

Healing Fabrics

Healing Fabrics in Contemporary Practices of Bulgarian Pilgrims and Their Liturgical, Iconographic, and Theological Entanglements with Byzantine Religious Sensorium

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[1]

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Abstrakt:

This article focuses on the role of healing fabrics in contemporary practices of Bulgarian pilgrims who visit churches or monasteries hoping to be filled with energies believed to be present there. In order to be able to draw on the effects of miraculous objects (icons, relics) longer, the faithful often temporarily leave clothes or towels next to them, thus enabling their transformation from ordinary objects into transmitters of sacred powers. They also ask priests to bless fabrics with holy water, to anoint them or to pray over them, thus enhancing their healing properties.

I analyze the use of healing fabrics as I try to capture ontological assumptions of their efficacy. An analysis of ethnographic data is preceded by a theoretical introduction in which I highlight the linkage between the orthopraxis of modern-day pilgrims and Byzantine religious sensorium as perpetuated in Eastern Orthodox theology, liturgical rites, iconography, and religious literature popular in Bulgaria

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