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Panel 3.1: Culture and Performing Arts

Domesticated Religiosity in Pampanga, Philippines: The Lenten Pabasa

Religiosity is often cited as a Filipino characteristic. Rafael points out that for Tagalog Catholicism the process of selection, “fishing while listening,” leads to variants of Church orthodoxy. Frequently, minor departures from received orthodoxy are celebrated as local custom. More pronounced departures may be described as folk Catholicism. At a greater remove are colorum movements, which constitute heterodoxies. This paper examines the Kapampangan pabasa—a recited, vernacular account of Biblical history leading to Holy Week, Easter Sunday, and the Second Coming. For the Kapampangan pabasa, materiality includes folio manuscripts, hand-copied and illuminated; protocol includes a cantata-like interpolation at midnight. Thus an examination of the Kapampangan pabasa reveals local variations as part of folk tradition and regional identity.