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Report on the Visiting Lecture

On Friday, May 21, I had a visiting lecture at the MA program in Anthropology, Faculty of Political Sciences, National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest. The topic of the lecture was: *Lichen as an invented tradition*. It was accompanied by a power-point presentation with photographs from the Lichen pilgrimage site. The lecture was based on the field research that was a part of the intersession activities of the ReSET programme.

The main thesis of the lecture was that the Religious Complex of Lichen is a threefold invented tradition. It is invented in terms of religion, architecture and national tradition. However the crucial assertion was not that Lichen is an invented tradition, but that this tradition is successfully implemented through a combination of the symbolism and aesthetics used by the communist regime and a soap-opera poetics.

The students' reactions were first and foremost concerned with the comparison between Poland and Romania. Their two main points were: on one hand the similarity of the new icons in Lichen with pictures representing Nicolae Ceausescu during his rule. On the other hand, they pointed at the conspicuous differences in the religious objects' market, especially the lack of clear boundaries between religious and secular objects in Lichen.