

**PRESENT AND PAST
CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE
ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE**

**JELÉN ÉS MÚLT
KORTÁRS ÉS TÖRTÉNETI PERSPEKTÍVÁK A VALLÁSI ÉLET ANTROPOLÓGIAI
KUTATÁSÁBAN**

A three-day international conference in Budapest
on May 5–7 2017, Friday to Sunday

Organized by

*“East–West” Research Group / “Kelet–Nyugat” Vallásetnológiai Kutatócsoport
Vernacular religion on the boundary of Eastern and Western Christianity: continuity, changes
and interactions (ERC project № 324214) / Népi vallás a keleti és nyugati kereszténység határán:
folyamatosság, változások és kölcsönhatások (324214 sz. EKT projekt)*

Dear Colleague,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I hereby invite you to our next international conference and would be honoured if you could contribute to its success by presenting your research findings.

The primary goal of this conference is to explore the varied and complex relations of the present and the past, the contemporary and historical perspectives of research and the current research problematics in the light of investigations by the anthropology and ethnology of religion. Our key question is how is it possible (or impossible) to study the present with the help of the past, or the past with the help of the present. We are hoping that the conference will attract talks which highlight the ways in which present and past share various traits or mutually rely on or complement each other; the various constellations of research connecting the past to the present; as well as the pitfalls and difficulties of such interrelations, using any material that explores the areas of faith, cult, ritual, magic or beliefs.

Suggested topics include:

The survival of past phenomena in the present; questions of ‘continuity’ and ‘origin’, discrepancies between past and present (questions of historical continuity; studying the past, the roots of contemporary rituals, ideals, beliefs and texts; sources from the past and their various contexts; ‘historical-comparative’ analyses by comparative examinations of the present and the past, in similar and different societies, functions or intellectual settings; relations of past texts and contemporary oral tradition; the problematic of universal and ‘eternal’ religious symbols).

The benefits and pitfalls of source use, questions of source criticism (reconstructing past systems of magic or religion based on data which survived accidentally, in incomplete forms or not in their primary context; the interpretation of fragmented or randomly surviving data with the help of contemporary data; reconstructing the past based on historical, archaeological, literary or linguistic etc. sources).

Construction and reconstruction (the time-space frame of the historical past as an anthropological field; reconstructing the religious/magical regulatory systems of the past, its social context, textual context and functional environment in the light of contemporary anthropological and folklore studies; interpreting contemporary data as ‘archaic tradition’ within the frames of a

construed past system; the construed past of religions, mythologies and belief systems, mythologizing the past, reconstructions of religion and mythology; incorporating the religious or folk belief data of the present into mythological reconstructions; the present constructed with the help of the reconstructed past; ‘invented traditions’; connections between new, construed mythologies and the ‘original’, ‘archaic’ traditions).

Contemporary religious systems, belief systems and folklore archives (the use of archive data as ‘interpreters’ in contemporary investigations; old folklore collections, data systems and archive systems as inducing factors behind constructing contemporary systems).

The list may be freely extended, but please, do bear in mind the main thematic strand – that of the interconnections between past and present and the resulting research problems.

The languages of the conference will be English and Hungarian. It is likely that there will be one or two Hungarian-only sections, but in order to guarantee communication between Hungarians and foreigners it would be helpful if Hungarian speakers would also give their talk in English so far as possible. The projected length of talks is 20 minutes and you will be asked to submit the full text of your contribution by April 30th 2017 so that we can reproduce them and send them out to all participants. We do reserve the right to reject one or two submissions, but if the number of speakers exceeds 30 we will be compelled to stat selection, as the time frames of the conference do not allow us to exceed this number.

Costs of participation are not as yet clear, we are doing our best to keep expenses tolerable for those not from Budapest. If circumstances permit, we would like to organise a trip for the fourth day. Information about expenses will be sent out no later than January.

Please send your application by email to pocse@chello.hu by filling out the following application form, including an abstract of 10-15 sentences (in English) and send in your submission by no later than October 15th 2016. We will let you know by the end of October whether your paper has been accepted and inform you about the emerging programme of the conference.

We look forward to hearing from you,
best regards,

Éva Pócs
professor emeritus
principal investigator of the “East-West” ERC project

Application form for the conference PAST AND PRESENT

Name:

Occupation, position, title, employer:

Postal address:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Title of paper:

Abstract (10-15 sentences):