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Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie

# BOOK PRESENTATION

11.12.2023, 17:00 Uhr, HS-A

IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock

## Ritualising Cultural Heritage and Re-enchanting Rituals in Europe Alessandro Testa



Cultural heritage, public rituality, and novel or unconventional religious practices have recently acquired an unprecedented centrality in Europe. Stemming from the past but operating in the present and branching out towards the future, these phenomena can function as catalysers of cultural synergy (or conversely cultural resistance) vis-à-vis the tectonic sociocultural changes of our late modern era. They do this by shaping new imaginaries and discourses, moulding senses of typicity and traditionality, and structuring feelings of authenticity and social belonging that lie at the very core of European local communities. All of these and other kin processes are conjured up and conveyed by symbols, the immaterial substance of which cultural life is made.

This book analyses these themes from the perspective of social anthropology and European ethnology. The workings and entanglements of cultural heritage, popular beliefs and practices, the invention of new symbols, and ritual forms of collective action are all hereby explored ethnographically and comparatively, while the concepts that we use to define and characterise them are thoroughly rethought and theorised. This book also systematises and reviews the conceptual state of the art of these terms and ideas, which are fundamentally crucial in the understanding of European cultures today. Notions of "rituality," "cultural heritage," and "re-enchantment," for instance, are the object of special scrutiny.

Welcome and opening by  
**Peter Schweitzer**  
(IKSA)

with  
**Gertraud Seiser** (IKSA) and  
**Sára Eszter Heidl** (Max-Weber-Kolleg, Uni Erfurt)  
as discussants

**Alessandro Testa** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, where between 2020 and 2022 he led the ERC CZ project "The Re-Enchantment of Central-Eastern Europe". Prior to this, he was Lise Meitner Postdoctoral Fellow and Adjunct at the University of Vienna (2015-2019).

Trained in History, Ethnology, and Religious Studies at the Universities of Florence, Rome, Paris, and Messina, he received his PhD in Social Anthropology in 2013. Later he obtained academic habilitations for professorship in Social Anthropology (2017), History of Religions (2022), and European Ethnology (2022).