Romani woman living in a segregated Roma settlement in the Šariš region in the eastern part of Slovakia. The seer perfectly fits into the 'periphery' concept: she is an illiterate woman from a socially deprived settlement and is a member of the ethnically stigmatised community of Cigáni [Gypsies]. Her visions are private, and ever since they began to appear, she launched her struggle for collective and public recognition. The story of her apparition thus contains the well-known part of the path of other 'successful visionaries' - 'from periphery to centre' (i.e. from marginal private/individual apparition to central public/mass recognition). Since visions are 'cultural products' (Christian 1998) produced in the process of communication (Knoblauch 2009; Knoblauch and Schnettler 2018), they are not only embedded in a particular cultural context but also in the language and visual taste. 5 For every apparition, the crucial point is to achieve collective consensus and to attract masses. This is the way from private/individual apparition to public/collective acknowledgement. This is the way from 'periphery to the centre'. In our case, however, the seer was able to achieve recognition only within her own family. The response of the local Roma community to her apparitions is mostly negative. Quite interesting about this case is, that, according to her, she has support from the side of non-Roma local religious authorities. The struggle for collective consensus and an ethnic code are thus the most important themes of the analysed narrative on apparition.

The question arises as to whether 'Roma' is the best term to use since there are several ethnic groups in Slovakia (Rumungro, Wallachian Gypsies/Roma, Sintis) and it is questionable, whether the 'umbrella' term 'Roma' fits to cover all of them. Moreover, some 'Roma' prefer the ethnonym Cigáni and they use it in their daily-life communicative praxis as an emic auto-ethnonym. The word 'Cigáni' was used for centuries to designate separate, clearly defined ethnic communities with common origins, as a sort of umbrella term for a heterogeneous community (Marushiakova and Popov 2013: 62). However, in the Slovak context, the term 'Cigán/Cigáni' is considered to be a derogatory term since the verb form of Cigán is 'cigánit', which means to lie or to deceive. In order to prevent the usage of the pejorative ethnonym in public discourse, the newly coined term *Rómovia* [Roma] is currently being promoted as a neutral term. For this reason, I shall use the term Roma in this chapter to refer to my fieldwork within my exo-discourse. Nevertheless, I shall keep the original label Cigáni at those parts the transcript of the narrative on the apparition where it was used by the seer herself (within the endo-discourse) (for more details on Roma labelling see Podolinská 2017; Marushiakova and Popov 2018).

² For concept of Roma culture see Marushiakova and Popov 2016; for relations of ethnic and confessional consciousness of Roma see Marushiakova and Popov 1999.

³ For the 'Chocolate Mary' see Podolinská 2007, 2014.

⁴ This contribution is the output of the research project VEGA 2/0066/19 Patterns of Social Mobility of the Roma in the Light of Empirical Research. Critical Reflection on Existing Practices and Collection of New Data.

⁵ According to P. Bourdieu (1989) the *judgment of taste* in the late modernity has become a sensitive and very efficient mechanism of social classification. Taste classifies but it also classifies the classifier. It means that any aesthetic choices made contain double-edged information: about the object of choice and about its subject, and the latter refers to the social origin and position of the choice-maker.

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 10

The peripheral and deprived life situation of the seer is embedded into her visions. In her narrative, the attempt to achieve 'centrality' in a marginal position is central and the recognition theme is more frequent than the description of the apparition itself. In order to offer the reader a holistic picture of research situation, I use not only a qualitative analysis and thematic coding but also the perspective of *multi-vocal ethnography* (Tobin 1988; Clegg 2017). The interview is thus embedded in the synchronous context of field journal notes of the author, as well as in the diachronic context of her recent memories. The qualitative analysis is also placed in the wider context of the thematic search of media reports on local apparitions among Roma households in Eastern Slovakia.

Methodological Take-off: Thematic Analysis (TA) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

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When considering suitable methodology for analysing my field data, I was inspired by the thematic analysis (TA) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology. Drawing principally on Braun and Clarke's (2013, 2006) and Boyatzis' (1998) works, thematic analysis (TA) is concerned with the identification and analysis of patterns of meaning (themes) and constitutes a widely applicable, cost effective and flexible tool for exploratory research (Herzog et al. 2019). In its essence, TA consists of the analytical construction of: (a) codes, (b) themes in qualitative verbal expressions; as well as (c) patterns of recurrence, evaluation or association within these themes (Ibid.). This categorisation can be done *inductively*, aiming to generate new theory emerging from the data analysed (bottom-up), or *deductively*, testing theory (top-down) (Clarke and Braun 2014: 1948).

The author can choose various methods for coding (first-cycle and second-cycle coding). In this case, I chose the *affective methods* for first-cycle coding (Saldaña 2016: 124–143), which explore the subjective qualities of human experience (emotions, values, conflicts, judgements etc.) by directly acknowledging and naming those

experiences. According to Saldaña, they include (among others): (a) *emotion coding labels*: the emotion recalled or experienced (2016: 124–130, 293), and (b) *values coding* which assess a participant's integrated value, attitude, and belief systems (2016: 131–136; 298). In my qualitative analysis, I attempted to identify and describe both implicit and explicit ideas within the data (themes).

With respect to my research, I consider the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as the most productive and inspiring method. The approach is phenomenological in that it involves detailed examination of the participant's life-world; it attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual's personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself (Smith et al. 2009; Smith 2015). At the same time, IPA also emphasises that the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process (Smith and Osborn 2007). Finally, IPA is idiographic in its commitment to examining the detailed experience of each case in turn, prior to the move to more general claims (Smith 2015).

It can be summarised that while qualitative content analysis serves for a qualitative analysis of larger data set interviews (counted in hundreds) and TA for medium-sized and smaller data sets (counted in tens), IPA can also focus on very small sets of statements (up to ten) and be used for an in-depth analysis of even a single particular transcript of a narration, which is our case as well.

This paper offers a qualitative analysis of a single in-depth interview on a specific topic of a highly private and sensitive nature. My primary ambition was to accurately present, with the greatest detail possible, the context of narration about a particular apparition, including the narrator and author of this article herself in the context of the research and narration as such. While accepting the requirement for self-reflection and continuous consideration of the role of researcher in the context of the research, for this particular case, as a researcher, I consider myself an equal participant in the narration

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 10

(especially in its second part). The analytical data set therefore includes notes from my field journal, which I consider complementary to the transcript of the interview's audio recording. With regards to the background of this primary description, I shall later, during the primary and secondary analysis of inductively created thematic codes, outline the general thematic structure of the narration.

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Another important methodological decision was inspired by the critical remarks by Hollway and Jefferson (2000), who challenged the practice of coding data into fragmented text segments in order to make sense of it. They also stated that fragmentation results in neglect of the whole, whereas the entire interview is not only greater than the sum of its parts, but by 'immersion' in the whole, one gains understanding of the parts, rather than vice versa. For the purposes of this study, I therefore work with the (almost) entire transcript of the interview on the apparition and with the (almost) entire transcript of the extract from my field journal. That is why this chapter is longer compared to the rest of the contributions within the given volume. All sentences in the interview transcript and the thematic paragraphs are numbered. For the purposes of the subsequent indepth qualitative analysis, I worked with semantically coded parts of the interview and field journal transcript, respecting the original sequence of sections and sentences. The reader thus has a detailed idea about the sequence of the individual parts (up to the level of the sentence) and their positions against the whole.

Apparitions⁶ of the Virgin Mary and Jesus in Roma Settlements in (Eastern) Slovakia (Thematic Desk Research of Media Reports)⁷

As part of the wider context of the analysed narration, I offer here a brief thematic search of media reports, including an outline of their typical or common thematic elements. In recent years, thanks also to increased media interest, information on 'private apparitions' of the Virgin Mary and Jesus or of the image of the Holy Family not only at different locations with a higher concen-

tration of the Roma population, but also among the general population in Slovakia, have been made publicly available on the internet. It is important to mention the recorded apparitions that have taken place in Roma environments over the past ten years:8 the apparition of Jesus's silhouette on the plaster of the wall in a house in Hlinné (1997),9 the witnessing of Jesus's silhouette for two nights during a full moon in Šarišské Jastrabie (2009),10 the apparition of the Virgin Mary in the rings of a cut tree trunk, as seen by the Roma living at Pod Laščíkom (2009), 11 the recognition of Jesus's silhouette in the rings of the tree trunk in Čaklov (2010),12 the apparition of the image of Jesus, the Virgin Mary and of an angel on the glass door of a fireplace in Hencovce (2011), 13 the apparition of the Virgin Mary's silhouette on a wall outside a house in Handlová (2011),14 the apparition of Jesus's silhouette on the glass of an electric stove door in Batizovce (2016), 15 the apparition of Jesus on the glass of a stove door in Petrová (2018),16 the apparition of Jesus on a wall of a house in a Roma colony near the village of Zemplínska Teplica (2018), 17 the apparition of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary on a cupboard door in Turňa nad Bodvou (2018), 18 and the apparition of Christ and Satan on a furniture door in Moldava nad Bodvou (2019).19 The most recent apparition reported by the media is that of the Virgin Mary on a TV screen in July 2019. 20, 21 The media reports include the 'apparition of a demon' in Vyšná Kamenica (2011)²² and the apparition of a 'supernatural picture' of mysterious eyes in Čirč (2017).²³

Even though each of these apparitions has a different context, what is common for most of these apparitions is that they occurred in the intimate environment of their private households (wall of a house, furniture door, door of a stove or fireplace, TV screen) or in their immediate vicinity (wood logs in the house exterior). The objects where the apparitions appeared, in spite of their previous profane function, now became objects of worship and are no longer used for their original purpose. The cited media reports on the apparitions, despite being fragmentary with minimum qualitative statements, show certain common features or tendencies and common thematic elements:

292

- 6 The term 'apparition' used herein is taken from the emic vocabulary of press releases or the respondents themselves. While media releases report 'alleged apparitions' and are rather reserved about their 'authenticity', the respondents (witnesses, seers, etc.) are convinced of their authenticity, as suggested by the reports.
- Since qualitative or discoursive analysis of media reports on apparitions is not the subject of this study, they are not analysed in this text in detail, and only their thematic search with the summary of the basic thematic elements is presented here. For the sake of providing a wider context of the private apparition, the footnote contains selected quotes from the original media reports. The search of the reports is presented in chronological order. Direct speech is marked in italics, cut with an ellipsis. The names mentioned in the texts are shortened to capital letters. Statements with attributes, which are important for the summary of the thematic elements, are marked in bold.
- 8 From the discourse perspective, the parodical search of 'Roma apparitions' by an author from a non-Roma environment is interesting, see http://birdz.sk/torpedo08/blog/zahadne-zjavenia-v-osadach-cast-prva/177906-clanok.html, entitled Mysterious Apparitions in Settlements! Part One (this article was published under the subsection Thrilling Stories) (February 13, 2019; accessed on August 7, 2019).
- Ouring an August evening in 1997, two teenagers recognised Jesus's silhouette... on the wall of the house of Mr. B. in the Roma settlement in Hlinné. (...) The Church is reserved in such matters. I talked to both youngsters,... they are convinced that they really saw Christ, the local priest commented on the event. (...) The Roma from Hlinné and hundreds of tourists were coming to pray at the house for several weeks' (cited from https://www.pluska.sk/plus-7-dni/domov/10/video-jezis-rure-batizovciachzjavenie-romskej-osade-robi-majitelom-sporaka-problemy.html, November 1, 2016; accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 10 'In November 2009, the Roma from Šarišské Jastrabie saw Jesus. The settlers saw the silhouette of Jesus praying for two nights during a full moon. This happened in the evening of All Saints' Day. (...) - All of us saw him here. He had long black hair and was heading to the settlement,... (...) It is said that everyone in the settlement began to pray firmly and promised to do better' (cited from https://www.pluska.sk/ plus-7-dni/domov/10/video-jezis-rure-batizovciach-zjavenie-romskej-osade-robimajitelom-sporaka-problemy.html, November 1, 2016; accessed on August 7, 2019). A description of the event from another media report: 'We're happy that we've been visited by the Son of God, and we promise that we shall forever be good believers and that we shall only do good,... The day after the apparition, they went to see the local priest (...). - We were not taken seriously, telling us that it was nonsense. I know that the priest doesn't like us, the Roma, and that's why he didn't receive us. However, we're not afraid of God, because he's our love. We believe that he will come to see us again and that all of us will go to heaven. Both we and our children pray for it' (cited from https://www.cas. sk/clanok/137313/romovia-zo-sarisskeho-iastrabia-na-mesiaci-sme-videli-jezisa/. November 4, 2009; accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 11 'The Roma from Pod Laščíkom are convinced that the Virgin Mary appeared to them on cut willow logs. (...) I literally shuddered. When I found out what it was, I asked my friend, who was helping me, whether he saw anything. And he told me no. But I was convinced that it was an apparition. (...) The deacon of Stropkov J. Š. B. told us his opinion (...) I found around fifty people there, standing at a makeshift altar with two logs of rounded wood on top of it. There are darker spots in the middle of the logs (...). Some of

- them thought it to be the Virgin Mary or Lord Jesus (...). In my opinion, however, there are no supernatural interventions or apparitions...' (cited from http://www.espektrum.sk/index.php?text=1691-romovia-pod-lascikom-tvrdia-ze-sa-im-zjavila-panna-maria, August 9, 2009; accessed on August 7, 2019). Pod Laščíkom is part of the town of Stropkov, and is the oldest place of pilgrimage of the Virgin Mary of the Scapular in Slovakia. At the request of the local believers, Pope Clement IX acknowledged the Brotherhood of the St. Scapular of Stropkov with a special bull of May 11, 1669. Later, Pope Pius VII enabled the believers to obtain indulgences at this place of pilgrimage on the day of the celebrated feast (http://www.espektrum.sk/index.php?text=10938-odpustove-slavnosti-v-stropkove, accessed on August 10, 2019).
- 12 'In October 2010, an inhabitant of Čaklov spotted the face of Jesus among the rings of a tree that had been cut some time ago. The trunk was lying in the grass near the church, and since its discovery it has been **surrounded by praying Roma every day. The angry priest ordered them to go to church instead**' (cited from https://www.pluska.sk/plus-7-dni/domov/10/video-jezis-rure-batizovciach-zjavenie-romskej-osade-robi-majitelom-sporaka-problemy.html, November 1, 2016; accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 13 'In October 2011, a family from Hencovce near Vranov nad Toplou saw the image of the Holy Family. It appeared on the glass door of the fireplace at the moment they started a fire in it. (...) They were said to be blessed with this because they have a handicapped child. (...) However, the mayor of Hencovce... wiped off the picture and told them to see him when it appeared again' (cited from https://www.pluska.sk/plus-7-dni/domov/10/video-jezis-rure-batizovciach-zjavenie-romskej-osaderobi-majitelom-sporaka-problemy.html, November 1, 2016; for a You Tube video see https://youtu.be/RDSDWXUCMUE; both links accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 'HANDLOVÁ. The appearance on the wall of one of the houses caused quite a stir. The plaster created an image which the locals considered an apparition. They immediately brought candles and made an altar out of the electrical fuse box, to which they now come to pray. (...) I think the Virgin Mary appeared to us, but I don't know why it happened in our house (...). The figure looks like the picture we have at home, explained the 13-year-old M. Š. who discovered the appearance. (...). The people in the colony believe that the apparition would protect them from misfortune. M. hopes that it would scare all bad people away, those who steal here, drink alcohol and argue, her mother believes in the healing of her ill mother-in-law. (...) The citizens of Handlová decided to call the priest. We want him to come and see, and consecrate this place and build a chapel for us to pray (...). The deacon of Prievidza M. D. did not wish to comment on the apparition on the wall of the house in the colony' (cited from: https://myhornanitra.sme.sk/c/5976870/s-udajnym-zjavenim-chceli-niektoriobyvatelia-handlovej-obchodovat.html#ixzz5ndVc5c7y, July 13, 2011; accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 15 'Five years ago, a plaster demon caused a stir, as it miraculously appeared on the wall of a Roma house in Vyšná Kamenica. For the past months, the Roma of Batizovce have been worshipping the door of a stove on which Jesus appeared. Rumours of the apparition have even crossed the borders of Slovakia and the apparition has even been reported by the British. (...) Kneeling at the stove, the settlers recited prayers and believed that Jesus appeared to them in order to relieve them from misery. Some believe in the apparition, others are sceptical. (...) The people living in the settlement trust the apparition. It moved many of them

to tears. They believe that Jesus appeared to them in order to encourage them. (...) People were coming in crowds to the house in which the stove was situated. After some time, the mayor G. B. decided to take the stove door to his place. According to him, people began to trade with it. The local Roma would like to exhibit the door of the stove in the church' (The apparition was reported by TV Markíza; text cited from https://spis.korzar.sme.sk/c/20361478/batizovce-ozjaveni-jezisa-hovori-aj-svet. html, October 20, 2016; accessed on August 7, 2019. For another media report on the same apparition see https://www.pluska.sk/plus-7-dni/domov/10/video-jezis-rure-batizovciach-zjavenie-romskej-osade-robi-majitelom-sporaka-problemy.html, November 1, 2016; 2019), or https://www.mojevideo.sk/video/2846b/v_osade_sa_zjavil_jezis_na_sporaku_(slovensko).html, see also the extensive discussion on the article). All links accessed on August 7, 2019.

10

294

- 16 'In the municipality of Petrová in north-eastern Slovakia, people began to pray to a stove (...). The locals believe that it was an apparition and prayed in front of the stove until eight in the morning. (...) They placed statues of the Virgin Mary and a picture of Jesus on the stove, turning the kitchen into a prayer room. They no longer use the stove for cooking; according to the residents of the house, they want to find a more dignified place for the glass. However, the Orthodox priest calls for caution' (The event was reported by TV JOJ in its evening news programme, text cited from https://www.hlavnespravy.sk/osade-vychode-slovenska-saskle-kuchvnskei-rurv-udaine-ziavil-iezis-kristus-pravoslavny-knaz-obiasnilsituaciu/1512898, September 6, 2018). Video reportages available at https://www. mojevideo.sk/video/2e135/ zjavenie na sporaku.html and https://www.mojevideo. sk/video/2ff73/na_vychode_sa_v_sporaku_zjavil_jezis_kristus_na_kolenach_niekto. html). The media report titled Apparitions of the Saviour on the door of a stove have already been seen in two settlements also informs about the apparitions in Petrová and Batizovce: https://hornyzemplin.korzar.sme.sk/c/20909581/zjavenia-spasitelana-dverach-sporaka-videli-uz-v-dvoch-osadach.html#ixzz5vv5OjFII, September 9, 2018). (All links accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 17 'The Roma living in the colony near the municipality of Zemplínska Teplica in the district of Trebišov were allegedly witnesses to a miracle during the weekend. Jesus is reported to appear on the wall of one of their houses. The picture of Christ did not change for long, and the locals therefore began to pray regularly. Moreover, they say that there were some more apparitions. The inhabitants of the settlement spoke about the unusual situation to their mayor and their priest. ...And so I told them... that we are, of course, reserved about such situations, and asked them to wait a week or so, said the parish administrator I. Č. for TV JOJ' (October 9, 2018, Hlavné správy TV JOJ, cited from https://magazin.panobcan.sk/osadnici-hovoria-o-dalsom-zjavenina-stene-domu-udaine-videli-jezisa-krista/: accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 18 For the video reportage broadcasted by TV JOJ see https://www.mojevideo.sk/video/2d66f/modlia_sa_k_starej_skrini_(neveril_som).html (June 30, 2018; accessed on August 7, 2019).
- 19 For the video see https://www.mojevideo.sk/video/2ec9c/zjavenie_na_starej_skrini_opat_uraduje.html, (January 13, 2019). The media report on the video states: 'The faces of Jesus Christ and Satan appeared on a cupboard in Eastern Slovakia. (...)The family of H. from Moldava nad Bodvou asks the local priest for help. Even though they believe in miracles, they don't want to have them at home. The apparition is said to be related to the disease of their mother. (...).'

- 20 Citation from the media report entitled: Video: The Roma in Zborov say the Virgin Mary appeared to them. They say they have proof: '(...) The family was watching the MTV channel on a plasma television. The left half of the screen suddenly turned black and a strangely perfect female face appeared in the right half of the screen. The family and the people in the settlement considered it the **apparition of** the Virgin Mary(...). All of them discuss it excitedly, many of them cry or fall on their knees and pray earnestly. (...) Real apparition? (...) Warning for the settlement and the settlers to stop living as they do today, or the manifestation of the **protective hand** directly from heaven? Or just (...) a television failure?' (for the video footage broadcasted by TV Markíza see https://www.facebook.com/ TelevizneNoviny). The video footage was produced 10-15 mins after the apparition (12:40) by the film crew of Fluidum Film s.r.o. which was coincidentally shooting a documentary film *The Way Out* in Zborov, see YouTube https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=WDJVBBcBa8Y&feature=share. All links accessed on August 7, 2019. (I am thankful to my colleague Mgr. Tomáš Hrustič from the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology SAS for reminding me of this apparition.)
- 21 In less than a week from the initial broadcast of the original report, TV Markíza posted a report of 'explanation' on its FB profile: '(...) The settlers from Zborov near Bardejov thought that the face of Jesus's mother appeared on their television screen. (...) The viewers on the social network ... realised after the publishing of the report that it was no miracle, but just a paused music video from the Canadian singer known as The Weeknd.' (The video reportage is available at: http://www.tvnoviny.sk/zaujimavosti/1971251_zahadne-zjavenie-panny-marie-v-romskej-osade-sa-vysvetlilo-urcite-sa-zasmejete?fbclid=IwAR31ALP_KPh9ztyfgSAccnXuXQChw4LLk2 Fw6BG5kkRoGnV4y-N1DXFd8PQ#, accessed on August 7, 2019.)
- 'Slightly different was the apparition of the demon which scared the Roma from Vyšná Kamenica in November 2011. A monster with pointy ears, a dog mouth and cow eyes used to appear in the house of H., but only when the deaf-mute young man was in the room. As a hidden camera revealed, it was him who painted the demon. Musician T. H. set this humorous story in music, giving it an equally humorous title: Plaster Demon.' (Cited from https://www.pluska.sk/plus-7-dni/domov/10/video-jezis-rure-batizovciach-zjavenie-romskej-osade-robi-majitelom-sporaka-problemy. html, November 1, 2016; for the YouTube video see https://youtu.be/Aev662LXeXc). (All links accessed on August 7, 2019.)
- 23 The municipality of Čirč is an important place of pilgrimage for the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia. 'Back in 2017, TV JOJ broadcasted a report from the settlement next to the village of Čirč. Its inhabitants were said to have seen a supernatural image on their cottage. Ever since, the locals pray to avoid anything bad (...). This image appeared suddenly, which scared the owners of the house a lot. (...) They think it was an apparition and that someone wanted to tell them something, yet they do not know whether to expect good news or bad news (...).' The video reportage is available at and the text is cited from https://muzskysvet.sk/video-zahadny-ukaz-v-romskej-osade-vsetci-sa-boja-a-modlia/ (June 30, 2018; accessed on August 7, 2019).

(a) The interpretation of (unusual) events within the religious code: '...they are convinced of having seen Christ in real life' – media report (m. r.) Hlinné; 'The Roma from Pod Laščíkom are convinced...' – m. r. Laščík; 'The plaster created an image which the locals consider an apparition.' – m. r. Handlová; 'The locals believe it was an apparition,' – m. r. Batizovce;

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- (b) An ambivalent attitude to what the person has seen (joy and happiness, deep emotion, as well as confusion and fear): 'We're happy that God's Son came to visit us!' and 'But we're not afraid of God, because He's our love,' m. r. Šarišské Jastrabie; 'I literally shuddered,' m. r. Laščík; 'I think the Virgin Mary appeared to us, but I don't know why it happened in our house.' m. r. Handlová; 'It moved many of them to tears,' m. r. Batizovce; 'Though they believe in miracles, they don't want to have them at home.' m. r. Moldava nad Bodvou; '...many of them cry,' m. r. Zborov; 'Ever since, the locals pray to avoid anything bad.' and 'This image appeared suddenly, which scared the owners of the house a lot. (...) They think it was an apparition and that someone wanted to tell them something, yet they do not know whether to expect good news or bad news.' m. r. Čirč;
- (c) Spontaneous internal acceptation of the apparition (within the local Roma community): 'They immediately brought candles and made an altar on the electrical fuse box, to which they now come to pray.' m. r. Handlová; 'The people from the settlement trust in the apparition.' m. r. Batizovce;
- (d) Collective reaction and sharing of the apparition (improvised altars, places for prayer): 'The Roma from Hlinné and hundreds of tourists came to pray at the house for several weeks' m. r. Hlinné; 'It is said that all people in the settlement began to pray firmly.' m. r. Šarišské Jastrabie; '[deacon]: The trunk was lying in the grass near the church, and since its discovery it has been surrounded by praying Roma every day' m. r. Čaklov; 'Kneeling at the stove, the settlers recited prayers,' or 'People were coming in crowds to the house in which the stove was

- situated.' or '...prayed at the stove until eight in the morning,' and 'They placed statues of the Virgin Mary and a picture of Jesus on the stove, turning the kitchen into a prayer room.' m. r. Batizovce; '...the locals began to pray regularly,' m. r. Zemplínska Teplica; 'All of them discuss it excitedly, many of them cry or fall on their knees and pray earnestly.' m. r. Zborov;
- (e) Search for internal and external authorities to confirm authenticity (either of religious priest or non-religious nature mayor, media): 'When I found out what it was, I asked my friend who was helping me whether he saw anything.' m. r. Laščík; 'The citizens of Handlová decided to call the priest.' m. r. Handlová; 'The inhabitants of the settlement spoke about the unusual situation to their mayor and their priest.' m. r. Zemplínska Teplica; 'The family of H. from Moldava nad Bodvou has asked the local priest for help.' m. r. Moldava na Bodvou;
- (f) (Usually) a reserved or negative attitude from external authorities: 'The Church is reserved in such matters.' m. r. Hlinné; 'I know that the priest doesn't like us, the Roma, and that's why he didn't receive us,' m. r. Šarišské Jastrabie; [deacon] 'In my opinion, however, these are not supernatural interventions or apparitions...' m. r. Laščík; 'The angry priest ordered them to go to church instead.' m. r. Čaklov; 'However, the mayor of Hencovce... wiped off the picture and told them to see him when it appeared again.' m. r. Hencovce; 'The deacon of Prievidza M. D. did not wish to comment on the apparition on the wall of the house in the colony.' m. r. Handlová; 'However, the Orthodox priest calls for caution,' m. r. Batizovce; [parish administrator] 'And so I told them... that we are, of course, reserved about such situations, and asked them to wait a week or so.' m. r. Zemplínska Teplica;
- (g) Bach search for the causes of apparition (the motif of collective 'chosenness', as well as the state of poverty or illness of a concrete person): 'They were said to be blessed with this because they have a handicapped child.' m. r. Hencovce; '...believed that Jesus appeared to them in order to relieve them from their

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 10

misery.' – m. r. Batizovce; 'The apparition is said to be related to the disease of their mother.' – m. r. Moldava na Bodvou;

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- (h) Seeking the message of the apparition (protection of the people living in the village, healing of concrete persons): 'We believe that he will come to see us again and that all of us will go to heaven.' m. r. Šarišské Jastrabie; 'The people in the colony believe that the apparition would protect them from misfortune. M. hopes that it would scare all bad people away, –those who steal here, drink alcohol and argue, her mother believes in the healing of her ill mother-in-law.' m. r. Handlová; 'They believe that Jesus appeared to them in order to encourage them.' m. r. Batizovce;
- (i) Feeling of duty: (the tendency to set up an altar or a chapel at the place of the apparition or to search for a dignified place for the apparition medium): 'The local Roma would like to exhibit the door of the stove in the church.' m. r. Batizovce; 'We want him [the priest] to come and see, consecrate this place and build a chapel for us to pray.' m. r. Handlová; 'I [deacon] found around fifty people there, standing at a makeshift altar with two logs of rounded wood on top of it.' m. r. Laščík); as well as feelings of duty as a need to 'do better' collectively in the form of intensified faith and improved interpersonal relationships: '...they promised to do better' and '...we promise that we shall forever be good believers and that we shall only do good...' m. r. Šarišské Jastrabie;
- (j) The main 'apparition' is sometimes accompanied by accompanying apparitions or signs or other 'supernatural' phenomena, which is perceived by the eyewitnesses as confirmation of the authenticity of the apparition. 'Moreover, they say there were some more subsequent apparitions' m. r. Zemplínska Teplica. The media reports (in exceptional cases) also captured apparitions of demonic beings and of the Devil: 'Some see the lines of the Devil in the bottom right-hand corner' m. r. Zborov; 'The faces of Jesus Christ and Satan appeared on a cupboard in Eastern Slovakia.' m. r. Moldava nad Bodvou; '...the apparition of the demon which scared the Roma in November 2011,' m. r. Vyšná Kamenica.

Private Apparition of the Virgin Mary in Hermanovce Situational Context

In the following section, I shall describe the wider situational research context of the analysed narration on the apparition of the Virgin Mary based on my data corpus from the research on Roma religiousness in Eastern Slovakia in 2006 and 2007.24 I first visited Hermanovce in 2006. At that time, I was mapping the expressions of religiousness in Roma households, home altars, religious pictures, statues, their compositions, as well as domestic frescos of naive Roma and non-Roma painters. On this occasion, I encountered several private apparitions of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ among the local Roma (altogether eight stories of various length), which usually resulted in the creation of private family chapels or small altars, either directly within the house (at the place where the Virgin Mary appeared, Fig. 10.1 and Fig. 10.2), or on the house's façade (Fig. 10.3-10.6), or encouraged the locals to paint a picture (Fig.10.7) or build a chapel in the street in front of the house (Fig. 10.8a, b), or in the garden around the house (Fig. 10.9), or to create a statue or a cross (Fig. 10.10 and 10.11).

The encounters with the people who talked about the apparition of the Virgin Mary (or Jesus or God) were very different. However, the common feature for all of them was the ambivalent feelings of *chosenness* ('It was me whom She appeared to!', *fear* ('How would my family and my wider surroundings receive it?') and, at the same time, the *compulsive urge to share* the apparition with others by talking about it. The majority of the apparitions that I recorded resulted in some kind of duties for the persons chosen for/affected by the apparition – they were requested by the Virgin Mary or by Jesus to do something (erect a cross, build a chapel, missionary activities among the Roma, giving intensive testimony of faith, etc.). Some of them explicitly complained that Mary did not let them

²⁴ Mapped locations: Jarovnice, Svinia, Hermanovce, Abranovce, Žehňa, Uzovské Pekľany, Rokycany, Terňa, Vyšný Slivník, Furmanec, Raslavice, Muršov.

rest until they fulfilled her request (scaring people in dreams or in visions while awake).²⁵ However, not all narrators were willing to talk more widely about their apparitions with an unknown 'non-Roma' researcher. The problem was certainly multiplied by the assumed social distance and fear from rational rejection. Another factor seemed to be time – I would say that the more distant in time, the less emotional and briefer was the narration on the apparition.

As for the 'apparition at Hermanovce', it was the strongest encounter emotionally in which my role as researcher became part of the story at a certain point. In order to capture the story of the apparition in the form of narration as accurately and concisely as possible, I consider it appropriate to present my immediate feelings and the role I played in this situation as a researcher as well.

Field Journal Notes²⁶

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Situational Context (Ex-Post, from Researcher's Field Experience, Based on Memory)

My Field Journal was created on an on-going basis, every day after the completion of my 'field research', while staying in local lodging houses in Eastern Slovakia (i.e. not within Roma settlements where the field research was conducted). I made written records in a special notebook, and the length and nature of my daily records varied. In principle, I made note of everything I considered important, from information on the current participants and research sites, as well as recommendations for new participants and sites, statistical and factual data, captions for documentary pictures, up to coherent daily records of the research autopsy which contained mainly the situational contexts of the interviews as well as purely subjective observations and intimate personal emotions (Fig. 10.12).

Throughout my on-going research, I did not divide the text of my field journal in thematic sections. The thematic codes for the different parts of the text were created ex post, for the purposes of this study, and form part of the analysis in which my own records are treated as the subject of research. The text was coded by choosing a 'key word' for the given part/sentence of the records using the inductive method. When writing the field journal, I did not use any predefined code for thematic records. During the analysis itself, I decided to respect the given 'thematic' eclecticity of the record: we can thus find here codes of structural, descriptive, emotional, value-based or evaluative character (Saldaña 2016), as well as contextual and situational notes (capturing the change of topic, research situation or the reasons for interrupting an interview, etc.), which significantly complete the overall context of the interview).²⁷

Since the text itself is not too extensive, I have published it here in its original extent and wording, with minimum changes and shortening,²⁸ while changing the name of the location and the names of the persons in order to the maintain the anonymity of the site and of the narrator.

Thematic coding of extract from field journal in original sequence order:29

- (1) Overall impression
 Hermanovce. Very strong impression. Strong and bad.
- (2) Social and status asymmetries /situational context before the interview/

Kristína is a woman who is more-or-less my age, perhaps a bit older. However, what distinguishes us apart is our social status, skin colour and opportunities. I have my own bed and hot

^{25 &#}x27;It scared me until I created it [the chapel]' (male,71-years-old,Žehňa,2006).

²⁶ Freely recorded notes, published without 'self-censored' changes or modifications of the contents, with minimum shortening.

²⁷ From this point of view, it is almost 'verbatim transcript'.

²⁸ Text shortening is marked with (...).

²⁹ The contextual and situational notes are placed after the respective codes in /brackets with slashes/.

food several times a day. Kristína lives in a dilapidated hut with 12 people jammed into 6m². There are three beds in the house, one window covered with a plastic sheet and a trampled floor, which is covered with remnants of varicoloured linoleum seized from the dump. Kristína calls it 'my house'. Even my dog's pen is larger. There is no furniture here except for the strange bundles made of old curtains, hanging from the ceiling at various places. I couldn't see what was inside. I suppose it was clothes. Kristína offers me a place to sit on the bed next to one of the bundles, rocking a baby wrapped in a pillow on her knees. Before Kristína begins to talk, the bundle next to me moves. I realise that a child is inside. There are children everywhere. Children and flies. (...)

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- (3) Emotion evoked by the interview /interaction, interruption of the interview/
 - Kristína made me cry by singing a song about the Virgin Mary. I'm sitting there, listening, recording and feeling ashamed. Kristína's daughters-in-law picked up the 'bundles'. One of them takes the baby from Kristína's arms and breastfeeds it. The baby sucks on her breast, she sucks on a cigarette. The cigarette is being passed around. Some onlookers are coming in. They would sit there, babysit, listen to part of the story and leave. One of the daughters-in-law is watching me as I start to cry. I interrupt the recording. Kristína is kneeling on the floor, finishing a Roma song on Christ. Both of us are crying.
- (4) Emotion evoked by picture documentation /interaction with the result of the current external confirmation of the apparition/
 I'm photographing Kristína and the clay wall where the Virgin Mary appeared (Fig. 10.1), including the opposite one on which they saw a cross. When in total darkness, I take a picture of that wall with a flash, the lines of the cross appear on the shot on the camera's display. The camera is passed around, one can see on the display something reminiscent of a cross, Kristína is moved and crying.

(5) Thematic search and situational context of the interview recording, change of conversation topic /interaction and secondary intervention/
The daughter-in-law draws me aside; she wants to tell me something. 'Later' – I tell her. Kristína is talking about the local flood, 30 about the apparition of the Virgin Mary, about the pilgrimages and singing. Her husband comes in and joins our conversation about traditional customs. I realise that Kristína is like a filter that does not allow much ethnographically interesting information pass. Her daughter-in-law draws me aside again and explains that her child is in hospital and if they don't bring the money for child nutrition and diapers there, they would place the child in a children's home. I reached into my bag and took out all the money I had. It's all I have. I promise the daughter-in-law to drive her to the hospital. We need to go. It's Friday, the head of the department would not be there forever.

Kristína sees us off to the car, leading us towards the cross above her house, and then to the house of her sister who, just like Kristína, has a small wall 'chapel'.

As we arrive at the hospital, the daughter-in-law asks me for more money. When we find out that the child is not there (they 'put him in the children's home') and that I don't have any more money, we return. The daughter-in-law enters the house. Nobody is asking her anything. Her eyes tell them that she hasn't got more money. They look down and leave.

(6) Post scriptum of the story line /situational context after the end of the conversation/

Next to the white rosary, the medallion of the Virgin Mary of the Guadalupe is hanging on Kristína's neck, which I gave her as a gift in the morning. Kristína is cooking lunch for all her

³⁰ During my research in 2006, the respondents recalled huge floods in 1998, which affected several villages: Jarovnice, Terňa, Svinia, Hermanovce, Uzovské Pekľany, Rokycany. The floods caused human casualties in Jarovnice and Hermanovce (according to my notes from the Field Journal of 2006).

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 10

family. Washed potato peels from the previous week and a half package of pasta. She stirs this incredible mixture on an old, rusty stove and, in a relaxed manner, utters a question: 'I'll send someone to buy bread rolls and sausage for you, you haven't eaten since the morning, have you?!' – The Sun came up. God is far and high. For me, Kristína is God now.

On my way back from my research in the settlement a couple of hours later, I stop at Kristína's house to say good-bye. She's sitting on the doorstep of the run-down house of her father next to her house. Her father's spirit as a *mulo*³¹ set the house on fire, because they put cigarettes and matches in his hands when in the coffin. Ever since, they only put cigarettes.

Kristína is sitting on the charred doorstep. Her youngest son of around five years is sawing a big rafter. Kristína waves in the direction of the scorched part and shows me where she would have her new small 'chapel'. She explains to me that there is a shop in Prešov where I should buy a new statue of the Virgin Mary for her. In the street in front of her house, I obtain her blessing, also for my son. And she tells me to give her a call and send her a package with clothes for her children.

(7) Overall reflective emotion

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A very strong day. A very strong woman. Huge misery. The biggest one I've ever seen. People lie and steal, but they still reflect humanity so much. I can see in Kristína's eyes when she's lying, though I know that she has to lie; I admire her strength, it is the only active path, to do something, beg something for herself and for her children, surrounded by mud and flies and by

the children of her children. With a white rosary on her neck, she's standing on the doorstep of her 'house', knowing that she can rely only on the power of her eyes which would bring the young *Gadji*³² with a soft heart back to her and force her to fulfil all her requests."³³

Qualitative Analysis of the Transcript of the Interview about the Apparition in Original Sequential Order

Situational Context (Ex-Post, from Researcher Field Experience, Based on Memory)

The conversation with Kristína took place in her hut and lasted for about three hours, with a longer break because of my leaving for the hospital with her daughter-in-law. Kristína spoke very good Slovak (not the Šariš dialect), though she had a strong Šariš accent and not all the words were used in their correct grammatical form.³⁴ In her narration, from time to time she used words from the local Šariš dialect.³⁵ Some other members of her household were also present during the interview: her two daughters-in-law, Kristína's adult son, Kristína's husband, an older man (probably the father of her husband or of one of the daughters-in-law), two children aged three to five years, two babies and several children aged five to ten. The composition of the audience often changed as some of them were coming, others were leaving, yet nobody interrupted her, nor took over the initiative to speak, and they did

³¹ *Mulo* – a frequent motif of a revenant, a returning spirit of the dead, which can physically operate in this world (see, for example, Mann 1988, 1993). During my research at Roma sites, the 'mulos' could cause special bruises to the living survivors (fingerprints on the body, turning immediately yellow and green); their presence could be manifested by cold and by sitting on the bed at night. Some 'mulos' visited their surviving wives in a physical body and had more children with them (from the complex data set of 2006–2007, Dreveník 2006).

³² Gadži - Romani term for non-Roma woman.

³³ If I am to comment on my notes in the field journal from a diachronic and analytical perspective, I admit my great emotional engagement, as well as intense feelings of discomfort resulting from the considerable social asymmetry which was manifested, among other things, by my intense and spontaneous need for reciprocity and help to balance out (at least temporarily and situationally) this asymmetry in some way.

³⁴ The interview was conducted in Slovak language. The author's command of Romani language was insufficient to understand the details of the narrative in *Romanes* [Romani language]. It was Kristína who (automatically) chose the Slovak language for her narrative.

³⁵ The words from the local Šariš dialect are translated into English and < marked >.

not comment on what she was talking about. Her husband actively joined the end of the conversation, with Kristína intensively correcting some of his statements. The members of the household who did not join the conversation talked in Romani to each other.

When I informed Kristína about the topic of my research and asked for her consent to the recording and photographs, Kristína spontaneously approached the wall in her house where there was a manually modelled small wall chapel from clay with the statue of the Virgin Mary, decorated with artificial flowers (Fig. 10.2), and began talking about her apparition.

I did not direct the first part of the conversation. It was a free form of narration, into which I intervened only minimally in the form of occasional complementary or specifying questions. Kristína herself chose the meaningful themes of her narration and included supporting or explanatory comments and subthemes; from time to time, she returned to some points of her narration which she considered important.

The second part of the conversation had the character of a directed interview, where I used the opportunity to ask about the context or about the unclear sections of the previous part in greater detail. I numbered and coded the individual segments of her narration in the original transcript of the audio-recording in sequential order (1, 2, etc.) and, within them, I numbered each sentence (1.1., 1.2., etc.). Because of the limited length of this article, I present here only the first, free part of the narration in its original wording, which I shortened just a little. The second part of the conversation is presented in shortened form, while maintaining the thematic sections; the omitted sentences, marked with the respective sequential number of the section and sentence, are marked with three full-stops in a bracket, such as (...1.2...). The reader can thus obtain a fair view of the chronological and logical sequence of the original narration and an idea about the shortened parts of the individual sections. The text is shortened only where there were redundant parts of sections or sentences in terms of meaning.

The first part of the conversation in sequential order with the codes of the narrative parts³⁶

- (1) Vision = 'Apparition' 1.1. And so I had the Virgin Mary on this wall here 1.2. (A) And how it happened? 1.3. First, I had a vision there [on the wall] (...) [a female silhouette stepping out from the wall plaster].
- (2) Emotion (misunderstanding) + internal refusal (family) 2.1. I didn't know who it was. 2.2 My husband <physically removed> it.
- (3) Private acceptation of the apparition (without rational understanding) + reaction
 - 3.1. But my heart told me to put another (colour) there and to <paint the wall white>. 3.2 And so I tried to paint it white and restore it as it was before.
- (4) Calling an external authority, 37 external confirmation and external interpretation - re-apparition + ethnic code 4.1. And I called the White, 38 telling them what I've got at home.
 - 4.2 She ['the White'] said [it was] the Virgin Mary, whether we know at all what It is. 4.3 This is what she told [explained] me.
- (5) Accompanying apparitions + ethnic code 5.1. /K. shows another place in the house/. Here, I had Jesus. 5.2 One of the White saw it, not me. 5.3 There was a cross and <a rosary>.
- (6) External confirmation + reaction (praying) faith + ethnic code 6.1 So this is where the 'White Women' came to pray.
- (7) *Promise* = *duty* + *reaction* (small private chapel)

³⁶ In the transcripts. Kristína will sometimes be designated as K. The author's questions are marked with the sequential number of the section and sentence and are introduced with letter (A). The necessary author's explanatory notes are provided in [square brackets] directly in the text of the narration; the author's situational notes are set aside /in brackets with slashes/.

Meaning: from an external environment with respect to the Roma community.

When Kristina talked about the majority, the non-Roma population, she always referred to them as the 'White', i.e. she used a 'racial' discourse and bipolar classification of people on the ethnical/racial principle.

7.1 I promised to <build> a chapel here. 7.2 Because I had the apparition.

- (8) Disappearance of the apparition + emotion (regret)
 8.1 I had it for three months and then it disappeared. 8.2 I cried so much for [<Her, the Virgin Mary>], I cried a lot for <Her>.
- (9) External authorities external interpretation of the apparition's calling for missions among Roma faith + ethnic code + emotion (self-affirmation) + reaction (praying)
 9.1 And so I told the priest about what I had here, as well as to that woman [church sexton] who was coming here... 9.2 And she said that the Roma would get proof, that I should teach them to pray. 9.3 They don't want to turn to God. 9.4 And so I do pray, and I believe in the Lord God, the Virgin Mary, I believe...
- (10) Reaction (seeking for logical cause)
 10.1 And this happened after the flood. (...10.2...) 10.3 After the floods; five or six months later I had it here [on the wall].
- (11) Gradual apparition internal authority, internal confirmation and internal interpretation accompanying signs
 - 11.1 And I was thinking about what I saw, I can't read, write, and so I wrote a letter.
 - 11.2 Then it was written [on the wall]: 'Magdaléna, Maríja, Adam, Ježiš, Maríja' ('Magdalene, Mary, Adam, Jesus, Mary') was there, 'Alžbeta, Peter' ('Elisabeth, Peter')... 11.3 But I couldn't read, I asked my friend to read what was written there...
- (12) Impact of the apparition (fortune telling skills)
 - 12.1 And a friend of mine... asked me whether I can <foretell> something ...as a fortune teller. 12.2 I'm not a fortune teller(!) 12.3 So I told her the truth, that she has a boyfriend who <cheats on> her, that he's got another woman who buys <gifts> to her. 12.4. (A) And how were you able to tell it to her? 12.5 Just based

on what my heart told me... I don't know whether God is giving me such heart, but I don't know what... 12.6 (A) Did you have it before? 12.7 No, I didn't. 12.8 Just after I had this apparition.

(13) Impact of the apparition (stopping of the flood)

13.1 And when it <was raining> [reference to the flood], the Roma were running with their children, and I was running, too, and started to pray and talk to the Lord God in the heaven. 13.2 (A) How? 13.3 I couldn't see him, I just talked to heaven. 13.4 I was crying, telling him that there was enough of sacrifice, so that no more huts are destroyed, that these kids here are innocent. 13.5 And then it stopped! [raining]. 13.6 He listened to my pleas [God]. 13.7 (A) Did you hear some voice from heaven, or you were just praying? 13.8 No. I, I felt God was helping me. 13.9 And the Virgin Mary, too.

- (14) Impact of the apparition (miraculous healing)
 - 14.1 I was in hospital, with pneumonia. 14.2 They said I probably had tuberculosis. 14.3 I thought it was true, because the head of the department told me that. 14.4 I stayed at the pulmonary department for two days and it disappeared. (...14.5...) 14.6 I didn't have tuberculosis, there was some kind of pneumonia... I had a <X-ray>, and there was nothing at all.
- (15) Internal refusal of the apparition (by the Roma community) faith emotion (self-affirmation)

15.1 God gives me strength, and the Virgin Mary as well. 15.2 I thought I must not <cigániť>³9 (lie); when he comes down here, he would judge me; He or the Virgin Mary, that they can punish me! 15.3 I must speak truth! 15.4 Someone's laughing. 15.5 I say, you can laugh, I don't want to live with Satan, I want to live with the Lord God and the Virgin Mary. (...15.6...) 15.7 And I pray to the Virgin Mary. 15.8 (A) And what's the situation within the settlement? Why are they laughing at you? What do they believe in? 15.9 Well, they think I'm making that up when I tell the truth... (...15.10–14...) 15.15 I tell them, you can laugh, make laughter, but I believe in the Virgin Mary and in Lord Jesus, whatever you say...

³⁹ Here Kristína uses the verb for 'to lie' in Slovak cigánit, that has association with ethnonym Cigáni [Gypsy]. (She had various other option to use in this instance: klamat, nevraviet pravdu, šálit, zavádzat, podvádzať etc.)

The spontaneous introductory part of the narration on the apparition was followed by the second part of the conversation – a conducted interview. The numbering of the codes of part 2 of the conversation follows the numbering of part 1 of the transcript.

Part 2 of the conversation in sequential order with the codes of the narrative parts:⁴⁰

- (16) Praying to the Virgin Mary and Jesus + ethnic code (...16.1-3...) 16.4. Yes, I pray in Romani, and I also pray in your language. The Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary...
- (17) Impacts of the apparition (strengthening of personal faith)
 17.1 Before, I knew that God exists, but I didn't go after him,
 I didn't go. 17.2 It was just when there was the flood, I had that apparition, then (...17.3, 17.4...).
- (18) Flood

 18.1. (A) The flood occurred in 1998... 18.2 ...At that time, I already went after the Virgin Mary, and Lord Jesus.
- (19) Promise duty (chapel + 'conversion')
 19.1 I promised myself to place the chapel here, and I've had it here ever since, that chapel. 19.2 I must do my best and turn to Jesus...
- (20) Accompanying vision: the vision of the Virgin Mary at sleep
 20.1 It happened twice that the Virgin Mary woke me up from sleep: 'Come, the Virgin Mary is awaiting you!'
- (21) Emotion (fear) + ethnic code
 21.1. And I said in Romani: 'I'm afraid!' 21.2 'Me man darav, kaj man vičines!' [I'm afraid, where are you calling me to go?⁴¹] 21.3. And she told me, in your language: 'Don't be afraid,

- come!' 21.4 (A) Did you see her? 21.5 I did, while I was sleeping! (...21.6-9...).
- (22) Second vision, external authority and the mission to evangelise the Roma ('false belief') + ethnic code

 22.1 And then I had the dream for the second time... 21.2 [My daughter]... asked the woman in Pekl'any [non-Roma catechist] about what it means(?) 22.3 And she [the woman] said that I should teach the Roma to pray. 22.4 That she woke me up because she wanted me to convert the Roma. 22.5 But the Roma here don't want to believe. 22.6 They do believe, but I don't know how.
- (23) Chosenness and 'true faith'
 23.1 I do believe in it. 23.2 They pray only when they go get baptised. 23.4 But I pray anyway. 23.5 I have this rosary in my hand. (... 23.6...).
- (24) Intensification of religious experience: pilgrimages
 24.1. I was in Gaboltov,⁴² it's where the Virgin Mary appeared...
 (...24.2-6...) 24.7 I was in Litmanová.⁴³ 24.8 I was in Gaboltov.
 24.9 I was in Košice. 24.10 I was on a pilgrimage with the Roma from Jarovnice. 24.11 I often went after Jesus.
- (25) Description of the appearance of the Virgin Mary + ethnic code 25.1 (A) When you saw the Virgin Mary, what did She look like? Can you describe her? 25.2 Well, She looks like a Japanese

⁴⁰ The necessary author's explanatory notes are again put in [square brackets] directly in the text of the narration; the author's situational notes are put aside /using a bracket with a slash/; the interruption of the recording is marked with //pause//, adding a situational comment and a reference to the corresponding part with a more detailed description in the field journal; the omission of a set of subsequent sentences is marked as (...16.1-3...).

⁴¹ I thank Viktor Elšík from the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague,
Department of General Linguistics, for consultations and a correct transcript of the
Romani language.

⁴² The municipality of Gaboltov is situated in the north-eastern part of Slovakia, 15 km north-west from Bardejov, in the valley of the Kamenec stream, under a hill called Busov, close to the Polish border. It is the most important place of pilgrimage of the Košice Archdiocese. It was mentioned as a place of pilgrimage back in 1706 in connection with the picture of the *Virgin Mary of the Scapular*. Pilgrimages are currently held on the Saturday and Sunday following the holiday of the *Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*, i.e. after July 16 (for more details see http://www.putnickemiesta.sk/putnicke-miesta-na-slovensku/kosicka-arcidieceza/gaboltov/). Gaboltov is also known for Roma pilgrimages – its 27th year was held in 2019 (for more details see http://www.farnostpusovce.sk/aktuality/put-gaboltov-2019; both links accessed on August 10, 2019).

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 10

woman. 25.3 (A) A Japanese woman? How come? 25.4 She doesn't look like in the pictures. Her face is like yours. She's not white, she's almost like a Roma. She's beautiful, has black hair, [divided] on both sides, and her hair was tied back like this /K. showing her hair pulled up/. 25.5 (A) Does she have a bun? 25.6 Yes. 25.7 This is how her hair was tied. 25.8 She has straight hair. 25.9 And Jesus, Jesus has black hair, a short beard, he's <bearded> a bit, but he looks handsome /K. has a smile on her face and a subtle, satisfied expression/. 25.10 He has a narrow nose, he looks handsome... 25.11 (A) And what about his skin? What colour is it? 25.12 His skin is not as white as in the picture, his skin is not like that, that would be <false>, not even the Virgin Mary has such a face... (...25.13-16...) 25.17 If you saw the picture,... 25.18 The one placed on the ball. 25.19 This is how she looks like. 25.20 Her hair, her eyes, too. 25.21 But, for example, the photos I have, she doesn't look like that. (...25.22-24...) 25. 25 (A) And is she old or young? 25. 26 Young. 25.27 (A) And why a Japanese woman? Does she have slanted eyes, or why did you say that She's like a Japanese woman? 25.28 Her face is... how to explain it... 25.29 She has a round face, She has beautiful eyes with eyebrows, a beautiful nose, She has beautiful lips, Her skin is not white, She's like a Roma woman. 25.30 She's not White. 25.31 (A) And Jesus? 25.32 He's...darker... Or, for example, (...) it's not true that he had blue eyes. (...25.33, 34). 25.35 (A) And has She ever talked to you in Roma? 25.36 No. 25.37 I can't <cigánit'>

10

[lie]. 25.38 She doesn't look like that... 25.39 She had... a rounded crown. 25.40 And her veil was – white. 25.41 Around her face. 25.42 She had a coat. 25.43 (A) What colour? 25.44 I don't know. 25.45 She had something like a lace tied in her hand. 25.46 (A) And did She wear shoes? 25.47 No, I saw just half [of her body].

- (26) Internal refusal (reactions of the community) + ethnic code 26.1 The Roma saw it too! 26.2 (A) Here, on your wall? 26.3 Yes, they didn't want to believe me... 26.4 They said I <painted> the Virgin Mary. 26.5 I can't paint, I can do nothing. (...26. 6-13...) 26.14 This is what it looked like, it was her [the Virgin Mary], I have it here [the chapel and the statue of the Virgin Mary], She looked like this. 26.15 Her hair. 26.16 She held her coat, and her hand was here [lifted]. 26.17 ...this is how She's here until today... 26.18 (A) I can see, like this... I can see... 26.19 (A) And your next apparitions that you mentioned occurred there (?), those... letters...? 26.20 Well, I saw the numbers, I saw them, for example, here, ok? /K. is pointing at another place on the wall/. 26.21 I can't read, write. (...26.22-23...) 26.24 And then the White Woman came here, she saw a cross here /K. is pointing at another place on the wall/.26.25 You can see the cross here, here it is, faded, you can come here, look, the hands... 26.26 They were laughing at me, saying that I'm inventing stories and other similar things...//pause///I'm taking pictures of the wall, confirmation interaction, see thematic section (4) of the field journal/.
- (27) External (religious) authority external confirmation 27.1 (A) Did you tell it to the priest? (...27.2–3...) 27.4 He comes here often, he believes me. (...27.5...)
- $(28) Association\ with\ water/spring$

28.1 Well, the spring, if anything happens, here's the spring. 28.2 He said some water would run out from here. 28.3 (A) He said there's water? 28.4 Well, that She [the Virgin Mary] left something from herself here, her coat. 28.5 (A) I don't understand. This is what the priest told you? 28.6 Yes. 28.7 (A) That water would run out from that wall? 28.8 Yes. 28.9 If anything

in Post-Communist Europe

⁴³ On the Zvir mountain, located some 3.5 km from the village of Litmanová, in the district of Stará Ľubovňa, at an altitude of 820m, in the room of a log house which was owned by the family of Vasil Korčák, the Virgin Mary appeared several times from August 5, 1990, till August 8, 1995 (cited from http://horazvir.malcobcan.sk/, accessed on August 10, 2019). The main pilgrimage to the Zvir mountain is held annually on the eve of the first apparition (August 3-4). Litmanová is also related to the well-known – 'sun miracle', described by several pilgrims (the phenomenon of a rotating sun, appearance of several suns and other changes in the sun). The apparitions are being investigated by a special committee of the Greek-Catholic Archbishopric of Prešov, which has not confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions yet.

happens, water would run out of that wall... 28.9 (A) And does it happen sometimes that water runs out of that wall? 28.10 Not now. (...28.11-12...) 28.13 (A) So is it to come yet? 28.14 Yeah. 28.15 If anything happens, water will run out of here... that the spring is here. 28. This <small chapel> that I got consecrated and the Virgin Mary as well (...).

(29) Intensity of religious practice + ethnic code 29.1 (A) And do you go to church here? 29.2 I don't go now, because we have small kids, ... 29.3 And I have more kids, twelve. 29.4 ... I take care of them and pray in the evening. 29.5 (A) And the other Roma... do they go to church? 29.6 They would allow them in the church [the majority], ...but the Roma don't go.

(30) Local religious authority

(...29.7...).

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30.1 (A) How's the local priest? 30.2 Good (...30.3–6...) 30.7 (A) If you ask him, he would baptise as well as bury... 30.8 Yes. 30.9 He also comes here for teaching; he would sit here... I explained to him what I saw, I don't want to speak on behalf of other Roma... (...30.10–11...).

(31) External confirmation of the apparition – contact with another person who also had an apparition

31.1 And the one who was in Litmanová, Iveta,⁴⁴ she's called 'Maríja' (Mary) now. 31.2 She had it changed [her name] to 'Maríja'. 31.3 She was talking to the Virgin Mary. 31.4 As it appeared to her. 31.5 And nobody wanted to believe her either. 31.6 (A) That Iveta... is she here in the village? 31.7 Over there, in Litmanová.

(32) Duty arising from the apparition (chapel/church)
32.1 The one in that forest, the one who arranged the building of the church. 32.2 The Virgin Mary told her to make that chapel and the church.

(33) Water/Spring

33.1 This is where it starts [the spring in Litmanová], the water would stop when they stopped praying, the White Women are going there, the handicapped ones, where the cross is, one wouldn't even hear [the spring]. 33.2 She [Iveta] is a nun now.

- (34) External confirmation of authenticity of the apparition and accompanying apparitions to other persons emotion (regret) + ethnic code 34.1 (A) But is she a Roma or a non-Roma? 34.2 White. She's White. 34.3 She talked to Her [the Virgin Mary]. 34.4 ...she calls her 'Mum', [that] Iveta. 34.5 And she [Iveta]..., as I was telling her what I saw..., she took my hand: 'You've got mercy from the Lord!' 34.6 I started to cry, as I was right. 34.7 And the heaven opened to [the daughter] of my sister, and [Jesus] pointed at me and asked 'Do you know that woman?' 34.8 And she said 'Yes, it's my aunt'. 34.9 'And why don't you want to believe her?' (...34.10–13...) She, scared, it was five o'clock, knocked on my sister's door: 'Kristína, as she saw it, God was talking to me, ... that she's right about everything!' 34.12 And so my sister went to the church, and I had to tell it to the priest, the truth that I saw, ... and so I swore ... that I had seen it. (...34.13–17...).
- (35) Performing at the folklore festival in Detva
 (...35.1-7...) /K. is singing in Romani, then in Slovak, holding her left hand on the rosary that she has on her neck, she lifts her right hand and sings/ //pause// /strong emotion in both the narrator and the researcher, see section in the field journal (3)/.45
- (36) Chosenness by God, poverty emotion (regret) + interaction 36.1 I used to get <money>. (...36.2...) 36.2 And I was crying with those ten kids. 36.3 I let them eat one package of pasta, I stayed hungry. 36.4 And then it happened to me. 36.5 That I was chosen by God. 36.6 I didn't ask anything when someone came here,

⁴⁴ In Litmanová, the Virgin Mary appeared to the 11-years-old Iveta Korčáková and 13-year-old Katarína Česelková (cited from http://horazvir.malcobcan.sk/, accessed on August 10, 2019).

⁴⁵ At this point, my records in the field journal chronologically differs from the transcript of the interview.

the Germans came. (...36.7...) 36.8 They offered me to take it, the money, because they do believe in the Virgin Mary. (...36.9–16...) //pause// /we're crying together again; I give all the cash I have to the family, and I give to K. my silver pendant of the *Virgin of Guadalupe*, see thematic section of the field journal (5)/.

(37) Apparition of the Virgin Mary on a TV screen

10

316

37.1 And I told them [the neighbours] <po cigánsky> [in Gypsy language]: - 'Give me gruli <potatoes>, I'll give you flour!'46 37.2 He replied, he wouldn't. 37.3 As if God was telling me: - 'Look at the television!' /Another female voice confirms K.'s statement/: 37.4 She was stepping out of the screen! [the Virgin Mary] /K. continues/: 37.5 And the television <didn't work>. 37.6 Well, She [the Virgin Mary] stepped out [appeared] from the screen... /Since I don't understand at the given moment that they are referring to another apparition of the Virgin Mary, on a TV screen, unfortunately, I change the topic of the conversation by asking them about the local customs, and we wouldn't go back to the apparition again./ The situational post-scriptum is completed by the field journal (see thematic sections 5, 6 and 7).

In-depth Qualitative Analysis of the Narrative on the

Apparition (Based on a Field Journal, Researcher's Ex-Post Memories, and Both Parts of the Interview)

After we presented the coded transcripts of both parts of the conversation in sequential order, we can perform an in-depth qualitative analysis of the entire data set. What I consider an important situational moment is the fact that Kristína began talking about her apparition spontaneously, by herself, despite that this event happened around eight years ago. As for the formal structure, the narration did not follow the chronological order of the events, but began directly with the most important point in

terms of meaning – the most important apparition of the Virgin Mary, whereas Kristína used the past tense when talking about earlier or later phenomena related to the apparition or later accompanying apparitions.

Kristína perceived the apparition purely as 'something' very *individual and private*, veiled by a secret that she had not fully understood (and still does not understand) and which was a source of very *ambivalent feelings* of anxiety, fear, personal discomfort, as well as big personal satisfaction, joy, feeling of chosenness and religious fulfilment.

Instead of the term 'apparition', Kristína used the term 'vision', while distinguishing between the apparition of the Virgin Mary (using the personal pronoun 'it') from the very being of the Virgin Mary (using the personal pronoun 'She'). From a strictly chronological perspective, the – 'apparition' began after the flood in 1998, which caused massive damage and loss of lives, by the appearance of various signs, symbols, 'numbers' and 'letters' on different parts of the wall in Kristína's dwelling. Kristína emphasised several times that, at the beginning, she didn't know 'what it was about', and the way the apparition occurred scared her at first, bringing her and her entire family to *emotional stress*, as a result of which her husband destroyed the very first 'apparition' of the Virgin Mary on the wall. Besides the Virgin Mary, a cross and a rosary also appeared on another wall in her house. Here, Kristína later created a home chapel with her own hands.

In her narration, it is not a single 'apparition'; it is rather a *process of recurrent apparitions or revelations*, it is a series of appearing and disappearing effects of different nature which, however, have a tangible form, visible for other eyewitnesses as well. According to Kristína, with this they clearly prove the *live presence* of the Virgin Mary, Jesus as a divine person directly in situ, in various places of her dwelling. In addition, Kristína had two personal visions of the Virgin Mary in her dream. The apparition of the Virgin Mary on the TV screen was seen and testified by other eyewitnesses as well.

⁴⁶ Kristína, however, said this sentence in Slovak, not in *Romanes*, as she announced in the previous sentence.

Kristína perceived these various phenomena also as *symbolic messages* that she sought to understand. Since she did not always manage to do so by herself, and so for the interpretation and confirmation of the authenticity of the apparitions she first called the people from her internal environment (sister-in-law, husband, friend), as well as non-religious and religious authorities from the majoritarian environment (church sexton, catechist, local priest and others). She allowed the place of apparition of the Virgin Mary on the wall plaster in her dwelling to be consecrated, as well as the chapel with the statue of the Virgin Mary on that wall, which she built with her own hands.

What I consider symptomatic is that, in her narration, Kristína often used the *ethnic code* (altogether 11 times; $4\times$ in the first part and $7\times$ in the second part of the interview); in this sense, she regarded all the 'White' (the non-Roma) as a hierarchically superior authority for confirmation purposes vis- \acute{a} -vis the persons from her 'internal' (Roma) environment. An important moment in the narration with an ethnic character was when Kristína says that the Virgin Mary talks with her in Slovak, but Kristína replies in Romanes. Likewise, Kristína recites the 'prescribed prayers' – the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary47 – in Slovak, but she addresses the personal 'pleadings and thanks' to God in Romani.

One of the messages of the apparition, which was interpreted to her by the 'White' and which interpretation she accepted, was an appeal to personal evangelisation of the local Roma ('teach the local Roma to pray'). Her narration suggests certain *disillusion*, both because of the intensity of the religious experience of the local Roma and the *non-acceptance* of 'Her apparition' ('they're laughing at me'). As a *confirmation of the authenticity* 'of her apparition', Kristína emphasised several times during her narration that several 'White' believed in her apparition ('they came here to pray'). Another confirming element of her narration was the

accompanying apparitions in which God communicated with the members of her family, thus confirming the authenticity of her personal apparition of the Virgin Mary. She also felt relieved after the meeting with another seer [Iveta from Litmanová], who (indirectly) confirmed her apparition.

Extremely interesting is Kristína's detailed and ethnically tinged description of the appearance of the Virgin Mary and Jesus. With her description, which differs from commonly available representations, Kristína indirectly gives more meaning to her personal testimony and verifies it. In addition, Kristína's testimony indirectly suggests that the apparition brought to her certain exceptional skills of 'fortune telling' to other persons, attributing to it her miraculous healing from severe pneumonia, and she was also able to stop the torrential rain which threatened another flood. One of the main consequences was the intensification of her religious faith (participation at pilgrimages), as well as positive contacts with the majority.

Primary and Secondary Analysis as a Form of Discussion

As the inductively constructed codes in the first-cycle coding showed, Kristína's narration on the apparition is interwoven primarily with *emotions* (fear, confusion, joy, deep emotion, anxiety, chosenness, etc.), references to the *value system* (faith, fortune telling, miracles), and *attitudes* (confirmation of the apparition or its negation, calling the authorities, latent conflict with the local Roma). In this 'type of narration' (emotional in-depth detailed narration about a personal apparition), it appears to be effective to take for first-cycle coding (*affective methods* that investigate primarily emotions, values, conflicts, judgements, etc.) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences.

The frequency of representation of the different codes in the first part of the narration with respect to *emotion and values coding labels* (Saldaña 2016) is summarised in Table 1:

⁴⁷ At my request, Kristína was able to recite both prayers in Romanes.

Table 1

10

Code	Frequency
(APPARITIONS)	(7)
•the main apparition (2× + 1× disappearance)	3
•accompanying apparitions (Jesus, cross, rosary, letters)	4
(EMOTIONS)	(4)
·misunderstanding	1
•self-affirmation	2
•crying	1
(VALUES)	(7)
•fortune telling	1
•faith	4
·miraculous stopping of the flood	1
·miraculous healing	1
(ATTITUDES/RELATIONS)	(12)
•refusal (internal – community)	3
•acceptation/confirmation (internal - family)	2
•acceptation/confirmation (external)	5
•duty/promise	2

This first-level analysis suggests that the key moment of Kristína's spontaneous narration about the apparition was an attempt to recognise the authenticity of 'Her apparition' (10×). This theme was more frequent then the apparition topic itself (7×). Another key moment was a very strongly presented *ethnic code*. Kristína felt accepted more by 'external' authorities (the 'White') than by the internal members of her community (local Roma) (5× external acceptance vs. 3× internal refusal). The impact of the apparition on Kristina's life in terms of changing of her value system (intensification of her faith), but also the ability of fortune telling, miraculous healing and miraculous stopping of the flood are also

important thematic pillars of her narrative (7×). Emotions, surprisingly, were less present both in the first part of the narrative (4×) and in the second part of interview (3×). However, the power and intensity of these emotions should be stressed as still active and still able to evoke strong emotions not only of the narrator herself but also transmit the emotions to the audience. Besides emotions, values and attitudes, we could also search for relations, reactions and actions represented, for instance, by painting of the wall, praying (3×), inviting the internal authority (2×), asking for external interpretation (3×), asking for internal interpretation (2×), seeking for the reasons of the apparition etc.⁴⁸ If we, in the above-mentioned terms, have searched for a more general cumulative group of thematic codes mapping the forms of 'activism', it would result in quite a large group, counting 17 occurrences. This result would indicate an increase in the 'activity' of the visionary aimed at her immediate family members as well as at the local community as a direct impact of the apparition.

In connection with the methodological challenges that we face during qualitative research and subsequent analyses, I considered it necessary and methodologically beneficial to present, in the most transparent manner, not only my source material, but also the partial ways of reasoning. This concerns mainly the presentation of the way of creation of the codes, the sequential order of sections and sentences, the marking of shortened text and the explanation of the situational context, including accompanying interruptions of the conversation. In view of the above, I would still like to attempt to draw possible a generalisation in the form of a very simple second-level analysis, 49 arranging the inductively created codes of both parts into a framework thematic structure.

⁴⁸ The listed occurrences refer to the first part of the narrative.

⁴⁹ At this point, second-level analyses of different types could be performed (e.g. based on the frequency of occurrence, or the state of emotion or attitudes, sequential analysis of the associative order of thematic elements, etc.).

Series of codes from both parts of the interview (spontaneous narration about the apparition) in the original sequential order: (1) vision = apparition; (2) emotion (misunderstanding) + internal refusal of the family; (3) private acceptance of the apparition (without rational understanding) + reaction; (4) calling an external authority,50 external confirmation and external interpretation) - re-apparition + ethnic code; (5) accompanying apparitions + ethnic code; (6) external confirmation – reaction – faith + ethnic code; (7) promise = duty + reaction; (8) disappearance of the apparition + emotion (regret); (9) external authority - external interpretation by a religious authority - faith + ethnic code + emotion (self-affirmation) + reaction; (10) reaction (logical seeking of the cause); (11) sequence of apparitions - internal authority, internal confirmation and internal interpretation - accompanying signs; (12) impact of apparition (fortune telling skills); (13) impact of apparition (stopping the flood); (14) impact of apparition (miraculous healing); (15) internal refusal of the apparition (by the community of the local Roma) + emotion (self-affirmation); (16) praying to the Virgin Mary and Jesus + ethnic code; (17) impacts of the apparition (intensification of personal faith); (18) flood as the cause; (19) promise = duty (chapel + 'conversion'), (20) accompanying vision of the Virgin Mary during sleep; (21) emotion (fear) + ethnic code; (22) second vision, external authority and mission to evangelise the Roma ('false faith') + ethnic code; (23) chosenness and 'true faith', (24) intensification of the religious experience: pilgrimage; (25) description of the appearance of the Virgin Mary + ethnic code; (26) negative reactions of the community + ethnic code; (27) external religious authority - external confirmation; (28) association with water/spring; (29) intensity of religious practicing + ethnic code; (30) local religious authority; (31) external confirmation - contact with another person who also had experienced an apparition; (32) duty (chapel); (33) water/spring; (34) external confirmation of apparition and accompanying apparition

to other persons + emotion + ethnic code; (35) performance at a folk-lore festival in Detva; (36) chosenness by God, poverty + emotion –interaction; (37) apparition of the Virgin Mary on a TV screen.

If, apart from the codes created during first-cycle coding, we take into consideration the situational context and the researcher's notes in the field journal (past) as well as the memories, experiences and feelings of the researcher (present), we can attempt to create, as a part of secondary analysis, a thematic structure arranged in a (causally) logical and chronological order:

- 1. Origin and course of the apparition:
 - 1.1 Uncommon phenomenon and its interpretation through the religious code = apparition;
 - 1.2. Apparition as an unstable process (accompanying apparitions and signs, disappearance and re-appearance);
 - 1.3. Description of the apparition based on the ethnic code (as part of the confirmation of authenticity): detailed description of the 'actual' appearance.
- $2. \ \ \textit{Attitude towards the apparition: acceptance/refusal/indifference:}$
 - 2.1 Acceptance of the apparition as a process;
 - 2.2. Different levels of acceptance of the apparition: individual, family, internal community, wider environment;
 - 2.3 The motive of refusal to recognise authenticity (at different levels);
 - 2.4 The need to confirm the authenticity of the apparition: internal (family, community) and external authorities (priest, mayor, media, majority), while also using ethnic coding (the 'White' vs. the 'Roma')
- 3. Emotions:
 - 3.1. Apparition as a source of strong ambivalent emotions (joy, fear, chosenness, exclusion, strong emotion, etc.);
- 4. Cause of the apparition:
 - 4.1. Seeking the (logical) causes of the apparition (private, family, community, etc.);
- 5. An attempt to understand the message of the apparition
- 6. Apparition as a duty (promise):

⁵⁰ From the external environment with regard to the Roma community.

6.1 Testimony about the apparition; the duty to create a chapel, the duty to evangelise the Roma;

- 7. Impacts of the apparition (indirect confirmation):
 - 7.1 Other apparitions, miraculous phenomena, miraculous abilities, miraculous healing, change of behaviour, intensification of the religious experience;
 - 7.2 Association with water (spring) which (according to K.) would burst out from beneath the statue of the Virgin Mary during the next apparition.⁵¹

From my point of view, it is remarkable that this outline of the key topics of the analysed narration on the apparition corresponds to a certain extent to the outlined key topics from the thematic search of media reports about the apparition - see thematic elements (a) to (j), all of them of a later date than Kristína's narration.

I believe that this working outline can serve in the future for a potential TA or IPA analysis of a major data corpus of qualitative narrations about apparitions (both within Roma and non-Roma environments). In such case, it would certainly be very interesting to observe the use of ethnic coding depending on the ethnicity of the narrator. The outlines of the primary and secondary analysis that I briefly presented in the introductory part of this paper as a form of auto-reflection are subjective, and I am fully aware of their arbitrariness. 52 I therefore publish them in the Discussion part. More widely valid themes and conclusions can be drawn only by comparing a larger number of interviews.

Conclusions

During my research conducted in 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2011, I encountered several private apparitions of the Virgin Mary among the Roma in Eastern Slovakia. I should like to note that each apparition or narration about an apparition is a separate story that even the narrator hardly understands sometimes. At times, it looks as if 'the apparition appeared over and over again' by means of the narration as such. The narration generates in the narrator a certain mood and emotions that can be observed not only in the speech intonation, but also in the body position or changes in facial features (kneeling, making the sign of the cross, clasping of hands into prayer, visual contact with the place of apparition, crying or, on the contrary, clearing up and refinement of facial features). I often encountered feelings of fear and burden as well, which were evoked in the affected persons and their families by the apparition. Therefore, an apparition is not a single act; it is rather a multi-dimensional phenomenon interwoven with emotions and able to evoke both in the eyewitnesses and in the audience strong emotions linked to religious expressions.

For me as the author, the encounter with the people who talked about their personal 'apparitions' directly at the place of the apparition, was a big emotional challenge. I faced an equally large challenge when making the decision on how to write about my research on these apparitions. I finally chose to present to the reader the most faithful descriptions possible at the different levels of capturing of the situation without attempting to 'integrate' them (too much) into a compact and coherent picture, re-arranged by my optic and logic. Besides qualitative analysis, it was my aim to present as many source data as possible, including the context, and to disclose also the steps and methods I used for my interpretation. I leave the story open ended. I hope that the reader has enough background information to create his or her own picture and conclusions.

In my subjective understanding, this particular chapter is a sample case of the fate of the majority of individual/private

⁵¹ The inclusion of the water element (bursting out of the spring) into the sub-themes is questionable. During the conducted interview. I did not manage to fully understand how water associates with Kristína's apparition of the Virgin Mary. It is based on her narration about the spring in Litmanová, where she was on a pilgrimage and which she describes as purifying (they pray next to the spring, water would stop and then start to run, washing away all their sins).

⁵² As mentioned in Herzog et al. (2019: 5), a qualitative analysis 'requires a relatively large degree of individual judgement', that is way they stressed 'the importance of being transparent ad clearly explaining the methodological and analytical decisions made'.

apparitions. Not every apparition is 'successful'. Not every seer achieves public recognition and collective consensus, and not every apparition has the power to move masses. According to Kristína, she was not successful on her private way from 'periphery to the centre'. At least for this failure, she does not blame herself. She somehow understands that the apparition is not just a 'thing from heaven', but also a 'thing in the world'. It is existing and interacting in a mundane world as not only mediated and communicated through the personality of seer, but also radically dependent on, transformed and reshaped through the ears and lenses of the auditory, within which groups and institutions play the most important role. Kristína perfectly understands that, first of all, the acceptance of the apparition depends on the openness and willingness of the given community (or broader society) to listen to her, to accept her story as a true apparition and her as a true seer. What Kristína does not know is that the process of recognition of apparitions is connected with the politics of the religious ready-made event, as it reappears instrumentally in time, which is also anchored in propagation, the liberal use of the event's formatting and reformatting and strategical interests of the elites and institutions. In this context, Kristína has at least achieved the position of 'marginal centrality' and received recognition in the eyes of her family and some local non-Roma religious specialist. I do count myself into this 'marginal circle' and as such I felt I owed Kristína to give voice to her.



Fig. 8.1



Fig. 8.2

- Fig. 8.1 Recent welcoming of the Three-Handed Theotocos icon in Kalenic Monastery, Serbia, 2009; personal archives of the author (personal archives of A. Pavićević).
- Fig. 8.2 Icon of the Theotokos Tricherousa (Three-handed) which appears to be one of the most important icons in Serbian
- → popular and church tradition and history (personal archives of A. Pavićević).





Fig. 10.1



Fig. 10.2

- Fig. 10.1 Place of apparition of the Virgin Mary on the wall inside Kristína's house, Hermanovce (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).
- Fig. 10.2 Kristína's chapel of the Virgin Mary inside her house, Hermanovce (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).

Fig. 10.3 Private chapel on the façade of a family house, Žehňa (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).

194 Aleksandra Pavićević Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 195



Fig. 10.5



Fig. 10.4





Fig. 10.7

- Fig. 10.4 Private chapel on the façade of a family house, Žehňa (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).
- Fig. 10.5 Painting of the Virgin Mary on the plaster of a panel house, Svinia. Text under the painting: EVE. MARY OUR ONLY
- → MOTHER (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).

- Fig. 10.6 Painting of the Virgin Mary on the façade of a private house, Raslavice (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).
- Fig. 10.7 Uzovské Pekľany (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).







Fig. 10.8b



Fig. 10.9

- Fig. 10.8 Chapels serving for public purposes in the streets of the Roma part of the village, built by Roma as a result of private apparitions:
- (a) Abranovce;
- (b) Vyšný Furmanec -Slivník (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská. 2006).
- Fig. 10.9 Private chapel in the garden of a house, Abranovce (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).



Fig. 10.10



Fig. 10.11

Rolzeany Word 29.8. Obrem Terni mi Dal Daniel Eina hyp na Robery. Vhaj je du hoper malib. Tale dam v abook, napriel dandu odelia diam. Klasha allo sed ober wad. Tasku a fotak for perpedet idem ra dymom a westor un i mladon Rombon porabla pleon sa subuyo Rieha. Vyrera pe so tier vylion. * Romba sa mode sa so unou da do reci. a ut ideme a domu do domu. Posobil tre wins maliar Janho Verel. Dre jeho mally urpornám ro Brianj. "Kapista" z debshi ko domora. Namerdálne berlomore. I domosh je milo mijde obiskor a

* Zaplavy majú shoro všade: Jarovnice, Terita, Hermanovec, Svinia, Krontie Petitay, Robjeaj Ale obele boli len + Jacomi ciach a Himanovino

Fig. 10.12

Fig. 10.10 Statue of the Virgin Mary and Jesus with Roma facial features, Jarovnice. (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006.)

Fig. 10.11 Cross before the village of Svinia, built after the apparition (cut by an axe and a pocket knife) (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2006).

Fig. 10.12 Sample of the field diary from the author's research in 2006 (photo by T. Zachar Podolinská, 2019).

198 Tatiana Zachar Podolinská Tatiana Zachar Podolinská 199

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Executive Summary

01 ZACHAR PODOLINSKÁ, Tatiana

Traces of the Mary in Post-Communist Europe

The Virgin Mary as such cannot be examined scientifically. We can, however, examine her 'apparitions' in the world, as well as the innumerable variants of Marian devotion and cult. This volume focuses on her manifestations in the post-Communist region with some geographical spillovers. It is either because post-Communist transformation concerned not only the former socialist countries, but also had an impact on the entire European region and was part of the overall post-modern and post-Communist reconfiguration of the European area. Another factor is that Marian worship is not controlled by political borders of present-day nation states. It has a wider transnational potential and impact. Nevertheless, we focused our viewfinder primarily on the post-Communist region, as we believe that thanks to its geographical and symbolic location and economic position in Europe, as well as its historical roots and traditions and common Communist history and heritage, it not only shows different traits of modernity compared to 'Western Europe', but we also face specific features and forms of worshipping of the Virgin Mary. We therefore decided to present in this volume the traces of the Virgin Mary by means of more in-depth analyses from selected countries of the post-socialist region.

By means of this publication, we can observe how the Virgin Mary is manifested in the faces of seers and pilgrims and how audio-visual means are becoming a direct part of Marian apparitions in Germany in the modern era (H. Knoblauch and S. Petschke); how she speaks through the mouth of a blind Roma woman and pacifies the ethnic and religious tensions between various groups in Romania (L. Peti); how she attributes meaning to meaningless places on the map by reallocating her presence through the geographical and time distribution of Marian dedications in Slovakia (J. Majo); how, after the fall of Communism, she revitalises the old places of her cult with new power, bringing together traditional

and non-traditional forms of worship in the secular Czech Lands (M. Holubová); how her messages are spread on the websites of new non-traditional Marian movements and how their apocalyptical warnings are being updated and localised into the specific national environment in Czechia (V. Tutr); how she addresses the readers of Marian literature differently on the shelves of bookstores in Slovakia and Austria (R. Kečka); but also how the Virgin Mary absorbs ultra-modern millennial and spiritualistic concepts of Mother Earth and Mother of the Universe, becoming the speaker of the great unified Hungarian nation (J. Kis-Halas); how she is becoming the re-discovered herald of Serbian national identity (A. Pavićević); how she absorbs the local forms of faith and folk Christianity in modern era and is thus the manifestation of grassroot Christianity and local religious culture in Bulgaria (V. Baeva and A. Georgieva); and how the path from a private to an officially recognised apparition depends not only on the Virgin Mary and the seer, but also on the overall constellation of the audience and the ability to offer a religious ready-made event (T. Zachar Podolinská and L. Peti).

This publication observes the current diversity of the forms of Marian devotion in post-Communist countries through different national and geographically defined contours and, in particular, the ability of the Virgin Mary to satisfy the hunger for modern spirituality and authentic religiousness, give voice to unofficial and popular religions, revitalise and redefine old places of cult and add new ones, appease war conflicts, speak out on behalf of nations and marginalised ethnic groups, and guard national and conservative values. The post-modern and post-Communist Mary thus restores ruptured traditions with love, and enchants the violently atheised European region with new miracles and apparitions, regardless of whether top Church and state representatives like it or not.

02 KIS-HALAS, Judit

Sacred Sites Reinterpreted: New Age Phenomena at a Hungarian Marian Shrine

Marian shrines were always the sites of miraculous healings and spectacular apparitions. Nowadays, they have also become the crystallisation points of the New Age phenomena. Several studies have already pointed out this trend with regard to popular pilgrimage destinations. As far as the Hungarian Marian shrines are concerned, none of them have been systematically examined from this perspective. This chapter aims to provide a deeper insight of how a Marian shrine is being re-orchestrated as a specific 'power place' in the context of alternative spiritualities, such as New Age religiosity or ethno-paganism at one Marian shrine at Máriagyűd.

From the wide-ranging New Age phenomena and religious practices that the author observed during the past decades at Máriagyűd, she chose the prominent example of an esoteric group called Magyar MAGoh [Hungarian Seeds], which deals with diverse religious and healing activities. Their programmes include shamanic drumming sessions, tours to 'sacred sites' in Hungary and the Carpathian Basin (mostly Romania), weekend meditations, esoteric workshops, readings on the history and culture of the ancient Hungarians, such as direct kinship between the Hungarians and the Huns, or the identification of the Ancient Hungarians with the Scythians, or the Hungarian origins of the Christian Father God. In accordance with the millennial narrative, they use the elements of the alternative history of the Hungarians as well as other motifs which recall UFO-religions and ET-spiritualities, and last but not least, the idea of healing and cleansing as the basic means leading to universal well-being. The description of their unique rituals and other religious practices is followed by an analysis of the discourse on the contested authority of the shrine.

The author of the chapter focuses on the role of the Virgin Mary within their discourse. She found it interesting that Mary

is connected with the so-called Boldogasszony (literally [Blessed Woman]), which is a special Hungarian denomination of the Virgin Mary and, at the same time, the alleged goddess of the ancient Hungarians. 'Boldogasszony' has been used as a synonym for the Blessed Virgin Mary since the Middle Ages (cf. Madas 2002). The quest for a lost epic and a missing mythology of the Hungarians, which was inspired by national romanticism, resulted in the term gaining an ethnic taste by the end of the 19th century. 'Boldogasszony' was the most emblematic female figure of the pantheon in the re-invented Ancient Hungarian religion - the Mother Goddess (Kálmány 1885). With regard to its contemporary use, 'Boldogasszony' is also interpreted as the Hungarian equivalent of the Goddess (Bowman 2009), and is also considered Mother Earth (Gaia) and the galactic patroness of all Hungarians par excellence. The author put the manifold interpretations of the Virgin Mary's figure in the centre of attention, highlighting the Catholic Church's standpoint on the emergence of New Age spirituality at Catholic devotional places.

03 HOLUBOVÁ, Markéta

Manifestations of Marian Devotion in the Czech Republic the Past and Present

According to the author of the chapter, Marian devotion in the Czech Republic should be seen not only in the light of recent highly secularised climate of Czech society. For the current dislike for official Catholicism and de-Christianisation of Czech society, we have to go back in history. In the 19th century, Czechs became liberals, nationalists or socialists. At the same time, religion ceased to play its former role and was assigned only the role of an occasionally sought-after, yet unnecessary 'folklore' anachronism, typical for village population. Religious identity was substituted primarily by national identity, as well as by class identity and a 'scientific' worldview. The rise of the Communist dictatorship after 1948 bolstered these trends and used them – mostly unmod-

ified – for its own benefit. The non-religious and anti-religious components were accentuated, while the forms of 'implicit religiosity' stayed preserved and Church organisations were forced to face systematic repression. The years 1989 and 1990 brought about radical changes in the political and spiritual history of the Czech Republic. Religion lost its principal enemy – Communism. Innumerable forms of religiosity appeared, from versions of classical and modern Christianity to the spiritual schools of the Far East.

In this context, it is very interesting that the worshiping of the Virgin Mary has remained virtually unchanged. Just like in the past, emphasis is placed today on spirituality and emotional experience, thereby fulfilling the main conditions for survival in the modern era de facto. In addition to the traditional forms of cult and pilgrimage rituals, there are also new forms of religiosity brought about by the 21st century, especially in abundantly visited places of pilgrimage. Due to the widespread use of the internet and e-mail communication, after centuries of pilgrimage tradition, there is for the first time no need to receive the written *votum* personally or even in representation. After 1989, visits to Czech and foreign places of pilgrimage began to appear in the catalogues of many travelling agencies. Also, bike pilgrimages represent a very popular form among young people.

On the other hand, it can be also mentioned, that despite the strong Marian tradition, the general public and as well as the religious discourse on Marian devotion connected to private apparitions in the Czech Republic is at a certain point 'marginal'. This can have two principal reasons. Firstly, the import of apparitions is caused by the absence of such apparitions at home. Secondly, the import of greater movements and groups represents a reaction to the delay of the Communist era and a smaller membership of believers.

04 TUTR, Vojtěch

The Reception of Recent Marian Apparitions in the Czech Republic in the Field of Popular Religiosity - Two Examples

Marian apparitions have always emerged throughout the history of the Catholic Church. However, they have never been given a lot of attention and have never met with so much public acceptance as has been seen since the latter half of the 19th century. The development of *mass communication* and increasing population *mobility* have partly contributed to this phenomenon. These apparitions have a new function – providing *public messages*. The Virgin Mary is no longer speaking only to the visionary; she is pronouncing prophecies and messages to all believers, laying claims to the hierarchy.

This chapter offers a comparative analysis of two examples of 'popular religiosity' in the Czech Republic as a spontaneous religious activity produced and operated by their charismatic leaders and opinion-makers: *Vérité* centre founded by František Mráček and *Mariánské nakladatelství* [MANA, Marian publishers] founded by František Press in Brno. Both cases are based on modern Marian apparitions and are contextualised in the current global situation and in the Czech Republic. According to the author, this goes hand in hand with the trend of modernisation and the era of mass communication.

Marian devotion plays a central role in both studied cases and is crucial for understanding the portraying her as the *Loving Mother* and *Hope of the Mankind*, as well as the *Guardian of the World* coming as the (last) *Living Warning* before the expected global catastrophe. The apocalyptic, chiliastic and millennial tone presented by both interpreters of modern Marian apparitions is being explored as well. The main issue in both cases is the expectation of the *end of the current world* order. This element was certainly activated by the approaching end of the millennium. Even though this stimulation of thoughts on the end of the world is now out of play, the charismatic leaders flexibly postponed their prediction in this re-

gard and, according to them, we should expect some global threat in the future, the outbreak of WWIII, nuclear or ecological catastrophes, globalisation or total control by means of information technologies.

Another nodal point is the reference to *globalisation* as an instrument of Satan's rule over the unified world. According to the author, both studied cases are examples of modern adaptation of Christianity to the post-modern religious landscape of post-socialist Czech Republic and represent a form of *popular religiosity* which is transformed and adapted to the context of modern society and 'Western culture'.

05 KEČKA, Roman

Contemporary Models of Marian Discourse in Slovakia

According to the 2001 census, the majority of Slovakia's population statistically follows the Catholic confession of Roman or Byzantine rites. In both rites, the Marian devotion has a considerable place in religious reflection and spirituality. This study explores the religious discourse of the Marian devotion as it appears in available books and booklets on this topic. The main focus of the chapter is a comparison of the Marian discourse in Slovakia (representing a post-socialist country) and the Marian discourse in neighbouring Austria (representing a 'Western' country with no socialist history). For this purpose, a sample of Mariological reflections and spiritual texts was created based on their availability in all Catholic bookstores in the capital of Slovakia (Bratislava) and the capital of Austria (Vienna). The reason for this choice is that these bookstores offer books that mirror the living intellectual and religious brainstorming and reflect Christianity, in particularly the pattern of the Marian discourse of the recent decades in both countries. The study comments on the absence of modern Marian literature in Slovak bookstores. The author also analyses the Marian vocabulary and topics in the both samples. The author distinguishes three existing models of the Marian discourse in

Slovakia, all of traditional origin, portraying Mary as an unselfish and patient mother, Mary loving conditionally and restraining God's anger; Mary leading the legions against Satan and crushing his head. All three models are based on the traditional images of Mary and, within the Christian communities, are not understood as contradictory, but complementary.

Compared to Western Christianity, the Marian discourse in Slovakia lacks two recurrent models: (1) the progressive 20th/21st century model, and (2) the traditionalist and fundamentalist model. The first model has created a Marian vocabulary and contents representing a self-confident, social and communicative model of Mary. This model presents an alternative to the old models combining mild or triumphant vocabulary with mild or triumphant contents. The second model which is absent among Slovak believers is the Marian discourse of the traditionalist and fundamentalist groups of each age tolerated by official Church structures. These traditionalist and fundamentalist groups return to the old Marian vocabulary and contents that is triumphant, militant and - in this modern version - has an offensive character. This form of discourse, created as a reaction to progressive Christian groups - did not emerge in Slovakia, since there were no progressive Christian movements.

Based on the research of the author, the Slovak Marian reflection and spirituality result from traditional beliefs, having no affinity to Western progressive and traditionalist models. In this regard, it can be stated that Slovakia's isolation from the European spiritual development, which has caused traditional devotion to be fixed in its forms, is, paradoxically, continuing also after the fall of Communism in the era of religious freedom. The comparative discoursive analysis of Mariological literature in Slovakia and its Western neighbour – Austria has showed that the Slovak religious landscape is far more traditional (but not traditionalist) than the current trends in the 'Western' religious discourse.

06 MAJO, Juraj

Marian Dedications within the Current Cultural Space of Slovakia

Cultural geography (as the main field in geography with no connection to religion) is strongly influenced by constructivist approaches today. Geographer Doreen Masey wrote in 2010 (Massey 2010: 107) that space is always being made and always, therefore, in a sense, unfinished. The 'always' is rather that there are always connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction, or not, potential links which may never be established. Loose ends and ongoing stories. With these ideas she perfectly outlined the relationship of space, time, and social world. In the field of religious identity and its expression it indicates not just variability of its representations but can also work as a hub to the local projections of identity interactions and how this space is formed within local actors and local circumstances.

All interactions within the various scales forms two paradigms of how place and space can be analysed – as politics and poetics of space. If the cult of the Virgin Mary prevails within the Catholic religious practice, then the poetics and politics of space can have vast forms of expression and impacts. This chapter attempts to outline the spatiality of this cult represented in dedications of sacred buildings, and open up questions on forming such distributions and regional specificities in Slovakia.

Research on the spatial aspects of dedications of sacred buildings provide interesting intersections of relations between sacred and profane as well as various levels of research resulting in a relationship between the 'politics' and 'poetics' of place. This chapter introduces such relationship within cultural geography. Although this approach is fully applicable in local or regional research, we have outlined the spatial aspects of the cult of the Virgin Mary as embodied in the dedication of sacred buildings, introducing the differences in the types of such dedication within regional and denominational aspects (such as Roman and Byzantine Catholics).

The link between time and space is observed in living as well as obliterated dedications, which helps us understand in a very broad sense the dynamics of construction and maintenance of sacred space and the projections of initiatives at various levels of political administration with an impact on the poetics of space and community.

Research on the spatial distribution of dedications in Slovakia is still a little explored field, even though the extensive data sources are relatively high in quality and quantity and enable the interpretation of different relations in various scales. In the context of important dedications, it is the Marian ones that have a significant position in church life and are the most common ones, reflecting the intensity of the worship of the Virgin Mary within the Slovak environment. The research also indicates that the importance and popularity of Marian dedications are accompanied by great diversity with growth over time. It also reflects on the background based on social changes, such as the extinction of the Kingdom of Hungary, the declaration of Our Lady of Sorrows as the patron of Slovakia, etc.

07 KNOBLAUCH, Hubert - PETSCHKE, Sabine Vision and Video. Marian Apparition, Spirituality and Popular Religion

The chapter demonstrates that *spirituality* and *popular religiosity* are built into the Marian apparitions, thus turning them into a contemporary 'modern' phenomenon. The study refers to a series of apparitions which happened during 1999 in Marpingen, a German village close to the Western border with France. This village was the setting for a series of Marian apparitions back in the 19th century. These earlier apparitions have recently been subjected to a very thorough study by British historian David Blackbourn (1993). Whereas Blackbourn based his analysis on written documents mostly stored in archives, the authors had not only access to written documents, newspapers and books, but also the

exceptional chance to collect video-tape records from the event, and they could also rely on audio-taped statements by the seers. These data, supported by ethnographic field data, are subject to a fine-grained video-analysis provided in the chapter.

In Marpingen, it was Marion who began to have visions on May 17 and 20 near the chapel (built by the above-mentioned association) where the earlier apparitions had happened. Thereafter, the three women together had various apparitions near the chapel, mostly in the company of an increasing number of pilgrims. The sixth apparitions on June 13, 1999, was already witnessed by about 4,000 visitors, and on the ninth day of the apparitions, on July 18, 12,000 visitors turned up. The final apparitions were said to be attended by 30,000. As a hundred years before, the incident not only attracted masses, there was also some turmoil accompanying the apparitions: television stations turned up and reported critically on the event, the Church prohibited any proclamation by the seers, the seers were threatened and, finally, the village administration and the chapel association got into a conflict.

The authors pointed out that when talking about the apparition, we must be aware of the fact that this notion refers not only to a subjective experience by the seers. In order to become an apparition, it needs to be communicated. The communication of the apparition does not only draw on the verbalisation by which the apparition is being reported, i.e. reconstructed. In addition, the apparition is also being performed by the body of the seers who form part of the setting which includes the visitors in relation to the seers and the spatial constellations of other objects. Thus, the authors interpret apparition as a *communicative performance of religious action*.

However, the verbalisation of the cited vision is not, as in other cases, reconstructed *after* the vision. On the contrary, the seer (Marion) talks into a dictograph which is held by another visionary – Judith – while having the vision. In this way, the apparition is turned into a *live report*. It may be no accident that this kind of

live report is not directly addressed to the live audience. Rather, it is recorded so to be accessible to a larger media audience via audio tapes, transcripts of the visions and a number of books based on these reports. According to Auslander (1999: 39ff.), it is the 'technological and aesthetic contamination of live performance'. The authors noted that the media are not only added to the event but are imparted in the event to such a degree that they transform it into something different. Thus, the use of the dictograph results in a format of the 'live report' on the inner visions. The microphone allows coordinating the actions of the seers with those of the crowd – a phenomenon that was virtually impossible at earlier apparitions.

According to the authors, the Marian movement is not only a static remnant of earlier periods but also a form of modern expression against rationality and secularism. The Marian apparition in question, according to the authors, is an example for the modernity of this form of religion by exhibiting the essential features of popular religion. It is not that religion has changed its contents: it is still the realm of the transcendent as the subject matter of religion. However, this subject matter is not an element of cognitive or moral belief; it is something to be experienced subjectively, the reasserting subject being the major instance and locus of religiosity. This way, the analysis of Marian apparitions is a case for the thesis of the modernity of religion and a case that demonstrates what is modern about religion.

08 PAVIĆEVIĆ, Aleksandra

Travelling through the Battle Fields. The Cult of the Bogorodica in Serbian Tradition and Contemporary Times

The chapter deals with the role of the Virgin Mary in the nationstate building process in Serbia. The beginning of the process of religious revival in Serbia coincided with the beginning of the social, economic and political crisis in the former Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, which took place at the beginning of the 1990s. There was an urgent need to find *new collective identity*, since the earlier had been reduced to rubble. At the *individual level*, this process primarily implied increased participation in rites within the life cycle of an individual (baptism, wedding, and funeral), followed by popularisation of the practice of celebrating family's patron saint days and, only in the end and on the smallest scale, by an increase in the number of believers taking an active part in regular church services.

On the *collective level*, the traditional closeness of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serb people and the state was the basic paradigm of such restructuring. The attempt to establish continuity with the tradition of the medieval Serb state, which implied active participation of the Church in both social and political matters, as well as the grafting of this relationship in the secular state and civil society in Serbia at the end of the second millennium, turned out to be a multi-tiered issue (Jevtić 1997).

At mass celebrations, as well as at revolutionary street protest rallies (which were plentiful in the capital during the last dozen years or so) and at celebrations of the town's patron saint days and various festivities, the image of the 'Bogorodica' [Gr. 'Theotokos', i.e. The Mother of God]; appears. Leading the processional walks of the towns, it emerges as a symbol which manages to mobilise the nation with its fullness and multi-layered meaning. The main thesis of the chapter is to explain the historical roots of her cult and her embeddedness in the national history and identity in Serbia.

The cult of the 'Bogorodica' has always had greater importance on the macro than on the micro level. This is corroborated by the fact that a relatively small number of families celebrated some of the 'Bogorodica' holidays as their Patron St Day, while a large number of monasteries and churches, as well as village Patron St Days were dedicated to one of them (Grujić 1985: 436). On the other hand, some authors believe that, with the acceptance of Christianity, it was the cult of the 'Bogorodica' which was the most developed

among the Serb population, because her main and most widely recognisable epithet *Baba*, connected to giving birth, was directly associated with the powerful female pagan divinities such as the Great Mother, Grandmother etc. (Petrović 2001: 55; Čajkanović 1994a: 339). In the folk perception, the 'Presveta Bogorodica' [The Most Holy Mother of God] is unambiguously connected to the phenomenon and process of birth-giving and, that is why, barren women most frequently addressed the 'Bogorodica' for assistance.

The observance of the image of the 'Bogorodica' was specifically connected with the so-called *miracle icons*, that is, her paintings linked to some miraculous event, either locally or generally. This was most frequently related to the icons which were famous for discharging myrrh, as well as icons which would 'cry' in certain situations, as well as those that changed the place of residence in a miraculous manner.

The use of icons in wars, either those of conquest or defensive, appears to be a widely spread practice in the Orthodox world. It was noted that Serb noblemen carried standards with images of various saints to wars, and that the cities were frequently placed under the protection of certain icons. The author shows how, travelling through towns and battlefields, throughout the decades and centuries, the 'Bogorodica' appeared through its holy image at the end of the second millennium as the protectress, advocate, Pointer of the Way and foster mother of those who were, possibly more than ever, in need of miracles and waymarks.

09 BAEVA, Vihra - GEORGIEVA, Albena The Worship of Mary in the Region of Asenovgrad (Central Southern Bulgaria): Sites, Rituals and Narratives

The chapter presents Marian worship in one of its specific local manifestations – the cult to the Virgin in the region of Asenovgrad, Central Southern Bulgaria. The fact that it is the most representative example of the vital and well-developed Marian cult within present-day Bulgaria, as well as authors' long-term fieldwork

in the region (started 1996), influenced the choice of Asenovgrad as the focus of their attention. The methodological framework is based on the concept of local religion (Christian 1989: 3), reformulated by the authors into the concepts of local religiosity and local religious culture. The local Marian cult in Asenovgrad region is used as an example of how to understand this local and cultural embeddedness of religiosity, presented via (1) devotional sites and the images belonging to them (in this case, miracle-working icons of the Virgin); (2) local feasts and ritual practices; and (3) local and personal religious narratives. The authors regard places, rituals and narratives as basic elements which complement, influence and support each another, constituting a complex system of local religious culture. Following this pattern, the authors pinpointed for their analysis the three most important places of Marian worship in the region: the Dormition of Mary Monastery of Bachkovo, the Annunciation of Mary Church in Asenovgrad, and the Dormition of Mary Church in Gorni Voden. Besides the contextual information, the authors also focused on a more intimate, individual dimension of Marian worship, exploring the presence of the Virgin in personal narratives about miraculous recoveries, dreams, visions, etc. and delineating the connection between individual experience and cultural background. According to the authors, the local worship of Mary in Asenovgrad region is a brilliant example of the ways in which local religiosity exists and develops in the intersection of universal religion and local traditions, folklore and cultural specificities. On the local level, the general Christian figure of the Virgin acquires characteristic features, associated with her motherly aspect and her quality of a divine patroness and immediate helper in every need. Her intercession is achieved by means of sacred intermediaries that have the power to connect the common devotee with the celestial power: holy places, miracle-working icons, springs and caves. Apart from the well-known Marian feasts, idiosyncratic local holidays are observed, too, and the related ritual actions span from the canonical to the folkloric

and 'magical'. Specific symbols, such as the apple, the water, and the fish, come to the fore as a material representation of Mary's sacred power and assistance. Local and personal narratives add a private, sometimes even intimate aspect to the Marian devotion, binding the universal sacred figure of the Virgin with the history and geography of the local community, as well as with the individual life trajectories of the believers.

10 ZACHAR PODOLINSKÁ, Tatiana

'From Periphery to the Centre': Private Apparition of the Virgin Mary (An In-depth Qualitative Analysis of the Apparition's Narrative with Field Journal Notes)

The overall research dataset used for the purposes of this chapter is part of ongoing research of the author on Roma folk beliefs (2006–2007), as well as on the activities of both traditional and non-traditional religious movements among the Roma in Slovakia (2003–2004, 2010–2011).

In the framework of the previous outputs from this research, the author attempted to create, with some generalisation, a typology of the elements of traditional rural *Romani Christianity* in Slovakia, elucidating the phenomena of the cultural and ethnic reinterpretation of mainstream Christianity into a Roma cultural context (Podolinská 2009). In particular, she pointed out the phenomenon of *inculturation* in which the 'White' Virgin Mary is culturally and ethnically 'transcripted' and 'translated' into the 'Chocolate Mary' that physically, mentally and spiritually fits better and corresponds to the hopes and needs of particular 'peripheral' ethnic community.

As Viktor Turner (1974) pointed out that what is interesting about apparitions is that they occur on the *periphery* not only from the geographical point of view (peripheries of cities, rural areas) but also at peripheral levels of society: the seers are mostly children or (illiterate) women from a socially deprived background. This chapter offers an in-depth qualitative analysis of a narrative

on private Marian apparitions of one Romani woman living in a segregated Roma settlement in Šariš region, Eastern Slovakia. The seer perfectly fits into the 'periphery' concept: she is an illiterate woman from a socially deprived settlement and is a member of the ethnically stigmatised community of Cigáni [Gypsies]. Her visions are private ones, and since they started to appear, she started her struggle for collective and public recognition. The story of her apparition thus contains the well-known part of the path of other 'successful visionaries' - 'from periphery to centre' (i.e. from marginal private/individual apparition to the central public/mass recognition). As far as visions are 'cultural products' (Christian 1998) produced in the process of communication (Knoblauch 2009; Knoblauch and Schnettler 2018), they are not only embedded in a particular cultural context but also in the language and aesthetic taste. For every apparition, the crucial point is to achieve collective consensus and to attract masses. This is the way from private/ individual apparition to public/collective acknowledgement. This is the way from 'periphery to the centre'. In the described case, however, the seer was able to achieve recognition only within her own family. The response of the local Roma community to her apparitions was mostly negative. Quite interesting about this case is that, according to her, she has support from the side of non-Roma local religious authorities. Based on the author's qualitative analysis, the struggle for *collective consensus* and *ethnic code* are the most important themes of the analysed narrative on apparition.

According to the author, the peripheral and deprived life situation of the seer is embedded in her visions. In her narrative, the attempt to achieve 'centrality' in a marginal position is central and the recognition theme is more frequent than the description of the apparition itself. In order to offer the reader a holistic picture of research situation, the author uses not only the qualitative analysis and thematic coding, but also the perspective of multi-vocal ethnography (Tobin 1988; Clegg 2017). The interview is thus embedded in the synchronous context of field journal notes

of the author, as well as in the diachronic context of her recent memories. The qualitative analysis also includes a wider context of the thematic search of media reports on local apparitions among Roma households in Eastern Slovakia.

11 PETI, Lehel

The Marian Apparition of Seuca/Szőkefalva in the Context of Religious and Ethnical Interferences

Seuca became a known place for pilgrimage due to a blind Gypsy woman's public visions about the Virgin Mary in the first years of the new millennium. The author presents both the history of the ethnical and confessional co-existence in the village and the economic and social problems which affected the whole community. Then, the attitudes towards the apparition of the different denominations are highlighted by also presenting the way the seer attempts to question the different denominational opinions. The legitimating strategies of a Gypsy woman significantly influenced the aspects of the vision of the Virgin Mary from Seuca. In the history of Seuca, we find the practice of ethnic groups making well-defined boundaries between them, functioning as important parts of the communities. The artificial change of the ethnic structure during the Communist dictatorship changed the patterns of relations between the ethnic groups and made ethnic coexistence more problematic. The local parish that tried to expropriate the Marian apparitions has successfully integrated their messages into the ideology of ethnic reconciliation. The traditional ontological systems of religion in the communities still work and the frequent crossing of the ethnic and denominational boundaries have also promoted the strategies of the Church. In addition, the apparitions in Seuca earned the village a distinguished reputation in the region where enormous changes have taken place and where people have been forced to develop more complex strategies, or ways of life, without any pre-existing concrete models.

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396

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Index

Index

A	apatheists 43
Abranovce (SK) 14, 198, 299	apocalypse 13, 66, 110, 114, 121, 190, 192
Akathist to the God-Bearer	apocalyptic 44, 55, 92, 98, 114, 116, 118,
[Acatist/Akatist] 132, 135, 136, 269	123-4
Advent 90, 134	apocalyptic Marian apparitions 86, 12
advent custom(s) 90;	Apostolate of Fatima 87, 101
advent of democracy 266	apparition(s)
Adventist 334	approved 21, 24, 27, 37, 41, 89, 99,
affective methods 288, 319	101, 133, 142, 143;
Africa 30	modern 43, 48-9, 114, 210, 226, 344;
African 20	pre-modern 29;
aggiornamento 206	private 14, 43, 52, 94, 284, 299, 335;
agriculture 39, 211, 336-7	public 52-3, 62, 98, 100, 204, 222,
Alps 156	227, 287, 326, 332, 334-5, 343-4, 346
altar 11, 12, 66, 72, 74, 89, 179-180, 243,	archaeology 61
263-4, 270, 272, 276, 292-3, 296,	Archangel Gabriel 271
298-9, 335	Archangel Michael 68, 140, 158, 183,
alternative religiosity 227	259-61
alternative re-sacralization 28	Arianism 132
alternative spirituality 41, 43, 227	Árpád (ancient Hungarian ruler)
Altötting (Marian pilgrimage site, DE)	62, 67-8, 70
27	Árpádian dynasty 67
America(s) 30, 146	Argentina 33
American apparition 226;	Armenians 254
conspiracist author 64;	Artemis 21
creationist centre CESHE-CRS 122;	<i>Arvisura</i> (an island from Hungarian
devotees 29;	mythology) 65
elite groups 118;	ascensionism 69
Pan-American symbol 30	ascetism 237, 238
Amsterdam (NL) 99, 121	Asenovgrad (Marian pilgrimage site,
Anatolia 21	BG) 50, 51, 250, 252-8, 263-8, 273-4,
ancestor spirits 68	277-8, 280-2
Andocs (Marian shrine, HU) 70	Asia ; Central Asian origin 62,
angels 59, 68, 85, 132-3, 140, 150, 217, 262,	Eurasian 62
266-8, 278	<i>Atais</i> (an island from Hungarian
Anglican communion 27	mythology) 65
Annunciation of Mary Church in	atheism 35, 79, 138;
Asenovgrad (BG) 51, 253, 257, 263, 265	declarative 78
anti-Brussels rhetoric 45;	Atlantic Ocean 9
Catholic 79;	Attila the Hun, 62, 70
civilization 118;	Australia 30
clerical 21, 43, 44;	Austria 48, 55, 129, 151
culture 118;	Ayazmo (Marian pilgrimage place, BG
modern 28, 43;	259-60, 262, 264, 279
religious 43, 78, 79, 81, 9;	Aylesford in Kent (Marian pilgrimage
western rhetoric 45	site, UK) 332
Antichrist 110-2, 122	Aztecs 21

В	Bogoroditsa (Bg.) 252, 258, 264	catastrophic language 22, 25, 45, 84	Clearwater (Marian apparition place,
Baba (Sr.) 20, 49, 240	Sveta Bogorodichka [Holy Little	catastrophes 113, 116, 123;	Florida, U.S.) 30, 226
Balkans 27, 41, 260, 273, 279	Mother of God] 255;	ecological 99, 125;	Cold War 29, 38
Balkan Wars 255	Bogoroditsa Umilenie [Mary Tender	nuclear 26, 45, 98, 125	collective consensus 19, 41, 52, 287, 326
Banská Bystrica (SK) 158	Mercy] 258;	Cathedral of St Alexander Nevski (BG) 282	Collegiate church in Belgrade (RS) 247
Baptists 334	Bogoroditsa Patevoditelka [Pointer of	Catherina Emmerich 109	Cologne (DE) 13, 190
Bardejov (SK) 158, 165, 295, 311	the Way] 264, 268	Catholic Church 19, 22-4, 27-9, 35, 39, 47, 66,	communicative construction 216
Baroque 12, 78, 80, 83, 89-90, 184-5;	Bohemia (CZ) 83, 89	71, 73-4, 78, 86, 92, 98, 100, 122, 130, 159,	communicative performance 48, 210
religiosity 78	Boldogasszony (Hu.) 41, 65-6, 70, 73	164-5, 211, 217, 295, 325, 339, 340, 343-7	Communism 25, 36, 38, 42, 44-6, 48, 54, 84,
Batizovce (SK) 291, 293-4, 296-8	Bolshevism 25	Catholicism 78-80, 93, 211, 232, 271, 329	86, 93, 94, 110-1, 118, 151, 343
Battle of the White Mountain 78, 80	Bosnia 26, 87, 247	Catholic Man's Book 139	Communist Party 44
Bavary 27;	Bösztörpuszta (place of Marian cult, HU) 180	Catholic Woman's Book 139	consecration 24, 25, 138
Bavarian 245	Bourdieu, P. 257, 287	Cenacle 138	conservative Catholics 36, 86;
Bayside (Marian apparition place, U.S.)	Bratislava (SK) 11-2, 18, 30, 45, 128, 158, 160,	Cenacolo (detoxication community, CZ)	opinions 121;
99	164-5, 174-81;	88, 105	theologians 86, 115;
	/Nové Mesto 160	ceremonies 59, 69, 252	tradition 45;
beliefs 41, 46, 62, 73, 85, 102, 129, 151,	Brazil 33	ceremonial clothing 261;	values 40, 55
239-40, 278, 286	Brno (CZ) 44, 91, 98, 115	lunch 262;	conspiracy 62, 70
Belgium 27	Budapest (HU) 61, 344	objects 59;	Constantinopol/Constantinople/Istanbul
Belgrade (RS) 245, 247-8	Bulgaria 38, 40, 50, 55, 250, 252-6, 259-61,	procession 261,	(TR) 245, 255, 264
Beluša (SK) 11, 176-7	267-8, 270, 273, 279	walk(s) 90, 265	consumerism 18, 144
Berger, P. 208, 226	Bulgarian 255, 260-1, 266-7, 271;	channelling 59, 61, 66–8, 70, 73	Convent of Rue du Bac (FR) 27
Bernadette (the seer from Lourdes, FR) 32	Christians 260;	charisma 227	Coptic Orthodox Church 27, 30
Bethlehem 90	Church 282;	charismatic leader(s) 44-5, 98;	coronation of Mary 13, 89, 191
Bible 108, 130, 133, 137-8, 143	Exarchate 255, 266;	movement(s) 44, 45;	Cortona (IT) 13, 189
Biblical 68, 109, 134, 138, 142, 147-9	Greek rivalry 255-6;	revival 86	cosmic energies 59, 68-9
Blackbourn, D. 18, 29, 36-7, 48, 209, 211,	immigrants 256;	charity 61, 86	councils: the Second Vatican 23, 28, 146;
222, 225, 331	Kingdom 254;	Chilandar monastery (BG) 244–5, 247	the Third Ecumenical Council 21, 23;
Black Madonna 27;	Patriarch 255;	chiliastic 98, 114	of Trent 159
from Częstochowa 27, 50;	refugees 264;	Chile 30	County Mayo (Marian apparition place,
from Altötting 27	State 255;	China 30	IE) 27
'blue' Blue Army 87;	Tsar 254	Chiprovtzi (BG) 262	Cova da Iria (Marian apparition place,
coat 215;	Bytčica (SK) 83	Christian, W. A. Jr. 36-7, 51, 252, 258, 287,	Fatima, PT) 33
dress 276, 347;	Byzantine army 254;	330-1	Crail (UK) 9
energy 60;	Catholic Church 159, 162-3, 164-5, 168;	Christianity 18-9, 21, 42, 45, 55, 58, 84, 94, 129,	creationism 114, 115
eyes 312;	rite 128	137, 150, 207, 236, 240, 252, 271, 286, 332	Crnica Hill (Marian apparition place,
mantle 60		Christine (Ch.) (the seer, Marpingen, DE)	Medjugorje, BA) 26
Bodajk (Marian shrine, HU) 70		218, 220-1, 230	Croatia 58, 59, 60, 87
body formation 221–2, 230	С	Christmas 134, 247;	Croatian nationalism 50
Bogorodica (Sr.) 49, 50, 234, 236, 239-48	Cairo (EG) 30	plays 90	Csángós 340
Presveta Bogorodica [The Most Holy	Capitalist 38, 45	Christotokos [Mother of Christ] 21, 132	Csíksomlyó (Marian apparition place, RO)
Mother of God] 239-242, 247;	Carpathian Basin 61, 63, 66-7, 73	Church of Exaltation of the Holy Cross (SK) 12,	53, 58, 333, 345
Bogorodica Trojeručica [The Three-	cartographic approach 39, 46, 156	30, 180-1	cult of Artemis 21;
handed Mother of God] 243-8;	Camino de Santiago (ES) 33	Church of Our Lady Auxiliary (CZ) 82	of Baba 20;
Bogorodica Mlekopitalejnica [The Milk	Canada 26, 30, 33	Church of Mileseva Monastery (BG) 238	of Bogorodica 49, 234, 239-40;
Feeder Mother of God] 244;	candles 59, 248, 261, 280, 293, 296	Cigáni/cigányok/Gypsies 53, 82, 286-7, 309,	of Our Lady of Fatima 24;
Bogorodica Putevoditeljica [Pointer of	Casanova, J. 28	316, 332-6, 338	of images 41;
the Way] 244-5	Caserta (Marian apparition place, IT) 99	Cistercians 157	of Our Lady of Guadalupe 22;

of Virgin Mary 51, 166;	E	Western Europe 34, 40, 54;	G
of saints 240	Early Modern Era 79	post-Communist Europe 7, 16, 34	Gaboltov (Marian pilgrimage site, SK)
Czechia 11, 44, 55, 119, 156-7, 179	Easter 130, 134, 257, 261-3, 265, 269	Evangelical 334, 335, 341	128, 311
Czech lands 44, 55, 89, 92-3	Eastern Christian tradition 32	Evil/evil 62, 70, 107, 111-2, 117, 136, 139, 142,	Gálfalva (RO) 334
Czech Lutheran Church 78	East Neuk (UK) 9, 12, 179,	144-5, 150, 298	Garabandal (Marian apparition place, ES)
Czech nationalism 79, 93	ecstatic gaze 221-5;	evolution 69, 90, 115, 236	99, 109, 121
Czechoslovakia 44, 81-3, 119	journey (into the Other World) 209;	experience of transcendence 227	Gemer region 164
Czechoslovak Republic 80, 160	movements 216	extra-terrestrial civilisations 20, 59, 65,	Georgia(n)(s) 254, 258, 262
Czech reformation 78	economic analysis 52;	67-8, 70-1, 73	German Reich 211
Czech Reform Church 78	crisis 28, 49, 236, 331, 333;		Germany 190, 210, 224-5
Czech Republic 11-3, 36, 38, 40, 42-4, 48,	market 31;		German(s) 109, 119, 145, 190, 210, 222, 226,
76, 78, 84, 86-9, 93-4, 98, 117, 119, 124,	position 54, 282, 332, 336, 347;	F	277, 316, 340
179, 186-7	processes 34, 337;	Father God 20, 42, 62-3, 71, 112, 141, 218;	Glastonbury (pilgrimage site, UK) 58
Čadca (SK) 83, 158, 160	situation 144;	Heavenly 107;	Globalisation 99, 110-2, 124-5
Čaklov (SK) 291, 293, 296-7	tourists 38;	Holy 25, 85;	Grandmother 49, 240
Čirč (SK) 291	transformation 32	Sky 65	Great Enchantress 18, 28
Čitluk (BA) 87	Ecuador 30	Fatima (Marian apparition place, PT)	Great Lent 269
	Eliade, M. 155	23-6, 29, 31, 33, 37, 84-5, 87, 98-9,	Great Mother 20, 49, 240
	emotional experience 42, 85, 94	100-1, 108-9, 115, 117, 120-1, 142-3;	Greece 255-6, 264, 269, 273
D	emotions 18, 134, 143, 273, 288, 300, 319, 321,	Our Lady of Fatima 18, 24, 29, 92,	Greek Catholic Church 130, 295, 343, 345
Da Vinci Code, the 64	323, 325	107	Greek-Orthodox world 50
de-Christianisation 79, 93	(papal) encyclicals 21-5;	Federal Republic of Germany 20	Grigorius and Aspasios Bakurian
Dechtice (Marian apparition place, SK) 128	Divini Redemptoris 22, 25;	female deities 20, 21;	(brothers) 254
denominational rivalry 338	Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum 23;	fertility 164, 241, 271-2;	grotto 219, 222–3, 228, 230
de-privatization 28	Saeculo Exeunte Octavo 24	in-fertility 240	group meditation 59, 67
desecularisation 206	Ephesus 21, 23	Fénymegkötő Szer [Light-binding Feast]	Gobbi, S. 87, 92, 100, 109–11, 113
Detva (SK) 158, 315, 323	eschatological communities 86	(HU) 66, 69, 73	Goddess Mother 20
Devil 140-1, 144, 298	esoteric 59, 64, 73;	Fénysugár Jézus Krisztus Háza	God Father 20, 42
devotional objects 20, 31	cults 64;	Szeretetszolgálat Alapítvány [Ray of	God 14, 18, 20-2, 28, 41-2, 49, 61-3, 65, 68, 71, 85
diaspora 42, 156	group(s) 59–60;	Light - The House of Jesus Christ	89, 90, 102, 106–8, 110–3, 115–7, 122–3, 125,
'dimension gates' 59, 67	healers 60;	Charity Foundation] (HU) 61	130, 131-6, 138, 140-2, 144-5, 149, 151, 158-9
discoursive analysis 39, 151, 292	language 41;	field journal 284, 288, 290, 300-1, 303,	163-4, 169, 170, 214, 221, 228, 236-7, 239,
discrimination 19	network 60, 73;	305	243, 249, 252, 256–9, 273–4, 276–9, 292, 296,
disenchanted world 28	workshop(s) 61	Finno-Ugrian Kinship 62;	299, 304, 308–10, 315–6, 318–9, 323, 345, 349
Dobrich (BG) 279	ethnic appropriation 41	language family 62	Gorni Voden (Marian pilgrimage site, BG)
dogma 22, 23, 226, 237;	ethnic code 52, 287, 307-8, 310-5, 318, 320,	Florence (IT) 13, 189	253-4, 256, 268-70, 280
of the Assumption 23;	322-3	Florida (U.S.) 30, 226	Gospa (Our Lady of Medjugorje) 26
of the Immaculate Conception 22–3, 216	ethnography 39, 62;	folk culture 209	Guadalupe (MX) Our Lady of Guadalupe/
dogmatic 24, 129, 157		folk customs and beliefs 41, 90, 242, 286	
dogmatism 227	qualitative 39;	folk movement(s) 101	Virgin Mary of Guadalupe 12, 21-2, 27, 30,
Dolni Voden (BG) 254	multi-sited 39;	folklore 42, 80, 93, 242, 260, 271	50, 180, 303
Dolný Kubín (SK) 11, 174	multi-vocal 39, 288;	folklorists 213, 267	Gypsy/ies 286-7, 309, 316, 332-6, 338, 340
Dominicans 86	focused 210	folk religiosity 82, 86, 102–3	
Dormition of Mary Church in Gorni Voden (BG)	ethno-paganism 40, 41	fortune-telling 241, 308, 319-20, 322	н
253, 257, 268	ET-spiritualities 70, 73	France 13, 23, 27, 32–3, 48, 81	
Dormition of Mary Monastery of Bachkovo	EU 36, 71, 124	Franciscans 44	Handlová (SK) 291, 293, 296-8
(BG) 51, 253-4, 257-8,	Europe; Central Europe 45, 90, 100;	fundamentalists 44	Havel, V. 119, 156
Dreveník (SK) 304	Eastern Europe 25, 34, 110;	Furmanec (SK) 14, 198, 299	Härtelwald forest (DE) 210

healings 143, 144, 182, 253, 278, 280	iconographic pattern 225	Jeseník (CZ) 82	Levoča (SK) 128, 158
Healing Star' (HU) 65–6	identity 46, 52-3, 154, 252, 255-6, 337, 345;	Jesus 12, 14, 18, 20, 24, 61, 106, 108, 114-5,	LGBTQ movements 36
Hellenistic world 21	class 42, 80, 93;	123, 131-2, 136-8, 149, 181, 192-3, 199,	liberals 39, 42, 80
Hencovce (SK) 291, 293, 297	collective 236-7;	217-8, 224, 227, 274, 290-5, 297-9, 307-2,	liberalism 92
heretics 137	ethnic 342;	315, 317, 320, 348	linguistics 62, 311
Heroldsbach (DE) 225	individual 237;	Ještěd region (CZ) 88	Liptov (SK) 158
Hermanovce (SK) 14, 195, 299-301, 303	national 15, 32 42, 55, 80, 93, 239;	Jews 137	litanies 128, 132-3, 136;
Hervieu-Léger, D. 35	religious 42, 80, 93, 154, 166, 200, 239;	Juan Diego (Don, the seer from Tepeyac,	of Loreto 133;
Herzegovina 26, 87, 99, 108, 144	confessional 79;	Our Lady of Guadalupe, MX) 21, 30	of Our Lady of Mount Carmel 133;
hinduism 11	local 166, 281, 347	Judith (J.) (the seer from Marpingen, DE)	of Our lady of Perpetual Help 133;
Hindu tradition 11	idolatry 74	217-8, 220-1, 224, 229	of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows 133;
Hlinné (SK) 291-2, 296-7	Ilona (esoteric seer and healer, Hungarian		of Our Lady of Lourdes 133;
holism 226	Seeds, HU) 12, 61-2, 64, 66, 68-9, 183		of Our Lady of Scapular 133;
holistic 39, 288	Immaculate Heart of Mary 23, 24, 100–3	K	of Mary Help of Christians 133;
Holy Family 290, 293	Immaculate Conception 13, 22, 157, 165, 190-1,	Kalenic monastery (RS) 14, 194	to the Heart of our Lady 133
Holy Mountain (Athos) (BG) 244-7, 254	271	Kalinkovo (SK) 11, 175	Lithuania 27
Holy Spirit 112, 133, 138, 207, 218, 228	inculturation 20, 51, 286	Karayas (RS) 244	Litmanová (Marian apparition place, SK)
Holy Trinity 119, 158, 278	India 20, 30	Kecskemét (HU) 61	92, 100, 115, 128, 144, 189, 311-2, 319, 324
Holzhauser, B. (The seer, DE) 109	industrial societies 70;	Kelie Castle (UK) 12, 181	Lourdes (Marian apparition place, FR)
Hungarians 12, 41-2, 61-8, 71, 73, 182, 333,	post-industrial societies 40	Kibeho (Marian apparition place, RW,	50, 99, 100, 108, 142-3, 219, 343;
335, 337-8, 342, 345-7, 350	industry 32, 39, 211	Africa) 30	Our Lady of Lourdes 133
Hungarian Catholic Church 71, 73-4	information technologies 45, 99, 125	Kingdom of Hungary 166	
Hungarian Holy Crown' 63-4	Inglehart, R. 34	'King of Terror' 84	
Hungarian Kingdom 67	interior locution 92, 100, 138	Kluviya (pilgrimage site, BG) 259-63, 279	M
Hungarian Lowlands 156	interpretative phenomenological analysis	Knighthood of the Immaculate 101	Macedonia 256
Hungarian Pilgrimage Route 56	(IPA) 40, 288-9	Knock (Marian apparition site, IE) 27, 99	Madagascar 30
Hungarian Seeds 60, 61, 63, 73	Ireland 27, 109	Košice (SK) 158, 160	Madrid (ES) 13, 188-9
Hungary 7, 20, 27, 38, 41–3, 48, 58–66, 73,	Iron Curtain 38	Kozlovice (CZ) 158, 163, 311	Magdolna (the esoteric seer and healer,
166, 182-5, 247	Island of Tinos (Marian cult, GR) 50	Krastova Gora (BG) 260	Hungarian Seeds, HU) 12, 61-3, 71, 182
Huns 62, 71	Israel 30, 111, 142	Kritchim (flying icon of the Virgin Mary,	magical 63, 79, 203, 236, 260, 282
Hussite movement 78-9	Italy 13, 27, 88, 190-1,	BG) 262	Magyar MAGok [Hungarian Seeds] (esoteric
	Ivan Alexander (Bulgarian King/Tsar) 254	Kristína (K.) (the seer from Hermanovce,	network, HU) 63-6, 69, 70, 73-4
	Ivan Asen II (Bulgarian King/Tsar) 254	SK) 14, 195, 301, 304-5, 309, 315, 318-9,	Malhotice (CZ) 90
I	Iveta (Kočáková) a Katarína (Česelková) (the	324, 326	marginalisation 19, 55, 281;
icon(s) 49-50, 220, 238, 242-4, 246-8, 257-8,	seers from Litmanová, SK) 158, 319, 314	Kulturkampf 211	of religion 206
261–72, 278;	, , , ,	Kuklen (BG) 255	Máriagyűd/Gyűd (Marian pilgrimage site,
of the Annunciation Church 267;		Kysuce (SK) 121, 158, 163	HU) 12, 41, 58-60, 64-74, 182-3
of the Ascension 248;	J	Kysucké Nové Mesto (SK) 158	Máriakönnye-Vodican (Marian shrine,
Bogoroditsa Umilenie 258;	Jacinta and Francisco (the seers from	,	HU)70
Bogoroditsa Patevodilka 264, 268;	Fatima, PT) 25		Marian apparition(s): 26-31, 37, 44, 48, 49,
'Mother and Daughter' icons 266-7;	Japan 30, 246	L	51, 86, 96, 98-100, 103, 108, 114, 121,
miracle-working 253, 257, 280, 282;	Our Lady of Akita 30;	Lamač (SK) 11, 173	123-5, 148, 149, 151, 207, 206-8, 210-1,
miraculous 236, 242, 258, 261;	(Virgin Mary as) a Japanese woman	La Salette (Marian apparition place, FR)	216-7, 226, 231, 286, 346, 350
Mlekopitateljnica 244;	311-2	27, 29, 216	Marian century 26, 241
Putevoditeljica 244-5;	Jarovnice (SK) 14, 199, 299, 303, 311	La Virgen de Guadalupe/La Virgen Morena	Marian dedications 47, 152, 157-63, 165-70;
of Our Lady of Perpetual Help 13, 188;	Jasna Gora (Black Madonna, PL) 27	21, 30	the Assumption of the Virgin Mary/The
of Trojeručica 14, 194, 244, 247;	Jerusalem 118, 244, 262;	Le Goff, J. 102, 277, 278	Dormition of the Holy Mother of God 159,
of the White Angel 238	Little Jerusalem 256, 281	Leskovaca Morava (RS) 241	161, 164–5, 170;

of Immaculate Conception of the Virgin	Maria Valvorta (the seer from Caserta, IT) 99	missionary activities 18, 123, 240	Muslim(s) 254, 260
Mary 157, 165;	Mariology 24	mobility 30, 40, 49, 98, 100, 287	mysteries of Earth 69, 71;
of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary/Holy	Marion (M.) (the seer, Marpingen, DE),	modernisation 28, 34-5, 36, 48, 98, 206,	three mysteries of Fatima)100;
Mother of God 164, 169;	214, 217-8, 220-6, 228	333-4	of Medjugorje 113
of Our Lady of the Rosary 159, 165, 170; of	Marpingen (Marian apparition place, DE)	modernity 28-9, 34, 49, 54, 208, 210, 216,	mysticism 88, 137, 231
Our Lady of Sorrows 158-9, 160, 166, 168;	13, 40, 208, 213, 216-7, 222, 224, 226, 228	231-2	mythology of the ancient Hungarians 62,
the Protection of the Holy Mother of God	Masaryk, T. G. 80	modern religiosity 18	65, 71; Greek 271
159;	(mass) media 14, 18, 28, 49, 86, 118, 207, 215,	Moldava nad Bodvou (SK) 291, 294, 296-7	
of the Virgin Mary/Holy Mother of God	224-9, 231-2, 270, 281, 288, 290-4, 296,	Monastery of Sts Cyricus and Julitta (BG)	
159, 161, 164-5, 169	298, 323-4	254, 268	N
Marian devotion 7, 21, 28-9, 31, 36-7, 39,	Matúš Lašut (the seer from Turzovka, SK) 83	Moon Goddess 20	Nahuatl 21
40-3, 51, 54-5, 76, 78, 84-5, 87, 90-4, 99,	Maya 20	Moravia (CZ) 83, 88, 90, 115	narrative(s) 69, 73, 250, 257, 259, 262-3, 267,
128-9, 133, 137, 139, 143, 145-6, 148	Mayan Calendar 64	Mostar (BA) 87	269, 270, 274-5, 277, 286, 288, 305, 307,
Marian discourse 64, 145-6, 148-51;	Maximillian the Second Emmanuel	Mother 7, 14, 18, 20, 50, 132-3, 138, 140-2,	310, 321;
fundamentalist 86, 146-7, 150;	(Bavarian Duke) 245	144, 151, 196, 214, 218, 230, 245-6, 252;	on apparition 284, 287, 316;
non-traditional 148;	mediatised performance 229	All-Mother 19;	emblematic 262;
progressive 41, 45-6, 81, 145-58, 150-1;	Mediator (Virgin Mary) 85, 131-2, 134, 137, 144	of all 23;	ethno-pagan 70;
traditional(ist) 86	medical pluralism 60	of all believers 149;	(local)/personal religious 51, 252-3, 258
Marian Holiday/Feasts 51, 239,	Medieval 60, 67, 80, 157, 206, 220, 237, 247-8,	of Christ 20;	261, 266, 273-4, 282;
241-2, 263, 269;	267, 332	of the Church 23, 141, 149;	millenial narrative 70;
of Annunciation 241, 255;	meditation(s) 59, 61, 64, 67, 118, 236	of Earth (Gaia) 21, 41-2, 55, 65-6, 69, 73;	on miraculous healing 260;
of the Belt of the 'Presveta	Medjugorje (Marian apparition place, BA)	of God 14, 20, 21, 49, 89-90, 130-2, 134-5,	miraculous narrative 348;
Bogorodica' 242;	14, 26-7, 30-1, 87-8, 98-9, 104-9, 121, 144,	137-8, 141, 145, 149, 159, 163-4, 170, 214,	private 286;
of Dormition 241, 255;	213, 220, 228, 347, 349;	218, 221, 228, 230, 239, 243, 249, 252,	visionary 277, 331
of the Golden Apple 268;	Our Lady of Medjugorje 50, 87, 111	257-9, 274, 276, 278;	nationalism 34, 50, 79, 93
of the Nativity 255;	Medzilaborce (SK) 158	Goddess Mother 20, 41, 65, 257;	nationalistic 36, 42, 70, 122
Prepolovenie [Halving] 265;	Mesmerism 231	Great Grandmother 49, 240;	nationalists 42, 62, 80, 93
of the Shroud of the 'Presveta Bogorodica'	messages 18-9, 22, 24-6, 44-5, 53, 55, 60, 64,	Great Mother 49, 240;	national symbols 50, 337
240-2;	91-2, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106-9, 111, 114-6,	Holy Mother 85, 133, 159, 161, 164-5,	NATO 36, 38, 246
slava [Patron St Day] 243	119-21, 124, 143, 144-5, 218, 318, 333, 335,	169, 278;	Nazareth 142
Marian hymns 20	346-7, 350	of all Hungarians 42;	near-death experiences 207
Marianka (Marian pilgrimage site, SK)	Mexican Queen of Heaven 22	of Jesus 18, 20, 24;	neo-pagan 73
11, 177-8	Mexico 21, 27, 30	Loving Mother 99, 106-7, 116;	neopaganism 236
Marian movement 44, 55, 87, 92, 102, 138,	Mexico City 21	Mary 22;	neo-shamanism 207
210, 216, 226	Middle Ages 65, 132, 134, 144, 147, 163, 332	of Mercy 131, 249;	Nesebar (flying icons, GB) 262
Marian Movement of Priests 87, 92, 138	Middle East 111	of the Nation 40;	Nestorianism 132
Márianosztra (Marian shrine, HU) 70	migration 156, 255, 336	of Perpetual Help 136;	Nestorius 21
Mariánské nakladatelství (MANA) [Marian	Milano (IT) 87, 110	Queen 136-8, 142;	New Age 41, 56, 58, 60, 64, 69, 70-3, 118, 236
Publishers] (charismatic movement,	millennial 55, 69-70, 98	of Seven Sorrows 132, 136-7;	New Testament 112, 271
CZ) 44, 98, 114-6	millennialism 69	of the Universe 20, 42, 55;	New Thought 231
Marian prayer(s) 130-5, 137, 139	Milutin (Serbian king) 245	of the Word 30	Nicaragua 30
Marian songs 134-5,	miraculous healing 11, 19, 58, 85, 94, 178,	Mount Athos (BG) 261	Nimrod 68
Marian spirituality 86, 129-30, 139-40, 143,	244	Mráček, F. (the charismatic leader, CZ) 98,	Nitra (SK) 160, 164-5, 293
146, 149, 151, 206	miraculous/miracle-working icon(s) 50-1,	103-13, 117, 119-22, 124	non-believers 90, 103
Marian vocabulary 129, 140-1, 145-51	236, 244, 253, 257-8, 261, 263, 265, 268,	multi-confessional 53, 60, 333, 339	normalisation 82
Máriapócs (Marian shrine, HU) 68, 70	280-1	multi-cultural 334, 339, 342, 346	normative religion 19
Máriaradna (Marian pilgrimage site, RO)	miracles 18-9, 29, 50, 55, 85, 94, 135, 206,	multi-ethnic 53, 60, 333, 336-9	non-Christian 137, 239
53, 333, 345	246-7, 294, 296, 319, 332-3, 344, 348	Muršov (SK) 299	non-church religiousness 28

non-religion 18, 43, 154	104-5, 106-9, 111, 113, 121, 144, 213, 220,	Plovdiv (BG) 253-5, 269, 281	procession(s) 12, 72, 86, 88-9, 186, 239,
on-religious 81, 93, 226, 297, 318	227, 347;	Podbiel (SK) 11, 172	247-8, 257, 261-3, 265, 266-8, 281
on-traditional religiosity 28, 43, 54	the Miraculous Medal 27, 100, 136;	Podbrdo (Marian apparition place,	prophet(ess) (ic) 24, 61, 71, 84, 109, 114, 116,
on-traditional movements 29, 40, 55, 286	Perpetual Help 133, 136;	Medjugorje, BA) 26	121, 133, 335, 348
Jostradamus 84	Pontmain 27;	Pod Laščíkom (SK) 292–3, 296–8	prophecies 98, 100, 105, 109-12
lové Zámky (SK) 165	the <i>Rosary</i> 23, 160, 165, 170;	Poland 11, 27, 43, 48, 94, 100, 175	Protestant churches 79, 213
	Sorrows 47, 158-9, 160, 166, 168;	Pontmain (Marian apparition place, FR)	Protestantism 80, 213
	the Seven Sorrows 136;	27, 29, 99	Prussia 211
0	Šiluva 27;	Pope 19, 24, 26, 72, 86, 100, 109, 111-3, 120,	Prussian forces 210
occultism 74, 210	Zeitoun 27, 30;	122;	Příbram (CZ) 12, 83, 89, 187
DECD 38	Walsingham 27;	Benedict XVI 23, 26, 146;	
Plawa (Marian apparition place, PL) 100	Warraq 27;	Celestin II;	
Old Catholic movement 80	Yankalilla 27	Clement IX 293;	Q
old Testament 111-2		Francis 25, 71;	Quito (Marian apparition place, EC) 30
Plomouc (CZ) 83, 91		John Paul II 23, 25, 108, 281;	
n-line religiosity 61	P	Peter II 109;	
n-line spirituality 40, 60-1	Pacific Ocean 65	Pius VII 293;	R
Drava (SK) 11, 158, 174	pagan(s)(ism) 20, 21, 40-2, 49, 58, 62, 67-8,	Pius X 23, 99;	Ragama (Marian apparition place, LK) 30
Orthodox/orthodox 113, 138, 238, 254-5, 270,	70, 73, 137, 236, 239-40, 243	Pius XI 22, 24-5;	Rainbow Madonna (Clearwater, Florida,
294, 297, 334, 339-40, 344, 350;	Palestine 111	Pius XII 23, 24-5;	U.S.) 30
Coptic Church 27, 30;	Pan-American symbol 30	Paul VI 23;	Rahovica monastery in Belgrade (RS) 247
world 49;	Papua New Guinea 29	Sixtus V 133;	Raslavice (SK) 14, 197, 299
Christianity 236, 271, 332;	Paradise 92, 133	Sylvester II 64;	rationalism 18
Church 237, 343;	paraphernalia 238	Urban VIII 89	Ratíškovice (CZ) 90
Eastern-Orthodox tradition 252, 257, 273;	Paris (FR) 27, 99-100, 114	Poprad (SK)158	re-Catholicisation 46, 78
Greek-Orthodox world 50;	parusia 86	popular culture 207-8, 226, 232	re-enchantment 208
Serbian Orthodox Church 236	Patent of Tolerance 78	popularisation 208, 231, 237	Reformation 47, 78, 80, 158, 164
Ottoman period 255; rule 259	Pécs (HU) 64, 71, 330	popular religion(s) 55, 204, 207-8, 231-2, 239	Reformed 213, 334, 338-9, 340-1, 349
Our Lady of Akita 30;	Pellevoisin (Marrian appartion place, FR)	popular religiosity 41, 44-5, 48, 96, 98,	religion(s) 18-9, 28, 34-5, 38, 40, 42-3, 49,
Altötting 27;	99	102-3, 114, 124-5, 207-8, 231	55, 58, 61, 65, 70, 73, 78-80, 82, 84, 90,
Assiut 27;	Pentecost 23, 112, 130, 138, 265	popular Christianity 19	93-4, 103, 154-5, 204, 206-8, 210, 226-7
Banneux 27;	'periphery' concept 19, 53, 284, 286-7, 332	Portugal 24, 27, 33, 85, 92; Portuguese 29, 33	231-2, 237, 239, 252, 256, 281-2, 332, 334
Beauraing 27;	Petrová (SK) 291, 294	post-Communist Europe 7, 16, 34-40, 42-3,	339-40, 350
Cuapa 30;	Petrozzi, E. 88	48, 53-5, 94;	religious cults 236
Fatima 24, 29, 92, 107;	Petržalka (SK) 12, 30, 178-9	Mary(ies) 8, 36, 55;	religious culture 35, 51, 55, 252-3, 256, 258
Gietrzwałd 27;	Philippines 30	modernity 34;	273, 340
Good Event 30;	pilgrimages 15, 26, 33, 36-7, 43, 81, 88, 91,	period 35;	religious discourse 41, 43, 94, 128, 151
Guadalupe 12, 21-2, 27, 30, 50, 180, 303,	92, 94, 103, 105, 128, 143, 201, 303, 311,	transformation 53-4	religious identity 42, 80, 93, 166, 239
316;	319, 332, 346;	post-modern(ity) 18, 37, 40-2, 54-5, 84	religious movements 29, 40, 61, 78, 94, 99,
Knoch 27, 99;	bike pilgrimages 43, 91, 94	Považie (SK) 158	209, 286
La Salette 27, 29, 216;	pilgrims 12, 13, 15, 24, 27, 31-2, 54, 58-9, 66,	Prague (CZ) 82, 91, 93, 103-4, 311	religiosity 18, 29, 37, 40-5, 48, 51, 58, 61, 69
Lanka 30;	72, 74, 82–3, 88–9, 91, 98, 100, 128, 182,	'Prague Spring' 82, 93	78-82, 85-6, 88, 90, 93-4, 96, 98, 102-3
Laus 27;	187, 201-3, 216-7, 219, 225-6, 229, 232,	pre-Christian 20, 40, 42, 257	114, 124-5, 135, 206-8, 227, 231-2, 236-7
Lavang 20, 30, 50;	258-62, 265, 267, 270, 273, 275, 281, 312,	pre-modern 29, 210	252, 255-6, 268, 282, 340
Los Tepes 30;	335, 342-3, 346, 349, 350	Premonstratensians 86-7, 157	religious practices 60, 73, 340;
Lourdes 18, 22, 24, 26-7, 29, 31-2, 37, 99,	Pilis Mountains (HU) 12, 65, 180	Press, F. (Charismatic leader, CZ) 44, 98,	ready-made event 41, 52-3, 326;
100, 108, 133, 142, 219;	Pilisszántó (HU) 12, 65, 74, 161	114-20, 121-4	revival 28, 36-7, 49, 236;
Medjugorje 14, 26-7, 50, 87-8, 98, 100,	Pleiades 68	Prešov (SK) 160, 164-5, 304, 312	revitalisation 236;

studies 20;	Satan 13, 106, 117-20, 124, 136, 140-1, 144,	socio-economic analysis 52	statues 11, 14, 20, 175, 223
symbol(s) 207-8, 238;	149, 151, 188, 291, 294, 298, 309	sociology of religion 28	Stefan the First-Crowned 244
toponymy 155;	Saxon(s) 334, 336, 340	Sofia (BG) 253, 275, 279, 282	Stenimachos region (BG) 254-5
tourism 58, 83, 342	scientific 7, 19, 42, 54, 80, 104, 115, 140, 225,	solar eclipse 84	Stropkov (SK) 292
re-sacralisation of Europe 28	229, 330	Soviet Union 82, 110	Studenica monastery (RS) 245
revivalists 79-80	Scotland 8, 9, 12, 179	Spain 13, 27, 190, 191	Stupava (SK) 11, 172
Rhodope Mountain (BG) 254, 259, 266, 276	sculptures 31, 60, 80	spiritism 70	subjectivity 231
Ribbons 12, 59, 66, 74, 181	Scythians 71	spiritist practice 236	Sun 15, 66, 117, 202-3, 241, 304, 312, 341
Rila monastery (BG) 260	Scythian-Hunnish origin 62	spiritual folk songs 90;	'Sun-dancing' 15, 202-3
risk-societies 28	secularism 18, 35, 44, 154	healing 40, 42;	superstitious 79, 237
rituals 43, 60-1, 64-5, 67, 68-9, 89-90, 242,	secular faith 43, 78	seekers 59, 72;	Svatá Hora [Holy Mountain] (pilgrimage
250, 253, 260, 269, 271, 281, 342, 344	seer(s) 13, 14, 15, 21, 25, 41, 48, 52-5, 60, 62,	schools 42;	site, CZ) 12, 83, 89, 91, 186-7
Rokycany (SK) 299	64, 84, 211-3, 216-232, 286-8, 292, 319,	of the Far East 84, 94	Svatý Kopeček [Holy Little Hill]
Roma(ni) 14, 20, 41, 51-2, 54, 91, 198-201,	326, 330-48, 350	spiritualisation 231	(pilgrimage site, CZ) 83, 91
286-94, 296-302, 304-312, 313-16,	secret 24, 64, 83-5, 317;	spiritualistic 42, 55	Svinia (SK) 14, 196, 199, 299, 303
318-20, 322-4, 235, 326, 333	of Fatima 84-5	spiritualist photography 225	symbolic communication 52-3, 334
Roman Catholic Church 27, 47, 66, 92, 159,	Senica (SK) 160	spirituality 28-9, 37, 40-3, 46, 48, 55, 64,	symbolic cultivation 333
162-3, 165, 335, 343-4, 346, 347	sequential analysis 231, 321	85-7, 92, 94, 103, 105, 128-9, 130, 136, 139,	syncretism 236
Romania 40, 53-4, 58, 61, 247, 332, 340, 345,	Serbia 14, 20, 38, 40, 49-50, 59, 194, 236-41,	140, 143, 146-9, 151, 204-8, 225-7, 231;	Syria 30
347, 349	244-48	alternative 48, 226;	Šariš (SK) 287, 305
Romanian 14, 15, 200-1, 330, 334-40, 342-3,	Serbian 14, 49, 55, 194, 234, 236-8, 243, 246-8	on-line 40, 42;	Šarišské Jastrabie (SK) 291-2, 296-8
345-7	Serbian Orthodox Church 237-8, 246	post-modern 40-2	Šaštín (Marian pilgrimage site, SK) 128,
Romani Christianity 286	Seuca/Szőkefalva (Marian apparition	Srí Lanka 30	159, 160
Romani pilgrimages 91	place, RO) 15, 53, 200-1, 328, 333-50	St Alexander Nevski 282;	
Roman rite 128	shaman 62, 71	St Clement 156;	
Rome (IT) 13, 188	shamanic drumming sessions 12, 61, 182	St Christopher 158;	T
rosary 12, 23, 71, 83, 88, 101, 136-7, 159, 163,	shamanism 62, 209	St Demetrius 246;	Tachov district (CZ) 44
165, 170, 184, 227, 231, 303, 305, 307, 311,	shrine(s) 12, 20, 26, 31-2, 41, 53, 56, 58-60,	St Don Bosco 109;	táltos 62–3
315, 317, 320	65, 67-74, 92, 94, 128, 143, 183-4, 219-20,	St Francis 109;	Tamil traditions 20
Rosary brotherhoods 101	254, 256-7, 259-60, 262, 264, 268, 332,	St George 70;	Târgu-Mureş (RO) 345
Rózsika Márian (the seer from Seuca, RO)	343-4, 345, 347	St Gothard 156;	Târnăveni (RO) 336
15, 200, 334-6, 342-4	Sintis 286	St John the Baptist 260, 264;	Tepeyac (Marian apparition place, MX) 21, 27
Rožňava (SK) 158	Siklós (HU) 58, 60	St Havel 156;	Terňa (SK) 299, 303
Rue du Back in Paris (Marian apparition	Siluva (LT) 27	St Hildegard 109;	terrorist attack 84
place, FR) 99	Sirius 68	St John of Damascus 244, 260, 264;	testimonies 19, 144-5, 267, 280, 331
Rumungro Roma 286	Skalica (SK) 160	St Malachy 109;	thematic analysis (TA) 288
runic inscriptions 66	Slovakia 11-3, 27, 30, 38, 41, 43-8, 51, 54-5,	St Martin 156;	theology 20, 22, 24, 101, 112, 146
Russia 24, 25, 30, 100, 117, 246	83, 92, 94, 126, 128, 130, 144-6, 148-51,	St Michael 70, 158;	Theotokos [The Mother of God/Birth Giver
Ružomberok (SK) 160	156-9, 160, 161, 164-70, 174-81, 187-9,	St Paraskeve 241;	of God] 21, 49, 132, 194, 236, 243, 252,
Rwanda 30	286, 288, 290, 293-4, 295, 298-300, 311,	St Petka 276-7;	258, 264
	325	St Sava 238, 243-4, 247;	Thessaloniky (GR) 246
	Smederevo (RS) 245	St Simon Stock 332;	Thrace 266; Eastern 256
S	Snežka (Marian chapel, CZ) 11, 117	St Stephen, the first Hungarian king	Tibet 11, 177
Saar region (DE) 219	Socialist Federative Republic of	64, 67;	Tibetan singing bowls 64
Sabinov (SK) 158	Yugoslavia 49	St Thomas the Apostle 272	Tonantzin (Mother Goddess, MX) 21
Sacrum 20, 32	socialists 42, 80, 93	Stará Boleslav (CZ) 83	Topoľčany (SK) 165
Saint-Étienne-le-Laus (Marian apparition	socialism 42, 118, 156	Staré Hory [Old Mountains] (pilgrimage	topos 262, 267
place, FR) 27	social network(s) 19, 295	site, SK) 128	totalitarian 81, 122

Index

'Chocolate' 51, 286-7; Traditionalist(s) 36, 45-6, 86, 146-8, 150-1 transcendence 207, 225, 331 Serbian 236; transcendent being 20 of Seuca 333, 347; transnational 29, 31 of the Scapular 293, 311; Tre Fontane (Marian apparition place, IT) 99 of Mount Carmel 133, 136, 311, 332 Tridentine Catholicism 78 vision(s) 14, 21, 24, 29, 48, 50, 52-3, 68, 84, Tridentine rite 146 100, 104, 106, 109, 119-20, 124, 137, Trenčín (SK) 160 142, 148, 149, 151, 204, 206-7, 210, 214, Trnava (SK) 160 216-7, 220, 222-3, 228-9, 230-32, 253, Troyan (BG) 279 267, 277-8, 287-8, 300, 307, 310-11, 317, Turkish 164, 243, 245, 255, 260, 262 visionar(y)(ies) 83, 87, 98, 100, 106, 108, Turňa nad Bodvou (SK) 291 113, 120, 144, 220, 222, 225-6, 229, 287, Turner, V. 19, 29, 37, 52, 286, 332, 346 321-2, 330-35, 343-4, 346, 349-50 **Túrony** (HU) 60, 67 Visual Studies 211 votive objects 72 turul/Turul 71, 73 Turzovka (Marian apparition place, SK) votum 43, 91, 94 12-3, 83, 115, 119, 121, 128, 144, 187-9 Vranov nad Topľou (SK) 158, 165, 293 Tutankhamun's secret 64 Vyšná Kamenica (SK) 291, 293, 295, 298 Vyšný Slivník (SK) 299 U UFOs 225 W UFO-religions 70, 73 Wallachian Gypsies/Roma 286 **Ukraine** 27 Warsaw Pact 82 Uniate 334 Weber, M. 226 Unified Catholic Hymnal, the 128, 130 westernisation 37, 40, 45 Unitarian 338, 340 winter solstice 59, 69 United States, the 29, 33, 38, 87 World Trade Centre 84 WWI 256; **U.S.** 30 U-turn of religiosity 44, 206-8 WWII 24, 38, 107; Uzovské Pekľany (SK) 14, 197, 299, 303 WWIII 45, 98, 125 \mathbf{v} Y Varna (BG) 262 Y2K 84 'Year of Jubilee' 109-10, 117 Vatican 23-5, 28, 81, 85, 87, 89, 146 Vatopedi Monastery of Mount Athos (BG) 273 Velehrad (pilgrimage site, CZ) 82, 83 Z Vérité (charismatic movement, CZ) 44, 98, **Zborov** (SK) 294, 296-8 103-8, 109, 115, 121 Vesmírní lidé [Space People] 103 Zemplínska Teplica (SK) 291, 294, 297-8 videography 40, 210 Zlaté Hory [Golden Mountains] (CZ) 82 Vienna (AT) 45, 145 Zvir Mountain (Marian apparition place, Vietnam(ese) 20, 30 Litmanová, SK) 92, 312, 314 Villány mountains (HU) 58 **Žarošice** (CZ) 13, 88-9, 189 Žehňa (SK) 14, 195-6, 299-300 Virgin Mary; Blessed 12-3, 26, 63, 66, 73, 114, 123, 131, 158, 183, 192, 293, 297, 344, 346; Žibřidice (CZ) 88 'White' 51, 210, 286, 312-3, 315, 318, 336; Žilina (SK) 83, 158, 160, 164-5

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