

Religion Culture Society



MTA-SZTE
RESEARCH GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS CULTURE

RELIGION, CULTURE, SOCIETY

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Yearbook of the MTA-SZTE Research Group
for the Study of Religious Culture
Szeged, Hungary

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Edited by
Gábor BARNÁ



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CONTENTS

Foreword. Gábor BARNÁ	7
FRAUHAMMER, Krisztina: An Unexplored Source Group of the Religious Life: the Prayerbooks.....	9
GYÖNGYÖSSY, Orsolya: Parliamentary Elections as “Holy War”? Priests Involved in Politics in a Small Town on the Great Plain in the Second Half of the 19 th Century	31
BARNÁ, Gábor: The Living Rosary Society as Frame and Form of the Marian Devotion. The Feminization of the Marian Devotion – A Case Study	48
FÁBIÁN, Gabriella: On the Spread of the Living Rosary Confraternities in Transylvania.....	66
KEREKES, Ibolya: Contemplative Dominican Nuns in Szeged.....	82
POVEDÁK, István: The Monk and the White Shaman. Competitive Discourses and Conspiracy Theories around the Reinterpreted Cult of Blessed Eusebius	95
POVEDÁK, Kinga: Religion, Music, Community. The Interferences of the Pentecostal Charismatic Renewal and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal	114
BELHÁJ, Abdessamad – SPEIDL, Bianka: Marriage as Appropriation: Evidence from the Hungarian Muslim Community	129

GLÄSSER, Nobert:	
The Holy Priest of Kálló. A Reform Jewish Integration Narrative in Interwar Hungary.....	155
Contributors.....	175

Foreword

On 1st July 2013, the MTA-SZTE Research Group for the Study of Religious Culture, attached to the Szeged Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, began its activity. It came into being as a result of the cooperation between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, who financially supports the Research Group, and the Faculty of Arts at Szeged University. This Research Group has deep roots in Szeged University, reaching back to the work and scientific legacy of Sándor Bálint (1904-1980), Professor of the Department (1947-1966), who remains the foremost scholar of ethnology of religion in Hungary. Building on his academic achievements, research on religious culture has strengthened in recent decades at the Department of Ethnology in Szeged. This department has become one of the outstanding European research centres of ethnology of religion. The activity of the MTA-SZTE continues this thorough tradition of many decades.

The MTA-SZTE Research Group for the Study of Religious Culture is multidisciplinary; it acknowledges the complexity of religions in our present times, whether they are examined as systems of beliefs, organisations or actions. Accordingly, its research methods and ramifications involve various disciplines, including ethnography, anthropology, sociology, history and Islamic studies. All research projects of the MTA-SZTE Research Group aim to study the transformations of religious cultures in light of their historical, cultural and social settings. A special focus is laid on social transformations of religions in the 19th-21st centuries. For this reason, the research group launches its yearbook under the title of *Religion, Culture, Society*.

The research group reaches other sectors of the society. Although it operates in a historically Christian (Roman Catholic and Protestant) social and cultural environment, it shows genuine interest in the Jewish and Muslim religious cultures and an outlook towards other religions and/or religious movements, including the so-called neopagan movements that have strengthened in recent decades in both Hungary and other European countries. The inter-religious and the ecumenical perspectives provide a stimulating environment for the research, making a distinctive contribution to both the local and the international academic community. In cooperation with theological and religious studies, it strives to carry out its work with a sound historical basis in which theory and practice, empirical facts and their interpretation, historicity and normativity are closely intertwined.

The associates of the research group are experienced in the exploration of historical sources, in fieldwork and in international scholarly life. They benefit from the strong and motivating research culture of the Szeged school of ethnology.

The academic research group presents its findings at conferences in Hungary and abroad, in its own publications (Books on Research of Religious Culture series), and in its English-language yearbook *Religion, Culture, Society* launched with this edition. The first volume of the yearbook contains case studies from recent research.

Gábor BARNA
editor

Krisztina FRAUHAMMER

AN UNEXPLORED SOURCE GROUP OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE: THE PRAYERBOOKS

Abstract: The paper presents the first findings of the study of a previously completely unexplored source group, prayerbooks. Although famous individuals and the authors of prayerbooks have written on the subject, there are hardly any syntheses or scholarly works on prayerbooks. This is especially true regarding the prayerbooks published after the Baroque period. We have been collecting for years and building up a digital database on prayerbooks with the aim of filling this gap. In the present article the author sets out the need to explore this genre, the benefits such a study will bring, the development of prayerbooks after 1800 and the major trends in the publication of prayerbooks.

Keywords: prayerbook, 19th century, spirituality, database

In this study I present the first findings of the investigation of a previously unexplored research group: prayerbooks.¹ My attention was drawn to these books years ago when I completed a research project analysing contemporary prayer texts. In the course of that research I had analysed prayers written spontaneously, without any restrictions, by individual visitors to shrines. It occurred to me that it could be interesting to make an investigation in the opposite direction, examining the kind of prayer texts the church offers those wishing to pray.² This question led me to the prayerbooks and the realisation that no one had ever made a comprehensive study of them.

Database of Hungarian prayerbooks published after 1800

For the reasons mentioned here I began to take stock of these prayerbooks, catalogue them and find a way to make this vast corpus of sources searchable. It seemed to me that these needs could best be met from an open access database on the internet. After several years of collecting work, data collection and preparations, this database was launched in July 2013. Since then we have been

1 This article was written and the research carried out with the support of the Hungarian National Research Fund (OTKA) Grant NK81502.

2 I would like to express my thanks to Gábor Barna who drew my attention to this subject and has helped my research with his expert advice and discussions.

continuously uploading data, taking into account the following considerations: language, author (with title, occupation, rank), date of publication, season, place of publication, publisher, printing house, origin of the work, denominational connection, connection to an order (monastic order, religious confraternity, etc.), genre, classification (target audience), prayers, songs, meditations, number of illustrations, subject matter, engraver.³

My investigation covered books and prayer booklets intended for lay believers, for collective or private devotions, containing largely prayer texts and related meditations. I did not regard it as my aim to collect offices, missals, breviaries, etc. serving liturgical purposes, and I did not study the hymn books either. I chose 1800 as the starting date for the research history reasons mentioned above. I have left the closing date open in the hope that I will eventually be able to examine the material right up to the present. In addition, it is clear that the 19th century brought big progress in the publication of prayerbooks, due in part to the rapid development of printing, the spread of literacy and reading culture, and in part to the changes in church life at that time.

The long-term aim is naturally an overview without time limits, but this will require many more years of work. In the first years of research I have been able to focus on only a few hundred books, most of them intended for Roman Catholics, published between 1850 and 1940. The first conclusions of the study rest on these foundations.

The spread of literacy, reading culture, printing

Before writing about the changes taking place in the church in the period and its new tasks, I consider it important to draw attention to a few circumstances that, in my opinion, were instrumental in giving printed materials such an important role in the church's new pastorisation strategy.

The first of these circumstances was the positive changes that occurred with the spread of literacy. Thanks to the efforts made by enlightenment for general literacy (the expansion of primary education), the number of new readers greatly increased. Women, children and workers swelled the ranks of readers.⁴ Under the influence of these factors a marked change can be observed in reading culture from the 19th century. Researchers dealing with the cultural history of reading and books speak of this period as the time of a "reading revolution". The gradual spread of compulsory schooling, as well as the appearance of a social stratum defining itself as a "bourgeoisie of rising talents" contributed with increasing effectiveness to making printed materials the most important tools of information and training. It was this general reading public that no longer read just a few standard works intensively again and again, but brought its reading habits into

³ The database of prayerbooks published after 1800 can be accessed at: http://neprajz.bibl.u-szeged.hu/IMA/ima_list.php. I am grateful to Péter Kószeg who built the database.

⁴ LYONS 2000. 348.

line with the steady stream of new works, thereby creating a relatively dense network of open communication coming from the centre of the private sphere, in other words, the “public sphere”.⁵ “The expression reading revolution thus means both the widening of the reading public and the changes of fundamental importance that occurred in the reading public’s reading practice and its social function,” writes Frédéric Barbier.⁶ In this way, beside the traditional reading matter (almanacs, cheap popular literature and spiritual readings on religious topics), secular publications and various periodicals appeared in growing numbers and were “feverishly consumed” by the reading public.⁷ These processes also reached Hungary, although with a certain delay, and had an influence on church publishing. In part by opening new perspectives for pastoral care and in part by facing representatives of the different denominations with new challenges. They flooded the reading public with previously unseen quantities of modern secular reading matter containing liberal ideals. To counterbalance all this the churches also had to pay special attention. As the prayerbook *Mária hű leánya* [Mary’s Faithful Daughter] also points out: “Beware of false prophets. Do you know which are the most dangerous? The bad books and newspapers with which Satan is flooding the world, causing the loss of souls. Bad writings have an alarmingly great influence, especially on the mood of the young. [...] If you wish to remain pious and innocent, you must be cautious and restrained in your reading. A God-fearing young woman must not read books that are in conflict with the Catholic religion or Christian morals. [...] Immoral pictures are even more harmful than bad books. [...] As for newspapers and entertaining magazines, read only those that are Catholic in spirit [...] A good child of Mary does not read a lot simply as a way of spending time.”⁸

Parallel with all these changes, book culture as a whole was undergoing en-bourgeoisement and its national character was changing, that is, the Hungarian language was becoming predominant. Besides the expansion of book publishing, the number of printing houses increased and the Hungarian printing industry developed technologically. An independent book trade and the periodical press also came into being.⁹

5 The concept of the public sphere and the theory of its emergence was created by Jürgen Habermas in his book “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere” that became world famous and went through many editions. The above quotation is taken from the foreword to the Hungarian-language edition published by Osiris in 1999. HABERMAS 1999. 9.

6 BARBIER 2005. 247.

7 BARBIER 2005. 247.

8 *Mária hű leánya* [Mary’s Faithful Daughter] 1894. 141-145.

9 FÜLÖP 2010. 49-51.

Changing church, new tasks, new tools

The period set for the prayerbooks to be examined is known to historians as the Recent or Modern Age. The two main ideological trends that emerged in this period – the enlightenment and liberalism – also resulted in many new challenges in the history and operation of the church; the members of the clergy had to elaborate responses and strategies different from those applied earlier.

In the new church policy principles the concept of tolerance acquired a new interpretation, bringing big changes in the question of denominational pluralism. In this way, the requirement of a religiously neutral state and denominational freedom became a determining aspiration in the 19th century. In conjunction with this, the principle of separation of state and church also became a basic tenet in liberal thinking in that period; this was naturally accompanied by strong criticism of the church, the exclusion of its institutions from public life and the dismantling of its privileges.¹⁰ These questions and problems were present in Hungary too throughout the 19th century, although with differing intensity and extent. It is not my aim to give a comprehensive overview of these processes as the subject has been covered extensively in the literature; I shall refer only to the main processes touching on our topic.

Firstly, I must mention the Josephinism that preceded the period examined here but exercised a deep influence on its first decades. The period on which Joseph II¹¹ left an imprint with his measures (dissolution of the monastic orders, centralisation of the seminaries, etc.), and his ideas on the church as an instrument serving the state had a big influence on life in the first decades of the 19th century characterised by an absence of the church and religion. This can be felt in the church reform movement that unfolded in the 1820s, and even in the 1822 synod in Pozsony that sought solutions to remedy the problems. The monastic orders were restored, the banned congregations and confraternities were gradually formed again, and the training of priests was resumed in the dioceses. Nevertheless it became increasingly apparent that the Catholic church could not preserve its centuries-old positions and privileges.

In this changed situation where Hungarian society was changing according to the principles of bourgeois liberalism, it became especially important for the church to deepen the life of its believers and make it more intimate and to protect them from the harmful effects of the anti-faith trends attacking religion and the church in the wake of the new ideals that were spreading. It had to elaborate a new and dynamic pastorisation strategy. Books and the press became one of the main tools for this as the church saw enormous opportunities in the press that had become free in Hungary in the course of the 19th century and in its strengthening.¹²

10 GÁRDONYI 2006. 267-273.

11 Joseph II, 1780-1790, ruler of Hungary, also Holy Roman Emperor, Archduke of Austria and King of Bohemia.

12 MÉSZÁROS 1998. 12.

In addition the already mentioned spread of literacy and the growing number of printing houses also created a new situation. They developed a new model for the wider dissemination of books and newspapers, setting up a company in 1848, the Good and Cheap Book Publishing Company (that later became the Saint Stephen Society: author's note). They were of the opinion that anyone who failed to act in the given situation had no future.¹³ As Bishop Mihály Fogarassy wrote in the columns of *Religio és Nevelés* [Religion and Education] on the occasion of the establishment of the Good and Cheap Book Publishing Company: "He who does not make use of the beneficial effects of the free press to spread the one true religion and pure morality is unfaithful to the church he respects in his heart, and whose interests for the most part can be protected only through literature".¹⁴ Clearly, they placed great hope in the new medium: "We look with great longing for the company initiated by His Grace, the Lord Bishop Mihály Fogarasy and followed with such sacred desires and such hopeful expectation [...] to begin its activity because, if anything, this company meets a real need of our time."¹⁵ Among many other things, the publisher set the aim of publishing prayerbooks: "For the same reason, one of the first steps taken by the company will be to ensure that families will be able to obtain good prayerbooks covering all needs, gospel books, Bible stories, lives of the saints, etc."¹⁶ The same demand is expressed by the Franciscan Kálmán Mészáros in his prayerbook *Áhitat koszorúja* [Wreath of Piety]: "It was a complaint expressed for years from many quarters, especially among the Hungarian-speaking faithful of Budapest, that they do not have a prayerbook containing the customary prayers as well as hymns that are now in almost general use. Since the old Trattner prayerbook at first used only in the Budapest churches of the Franciscan order and later adopted in the other churches with the general introduction of religious services in the Hungarian-language, is no longer available, and moreover since it was published long ago and no longer meets the present requirements as it lacks most of the popular prayers and songs, I have therefore taken the opportunity, now that the above prayer and hymn book that was already inadequate is no longer available at all, to replace it with a fuller book that better meets the present requirements."¹⁷

An examination of the years of publication of the prayerbooks clearly shows this conscious effort on the part of the church from the 1850s. Many new and previously unknown prayerbooks printed in large numbers appeared on the

13 Mészáros 1998. 19.

14 *Religio és Nevelés* 1848/35. 286.

15 *Egyházi Literatúrai Lap* 1848/11. 42.

16 *Religio és Nevelés* 1848/36. 299.

17 *Áhitat koszorúja* 1885. 705.

market.¹⁸ The growing number of printing houses naturally also joined in this publishing fever, as the prayerbook genre was also good for business.

Wider trends

In the following section I attempt to show the wider trends emerging from the mid-1800s, taking into account the thematic units. In keeping with my original aims I strive to link these considerations also to the wider processes in the history of spirituality, the church, culture and society.

New editions of old prayerbooks

First of all I would like to refer to the processes of continuity that can be observed in the publication of prayerbooks: this is a genre that looks back on centuries of tradition and even before the big upswing in the 19th century it was an important segment of church book publishing and of reading culture in general. It can be said on the basis of a first examination of the material collected so far that many prayerbooks that were already popular in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries remained in circulation. For example: Péter Pázmány's *Keresztényi imádságos könyv* [Book of Christian Prayer] (1606), Erzsébet Zsigrai's *Jó illatú rózsáskert* [Perfumed Rose Garden] (1664), Péter Ágoston's *Mennyei követ* [Heavenly Messenger] (1681), later published under the title *A két atyafi szent szüzek Gertrúd és Mechtild imádságoskönyve* [Prayerbook of the two sacred virgin sisters, Gertrude and Mechtild]¹⁹, *Utítárs* [Travel Companion] (1640), *Lelki fegyverház* [Spiritual Armoury] (1693), *Lelki kincs* [Spiritual Treasure] (1773) to name only a few. We also know from the

18 To mention only a few of the better known: n.n. *Szűz Mária szeplőtelen szent Szívének tisztelete a hitetlenek és bűnösök megtéréséért*. [Veneration of the Immaculate Sacred Heart of the Virgin Mary for the Conversion of the Unbelieving and Sinful.] Stephaneum Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1857; Nogall, János: *Vezérfkönyv a legfőlségesebb Oltáriszentség imádására*. [Guidebook for Veneration of the Most Sublime Sacrament.] Országos Központi Oltár-Egyesület, Székesfehérvár 1867; Béla Tárkányi's prayerbooks: *Lelki manna, az az imádságos és énekeskönyv, különösen a kath. kereszt. ifjúság számára*. [Spiritual Manna, Book of Prayers and Hymns especially for Catholic Christian Youth.] Pest, 1853; *Jézus szent szívének imádása*. [Veneration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.] Eger, 1853; *Ajtatosság liliumai*. A boldogságos szűz Mária szeplőtlen fogantatásának tiszteletére. [Lilies of Devotion. In veneration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.] Pest, 1855; *Szomorúak vigasztalója*. Imádságos és énekeskönyv a hét fájdalomú szűz anya tiszteletére. [Consolation for the Sad. Book of prayers and hymns on the seven sorrows of the Virgin Mother.] Pest, 185; *Vezércsillag az üdv. elnyerésére*. Imakönyv a kath. nőnem használatára. [Lodestar for salvation. Prayerbook for the use of Catholic females.] Pest, 1860.

19 Both volumes were translations based on the work of Martin von Cochem, the famous German 17th century Baroque spiritual writer. Cochem wrote in the vernacular and his emotionally rich works often drawing on mediaeval and mystical traditions were popular throughout Europe, including Hungary, right up to the early 20th century. Among his prayerbooks the *Kleine-, Grosse- und Mittlere-Himmelschlüssel*, the *Grosse- und Mittlere Myrrhengarten*, and the *Grosse- és Mittlere Baumgarten* were frequently reprinted in German in the course of the 19th century. The Germans living in Hungary used these books right up to their expulsion in 1946; they played an important role in the preservation of their identity. For further details, see: FRAUHAMMER 2013. 8-11.

bibliography of Béla Holl²⁰ and my own data that, with a few exceptions (Arany korona), these popular books were reprinted right up to the end of the 1850s.²¹ This is further confirmation that the 1850s marked a watershed in the publication and reinterpretation of prayerbooks.

Prayerbooks with mixed content and serving general purposes, containing mainly selections from other books and prayers of famous authors, continued to be the most popular. The most popular prayerbooks of all were: *Szent hangzatok* [Sacred Sounds], *Áhitat gyakorlat* [Devotional Practice], *Lelki Manna* [Spiritual Manna], *Mennyei hangok* [Heavenly Voices], *Orgona virágok* [Flowers], *Vezércsillag* [Lodestone]. They were almost identical in their division into sections and in the main chapters. They offered prayer texts, meditations, instruction and litanies not only for morning and evening prayers, but also for the feasts of the church year, the saints' days, holy mass, the Way of the Cross and the rosary devotions, the veneration of Mary and the Lord Jesus, confession and communion. The most frequently cited among the prayers selected were texts from the greatest mediaeval church writers, mystics and saints (Bonaventúra, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Thomas à Kempis, Saint Bridget, Saints Gertrude and Mechtild, Saint Augustine, etc.), but in many places prayers of the new saints of the age, Saint Alphonsus Liguori and Saint Margaret Alacoque²² were also included. At the same time a gradual increase in the number of prayers given for everyday situations of need can also be observed, and many books strove to give believers the liturgical regulations, church rules and meditations for the given church feast, thereby also instructing them in the basic theological principles. There was also a growing tendency to merge hymns and prayers that was obviously aimed at helping their use in church and raising the standard of the musical part of the litany. It should be mentioned here that thanks to Béla Tárkányi and the Zsasskovszky brothers it was also in the mid-1850s (1854) that the first hymn book with musical notation, *Katolikus egyházi énektárat* [Catholic Hymn Book] was published. This spread throughout the country and went through numerous reprints and revisions.

Beside the works with general contents, the titles of the prayerbooks reflect the most popular devotions of the period: the flourishing cult of the Holy Sacrament, the Sacred Heart and the Virgin Mary, as well as the unabated popularity of the cult of Saint Anthony.

20 Béla Holl (1922-1997), Piarist literary historian and bibliographer.

21 A thorough impact study would be needed to further trace their prayer texts.

22 Both were beatified and then canonised in the period examined here, one of the reasons why their cult was so alive and well known. Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), a church father wrote many works that also had a big influence on popular piety. We can also thank him for the prayerbook *Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament* was translated into Hungarian by János Nogall in 1867. He was canonised in 1839. According to her autobiography, Saint Margaret Alacoque (1647-1690) received a private revelation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that was to play a great part in the development of the cult of the Sacred Heart. She was beatified in 1864 and canonised in 1920. Dírós 2009. Online access: <http://www.katolikus.hu/szentek/>

Prayerbooks intended for particular social strata: prayers for women

It is well known that the period examined was marked by the bourgeois transformation of Hungarian society resulting in major changes in social life and the spread of the bourgeois nuclear family way of life. The new social mobility paths led to the growing role of new cultural phenomena in social prestige, bringing general culture and family child-raising to the fore and throwing a new light on the role of mothers, gender relations and the institution of marriage.²³ Both secular and church publishing had to take into account all these questions and those affected by them, their demands and tastes.²⁴

As already mentioned, these changes led to the appearance of new genres and the reinterpretation of old genres. The new female readers who appeared at that time had more secular tastes than their predecessors. Cookery books, women's magazines, printed materials for women and above all cheap romantic novels became highly popular. They included intimate details of private life and the inner life of the private sphere. It was generally thought at the time that this was often a source of dangers: it could excite the passions and stimulate the female imagination. It could also arouse irrational, romantic expectations, and even erotic notions threatening the accepted order. It was in this way that, in the opinion of Martin Lyons, the female adultery represented by Madame Bovary, Anna Karenina, Effi Briest, Ibsen's Nora and others became the archetypal form of social transgression appearing in novels of the period.²⁵

Prayerbooks published and renewed for particular social groups (children, unmarried young women, youth, women, etc.) can be included among the new or reinterpreted genre in the course of the 19th century, especially in the second half and towards the end of that period.²⁶ These acquired their main role principally in religious and moral training, in counterbalancing the growing influence of popular reading matter particularly in urban environments, and in constructing the different social roles.

Blanka Teleki, one of the most famous women of the time, wrote: "The woman stands in a vast space, she realises the full importance of her situation. The future generation is in her hands. To stand firmly in the private circle, at the altar of family life, to discharge her duty as a female patriot, to act conscientiously as a mother,

23 WESSELY 2004. 190.

24 NAGYDIÓSI 1957. 193.

25 LYONS 2000 354.

26 Separate prayerbooks were also published for men and the elderly. To mention just a few: Spett, György: *Hitvalló imakönyv. A művelt férfiközönség számára* [Confessional Prayerbook. For the educated male public], Stephaneum nyomda és Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1903; Novák, László: *Uram, maradj velünk. öregek és betegek lelki gyámolítására*, [Lord, Stay With Us. For the spiritual support of the elderly and the sick.] Stephaneum nyomda és Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1904; Egger, Ágost: *Keresztény apa*. [Christian Father] Translated by a priest from Szatmár County, Stephaneum nyomda és Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1904.

this is her task now".²⁷ The notions of the good mother and the patriotic female arose from this and similar declarations, and it was on this basis that increasingly urgent voices called for the education of girls and women. The provision of a suitable education – independently of religious denomination – was indispensable for the family and the nation.²⁸ From the first timid statements reflecting doubts about whether girls should be taught to read and write at all, by the mid-19th century in Hungary too it became a generally accepted principle that girls aged 6 to 12 years should be able to acquire the same basic education as boys in the primary schools, while older girls should be able to study in institutions where they were taught modern knowledge in the national spirit by female teachers.²⁹ It is important for the correct interpretation of these processes to note also that the changing roles of women and their emancipation began from the top down, starting mainly from the elite level, and only slowly spread to the wider social strata.

Naturally, this does not mean that the different denominations did not have prayerbooks for women before the 19th century. Prayerbooks compiled for women existed among Catholics, Protestants and Jews. However, many books addressed to women show that the new demands of readers led in the case of all denominations to updating and rethinking the contents of the prayerbooks following the second half of the 19th century. This is most evident in the appearance of prayers written for female life situations and the expansion of their repertoire. Besides women, children and youth were the other big social group whose spiritual care appeared as a new task in church life. Works published for them form the next large group of prayerbooks for special strata published in the period.

Prayerbooks in the service of youth education

Another Europe-wide phenomenon that can also be linked to the period examined was the creation of the education system and the introduction of compulsory schooling. This was a time when kindergartens were established, institutional education for girls set up, and extensive teacher training organised; moreover various forms of vocational training were introduced and universities renewed in the spirit of the modern age.³⁰ Education was thus a central question and the church (especially the Catholic and Protestant churches) continued to be among the determining bodies. The first teacher training college in Eger was established by the Catholic church, and two classical teaching orders, the Piarists and the Jesuits, continued to play a big part in secondary education. It was an important aspiration of both big denominations to operate a school at primary level beside the church in every village. Together with the classical orders involved in education, during the course of the century many new charitable societies, male and female

27 Writing of Blanka Teleki published in: FÁBRI 1999, 226.

28 For more information on the question of the education of girls and women, see: FÁBRI 1999, 129-145; FEHÉR 2005, 265-304.

29 FEHÉR 2005, 13.

30 KÉRI 1996. Online access: <http://nostromo.pte.hu/technika/nevtvazl.hun>

orders and congregations were set up to teach and educate the poor masses and to provide social care. The Sisters of the Holy Cross, Les Auxiliatrices des Ames du Purgatoire, the Verbites, the Calasancians, the Salesians, and the community of Oblates appeared in Hungary during this period.

It is an indication of the importance of the cause of education that it occupies a big place also in the prayerbook genre. This was partly because of the denominational nature of education, and partly because the moral education of children occupied a prominent place among the aims of teaching in the schools. As István Majer wrote in 1848 in *Religio és Nevelés* "... under the regulations, one of the main tasks of the schools is to teach the child to pray."³¹ According to the commonly held opinion of the time, in the eyes of the parents children were not individuals with their own value but the citizens or soldiers of the future and thus the principal goal was to educate them to be useful citizens.³² "The child is a person to be moulded, who is in need of education, and it is only in this way that he can become a real person; right from the moment of birth and throughout youth he is in need of a guide to lead him along the winding paths of life to his ordained goal, and this guide is: education. (...) But what exactly is a good education? The answer to that question is easy: accustoming him to good from an early age – and away from evil. The child must be accustomed to the good from a very early age, while his heart is still tender and open to all that is beautiful and good." wrote the author in the foreword to the prayerbook *Nefelejts* [Never Forget].³³ And how did they wish to achieve this? The foreword to the prayerbook *Áhítat gyakorlat* [Devotional Practice] gives the answer: "As the root of all dangers lies in pride, pride is the beginning of man's separation from God. We must therefore provide an effective antidote to this terrible scourge, and it can be no other than piety. The practices of piety are: aspiring for good, devout prayers, reading sacred books, the works of Christian charity, a sober life, self-denial, self-restraint, fasting, chastisement of the body, penitence, but the principal practice of piety is prayer."³⁴ The period's mistrust of older children and the fear that they will go astray can be felt in these lines. This thought is also expressed by Mihály Bogisich in his prayerbook: "I had the spiritual needs of youth educated in higher and secondary schools before my eyes when I selected prayers and petitions for all circumstances in the life of young people that offer the surest weapon against the spiritual coldness, the indifference to faith and arrogant intellectual culture of our age so ardently pursuing material goods, and rapidly infecting young hearts with its tempting teachings."³⁵ This was why, in addition to the customary prayers and sections found in prayerbooks, most prayerbooks written for youth contained a separate chapter on questions of education theory in which they explain to the reader the basic pillars of Catholic morality as the main criteria of a good Christian youth, holding up the model of good Christian behaviour expected by the

31 *Religio és Nevelés* 1848/29. 229.

32 PUKÁNSZKY 2005. 79.

33 *Nefelejts* 1850. IV-V.

34 *Áhítat gyakorlat* 1857. VIII-X.

35 *Őseink buzgósága* 1888. foreword

Catholic church and at the same time counterbalancing the harmful influences of the age dangerous to youth.

Special prayerbooks written for different age groups of youth, schools, homes for children and other institutions and organisations retained their importance during later decades of the period, indicating that the pastorisation of youth had become an unavoidable and important task for the church.³⁶ The Regnum Marianum Association formed in 1902 was given an important place in this: together with a broad range of pastoral activity (religious education, Scouts), it also took the lead among others in the publication of character-forming and religious books.³⁷ Together with these, there was a whole series of prayerbooks in the period, the most popular and most often republished of which was the 1912 prayerbook of Sándor Sík and Antal Schütz titled *“Imádságoskönyv egyszersmind kalauz a lelki életre a tanuló ifjúság számára”* [Prayerbook and guide to the life of the spirit for young students].³⁸

The work of another spiritual movement must be mentioned in connection with the spiritual care of younger children: this was the Heart Guard linked to the Jesuits, that arose out of the children’s section of *Szív újság* [Heart Paper], also launched by the Jesuits. The aim of the movement was to strengthen the teaching of religious morals and patriotism, and within this the love of family life, respect for authority, to educate young people for work and a sense of duty.³⁹ The paper

36 To mention only a few prayerbooks for youth: *Áhítat gyakorlat*. Imák s énekekben a római katolikus ifjúság épülésére. [Devotional Practice. Prayers and songs for the edification of Roman Catholic youth.] Imre Szepesi, Piarist teacher, Pest 1857; *Nefelejts vagy azon erkölcsi mondasok, énekek és imádságok gyűjteménye, melyek a kisdodó Intézetbe járó kisdetek szíveik és elméjük képzettetésére szolgálnak*. [Never Forget, collection of moral sayings, songs and prayers to shape the hearts and minds of infants attending kindergartens.] Péter Varga, teacher in the Inner City Kindergarten Institute. Nyomtatott Müller A. Pesten 1850; *Egi Manna*. Ima- és énekeskönyv, a keresztény katolikus ifjúság számára. [Heavenly Manna. Book of prayers and songs for Christian Catholic youth.] Zádori Ev. János (ed.), Steinbrener Ker. János kath. kiadóhivatal, Budapest 1882; *Énekeljete az Úrnak*. Imádságos és énekes könyv a serdülő katolikus ifjúság számára. [Sung Unto the Lord. Prayer and song book for adolescent Catholic youth.] Ferenc Kersch, cathedral choirmaster and Dr. János Kiss university professor (eds.), Pesti könyvnyomda-részvény-társaság, Budapest 1898; *Venite Adoremus!* Katolikus Oktató- és imádságoskönyv a tanulóifjúság számára. [Venite Adoremus! Catholic instruction and prayerbook for young students.] Dr. Incze Láng cist. R. priest, religious education teacher, Szent István Társulat Kiadása, Budapest 1902; *Ifjúsági imakönyv serdülő ifjak és leányok számára*. [Youth Prayerbook for adolescent boys and girls.] János Hock Kőbánya parish priest, Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt. Budapest 1903; Sándor Sík – Antal Schütz: *Imádságos könyv, egyszersmind lelki kalauz a tanuló ifjúság számára*. [Prayerbook and guide to the life of the spirit for young students.] Szent István Társulat, Budapest 1912; *Nefelejts: imakönyv a kat. ifjúság részére*. [Never Forget. Prayerbook for Roman Catholic Youth.] Compiled by Lőrinc Biró. Szent Bonaventura Nyomda, Kolozsvár 1923; *Istenem, mindenem: ifjúsági imakönyv*. [My Lord, My All: prayerbook for youth.] Szent István Társulat, Stephaneum Nyomda, Budapest 1928.

37 For a thorough list of these books, see SÖVEGES 2007. 252.

38 See the bibliographic data in footnote No. 55.

39 DÍÓS 1993. XIII. 321.

was edited by Mária Blaskó, a prolific writer, the author of over fifty works, including many prayerbooks, prayer booklets and prayer leaflets.⁴⁰

The world wars – special situation – special prayerbooks

The church had to give a response not only to changes caused by the transformation of society, the world-scale military events of the 20th century also called for action. Amidst the difficulties of war it had to offer consolation, first of all to the soldiers at the front, but also to those who remained behind in the hinterland. The thematic prayerbooks published at that time clearly show that the churches responded almost immediately to these challenges.⁴¹ Indeed, the Saint Stephen Society distributed publications of this type free of charge in the barracks, in hospitals and on the battlefields. They also strove to ensure that they were available not only in Hungarian but also in German, Slovak, Croatian and in cases even in Polish. István Mészáros has shown that in 1914 670,000 copies were printed, in 1915 625,000, in 1916 345,000, and in 1917 183,000 copies.⁴² These figures confirm the finding by Ibolya Maczák that prayerbooks for soldiers represented an important (if not the most important) segment not only of war-time book publishing but also in general of war-time church activity and charity.⁴³ This was true for Catholic, Protestant and Jewish activity alike.⁴⁴ We can read in an article in *Protestáns Szemle* [Protestant Review] in 1915: “We see with pleasure that the war-time prayers and tracts are valuable and useful things. In general they are far superior

40 A few of the author’s prayerbooks: *Cseréljük szívét*. Gyermek imakönyv. [Let us change our hearts. Prayerbook for children.] Budapest 1924; *Jézusom, itt vagyok!* Imaóra elemista gyermekeknek. [My Jesus, I am here! Prayer hour for primary school children.] Budapest 1932; *Jézuska szeress!* Oktatás és napi imák kicsi gyermekeknek. [Little Jesus, love me! Instruction and daily prayers for young children.] Budapest 1934; *Krisztus király serege*. Oktató- és imádságos füzet a „Katolikus Akcióról” gyermekeknek. [The army of Christ the King. Instruction and prayerbook on “Catholic Action” for children.] Budapest 1936; *Imádságos képeskönyvem*. Iskolás koron alóli és 1-2. o. kisgyermekek számára. [My Picture Prayerbook. For pre-school, 1st and 2nd year pupils.] Budapest 1936. For a detailed survey of the author’s other works, see the entry on Mária Blaskó in *Katolikus Lexikon* vol. I. Diós 1993. I. 870.

41 To give only a few examples: *Imák és intelmek a magyar kath. hadfiak számára*. [Prayers and Exhortations for Hungarian Catholic soldiers.] By Bertalan Molnár Vid. Revised by Aladár Reviczky, Szent István Társulat, Budapest 1909; Aladár Reviczky: *Bizzál fiam!* Sebesült katonák részére. [Have Trust, My Son. For wounded soldiers.] Szent István Társulat, Budapest 1914; Aladár Reviczky: *Uram, irgalmazz nekünk*. Az itthonmaradtak imádságai a háború idejére. [Lord, Have Mercy On Us. Prayers for those at home in time of war.] Szent István Társulat, Budapest 1914; Aladár Reviczky: *Elesett hőseinkért*. Imafüzet. [For Our Fallen Heroes. Prayer booklet.] Szent István Társulat, Budapest. 1915; *Seregek Ura*. Katolikus magyar katonák ima- és énekeskönyve. [Lord of Armies. Prayer and song book for Catholic Hungarian Soldiers.] Ed. János Mészáros, Szeged, 1930.

42 MÉSZÁROS 1998. 137.

43 MACZÁK 2010. 99.

44 An example of prayerbooks for soldiers from each of these denominations: Gerzson Szolnoki Calvinist minister: *Háborús idők imádságos könyve hadbavonultak és azok családjai számára*. [Book of Prayers in Time of War for Soldiers and Their Families.] 10th edition, Hegedűs és Sándor Könyvkiadóhivatala, Debrecen 1916; n.n. *Pajzs és Vért*. Imádságok izraelita vallású katonák számára. [Shield and Armour. Prayers for Israelite soldiers.] Országos Rabbiegyesület, Magyar Könyvnyomda és Kiadóvállalat Rt., Budapest 1915. Norbert Glässer drew my attention to the latter prayerbook; I take this opportunity to thank him for a digital copy of the book.

to war-time sermons. Certainly, their preparation and publication will be one of the thoughts and actions of most lasting value in the work done during the war by the Hungarian Protestant church."⁴⁵

These books differ from the other publications in their content too. In addition to general prayers they also contain prayers suited to situations of war, death and suffering, prayers for the country, for the homeland, for the leader, prayers before a charge on the battlefield, prayers in case of injury, prayer for a good death, prayer for eternal salvation, to be raised above earthly suffering, etc.

Interestingly, it cannot be said that there is a significant difference in the prayer repertoire of the different denominations. "Despite the fact that the authors stressed, for example, how important it was that Calvinists should not read the Catholic bible and vice versa, there are no fundamental differences in the kinds of prayers. The reason for this is mainly the war theme: these prayerbooks do not often mention (or if they do it is not in an emphatic way or prominent place) such questions as the sacrament doctrine or the role of the Virgin Mary, that would be influenced by denominational allegiance."⁴⁶ notes Ibolya Maczák in the study cited above. An article published in *Egyenlőség*, the Reform Jewish weekly, throws an interesting light on this question. They hold up the example of a wealthy Catholic woman who bought Jewish prayerbooks for Jewish soldiers, in contrast to an aristocratic woman who sent Catholic prayerbooks to Jewish soldiers at the front.⁴⁷ It seems that in the emergency, charity and patriotism at times overrode denominational allegiance, and the war-time prayerbooks also met this requirement.

Catholic revival, "renaissance"

Among the more important trends, mention must be made of the church revival in the first decades of the 20th century; it is also reflected in the publication of spiritual works. Behind it was an aspiration of the Catholic church that came to the fore in the interwar years, when it saw the way forward through the difficulties of the period in developing a living religious life based on Christ's teachings, grace and dogmas.⁴⁸ The change in political life after 1919 in a direction described as national Christian had a favourable influence on these aims. In the opinion of Gábor Adriányi, after the sad experience of the Republic of Soviets and the national catastrophe of the Trianon peace treaty, only Christian foundations could be counted on in the national reconstruction, accordingly the successive governments strove for constructive and close cooperation with the churches, above all with the Catholic Church.⁴⁹ These changes effectively contributed to the flourishing of the Christian press, lay activity in religious affairs and monastic orders

45 *Protestáns Szemle* 1915/XXVII. 87.

46 MACZÁK 2010. 100.

47 *Egyenlőség* 24 June 1916. 10.

48 SÖVEGES 2007. 228.

49 ADRIÁNYI 2005. 182.

and the unprecedented growth of Catholic societies.⁵⁰ These processes are clearly reflected in the wide range of religious publications, particularly the big boom that can be observed from the 1920s in the publication of prayerbooks, small prayer booklets and prayer leaflets.

Among the most influential spiritualities of this period in connection with the youth pastorisation already mentioned, was *Regnum Marianum* aimed at secondary school students, the Sacred Heart Federation that revived the cult of the Sacred Heart and its “children’s branch”, the Heart Guard Movement, as well as the Congregation of Mary also linked to the Jesuits. All of these movements relied heavily on the press and printed materials and therefore also supported the publication of numerous prayerbooks. These have already been mentioned above.

Among the movements within the church the one that brought the most for spirituality and was undoubtedly the most significant was liturgical renewal, also known as the liturgical movement. The mass and the Eucharist, regarded as the main sources of spiritual life, played a central role in this.⁵¹ In order to make the liturgy deeper and more spiritual, numerous works of spirituality were translated, a new missal written by Xavér Szúnyogh, the apostle of the Hungarian popular liturgy movement was published, and numerous new prayerbooks were also placed in the hands of believers.⁵² These gave a more prominent role than previously to the offering of the mass and its prayer texts aimed at involving believers as deeply as possible in the mystery of the ceremony. As part of the renewal of the liturgy the musical part of the ceremony was also refreshed, as indicated by the increased space given in the prayerbooks to songs with their musical scores.⁵³

50 For further details, see: ADRIÁNYI 2005. 183-187.

51 SÖVEGES 2007. 239.

52 Syllaba-Reviczky: *Jöjj, Uram Jézus!* Gyakran áldozó fiúk és leányok imakönyve [Come, Lord Jesus! Prayerbook for boys and girls frequently taking communion], Stephaneum Nyomda és Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1910; Aladár Reviczky: *Jézusom szeretlek!* Gyakran áldozó gyerekek imakönyve [My Jesus, I Love You! Prayerbook for children frequently taking communion], Stephaneum Nyomda és Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1911; Aladár Reviczky: *Mindennapi kenyérünk.* Gyakran áldozók imakönyve [Our Daily Bread. Prayerbook for frequent communicants], Stephaneum Nyomda és Kiadó Rt., Budapest 1912; Krizosztom Kelemen (ed.): *Opus Dei: bencés diákok imakönyve* [Opus Dei: Prayerbook for Benedictine students]. 1942; Xavér Szunyogh: *Imádságos lélekkel az Úr előtt.* Imádságok és énekek a lelkileg művelt kat. hívők számára [With a prayerful soul before the Lord. Prayers and hymns for spiritually cultured Catholic believers]. Budapest, 1946.

53 Spearheaded by the Abbey of Solesmes in France a whole movement arose to rediscover the authentic, old forms of Gregorian chant and introduce them into church practice. Their activity met with great resistance and their cause was not successful until it was supported by Pope Pius X. In his 1903 *Motu Proprio* he set out the general rules for church music, and declared that the Gregorian chant is the basis of Roman church music and must be cultivated, practised and taught in all churches, monasteries and seminaries. Source: <http://penta.hcbc.hu/kantorkepzo/jegyzet/gregorian1.htm>

Authors

Finally, a few words about the authors of these books. It must be noted that with analysis of the prayerbook genre, this could in itself be a topic worth examining as the authors include the most outstanding priests of the period, as well as now forgotten parish priests and celebrants. In this way further nuances could be added to the picture of the writing activity and influence of the leading figures of the spiritual movements of the time, and a study made of the pastoral tasks of the lower clergy and their influence on local communities. Especially in this latter aspect, a thorough examination of the authors of prayerbooks and their work as writers could bring new results.⁵⁴

Among the authors I shall mention first the church figures widely known in Hungary and leading figures of spiritual movements and orders. They almost all stood out for their abilities as writers, poets and speakers, so it is not surprising that the prayerbooks and books they wrote became very popular. They include the famous Benedictine Szaniszló Albach, the likewise Benedictine Xavér Szunyogh, the Franciscans Benjamin Áts and Fortunát Borus, the two famous Piarist theologians and poets Antal Schütz and Sándor Sík, the Jesuits Béla Bangha and Kornél Bóhle, the priest-poet from Eger, Béla Tárkányi, and one of the most influential church writers Ottokár Prohászka.

Beside them is a long list of now little known figures from the church who translated prayerbooks, compiled selections of prayers and on occasion even wrote texts themselves. Their numbers include many parish priests, chaplains, archdeacons, celebrants and members of orders (mainly Franciscans, Cistercians, Carmelites and Dominicans), who were strongly committed to strengthening the prayer-life of believers or even particular cult practices, the veneration of certain saints. It was not unusual for a work to be targeted at the community of a particular parish, an indication that the priest really wished to be a good shepherd of his flock and adapted his pastoral work to the individuals concerned. Another large group of authors were men of the church actively engaged in some kind of educational activity (at a university, secondary or primary school), most often in the area of religious education. Obviously, moral and spiritual teaching was an integral part of that educational activity, for which prayers, meditations and various devotional exercises could be excellent tools. For this reason the prayerbooks here were mainly written for a group of youth, the students or pupils of a given education institution. Finally, mention must be made among the authors of the cantors who, already through their activity, played a big part in leading the prayer and song practices of the given community.

It is my hope that with this first overview of the publication of Hungarian prayerbooks after 1800 I have succeeded in showing the need for research on this

54 The volume of studies on the role of the lower clergy in local society and popular culture edited by Dániel Bárh in 2013 can be a source of inspiration and a good overview of this topic. BÁRTH 2013.

genre, as well as the diverse opportunities it offers. I believe that a thorough analysis of their contents, spirituality, authors, publishers, printers, their target audience and their illustrations can enrich our knowledge of the period with much valuable information. They can serve as a source for those interested in the history of the church, liturgy, spirituality and mentality. These opportunities have not yet been exploited: they hold many tasks for the future.

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PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AS “HOLY WAR”?

PRIESTS INVOLVED IN POLITICS IN A SMALL TOWN ON THE GREAT PLAIN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Abstract: In the second half of the 19th century, especially following the Compromise (1867) that marked the birth of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Roman Catholic lower clergy became increasingly involved in politics. This phenomenon affected even the judgement of the traditional social role of the clergy. The author presents the example of Antal Hegyi, last 19th century parish priest of Csongrád (Csongrád County) and his assistant ministers, showing what consequences openly undertaken political activity during local parliamentary elections could have for the general judgement of the clergy.

Keywords: lower clergy, social role, politics, 19th century, Hungary

In Hungary the dismantling of the legal foundation of feudalism began with the April laws¹ drawn up during the 1848 revolution and freedom struggle, and was completed during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918). Especially important for our topic among the many reform measures was Section 2/d of Act V of 1848 that, among others, declared the right of priests to vote, regardless of their financial situation.² The growing signs of the “politicisation” of the lower clergy, such as participation in election campaigns or acceptance of various political offices – especially in smaller settlements that clung more firmly to

1 The article was written and the research carried out with the support of the Hungarian National Research Fund (OTKA) Grant NK81502. – The 1848 revolution and freedom struggle was inspired by the ideal of an independent Hungary, the desire to break away from the Habsburg Empire and move beyond the feudal state; the so-called “April laws” were drawn up in this spirit. The legislative package of 31 articles compiled at the last feudal diet was designed to set out the frames of a parliamentary state. The April laws created a new constitutional situation and represented a major milestone despite the fact that they were withdrawn after the defeat of the freedom struggle. The demands formulated at that time were realised in the second half of the century, in part through the Compromise (1867, defining the legal, political and economic conditions of the alliance between the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary), and in part through the continuous development of constitutional law during the dual monarchy.

2 In this period only around 10% of the population had the right to vote that was determined by the amount of taxes paid.

traditions – were a highly unusual phenomenon.³ Public opinion was divided on whether spiritual leaders should deal with secular questions and engage openly in politics. Ignoring the core of the issue and approaching the question from the angle of the social sciences, I examine what influence this new element had on the opinions formed of the *social role* of the parish priest.

We generally understand social role to mean “the sum of the forms of behaviour expected of the individual by the community”,⁴ that is, the sum of expectations attached to certain social statuses and positions. Individuals are also aware of such questions as “how a priest/cantor should behave”, and as they adapt their behaviour to them, they become role models. Expectations regarding social roles change more slowly and with greater difficulty than the structure of society. It could be said that they constantly “lag behind” and as a result the social role expected of the clergy was preserved largely intact in the progression from feudalism to bourgeois society.

In this article I draw mainly on the example of a predominantly Roman Catholic small town on the Great Plain clinging to its traditions and with a basically serf peasant mentality, to show the reactions evoked in the community by the appearance in the second half of the 19th century of a parish priest with strong political ambitions. What was the attitude of the community, the leaders of the town and the county bishop to the political role undertaken by the parish priest of Csongrád? Was the judgement of the traditional social role of the Csongrád parish priest changed by events?

In my research I focused on the period between 1850 and 1900. This was an exciting time full of contradictions, marked by the search for new directions of the peasant bourgeoisie of Csongrád seeking to free itself of the feudal legacy. It was around this time that the first religious societies, citizens’ associations, the Casino and reading circles were established; lively interest began to be shown in politics, to which not even the local clergy and the church assistants were immune. The present article analyses the behaviour of Antal Hegyi (parish priest of Csongrád from 1886-1902) and the Csongrád chaplains during the time of the parliamentary elections.⁵

The society of Csongrád, the religiosity of the people of Csongrád in the second half of the 19th century

In the 19th century the majority of the society of Csongrád, a small town on the Hungarian Great Plain at the confluence of the Tisza and Körös rivers, were peasants with small or dwarf holdings of 5-10 or 0-5 *hold*⁶ of land, landless poor and

3 It is not possible here for reasons of space to present the “culture wars” in Hungary or to analyse the twists and turns of contemporary church policy. For more details on this subject, see: FAZEKAS 2008.

4 TOMKA 1997. 64.

5 Roland Tánzos, for example, in 2006 devoted a lengthy study to the political and public life activity of Antal Hegyi, the “militant parish priest of Csongrád”. See TÁNZOS 2006.

6 A hold is an area of land equivalent to 5755 square metres, 0.57 hectares or 1.42 acres.

farm servants. In the words of Gellért Váry, a locally-born Piarist: they were the “people of Csongrád”⁷. The settlement’s social development was shaped by the fact that the inhabitants were all Roman Catholics, the majority were smallholders and all ethnic Hungarians. Anyone with secondary or higher-level schooling, with an officer’s commission, higher-ranking public servants, doctors, secondary school teachers, school principals, lawyers, whose way of life, wealth and mentality visibly distinguished them from the farmers and agricultural labourers who formed the majority were known collectively as the “intelligentsia”.

Between 1850 and 1900 the community underwent considerable change, both as regards size, structure and the distribution of wealth and occupations. The growing social stratification that followed the dismantling of the legal and political structure of feudalism brought a shift towards the separation of groups organised on the basis of wealth, occupation and religion.⁸ By the end of the century the wealthy big farmers and the Jewish intelligentsia, the merchants and the hired navvies found amusement in different places, at separate balls and lived in different parts of the town. Endogamy continued as a strict practice within the different settlement areas. The social “divergence” reached its peak during the period examined. As a journalist writing in the *Csongrádi Újság* noted: “the farmer looks down on the tradesman, the merchant dissociates himself from the society of tradesmen, and the intellectual from both classes. If the tradesmen hold a social gathering, it will not be attended by any merchants, officials or farmers. By the same token, the tradesmen and the intelligentsia are absent from the farmers’ gatherings”.⁹

What united the poor and rich, the educated and illiterate of Csongrád was their emotional, committed religious practice. Most of the Catholic community of Csongrád without discrimination flocked to mass on Sunday. There was always somebody who fainted in the throng,¹⁰ the cantor grumbled as he tried to push his way through the crowd to take part in the procession,¹¹ even the parish priest had to be helped by the police when he passed among the people to sprinkle holy water.¹² It was not by chance that by the late 19th century membership of the different religious confraternities became a question of prestige. In contrast to larger towns of that time, in Csongrád failure to attend church did not become part of the “middle class behaviour”, indeed in the prosperous farming families religion

7 VÁRY 1974.86.

8 Regarding the denominational distribution, for centuries the settlement was inhabited exclusively by Roman Catholics. A census taken in 1785 by parish priest András Kanyó mentions 61 Calvinists, all of whom lived in the affiliated parish of Tés on the opposite bank of the Tisza. The first Jewish families arrived around the 1790s. In the 1870s, in addition to the 16,772 Roman Catholics living in the inner area of Csongrád, the parish priest recorded 517 Jews, 56 Lutherans, 9 Calvinists and 2 Greek Catholics. DUDÁS 1999. 26; Nagyboldogasszony Parish Archive, Csongrád (hereinafter: NPI) *Historia Domus, Csongrád* vol. I, p. 113.

9 *Csongrádi Újság*, 8 November 1903. Vol. I, no. 3, p. 2.

10 Vác Episcopal and Chapter Archive, Acta Privatorum (hereinafter: VPL APriv.) – János Mátyus, 10 July 1823. Confession of András Makai.

11 Vác Episcopal and Chapter Archive, Acta Parochiarum Csongrád (hereinafter: VPL APar. - Cs.) 1867. undated letter of complaint from cantor Antal Sohlya to the Bishop of Vác.

12 VPL APar. - Cs. 1887. Undated letter from Antal Hegyi to the Bishop of Vác.

remained at the top of the value hierarchy and the larger donations came from this source. Their example was followed by the peasants with smallholdings, vineyard workers and fishermen, who contributed when money was collected for sacred purposes, or who themselves erected statues and crosses outside the town.

In this way society looked to the church to act as an integrating and linking bridge. On the basis of a kind of unspoken consensus the church was accepted as a “zone” free of social contradictions. An eloquent example is the flag-blessing celebration of the People’s Circle¹³ that grouped mainly middle peasants and big farmers. The tradesmen received an invitation to the event (by mistake?) and so they too processed into the church at the time indicated. An office-bearer of the People’s Circle angrily challenged the group, but the tradesmen replied that as Catholics they would go to church whenever they pleased.¹⁴

At all times the local lower clergy enjoyed special respect: people raised their hats to them in the street or kissed their hand. As Antal Zöld, an elementary schoolteacher in Csongrád wrote in 1889 in a letter: “this man (i.e. the parish priest) is the person deserving of the greatest respect in Csongrád”.¹⁵ The people of Csongrád referred to the parish priest as “master parish priest”, but since he was not the only priest in the parish, to distinguish him from the chaplains he was also called *head priest*¹⁶, *head master*¹⁷, *head father*¹⁸ or *old priest*¹⁹.

The parish priest enjoyed unconditional respect; according to the evidence of contemporary investigation protocols, the illiterate peasants took his word without reservation, for example they did not ask for written confirmation of their donations or mass-foundations. The secular authorities were also aware of the power of the word of the parish priest. It is not surprising that the town’s leaders attached such importance to the content of sermons preached in the church, or to any politically-coloured manifestations of the local clergy. This was the intellectual environment that Antal Hegyi found when he arrived in Csongrád in 1886.

An “atypical” character: the life career of parish priest Antal Hegyi

Antal Hegyi was born on 9 September 1848 in Hódmezővásárhely (Csongrád County). He attended secondary school in his birthplace and went on to study theology in Vác (Pest County) where he was ordained in August 1872. It was during his years as a chaplain in Kecskemét (Bács-Kiskun County) that we first

13 The name of a civil association preserving the spirit of the freedom struggle of 1848–49. The reading circles typically held discussion evenings and readings on political subjects. The circle in Csongrád was established by chief cantor Antal Sohlya in 1877.

14 *Csongrádi Újság*, 12 March 1905, vol. III, no. 11, p. 2.

15 VPL APriv. Hegyi Antal, 21 February 1889. Letter from Antal Zöld to the Bishop of Vác.

16 “In our area the chapter parish priests are also known as chief priests”. VPL APar. Cs. 1867. Undated letter from Antal Sohlya to the Bishop of Vác.

17 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 22–26 August 1898. Confession of János Máté.

18 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 22–26 August 1898. Confession of Ilona Roza Lantosné.

19 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 22–26 August 1898. Confession of Viktória Nyilas Ornyikné.

learn that Hegyi “makes speeches of political incitement to the people”.²⁰ The chaplain refuted the accusations in vain: he was transferred by the bishop to Hódmezővásárhely in 1875. It was here that another of Antal Hegyi’s characteristic interests took shape: he showed special interest in religious societies and in religious community organisation. His name is associated with the establishment and flourishing of the Sacred Heart society in Hódmezővásárhely.

In 1876 Hegyi returned to Vác where a promising career awaited the intelligent but unusually short-tempered young priest. The many qualities in which Hegyi served the Vác diocese would make a very long list. At first he was a supervisor of studies in the Vác seminary, and a substitute teacher of ethics and pastoral doctrine. In 1879 he was spiritual director of the same institution, in 1880 he became a substitute secondary school teacher. Two years later he was notary of the ecclesiastical court, diocesan archivist and librarian. In 1885, the year of the death of Antal Peitler, the county bishop he greatly respected and loved, he was already secretary to the bishop, then office director, assistant inspector of schools and ecclesiastical court councillor.²¹ From here he was appointed a year later to head the Csongrád parish that had become vacant.²²

Already in his first year in Csongrád Antal Hegyi came into conflict with the Calvinist midwife, then shortly after with the church sexton.²³ In spite of his sometimes aggressive and impatient behaviour towards the church assistants and the parishioners, there can be no doubt that the church at Csongrád was visibly embellished and enriched during the time of Antal Hegyi: the furnishings were steadily renewed and new items added, the parish community purchased a bell, the Sacred Heart chapel was built in Bokros. It was he who first tried to plant trees around the church and surrounding area and keep it tidy.

Relations between Antal Hegyi and county bishop Konstantin Schuszter began to deteriorate in the late 1880s. The first, more serious conflict arose over the plan to appoint chaplain Mátyás Bozsó to Csongrád; Hegyi was not prepared to receive Bozsó as his chaplain because of his questionable reputation. Because of his disobedience he was summoned to Vác to be questioned, but under various pretexts the Csongrád parish priest failed to appear at the hearings. The consequence of the affair was a first degree disciplinary punishment. Hegyi wrote a series of indignant letters to the ecclesiastical court of the bishop of Vác that brought the judgement, declaring his punishment to be unjustified and refusing to show any repentance.²⁴ From then on relations between the county bishop and Antal

20 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 1875. Undated letter from the chairman of the church council of Kecskemét to the Bishop of Vác.

21 СНОВОТ II.1917. 766.

22 TÁNCZOS 2006. 59.

23 Going against earlier tradition, he forbade the Calvinist midwife Mrs Gáspár Magdits from attending the christening of Roman Catholic children she had brought into the world. In the same year he became involved in a court case when he removed from office the sexton György Keviczky – whose family had held the post of sexton and sacristan for 120 years. VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 6 November 1888. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the district archdeacon. VPL APar. Cs. Historia Domus. Antal Hegyi’s torn out sheets 144-145. (1888.)

24 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 3 August 1888. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the Bishop of Vác.

Hegyí became increasingly bitter, with a whole series of affronts and apologies. The final consequences overtook the parish priest of Csongrád at the end of the 1890s.

It was partly because of his articles “revealing the facts” in *Csongrádi Lap* that Antal Hegyí came under rapidly growing pressure in the 1890s. In the absence of receipts, he was unable to account for the sums received from the parish priests of Biel and Winterthur (Switzerland) sent as mass-intentions²⁵, and as a result he spent his last years as parish priest of Csongrád in angry self-defence combined with attacks.²⁶ Then, not for the first time, Hegyí became involved in a case of disobedience brought by his bishop, that also drew the attention of the national press.²⁷ In the mean time he continuously resisted the introduction of civil marriage and recognition of the Jews²⁸. In 1898 he was suspended as parish priest and the former Csongrád chaplain Mihály Droppa was appointed temporary administrator.²⁹ In response Antal Hegyí had printed by György Márián in Budapest his much disputed writing titled: *Let there be light! Written in self-defence in place of a Lenten sermon and published by Antal Hegyí, suspended from his office and remuneration as parish priest of Csongrád*. In the course of the investigation, the episcopal court examined the pamphlet as an aggravating circumstance.³⁰

Antal Hegyí’s growing number of ecclesiastical and civil litigious affairs reached the limit of tolerance in 1902: his punishment now expanded to a three-month prison sentence. After the Csongrád parish priest unsuccessfully appealed for clemency to the Minister for Justice and to Francis Joseph Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, he left Csongrád on 5 November 1902 and travelled via Budapest and Hamburg to New York. While in Hungary a warrant was issued for his arrest and his belongings were auctioned, in Cleveland he took over the editing of the weekly paper *Magyarok Vasárnapja* (Hungarian Sunday) and later was appointed parish priest of Fairport³¹. Years of calm followed in Hegyí’s life: he responded from abroad to accusations made against him in the press in Hungary, while in *Magyarok Vasárnapja* he published writings in self-defence, outlining the circumstances that led to his emigration. For some time articles in *Csongrádi Lap*

25 According to the Hungarian Catholic Encyclopaedia, the purpose of a *mass-intention*, or mass-foundation is “to have one or more masses said over a longer period of time (10, 20, 50 years) for the soul of the person making the foundation or another deceased person.” See: <http://lexikon.katolikus.hu/M/misealapitvany.html>

26 “Neither prison nor the scaffold will make another person of me than what God created. This is why I disdain this whole, miserable earthly life full of persecution, and if I am forced I will go to great extremes together with my friends: but what happens will cause whoever hears about it to fall silent.” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyí, 9 December 1895. Letter from Antal Hegyí to the Diocesan Authority of Vác.

27 On 6 January 1889 the county bishop forgave Hegyí’s disobedience, but since his behaviour continued to be aggressive, in February 1893 the archbishop also expressed his disapproval.

28 Act XLII of 1895 declared the equal status of the Jewish religion in Hungary.

29 *Csongrádi Lap*, 23 January 1898, vol. VIII. no. 4, p. 3.

30 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyí, 31 August 1898. Protocol of the Vác ecclesiastical court.

31 Fairport had a population of 300, mainly Hungarians who had emigrated from Zemplén and Ung counties. Slovaks, English people, and Finns who had emigrated from Russia also lived in the settlement. TÁnczos 2006. 72.

and *Csongrádi Újság* had been referring to Hegyi as “morally dead” and kept his memory alive among the population with short gibes.³²

In 1906 Antal Hegyi returned to Hungary on what he intended as a short visit, to collect money for a Hungarian orphanage in America. However the authorities were not swayed by his noble aims and Hegyi was brought to court in Szeged. After five months of imprisonment, the petitions and official missions by the American community he had left behind and by people of Csongrád were successful and in November 1906 Antal Hegyi was released on a royal pardon.

The former parish priest returned to Csongrád, where he took over management of the Christian Consumers Cooperative he had established, and later of the Christian Steam Mill Co. Between 1911 and 1919 he was chief magistrate of Csongrád.³³ Apart from celebrating mass he did not perform any other priestly function. After 1919 he retired and the newly appointed county bishop of Vác, István Á. Hanauer assisted him in his serious financial difficulties. In September 1922 a festive mass was said to mark the 50th anniversary of his ordination. Antal Hegyi died a lonely man on 9 July, 1923 at the age of 75.³⁴

New ways of shaping opinion: the parish priest as newspaper editor

Following the crushing of the revolution and after the conditions of the dual monarchy were set out in the Compromise (1867), the Hungarian political scene was dominated by liberal–royalist parties³⁵, also known as parties of “67”, or parties clinging to the independence ideal of “48”. The *Szabadelvű Párt* (Liberal Party) (1875–1906) representing the spirit of the Compromise was in power for 30 years with the exception of 1905, while – due to the particular nature of the dualist state – the parties of “48” could only remain in opposition. As an enthusiastic supporter of the political opposition, Antal Hegyi did not accept the justification for the dualist state and so favoured the so-called “48” and Catholic parties, namely the *Függetlenségi és Negyvennyolcas Párt* (Independence and 48 Party), and the *Katolikus Néppárt* (Catholic People’s Party) (1894–1918).³⁶

32 “They are whitewashing the church tower, raising scaffolding around it and attracting the attention of several passers-by. A pretty young woman joins the gazers and as she lifts her eyes up to the tower she says with deep conviction: ‘Antal Hegyi is coming home, they are whitewashing the tower so that he won’t find it dirty, they are afraid that he will once again sweep out the whole town hall.’” *Csongrádi Újság*, 17 July 1904, vol. II, no. 29, p. 3.

33 SEBESTYÉN 2002. 83–84.

34 TÁNCZOS 2006. 74.

35 In Hungary liberalism appeared in the form of laws abolishing the privileges of Catholics that violated religious equality. Outstanding among these were the introduction of civil marriage and registration of births, marriages and deaths by the state.

36 The aim of the Catholic People’s Party, often referred to as the People’s Party, was a review from the Catholic point of view of the laws on church policy, while at the same time it took a stand against the excesses of capitalism. It was perhaps due to the liberal leanings of the Hungarian political elite that the People’s Party never had a sufficient number of representatives and so was unable to become the general representation of Hungarian Catholicism. TÓTH 1993. 305.

During the time Antal Hegyi was parish priest of Csongrád, four parliamentary elections were held in the country: in 1887, 1892, 1896 and 1901. Because he arrived in Csongrád barely a year before the elections of 1887, he still had little insight into the political leanings of the local population, consequently it was mainly during the elections of 1892 and 1896 that he can be said to have carried out real propaganda activity. In 1901 Antal Hegyi and the judge István Ludrovai Tóth together drew up the platform of the *Független Magyarország Párt* (Independent Hungary Party) they had founded. The parish priest acted as the representative of this new party.³⁷

During the 1891–92 parliamentary elections the parish priest strove to give legitimacy to his unusually strong political ambitions through the local press and pamphlets. His aim was to defeat Imre Szivák, the government party member of parliament for Csongrád and tried to achieve this with the support of his fellow priest, János Hock. Hegyi was not fastidious about the propaganda tools he used: he organised meetings, made campaign speeches, and went from door to door drumming up support for Hock. According to some sources he even used the church pulpit for his oratory against Imre Szivák, but Antal Hegyi steadfastly denied those accusations.³⁸

Parish priest Hegyi's persuasive rhetoric and his strongly worded articles deeply divided the parishioners of Csongrád. When Antal Hegyi took over the editing of the weekly *Tiszavidék* (from 1892), then in 1894 launched his own paper, *Csongrádi Közlöny* the result was a veritable standing war. In his articles the parish priest constantly criticised the positions of *Csongrádi Lap*, a liberal paper with a slightly socialist tone, edited by János Éder³⁹. These Csongrád publications reflected the national trends of the time in their style and structure⁴⁰, and for the most part responded to each other in highly personal terms. The stakes of the bare-knuckled fight between *Csongrádi Közlöny* and *Csongrádi Lap*, that is, between Antal Hegyi and János Éder were shaping the political views of the population, and achieving success in the election campaign.

Parish priest Hegyi's activity as a newspaper editor and journalist shows a definite intention to shape opinion that also represented a broadening of the traditional priestly role. János Éder treated his newspaper editor colleague in

37 On the party's platform, see: ERDÉLYI – GOMBOSNÉ SEBŐK 1989. 261.

38 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 2 January 1892. Letter from the Bishop of Vác to Antal Hegyi.

39 János Éder was the paper's editor-in-chief from 1891 to 1915. His father was a lawyer, a major in the 1848 National Guard, and member of parliament for Csongrád; his mother was Charlotta Csemegi, a descendant of Károly Csemegi the Hungarian legal expert born in Csongrád. Éder graduated from the Academy of Forestry and later earned a diploma in Budapest too. After completing his education he worked as a teacher in the Csongrád boys secondary school from 1883 to 1913, then acted as principal of the school from 1913 to 1919. János Éder was a committed socialist and a member of the Szeged Masonic lodge. If, in addition to all this we take into account his mother's Jewish origin, the complex reasons for his mutual antipathy shared with the parish priest are easier to understand. DUDÁS 1985. 89; DUDÁS 2004.

40 They shaped their profile in the light of the principles of the "48" in opposition or the liberal-government party.

keeping with liberal ideals,⁴¹ that is, during the parliamentary election campaign he expected him, as a responsible public figure, a kind of public official, to take a stand in the press in support of his candidate and to bravely tolerate the tone of the opposite side that citizens involved in politics could expect.

However, Antal Hegyi found it difficult to strike a balance between his political activity and his priestly vocation.⁴² Nor could the people see him apart from his status as a priest – although it is true that Antal Hegyi made no attempt to help them in this.⁴³ The reason for this failure was that, by his own admission, the parish priest had entered politics with the intention of defending the faith; in other words he supported the opposition because of what he saw as the anti-religion measures of the Hungarian government (such as the introduction of civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, and civil marriage).

“This hated man is unfurling the banner of the opposition in Csongrád (...) and the people are moving with him”

Antal Hegyi faced the daunting task of combining and winning acceptance for the figures of authentic priest and authentic citizen, but his efforts led to an overall image that was ambiguous, open to attack and still shifting. Numerous sources confirm that Hegyi engaged in political agitation from the pulpit, he involved his chaplains, the parish clerk and members of the religious societies in his organising activities.⁴⁴ He began to compare the parliamentary elections to a veritable “holy war”. When chief constable Ferenc Réti called on Hegyi through the press to withdraw, in reply he referred to his appointment as parish priest confirmed with a vow that was more lasting than the office of chief constable.⁴⁵ The biblical comparisons that he liked to make in self-defence when he was the target

41 The liberal ideal strips the priestly vocation of its transcendental aspects, and interprets religion as a kind of morality or intellectual attitude. See: Romsics 2007. 723.

42 His chaplains complained to the bishop of Vác: because of the parish priest’s “constant rambling, we ran the office too, and he did not pay much attention to the many people who came for confession because the constant campaigning, meetings and especially the muck-raking paper he edited occupied all his time.” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 4 March 1894. Letter from the Csongrád chaplains to the Bishop of Vác.

43 One instructive passage from a piece written by a committed admirer of Hegyi will serve as an example: “The supporters of the county have declared that this outstanding parish priest of the church is the most hated priest in the world. And this hated man is unfurling the banner of the opposition in Csongrád, and in the name of pure patriotism he is raising his apostolic voice under this banner; the people are moving with him, they will sweep away the government party and with it Szivák who has been declared unbeatable.” LABÁDI 2007. (The quotation is from 1892 – Szentesi Lap.)

44 *Csongrádi Lap*, 1 January 1892. Vol. II, no. 1, p. 2. “Not only the parish priest and the church caretaker, but also the chaplains, cantors, members of the Sacred Heart Society, all the rosary-reading and banner-carrying sons and daughters of the church vied with each other in their fanaticising and terrorising machinations.” LABÁDI 2007. 88. (*Szentesi Lap*, 25 March 1892. Vol. XX, no. 25, pp. 1-2.)

45 *Csongrádi Közlöny*, 5 May 1895. Vol. II, no. 18, p. 3.

of political attacks represent a rhetorical peak.⁴⁶ This obvious double standard irritated his political opponents. “When he slanders his bishop he claims that he is speaking as a citizen, that is, he feels himself to be outside the laws of the priesthood, but if he commits an offence as a citizen, he hides behind the bastion of the priestly vestment”⁴⁷ – wrote the parishioners struggling for his transfer.

The magistrate and notary of Csongrád observed with surprise the unprecedented activity of the parish priest. A letter from Konstantin Schuszter to the county bishop of Vác reveals sincere alarm. According to the argumentation of the public officials, the task of the parish priest is the moral, not the political leadership of the people; consequently Hegyi’s behaviour was “not fitting for a priest”, and so the case required immediate intervention.⁴⁸ In response to the events, the bishop of Vác wrote a long, fatherly letter to the Csongrád parish priest in which he set out his position as bishop.⁴⁹

The bishop acknowledged that the clergy who shared in the public burden of taxes was also entitled to the exercise of civil rights, but he regarded preserving the dignity of the priestly vocation as more important than support for any passing political formation. In this way Bishop Konstantin urged moderation on Antal Hegyi, at the same time strictly forbidding any politics from the pulpit, open organisation or door to door agitation.⁵⁰ In his reply letter, parish priest Hegyi stated that he regarded his political opponent as the opponent of the church and so he felt it was his duty – even in defiance of the bishop’s reprimand – to enter the struggle to defeat member of parliament Imre Szivák.⁵¹

46 “Did not the opponents of Christ our Lord do the same when they held up their own lies as proof against Him? [...] Why should they not mistreat me in the most unspeakable way when they mistreated Him, the master, to death?” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 30 September 1894. Letter from Antal Hegyi to the Bishop of Vác. In 1895 the *Csongrádi Lap* launched a separate satirical paper under the title of *Karvaly* (Sparrowhawk) to nettle “Antal Gyihe, editor of the Csigerhát Gutter Paper” who compares himself to Jesus, to Saint Augustine or to John the Baptist. The phenomenon must have been a common one in the period examined. In a history of the Tata parish, by Adolf Mohl, the parish priest defends himself against the accusations of the Calvinists by “crying out with Saint Paul”. MOHL 1909. 154.

47 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 14 March 1892. Letter from inhabitants of Csongrád to the archbishop.

48 “The priest, who should stand above all parties, stoops to behaving like a common political agitator in a pub.” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 31 December 1891. Letter from the Csongrád magistracy to the Bishop of Vác. A month later Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky also voiced his disapproval: “In Csongrád the political situation has become critical as a result of the unbridled incitement by the RC clergy and especially the parish priest Antal Hegyi [...] the consequences of which have once again become unforeseeable – including from the angle of the church.” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 8 January 1892. Letter from Baron Frigyes Podmaniczky to the Bishop of Vác.

49 According to Konstantin Schuszter, if during the elections the priests support with their vote the goals of the throne, the homeland and the church, and on occasion give advice to those who turn to them on political matters, this deserves support and recognition. At the same time “because of the special position of the priest among the believers and his vocation – as the angel of peace, proclaiming and spreading agreement – the man of the church [...] is obliged to remain within certain limits [...] he cannot take a leading role for any political party.” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 2 January 1892. Letter from the Bishop of Vác to Antal Hegyi.

50 To give sufficient emphasis to his warning, he called Antal Hegyi’s main political support, chaplain Gábor Bajcsy, to his side and did not allow him to return to Csongrád. VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 20 January 1892. Letter from the Bishop of Vác to chaplain Gábor Bajcsy.

51 “I will not allow any factor to restrict my freedom as a citizen to bring about the electoral defeat [...] of the open enemy of my church” VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, 5 January 1892. Letter from Antal Hegyi Antal to the Ecclesiastical Authority of Vác.

It can be seen that both the county bishop of Vác and the local authority regarded Antal Hegyi's activity in politics and public life as incompatible with his priestly vocation. According to a letter of complaint signed by “residents of Csongrád”, “the seeds of hostility, hate, embitterment, anger, revenge and immorality” had been scattered in the parish community as a consequence of the parish priest's political activity.⁵² *Csongrádi Lap* went so far as to blame parish priest Antal Hegyi because he considered that “the people of Csongrád morally are on a slippery slope”.⁵³

Later too, the *Csongrádi Lap* regularly confronted parish priest Antal Hegyi with the real or imagined expectations of the parishioners. In May 1896 it published a lengthy article stating that a good priest does not engage in politics but devotes himself to the spiritual care of his flock: “[if only] we could choose a pious, God-fearing, gentle and tolerant parish priest. One who does not treat the parishioners rudely, who does not conduct a political campaign: who is a spiritual pastor; who would use his pulpit not to make campaign speeches but to preach the word of God [...] a meek-hearted spiritual father”.⁵⁴ The good parish priest is thus the embodiment of peace, the guarantee of social consensus, who smoothes away the divisive force of politics.⁵⁵ Rising slightly above the moral plane, it is worth recalling that *Csongrádi Lap*, supporter of Imre Szivák, had very practical interests in pushing Antal Hegyi “back within the walls of the parish”.

In 1896 the *Csongrádi Lap* tried to weaken Hegyi's position by citing alarming examples and writing about the failures of the clergy engaged in politics. In January the news came from Kiskundorozsma that “the chaplain is distributing People's Party proposals among the church members in the village, to spread propaganda for this party of trouble-making chaplains and magnates and in addition to stir up hatred among the denominations”.⁵⁶ A few months later we learn about the unfortunate political activity in Kecskemét of chaplain József Járvas.⁵⁷

In 1901 the parish priest entered the elections, contesting the parliamentary seat of the government party representative Gábor Baross. He lost by only 20 votes to Gábor Baross, but the election was reviewed because of the suspicion of unfair agitation. The investigation found that the opponents frequently used alternative means of persuasion, particularly “wining and dining”. The court therefore ruled that Csongrád was to be deprived of its right to elect a member of parliament until the next elections.⁵⁸

52 VPL APriv. Hegyi Antal, 14 March 1892. Letter from the people of Csongrád to the Archbishop.

53 “The people of Csongrád have in essence greatly changed: they know no respect, they are not law-abiding; they make fun of their superiors and leaders; they hate gentlemen. Whether they have a reason for it or not. They are so envious that they look askance even at decently dressed clerks: because they think that the clothes have been acquired through their own sweat and fat.” *Csongrádi Lap*, 29 October 1899. Vol. IX, no. 44, p. 3.

54 *Csongrádi Lap*, 24 May 1896. Vol. VI, no. 21, p. 2.

55 “He will be an arbiter for the quarrelsome, he will smooth out inequality, he will reconcile enemies, and will bring an end to the bitter struggle between the people and the intelligentsia.” *Csongrádi Lap*, 26 February 1893. Vol. III, no. 9, pp. 1-2.

56 *Csongrádi Lap*, 6 January 1896. Vol. VI, no. 1, p. 2.

57 *Csongrádi Lap*, 15 November 1896. Vol. VI, no. 47, p. 3.

58 For more detail on the elections, see: ERDÉLYI – SEBŐKNÉ GOMBOS 1989.

Csongrád chaplains during the parliamentary elections

Like the parish priest, the chaplains were among the figures who shaped public life in Csongrád. The various civil associations and circles vied with each other to win the chaplains, as members, as speakers, often asking them to hold leading posts. These efforts greatly strengthened during the parliamentary election campaigns. Chaplain Gábor Bajcsy made the following confession in a letter: "They wanted to elect me to all kinds of committees and to invest me with various offices during the elections, but I rejected all such distinctions, I refused to accept them."⁵⁹

The local authorities were also aware of the potential power of the local priests to shape opinions and so they followed with close attention the political activity of the chaplains and complained to the parish priest at the slightest sign of any "deviation" judged to be unfavourable. In 1862 the sub-prefect wrote the following letter to parish priest Lajos Virter: "I have found in a number of places that certain ministers, chaplains and teachers have hostile feelings towards the government and have been agitating. I confidentially invite you to kindly report to me without delay any such cases in the district."⁶⁰

In 1886 the mayor of Csongrád, Antal Csemegi wrote a letter to the bishop of Vác complaining about the chaplains of parish priest János Edelényi. The mayor claimed that all the priests of the parish were responsible for the fact that public order was disrupted in Csongrád following the election to parliament the previous year of the opposition politician Zsigmond Csatár. The chaplains – in league with the cantor and the sexton – had organised meetings for political aims and made speeches of dubious content in the church. According to Csemegi the incitement threw a bad light on the government, the local authorities and the mayor; he therefore requested an immediate investigation into the priests of Csongrád. While the mayor later recognised the political neutrality of the parish priest, he sent a complaint against the two chaplains to the ministry of the interior through the sub-prefect.⁶¹ Our sources are silent on the fate of the chaplains, but the case nevertheless indicates the antipathy of the local authorities regarding political activity by the local priests.

Suspicious of this kind arose with growing frequency in Csongrád in the second half of the 19th century. There can be no doubt that Antal Hegyi's political views had a strong influence on the young priests working under his supervision. We know of four chaplains who actively agitated for the election of János Hock. *Csongrádi Lap* wrote in an ironic tone about the alleged incident where János Csapó and Géza Krezsák were "thrown out" of the Csongrád polling station.⁶²

59 VPL APriv. Antal Hegyi, n.d. 1892. Letter from chaplain Gábor Bajcsy to the Bishop of Vác.

60 DUDÁS 1998. 116.

61 VPL APar. Cs. 18 February 1876. Letter from archdeacon Gáspár Lichtner to the Bishop of Vác.

62 *Csongrádi Lap*, 28 June 1896. Vol. VI, no. 26, p. 2.

The case of the 1896 parliamentary elections differed from earlier examples because – although the chaplains had been easily swept into local political movements earlier too – up to this point the role of the parish priest had remained irreproachable and any investigations had involved only the chaplains. *Csongrádi Lap* used unflattering terms in writing about the parish priest’s chaplains involved in agitation, calling them *trouble-making chaplains*, and the *priest’s outriders*⁶³.

The expanding social role of the priesthood

Those who successfully embody a social role reproduce themselves, that is, their own role, by following the traditional expectations, thereby passing on the system of norms they have inherited.⁶⁴ The end result is that the system becomes rigid, responding with sanctions to attempts at innovation – whether they are aimed at limiting or expanding the role. It can be seen from the case studies presented that, rather than conserving the institutionalised norms, the behaviour of parish priest Antal Hegyi was directed towards a reformulation and expansion of his own social role.⁶⁵

The official leaders of Csongrád expected a parish priest to set an example of civil humility, rule-following, respect for superiors; he himself should be content with leading their immortal souls to salvation, and should not venture into the field of politics. By undertaking a role in public life and engaging openly in politics, the parish priest of Csongrád came under the cross-fire of serious conflicting interests. By shaping public opinion and with the help of the press his political opponents attempted to force him back into the confines of the parish. In a series of long articles they criticised his human nature and complained about the consequences of damaging the respect due to a priest. Besides the public servants, the Jewish intelligentsia and the majority of the tradesmen, as well as all those who disliked Antal Hegyi’s short-tempered and restless nature joined in the campaign against the parish priest.

In this way by the end of the 19th century the social role of the Csongrád parish priest was supplemented with a very definite role in public life and politics. The changes were seen in very extreme forms. The articles in the press give the impression that those who criticised Antal Hegyi feared that the ideal of spiritual pastor would be damaged; but this fear often hid the defence of their own best interests. The involvement of the public sphere and the press can be regarded as a new form of sanctions against the “norm-violating” parish priest, on occasion supplemented with pamphlets and open letters. When they took a stand in defence of their much-attacked parish priest, Antal Hegyi’s committed supporters were also motivated by a variety of factors.

63 *Csongrádi Lap*, 1 January 1892. Vol. II, no. 1, p. 2. *Fullajtár* (*outrider*): was the surname of the assistant organist in Csongrád.

64 TOMKA 1997. 66.

65 Institution: a system of norms that has its own existence; reality that stands opposed to the individual as an external fact of constraining force. TOMKA 1997. 26.

When he lost the confidence of the leading stratum, the small and middle peasants, the big farmers supporting the political opposition and the wives of farm hands and fishermen who held positions in the religious societies became Antal Hegyi's main base. With the exception of a few prosperous big farmers, they constituted a broad but for the most part illiterate stratum with very little political or decision-making influence, receptive to the influence of Hegyi's rhetoric.

Antal Hegyi was aware of the power of directness. He kept the affairs of the parish firmly in his own hands: he himself led the religious societies⁶⁶, he taught the new prayers, at the act of adoration he prayed together with his parishioners. At the same time he had a great fondness for impressive processions and consecration ceremonies held with unprecedented pomp amidst altars smothered with flowers. In the eyes of the middle peasants of Csongrád these virtues represented real value. Set beside the impressive beautification of the church, the giant Sacred Heart bell, the new Bokros chapel and the eloquent Sunday sermons, the political campaigning, the constant litigation and the scandalous newspaper editing were easily forgivable sins. It was true that his social role was expanded with unusual elements, but compared to his predecessors he showed greater sensitivity in recognising and effectively satisfying the religious demands of the common people. In this context they interpreted Antal Hegyi's political ambitions as an offensive in the defence of religion. The majority of parishioners supported the election to parliament of János Hock, but at the same time unconditionally denied the justification of civil marriage and the registration of births, marriages and deaths.

On the whole the role expectations of the Catholic believers in Csongrád remained unchanged, but there was a shift in the values held by the different social (and interest) groups, the way they saw things, and the points of emphasis in their judgement of actions. In this way Antal Hegyi became an extremely divisive figure; while the small and middle peasants celebrated him as a determined and zealous priest, to his "educated" opponents in Csongrád he remained a manipulative, unchristian money-grubbing man of interests.

66 In the last decades of the 19th century the role of the chaplains became more limited in some respects, while in others it expanded. Although the Csongrád chaplains showed interest in public affairs and politics already in the 1860s-70s, it was only when Antal Hegyi became active politically that they began to take a definite role in public life. This "opening" was in the parish priest's own interest. The withdrawal of the chaplains from the organisation of the religious societies also served the parish priest's aims, as the presence of another "leader figure" stood in the way of Antal Hegyi's efforts towards centralisation.

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Antal Hegyi, parish priest of Csongrád 1886-1902. Csemegi Károly Library and Tari László Museum, portrait collection. Without inventory number.

THE LIVING ROSARY SOCIETY
AS FRAME AND FORM OF THE MARIAN DEVOTION
THE FEMINIZATION OF THE MARIAN DEVOTION
A CASE STUDY

Abstract: The renewed form of the rosary prayer, the Living Rosary Society, established in Lyon (France) in 1826 spread rapidly on the continent. The paper examines the life and work of the society in an agrarian town on the Great Hungarian Plain. The rosary confraternity was principally an association of the peasantry. From the late 19th century the rosary increasingly became a form of women's devotion and confraternity, the lower middle class and elderly women. But even in the mid-20th century its leaders were still men. While religious life became feminised the secular world retained its patriarchal character in which only men could be leaders. The First World War brought rapid change.

Keywords: rosary society, The Living Rosary Society, female devotion, patriarchal society, offices in the society

The Rosary and Its Confraternities: The Living Rosary Society

The rosary, as an object and a prayer, is regarded as uniquely characteristic of Catholics. According to the legend, the Virgin Mary herself gave the rosary to Saint Dominic in the 13th century.¹ Although the rosary is generally regarded as one of the individual forms of devotion,² forms of its use in a communal frame are known from the last third of the 15th century. There are records of rosary confraternities in Hungary too from the end of the 15th century.³ The basic structure of the rosary remained essentially the same: 150 Hail Marys, 15 Pater Nosters and three times five, that is 15 mysteries taken from sacred history. In different periods and places, other prayers could also be associated with these, giving rise to the various forms of rosary devotion. This 800-year-old prayer underwent numerous changes in the course of history, but was always capable of renewal.

1 The article was written and the research carried out with the support of the Hungarian National Research Fund (OTKA) Grant NK81502. – BÁLINT 1977, II, 152., BARNA 2011. 67-69.

2 RADÓ 1961, 488-492; KLINKHAMMER 1981, 473-507; LÉVAY 1934, 229-255; VEREBÉLYI 1983.

3 BÁLINT 1977, II, 367; BARNA 1996, 287-288.

One such renewal can be dated to 1826 when Jean-Maria Jaricot, a French woman from Lyons, initiated the formation of 15-member prayer groups corresponding to the number of mysteries. In this way, each sacred mystery was said simultaneously in the group and so this kind of rosary was made *living* according to Madame Jaricot. With episcopal and papal support, this form of confraternity spread rapidly from the 1830s in Austria, Germany and Hungary. One of the first Hungarian parent confraternities (archiconfraternitas) is known to have operated in Győr (North-west Hungary) from 1843. From then on the confraternity spread rapidly in Hungary and between 1885 and 1945 also published its own periodical. Many prayer-books on the languages of the Hungarian Kingdom (Hungarian, German, Slovak, Croatian) were published for the members.⁴

The Living Rosary Society became and still is the most popular prayer confraternity among Roman Catholics in Hungary and elsewhere.⁵ In this paper it will be examined in wider Hungarian context based on the case study of the Living Rosary Confraternity in a small agrarian town, Kunszentmárton (county Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok) on the Great Hungarian Plain.

The Living Rosary Confraternity in Kunszentmárton

The people of Kunszentmárton first encountered the “living spiritual rosary” prayer and confraternity form in 1851 in Máriaradna (up to 1920 part of Hungary, now Radna, Arad County, Romania), a place of pilgrimage at the Whitsun feast.⁶ The singers leading the pilgrimage decided to form a similar confraternity in their own town.⁷

They obtained the approval of the rector.⁸ The permission given by the rector meant recognition of the legitimacy of the confraternity activity since the rector represented the clergy and the power of the church authorities. The permission given by the rector was based on his own authority and that of the Church, and further reinforced that authority. Besides giving his support, he also demanded the right of supervision.

The rector entrusted one of the singers to draw up a list of the confraternity members and asked for the list.⁹ A list of members was drawn up in 1852. This was supplemented and corrected in 1854 and again in 1857. A new list of

4 BARNÁ 1991, BARNÁ 1996., BARNÁ 2011. 130-131.

5 BARNÁ 2011. 149, 384-385.

6 For details on the pilgrimages made to Máriaradna by the people of Kunszentmárton, see: BARNÁ 1991.

7 Minute-books of the Confraternity of the Living Spiritual Rosary in Kunszentmárton (Min), p. 4. The minute-books were published by Barna in 1998. The figures refer to the page numbers in the minute-book.

8 Min 4, 7. József Trangos was rector in Kunszentmárton from 1844-1858. DÓSA – SZABÓ 1936, 146-148.

9 Min 8-10. József Ökrös (March 19, 1816 – January 21, 1893) was a master weaver. He founded a choral society (1845), rosary confraternity (1851), burial society (1856), organised church and guild celebrations, and composed many hymns. See also: JÓZSA 1998, BARNÁ 2001.

members was drawn up in 1897 when the Confraternity was its peak: at that time it had 1800 members in 120 groups of 15 persons each.

Minutes were kept on the functioning of the confraternity between 1851-1940. These also contain the lists of members.¹⁰ My short paper is based on these lists, an analysis of the confraternity's minute-books, as well as on observations and interviews.

The leaders of the confraternity

Offices and roles

Under canon law the rectors are the leaders of the confraternities. The rector supported the organisation of the confraternity¹¹ and encouraged church members to recite the rosary, but did not personally participate in the life of the confraternity or interfere in its internal affairs. He and his successors could be said to hover above the confraternity, acting as arbitrators in case of disputes.¹² The only departure from this practice occurred when a locally-born priest was rector:¹³ in the first years of his activity he regularly participated in the meetings of the leadership of the Rosary Confraternity. He exercised his right as head of the confraternity, named himself *president*, and the earlier lay president *vice-president*, titles that were used in this form in the minute-book from 1891. Adapting to the local religious traditions and his own local socialisation can be mentioned as factors in his participation.¹⁴ From 1891, thirty years after the establishment of the Rosary Confraternity, the Kunszentmárton rectors wished to control the society's financial affairs.¹⁵ However, the lay presidents (vice-presidents) remained the de facto leaders of the Rosary Confraternity throughout its existence.

At the time of establishment in 1851 the rector called on the singer and leader József Ökrös "and at the same time authorised him to direct the affairs of the Confraternity and to teach them whatever was necessary, while taking care not to act or initiate anything new without informing him".¹⁶ This latter sentence can be

¹⁰ BARNÁ 1998.

¹¹ He even protected the Rosary Confraternity from the political police at the time of its establishment. He did not allow meetings to be held in private houses even though this was possible under the rules adopted, insisting instead that they be held in the church to prevent them from becoming suspect in the eyes of the political police following the defeat of the War of Independence (there was a ban on assemblies).

¹² BARNÁ 1999, 34-35.

¹³ Min. 144. József Dósa, rector of Kunszentmárton from 1888-1913. See: DÓSA – SZABÓ 1936, 149-150.

¹⁴ He took an active part in the life of the rosary confraternity at a time when secularisation was already well under way in Hungarian society and when Catholic public life was also strongly articulated. The demand for functioning of the confraternities had greatly changed on the part of the official church, and the Rosary Confraternity was not the only lay religious society in Kunszentmárton.

¹⁵ Min 122.

¹⁶ Min. 8.

regarded as authorisation for József Ökrös to act as religious leader of the Confraternity. It was a form of church permit¹⁷ (*licentia*), and József Ökrös made use of it. He also preached sermons, something that had become rare by then, and wrote down his sermons.¹⁸

The confraternity's office-bearers came from the middle strata of society (tradesmen, farmers). The leadership was hierarchically structured. It was headed by the *confraternity president* (called *lay president* or *vice-president*). In most cases they also held the post of *singer / chief singer*. This circumstance points to one of the most important tasks of the confraternity leaders: to lead the singing on pilgrimages and in the church before official liturgies. In addition, they organised, directed and handled the church patronage. They corresponded and negotiated with tradesmen and artists and they also provided for the transport of the objects ordered (paintings, crosses, statues, banners and other items). One of the lay leaders, József Ökrös wrote and published special booklets of hymns and prayers for the confraternity. Through these he introduced new customs.¹⁹ One of the manuscript song-books of the 19th century singers was found in the legacy of a 20th century descendant, indicating that in undertaking this role they also preserved and passed on a cultural heritage. The confraternity's main office-bearers were the *president*, the *singer* and the *treasurer* and in most cases they filled these posts until their deaths. This meant that their experience, their social contacts and also their age played a part in their social prestige.

The confraternity employed a *servant* who – in the manner of the guilds²⁰ – delivered invitations to the meetings. All of the confraternity office-bearers received payment for their activity. There was also an *elected body* of five to fifteen members to direct the confraternity. Up to the 1920s its members were all men. What we see here is a typical, conservative, patriarchal association.

For a long while there was only one woman among the inner circle of leaders: the *deaconess* who supervised and directed the Daughters of Mary. All of their names are known from the minutes. To raise the pomp of the liturgical service, in 1852, almost from the date of its foundation, the rosary confraternity created the group of *confraternity girls (Daughters of Mary)* composed of girls around the age of 12.²¹ They carried the confraternity banners and the portable statue of Mary at

17 The Catholic Church in Hungary often gave permits of this type in the 17th–18th centuries, a period when the number of priests had greatly declined as a result of the Reformation and the Turkish occupation. These literate men conducted christenings, marriages and burials, organised religious life (e.g. pilgrimages) and taught. In the course of the Catholic restoration in the 18th century their activity was restricted. Their right to teach (preach) was withdrawn. See: JUHÁSZ 1921, SÁVAI – PINTÉR 1993, SÁVAI 1997, SÁVAI – GRYNÆUS 1994.

18 In these sermons he encouraged all social strata and age groups to say the rosary prayers. See: BARNA 1998, 132-133.

19 Min 37, 118. BARNA 1998. 33-34. The prayer written for the novena of the feast of the Immaculate Conception and published in 1887 is especially beautiful.

20 In Hungary the guilds were not disbanded until 1872 when free exercise of trade was introduced.

21 This is indicated by the minutes of the extraordinary assembly held on August 10, 1873, recording the closing and transfer of the finances and assets due to the death of the treasurer, József S. Tóth. Among those confirming the procedure is “signed x by Deaconess Anna Doba”. Min 27.

the masses and in processions, they accompanied those setting out on pilgrimage to Máriaradna, as far as the Blaise Cross at the edge of the town, and waited there for them when they returned, with the cross and banner, adding pomp and splendour to the thanksgiving held in the church on their return.²² They were listed by name at the time of establishment but unfortunately we do not know the later lists. It was the task of the deaconesses to instruct and supervise the girls in their participation in the liturgy. The various *deaconesses* were probably in charge of the Daughters of Mary for many years. When her term of service expired, the same deaconess was generally appointed again. When a deaconess died, her successor was chosen from among the women in the confraternity. In one case the minutes mention that the deaconess was 85 years old. Judging from their names and their probable family ties, the deaconesses must have been from the lower middle classes. Not all of them were literate.²³

Most of the leaders of the 15-member groups, known locally as *tens*, were women. The group leaders, who are hardly mentioned at all in the minutes, probably held their positions for decades. They organised the everyday life of the rosary confraternity, they made sure that the prayers and devotions were observed, distributed the mysteries and supervised their performance. They maintained prayer-houses in their homes. It was through them that the members were in contact with other groups and with the leaders of the confraternity.

The minutes report in detail mainly on the work of this narrow circle of leaders, dealing with the organisation of patronage by the confraternity: the collection of funds, purchases, travel and correspondence.

The membership of the confraternity, the led

Social composition of the confraternity membership

The rosary confraternity drew its members mainly from the broad middle strata (tradesmen, farmers), as well as the upper and lower strata. The founders and first leaders of the confraternity were prosperous and respected tradesmen and farmers. However, the confraternity minutes do not mention the secular occupation of any of the confraternity office-bearers.²⁴ This indicates that their authority arose not from their secular occupations or their financial status, but from their religious life. This, of course, also determined their social prestige. In a few cases it can be shown from the list of members that some of the town's leaders were also

²² Min 115.

²³ Min 92. However, we know from another source that during this period many devout women already subscribed to religious papers and periodicals. But it is perhaps not by chance that the surviving manuscript song and prayer books from the second half of the 19th century have all come down to us in the handwriting and from the possession of men.

²⁴ The founder, József Ökrös, was a master weaver and head of the guild at the time of its dissolution (1872).

members of a rosary group. The list for 1897, for example, includes the chief judge and his family. However, it is almost impossible on the basis of the membership lists to make any distinction regarding the financial status of the members.²⁵ On many occasions József Ökrös, founder and leader of the confraternity, stressed that the support of the town's leaders and the rector was important for them, obviously regarding it as a factor of legitimisation.²⁶ The social prestige and recognition of the rosary confraternity were no doubt enhanced by the fact that its church leader was always the rector. At the same time the secular public administration demanded the right to control the financial operation of the confraternity, not principally as a member but as patron.

The most influential and wealthiest landowners and their wives were among the members and patrons of the confraternity.²⁷ They maintained their determining role as patrons for decades. Summing up the data of the minute-books it can be said that members of the most prominent families in the local farming society initially figured in the rosary confraternity as members but later tended rather to be patrons. This role was played mainly by their wives and the women. However, the professionals (lawyers, judges, teachers, doctors, officials), were not members. The absence of the so-called intelligentsia from the church and religious life was a recurring complaint made on the occasion of visits by the subdeacon at the end of the 19th century.²⁸

The leaders of the rosary confraternity regarded the membership as a relatively homogeneous group. It made no distinction among the members by age or occupation, only by sex and place of residence. However, it was only in the early years that the distinction between men's groups and women's groups seems to have been a major consideration. Later it lost its significance.

Kinship and local connections within the confraternity

One of the reasons why this form of confraternity was so popular could have been that it broke the large community of religious society down into small communities that the individual could grasp and, at the same time, through them also incorporated the individual into the larger community. The rosary confraternity also involved two traditional principles of the horizontal organization of society into its own organization: kinship ties and neighbourhood. Throughout its existence the 15-member groups seem to have been organized on the basis of neighbourhood and kinship. Each group was composed of members of two or three families: parents, children and members of the older generation living in the same household with

25 This would require the use of other contemporary sources, e.g. tax assessments.

26 In one of his speeches, in connection with the establishment he made special mention of the patronage of the chief judge of the time and his deputy. Min 68.

27 Min 53.

28 Eger Archdiocese Archive, Minutes of visits by subdeacons 586.

them.²⁹ By the mid-20th century this frame was loosened somewhat. These groups were able to join up to form an even wider frame. The ordinary members were able to belong to this wider community through the person of the group leader who ensured and maintained the network of informal contacts among the groups. Family participation in the rosary confraternity must have strengthened family ties and emotional bonds. This confraternity offered the individual another way of integrating into the wider community of the parish and town. Organisation on the basis of sex and generation at first added variety and later quite clearly replaced it. The family confraternity frames disappeared, the men dropped out and women made up the majority of the confraternity members.

Men and women in the Rosary Confraternity

The confraternity, which was very dynamic at the time of its establishment, conducted a census of its members on several occasions (1852, that was supplemented in 1857, 1897, 1918, 1922) and from 1897 sent the list to the archconfraternity in Győr. An unusual and interesting feature is that right up to the censuses taken in the 20th century women figured almost exclusively under their maiden names. This circumstance makes it very difficult to identify the marital status and family ties of confraternity members.

The censuses carried out and recorded within the Rosary Confraternity of Kunszentmárton from 1852 clearly show the gradual feminisation. In 1852 separate men's and women's groups were still being formed, later there was mingling within groups and then a strong process of feminisation in the confraternity, although right up to the 1940s the leaders remained men. According to the census of 1852 there were 11 men's groups (= 165 persons) and 40 women's groups (= 600 persons). This means that already at the start there were four times more women

²⁹ The 47th group of the 1897 census can be cited as an example. The membership was recorded as follows: 1. Ilona Balla, leader, 2. Ilona Pásztor, 3. Mária Barna, 4. Ilona Barna, 5. Rozália Kis, 6. Ilona Kis, 7. Ilona Kovács, 8. Katalin Barna, 9. Teréz Kis, 10. Márta Katona, 11. Katalin Nagy, 12. Rozália Vincze, 13. Julianna Kakuk, 14. Rozália Tóth, 15. Katalin Sári. The members of this group who belonged to the same family and lived in the same household were: 1. Ilona BALLA, 2. Mária BARNÁ, Ilona BARNÁ (Mrs. Lukács Ecsédi, widow), Katalin BARNÁ, their mother (Mrs. Péter Barna, widow) Julianna KAKUK, 3. Katalin SÁRI. The SÁRI, BARNÁ and BALLA families were neighbours in their street – even in the mid-20th century.

The significance of family and kinship ties can be seen even more strikingly in the 93rd group of Alsóréz, a former 'puszta' (outlying settlement cluster) of Kunszentmárton which was given independent public administration status in 1897 as Mesterszállás. Its members were: 1. István Kuna, leader, 2. Apolló Dékány, 3. Antal Kuna, 4. Julianna Kiss, 5. István B. Nagy, 6. Ilona Devánszki, 7. János Imrei, 8. Anna Farkas, 9. József Kuna, 10. Mária Kuna, 11. Viktória Kovács, 12. Antal L. Kuna, 13. Viktória Kovács, 14. György Romhányi, 15. Veronika Kuna. The Kuna family dominates in this group. There are two members with the same name: Kovács Viktória. The list does not reveal the relationship of the members to each other. This can only be interpreted by someone familiar with these relationships. It was found that the group contained a number of siblings and several married couples but the women's married names are not given: 1. István Kuna – Apolló Dékány, 2. Antal Kuna – Julianna Kiss, 3. István D. Nagy – Ilona Devánszki, 4. János Imrei – Anna Farkas, 5. József Kuna – Viktória Kovács and their daughter, Mária Kuna, 6. Antal Kuna and Viktória Kovács, 7. György Romhányi – Veronika Kuna.

than men among the members.³⁰ When the confraternity census was updated in 1856 they found 16 men's groups (=180 persons), 6 women's groups (=90 persons) and 4 mixed groups (=60 persons).³¹ However, there was scarcely any change in the ratio of men to women. Of the 111 "tens" (=15-member groups) recorded in 1897, only 7 consisted solely of men, 47 were formed solely of women and 57 had a mixed membership of men and women with women in the majority.³² The 1917 census found only 52 groups of 15 members and when this census was updated in 1922 there were 56 groups. This means that by then the total membership had dropped to 840 persons. No further censuses were carried out. Today the confraternity has 30 members who are no longer divided into groups of 15. Women generally figure in the censuses and lists of donors under their maiden names. The increase in their numbers was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in their role in the leadership.

Women were the biggest patrons donating the most money to the confraternity for its various purposes. Already when the first donations were collected in 1852, 6 of the 11 largest donations were made by women, 4 by men and one was listed under joint donations.³³ In 1855 they collected money for a banner for the pilgrimage to Máriaradna. There were 86 donors, of whom 33 were men and 44 women, most of them listed under their married names.³⁴ In 1861 the confraternity began to collect donations for paintings of the Stations of the Cross to be placed in the Kunszentmárton parish church. There are 316 names on the list of donors: 106 men and 210 women.³⁵ In contrast, in 1868 305 persons made donations for the Stations (painted columns) planned for the Lower Cemetery: 248 men and only 57 women, some of them figuring under their married name. It is of note that the donors were mainly women from the prosperous farming families. This indicates that within the division of roles inside the families, religion was the field of the women, while the men were active in farming, in the family's external relations and in secular public affairs.³⁶

The wives of the most influential and wealthiest estate-owners, András Szabó and Gergely P. Kovács (from 1896 chief judge) are among the members of the confraternity and its donors. Around the turn of the century the Szabó and P. Kovács families were the church's principal patrons, making numerous gifts. In the jubilee year of 1900, Erzsébet Cziráki Almási was wife of the owner of the neighbouring Almási estate (now Kungyalu).³⁷ In the case of active membership this was probably true in the initial period. While they continue to act as donors, the

30 Min. 13-25.

31 Min. 64-65.

32 Min. 164-183.

33 Min. 26.

34 Min. 52-53.

35 Min. 76-82.

36 December 9, 1904. At the recommendation of vice-president Imre Szarvák it was recorded in the minute-book that the confraternity had 14 Stations of the Cross paintings done for the church at Radna. (Min 185) It was also recorded here that a sanctuary lamp was made for the local church. (Min 185) The names of the donors are listed in separate minutes. The Stations paintings cost 100 crowns each.

37 Min. 160.

town's leading families scarcely figure at all in the later lists of members. The absence of this stratum from the church and religious life was a recurring complaint made during visits by the subdeacon at the end of the 19th century.³⁸

The first decades of the 20th century were the period when women began to play an increasing role in the rosary confraternity, not only as members but also at the leadership level. The influence of wider social processes had begun to have an impact. However, it was the First World War that brought a decisive change. All this is reflected in a very instructive way in the entries in the minute-books.

On December 8, 1867, for example, women are first mentioned by name in a record of an assembly of the confraternity. Before that time, only the deaconess is mentioned by name. The women who are mentioned are not group leaders but ordinary members.³⁹ Later, for many decades, the list of members present at the confraternity assemblies merely notes that "many women" were also present. The list of participants at the confraternity assembly held on December 8, 1874 gives the names of 18 men and for the first time gives the exact number of women present: "a number of confraternity members and 37 women".⁴⁰ At the extraordinary assembly on April 23, 1922, beside the 14 male office-bearers present "there were also over 100 women". In 1923 over 200 women attended the assembly.⁴¹ They are the background, the decisive mass. Their numbers show that they felt responsibility for the affairs of the confraternity and also that the assembly was a social event for them. At the renewal of offices, the vice-president, treasurer and keeper of the minutes were always men.⁴² *The first time women were elected to the confraternity leadership was on January 8, 1923.*⁴³ After that, especially in the 1930s, men and women were elected to the leadership in roughly equal proportions.

Apart from the donations made by the more prosperous, the role of women in the confraternity was to decorate the church with flowers, care for the confraternity painting, statue and banners, and direct the Daughters of Mary. This represents a system of internal tasks, while the male members of the confraternity cultivated relations with the municipal and parish authorities, maintaining and operating a system of external relations. This was in line with the contemporary notions of women's roles and religion.

Age groups

It is not possible to distinguish the members by age as the censuses of confraternity members give no data on age. The censuses and the minutes of the confraternity assemblies make no reference to the age composition of the membership. It can be assumed that the members of the leaders and the deaconesses

38 Eger Archdiocese Archive, Minutes of visits by subdeacons 586.

39 Min. 85.

40 Min. 95.

41 Min. 209.

42 Min. 212.

43 Min 212.

supervising the Daughters of Mary were at least middle-aged or perhaps even older men and women.

The group of Daughters of Mary was obviously composed of children. Their numbers are not known either after the list of names given in the first year. We do not know how many girls carried banners and portable statues in the processions, or waited for the pilgrims returning from Máriaradna. However, it can be seen that such participation in the Rosary Confraternity in childhood must have influenced the later form of individual religious practice, giving young people a model, and in more wealthy families also setting an example for the practice of patronage.

It is no longer possible to determine the number of children or even their proportion, although the participation of a family could be reconstructed within one or two rosary groups. However, these data are not sufficient to make generalisations. Perhaps all that can be said is that a number of teenagers, especially girls, were members of the Rosary Confraternity, no doubt under the influence of their parents. Later they probably ensured the continuous recruitment of new members. This continuity and generational link was broken after the communists took over power, during the years in which the church and religion were repressed, and largely contributed to the fact that there are now only around 30 rosary members active in Kunszentmárton, all women, with only one or two teenage girls. The rapid decline began from the 1970s with the gradual death of members of the age groups born in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The local religious confraternity “market”

In the decades between the two world wars religious life in Kunszentmárton underwent great change. The occupation by Romania of the eastern part of the Great Hungarian Plain and its subsequent annexation to Romania made pilgrimages to Radna impossible. This previously important organising role of the rosary confraternity slowly faded. Local society became more articulated, creating an important basis for the organisation of groups. However, parallel with this, the primary role of the church as organiser of society and integrating force gradually declined.

In addition to the growing process of secularisation in the final decades of the 19th century, the greater supply on the “market” of religious confraternities also played a role in the feminisation and the declining numbers. New confraternities appeared in Kunszentmárton too, and divided the religious lay society. They offered men and women, young people and children, as well as the wealthy and the poor different models of socialisation and spirituality. In 1936, at the end of the period studied, the following confraternities operated in the town: Sacred Heart Confraternity⁴⁴ with 689 members, the second biggest was the Living Rosary Confraternity with 652 members, the Heart Brigade for children with 420 members, and the Sacred Heart Childhood Association with 125. Lagging far

44 Cf. BUSCH 1997.

behind these were the Franciscan Third Order (46 members), the Altar Society (87 members), the Missionary Association (52 members), the Congregation of Mary (56 members).⁴⁵ The very popular Catholic Young Men's Society (KALOT⁴⁶) and the Catholic rural girls' society (KALÁSZ⁴⁷), were organised after 1935 on the basis of occupation and age. And in this supply of religious societies the rosary confraternity was regarded as traditional. In the 20th century, especially from the middle of the century it increasingly lost ground and became a prayer society of middle-aged and elderly women. At the same time, its original function as a prayer society strengthened. Young people were attracted to other organisations; religious representation declined and after 1948 was banned under the communist dictatorship. Other forms of aid and of pomp at funerals emerged. In 1940 the Carmelite Order moved to Kunszentmárton. Another rival confraternity form, the *Carmelite Third Order* and the *Scapular Confraternity* also became popular.⁴⁸ The members of the Carmelite third order were mainly women. The scapular confraternity grouped broad strata of local and rural society.

A few conclusions

At the time the confraternity of Kunszentmárton was established, politically Hungary had only recently experienced the defeat of the revolution and war of independence in 1848-49 and was in a period of political absolutism, economically it was the beginning of rapid industrialisation (regulation of rivers, railway construction, manufacturing industry) and socially the period was marked by accelerating embourgeoisement. These changes naturally had a much stronger impact in the big towns and industrial centres than on the Hungarian Great Plain, the area of my investigation. Here, the large-scale industrialisation brought favourable years and decades for agrarian society but from the end of the 19th century the region was marked by economic stagnation and then in the 20th century by a steady decline that can still be felt. It was under these circumstances that the rosary confraternity was established. It became the longest-lived religious society in the modern history of Kunszentmárton, mobilising and organising the biggest masses. It still exists and functions.

The rosary confraternity was principally an association of the peasantry, not only in the settlement studied here but in Hungary in general. The rosary (also) became an object of dress, especially for middle-aged and elderly peasant women on festive occasions. In many places it is still worn.⁴⁹

45 BARNÁ 1998, 18.

46 KALOT: National Body of Catholic Rural Young Men's Associations (1935-1946). See: Magyar Katolikus Lexikon [Hungarian Catholic Lexicon] VI. 2001, 89-93.

47 KALÁSZ = Federation of Catholic Girls' Circles (1935-1946). See: Magyar Katolikus Lexikon [Hungarian Catholic Lexicon] VI. 2001, 364.

48 JÓZSA 1991, KÓSA 1991.

49 BARNÁ 2011. 382-384.

According to the evidence of the minute-books and contemporary religious literature and the confraternity's periodical, the rosary was principally a form of *women's devotion*. The women's enthusiasm is reflected in the lists of donors. If a *sponsor* had to be found for a cause, the confraternity could always count on the *female society*. However, the leaders were men.

What is the reason for this difference between men and women in reception of the rosary, clearly perceivable in Kunszentmárton after the first decades? It is probably not sufficient to refer to the commonplace in research on religion that religion has always been closer to women. The process of steadily growing feminisation of religion can be observed in Hungary from the mid-19th century and in Central Europe in general from the early 19th century. It affected all Christian denominations. It can be concluded from this that from the 19th century Christianity played a bigger role in the lives of women than of men.⁵⁰

The high degree of feminisation can only be interpreted in the context of the process of secularisation. The processes of economic, social and cultural modernisation, which can be seen as part of the broader processes of industrialisation and embourgeoisement, separated the living and working places and living spaces. It was the role of men to support the family and this went together with certain public roles that made men more receptive of secularisation. Women occupied the private space, within the family. It was their task to manage the household and raise the children. Within this context they also provided for the family's sacral world.

The rosary devotions and membership of the confraternity represented an important means of Christian education for the parents. But this can be said in a wider sense too. The confraternity's monthly periodical *Rózsafüzér Királynéja* [Queen of the Rosary]⁵¹, and other devotional writings related to the rosary tended to stress conservative religiosity, sharply opposing it to the liberal, Masonic and (in the 20th century) Bolshevik (communist) ideologies, blaming them for the social and moral problems of the time. They stresses, as a model, what could now perhaps be characterised as a feminine religiosity. In other words, they can be said to have legitimised the gender characteristics of religiosity.

From the late 19th century the rosary increasingly became a form of women's devotion and confraternity. But even in the mid-20th century its leaders were still men. While religious life became feminised the secular world retained its patriarchal character in which only men could be leaders. For a considerable time to come public forums were open largely only to men. This role is even strengthened by the women's roles.⁵² The rosary confraternity preserved its nature as a women's mass movement right up to the 1940s.⁵³

This was probably because 1. its operation involved substantial church patronage, so its continued existence was in the interest of the church, while it provided

50 McLEOD 1988.

51 The periodical, issued from 1885-1945 had strong ties to the Dominican Order. A number of people in Kunszentmárton and district subscribed to it.

52 MARSHMENT 1994, 131.

53 BARNA 2011. 384-385.

lay church members with a frame for their charity, 2. because it set tasks that were clear, readily understandable and easily performed, 3. it required members to co-ordinate their forms of individual and collective religious practice in a way that was acceptable. As individual religious practice the rosary group meant saying 10 “Hail Marys”. The place and time structure for the prayers was flexible, meaning that the prayers could be said anywhere and at any time, even during work; in fact it was even recommended that they be said during work. This gave special emphasis to intimacy in prayers, an important requirement for individual religious practice, while at the same time also ensuring a certain collective character. The confraternity members say their individual prayers simultaneously with other members. All this gave legitimacy to a distinctively feminine form of religious practice.⁵⁴

At the same time however, efforts were made to involve men and children in the rosary confraternity and devotions. The confraternity’s periodical regularly published stories of conversion influenced by the rosary and also regularly wrote about men – mainly belonging to the intelligentsia – who used the rosary for prayer. All these stories were read in Kunszentmárton too. In the early 20th century rosary groups were formed in Hungary and throughout Europe for children and soldiers.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, these examples were unable to reverse the general trend.

The First World War brought rapid change. Some of the men who had been to the front became alienated from religion and the church, while religiosity strengthened among women. The only change in this came from the late 1920s and even more from the mid-1930s when the Jesuits successfully organised the KALOT and KALÁSZ organisations.⁵⁶ Besides the strengthening and legitimisation of both gender and religious identity, these also represented strong social and nationalist ideals. However, this had the effect of drawing people – men, women, youth and children alike – away from the earlier confraternity forms felt to be traditional.

The motivations for establishment of confraternities were varied. In certain historical periods they could represent a forum of public life for the individual, making them important organisational frames for individual awareness (embourgeoisement). They could provide a frame for the manifestation and assertion of different aims and interests.

As Hungarian society underwent change in the late 19th century new demands arose in religious life, requiring a new frame, new forms of content and new social roles in the practice of religion. On the one hand, big mass movements⁵⁷ emerged, and on the other pastoral work became more differentiated. The new type of rosary confraternity form that arose in the mid-19th century was able to meet these new demands: it was able to link the horizontally organised confraternity to the

54 BARNÁ 2011, 378-381.

55 KIRSCH 1950, 344-348.

56 See notes 45 and 46.

57 E.g.: Catholic mass rallies.

vertically organised church. In Kunszentmárton it played a big role in integrating the entire society.⁵⁸

Membership of the confraternity represented a distinctive path and form of religious socialisation. Its frames were family membership: parents and children were members together, although later this was the case mainly for mothers and their daughters. Membership of the Daughters of Mary played a similar role. It is very likely that many young girls aged 10–14 years developed the habit of saying the rosary prayers, together with the demand, possibility and means of playing a certain community religious role.

This acceptable blend of functions and community roles, the individual and collective practice of religion led to a situation where, in the last decade of the 19th century, one fifth to one sixth of the town's inhabitants were members of the rosary confraternity, with the predominance of women. Practically all families in the middle and lower strata were represented in the confraternity. For the leaders of the confraternity this association frame represented a possible means and path for gaining social prominence. At the same time it also legitimised the existing (social, secular and ecclesiastical) order.

The change in the proportions of the leaders and the led, that is, the male office-bearers and the predominantly female members, reflects the economic and social processes of the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century. The activity of the men was confined mainly to the confraternity's external relations, while the women were active inside the confraternity. But as the social and political attitudes towards women changed in the early 20th century and the forums of openness became increasingly accessible for women too, women gained increasing possibilities and began to play a greater role in operating the confraternity's external relations. This was also assisted by the rapid spread of technical civilisation: transport and commerce became part of everyday life. At the same time they also retained their earlier, internal scope of activity. As a result women gradually took over all levels of confraternity activity and the network of contacts.

It can be seen that the rosary confraternity is principally a prayer and religious society of the peasantry, the lower middle class and elderly women. The intelligentsia and men participate only rarely and in small numbers. Nowadays very few young people and children are drawn into the organisation. While the men are representatives of "official religiosity" (priests, cantors, sextons, vestrymen, etc.), women are the organisers of unofficial religiosity. "Their institution is organised and operates from below, giving them a better overview than the representatives of official religion have of the most important demands coming from below, from the village community. They know when the family, as the primary group, has need of material and spiritual support and a helping hand. While official religion helps those in need only spiritually, through the means of church liturgy, the Rosary Confraternity, besides its interpretation of the liturgy originating from below, also tries to give every other kind of help: voluntary work groups, material assistance in the form of donations of money and loans of tableware, and

58 Min 97.

at the same time friendly, human encouragement and support through the close contacts. This institutionalised, helping organisation has a network covering almost the entire village; there are very few houses without a member. For this reason it can be said that it keeps the whole village under its supervision. Both the assistance and the contacts are linked to the cycles of nature (spring, summer, autumn, and the months), and to the turning points in human life.⁵⁹ In the case of the Kunszentmárton confraternity in the 19th century the system of external connections was operated by the men, while the women were responsible for the internal contacts.

For a century ageing and feminisation have been a recurring complaint by leaders and members of the rosary confraternity. And although a certain decline can undoubtedly be observed, the confraternity form itself has not disappeared, indeed, it can be said that it still constitutes the most popular religious association with the greatest number of members. There are perhaps two explanations for this: 1. the tasks women undertake in society have changed very little or not at all over the past decades and the changes that have taken place have had the effect of strengthening women's role in some areas, 2. as people approach the end of life their feeling of existential and spiritual uncertainty grows stronger and there is a need for the sense of security offered by a religious society to resolve this feeling, a need for the service of prayer undertaken and offered for another, giving the individual the security of hope.

The Marian legitimacy of the rosary is increased by the circumstance that the predictions of Fatima (1917) – for long mentioned only in whispers – have come true: socialism and communism in Europe, including Hungary, has collapsed, Russia has set out on the path of change and “conversion”. The prayer of the Living Rosary has been able to undergo renewal at the beginning of the 21st century. This renewal was initiated by the supreme authority of the church, the Pope himself, who introduced the rosary of light beside the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries.⁶⁰ His recommendation has been quickly adopted in many places by popular religiosity in Hungary and the size and structure of the prayer groups has been adapted to the new number of mysteries (4x5). Elsewhere however, knowledge of the luminous mystery has not brought structural change in the operation of the confraternity; this is the case for the majority of confraternities although they know about the rosary of light.

59 SZÓCSNÉ 2004. 166.

60 BARNÁ 2011. 316-318.

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ON THE SPREAD OF THE LIVING ROSARY CONFRATERNITIES IN TRANSYLVANIA (SZÉKELYFÖLD¹)

Abstract: The article presents and interpretes the data of three censuses conducted at different times (1900, 1902, 1928), and of the parish reports for 1913 to 1928 concerning the Living Rosary societies, using it to show the appearance and spread of the Living Rosary societies in Székelyföld and their existence up to 1928. As a final conclusion it can be said that the Living Rosary confraternity form was already widespread in the Székelyföld region at the turn of the century and even the major historical events of the period – the First World War, the Romanian occupation, the annexation of Transylvania – did not lead to their disappearance.
Keywords: Living Rosary, Székelyföld, male and female members, Roman Catholic communities, vicariates.

There are three forms of rosary societies in religious practice: the Rosary Confraternity, or the Archconfraternity of the Rosary, the Perpetual Rosary society and the Living Rosary prayer association.² The last of these is the most recent form: its first community was organised by Pauline Marie Jaricot.³ This form of society established in Lyon in 1826 spread rapidly throughout Europe. Research to date has been able to document its presence in Hungary from the 1840s.⁴ Research by Katalin Gergely⁵, Irma Gál⁶, János Bárh⁷ and Enikő Gazda Szócs⁸ brings us closer to its spread in the Székelyföld region. The earliest known formation of a

1 Székelyföld is one of the historical-ethnographical regions of Transylvania. Its administrative borders have changed many times over the course of history. Between 1437-1876 Székelyföld comprised five szék (administrative areas): Udvarhelyszék, Csíkszék, Háromszék, Marossszék and Aranyos-szék. After 1876 counties were created; their borders remained unchanged in the case of Csíkszék and were slightly modified for Udvarhelyszék and Háromszék. Marossszék was attached to Maros-Torda County and Aranyos-szék to Torda-Aranyos County. Under the Trianon peace treaty Székelyföld was annexed to Romania. From 1940-1944 Udvarhely, Csík Háromszék and Maros-Torda where the majority of the population were Szeklers belonged to Hungary, then up to 1968 formed part of the Hungarian Autonomous Province. Vofkori 1998. 17. For the purpose of this study I drew the borders of the region at the borders of the vicariate districts in Udvarhelyszék, Marossszék, Csíkszék and Háromszék.

2 BARNA 2011. 114.

3 BARNA 2011. 130.

4 BARNA 2011. 105.

5 GERGELY 1998.

6 GÁL 1998.

7 BÁRTH 2007. 90-94; BÁRTH 2006. 123- 126; BÁRTH 2004. 147-148.

8 SZÓCSNÉ 2002.

Rosary Confraternity in Székelyföld was in 1728, in Gyergyószentmiklós.⁹ The literature reports on the existence of rosary confraternity membership records from Zetelaka (1728)¹⁰ and Csíkszentgyörgy (1800)¹¹. The earliest record so far on the establishment of a Living Rosary association in Székelyföld is known from research by János Bárh¹²: the Csíkszentgyörgy community was formed in 1845 and reorganised in 1887. Enikő Gazda Szócs¹³ draws attention to a source from 1847, showing that 21 years after the appearance of the movement in Lyon, the Franciscans in Csíksomlyó were already engaged in popularising the new form of devotions. The handbook by an unknown author titled “*Az Élő Lelki Rozsafüzér*” (The Living Spiritual Rosary)¹⁴ is probably a facsimile edition of the version published under the same title in 1844 in Kolozsvár.¹⁵ We do not yet know what other means the Franciscans active in Székelyföld used in their efforts to popularise this movement, whether they were involved in coordination of the confraternities, and who else urged the establishment of the new kind of rosary devotions in this region. It will be a task for further research to determine whether representatives of the monastic orders, the diocesan priests or laypersons played a greater role in the later extensive spread of the movement in Székelyföld.

The investigation of the type of rosary confraternity that evolved in the 19th century in Székelyföld is based on a summary and analysis of sources found in the Gyulafehérvár Archiepiscopal and Archdeaconal Archive¹⁶, and the Roman Catholic collecting archives in Transylvania¹⁷. I attempted to trace the appearance and spread of the Living Rosary confraternities in Székelyföld with the help of these sources and the Rosary Album published in 1900.¹⁸ Among the documents preserved in the Gyulafehérvár Episcopal and Archdeaconal Archive are the records of a census made in 1928 of the religious communities in the Transylvanian diocese, as well as an earlier version of the same census made in 1902. To ensure the most careful interpretation of the data in these two inventories, I also drew on a third group of sources, the No. XII reports.¹⁹

9 GERGELY 1998. 298.

10 FÁBIÁN s.d.

11 BÁRTH 2007. 90.

12 BÁRTH 2007. 92.

13 SZÓCSNÉ 2002. 22.

14 *Early Books Collection* of the Csík Székely Museum. ltsz. 5151. MUCKENHAUPT 2007. 41.

15 BARNA 2011. 157–158.

16 Revision of the archive under the jurisdiction of the Gyulafehérvár Roman Catholic Episcopacy (GYÉFKL) began in 1999 and was completed in 2003; it resulted in the publication of a two-volume repertory in 2006. SZÖGI 2006; BERNÁD 2006.

17 Thanks to a program begun in 2003 six collecting archives were set up in 2003–2008 in the territory of the Gyulafehérvár Roman Catholic Episcopacy (in Gyulafehérvár, Szamosújvár, Sepsiszentgyörgy, Gyergyószentmiklós, Marosvásárhely and Székelyudvarhely), where the documents of the Catholic parish archives have been collected. BERNÁD 2009. 8. Between July 2013 and July 2014 I was working in the collecting archives in Gyergyószentmiklós (GYFL GYGYL), Székelyudvarhely (GYFL SZUGYL) and Marosvásárhely (GYFL MGYL).

18 Further on abbreviated as RA.

19 On the basis of an episcopal plan drawn up in 1912, parishes were required to submit a special report each August also covering the Catholic societies operating within their church communities. TAMÁSI 2009. 19.

The *Rózsafüzér-album* (Rosary Album) was compiled by P. Imre Kindler²⁰, editor of the periodical *A Legszentebb Rózsafüzér Királynéja* (Queen of the Most Sacred Rosary)²¹ in honour of the 1900 jubilee holy year.²² The publication²³ gives detailed information on the spread in Hungary at that time of the rosary confraternity forms granted permission to operate by the Dominican Order. Of the three confraternity forms only the Living Rosary had such recognition in the Transylvanian diocese. The order of formation, the name of the founder, the year of foundation and the number of members were given for all 94 “associations” functioning regularly at that time.²⁴ Only the number of members was given for three groups that had applied for recognition but had not yet received it. Since the list did not show the vicariates to which the groups belonged, they had to be identified. On the basis of the names of the founding church persons, and with the help of the *Schematismus* (Catalogue of church persons) for 1888²⁵, 1898²⁶ and 1900²⁷ as well as the Transylvanian gazetteer²⁸ and the catalogue of priests²⁹, it was possible to identify these with one exception³⁰. In two cases the list twice mentions establishments from the same church community under different names.³¹ Of the 97 Living Rosary confraternities in the Transylvanian diocese, 70 (72%) were organised in vicariates in the historical territory of Székelyföld (Alcsík-Kászon, Felcsík, Gyergyó, Kézdi-Orba, Maros, Sepsi-Barcaság, Székelyudvarhely). Their regional distribution was as follows: 11 (16%) in the vicariate of Alcsík-Kászon, 12 (17%) in Felcsík, 8 (11%) in Gyergyó, 7 (10%) in Kézdi-Orba, 12 (17%) in Maros, 6 (9%) in Sepsi-Barcaság, and 14 (20%) in Székelyudvarhely. Of these, only the Living Rosary confraternity in Szentegyházásfalva was not officially recognised. The confraternities were established between 1885 and 1899. Regarding the founders of the 69 religious confraternities, there is only one person (director of a secondary school) we were unable to identify as secular or not; the other 68 are all church persons, in four cases Franciscans, the remainder local parish priests.

20 A Dominican Frater, who was editor of the monthly paper from 1895-1900.

21 A Rosary periodical, published in Hungary from 1885; it was launched and at first edited by Károly Zafféry, a Trappist and later Salesian monk. In 1895 the monthly publication came under the supervision of the Dominicans and from then on was edited by P. Imre Kindler. BARNÁ 2011. 177-180.

22 BARNÁ 2011. 188.

23 RA 1900. 295-344.

24 Rosary societies were supervised by the Dominicans since the 1880s. cf. BARNÁ 2011. 189.

25 SCHEMATISMUS 1888.

26 SCHEMATISMUS 1898.

27 SCHEMATISMUS 1900.

28 SZABÓ 2003.

29 FERENCZI 2009.

30 The only place we were unable to identify was Farnos. This Transylvanian settlement name does not figure in the Gazetteer either, nor is the name of the church person given listed in the Schematismus.

31 At the turn of the century three settlements belonged to the church community Csíknagyboldogasszony: Csíkjenőfalva, Csíkkarcfalva, Csíkdánfalva. The list shows the names of three villages without giving the church community in 1886, the establishment of the Living Rosary confraternity (with 105, 180, and 180 members) was urged by the same church person. In 1888 it reports 975 members in Nagyboldogasszony, but this is probably the archeonfraternity of the three villages, however it was not possible to determine its connection with the groups formed in 1886.

The 1902 *census* of religious communities in the Transylvanian diocese was carried out for the report requested in the episcopal circular letter No. 1803/1902. The inventory titled “*Societies and associations of a religious nature in the diocese of Transylvania up to 20th May 1902*”³² lists the religious communities operating in the parishes of the diocese grouped by vicariate; it lists the year of establishment and the number of members, and also has space for remarks. There are very few church communities in the seven vicariates examined that did not send a report and in the majority of cases the year of establishment and the precise number of members are given. In some cases the date or simply the fact of reorganisation is mentioned. The use of names for the types of rosary confraternities is not consistent. The living rosary confraternity is most often called “Living Rosary Confraternity”, less frequently “Rosary Confraternity”, or “Sacred Rosary”.³³ In the Székelyföld vicariates the societies were established between 1846 and 1903³⁴, with the greatest number falling between 1890 and 1900. The earliest were formed in the vicariates of Felcsík (1847 – Csíkcsicsó, 1860 – Csíkdelne), Alcsík (1868 – Kászónújfalú, 1869 – Nagykászon) and Kézdi-Orba (1846 – Kézdivásárhely – Kanta, 1856 – Torja). The greatest number of reorganisations occurred in 1897 and 1900.

The 1928 *census*³⁵ of religious communities was probably conducted by the central administration³⁶ set up around that time for the Catholic associations of the diocese and took stock of the religious communities then operating in the Transylvanian diocese. It lists the Catholic associations of the parishes by vicariate, giving the year of establishment, number of members and the name of the leader and president.³⁷ Several names are used in the census for the rosary confraternity types; their use is consistent only for the Perpetual Rosary societies. The Living Rosary Confraternity is called “Confraternity of Mary”, “Beads Confraternity”, “Rosary Confraternity” and “Living Rosary Confraternity”. There are church communities that listed several names simultaneously, suggesting that the confraternity type examined must exist behind each of them. There are big gaps

32 GYÉFKL. *Püspöki (Érseki) Hivatal iratai 1902*. [Documents of the Episcopal Office 1902]

33 In the diocesan summary the names used for the rosary society types operating in the parishes are those given by the data providers, but they were grouped into a single type for the total number of members given at the end of the vicariates. In the case of a few church communities where there was no rosary society, the presence of a Society of Mary was indicated. The use of nomenclature in the later census raises the possibility that this too may actually refer to the type of confraternity examined here, but the summary of the data for 1902 did not follow that approach. This point requires further clarification.

34 In a few cases the year of establishment is later than that of the census. The explanation for this is that the summing up of data was closed in January 1904 and an effort had been made in the intervening period to supply the missing data.

35 GYÉFKL. *Hitbuzgalmi egyesületek, társulatok iratai 1863-1947. Az erdélyi püspöki egyházmegye plébániáiban létező katolikus egyesületek jegyzéke esperesi kerületek szerint 1928*. [Documents of devotional associations and societies 1863–1947. List of Catholic associations existing in parishes of the episcopal diocese of Transylvania by vicariates, 1928.]

36 TAMÁSI 2009. 73.

37 The volume contains entries not only for 1928 but also for later years in an attempt to fill in gaps. From 1929, as a continuation of the previous volume, a record was kept over a period of ten years of changes in the annual membership of religious communities operating in the parishes of the diocese.

in the data on the year of establishment, the leaders and presidents. The greatest uncertainty is found for the year of foundation. Either the year is not given, or there are various remarks indicating lack of knowledge (unknown, uncertain when, cannot be established, etc.) or remarks indicating long existence (ancient, very old, has always existed, etc.). In some cases reorganisation is also mentioned, or only that is shown. The precisely stated dates of establishment range from 1876 to 1928. In most cases the names of the leader and president of the religious communities are not given, only that of lay leaders but even that is sometimes missing. In most cases the position of leader was held by the local parish priest and that of president by a lay person. In contrast, membership is always stated. The record contains only subsequent entries on the rosary societies in a few church communities. In these cases we took into account only those that also state the date of establishment or reorganisation and where the figures given for membership were not contradictory.

The last source group used was the administrative reports (*Relációk* ~ relations) that the heads of church communities were required to draw up annually. The reports had to be forwarded to the offices of the deacons; they were then aggregated by the archdeacon and forwarded to the episcopal office. Among the close to 20 different kinds of report, after 1912 the No. XII report concerned Catholic associations operating in the parish. A separate form had to be filled in for each religious community, giving the distribution of membership by gender³⁸, name of the leader³⁹, and a brief summary of activity in the past year. I examined the reports for seven years out of the period investigated (1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1925, 1928). In these reports the name of the Living Rosary type of society was much more uniform than in earlier surveys. In the majority of settlements there were also men among the members of the rosary confraternities. The reports only rarely revealed whether they carried out their activity separately or in mixed groups with the women. In most cases the local parish priest is given as head of the community. But there were places where this role was filled by lay persons, in most cases women, although men also held the office.

In the next section I present the findings of a comparative analysis of the data from the sources used, by vicariate. In the diocese of Transylvania seven archdeaconries fall within the historical territory of Székelyföld.⁴⁰ The presentation covers the territorial and administrative divisions existing in 1928, while the names of the vicariates and parishes⁴¹ follow present use. Among the filial churches I examined only those that were independent by 1928.

38 A number of forms can be found, some also show the distribution by age groups.

39 There are also forms that require the "employment position" of the leader to be given.

40 There are also settlements in the Küküllő vicariate that belong to Székelyföld, but they are not discussed in this article.

41 I have followed the terminology of the millennium report.

The *Alcsík-Kászon vicariate* comprised 13 parishes in 1900⁴², and 15 in 1928⁴³. In the period examined, in most of the settlements belonging to the vicariate⁴⁴ more than 90% of the population was Roman Catholic.⁴⁵ A considerable proportion of the remainder were Greek Catholics. According to the 1902 census a rosary society operated in every parish of the vicariate. According to the data of the Rosary Album, in eight of these church communities there were confraternities that the Dominican Order also recognised as functioning according to the rules. The report made in 1902 gives 1868 as the earliest date of establishment, while the jubilee yearbook mentions the earliest establishments in 1886. In the 1928 census the society form examined is not mentioned in four settlements, but it can be shown with the help of earlier entries and the reports made by parish priests that such a society did exist in these settlements at that time. It is only in the case of Csíkmindszent that we do not know whether it was due to lack of information provision or to actual non-functioning that information on the society established in 1888 with 190 members is available again only from 1930.

Summing up it can be said that the Living Rosary form of society was certifiably present in 100% of the Alcsík-Kászon vicariate in 1902 and in 93% in 1928. The reports mention male membership in most of the societies in the district⁴⁶, there are even cases where the numbers of men and women are equal.⁴⁷ The 1928 reports for this district do not allow us to determine the distribution by age. In 1902 the biggest confraternity had 1050 members, in 1928 this figure was 450.

The *Felcsík archdeaconry district* comprised 14 parishes⁴⁸ in 1900 and 20⁴⁹ in 1928. In Szépvíz there was also an Armenian Catholic rites church community. In the period examined the Roman Catholic population of the district exceeded 90% in the majority of the settlements. Here too, Greek Catholics made up the larger part of the remainder. The 1902 census makes no mention of a rosary society in two parishes. According to the data of the Rosary Album, in 1900 the society in 7 parishes has been recognised by the Dominican Order. According to the 1902 report, the earliest establishment was in 1847, while the Rosary Album gives 1886 as the earliest date. The 1928 report mentions no rosary society in 6 parishes, but it is in only two⁵⁰ that the No. XII reports do not indicate the existence of a rosary society in any year. According to the Dominican list, a rosary society was established in Csikta-ploca in 1899, in the 1902 report the date given is 1898, while in later reports it is only in 1914 that it is indicated, so we are unable to prove its existence at the end of the period examined. The Rosary Album mentions establishment in Balánbánya in 1892, the reports for 1913 and 1914 probably also refer to the existence of this society, but we did not find confirmation of its further existence in any other source.

42 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 17-19.

43 SCHEMATISMUS 1929. 12-14.

44 The proportion is lower in certain settlements within the Kászon Basin, but nowhere less than 70%.

45 I took into account the data of the 1900 and 1930 population census. VARGA 1998.

46 The gender distribution is not shown in all cases.

47 In Csikszentlélek in 1913 98 men and 102 women were members of the confraternity.

48 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 19-21.

49 SCHEMATISMUS 1929. 14-15.

50 In Gyimesfelsőlök and in the Szépvíz Armenian rites parish.

Summing up, it can be said that the presence of the Living Rosary confraternity form can be confirmed in 87% of the church communities in the Felcsík archdeaconry district in 1902, and in 80% in 1928. The reports mention male members in all societies in all districts, with a higher proportion at the beginning of the period examined, declining towards the end. In the earliest Living Rosary confraternity established here in 1847 men made up 45% of the members in 1913 and 25% in 1928. According to the 1928 reports all age groups were represented in the society in five settlements. In 1902 the largest society had 1050 members, in 1928 this figure was 2250.

At the turn of the century 12 parishes⁵¹ belonged to the *Gyergyó archdeaconry district*. There was also an Armenian Catholic rites church community in Gyergyószentmiklós. In the first half of the 20th century Roman Catholics represented over 90% of the population in the majority of settlements of the district. The remainder was slightly more divided than in the districts already mentioned, but here too Greek Catholics predominated. Because of the absence of a report the 1902 census fails to give data on only one settlement, the rosary society form is mentioned in all other communities. On the basis of the information given in the Rosary Album, in 1900 seven church communities had Living Rosary confraternities operating with the authorisation of the Dominican Order. In 1928 the number of parishes in the vicariate district⁵² grew to 15.⁵³ Of these, according to the most recent census of the period, four did not have a Living Rosary society, but the reports for 1928 confirmed the existence of a society in another one. The reports for 1913-1917 indicate the existence of the society at that time in the remaining three church communities, but it is not known what happened to them by the end of the period examined. The 1902 census gives the earliest date of establishment as 1872 while the Rosary Album mentions 1886 as the earliest establishment in this district.

Summing up, we can say that the presence of the Living Rosary confraternity form can be shown in 92% of the church communities of the Gyergyó vicariate and in 80% in 1928. The reports for 1913 to 1928 continuously mention male members in this district too, with 23% as the highest proportion. According to the 1928 reports, all age groups were organised into the society in only one settlement. In 1902 the biggest society had 1235 members, and in 1928 the biggest had 1470 members.

In 1900 there were 18 parishes⁵⁴ in the *Kézdi-Orbai archdeaconry*. Here too most of the settlements had a Roman Catholic majority, similarly to the previous districts, above 90%. Territorially it is restricted to the villages of the Holy Land⁵⁵

51 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 23–25.

52 SCHEMATISMUS 1929. 16–17.

53 BERNÁD 2009. 260.

54 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 27–29.

55 This is the name used by the Protestant inhabitants in the south of the micro region for the Roman Catholic villages in the northern part of Háromszék. KÓSA-FILEP 1983. 177.

in the vicinity of Kézdivásárhely. But here the remainder of the population are divided among the Orthodox, Calvinist and Greek Catholic religions. There are also a few settlements where the majority of the population are Calvinists. With three exceptions, the 1902 census mentions the presence of the rosary confraternity form everywhere. Among the 15 parishes, according to the Rosary Album there were communities in five operating with the approval of the Dominican Order. The 1902 report indicates that the earliest establishment in the district was in 1846, while the earliest date given in the Rosary Album is 1885. The 1928 census does not mention the presence of the society form examined in seven church communities, but the 1928 reports indicate this absence only in one settlement.

Summing up, it can be said on the basis of the data examined so far, that at the turn of the century the Living Rosary confraternity form was present in 83% of the church communities in the Kézdi-Orba vicariate and in 1928 in 95%. Male members were continuously present in this district too. In 1902 the largest society had 300 members, and in 1928 585 members.

The *Maros archdeaconry district* had 20 parishes⁵⁶ in the early 20th century.⁵⁷ Here we find a population that is much more diverse denominationally, the Roman Catholic predominance in the settlements is not so strong, it is only in the villages of the Holy Land⁵⁸ along the Felső-Nyárád River that their proportion is steadily above 90%. The 1902 census does not mention any form of rosary confraternity in five of the twenty parishes in the district. But the 1928 list documents the establishment of rosary confraternities in Ákosfalva, and Görgényüvegcsúr at the end of the 19th century, giving the exact year. In addition, according to the data in the Rosary Album the latter society was officially recognised by the Dominican Order in 1895. Since they were established at a time very close to the end of the century and they still existed in 1928, it seems likely that they also existed in the early 1900s. Thus, according to our present state of knowledge, at the turn of the century only three of the 19 parishes did not have a rosary confraternity. The Rosary Album mentions the official existence of 12 communities in this district. By 1928 the number of parishes in the district had increased to 22 and according to the census in that year the society form examined did not exist in eight of them. However the 1928 reports do not mention the existence of such a society in only three of these. The 1928 census mentions the earliest establishment of a rosary confraternity as being in 1783, in Nyáráremete. Of those established in the 19th century the earliest was in 1878. On the basis of the data in the Rosary Album, the Dominican Order gave the earliest operating authorisation in this district in 1887.

Summing up, we can say that in 1902 the presence of the Living Rosary society form can be confirmed in 84% of the church communities of the Maros archdeaconry and in 1928 in 86%. Here too, the reports indicate continuous male

56 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 33–36.

57 But probably because services for Mezőerked were provided from Teke, both the 1902, and the 1928 records list it as a filial of Teke, I have adopted this approach too despite the fact that throughout the period examined it figures in the reports as a parish.

58 The inhabitants of the Protestant villages in the micro region referred to the Roman Catholic villages along the Felső-Nyárád river in this way. KÓSA-FILEP 1983. 176.

membership, in 1928 there was one community where it reached 44%. The largest membership was 345 in 1902 and 387 in 1928.

In 1900 12 parishes⁵⁹ belonged to the *Sepsi-Barcaság archdeaconry*. There are hardly any villages here with a Roman Catholic majority, in most cases their proportion is below 50%. According to the 1902 report three church communities did not have a rosary confraternity at the turn of the century. But given that the Rosary Album mentions that in 1898 a Living Rosary society with 330 members in Brassó was officially recognised by the Dominicans, it can be assumed that it still existed a few years later. In 1919 a new church community was formed in the district⁶⁰, so by 1928 the number of parishes had increased to 13⁶¹. According to the 1928 census the proportions had been reversed and a rosary confraternity operated in only three settlements at that time. However the 1928 reports mention the existence of a further two church communities. But the reports give no information on the later fate of the other communities. According to data in the Rosary Album six communities in the district had the approval of the Dominican Order, the earliest having been obtained in 1887.

Summing up, we can say that the society form examined was present in 75% of the parishes of the *Sepsi-Barcaság vicariate* in 1902, and in 38% in 1928. The presence of men can be observed throughout the period in this district too. They were completely absent only in 1928 from the Living Rosary confraternity in Brassó where it is interesting to note that the group was composed of German-speaking women. Probably the other four groups of the organisation, separated according to age and gender,⁶² were Hungarians, because no special mention is made of their ethnic identity. In this church community according to the data of the Rosary Album a Living Rosary society with 330 members was established in 1898 but no mention is made of it in the 1902 census. More recent information is provided in the reports for 1913, 1914 and 1917, throwing light on the existence of a rosary confraternity with 130 members (30 men, 100 women), 155 members (70 men, 85 women) and 160 members (10 men, 150 women) respectively. After that the only known data refer to the above-mentioned Brassó community from the end of the period examined.

The biggest Living Rosary confraternity in the district had 285 members in 1902 and 280 in 1928.

At the turn of the century there were 27 parishes⁶³ in the *Udvarhely archdeaconry district*, and by 1928 this number had risen to 29⁶⁴. In a substantial proportion of the settlements belonging to the vicariate the Roman Catholic population was over 90% in the decades examined.

59 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 13–15.

60 SCHEMATISMUS 2010. 153.

61 SCHEMATISMUS 1929. 10–11.

62 Groups of school boys and girls, of youth and adult girls.

63 SCHEMATISMUS 1900. 41–45.

64 SCHEMATISMUS 1929. 28–30.

According to the 1902 report at the turn of the century four of the 27 parishes in the district did not have a rosary confraternity. The Rosary Album mentions 12 authorised societies. According to the 1902 census the earliest establishment was in 1883, while the Rosary Album gives 1888 as the earliest date. However, we succeeded in finding a document⁶⁵ in the Székelyudvarhely collected archive confirming the appointment in 1886 of the Zetelaka parish priest by the Viennese Dominicans as director of the society under his guidance that also meant official recognition of the society. In the absence of an adequate source we do not yet know why the Zetelaka community does not figure in the Rosary Album. The 1928 census does not mention a rosary society in four church communities. But with the help of the reports it can be confirmed that two of these did in fact have a society also in 1928.

Summing up we can say that in 1902 rosary societies operated in 85% of the church communities of the Székelyudvarhely vicariate district, and in 93% in 1928. The reports mention male members in the majority of societies, in cases even in equal proportions to women. The largest rosary confraternity in the district in 1902 had 795 members and in 1928 1153 members.

Conclusions

The article presented and interpreted the data of three censuses conducted at different times (1900, 1902, 1928), and of the parish reports for 1913 to 1928 concerning the Living Rosary societies, using it to show the appearance and spread of the Living Rosary societies in Székelyföld and their existence up to 1928.

In Székelyföld we find the districts of the church diocese with a continuously Roman Catholic majority, where the population remained true to their faith even after the Reformation. Among the vicariate districts examined this is the case for the whole of the Alcsík-Kászón, Felcsík and Gyergyó, the eastern part of the Kézdi-Orba district, the area of the Maros district along the Felső-Nyárád river, and the areas of the Székelyudvarhely district to the east and north of Udvarhely.⁶⁶ It is only in the remaining areas that a more diverse denominational distribution can be observed. There are large church communities in the Alcsík-Kászón, Felcsík, Gyergyó and Székelyudvarhely vicariate districts. The first initiatives to establish societies appear to have been made mainly here too, and it was here that the largest religious communities arose. Two Armenian rites church communities operated in the territory examined, one in the Gyergyó, the other in the Felcsík vicariate district. The data examined indicated the operation of a rosary society only in the former, but there is no information on it in the period after the First World War.

65 GYFL SZUGYL. *A zetelaki plébánia levéltára. [Archive of the Zetelaka parish]* Thematically arranged volumes 1738-1982. Rózsafüzér Társulat könyve 1886-1926 [Book of the Rosary Society 1886-1926].

66 LÉSTYÁN 1992. 26-27.

A comparative analysis of the data showed that in 1902 in the vicariate districts within Székelyföld, Living Rosary societies operated in an average of 87% and in 1928 in 80%. In the censuses analysed the earliest establishment of a rosary confraternity, 1783, is mentioned in the census of 1928 in the Maros vicariate. But research so far has documented even earlier establishments in the Gyergyó⁶⁷ and Székelyudvarhely⁶⁸ vicariates. The earliest establishment of a rosary confraternity is noted in the 1902 census, according to which such a society existed in Kézdivásárhely in 1846. But a date a year earlier in the Alcsík-Kászton vicariate is known from local research⁶⁹. According to the census of 1902, the greatest number of societies were established between 1885 and 1888, and between 1895 and 1900; the Dominicans gave the greatest number of authorisations in 1887. According to the data in the Rosary Album the earliest authorisation for a director in the Székelyföld region was given to the church leader of the community in Kézdivásárhely, in 1885. This appears to confirm that the tendency in this area was the same as that found throughout the country⁷⁰, namely that groups established after 1880 were mainly linked to the Dominican Order. The Dominicans did not recognise the legality of communities established earlier and without their approval. Consequently in the anniversary yearbook they compiled, the date given as the year of establishment is the date when the individual church leaders obtained their appointment as director and the authorisation of the Dominican Order. A comparison of the data in the censuses where the years of establishment is also indicated shows that in the reports made in the Transylvanian diocese in the majority of cases an earlier date is shown for communities established before 1900, or the date is the same as that shown in the Rosary Album. This appears rational since the societies applied to the Dominicans for authorisation after their establishment, generally not in the same year. But there are also cases where the date given in the Rosary Album is an earlier one. Here, either the date given is erroneous, or the diocesan census gives as the year of establishment of the confraternity the date of a later reorganisation.

We have analysed the membership data only incidentally. The reports on the Catholic associations were of great assistance in this investigation. They are available from the year following their introduction, that is, from 1913. Male members are found in all vicariate districts, and for the most part continuously between 1913 and 1928. In the Alcsík and Székelyudvarhely vicariate districts we find societies where the men and women are present in equal proportions. Their numbers decline mainly in the final years of World War One, but it is only rarely that they drop out altogether.

The 1928 reports offer the possibility for an examination of distribution by age; we can conclude that a wider range of age groups were involved in the life of the

67 GERGELY 1998. 298.

68 FÁBIÁN s.d.

69 BÁRTH 2007. 92.

70 BARNÁ 2011. 114-135.

societies in some church communities to meet the expectations of higher levels within the church, but this cannot be regarded as widespread.

As a final conclusion it can be said that the Living Rosary confraternity form was already widespread in the Székelyföld region at the turn of the century and even the major historical events of the period – the First World War, the Romanian occupation, the annexation of Transylvania – did not lead to their disappearance.

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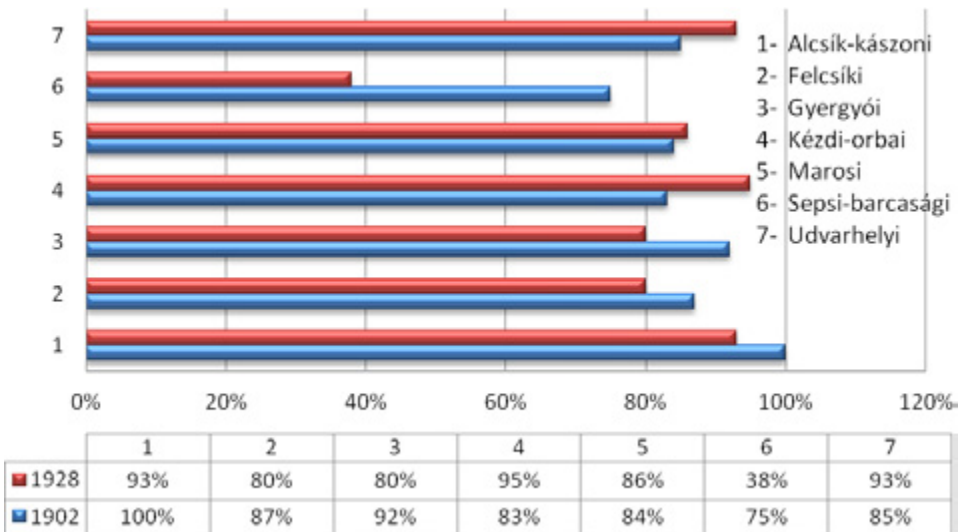
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Hungarian and Romanian Names of Settlements

(Abbreviations, counties: AB-Alba, CV-Covasna, HR-Harghita, MS-Mureş)

Balánbánya, Bălan, HR, RO
 Csíkdánfalva, Dăneşti, HR, RO
 Csíkjenőfalva, Ineu, HR, RO
 Csíkkarcfalva, Cârţa, HR, RO
 Csíkmindszent, Misentea, HR, RO
 Csíksomlyó, Şumuleu-Ciuc, HR, RO
 Csíkszentgyörgy, Ciucsăngeorgiu, HR, RO
 Csíkszentlélek, Leliceni, HR, RO
 Csíktaploca, Topliţa-Ciuc, HR, RO
 Gyergyószentmiklós, Gheorgheni, HR, RO
 Gyulafehérvár, Alba-Iulia, AB, RO
 Kézdivásárhely, Târgu Secuiesc, CV, RO
 Nyárádremete, Eremitu, MS, RO
 Szépvíz, Frumoasa, HR, RO
 Zetelaka, Zetea, HR, RO

Spread of the Living Rosary Societies in the Archdeaconries Investigated



CONTEMPLATIVE DOMINICAN NUNS IN SZEGED

Abstract: The activity of the Dominican Contemplative Nuns is deeply rooted in Hungarian church, cultural and literary history. They were present in Hungary in the 13th to 16th centuries. It was in conjunction with the canonisation procedure (1943) of the best known Hungarian Dominican nun, Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád (1242–1270) that the Dominican Order and the Hungarian Catholic church decided to re-establish a monastery of Dominican Contemplative Nuns in Hungary. The author shows the process of formation of the new community: a period of 25 years from the first aspirants to the consecration of the monastery. In tracing the events she throws light on the social environment and on the demands to which the new establishment responded.

Keywords: Dominican Order, Dominican nuns, Dominican spirituality, history of the Dominican Order, Dominican Order in Hungary, 20th century Hungarian church history

Prior to the canonisation of Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád, in the early 1940s increasing efforts were made by the heads of the Dominican province in Hungary and the Hungarian Catholic church to set up a community of Dominican Contemplative nuns in Hungary. At first the idea was to re-establish the monastery that had been founded on Margaret Island in the mid-13th century. In 1944 the official negotiations were halted, but the intention was not dropped. In a letter dated December 1945 a few prominent Catholic figures in Szeged called for the establishment of a community of Dominican nuns in the city. The idea was soon supported by Endre Hamvas, Bishop of Csanád and also by the Dominican province and so a few years later, in September 1948 the contemplative community was formed in the city.

This article aims to outline the background of the establishment. The first section gives a brief overview of the history of the establishment of the Dominican Order and the presence of the nuns in Hungary. The intention is to give a better understanding of the background of the re-establishment. Then I shall attempt to show who thought the time had come and why to set up a female community that, despite its deep historical and cultural historical roots, had not been present in Hungary for more than 300 years. What social needs gave rise to this demand? Who were the persons behind the initiative? I also attempt to answer the question of why Szeged was chosen as the place for establishment of the community.

Dominican nuns in Hungary in the 13th to 17th centuries

The first monastery of Dominican contemplative nuns was set up in Hungary in Veszprem. In 1246 King Béla IV and his wife Queen Mary placed their youngest daughter, then aged four, in this monastery.¹ Their child who was offered to God in gratitude for deliverance from the Mongolian invasion found herself in a community where the principal task of the nuns was to pray continuously for the conversion of the pagans.² The main goal of their community life was to strive to be the prayerful background to the preaching friars of the order. They were helped in this by their triple vow, the psalms, the daily mass, the communal and private prayers and the spiritual readings. In addition to this they did housework and needlework – mainly making liturgical textiles.

In 1252 eighteen nuns moved to the monastery built on the Island of Rabbits (today Margaret Island) opposite Buda. In both places they dealt with the education of girls, bringing up daughters of noble families. On completion of their training most of the girls left the monastery and married, but some entered the order. A manuscript copying workshop operated within the walls of the monastery on the island.³

This flourishing monastic life was destroyed at the beginning of the Ottoman conquest. In the spring of 1540 the nuns fled from the island. The community at first functioned in Nagyvárád, later in Nagyszombat and finally was received by the Clarissa nuns in Pozsony where they continued to live in the Dominican spirit and were allowed to wear their habits. However, they gradually grew old and their numbers dwindled. The last Dominican nun in Hungary, Erzsébet Szegedy died in Pozsony in 1637.⁴

Background of the re-establishment

A Dominican female community was re-established in Hungary in 1868. However these sisters did not live a contemplative life, they belonged to the *regular Third Order* that had been formed, and did outside, so-called apostolic work.⁵

1 On her life, see: BÁLINT 1977. 156-160; on her legend: ÉRSZEGI 1983. 110-179.

2 HARSÁNYI 1938; KIRÁLY 1979.

3 For more detail, see: MADAS 2002, 2003; SCHWARZ 2007.

4 We know far less about the other female Dominican monasteries in Hungary. It is certain that there were also female Dominican communities in Székesfehérvár, Némethi, Lábatlan, Pécs, Beregszász, Beszterce, Kolozsvár, Segesvár and Nagyszeben. BERGOU s.d.; BÓLE 1944; HARSÁNYI 1938. 110-111; SCHWARZ 2007. 258-259.

5 The "hierarchy" of the Dominican Order is built up as follows:

The First Order comprises the friars – (*pater*) and lay brothers (*frater*).

The members of the *Second Order* are nuns living a contemplative life "within the walls" of a monastery; they do not carry out external, apostolic activity. There are two branches within the *Third Order*. The first comprises the *sisters* who commit themselves with vows; they live in a monastic community and besides the life of prayer also carry out external apostolic activity. They form the *Regular Third Order*. The *Secular Third Order* comprises persons who are single or married, who live in their families and the world, striving to live the Dominican spirituality as lay persons.

They chose Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád as the patron saint of their *congregation*. Their centre, the *motherhouse*, was in Kőszeg, and they also had monasteries and various educational institutions in Kassa, Szombathely, Vasvár, Velem, Szarvaskend, Hódmezővásárhely and Szeged. In the eight decades up to 1948 when the church schools were nationalised, they dealt with the education of girls.⁶

Before the canonisation of Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád (1943) serious consideration was given to the idea of reorganising the Second Order in Hungary. Because within the order the contemplative nuns were always under the supervision of the friars, the Dominican province took steps for the establishment.

In that period women with a vocation to be *Second Order, Contemplative Dominican* nuns entered monasteries in Austria and Luxembourg. They were trained as nuns there and on their return to Hungary took part in the re-establishment. One of these women was Margit Desits.⁷ She joined the *regular Third Order* in 1901; when she entered the convent she was given the name of M. (Mária) Evangelista. She took her vows on 30 August 1902 in Kőszeg. For two decades she lived and worked as a sister (as a teacher and prefect) in the *Congregation of Sisters of the Order of Saint Dominic named after Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád*. However, at the age of 45 she left the community: on 26 May 1923 she officially left the regular Third Order and entered the contemplative Dominican monastery in Friesach, Carinthia. In her new community she was given the name Innocencia. After the period of novitiate she took her vows and became a valued member of the monastery. She remained in contact with the Dominican province in Hungary. After she took her vows P. Szádok Szabó, Provincial of the Dominican Friars at that time and P. Domonkos Ratnik, contacted the mother superior of the Friesach convent. Negotiations began on the possibilities and conditions for establishment of the Second Order in Hungary. They counted on Sister M. Innocencia Desits in the re-establishment.

Meanwhile Dr. László Brüchner, Sopron canon informed the Dominican fathers there that three young girls – namely Margit Dankó, her sister Jolán Dankó, and Róza Bédi – would like to become contemplative Dominican nuns. P. Szádok Szabó had thoroughly examined the case and formed the opinion that they would be fit both for the contemplative life, and for participation in the re-establishment of the Second Order. After consultation with the mother superior of the Friesach monastery, he sent the three aspirants to Luxembourg to learn the Dominican spirit and receive training for the order then, after taking their vows, together with Mother Pia, mother superior of Friesach, Sister M. Innocencia Desits and possibly other sisters, were to return home and begin establishment in Hungary.

⁶ MAGYAR 2007.

⁷ Margit M. Evangelista Desits / Innocencia, nun – born: 13 April 1878, Mór (Fejér County); entered: ?; temporary vows: ?; solemn vows: 30 August 1902; left: 26 May 1923; entered the contemplative Dominican monastery in Friesach (Austria): 1924. In 1938, after the Anschluss, she returned to Hungary and again entered the Third Order. Renewed solemn vows: 23 October 1939. †: 27 February 1948, Szombathely.

The movement for the canonisation of Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád and the resulting growing demand to follow the example of Margaret (her voluntary sacrifice for her country) probably played a big part in their being sent out. The First World War, the revolutions of 1918-1919, the French and Romanian occupation of Hungary, the Trianon peace dictate, and then the Second World War all brought great suffering and tribulation for the whole country. In this situation the political leaders encouraged the broadest possible combined efforts of the nation. The Hungarian Catholic church also played an important part in these efforts.⁸ It strove to hold up as examples to follow for the country in its difficulties saints and blesseds who had lived in similarly difficult times but had nevertheless been able to remain true to their faith, their nation and their homeland. Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád was one of these examples. She lived in a time when the country had to be rebuilt after the Mongolian invasion. Right from childhood until her early death (1270) she remained faithful to her parents' dedication. When she was able to decide for herself on her fate, she chose the Dominican monastery, life dedicated to God and sacrifice undertaken for her nation. She lived a deep, mystical life of prayer, and with her service to the poor and suffering she remained faithful to her monastic vocation in her everyday life. She lived a life full of self-denial and humiliations, but she bore witness with both her life and her death that sacrifice made for the nation is never in vain.

The example of this life was powerful even seven centuries later. This was why the movement for canonisation became so widely supported.

There were contemplative monasteries in Hungary. The Discalced Carmelite Sisters and the Visitation Order were well known and highly valued members of the Hungarian Catholic church. With the establishment of the monastery of Contemplative Dominican nuns, the intention was to create beside these a community that followed the example of Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád, living a strict monastic life, offering continuous prayer and self-denial for the salvation of souls and in particular for Hungary.

In the Contemplative Dominican monastery in Limpertsberg, Luxembourg the Dankó sisters became candidate nuns, while Róza Bédi became a candidate lay sister. When taking their vows Margit Dankó was given the name M. Margit, Jolán Dankó became M. Antónia, and Róza Bédi became M. Bartholomea. Not long after taking her vows, Sister Margit contracted tuberculosis and died. She was buried in the monastery's cemetery.⁹

In 1937 a new candidate nun arrived from Hungary: Ilona Szegedy who was 23 years old at the time.¹⁰ She was born in Szombathely and came into contact with the Order through the Dominicans there. Because her personality appeared

⁸ BARNÁ 2014a; 2014b.

⁹ As Sister M. Ilona Szegedy recalled, she offered the sufferings she experienced in her life and sickness for the establishment of the Second Order in Hungary.

¹⁰ Sister M. Ilona, Ilona Szegedy – born: 10 August 1914, Szombathely; parents: Lajos Szegedy and Anna Nyitrai; entered the monastery: 1937 Limpertsberg, Luxembourg; temporary vows: 5th August 1939; solemn vows: 27th October 1946. †: 16th December 2011.

to be suitable, the Fathers decided to send her to Luxembourg for training. After she entered the monastery she was given the name M. Ilona.

Thus at the end of the 1930s three young sisters in Limpertsberg, Luxembourg (M. Antónia Dankó, M. Bartholomea Bédi, M. Ilona Szegedy) and two older women in Friesach (M. Innocencia Desits and the mother superior of the monastery, Mother Pia) were preparing to meet the requirements of canon law within a few years, making them suitable to establish a Contemplative Dominican monastery in Hungary.

However, the advance of Nazism thwarted the earlier plans. In 1938 Hitler entered Austria. One of the measures he took was to dissolve the monasteries and so the Friesach sisters too, had to leave their convent. Sister Innocencia was helped to escape to Hungary, where she again requested admission to the congregation of Third Order sisters. In keeping with the rules of the Order, the sister, who was by then 60 years old, completed the novitiate for the third time and on 23 October 1939 once again took her solemn vows. Although for twenty years she had earlier been called M. Evangelista in the congregation, after her return she was able to retain the name of M. Innocencia she had been given in the Second Order. She did not leave the Third Order again. She was in charge of the hostel for students of the sisters' schools in Kőszeg and later in Vasvár. According to one of the Order's records, "she painted and embroidered beautifully". She died in 1948 in the monastery in Szombathely.

The German army occupied Luxembourg in May 1940. A few months later, on 25 February 1941,¹¹ they dissolved the monastery of the Contemplative Dominican Nuns in Limpertsberg. The nuns were taken in trucks to Eberhardsklausen close to the German-Luxembourg border (but in German territory).¹² A small contemplative Dominican community had been operating here since 1919, established by the Limpertsberg community. Shortly after the nuns were divided into groups and taken elsewhere. Fifteen of them – including the Hungarian nuns – went to Arenberg, to the monastery of Third Order sisters.¹³ From here the Hungarian sisters managed to return to Hungary and joined the province of the Third Order sisters named after Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád.¹⁴ At first, they were placed in the monastery in Kassa that had been returned following the First Vienna Award (1938). After this was lost their paths diverged in 1944: Sister M. Antónia Dankó was sent to the monastery in Kőszeg, M. Bartholomea Bédi to the monastery in Szeged, while M. Ilona Szegedy was given a place in the newly established study house in Budapest. But they all retained the hope that the establishment would be made soon and the contemplative life could begin in Hungary.

In this way the Hungarian nuns trained and prepared in the Second Order were in Hungary when, on 23 July 1943, Pope Pius XII proclaimed Margaret of the House of Árpád a saint.¹⁵ On 26 July, 1943, three days after the proclamation in

11 As Ilona Szegedy recalls, this day was Shrove Tuesday

12 Today Klausen – Rhein-Pfalz district, Germany. The monastery still stands, but it is empty.

13 Today part of Koblenz – Rhein-Pfalz district, Germany. The monastery still functions.

14 Communication from Sister M. Ilona Szegedy.

15 GERGELY 1984. 318-319.

Rome, the regular annual meeting of the heads of the Third Order nuns began in the Kőszeg motherhouse. The general mother superior reported that the Dominican fathers and the heads of the Hungarian Catholic church saw that the time had come to establish a contemplative monastery on Margaret Island. Prince Primate Jusztinián Serédi proposed the establishment of a health spa, the revenues from which could ensure the livelihood of the nuns settling on the island. The assets of Sister M. Jozefa Ébner, a member of the Third Order would have provided the initial capital for launching the establishment.¹⁶ Two (unnamed) ladies also contacted the fathers saying that they would like to join the new community and would contribute their dowries to the costs of the foundation. One of them offered 22,000 crowns for the purpose and the other 150,000 crowns. But neither the sisters nor the Dominican fathers gave approval for their admission. However, they offered to care for the two ladies for as long as they lived, to receive them as lifetime regular holiday guests in the health spa to be set up.¹⁷

A few months later, on 26th December 1943, Provincial Bertalan P. Badalik informed the congregation of Third Order sisters in writing about the meeting of the province held in Sopron by the Dominican Fathers. They decided there that they would still like to establish Second Order nuns living a contemplative life on Margaret Island, but they would not use the participation of the Third Order for this.¹⁸

Due to the events of the Second World War, official talks on establishment of the convent were stopped in 1944. The date for its establishment was shifted to an increasingly distant future, but discussions continued in the background. On the part of the Dominican Fathers, it was mainly P. Bertalan Badalik, P. Lajos Implom and P. Domonkos Ratnik who dealt with the matter. After the end of the war they began to look for a smaller house in Budapest suitable for use as a monastery, where a community could begin its life as soon as possible. In the search for a building they drew on the assistance of M. Ilona Szegedy, the Second Order nun who had returned from Luxembourg in 1941. The fathers regarded her as the most suitable person to head the future community.

In this situation, in January 1946 a new location and a new opportunity cropped up unexpectedly.

16 Vilma Ébner (widow Mrs Aurél Duschek) Sister M. Jozefa – born: 3rd March 1877, Budapest; entered the monastery: 5th December 1937; temporary vows: 23rd December 1938; solemn vows: 23rd December 1941; †: 31st October 1963, Hejce (Roman Catholic Care Home). Data gathered by the author from the Book of candidates entering and the Deceased of our congregation.

17 *Annalen der Congregation.*

18 *Annalen der Congregation.*

The invitation to Szeged

With her organising work Sister M. Innocencia Simóka¹⁹ who lived in the Szeged monastery of the Third Order sisters and worked as a kindergarten teacher played a very important role in the national movement initiating the canonisation of Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád. It seems likely that it was also her contribution behind the document addressed to P. Bertalan Badalik, signed by a few intellectuals in Szeged on 27th December 1945, the feast of John the Divine. In this they ask the Dominican Principal to accept a house in Szeged since, given the situation in Budapest at that time the establishment of the convent on Margaret Island was not possible in the foreseeable future, so that the establishment could eventually start from the small community to be created in Szeged.²⁰ The authors of the text also mentioned that there were few members of monastic orders on the Great Plain and no contemplative monastery at all. The signatories²¹ expressed the hope that the Szeged house of the Dominican Contemplative nuns could open at the approaching great feast of the Csanád diocese, the 900th anniversary of the death of the martyr bishop Saint Gerard²².

Endre Hamvas Bishop of Csanád, who lived in Szeged, supported those making the request. A close acquaintance of Sister M. Innocencia Simóka, Mrs Mihály Tóth – widow of a Szeged municipal councillor – offered the 20-room house and garden in the town centre at No. 3 Madách Street that she had inherited from her husband and all her assets. At the same time she also indicated that she herself wished to enter the community. Sister Innocencia requested her church superior Sándor Kovács, Bishop of Szombathely, and was granted permission to leave the congregation of apostolic sisters and to be transferred from the Third Order to the Second Order. Sister M. Euphemia Bucsy, who had returned from the Gleisdorf monastery of the Dominican Sisters in Austria at the end of the war would also have joined them. Because Bishop Hamvas was unable to contact Provincial Bertalan Badalik in January 1946, and as he was informed by the Innocencia sisters that they were unable to contact the sisters in Luxembourg, and the authorisation of the Holy See and the Dominican Provincial was not needed for the new establishment, he gave his approval for the organisation of the monastery.

However Bishop Hamvas was troubled by the matter. In June 1946 he requested the Jesuit P. Antal Petrich, a teacher at the theological seminary in Szeged, to

19 Sister M. Innocencia Katalin Simóka – born: 4th October 1896, Herény (Vas County); parents: Jakab Simóka and Ilona Csempeš; entered the monastery: 18th April 1927; temporary vows: 20th April 1928; solemn vows: 22nd August 1931; †: 10th July 1956, Jászberény (Roman Catholic Care Home). Data gathered by the author from the *Book of candidates entering and the Deceased of our congregation*.

20 Szeged – *Episcopal Archive of the Csanád Diocese (Szeged)*. IV. doboz 49/946.

21 The members of the “Committee formed to advance the establishment of a Second Order convent in Szeged”: Sándor Bálint, chairman of the committee, Géza Havass, secretary to the bishop, Dr. Lajos Dávid, retired university professor, Dr. Ödön Gaál, public prosecutor, Dr. Györgyi Sáfrán, teacher, Ilona Acsay, Csanád diocese head of KALÁSZ, P. István Békési SJ, Csanád diocese head of KALOT, and János Pálincás and Lajos Szegvári representing the Congregation of Mary.

22 24th September 1946.

look into the questions of canon law regarding the establishment. It was found that, in contrast to the *regular Third Order* the *contemplative nuns* came under the jurisdiction not of the bishop of the given diocese, but of the Dominican Fathers. Thus it was not the bishop but the male order that had the right to establish a new community. On 26th August 1946 Endre Hamvas discussed the matter in person with the Provincial Bertalan Badalik.²³ At this meeting Bishop Hamvas also learnt that the Fathers were engaged in well advanced negotiations with Rome – with the Apostolic See and the centre of the Dominican Order – on re-establishment of the Second Order in Hungary. And also that Sister M. Innocencia Simóka and her companions had failed to inform him that contemplative nuns with vows had been living in Hungary for years.²⁴ However firmly Sister Innocencia claimed that she and Sister Euphemia could simply transfer to the Second Order and be founding members of the monastery, the church rules did not allow this. After the meeting the bishop suspended his approval for operation of the monastery, then joined the petition of the fathers in which they sought the authorisation of the Holy See for establishment of the Second Order. The Bishop of Szombathely withdrew his permission for the transfer of Sister M. Innocencia Simóka. The heads of the Order refused the entry of Mrs Mihály Tóth, but they did not exclude the possibility of her participation in the life of the future community as an external member. But they found the building in Madách Street suitable for the purpose of a monastery, and since the widow maintained her offer of the house, preparations for the settlement in Szeged began in the autumn of 1946.

The fathers would have liked to appoint as leader of the community M. Ilona Szegedy who had returned from Luxembourg in 1942. However, there was the problem that – as she had entered the order in 1937 and in keeping with the rules in 1939 took her temporary vows for three years – because of the German occupation, the transfer of the convent then her escape to Hungary, she had been unable to take her solemn vows. From 1942 she renewed her temporary vows each year, trusting that after the war came to an end she would be able to return to her original community and take her solemn vows there in conformity with the Church Laws and the rules of the order. The Second World War ended in the spring of 1945, but there was no chance of returning to Luxembourg and later returning from there. The fathers therefore decided, in view of the extraordinary situation, to seek approval from Rome, from the Apostolic Holy See and the centre of the Dominican Order for her to take her vows in Hungary. The permission arrived and on 27th October 1946 Sister Ilona was able to take her solemn vows in her

23 Bertalan Badalik was born in 1890 in Hódmezővásárhely; he entered the Dominican Order in 1908, he was ordained in 1914 in Graz. He was head of the Hungarian Dominican province from 1938 to 1946. After his appointment ended, he became prior of the Dominican monastery attached to the Dominican church in Thököly Street, Budapest. On 30th July 1949 he was appointed Bishop of Veszprém by Pope Pius XII. On 15th August 1957 he was interned in Hejce by the state security force and kept under house arrest. Because of his serious illness he was allowed to leave for Budapest on 5th September 1965 with the permission of the State Office for Church Affairs. He died there on 13th October 1965. He was buried in Hódmezővásárhely, the place where he was born.

24 Sister Innocencia must have known about this as one of them, M. Bartholomea Bédi was serving in Szeged and Sister Innocencia was her companion in the monastery in Hóbiárt basa Street.

place of service at that time, in the chapel of the Third Order Dominican sisters' Budapest monastery, in the presence of P. Domonkos Ratnik, on behalf of the Dominican Provincial P. Bertalan Badalik. With this she became fit under canon law to lead the future community.²⁵

Provincial Bertalan Badalik had already in 1945 reached an agreement on the matter with the mother superior of the Dominican nuns in Limpertsberg. He had informed her that Sister Ilona was expected to take her solemn vows, and asked for two sisters from Luxembourg to take part in the Hungarian establishment. The mother superior in Luxembourg was not surprised by the request. It was for this reason that they had accepted the Hungarian aspirants, begun their training, and prayed every day for ten years for the establishment of a community in Hungary. But after the war ended things did not proceed as smoothly as they would have liked. Because of the transfers their community was still small and weak, it would take time for them to strengthen and be able to send sisters to a new establishment. Obtaining official papers was also a problem. Under the political conditions at the time, it appeared to be difficult for nuns with Luxembourg citizenship to move to Hungary. This left the possibility of establishing the community from Hungary and only with Hungarian nuns.

In the mean time coordination with Rome, the process of authorisation and petitions continued but the matter advanced only very slowly. After the elections in 1948 the communist party came to power in Hungary and this brought political changes. The state expropriated Mrs Mihály Tóth's house. It was divided into multiple apartments, only a small space was left for the widow and strangers moved in to the house. In May 1948 news came that one of the apartments would become vacant in early June. The Dominican Provincial at the time, P. Lajos Implom asked the Superior of the Third Order sisters, M. Remigia Schindele, to give her approval for sisters M. Ilona Szegedy and M. Bartholomea Bédi to move into the apartment when it became vacant, before others applied for it. A few weeks later the Third Order allowed M. Euphemia Bucsy and M. Augusztina Niczky to move into the house as well.²⁶ However P. Lajos Implom firmly refused to allow M. Innocencia Simóka to transfer to the Second Order.

In September 1948 Endre Hamvas Bishop of Csanád consecrated the monastery placed under the protection of Blessed Margaret of the House of Árpád. M. Ilona Szegedy became the superior, and the members of the community were M. Bartolomea Bédi, M. Euphemia Bucsy, M. Antónia Dankó and M. Augusztina Niczky²⁷. The nuns regarded their primary aim as being continual prayer and expiation for Hungary in its difficult situation, for the Hungarian Catholic church and the conversion of souls. Although they lived in the centre of the city, in a

25 A Dominican male monastery operated in Szent Domonkos Street, attached to the Dominican church in Thököly Street. At the request of the fathers the Third Order sisters established a small community here in 1945. The principal task of the five sisters placed here was to run the fathers' household.

26 In the same weeks talks were held on the nationalisation of the church schools.

27 Jolán Niczky – Sister M. Augusztina – born: 18th May 1905, Budapest, entered the monastery: 18th August 1927, temporary vows: 1928; solemn vows: 1932; †: 1st May 1971, Budapest. I have not yet found any information on an earlier connection with the Second Order.

place that was ill suited to the contemplative monastic life, they strove to create inner silence so that they could concentrate as fully as possible on their prayers.

Epilogue

They had barely two years of life together. Although the nuns did not live in complete withdrawal from the world – on the major feasts they held mass in their chapel and awaited believers for the Act of Adoration – their community was too small and too young to leave a deep imprint either on the church or on the life of the city. Their quiet life of expiation and prayer did not attract the attention of the outside world. This was despite the fact that the establishment took place after 25 years of preparation and it meant the re-establishment of an order that had a long history but had not been present in Hungary for three hundred years. Nor did contemporaries show interest in the fact that this happened in a place where the contemplative, monastic way of life had not been present for three centuries. This silence and silencing was due in great part to the change that had occurred in the social and political environment that did not favour the contemplative or even the monastic way of life.

With the dissolution of the monastic orders in 1950 the Dominican nuns had to leave their monastery too. They had to put aside their monastic habit and take secular jobs. But their vocation did not end. Their vows remained valid and each of them strove to keep their promise to God under the changed circumstances. Although they went their separate ways, they offered their lives, work, prayer, renunciations and trials for the same common goal: the Dominican Order and the conversion of souls.

The former monastery building still stands in Madách Street in Szeged, but no one today knows what an important effort was once made in this private house. This is why I have attempted with this article to outline the background of the establishment and to evoke the memory of those who made so many sacrifices for the creation of the community.²⁸

²⁸ I would like to express my thanks to the Apostolic Congregation of the Dominican Nuns named after Saint Margaret of the House of Árpád for permission to examine the archive of the order. I also gratefully preserve the words of Sister Ilona Szegedy († 2011), who shared with me her memories of the establishment of the Szeged monastery.

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Fig. 1. Hungarian nuns in Luxembourg: Soror Margit, Soror Annuntiata, Soror Bartholomea. Photo from the 1930s.



Fig. 2. Dominican nuns in Szeged (from left to the right) Augusztina Niczky M., Bartholomea Bédi M., Eufémia Bucsy M., Ilona Szegedy M., Antónia Dankó M. Photo 1949.

THE MONK AND THE WHITE SHAMAN.
COMPETITIVE DISCOURSES AND CONSPIRACY
THEORIES AROUND THE REINTERPRETED CULT OF
BLESSED EUSEBIUS

Abstract: In the past two decades a Hungarian neo-mythology appeared and is being shaped with amazing speed. It comprises partly neopagan and partly Christian, neo-nationalist elements and one of its prominent segments is the re-interpreted cult of Blessed Eusebius (c. 1200-1270). In this invented mythology, Blessed Eusebius and the Pauline Order he established becomes a white shaman and the guardian of the ancient Hungarian religion. The image of the Paulines in the invented mythology gained considerable popularity, mainly in non-Catholic circles. The main aim of the study is to show the origin of the mythology, its elements and the characteristics of the changing cult.

Keywords: devotion, syncretism, vernacular religiosity, Blessed Eusebius of Esztergom, Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit

Religion and religiosity are not static phenomena, the various cultural, economic and political processes can all influence the religious dimension.¹ Some dimensions, such as the artistic, respond more quickly to changed external circumstances,² while others, such as the ethical and legal dimension, change much more slowly. The changing social and religious demands can be clearly observed also in the case of the cult of the saints.³ Every historical period created its own ideal heroes, among them the saints, who not only provided a point of reference for believers in religious life, but also expressed the characteristics, shortcomings and desires of the given period and society. Parallel with these processes we can also observe how different aspects were emphasised in veneration of the saints in the different historical periods. As Anttonen has shown, this kind of partial reinterpretation can result in the emergence of even several, contradictory discourses, making it possible for the cult of the given saint to be used not only for religious but also for secular purposes.⁴ Such processes can be observed

1 This article was written and the research carried out with the support of the National Research Fund (OTKA) Grant NK81502.

2 On the functioning of religious music as a new religious language, see POVEDÁK K. 2013.

3 MARGRY 2002; BARNA 1994.

4 This could be observed for example, at the time of Finnish nation building, when Bishop Henrik began to be presented as one of the symbols of nationalism. ANTTONEN 2004, 2012.

in Hungary too at the present time in the cult of Blessed Eusebius, founder of the Pauline Order; we can witness the birth of a neo-mythology around his person, far removed from both the religious and historical aspects of the original legend. The aim of this article is to present the ambivalently judged phenomenon existing in vernacular religiosity, to show the characteristics and directions of remythologisation, to analyse the most important elements of the created new myth, and the wider driving forces behind the phenomenon.

The original legend

In order to examine the contemporary trends and changes in the shaping of the cult, we need to know the main motifs of the original legend that will enable us to position and evaluate the transformation.⁵

Eusebius was born around the year 1200 in Esztergom, capital of Hungary at that time, probably in a noble family. His life was recorded by the Pauline historian P. Gergely Gyöngyösi around 1520.⁶ He was ordained a priest, then became a canon. He was well known for his pious religiosity and his goodness of heart. He devoted all his income to serving the poor, and in this way came to be known by the penniless hermits living in the surrounding mountains. After the destruction by the Mongols in 1241-42 he distributed his wealth among the poor and withdrew into the neighbouring mountains, into the Hármas (Triple) cave as a hermit, to ask for a better fate for his nation with prayer, fasting and atonement.⁷ The figure of Blessed Eusebius basically stands on the grounds of reality, it is not wound about with threads of legend. Nevertheless, on one occasion he received a miraculous vision that determined the further course of his life. One night, as he was praying at the cross erected at the entrance to his cave, he glimpsed many tiny flames deep in the forest. The flames were all converging, and finally joined in a pillar of fiery light in front of Father Eusebius's cross. He felt that this strange phenomenon was a sign from heaven, a warning that he should gather the flames of the scattered hermits into a community. Together with the companions who joined him, he built a monastery beside the cave in 1250. They chose Saint Paul the Hermit as the heavenly patron of their community, and called themselves "Brothers of Saint Paul the First Hermit". In 1262 Blessed Eusebius travelled to Rome with a few companions to obtain the approval and confirmation of the Holy See for the establishment of the order. The Pope gave his approval of the new order, but he did not allow them to adopt the rule of Saint Augustine because the necessary financial conditions were not ensured. It was only in 1308 that Rome gave official approval of the Order. Blessed Eusebius died on 20 January 1270 after a serious illness. The Pauline Order he founded (OFSPPE) is still the only male monastic

⁵ I have summed up the most important elements of his career from TÖRÖK – LEGEZA – SZACSVAY 1996.

⁶ GYÖNGYÖSI, Gergely: *I. Remete Szent Pál Remete Testvéreinek Élete. Varia Paulina III. [Life of the Fathers of Saint Paul the First Hermit. Varia Paulina III]*. Fráter György Alapítvány, Pilisszántó, 1998. Translated by: P. Vince Árva OSP, Béla Csanád, Ferenc Csonka

⁷ In 1241-42 the Mongolian Tatars invaded Hungary, causing the death of 20-50% of the population.

order to have been established in Hungary. Over the centuries the Order's popularity and estates grew. A major break occurred in its history in 1786 when Joseph II disbanded the Paulines and confiscated their property (381 houses) under his Edict of Tolerance. The centre of the Pauline Order moved to Poland and it was only in the interwar years, in 1934 that it again settled in Hungary. However, they were unable to put down lasting roots because the communist dictatorship banned all monastic orders in 1950 and they were not established again until 1989.

Legendarium of the Pauline neo-mythology

The source of the remythologisation reinterpreting the history of the Pauline Order and through it also the life of Blessed Eusebius can be identified as Vince Árvá, a former Pauline father and his *theory of two Pauline Orders*.⁸ In essence, according to Árvá Pope Pius VI in a papal brief *Apostolicae Sedis auctoritas* issued on 3 December 1784, two years before the dissolution of the Paulines by Joseph II, in practice created a new Pauline order in Poland. Árvá stressed that this new order was not the same as the Pauline Order that had operated up to then in Hungary and as a result the Pauline Order that had transferred its seat to Poland and still operates there is not the same as the Pauline Order established by Blessed Eusebius in 1250. Vince Árvá named himself as the last member of the original *Ancient Pauline Order*. "Rome accepted my submission. Hence I am the only member of the Ancient Pauline Order ... Incomprehensibly, the Hungarian Bench of Bishops did not authorise the reorganisation of the Ancient Pauline Order."⁹

Vince Árvá's theory fits into the series of contemporary conspiracy theories; their common characteristic is the creation on the basis of bipolar oppositions of an alternative view of history and interpretation of reality that questions the mechanism and order underlying the given existing system. Árvá's theory focuses on a single event, the dissolution in the late 18th century, but by branding the subsequent period as false, it become possible to transform it into the founding myth of a Pauline neo-mythology based on a complex, alternative world view.¹⁰ This is also facilitated by the two facts that we have only incomplete information of

8 From 1961 Vince Árvá (1932-2008) was the leader of the Paulines operating in secret during the dictatorship. From 1982 he was the superior delegate at the head of the Hungarian section. He was the postulator in the beatification procedure for Eusebius. His relations with the Pauline Order deteriorated after he made public his views on the theory of the two Pauline orders. In 2004 he was excluded from the Pauline Order, after that he became chaplain in Székesfehérvár.

9 Árvá 2003. Vince Árvá's views are refuted, among others, by KERTÉSZ – BAKOS 2012. 75.

10 In 2011 a film was made; the Hungarian Pauline Order protested against its ideology in a number of forums. "The Hungarian Pauline Order fully dissociates itself from the content and nature of the film titled *Pálosok - az ősi magyar rend* [Paulines – the ancient Hungarian order] published in spring 2011 on DVD (director: Tamás Császár and producer Gábor Góbl). The film radically distorts the history and mission of the only male monastic order established in Hungary, that is closely connected to Christianity and, within it, to the Catholic Church. We ask all persons of good intentions to take this declaration into account in their attitude to the above DVD film and to pray for its intention to defend the Catholic faith. On behalf of the Hungarian Pauline Order: Botond Bátor Provincial." <http://www.palosrend.hu/nyilatkozat.htm> Last access: 20 January 2013.

events that occurred before the focal point,¹¹ and that Árvá's theses also question the credibility of events that happened after the focal point. In the neo-mythology that uses the ideas of Vince Árvá as its basis, in the minds of some the Paulines become white shamans,¹² but they can also be the "heart centre" of the Pilis¹³ and the guardians of the Holy Grail.¹⁴ Then, on the basis of this invented mythology, the institutionalised organisation of the Ancient Hungarian Pauline Order (more recently the Ancient Pauline Fraternity) also takes place.¹⁵

In the light of this background it is worth examining which elements in the Pauline neo-mythology become emphasised, which are neglected and what new motifs appear.¹⁶

1. Life and calling of Eusebius

The remythologisation of the life of Blessed Eusebius is based on the involvement among the conspiracy theories of the most important relevant historical source, the writing of Gergely Gyöngyösi, as a work that had been falsified in earlier periods. As Lajos Szántai, perhaps the most important ideologist of the Pauline neo-mythology stresses:

"We do not know this work in its entirety because it has not survived. We know a copy, but it is incomplete because it can be felt that at the most important parts the copyists have left out parts of sentences or even whole pages, either by chance or intentionally."¹⁷

From here the life of Blessed Eusebius can be shaped at will and within the frames of the neo-mythology it is undergoing considerable simplification and invented new elements are appearing in it. They regularly refer to his noble and in places even aristocratic origin, calling him a grand master of the Knights of Saint Stephen. However, this latter fact does not stand alone but is linked to his recognition of a kind of national mission.

"Eusebius was the Hungarian grandmaster of a Hungarian 'knighthood'. In spite of all the mystification of later ages, the aim

11 As Voigt stressed, incomplete knowledge promotes mythification. VOIGT 1980.

12 "There is every indication – and opinions on this are unanimous – that the ancestors of the Paulines were white-robed hermit saints who were at the same time shamans, a community of shamans." Szántai 2001, and <http://www.szkosz.com/node/1652> Last access: 20 January 2013

13 For more on this see, among others, the article by Csaba Baráz.

<http://www.mariaorszaga.hu/index.php?menu=bovebben&tipus=tortenelem&kod=240&kat=1&PHPSESSID=bc85d2e089492c7c12c2db539230a5>

14 <http://www.magtudin.org/gral.htm> Last access: 20 January 2013.

15 <http://www.palosrend.eoldal.hu/> Last access: 20 January 2013.

16 I have used for the analysis books serving as the basis for the Pauline neo-mythology, studies, online material and interviews.

17 SZÁNTAI 2010.

of the knighthood ... was no other than to preserve Hungarian noble and national tradition, ancient tradition ... And this something had to be ancient, Hungarian and definitely 'pure'..."¹⁸

"He [Vince Árva- I.P.] recounted on a number of occasions that the present researches – this refers to searches in the archives – that were carried out in Esztergom in the archives, have slightly reshaped the person of Eusebius. It was quite clearly found that Eusebius was not only episcopal canon, but above all grandmaster of the Knights of Saint Stephen."¹⁹

The element in the legend of Eusebius that his thirst for knowledge was awakened already in childhood and that he preferred reading to play is given a strong reinterpretation by Szántai, comparing him to the mythical hero of tales Fehérlófia (Son of White Horse),²⁰ and at the same time raising him to astrological level.

"He began to study and love wisdom before he was even weaned from his mother's breast. This means that he was still nourished by his mother's milk but he had already »began his studies«, and one can wonder about what wisdom could have come to him through the milk. This is not just ordinary wisdom, it is the kind of knowledge that is characteristic in our folk tales of Son of White Horse, who grows in strength and thrives because his mother breast fed him for years. Thus the wisdom and knowledge of Eusebius is linked to a heavenly quality, to the Milky Way."

Building on this, from being originally a hermit praying for his nation after the Mongolian invasion, in the neo-mythology Eusebius becomes a person with special abilities who can see into the future, "as in some way they were capable of seeing into the future too".²¹ And the tragedy that evokes his sense of mission is no longer the earlier Mongolian invasion, but is transposed from the 13th century to the future, to our present time in the 21st century, a move that also makes it easier to embed him into contemporary culture.

"Eusebius seems to have felt that this tradition would be threatened in time by some terrible danger. Indeed, in the case of the Hungarian people this tragedy would be one of exceptional gravity. If the Hungarian myth and mythology brought from far back in time is lost for ever, the line of kings of the Árpád dynasty will be broken,

18 GÖNCZI 2012. 25.

19 SZÁNTAI 2001.

20 Son of White Horse is a mythical hero with exceptional strength, descended from his animal mother of supernatural origin, who breast fed him for seven years. See the relevant entry in *Néprajzi Lexikon* [Encyclopaedia of Ethnology] : <http://mek.niif.hu/02100/02115/html/2-154.html> Last access: 30 September 2014

21 PRENOSZIL s.d.

we will forget (or be made to forget) our ancient past, making us rootless and easily manipulated ...”²²

It is not by chance either that the location is the Pilis mountains²³ that have become known as a “sacral centre’ in contemporary Hungarian neo-mythology. According to alternative historians and self-appointed researchers of “sacral geography” “the Pilis is a place of sacral power and mythical knowledge, this sacred Hungarian empire that has come down from the heavens, the spiritual but nevertheless tangible landscape of dense forests, a living, breathing, organic, secret world born of nature, with its special, hidden Hungarian paths, whose light reaches as far as Egypt.”²⁴ According to Szántai and others, the Pilis was a Scythian-Hun-Hungarian centre of initiation and rule, the “coronation place of the early Hungarians”, where the Paulines joined up the caves to create a whole city and castle that functioned as the country’s sacral centre.²⁵ Gönczi emphasises that on the basis of “sacral geography”, the Hungarians have an intellectual, spiritual and geographical centre in the Pilis and the Paulines “wanted to bring this sacral power into operation again”.²⁶ The Pilis neo-mythology itself acquired its final meaning through remythologisation that can be linked to the Paulines. Szántai and Gönczi – referring to Gergely Gyöngyösi – wrote that the Paulines were looking for something in the Pilis that was none other than the “lost Hungarian ancient tradition” the “ancient religion”.²⁷

2. *Initiation of the Paulines*

The construction of neo-mythology and within it of the Pauline mythology using elements taken from a number of cultural canons and mythologies of various ages and regions in a way that parallels the operating principles of à la carte bricolage religion can be observed in contemporary society. In essence this process links incompatible elements into a seemingly organic whole, ignoring the anomalies below the surface.²⁸ It is in this way that astrology can be combined with Jesus, with shamans, with acupuncture in contemporary bricolage religion, and the same principle applies to the reinterpretation of the legend on the initiation of the Paulines. As a first step in building up the myths on the “mystical”

22 GÖNCZI 2012. 26.

23 In contemporary Hungarian neo-mythology the majority of legends and conspiracy theories are linked to the Pilis mountains north-west of Budapest. See, among others, BORN 2008, GÖNCZI 2012, SZÁNTAI 2008. According to the most widespread view, the Dalai Lama declared that the heart chakra of the Earth is located in Hungary, in the Pilis Mountains. When he visited Hungary on 15 December 2010 the Dalai Lama refuted this, but that did not affect the spread of the legend. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7zOw2diQlg> Last access: 30 September 2014

24 GÖNCZI 2012. 31.

25 GÖNCZI 2012. 51.

26 GÖNCZI 2012. 55, 71. The sacral geography and the Hungarian neo-mythology built around its geographical theses have been refuted, among others, by Keményfi. KEMÉNYFI 2008.

27 GÖNCZI 2012. 61-65.

28 For more details, see SZILÁGYI – SZILÁRDI 2007; POVEDÁK 2014.

innovation, the one-year period as a candidate that is customary in all monastic orders is presented as an exceptional phenomenon that is principally necessary so that the candidate can decide whether he accepts the extraordinary state that accompanies initiation: death and resurrection from it.

“The admission ceremony was performed only after a year, until then the candidate could live without any obligation, then he had to decide whether to enter or not, because if he did: he really had to lie in the stone coffin to experience death... the candidate dies symbolically (or perhaps in reality?), his soul flies up to Heaven, and after it has travelled ‘the path of eternal wisdom’, returns, and now as an initiate, a reborn, in possession of gnosis it performed its earthly task. The ceremonies held in the hidden caves of the Paulines were in practice the same as those undergone by the great initiates of mankind. The roots of the ceremonies reach back to a period thousands of years ago, just as the knowledge or ideal of the Paulines does.”²⁹

“This initiation was a very similar ceremony to that used by the priests in Egypt. According to the descriptions, those awaiting initiation had to lie in a stone coffin deep in a cave and had to spend a certain period of time there in a meditative state. If the initiate’s »light« passed through the stone coffin, the initiation had succeeded and he became a full member of the Pauline Order. And he had to achieve on Earth what he had seen in a state of trance (in Heaven). In Egypt this same initiation was held in the pyramids.”³⁰

“Something really opens up in this stone coffin. The heavens open up, the soul of the Pauline Father rises up, breaks through the stone roof, the spheres of the Earth – and this is the essence of initiation in the cave – for if he could not step out from the depths of the cave, from the closed world, the candidate would not be accepted into the Order.”³¹

3. *The immortality of the Paulines*

The extension to all Pauline Fathers of the incorruptibility of the body after death, an element that can be read in numerous places in the legends of the saints, sums up all this, the experience of the otherworld and resurrection from death, as though in a frame.

“In the Middle Ages the Paulines could be recognised from the fact that they did not leave behind after death a body that could

29 BUNYEVÁ CZ s.d.

30 PESZENOVIC s.d.

31 SZÁNTAI 2010.

decay, because true initiation had happened in the depths of the caves. The Pauline knew death in reality, he had faced death, his soul had flown up to Heaven which meant that he came back to Earth armed with heavenly powers, he brought back the heavenly body into the earthly body and so his dead body remained incorruptible. This was so well known in the Middle Ages that it has survived even through folk tradition.”³²

Characteristics of the Pauline neo-mythology

As already mentioned, the basis of the Pauline neo-mythology is the work of Vince Árvai that also created the possibility for the remythologisation of the earlier periods. All these invented historical myths have the following common characteristics.

1) *Emphasis of the sense of a national mission*

In the case of Szántai this culminates in the notion of “Pauline – pairs” history (“the Paulines have not one but a pair of life careers”)³³ according to which the history of the Paulines is parallel with the fate of the Hungarian kings. This means on the one hand that the fate of the Pauline Order and the Hungarian kings was intertwined.

“When Eusebius died in 1270, King Béla IV also died in the same year, on the day of the discovery of the Holy Cross ... Eusebius is followed in the chair of general by Benedek, who died in 1290. And in that year our King Ladislaus IV the Cuman also died. Thus we are on the level of a live together, die together way of life. The Hungarian kings and the Paulines are bound together in this way too.”³⁴

On the other hand, the establishment of the Pauline Order is reinterpreted in this mirror. According to Szántai, Eusebius founded his order in a period when the Árpadian dynasty³⁵ was already in mortal danger.

“When the house of Árpád dies out, that is, when we reach the period that can be known precisely from the portents, that the Turul

32 SZÁNTAI 2010.

33 SZÁNTAI 2010.

34 SZÁNTAI 2010. On the same subject see: GÖNCZI 2012. 179-181.

35 The kings of the House of Árpád, direct descendants of Árpád the chieftain who led the first settlement in Hungary, ruled Hungary from 1000-1301. Ideologues of the Hungarian neo-mythology often refer to the Árpadian dynasty as the Turul dynasty, named after the Turul bird, the mythological ancestor of the Árpadian dynasty, thereby stressing the pre-Christian mythological connection.

tribe is coming to the end of its time on Earth, then a certain body of knowledge has to be passed on like a torch, and the Paulines are launched within the Pilis mountains. It is as though a flame is dying down, but someone must carry on that flame."³⁶

2) *Conspiracy of foreign powers to suppress the Hungarian people*

As Gönczi stresses, this could be observed already at the time of establishment of the order. In his opinion this was the main reason why authorisation for the Pauline Order dragged on from 1262 to 1308.

"In Rome the matter was not seen as so urgent. The Holy See was not pleased by the idea of a new monastic order strongly linked to a nation an ancient Scythian tradition that was almost certainly an important part of the ancient Hungarian spirituality was part of the spirituality of the ancient Hungarian Pauline Order created by Eusebius. However much this sacral national tradition and ancient Hungarian spirituality was part of the spirituality of the Pauline Order, it was almost certainly obvious to the official Catholic clergy."³⁷

But this same anti-national idea can be found in the theory of Vince Árva regarding the edict of Joseph II, and the obstacles raised to re-establishment of the order in the course of the 19th century,³⁸ and is also found in the contemporary processes, together with the anti-globalisation and xenophobic attitudes that have strengthened as a result of political happenings in the recent past. As a consequence great emphasis is placed in the Pauline neo-mythology on the famous lines of Péter Pázmány, a leading figure of the Hungarian Counter-Reformation,³⁹ drawing a parallel between the fate of the Paulines and the fate of the nation.⁴⁰ In this way, the era of Joseph II mentioned by Vince Árva as the beginning of the "falsified Pauline history", in the writings of the other ideologues (Szántai, Gönczi) becomes the culmination of an international conspiracy to suppress the Hungarian people. It is only now, as a consequence of their recognitions, that the possibility arises after more than two centuries of awakening "from the false consciousness".

36 SZÁNTAI 2010.

37 GÖNCZI 2012. 133.

38 BAKK s.d.

39 Péter Pázmány (1570-1636) was the Archbishop of Esztergom and the Primate of Hungary between 1616-1637. He was the soul of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in Hungary.

40 "If you wish to know the fate of the country, turn your regard to the Order of Saint Paul the Hermit. If you see their numbers dwindling, know that the country is in a bad state, if you see them grow, you must know that the country is also ascending."

3) *Emphasis on the so-called ancient Hungarian Christianity, or Scythian-Hungarian Christianity*

This characteristic is the clearest indication that the entire Pauline neo-mythology is basically not part of vernacular religion linked to Roman Catholic Christianity, but is a syncretic “cultural Christianity” placing the focus on sacralisation of the nation. A widespread element in the invented new Hungarian mythology is also related to the Paulines; it is essentially the conspiracy theory that in practice questions the authenticity of the entire existing Christianity. The bases of the ideology can be linked to the activity of Badinyi Jós, who has described the historical Christian churches as *Judeo-Christian*,⁴¹ while he regards the ancient Hungarian Christianity as the true continuation of the legacy of Jesus. In addition to his theory of the Parthian origin of Jesus,⁴² Ferenc Badinyi Jós has also written about Hungarian, Chaldean or Scythian Christianity and he has attempted to prove that Jesus and his followers were not of Jewish origin.⁴³ The work of Badinyi Jós became the unquestionable, canonised ideological basis of those who believe in the alternative origin and prophetic consciousness of the Hungarian people; it is therefore not surprising to see that the creators of the Pauline neo-mythology also apply it to the Paulines who they regard as the continuers of this ancient Hungarian Christianity.

“Because it was not the Roman Catholic religion that they introduced and spread here. This religion too is called Catholic, but it has no attribute, it is not Roman, not Byzantine, but Catholic which means universal, general and eternally valid. And the ideology of this religion is summed up in the Holy Crown.”⁴⁴

However we do not learn what else this Pauline neo-mythology contains, what the principal tenets of the redefined Pauline order are. All we are told is that the Paulines wanted to preserve some kind of ancient Hungarian religion, the legacy of the shamans, that is closely intertwined with the fate of the Hungarian people. It is quite clear that although the Pauline neo-mythology reinterpreted a number of elements from the original legend of Blessed Eusebius and the history of the Paulines and added to this a number of invented elements, one thing it left

41 The description of Christianity as Judeo-Christianity implies an anti-Semitic attitude.

42 BADINYI JÓSI 2002, 2003, 2005.

43 For further details, see, among others: Lajdi, Tamás: A Magyar Apostol Nemzetség vallása [The Religion of the Hungarian Apostolic Nation] in which he sums up the basic principles of Scythian-Hungarian Christianity. <http://magunk.hu/>. Last access: 20 January 2013. The ideology also clearly functions as a counter-culture: “We are not interested in whether the State recognises us or not, supports us or not, we have not asked for and do not expect such recognition and support since we have nothing to do with this state form, the republic. Since for our part we do not recognise the state forms existing in Europe today, we do not ask them to recognise us ... we do not recognise the existence of the present statehood in Europe, and especially not its existing form in Hungary. We live within the frames of the Holy or Divine Kingdom despite the fact that the life around us legislates in a distorted state form and on the basis of an anti-humane constitution.”

44 SZÁNTAI 2001.

out almost entirely is the tenets, the religious content. It is this lack that created the receptive base of the mythology and at the same time also explains why the invented mythology and its ideologues keep coming into conflict with the Pauline Order. It is inevitable that an invented mythology without Christian tenets, that questions the identity of the existing Pauline Order, can become popular in a circle for which it is not the missing Christian elements that are important but the elements present linked to neo-nationalism. This broad stratum known in the sociology of religion as those “religious in their own way” represents a segment of society not precisely definable whose superficial “cultural Christianity” finds the sacral bases of its own identity in an invented mythological world-view.⁴⁵ All this fits well into the post-socialist national discourse described by Niedermüller, the main aim of which is the symbolical recovery of national history that had been silenced or suppressed for ideological reasons. As Niedermüller notes, this aim is basically achieved through an “anti-modernisation” strategy aimed at emphasising the naturalness of social and cultural phenomena, above all the nation, the national culture and tradition, and through this the unnatural nature of all phenomena wishing to change this natural culture.⁴⁶ On the basis of this principle, the preservers of tradition become the actors in an anti-national conspiracy theory and thus representatives of foreign powers bent on destroying the nation.

The changing Pauline cult

Among the varied manifestation forms of the Pauline neo-mythology, the narrative dimension is undoubtedly the most important, but it is not limited to the ideological works mentioned here. We can also list here the websites that provide scope for the expression of opinions and views of the base receptive of the mythology, as well as the sites where visitors can get to know the religious experience and religious messages linked to the mythology.

1) Contemporary visions

A number of new elements are being built on the sense of a national mission and on the idea that the “false world view” in conspiracy theories can be unveiled in our own age. Of particular note among these are the visions of Katalin Lendvai Fekete originating from Eusebius that she has also posted on various websites.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ It is an indication of the inadequate knowledge about him (and of the superficial knowledge individuals have of vernacular religion) that Blessed Eusebius is frequently mentioned as Saint Eusebius. For example: <http://www.halas.net/component/content/article/5266>; www.szentozseb.hu/; <http://www.enkarapilisszanto.eoldal.hu/>. Last access: 30 September 2014. The title Saint Eusebius quite clearly refers to Blessed Eusebius and not to Saint Eusebius of Vercelli (bishop).

⁴⁶ NIEDERMÜLLER 2002. 145.

⁴⁷ <http://magokvagyunk.blogspot.com/p/magyarok-taltosok-palosok-magosok.html> Last access: 30 September 2014.

In visions Blessed Eusebius entered into direct contact with the woman, through her he sent messages to the Hungarians of today, all reflecting a view proclaiming the end of the paradigmatic change of era, the end of the “false period” and the beginning of the period of national rebirth.

“You must care for the future! The future that is blessed is placed in your hands! Your fate, the fate of your country depends on you...! The time has come for change, to take a stand, for the beginning of a new process that brings the country together in UNITY and does not allow it to be dragged to the brink of ruin! But for this my children you need courage – FAITH, TRUST and HIGH IDEALS! It is not enough to pay attention to your own affairs, the Homeland is your affair now, the affair of you all! The Homeland must be set on a path that writes a New Reality! From which and in which it again becomes a nation with the fate of Christ! In which Christ shows the way with his love, and rallies it around him, and rallies the nations living around him and raises them up to the Lord, and sets an example for them!...”

“– *I beg you Eusebius, tell me what we should do to become victorious?* Do not put up with it any longer, do not allow yourselves to be enslaved! Obey the Law of the Lord, that he has left for you over the millennia! Only in this way can you again become a nation with a pure fate! ... Put the past in its place, renew it in the present! Open up the Sacred Codes that you brought with yourselves! Pay more and proper respect to the majesty, mystery and teachings of the Holy Crown!... Hungary is undergoing a purification without parallel in recent history.”⁴⁸

2) *The Ancient Pauline Order*

It is also worth mentioning that the Ancient Pauline Order, an institutionalised organisation based on the Pauline neo-mythology, has been set up. However, the operation of the seemingly religious community appearing in a religious guise, like the whole Pauline neo-mythology, goes beyond religious frames and can be defined as a kind of neo-nationalist counter-culture group. The fact that the content of the website is not primarily religious but is associated to national consciousness is proof of this. On the home page they ask “those who love our nation and wish to act for the country of the Holy Crown” to help their work. Among the news on the website we find an item on the “Constitution of Hungarian Freedom” they proclaim, that can be regarded as their confession of faith. It reflects the prophetic consciousness of the Hungarian people, a chosen people: “...the mercy of

⁴⁸ <http://magokvagyunk.blogspot.com/p/magyarok-taltosok-palosok-magosok.html> Last access: 30 September 2014.

the Creator made the universal Hungarian people share in the task of the Mother of God with the Holy Crown ... with the recognition that the violence that prevents us from performing the tasks given to us by the grace of the Mother of God places our nation and mankind in mortal danger ...” The “Constitution of Hungarian Freedom” uses both Christian actors (it once mentions the Blessed Lady and Christ, in the introductory section it mentions the Creator and Mother of God three times) and speaks of the Light of the Soul, of universal love reflecting a pantheist character, and attributes a personified, supernatural nature to the historical Holy Crown, calling Hungary the Country of the Holy Crown and those living in the territory of the country members of the Holy Crown. It can be clearly felt that the main driving force of the phenomenon is not religion, not the continuation of religious tradition, but creation of the sacral foundations for the reshaping of the national identity and placing it in the sacral dimension. The historical Pauline Order rejects the Ancient Pauline Order that shows features of chauvinism.

3) *Vince Árva, the last true Pauline hero*

It can be clearly seen that the construction of the Pauline neo-mythology is the foundation myth of a complex identification reconstruction process. However, all myths necessarily contain heroes who show the way to ordinary mortals with their deeds and thoughts. We encounter two such heroes in this Pauline mythology: Blessed Eusebius reinterpreted in the remythologisation, and Vince Árva founder of the entire Pauline neo-mythology. Even the leading ideologues of the trend treat Árva’s words and views as axiomatic. “I refer to Vince Árva, the past great director and governor of the Pauline Order, who directed the order when he was in illegality, so his information is certainly reliable”.⁴⁹ Vince Árva became an iconic figure representing an invented Hungarian neo-mythology, whose deeds and thoughts represent the ancient, pure, unspoiled past conception of an idyllic Hungarian Christianity. He is an unconditionally positive hero whose death, like the death of heroes of legend, could not be a natural one, it could only be the result of some kind of plot.⁵⁰ It can be seen that Árva’s study launched an avalanche of transformation in which a conspiracy theory concerning the modern history of the Pauline Order created a complex remythologisation matrix, absorbing also stories arising around the person who invented it. A cult has been built up around

⁴⁹ SZÁNTAI 2001.

⁵⁰ It is important to note that countless conspiracy stories arose around the death of Vince Árva too. According to some he did not die a natural death. <http://mkh.valosag.net/index.php/temakeroek/magyarsag/1602-ilyen-volt-a-mi-papunk-in-memoriám-p-arva-vince-anya> Last access: 30 September 2014.

The majority of his followers took it as a fact that in his last will Vince Árva declared that he would like to be buried in Pilisszántó not in Székesfehérvár where he had been a priest since 2004. A movement was launched for his funeral. The Bishop of Székesfehérvár, who took Árva into his diocese in his old age, did not know about such a will. <http://szentlaszloiskola.hu/hirek/egyhazi-megyei-nyilatkozat-arva-vince-anya-temetesevel-kapcsolatban2009-01-03-20090105>. Last access: 30 September 2014. A more detailed description of the conflict would exceed the limits of the present study.

his person, his name is used as the stamp of true knowledge, an authenticating brand, with which books could be sold and ideologies confirmed during his life and after his death.⁵¹

Summing up

The described elements of Pauline neo-mythology clearly show that the phenomenon is part of a complex identity reconstruction bringing about a syncretic symbiosis of Christian, neopagan and nation elements. As I have shown in my earlier article giving an overview of the trends in Christian-neopagan syncretism,⁵² like the neopagan orientation its syncretism with Christianity is a very complex phenomenon. Basically, a distinction must be made between its two variants: 1.) the presence of Christian-neopagan syncretism in the vernacular religiosity of Christian believers, and 2.) the trend of the neopagan orientation that draws on Christian symbolism and teachings and wishes to incorporate them into its own theory. At the same time it must be emphasised that in the first case the process of mingling blends with Christianity not neopagan elements in the strictest sense,⁵³ but rather certain chapters in Hungarian history, among them a reinterpretation of the connection of the Hungarian people with Christianity, in which the date and manner of the conversion of the Hungarians is placed in a new light, the role of certain actors is reinterpreted and through this, belief in the chosenness of the Hungarians and their prophetic consciousness appears. The many-branched ideology of the trend and in cases its system of teachings represents a fundamental reinterpretation of Christian tradition or places Christian history on a new basis seen from an ethnic-specific viewpoint through a strong process of remythologisation. The case of the Pauline neo-mythology is not primarily about religious reinterpretation either. We cannot speak of the strengthening of the cult of Blessed Eusebius in a Catholic context, rather neo-nationalism appears linked with an invented new mythology, overstepping religious borders. The Pauline neo-mythology on the one hand represents profanisation, while in other respects it also remains sacral, although not within the frames of Christianity and the concept of sacrality but in a new mythology linked to the "nation-religion".

The phenomenon itself can be compared to the process of the search for a mythology by 19th century Romantic nationalism. The Grimm Brothers, Elias Lönnrot, or in Hungary, among others, Arnold Ipolyi and Kabos Kandra attempted to reconstruct mythologies linked to a particular ethnic group. While in the 19th century this process was not capable of creating a coherent archaic Hungarian mythology from the knowledge preserved in folklore, in the 21st century we find the opposite process. The Hungarian neo-mythology has created, that is, it has

⁵¹ It is a good indication of the transcendent attitude towards him, that at the National Assembly of Hungarians in 2010, two years after his death wine that he had blessed was successfully sold in plastic bottles. See the photo in the annex.

⁵² POVEDÁK 2014.

⁵³ For example, the revival of phenomena related to the shaman tradition.

invented everything that the methodical approach of 19th century folklore and mythology research was unable to do. The reason for this is simple. This is a process with a sense of national mission, a national prophetic consciousness⁵⁴ that predestines the success of the creation of a complex mythology. Failure cannot be tolerated in this process because it would eliminate the sacral foundations of the very sense of a national mission. It must therefore be proven to exist, and for this contemporary myth creation provides everything that the earlier effort could not: sacral mission, sacral actors, world-saving consciousness. In this way it is creating an alternative mythological world, but at the same time it is also blurring the borders between myth and reality, presenting the events of the invented mythology as reality. Unfortunately this is also in line with the demands of our contemporary society where, in many cases, it is not historical authenticity that is important but merely its appearance.

54 HAMMOND 1980.

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Fig. 1 The Pauline Cross Stone
The Stone was excavated at Pilisszántó in 2000. According to some, the stone originally stood on the grave of Blessed Eusebius. The Pauline neo-mythology contains stories about the energy of the stone that has a special effect on people and objects around it, claiming that the Cross Stone could strengthen the positive energies but also cause severe headache for persons arriving with harmful intent. (<http://tudatosebredes.blogspot.com/2011/12/palosok-nyomaban.html>)



Fig. 2 Branding. "Tátos (shaman) and Pauline blessed wine." The wine was blessed by Vince Árva. (Photo: I. Povedák 2010)

KINGA POVEDÁK

RELIGION, MUSIC, COMMUNITY

THE INTERFERENCES OF THE PENTECOSTAL CHARISMATIC RENEWAL AND THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Abstract: In the article the author focuses on the Pentecostal-Charismatic Renewal movements that attract rapidly increasing number of followers all over the world and in recent years in Hungary as well. She intends to show how this fundamentally Protestant-inspired trend appears within Catholic frameworks and look at the demands and cultural processes behind the syncretising phenomenon. The blurring of boundaries and the transposable patterns are clearly reflected in the common use of the worship-song repertoire.

Keywords: Pentecostal-charismatic movements, Catholic charismatic renewal, Christian congregational music, Christianity in late-modernity, pentecostalization of Catholicism

It seems quite clear from the trends of the past few decades in religious studies that Berger's secularisation thesis cannot be applied to analysis of all contemporary religious processes as it takes practically no account of the religious revivals occurring parallel with the process of secularisation.¹ Countless examples of this can be observed especially from the 1960s, and religious studies in Hungary too has done extensive research for the analysis and presentation of the new religious movements. However, considerably less attention has been devoted to exploring renewal movements within Christianity.² In this article I look at the charismatic renewal movement that is showing exponential growth throughout the world, a trend that is gradually emerging in Hungary too. My aim is to show how this basically Protestant-based trend is appearing within Roman Catholicism, and to explore the demands and cultural processes behind this process of syncretisation.

1 This article was written and the research carried out with the support of the OTKA NK 81502 Research Grant. – To give just a few examples: KAMARÁS 1998; MÁTÉ-TÓTH – NAGY 2011; POVEDÁK – SZILÁRDI 2014.

2 MÁTÉ-TÓTH 1996; MEZEY 2013.

Historical background

Although we have witnessed its rapid spread in the last few decades, the charismatic renewal is not a product of the 20th century. The beginnings of the movement reach back to the United States in the 19th century when a whole series of awakening movements swept through the country (Great Awakening). It was on this basis that the Pentecostal renewal appeared in the early years of the 20th century. The members of these movements left the old mainstream churches and formed new communities. Their preaching consisted of readings from the Bible, overheated sermons and healing of the sick.³ The activity of the Methodist minister Charles Fox Parham, who was considerably influenced by the 19th century "Holiness movement", gave new impetus to the movement. Like the pioneers of Pentecostalism, Parham sought an answer to the question of why there was such a big difference between the church practice of modern times and its operation in the time of the apostles, and more specifically, why the strong working of the Holy Spirit could no longer be felt.⁴ In his opinion secularised and rigidly formalised Christianity was in need of new fruitful inspiration from the Holy Spirit. He believed that glossolalia, the ability to speak in tongues, was a sign of the new coming of the Holy Spirit (the new Pentecost). Agnes Oznam, a girl from his school in Topeka (Kansas), was the first; she began to "speak in tongues" on 1st January 1901, then on 3rd January Parham also gained the "Spirit baptism". Parham described this experience in the following words: "I held my hands above her and prayed... I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face, and she began speaking in the Chinese language, and was unable to speak English for three days."⁵ Shortly after they set out on missionary trips across the continent, but the movement came to the brink of collapse. It gained new impetus when Parham received the gift of healing with the laying on of hands. Masses of people came to the services and he healed thousands of sick. Then the process of American expansion began. William J. Seymour, a black Baptist minister was allowed to attend (strictly only outside the building!) the Bible school operated by Parham – a Ku-Klux-Klan sympathiser – in Houston. Later, in Los Angeles Seymour set up a small community for black, poor and largely uneducated servants. His popularity then increased after he received the gift of speaking in tongues on 9 April 1906; as a result he and his growing

3 VARGA 2000. 7.

4 In Catholic circles another event is also stressed. Perhaps in order to show the Catholic bases besides the entirely Protestant roots, they stress the coincidence of two events. One was the appeal of Leo XIII in an apostolic letter calling on believers to pray to the Holy Spirit (Provida Matris Caritate), then issued his encyclical on the Holy Spirit (Divinum Illud Munus) and on 1 January 1901 prayed the hymn "Veni creator spiritus". The other was that on the same day the Parham awakening began. VARGA 2000. 5.

5 SYNAN 2001. 1.

number of followers moved to a new place at 312 Azusa Street. Services here were attended by black and white together, they were open to everyone.⁶ Many people were impressed to see that the community trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit was able to break down all the traditional racial barriers, while others were horrified by the new kind of emotionally-charged religious experience (singing, shouting, speaking in tongues). From this now emblematic place that operated for only three and a half years the “modern Pentecost” spread to a wider, international religious stage.⁷ Thirty-eight missionaries set out from the Azusa Street community to Egypt, Norway and South Africa.⁸ Because the Protestant churches rejected the new kind of religious practice, the followers of the awakening movement split away from them, but the Pentecostal groups did not form an organised Christian church, instead they were active in “spiritual union”. Cox summed up their characteristics at this time. “They abolished hierarchies but kept ecstasy. They rejected both scientism *and* traditionalism. They returned to the raw inner core of human spirituality and thus provided just the new kind of ‘religious space’ many people needed.”⁹ The movement was launched in Europe by Thomas Ball Barratt, an English Methodist minister working in Norway, who received the Spirit baptism in 1906. He was followed in 1907 by Alexander Boddy who preached sermons preparing for the Spirit baptism in the All Saints Anglican parish of Sunderland. The movement rapidly spread throughout England and from there also reached Germany.¹⁰

The initial Pentecostal liturgy struck many observers as chaotic. There were several reasons for this. One was the liberation from the bonds of tradition that led the various groups to experiment with a number of new ritual forms; another was that most of their leaders and ministers had not been trained for years in seminaries in the traditional way and therefore often did not use the “appropriate” ritual forms or did not use them in the usual way. However, as MacNutt notes, it was precisely this feature that made them so lively, vibrant and attractive.¹¹ “It was obvious that nine out of ten people were there because of the new excitement. A new kind of show, with no entry charge ... if necessary they stood on the benches, or if this was impossible, then on each other’s feet,” wrote the Los Angeles Herald of the time.¹²

Although by the 1940s the Pentecostal Renewal had relatively stabilised its situation and its connections with the Christian churches, indeed the Pentecostal World Fellowship grouping the movement was established in 1947 and Leonard Steiner organised its first meeting (Pentecostal World Congress) in Zurich,

6 MACNUTT 2005. 185-198.

7 STEFON 2012. 308-313.

8 MACNUTT 2005. 185-198.

9 COX 1995. 105.

10 LIPTHAY 2002.

11 MACNUTT 2005. 189.

12 ROBECK JR. 2006. 1.

the movement itself had lost much of its intensity (“spiritual dryness”) and there were fewer miraculous healings than in the earlier decades.

The second wave of Pentecostal awakening, the forerunner of the charismatic renewal began in the Protestant churches in the 1950s and led to the birth in 1967 of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International¹³ was formed in 1952 in the United States; its aim was for the members to spread the “Full Gospel” in their everyday lives and also to financially support other missions. This fellowship already bore the later main characteristics of the second wave: they did not create a new church or set up a separate community, the members were to become participants in the awakening movement while remaining in their own denominations. The beginning of the charismatic awakening is generally dated to Easter 1960 when Dennis Bennett, the rector of St. Mark’s Episcopal Church spoke before the congregation of the “religious experience of Pentecost”. This aroused considerable interest in the press, not only drawing attention to the emerging charismatic renewal, but also led other persons in the clergy of other Christian denominations to set out in the direction of the movement. Ministers who remained within their own denominations held meetings for spiritual seekers or healed with prayer. The term “charismatic” was given by the American Lutheran minister, Harald Bredesen, in 1962 when he described the new process not as neo-Pentecostal, but as the “charismatic renewal of the mainline churches”.

The Charismatic Renewal

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal began in January 1967 in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania). A few teachers and students of the Duquesne University faculty of theology went for spiritual exercises (Duquesne Weekend) where they experienced the spiritual awakening of “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”. They soon shared their experience with students of Notre Dame University and Michigan State University. As Csordas notes, the new “Pentecostal Catholics” promised individuals a unique spiritual experience, the direct experience of divine power through numerous “spiritual gifts” and “charisms”, the result of which will be a drastic renewal of church life based on the re-baptism and “personal contact” with Jesus.¹⁴ In contrast with the earlier Pentecostal awakening, the Charismatic Renewal attracted mainly educated, middle-class Catholics from the suburbs. The new movement spread like wildfire through the United States, then appeared in all Catholic regions of the world, including Hungary.

In its third wave of renewal beginning in the 1990s Protestant and Catholic Charismatic Renewal escalated rapidly and is spreading to all parts of the world.

13 Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International.

14 CSORDAS 1997. 4.

Various estimates put the number of persons belonging to the Pentecostal Charismatic movement as high as 550 million, making it the second largest and steadily growing group within Christianity after Roman Catholicism (a total of approximately 2.1 billion). Some of its followers have converted to the Pentecostal congregations, but at least as many others have converted from Catholicism. At present the movement has a particularly strong influence in the Third World, in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia. In 2013 *Time* magazine described the phenomenon as a Latino revolution, stressing that the Pentecostal Charismatic movement is spreading more rapidly than Catholicism among the population traditionally regarded as Catholic. While Catholicism has to make an effort to retain its followers, the Pentecostal Charismatic congregations are experiencing explosive growth (a Latino Protestant boom).¹⁵ This is reflected in the fact that while in 1996 81% of the population of Latin America was Catholic and only 4% Protestant, in 2010 the corresponding figures were 70% and 13%, and in Brazil, the country with the world's largest Catholic population, the proportion of Catholics fell from 83% in 1970 to 65% in 2010 while the proportion of those belonging to the Pentecostal Charismatic movement grew from 6% in 1991 to 13% in 2010 and 45% of its members have converted from the Catholic faith.¹⁶ Many people in Catholic circles think that the wave of conversions can only be stopped with radical changes and propagation of the Catholic Charismatic movement. "As the church continues to lose members in the region with the world's largest Catholic population, the charismatic movement stands out as a source of hope, not only for fending off the formidable competition of Pentecostal Protestantism but for raising morale among the faithful as a whole."¹⁷ Based on data of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services for 2012, the number of Charismatics reached 120 million, and in Latin America they make up 16% of the entire Catholic population. The beginnings of a change of attitude within the Catholic church can also be seen in the words of Pope Francis who has gone from being one of the opponents of the movement to a supporter. "Back at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, I had no time for charismatics... Once, speaking about them, I said: 'These people confuse a liturgical celebration with samba lessons' Now I regret it. Now I think that this movement does much good for the church, overall. I don't think that the charismatic renewal movement merely prevents people from passing over to Pentecostal denominations ... No! It is also a service to the church herself! It renews us."¹⁸ The first Charismatic groups in Hungary were formed in 1975-76. In 1982 the TÚZ (Fire) movement was launched with the aim of evangelisation, introducing and discovering the Holy Spirit with the help

¹⁵ Within the Latino population migrating to the United States, among first generation immigrants 69% are Catholics and 13% Protestants, but among third generation immigrants these proportions are 40% and 21%. DIAS 2013. 22.

¹⁶ <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1303443.htm> More detailed data can be found at <http://www.worldchristianitydatabase.org/wcd/>. Last access: 30 January 2014. The appearance and spread of the Pentecostal movement in Hungary is shown in detail in the monograph by RAJKI – SZIGETI. (2012)

¹⁷ <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1303443.htm> Last access: 30 January 2014.

¹⁸ <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1303443.htm> Last access: 30 January 2014.

of various courses (Philip course, John Course, Andrew session etc.). The National Council of Hungarian Catholic Charismatic Renewal was formed in 1989 through the combined efforts of the communities and with the support of ICCRS. The National Charismatic Gathering has been held each year since 1992.

The cause of the spread and popularity of the charismatic movements cannot be analysed in the same way as the spread of new religious movements or millenarian “sects”. The appearance and popularity of the Pentecostal – Charismatic renewal that can be observed throughout the world is one of the major aspects of cultural globalisation driven by a number of factors. One important factor is that the movement has been very open ever since the launch of the Pentecostal Renewal in Azusa Street; this openness can still be seen in the fluid cultural circumstances of today. This kind of openness not only implies the acceptance of the other culture, social stratum, financial situation, etc., but also brings a high level of receptiveness to innovations. “You want to pray aloud in your pew? Do it at the top of your voice, even when the pastor is praying. Want to fall to your knees? Run to the altar. Sing in Spanish and switch to English at Verse 3? Go for it. “The evangelical church says this: Listen, you want to come to our church? If you are Mexican, we will show you a church where you can sing mariachi music,” explains Rodriguez. “If you are Puerto Rican, we will have salsa. If you are Dominican, we will have merengue. If you are Colombian, we will have cumbia.”¹⁹

These make it highly suited for the application in different cultural contexts and social conditions of the fluid character stressed, among others, by Simon Coleman.²⁰ In the Third World and among groups linked to the lower social strata one of the reasons for the popularity is the so-called prosperity gospel or health and wealth theology²¹, according to which the correct faith and appropriate exercise of the faith can also lead to material prosperity. A number of observers point out that the exceptional popularity among the Afro-American population can be attributed to the black roots behind the emergence of the phenomenon.²² Nevertheless, its adaptability to the given culture, the high level of involvement of the individual and community traditions can be clearly observed in other parts of the world as well. This is one of the explanations for why the Pentecostal Charismatic movements are so popular in Hungary too among the Roma population and why the far more formal Catholic religion is not capable of such fluidity.

Other important factors are the less formalised religiosity that is much better suited to the demands of contemporary society, and for the same reason also the lack of a church hierarchy and the significance of a vertical, direct contact between leaders and believers.

19 DIAS 2013. 21.

20 COLEMAN 2000.

21 István Kamarás refers to prosperity gospel as “abundance theology”. KAMARÁS 2003. 353.

22 ROBBINS 2004.

“Gender-oriented” analyses by Martin and others have shown a considerably higher proportion of adult women (around 75%) among the members of the Pentecostal and Catholic charismatic movements.²³ Of course, right from the start Pentecostalism was more popular among women than among men, due in part to the fact that ministerial positions are also open to women.

On the subject of globalisation it should be emphasised that as a consequence of the infocommunication revolution the possibilities offered by the internet influence expansion in two directions. On the one hand the freely accessible content provides the communities with a pattern for structuring rites, the elements used, style, songs, etc., and on the other through the high degree of similarity in the liturgy of the Pentecostal and Catholic charismatic movements that also strengthens the syncretism between the two. This mingling is largely a one-way process, in that the influence of the Pentecostal liturgy on the Catholic Charismatics can be observed, clearly detectable among others in the use of Pentecostal songs in both.

However, the most significant incentive is to be sought in the nature of the rites. The most important characteristics of the charismatic services are spontaneity, active personal participation, emotional richness and ecstatic experiences. As *Time* magazine notes in this connection – stereotypically but aptly simplifying the phenomenon – during these events “people are much more liable to stand up and dance than they are to fall asleep”.²⁴ As many observers emphasise all these features often blur the borders between religious service and entertainment.²⁵ In the present case the main question is the repositioning of Martyn Percy’s thought “How does faith feel?” that is, an examination of the feelings that can arise during such a liturgy and how they can affect the nature of the dissemination.²⁶ It is not possible due to limitations of space to examine all the aspects here; I shall attempt to grasp the essence through what is perhaps the most emphasised channel for the manifestation of the religious experience, namely religious music.

Religious music itself is naturally greatly influenced by the complex nature of the rite within which it is heard. And in the case of the Catholic Charismatic movement this shows close similarities to parts of the Pentecostal rite. Both emphasise the role of the Holy Spirit (in the case of the Pentecostals the Holy Ghost), the most obvious manifestation of which is faith healing and speaking in tongues, the direct experience of the miracle. In addition the Holy Spirit is also present in the form of urgings and inspiration in the course of the process of creating the music and in the musical service. In the Catholic Charismatic celebrations

23 ROBBINS 2004. 132.

24 DIAS 2013. 22.

25 ROBBINS 126.

26 PERCY 2013. 217-222.

the musicians do not agree beforehand on what they will play, but leave it to the Holy Spirit to guide them, often without a score.

“We enter the door, open our hearts, call on the Holy Spirit, try to attune ourselves to it. I announce that I want to praise, that I am here, the will is important, that I want to pray ... in the sacred part they are at the altar; this is when they can receive different sacraments and gifts, when they have no way of expressing what the Sacred is, this is when the language prayer comes, they begin to praise the Lord in another language. They are unable to say anything more beautiful or greater to God, and the Holy Spirit begins to pray in them, at such times they say secret things, mysteries that they themselves do not understand.”²⁷ They share the characteristic of spontaneity, an overheated emotional state, in many cases lively body language gesticulation and the possibility of direct feedback (immediate witness to recovery made in front of the community of believers). “...while there are strict rules for the liturgy that must be followed during mass, while in the praise everything is free, there is no pre-agreed order of singing, anyone can kneel, pray with arms outstretched, the songs can be sung at great length, there is no fixed duration. There is time for meditation, to turn inwards, the Holy Spirit can touch them. In this way they can partake of a greater experience than, for example, at a mass.”²⁸ The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, has thus practically taken over the whole system of praise and worship, what could be called the “whole package” – the songs, the gesticulation, and the central role of praise in the religious rite. An interesting feature in the spread of the songs is that the Catholic Charismatics in practice use the music of the Pentecostals, borrowing the songs in full and translating them regardless of the theological differences between the two denominations. A good example of this is the song book titled *Rólad szól dicséretem...* (My Praise is of You...) published by the National Youth Mission linked to the Hungarian Pentecostal Church (2011), but the book is also on sale at the National Catholic Charismatic gathering, indeed the Catholic praise groups use this collection for the most part. The consequence of this migration of songs and one that reinforces the migration, is that the borders between the two become blurred.

Many on the Catholic side became aware of this kind of fluidity, its dangers and the conversions, and are making considerable efforts for the catholicisation of the borrowed practices. A central role is being played in this by the priests who belong to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement who, because of their theological training deliberately do not use the expression Holy Ghost in place of Holy Spirit, or, for example, they pray for individuals with the Holy Trinity, rather than calling down the Holy Ghost. But at the same time they continue to sing of the Holy Ghost in the songs! Another source of natural difference is that the cult of the Virgin Mary is absent from the Pentecostal Charismatic Renewal, while this cult may – but does not necessarily – appear in the Catholic Charismatic liturgy, but it is much less prominent than in the traditional Catholic liturgy.

27 FARKAS 2012. 4-5.

28 FARKAS 2012. 4-5.

(An indication of this is that during the full-day charismatic gathering held in 2012 there was only one song addressed to the Virgin Mary.)

In view of all this it is strange that a Catholic Charismatic gathering more closely resembles in its external features the liturgy of the *Hit-gyülekezet* (Faith Church). Of course, this character has not been judged uniformly, either in Hungary or abroad, and writings by Catholic figures, especially members of the clergy, soon began to appear expressing the opinion that services more closely resemble Christian popular music concerts. Miller stresses that “One of the more unfortunate consequences of the changes to take place since the Vatican II days has been a blurring of those distinctions ... Through the proliferation of dancing in the aisles, “gospel” music, “evangelistic” sermons, “Christian Rock” and performance liturgies, some of the more obvious and visible boundaries between the Catholic Church and the realm of *extra ecclesiam* have become obscured. Nowhere is this more evident or unsettling than in what has been termed the ‘Charismatic Movement’”.²⁹

Naturally, a scholarly explanation can be found behind all these phenomena, one that is not merely limited to Morel’s demand for the search for a “new religious language”,³⁰ according to which each age must find the appropriate “language” – and we may add, channel – through which the message of the church can be understood by believers. But, although recognising that the existence of these two forms the basis of its popularity, the demands in the background moving the contemporary religious market can also be discovered, and although these work in a completely different way in the American environment compared to the European, the basic motivations and attitudes are also similar.³¹ One of the most important of these is that it is increasingly important under the conditions of late modernity for the religious experience to be in line with the demand of the masses, corresponding to the mechanism of the consumer and experience society. One manifestation of this is the infiltration of current fashion trends into the liturgy, among others through Christian popular music. It is not only that the religious experience found in different religious groups using a similar profane music fashion is similar because of the music used, but also that this kind of music style is better suited to the given religious experiences. In other words, the charismatic experience and its ritual frame that correspond to postmodern religious demands and therefore can be “sold” successfully on the religious market, result in the appearance of a similar music style, that in the present case functions not only as an aesthetic category but also as a channel of religious communication. In this way fashion has appeared, based on aesthetic demands, in the religious environment but it owes its popularity and long life to the fact that these aesthetic demands have been successfully implanted into the religious demands.

29 MILLER 2002.

30 MOREL 1995.

31 DAVIE 2010. 11-13.

It must also be mentioned that, as a characteristic of the postmodern age, the deconstruction of clearly defined, strict borders, and preference for the partnership attitude in place a hierarchy have also appeared in religious culture and have left their imprint on the Pentecostal movement as well. The blurring of borders that had already been pointed out by many observers,³² in the present case the syncretism already mentioned also means the migration between denominations of various religious elements and practices. The spread of songs from Pentecostalism to Catholic Charismatics was a visible sign of this. One of the characteristics of the many songs borrowed from the Pentecostal movement is that the positive Christian message is packaged in the popular music trends of mass culture so that it is free of the theology of suffering, makes no mention of the Cross and conveys only the message of Resurrection. This went together with a religious practice building on the already mentioned high degree of spontaneity and individual intuition.

It is not only the achievements of technology that can become part of religious practice in the age of late modernity but also, for example the phenomenon of branding known from economics. Just as brand building is playing a growing role in the success of products and services with the advance of globalisation, we can also speak of brand building in the field of religion.³³ The Hillsong Church, perhaps the most popular Pentecostal Charismatic worship group, is a good example of this religious branding.³⁴ The Hillsong Church became the face of Australian Christianity and at the same time the best known Australian brand reaching young people, including the market for non-religious products! The Hillsong parent congregation in Sydney attracts 20,000 people a week, and has appeared in London, New York, Amsterdam, Kiev, Paris, Stockholm and Cape Town. Their praise and worship song performed by Hillsong United have accumulated over ten million views on YouTube. In Hungary they are used both by the Catholic Charismatic groups and, among others by the Faith Church that holds the translation rights for the songs. It was largely because of its fashionable, professional and distinctive praise music that Hillsong Church was able to become so enormously successful. It could be their typically youthful sound and appearance that makes them so attractive for the X and Y generations. Over a space of 20 years they issued 40 CDs, their songs are written and performed by professional musicians, and they carry out marketing activity. They created religious branding, and the brand itself with the export of praise and worship song. Naturally not all Pentecostal Charismatic or Catholic Charismatic worship occasions copy the Hillsong phenomenon, but its musical influence is indisputable.

32 On the subject of the phenomena of popular culture, Romanowski concluded that the borders are becoming increasingly blurred, ROMANOWSKI 2000; while Povedák analysed the phenomenon in conjunction with the mingling of Christianity and neopaganism. POVEDÁK I. 2014.

33 For more details, see GAUTHIER and MARTIKAINEN 2013.

34 WAGNER 2013.

Summing up

It is obviously impossible within the frames of the present article to explore fully the motivations behind the spread of the Pentecostal and the Catholic Charismatic movements and the similarity between the two. Because of the limitations of space certain aspects have had to be left out, although they are needed to form a full picture. The overheated emotional character of the praise music is one of the most characteristic features of the Pentecostal and Catholic Charismatic liturgy and religious experience, but a theomusicological investigation of the songs and the vernacular theological views of individuals would also be of interest for the complex result. A future comparison of the lived experience during the rites could give a detailed picture of the nature of the continuous flow and changes in vernacular religiosity and the background incentives.

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Fig. 1. National Charismatic Gathering in Szeged, 15 September 2012. (Photo: Kinga Povedák)



Fig. 2. The outflowing of the healing power of the Holy Spirit. National Charismatic Gathering, 2012, Szeged (Photo: Kinga Povedák)

MARRIAGE AS APPROPRIATION: EVIDENCE FROM THE HUNGARIAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY¹

Abstract: In the Hungarian Muslim community, marriage displays a complex web of relations, meanings and variables. Here, it is argued that marriage can be best interpreted as a process of appropriation. We distinguish between active appropriation, passive appropriation and disruptive appropriation. Hungarian Muslim couples tend to actively appropriate a new identity, faith and cultural models. They benefit from individualisation and localisation to take advantage of social and religious resources they dispose of. In this process, the individual comes into the foreground, using a multiplicity of symbolic resources to reduce the impact of the community on its life. Mostly, Hungarian Muslim couples succeed in their plans of happiness. Although stable, Arab Muslim couples in Hungary fall short of felicity. The pitfalls of immigration, delocalisation and traditional ethics of marriage trap them in passive appropriation. More serious is the case of Hungarian Arab couples. Here, both spouses fail to meet the needs of the other. As postmodern agents, Hungarian wives assume active roles, but with little local resources, and amid a soliloquy, they soon exhaust themselves. As for their Arab husbands, de-localised and cut off from their traditional resources, their fallacious hopes of a better life turn to desolation. Data for this study is mainly collected from the three major mosques of Budapest.

Keywords: marriage, Hungarian Muslims, appropriation, immigration

Introduction

For millenaries, marriage has been a sacred social contract in which religious culture and social reproduction mutually preserved and established the legitimacy of each other. Modernity brought turmoil to this balance. It de-linked the social and the sacred, uncovering spitefully the power of gender, law, and social order in the making of marriage. As modernity prevailed in Europe and elsewhere, societies became aware of abuse, child marriages, the blackmailing aspect of the dowry,

¹ Taking into consideration the limited number of Muslim communities in Budapest and the fact that the believers know one another's story much better than in any Western city that has bigger and more numerous communities, we changed the names and some other details about our interlocutors.

arranged marriages, polygamy, and the financial burden of the marriage and the wedding ceremony. Yet, religious cultures did not abduct. They also evolved to convey more effectively the changing social dynamics of marriage.

One key transformation of marriage in the modern age is the extension of cross-cultural marriages. This raises the question of whether religiously motivated social agents can cope with such complex social structure or not. Here, it is argued that marriage can be best interpreted as a process of appropriation. We distinguish between active appropriation, passive appropriation and disruptive appropriation. Hungarian Muslim couples we interviewed for the purpose of this study tend to actively appropriate a new identity, faith and cultural models. To a certain extent, they are supported by a culture and a community they understand and share. Arab Muslim couples passively appropriate a safe haven, negotiating social restraints and their status as migrants. In order to assure continuity, they rely on harmonious social and religious backgrounds. Hungarian-Arab couples are often entangled in a process of disruptive appropriation. They construct their new identities that accommodates them to the new situation in divergent ways. Both acts of appropriation initiated by the spouses do not respond to the expectations of each other. We maintain that the three patterns highlight the role of social identity in cross-cultural marriage.

With regard to method, we loosely draw on M. Weber's sociological notion of appropriation. Previous applications of this perspective informed research in literary studies, sociology, anthropology and Islamic studies.² We use appropriation to indicate the act in virtue of which a social agent attempts to incorporate a symbol or behaviour in her or his social or religious identity. The data comes from interviews and group participation with some 15 women and 10 men in one of the three major mosques of Budapest. The field work was carried on for over a period of two months (end of May- end of July, 2014) in Budapest.

1. Appropriating a new identity

Recently, Spyros A. Sofos and Roza Tsagarousianou argued that Muslims in Europe display frames of identity in close relation to agency. They consider the veil and the choice between mosques and discourses to be important frames of identity that allow self-shaping, the reconfiguration of Islam and the building of communities in Europe.³ In the same vein, we understand appropriation as an agency. One affirms his or her belonging, whether social or religious, inasmuch as he or she acts freely and consciously to construct "Muslimness". Nonetheless, we disagree with Sofos and Tsagarousianou on the extent of agency. As the Hungarian Muslim context shows, post-modern agency is extremely limited.

² For the application of appropriation in anthropology and Islamic studies which influenced our approach here, see: HAHN 2008. 191-202., KRAWIECZ – KOKOSCHKA 2013. 1-33.

³ SOFOS – TSAGAROUSIANOU 2013. 136-156. They draw on William Anthony Gamson's frames theory.

We observed two obvious areas of appropriating identity that support our claim: Muslim clothing and names. Each of which will be the subject of a separate section.

1.1 Taking Muslim clothes

In a post-modern age, identity is necessarily composite or “hybrid”. While most Hungarian practicing believers take pride in their Hungarian cultural roots,⁴ they also appropriate additional or supplementary identities without any feeling of shame or contradiction. Previous research has reported the thriving of religiosity in the Hungarian society.⁵ However, Muslim clothes, a necessary requirement in normative Islam, suggest that appropriation of a supplementary identity has its limits. In particular, the Muslim veil appears to be a trap for appropriation.

The married Muslim women we talked to in Budapest typically take one kind of Muslim clothes: the veil, *hijab* in the streets or in the mosque. The veil covers the whole body except the hands and the face. We did not meet with any woman who takes the integral veil (*niqab*) neither at the mosque of Budapest nor at MIK mosque. This fact is significant. It means that Salafism is not yet sufficiently implanted in Hungary. It also means that Hungarian Muslim women carefully appropriate their “Muslim self”. Showing the face increases their chances of communication, visibility and social integration. Furthermore, that our informants do not wear the veil at work indicates the confines of their agency. Sára, one of our informants, was married to a Sudanese at the time of the events she told us about:

I worked as a nurse and I could wear the *hijab*, but in a very simple way, making the hair and the shawl tight on it. When I was told not to wear long sleeves in the summer, I asked where is the regulation for that? So, the boss said okay, and I could work, but later they offered me an administrative job where the new style was less weird. The colleagues accepted it but of course with curiosity. As for my family, they accepted the change in religion but not the *hijab*.

This statement perfectly explains the limits of post-modern hybridity. Although Islam as faith does not seem to pose a major issue to the family, the latter rejects one of its salient symbols. That is because appropriation of this symbol establishes a boundary between Sára and her family. Invisible boundaries do not disturb her parents, but the veil does. The issue of agency, then, becomes problematic. Sára faces a dilemma here: either she endorses a frame of agency in which she freely fashions her individuality (accepting the consequence of social isolation)

4 At their entrances, both the mosques of the two main Muslim communities of Budapest proudly exhibit the Hungarian flag.

5 Lavinia Stan and Diane Vancea estimate the percentage of believers in some form of religiosity to attend 85 % in Hungary. See: STAN – VANCEA 2013. 86., See also: BARNA 2007.

or denies herself that frame and sustains her social relations. This undermines Sofos and Tsagarousianou's thesis. One can only claim to a post-modern frame of agency and identity if, and only if, the environment as such promotes this frame.

Another informant, Kati, married to a Hungarian Muslim, faces a similar situation:

My grandparents, who though not religious, are scared by my *Muslimness* and completely refute it. At the workplace there is a dress code so I cannot wear the *hijab*.

At this point, it is clear that taking Muslim clothes is a risky move. Hungarian married Muslim women take the Muslim cloths to embrace an important identity marker of "Muslimness". Nonetheless, they have to satisfy also the requirements of social identity. Conventional codes of dress set many hurdles to their agency. The veil is indeed a matter of daily concern for these women. While interviewing our informants, we attended a meeting between a group of Hungarian Muslim women at the MIK mosque to discuss the issue of the veil. The participants reiterated two ideas: 1. Women should forgive themselves if they cannot take the Muslim clothes at work. They can work without *hijab* out of necessity because "God does not expect us to put our daily bread at stake". As a matter of fact, these ladies do not wear the *hijab* at work. 2. Women should be faithful to their character. That is, they should stay firm about their religious identity even if they cannot appropriate its visible signs. The group discussion on *hijab* confirms the notion of agency as appropriation and its confines.

A presentation by a very active member of this community, let us call her Anna, opens the discussion. She said that she chose the *hijab* issue because it is a real problem. Her case deserves attention here. In her workplace, she is not allowed to wear the *hijab*. She told us the following:

I work at a company of logistics and my bosses are not supportive saying that people would panic if they saw a veiled women. In the summer, the heat is unbearable in the workplace. In the winter, I put a baseball hat and stuff my hair under it but the boss ironically asks: "Do you feel so cold that you need this on your head?" But I cannot leave the job because my income is much needed. My husband is Tunisian. I had been already a Muslim when I met him due to a strong impression I got in Morocco 5 years ago while on holiday there. A girl of 15 wearing the *hijab* deeply impressed me. I never saw a woman of such dignified look and posture. She seemed to me beautiful and strong she had an aura of strength but also femininity. This was my first time that I started to think about Islam that can turn you in such a human being. So I started to look for converted female friends.

Anna exemplifies best the resources and the limits of appropriation. Despite the restrictions, she manages to find ways to express her agency. She would like to appropriate a Muslim identity she imagines as a model of purity, strength and femininity. It is not because Islamic law requires women to take the veil or because her Tunisian husband asks her to do so. Her justification lies elsewhere: in her own interpretation of the meaning of the veil. Anna perceives the veil as a symbol of affirmation. When she puts a baseball hat to cover her hair, she would feel, even in a symbolic way, as appropriating her own selfhood.

Another case which details further the difficulties of adopting a frame of identity as agency is that of Móni. She is married to a Yemeni immigrant whom she met on the Internet. She works at a local company and she cannot wear the veil at work. She could not wear it either when she tried to get employed by a Muslim entrepreneur. He was against it and she was disappointed that she left the job because of that. She told us “it is the worst when Muslims behave like this”.

Closely related to the veil is conduct. We observed Hungarian married Muslim women in one of their social meetings and we noticed how the Muslim ethos marked our informants. Women were sitting as Arabs do on the green reed-mace carpet put on the normal carpet and ate the Hungarian chicken stew with spoon (not with their hands and bread as Arab women do) but neither with fork and knife as Hungarians do. These women put the veil and manto; their movements and gestures reveal the mark of Arab women as if the robe turns them into “someone else”. One can tell who is Hungarian and who is not by appearance but their gestures reveal their desire to uniformity.

1.2 *Changing names*

Naming is a powerful identity marker.⁶ It summarizes in a word the subjectivity and the legacy of an agent. With regard to appropriation, it represents an interesting *locus* of agency and counter-agency. Babies do not choose their names. It is the family that constructs the identity of their children through naming. As adults, some individuals express their unhappiness with their parents’ choice and change their names while others resiliently accept their names. Religions, being important identity markers and communities, tend to consider naming as a sensitive sphere of their presence. In particular, Islam attaches a high significance to names. Although several authorities exonerate converts from changing their names, the majority of religious scholars and schools would require a Muslim name to be necessary for being a member of the Muslim community (although not a condition of conversion to Islam). As Islam becomes European, many new Muslims promote transnational names and identities.

Hungarian married Muslim women endorse two strategies of appropriation of their personal names. On the one hand, some women take Arab personal names

⁶ Several anthropological studies explored the social significance of names in Central and Eastern Europe. For example, see: VINCZE 1978: 101-117., SALZMANN 1982: 114-128., DICKINSON 2007: 118-141.

while keeping their “Christian” ones (in Hungarian personal names are called *keresztnev*). One of our informants took the personal name of *Hasna’ nur*, which means “a beautiful woman of light”. It is both exotic and meaningful as a strategy of appropriation. She decided to take Islam and a Muslim name when she met a young Muslim colleague of hers called Hasan. First, she liked a name that contains light, *nur*, but then added *Hasna’* for gratitude to this man. *Hasna’ nur* does not know Arabic. We could not help but link her construction of a beautiful name to Anna’s constructing of a beautiful and strong veiled woman on the boat. One can notice the aesthetic appropriation of both clothes and names.

Linda, an informant from Szeged, changed her name to Majda. In fact, this is a much more subtle strategy of appropriation. Majda is an Arabic name the standard form of which is *Mājida* (a glorious woman). It can be pronounced Magda and then sounds European (Magdalena). It is a familiar appropriated “Muslim name”. Linda negotiates this change in her life so that her new frame of identity does not impede her previous frame. She believes that the two could co-exist if approached creatively.

Some names can jeopardise the integration of an individual. For instance, one of our informants’ personal name is Islam whom we met outside the mosque community. She comes from a mixed family, her father is an Iraqi immigrant, and her mother is Hungarian. As an adult she changed her name to Nóra and married a non-Muslim Hungarian dentist. Several women did not change their names. Lilla and Anna for example take pride in their personal names and do not consider changing names necessary to reflect the Muslim identity.

2. Appropriating the Muslim faith

The conversion of Hungarian Muslim women requires a study of its own. Suffice it here to briefly shed light on how conversion entangles with marriage. Far from being passive agents, Hungarian Muslim women negotiate commitment; they take a journey of their own towards the new faith.

2.1 *Converting*

Conversion is an act which reveals the difficulties of religions in a post-modern age: appropriating a tradition threatens the central authority of religion.⁷ This is the case since imagination considerably matters in conversion. As Post-modern subjectivities, our informants first imagine happiness in Islam as a thought experiment and try subsequently to change their own environment, in the realm of the possible. An open global society facilitates further the imaginary of felicity. Two

⁷ The prestigious French journal *Esprit* dedicated its issue of May 2014 to answer the question: Are the converts the future of religion? The authors highlight how conversion brings the dimension of change to religions which most traditions resist.

processes undermine further their social links: the decline of the traditional forms of religiosity, and an increased sense of alienation as a result of individualisation. As traditional structures disappeared, many individuals are unable to cope with the pressure and the tensions inherent in married life with regard to choosing the spouse and the profession, the marital problems and the raising of children. Our informants wanted to tackle all these issues as free and rational beings while making sense of them within a system of belief. For this reason, conversion might be seen as appropriation.⁸ Unable to find ready-to-wear responses, converts reinvent their links to religion and their societies, changing both in the process.

Our fieldwork led us to distinguish between two types of conversion: religious and social conversion. Religious conversion entails changing religion mostly from nominal Christianity to Islam. As for social conversion, it is a much more complex alteration. Our informants change their social code of ethics through a creative synthesis of the social criticism of Hungarian society and selective Islamic symbolic resources. As a result, they displace the centre of their faith, reinvent a tradition and appropriate an active social role. This second type of conversion allowed our informants to take control of their marriage.

Contrary to a widely accepted assumption, Hungarian Muslim women do not convert because of their husbands. The “You must have that true religion” (as Mavis Staples sings) reason is irrelevant here. Their journey to convert starts with a disappointment with their societies and cultures. At some point, they found themselves in rupture with Hungarian social codes and unable to understand or accept their rationales. In particular, many of our informants are disappointed with the gender relations in the current Hungarian society. The appeal of Islam starts at the moment when these women imagine that Islam offers the good life they aspire to.

For example, Laura became Muslim before her relationship with an Algerian man with whom she met on the Internet. They share interest in horses. She said she wanted to have a religion but was not appealed by Christianity because, according to her, the institutions of the Church are “too human”, complicated and abstract. Most of our informants agree with Laura that Christian faith (in a transcendent divinity) does not pose a problem for them, but the Church’s system of thought and establishment does. Laura felt lost, as she said, and found happiness to get guidance in life through Islam.

This ambiguity of religious and social conversion lies at the heart of post-modern age. Conversion seems to offer a solution to the tension between identity and hybridity. Mária’s story provides an insight into the complex web of conversion:

I am married to an Egyptian guy whom I met on the Internet. I first became friend with him and I really liked that he was calm and considerate, and when I expressed my interest in Islam the man said I did not have to become a Muslim, it must be a well-considered

⁸ To the best of our knowledge, the only study of conversion as appropriation was published by Monique Jeudy-Ballani. See: JEUDY-BALLANI 1998. 207-227.

decision because there is no way back. So we chatted for some time then I went to visit his family. I stayed with them, then got married after a month and then returned to Hungary because my parents are elderly and my father is very sick. I liked the environment very much and I was touched by the family atmosphere. All the family members were very kind with me. I sensed that people take care of each other and are more respectful than in Hungary, and even though the streets are dark there are less incident because people are more attentive.

Mária is far from being an exception among Hungarian Muslim women. Most of our informants lack the social skills to cope with fragmentation and inconsistency. Class and the professional network, fragile as they are, do not offer them any steady point of reference in life. They got deluded in the Hungarian society, its values and its traditions. As we can see, the post-modern distrust of the group results from social insecurity as well as from the fragmentation of meaning. In front of this uncertainty, Islam emerges as a confident and affirmative religion. In their view, Islam is a faith, a social philosophy and a coherent way of life at once. Our informants represent Islam as a solution to their post-modern concerns. Not that they carried on any deep inquiry or spiritual journey as one might presume. It is an intuitive step, certainly rational, but mostly imaginary. As active post-modern agents, they reshape their social identity through adherence to a new faith and order, importing it into their lives with the purpose to fix social anomalies and give sense to their existence.

2.2 Negotiating commitment

By now, the reader has understood that our informants seek commitment in Islam; the latter appears to them as an engaging and a committed religion. As our informants approach Islam, they have only a vague idea of the significance of Muslim commitment. While visiting Muslim countries, they met individuals or couples whose behaviour generates an image in which high moral commitment to marriage or family is seen through the lenses of Islam. It must be said that the only prism at our informants' disposal when they land in Muslim countries is that of Islam. Consequently, they believe that the commitment to Islam is joined at the hip with the commitment to marriage and family. They are unable to see, at first sight, the other traditional resources that create powerful – and often dividing and corrupting - bonds such as the tribe, the clan or the extended family, although these are not specific to Muslim societies. None of our informants spent more than a couple of months in Muslim countries, and do not speak Arabic. Therefore, they could not detect the deep structures of Muslim societies, being the social elements that make family life to be held together. They take Islam literally to symbolise the committed married life.

Furthermore, Hungarian Muslim women preserve a cultural trait they inherited from their previous religious background (Christianity), namely that religion is first and foremost spirituality. In practice, this trait entails a loose link or delinked commitment to religion. Contrary to Islam, Christianity leaves much room for the believer as an individual. This paradox in their religious commitment becomes more evident as they act as post-modern agents. Post-modernity brought about a change in the way individuals understand commitment. It is no longer a total and blind adherence to a faith, but a clever, selective and negotiated process.

Social commitment, the other side of the coin, requires men to be committed to marriage and family. This lies at the heart of our informants' concern. Here, we observed an interesting case of active appropriation. Due to their confidence as post-modern subjectivities, they feel entitled and capable to choose certain elements in Islam and put aside others.⁹ While married Hungarian Muslim women loosely approach religious commitment, they take social commitment very seriously.

Let us start with three examples of how our informants approach religious commitment. At one of our meetings with our informants a group of women withdrew to a van parking on the opposite side of the road to smoke, hiding themselves both from the public and the fellow Muslims. These women are not proud of their behaviour as it clearly contradicts the Muslim orthopraxy. While smoking is not forbidden *stricto sensu*, it is highly blameable. Many Muslim authorities even forbade it. Moreover, smoking in the street for a Muslim woman counts as an offense against public morals in any Islamic country. Smoking does not fit in the ethicalscape of Muslim practice. That our informants smoke indicates that they do not fully embrace this code of ethics as a way of life.

This conclusion is corroborated by another observation we made during our interviews. A new convert middle aged lady did not know that she is not allowed to drink daytime in Ramadan. She thought Ramadan is a good diet in which she could drink through the day only cutting down on food.

Finally, our informants accept the maintenance of a marriage between a Muslim woman and a non Muslim man (only if they were married before she converted). The standard view in Islamic law is to reject such marriage.

There remains, then, the question of social commitment. As our informants negotiate commitment with their Muslim husbands, it becomes evident that what matters most for them is appropriating a marital space in which they could live happily. Anna's case is revealing here:

We chatted for some time, and I was very open to him from the first moment saying that I have a daughter from a relationship, and that I have no respect for men. I always had to take care of myself etc. I was actually quite harsh in expressing these views. During the tumultuous days of the Arab spring, when there was no Internet, he even called me with international phone card etc. The guy asked me

9 For an anthropological study of commitment in marriage, see: QUINN 1982: 775-98.

to visit him. So we met in Tunis and in a few days we got married. The man preferred to stay there in Tunis because he is the eldest son of a family with both parents passed away. I said I can't due to the uncertain situation and also, I felt that his sisters were very angry with me for robbing him of them. I returned to Hungary and then we had to wait for a visa for almost a year. He was rejected 3 times also because of the age difference between us (I am 15 years older than him). Some told me he was doing all this out of interest. But I can tell you, he spent so much money to be able to keep in touch with me and on applying for legal visas that he could buy three visas for that amount of money.

Negotiating commitment takes two to settle and the Muslim husband also makes it clear that he has expectations. Sa'd, an Egyptian, who is married to Mária told her that the decision to convert to Islam was a serious one and should be considered carefully. He told her: once you become Muslim, there is no way back. It is true that Islamic law does not allow apostasy. If one leaves Islam for another religion, he or she risks death. However, no government applies this stipulation of Islamic law. What he meant was that converting to Islam would make their commitment stronger and couple more coherent. The way back would endanger the social commitment as well.

3. Rules of engagement: Imagining a Muslim family

Moved by a shiver of expectation that Islam is the perfect space for social commitment, our informants meet, engage with and marry Muslim men. Most of these women quickly realize that living in a Muslim country would not allow them to pursue happiness. Some of them establish defensive rules of engagement. That is to say, they require the future husband to come to Hungary in order to have all the facility to stay in control of their lives. Others, however, take the risk and try the Muslim life in a Muslim country. None of our informants could provide us with a positive input about their experience. Engagement turns immediately into dis-engagement. This fact could be explained by the fragility of the relationship in the first place. For what makes an engagement to be solid is that several social elements are involved in marriage (family, socio-economic conditions, long common life...). As Hungarian-Muslim couples form in a very short laps of time, often facing the opposition of and alienation from families on both sides or on one side amidst severely uncertain economic conditions in the Muslim countries, and without common links embedded in culture and tradition, the distance between engagement and dis-engagement can be blurred in a moment of despair. These are not adventures as one might presume. On the contrary, in all the stories we heard, we were convinced that these women were sincere; some of them left their jobs, families and country and went to find happiness in poor, barren and foreign

lands. They accepted to live with extended families, in small places, on basic conditions. They could not be happy because they could not appropriate a Muslim life that exists only in their imagination. Sára's story perfectly embodies the ups and downs of this (dis-) engagement:

I went to the Sudan to stay there. I liked the family life. I was introduced to my husband's friends. I was provided with 50 local money (Sudanese pounds). This sum equals almost 6.5 euros and 2000 Hungarian forints) for each week that I had to spend on household things. But whenever I bought something for myself - even an exercise book - my husband got angry saying that it is his duty to provide me with everything and they will buy me whatever I need, but if he is not nearby I have to ask first my father-in-law. Then, the husband expressed that he does not want children and I broke the engagement with him. I left the Sudan very disappointed.

Marrying a Muslim implies the appropriation of a set of new roles (Muslim wife / Muslim mother / Muslim husband...). One recalls here Anna's feeling in Tunis that her new sisters-in-law were very angry with her "for robbing her husband of his sisters". The sisters-in-law could not help but the sensation of disappropriation. From their own social standpoint, they lost their brother, a very important role in a Muslim patriarchal society in terms of economic support, loyalty and moral legitimacy. The story continues in Budapest as Anna decided she could not handle the family pressure and political turmoil in Tunis and convinced her husband to move to Hungary. She told us:

The sisters keep calling my husband many times a day. This annoys me. I told him not to talk with them in the evening when we go home. We have to keep our privacy. It is very difficult for him. He does not really like Hungary but he is patient. Here they (Muslim men) have to understand that wives do not serve the husbands like they do in the Arab countries. We work hard from morning till night. But not all men are like him.

Aside from the role of a Muslim wife, Anna has to assume the role of a Muslim mother to her daughter (11 years old) she has from a previous relationship. She lives with her and Anna is very much worried about her: how can she become and stay Muslim without being alienated from the classmates / friends or without leaving Islam? Alienation is a key-word here. Anna is aware that appropriating a foreign faith and a new role might well disappropriate her from her environment. She is willing to pay the price as a post-modern agent who cares more about her happiness than about satisfying the prospects of her society. Yet, as a Muslim mother, the situation gets more complicated. On the one side, she does not want her daughter to fall as a teenage to drugs and other threats. She is convinced that

Islam can protect her daughter from these daily threats. She wants her to obtain good results at school. That is to say, she wants her to be integrated in the system of values of the Hungarian society, and become a successful and respected person). On the other hand, she would like to reshape the identity of her daughter into a Muslim without isolating her from her age-mates. Anna's solution is to engage her daughter more in the community life of the mosque, to urge her to make friends with Muslim girls, who as second generation immigrants speak perfect Hungarian – unlike her husband.

Being a Muslim husband in Budapest is no less hard business than being a Muslim wife or mother. Mária's Egyptian husband illustrates well the difficulty one might have had he decided to assume this role. He was not enthusiastic about coming to Hungary, but came because Mária could not leave her parents alone. For a few months, he was looking for a job in the capital. Then, he got employed by a Lebanese who owns a restaurant. After three years of marriage, they have no child yet. A friend of hers, also one of our informants, told us that Mária's husband tends to be bossy over her "like Arab men do". She asserts that Arab husbands "expect the wife to serve them, but here they do not get it that way, and not all of them get used to the situation." Evidently, this general statement does not concern only Mária's case.

4. Cross-cultural models

As our informants accumulate the bitterness of failure to accommodate Hungarian social culture, they turn to the garb of cross-cultural resources. Beyond their own environment, they appropriate a space that nurtures better their aspirations. Still, a cross-cultural experience comes with numerous unforeseen vicissitudes.

4.1 Facebook (or a journey to the land of love)

Previously, we have seen how vivid imagination influences our informants' processes of appropriation. Here, we explore "virtual reality," another level of imagination-based agency. Virtuality, and markedly social media, allows the appropriation of the self in a new way. A set of strategies are used to reconstruct the self and communicate it to the others. To begin with, social media are, above all, a soliloquy;¹⁰ an agent reflects on itself, melds it or strives to reconcile between its contradictions. This tormenting self transmutes between virtuality and reality. Second, social media take its users from the land of invisibility and loneliness to that of opportunities and links. It is a social market. Accordingly, all users attempt to convince the potential visitors of their value (for a relationship). Online social

¹⁰ See the perspicuous depiction of connectedness and soliloquy in the digital age in: MITCHELL 2013. 66-70.

networks expose the users to global narratives and cross-cultural bonds, introducing them to “the ‘Ali Baba’s cave”.

In particular, Facebook¹¹ has a considerable impact on our informants’ lives. It is a tool that introduces them to the world of Islam in a few clicks: a face-to-face encounter with Islam without risks of abrupt involvement. Islam extremely benefited from the digital age to become a virtual power (arguably in disproportion to its real power). Islam on Facebook is gentle, sympathetic, and communicative, able to engage in dialogue. Besides, Facebook establishes a bond between our informants. They created a group on Facebook called “*külföldi a párom/ mixed couples*” to share their experiences. Members of this network are mostly married to Muslim men and frequently meet at the mosque.

Two stories from our informants illustrate how Facebook took them from loneliness to marriage with a Muslim. Lilla’s story started in the following way:

A she-friend of mine was chatting on Facebook with someone but did not trust him; we made a joke and I started to talk to the guy. He was really kind and intelligent. I told my friend to continue chatting with him. In the meantime, I became Facebook friend with the guy’s brother and I really liked that he was serene and patient. I expressed to him my interest in Islam. So, we chatted for some time then I went to visit the family.

One can immediately notice that Lilla has two interests: Islam (the social significance of which we discussed in the section on conversion) and a profile of a potential husband who would be kind, intelligent and calm. These are virtual constructions and universal ones at the same time. More precisely, they are cross-cultural constructions. Lilla extrapolates a profile of a husband, from her own culture, to a different culture in which such a profile might not be the standard. Through cross-cultural projections, she appropriates a husband she could not find *in vivo*. Knowing the risks of direct cross-cultural communication, she turns to the mediation of Facebook. Anna was no different in turning to Facebook for help. When she came back from her Moroccan trip:

I started to look for converted female friends on Facebook and started chats, asking for advice etc. It was not a female page but a mixed one. Through a common friend (a Slovak girl) a friend of hers started to chat with me. It was this Tunisian man. We chatted for some time. I was very open to him from the first moment saying that I have a daughter.

Anna also keeps a blog about her story, her ideas and her meeting with her husband. Be as it may, Anna is worried that her daughter would fall to Facebook.

¹¹ So far, the anthropology of Facebook has produced several insightful studies. For example, see: VEDWAN 2013: 87-92.

She said that boys and girls chat on Facebook outside the Qur'an class. She would like to see teachers at the mosque harder on students about Facebook, which in her view, distracts them and thus undermines their religious education.

4.2 *The Wedding*

To a great extent, a wedding can challenge the process of agency and appropriation. As a ritual, it imposes on the married couple specific motives, semantics, customs, gifts, meals, songs and music, and non-verbal communication the symbolic function of which defines the social roles of the bride and the groom in the family and in the community. For this reason, weddings take the colour, the smell and the sound of their local cultures. That said, cross-cultural weddings have a specificity of their own.¹² Many communities leave on the borders of countries, cultures or regions and are able to exhibit hybrid semantics of weddings. In this perspective, we were excited to attend a wedding at the mosque to discover the kind of semantic a Hungarian Muslim marriage can display on the day of the wedding.

At the beginning, we observed the attempt of the involved agents to respect the regulations of Islam in matters of marriage. In Islamic law, four conditions should be secured: a dowry, the consent of the groom and the bride, a guardian and two witnesses. The different Muslim juridical schools agree on all of them, but one Sunni school, the Hanafi school, does not require a guardian for a mature woman. The Imam said that a symbolic dowry is enough although in the tradition it should be according to the convention and the social status of the bride. In the Muslim tradition, it is the bride who can ask only for a symbolic dowry. Certainly, the Imam adapts his discourse to the case at hand, namely that in Budapest, women, by virtue of their Hungarian culture, do not ask for a dowry.

There was a debate when one of the witnesses said that the guardian, *wali* of the bride was missing. The Imam answered that according to the Hanafi school being a mature woman, she can contract marriage by herself. Again, the Imam concedes to reality what might be a rather intricate religious matter. For, it is only possible to sanction the marriage if the bride follows the Hanafi juridical school. As the bride did not reveal her convictions, the Imam's selectiveness allowed him to cleverly bypass the dissonance.

There were ab. 8-10 men and 13-15 women who attended the wedding. The number of foreigners surpassed that of Hungarians, because the wedding took place right after the Friday common prayer, in which 30-35 men and 15-20 women were present, mostly foreigners. Among the ladies, there was one from the Sudan, another from Libya and a third from Lebanon with her little son and another from India in addition to the Iraqi Imam's wife Nada. The Imam pronounced a sermon, *khutba* about Muhammad's trip to Jerusalem and then to heaven in one night. The

12 As attested by the literature on cross-cultural weddings. See the following studies conducted in Central and Eastern Europe: JAKUBÍKOVÁ 1980/81: 67-92., WEINHOLD 1990: 447-54., VAŽANOVÁ 2008: 21-32.

content did not match the setting and did not move the audience. After the sermon, the guests were offered a dinner. Nada and a Hungarian lady prepared the Hungarian chicken stew. One of the Hungarian Muslim women raised the issue of reading the Bible. Her stir is quite revealing; being worried about the competition of another religious book around a meal, in a wedding party, organised in a Mosque. She said to everyone "be careful with reading the Bible because it is falsified text from which references to Muhammad were consciously omitted". Other ladies joined to support her claim.

What struck us most was how this wedding links Islamic elements (*khutba*, clothes, Islamic personal law) to Hungarian cultural elements (food, humour, language of communication). Everyone seemed to sense the tension between the two sets of elements, but was willing to participate in preparing the ceremony. It can be described as a curious awareness that a ritual is just what it is, a semantic. It puts into symbols a social interest between the wife, the husband and the community. While the wife and the husband look forward to the community to legitimize their quest of happiness (and hopefully reproduction, the reason of marriage after all), the community is just happy that another Muslim couple would raise the number of the community, moreover, they were happy that both husband and wife were Hungarian converts. The community interpreted this fact as a proof that Hungary offers fertile ground for the spread of Islam.

Each of the involved agents consensually accepted the adaptation of Islamic personal law in order to make the wedding valid because it is a rite of passage toward marital life. Appropriation matters here as well. On the one hand, the couple appropriates benediction, which, put into social terms, could mean support, *laissez-faire* or even integration. On the other, the community also appropriates the couple the same way as a major enterprise incorporates a little one, bringing, thus, the promise of more children and revitalisation to its fraught body. That the family members of both the bride and the groom were absent is an extremely significant fact. As postmodern agents, the couple wished to enjoy the entire freedom in their choice of marriage. But a wedding cannot exist unless it gathers along the tradition of some community. Their links with their respective families being weak, they turned to the community they imagine to be the closest. This brings us to the limits of appropriating cross-cultural models and of agency in general. In its choice, the couple incarnates the solitude of postmodern marriage. Moreover, it was clear that the Muslim community can only flourish once it detaches itself from the Hungarian social standards and even by disrupting existing primary family ties. In the exuberance of the one, lies the sorrow of the other..

5. Bargaining for reality:¹³ Between Allah and hard times

Contrary to what many guests hastily thought, securing a passage to marital life after a wedding does not end the story. Actually, it just starts it.¹⁴ As a semantic, the wedding represents a web of social relations and interests that put them in a joyful event. It is a gate to the reality which tests the couple in every moment of the marital journey. As Muslims, the wife, as well as the husband, will find themselves in constant negotiation with the society in their new roles.

Ethics is one of the areas in which bargaining becomes a necessary strategy of Muslim spouses to cope with the new reality. In particular, the wife is expected to comply with the standards of conduct: should she change her behaviour with man colleagues and friends? Can she stay together in one room with a stranger, at work or elsewhere, as it is forbidden in Islam? After Kati's wedding, we asked these questions. She answered the following:

This issue is not a problem for me because at my work I have very few male colleagues. I have been working with them for three years now. Technically, they are not strangers, but I admit that from the point of view of Islamic law, they are. Besides, they are aware that I am a Muslim. So, they pay more attention to their behaviour with me *alhamdulillah* (thanks God). Anyway, I like to keep my distance from men in general and my colleagues are no exception to this rule. I do not like to stay alone with strange men, before and after Islam.

As we can notice, Kati is obliged to make concessions. As mentioned earlier, she does not wear the veil at work. She reconstructs her male colleagues as neutral or inoffensive. In other words, she appropriates the space she works in as "female-friendly". This choice is facilitated by her postmodern agency in which plurality and complexity are taken for granted. Conversely, Islamic law forbids the concessions she made and preaches sex segregation. The distinction Kati made between a technical and a religious stranger exhibits her sense of "bargaining to win".¹⁵ Here, she assumes her role as a Muslim spouse but as part of her gender role and that of complex social agency. It is again her social identity which sets the limits of her Muslim identity. Her appropriation of the latter interacts with her social setting in a way that, ultimately, her femaleness defines her other roles.

At the level of the religious practice, concessions to reality seem almost inevitable. One of the major challenges modernity addresses to Islam resides in its

13 We draw on Lawrence Rosen's *Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community*, a major anthropological study of the Moroccan city of Sefrou. ROSEN 1984.

14 On marriage as a process of bargaining see: COOK 2006: 442-72., GALVIN 1997: 125-46., YIP 2004: 336-50., VAN DIJK 2004: 438-67.

15 We borrow the expression to Bechelloni from her article:

Orsetta Bechelloni, "Bargaining to Win: Feminine Dealing with Outsiders in a Group of Settled 'Voyageurs'," *Romani Studies* 16 (2006): 169-90.

bureaucratisation of time. Islam's Friday noon prayer and the daily five times prayers are obligatory and should not be delayed unless a person is sick or on trip. Usually, three of these prayers (noon, afternoon and sunset prayers) fall during work time. This fact jeopardises the piety thesis; a number of sociologists and anthropologists of Islam believe piety, of which prayer is the cornerstone in Islam, to be a leading dynamic of change among women throughout the Muslim world.¹⁶ We could not find any correlation between Hungarian Muslim women being free and in control of their bodies and piety. Kati puts the problem in clear terms:

The Hungarian reality makes it difficult to create a situation where women do not work (thus no way to apply the Islamic principle in virtue of which the husband alone should take care of the family). Unfortunately, my salary is essential to make a living for our family. Because of that I face major problems regarding the daily five times prayers in my work as well. I have a continuing schedule of work and I am obliged to delay the prayers and perform them together. With the exception of the Morning Prayer which I do in time before going to work, I cannot pray in the workplace. Therein, the computer tells you when you can hold 10 minute break. I cannot even wear the veil (obligatory to take for a woman while praying) because of the dressing policy. Islamic law does not really play a role in our everyday lives. So, I cannot say anything about it. I can only tell about those regulations which we can follow in our family lives.

"Bargaining to win" can sometimes turn marriage into a mere façade. Ahmad, a young Muslim male from Miskolc, got married to legalize his relationship with a Hungarian girl who remained Lutheran. They did not start to live together, but stayed in two different apartments. The marriage was to show his maturity to the members of the community. Markedly, he was living next door to his parents and could not invite his girlfriend unless he is married to her. To enjoy their relationship, he convinced her to marry him. But they had no civil marriage yet. He organised a Muslim marriage and a wedding as if it was an official engagement that grants a status to the relationship but without real commitment.

That Ahmad pushes bargaining to an extreme should not surprise us. It is true that the Quran, the primary source of normative Islam, calls marriage a solemn pact, *mithaq ghalid* (Q 4: 21), commanding its sacredness and the preservation of women's rights. Nonetheless, different forms of customary marriage which do not bear witness to this solemn pact exist in medieval and modern Muslim societies. Suffice it here to mention two examples. First, in Shi'i areas, a form of marriage called the marriage of pleasure, *nikah al-mut'a* can run from an hour on, according

16 Here, we are referring to two major studies in this regard: Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: the Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). - Bryan S. Turner and Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, *The Sociology of Islam: Collected Essays of Bryan S. Turner* (FARNHAM, SURREY; BURLINGTON, VT: ASHGATE, 2013).

to which a husband disposes of the body of the wife.¹⁷ Second, in Egypt, a Sunni country, a form of marriage called the customary marriage, *zawaj 'urfi* is popular among young men and women. It is not documented as official and consists of three contractors: the husband, the wife and two witnesses (paid for the occasion at an office). The absence of the guardian and the secrecy of the marriage protect the husband who does not assume any legal responsibilities.¹⁸

6. Active vs. passive vs. disruptive appropriation

In this final section, our concern is primarily argumentative. We maintain that three patterns are observable in the Hungarian Muslim marriage: Active, passive, and disruptive appropriation. We do not claim that each of these patterns excludes the other in all occurrences. Rather, entangled as they are in globalisation, we perceive them as successive appropriations;¹⁹ the three modes of appropriation might co-exist in the same community or even as different stages in the life of an individual.

6.1 Hungarian-Hungarian couples and the increased chances for active appropriation

When both spouses are Hungarian converts to Islam, Hungarian Muslim couples tend to actively appropriate their social and religious identities. They are post-modern agents with an intuitive ability to handle complexity and bargain with reality. They also nurture links, however weak, to their different frames of identity and communities. Two couples illustrate this concept of active appropriation.

To begin with, Linda holds an MA degree in Economics. She thinks Islam to be “the religion she can believe in”. Linda has an open and strong personality, thinks clearly and accepts concessions to reality when necessary. Linda takes a Muslim name (Majda) only as a symbol that she converted to Islam. She did not change her name officially because she is committed to the Hungarian name her parents gave her. She considers the preservation of Hungarian identity an important matter for her. In her everyday communication, only Muslims call her Majda. However, she introduces herself to Muslims as both Linda and Majda. Among non-Muslims, she is only known as Linda. That her family members are scared by her “Muslimness” and completely refute it did not affect her close relationship to them. At work, she does not wear the veil and respects the professional rules of conduct. She is integrated while sustaining her subjectivity. To protect further

¹⁷ DAUDPOTA 1932: 79-92., HAERI 1986: 123-154.

¹⁸ SONNVELD 2012. 77-110.

¹⁹ Modelled on Peter Wagner’s concept of successive modernities. See: Wagner 2010: 9-24. We also owe the application of the concept in an Islamic context to Dietrich Jung. See: JUNG – PETERSEN – SPARRE 2014. 12-15.

this individuality, she isolates herself from her Muslim community in her own city, because it is too orthodox.

Furthermore, she organized her wedding in Budapest with another Muslim community. She only came to Budapest to validate her marriage. One can observe how minimally she entertains her links with different communities. In her wedding, she recalled the community to sanction her individual choice but she does not want to be involved any longer in the community life of the Budapest mosque.

She knew her now-husband before marriage and before he became Muslim. While on travel to Turkey, a warm and exotic setting, her boyfriend accepted to become a Muslim, the last hurdle to their marriage. Her husband seemed to be a calm but firm person. It is our impression that he thinks that Islam might help him having a successful life with a girl whom he really loves. Their selective appropriation of Islamic practice attests to their strong subjectivities: they pray, fast, read the Qur'an, do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

The case of Gyöngyi and her husband shows that active appropriation benefits from the localisation of her Muslim marriage. Now, they have two children: a son (8 years old) and a daughter (2 years old). Gyöngyi met Islam and Muslims through a she-friend. This she-friend and her husband were a Hungarian Muslim couple (now divorced; active appropriation does not necessarily bring about positive output). They live a quiet rural life near Kecskemét. Gyöngyi converted to Islam and later met her husband who became a Muslim, as she told us, because of her. She was a saleslady and a passionate archer. At present, she is a housewife taking care of the kids but still practices arching.

After conversion, she waited a few years before taking the veil. Her guardian was her friend's former husband. She said that, in her village, the environment is quite welcoming "as people appreciate religious persons more". She said that her neighbours are friendly and the kids love her veil; they call her a fairy creature. Her husband is involved in a business that aims to make halal-food available in the big food-store chains in Hungary. She said that before Islam there were no rules in her life and it was just flowing in all directions. She seemed to be truly fine and happy.

Both Linda and Gyöngyi exhibit a frame of active appropriation which operates through the mechanisms of individualisation and localisation. Keeping their distances as much as possible from the Muslim communities leaves them freedom in the way they construct their religious identities. Similarly, rooting themselves in their social identities and local places familiarizes their new faith. Individualisation and localisation largely contribute to their affirmation as post-modern subjectivities in quest of happiness. In their choices, they are awake and wiry. They share full adherence to the "secular age" and its social imaginary, in which, according to Charles Taylor, no religious naïve horizon replaces another.²⁰ Agents constantly move between horizons. While Linda and Gyöngyi creatively appropriate a medieval tradition, they still embrace postmodern values, offloading

20 TAYLOR 2007. 21.

Islam from its anti-modern practices. Ultimately, they de-contextualize Islam from its historical foundations and re-contextualize it in their own postmodern spiritual yearnings.

6.2 Arab-Muslim couples and the increased chances for passive appropriation

In the case of Arab-Muslim couples, the limits to agency become more salient. While they benefit from a homogenous religious identity, their status as migrants considerably wanes their social identity.²¹ They cannot appropriate what makes the strength of active appropriation: individualisation and localisation. A Yemeni couple, Reema and her husband Muhammad, expressively exemplify passive appropriation. Before marrying Muhammad seven years ago and joining him in Hungary, Reema owned a small enterprise in Sana'a (the capital of Yemen) where she lived with her family. She never met Muhammad before. They saw each other's photos and talked on the phone. Then she contracted marriage in Sana'a with the representative of Muhammad, his brother. When finally Muhammad met his wife in Budapest, they were already married.

Arranged marriage is still widely practiced among Arab-Muslim families who live in Europe (let alone the Muslim world). Muhammad lives in Hungary for decades. His wife does the cooking in the mosque and teaches the Saturday afternoon Arabic classes for children. However, she is quite isolated. She does not speak Hungarian and her English is not very good while the women who are active in the mosque are mostly Hungarians. She is a strong character and claims financial compensation for her work, while Hungarians expect her to do it voluntarily. Some of the members of the community are not happy with Reema's framing of children in terms of religious education, accusing her of leniency. However, the bottom line of their discontent is that they perceive Reema as turning her evident advantage as native Arab and born Muslims into an additional social capital.

Amidst the gloomy misfortunes of their social setting, relying on the mosque for their subsistence while isolated from the Hungarian society, the couple cannot but severely impede active appropriation. Their traditional marriage has no roots in a European city. The only capital they can promote, Arabness and Muslimness, has, in itself, a little value for the post-modern age and for a European setting. Their life bears a look of impertinence.

21 On the effect of migration and the phenomenon of endogamy on Muslim marriage see: LIEVENS 1999: 717-44., SHAW 2001: 315-34., CHARSLEY 2005: 85-105., TRILLA 2008: 877-902.

6.3 *Hungarian-Arab couples and the increased chances for disruptive appropriation*²²

Although Hungarian-Arab couples possess further resources of localisation in the Hungarian society than do the ethnic Arab couples, their appropriation, actually, fails to perform better. The Hungarian-Arab couples are often torn between cross-cultural and local models, between individualization and traditional gender roles. That is because these social sites are hardly appropriated the same way by a Hungarian or an Arab immigrant. A specific social identity marks each of the spouses, leading the couple into two directions. Animated by noble intentions, the wives appropriate a new dislocated identity, faith and marriage. It is difficult for the Hungarian wives to set aside their subjectivities in order to meet the expectations of their husbands, who look for subversive spouses. We risk nothing in asserting that the status of immigration (of the husband) and its social and ethnic hurdles to localisation pose a serious challenge to appropriation. As a consequence, these perils beset the couple by either putting extra pressure on the wife to comply with not only the religious but also the cultural expectations of the husband, or pushing the couple to increasingly discard religion, the apparent reason they are together. In either case, both the spouses are disillusioned.

A fair number of the couples we talked to in the mosque might well be considered as examples of disruptive appropriation. In order to respect the limited space available to us here, we shall only tell the story of Sára. When her Sudanese trip failed, she returned to Hungary. After a short time, she met another Sudanese and married him in Budapest. She also had a son with him, but the man was a *bon vivant*. Unable to cope with the hard times, they divorced. She raised the kid by herself while she got in touch again with the first Sudanese boyfriend who is currently working in Egypt. They talked every day on phone, but she has no hope that the man can come to Hungary. Now, he changed his mind about the children-issue. He would like to have them with her. So, she might try it again for the second time in the Sudan.

Disruption can be explained by a set of reasons; at the outset, Hungary, downcast into a gloomy economy, does not promote policies of immigration and multiculturalism. These are necessary objective conditions for a cross-national marriage to succeed. Moreover, Muslim husbands mistakenly expect to enjoy in Hungary the same standards of living one might encounter in Western Europe. Another reason for disruption resides in the fact that Hungarian Muslim wives underestimate the social and the cultural gap between them and their husbands. Usually, disruption leads to severe limitations on agency and irreconcilable differences.

²² The following studies illustrate disruptive appropriate in different European contexts: AUGUSTIN 1991: 125-144., CRESTER 1999: 363-380., GRASSI 2006: 283-306., POLEK – SCHOON 2008: 353-370., KARKABI 2011: 79-97., WOESTHOFF 2013: 199-231.

Conclusion

It has been shown that the concept of appropriation can help us a great deal to frame marriage among Hungarian Muslims. Hungarian Muslim couples benefit from individualisation and localisation to take advantage of social and religious resources they dispose of. In this process, the individual comes into the foreground, using a multiplicity of symbolic resources to reduce the impact of the community on its life. Mostly, Hungarian Muslim couples succeed in their plans of happiness. Although stable, Arab Muslim couples in Hungary fall short of felicity. The pitfalls of immigration, de-localisation and traditional ethics of marriage trap them in passive appropriation. More serious is the case of Hungarian Arab couples. Here, both spouses fail to meet the needs of the other. As postmodern agents, Hungarian wives assume active roles, but with little local resources, and amid a soliloquy, they soon exhaust themselves. As for their Arab husbands, de-localised and cut off from their traditional resources, their fallacious hopes of a better life turn to desolation.

The effectiveness of our argument relies on a distinction and a careful view of agency. First, we distinguished between the social identity and the religious identity of Hungarian Muslim couples. We argued that among our informants the social identity was fundamental in their appropriation of faith, commitment and cross-cultural models. This distinction led us to make another distinction between religious and social conversion. The evidence from the Hungarian Muslim community suggests that social conversion, rather than religious conversion, should be considered as the primary transformation converts go through. By social conversion we mean the way a social agent transforms its perception of the self, its social capital and its place in a society. Second, against Sofos and Tsagarousianou we maintained, in point of fact, that Muslim agency in Europe is extremely limited. Even in the case of active appropriation, we noticed how our informants conceded much of their religious identity to accommodate reality.

In this regard, we elaborated on the notion of “bargaining” to shed light on appropriation, especially active appropriation. Our informants “bargain to win”; they discard the orthopraxy of Islam when it does not fit their social setting. Pursued to an extreme extent, bargaining can make a religious marriage cover a forbidden relationship (according to Islamic law).

That being the case, religious cultures cannot but sanction, as the Imam in the mosque did, the imminent social transformation in the realm of marriage. Nonetheless, religious cultures, at least in Europe, thanks to the secular age, enlarge the pool of traits, resources and models of post-modern agency. Thus, post-modern agents solicit religious cultures to empower their social identities, to bless their marriages and to help them bring up their children. In a nutshell, religion still matters in the rites of passage; right there in the most important moments of human life.

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NORBERT GLÄSSER

THE HOLY PRIEST OF KÁLLÓ

A REFORM JEWISH INTEGRATION NARRATIVE IN INTERWAR HUNGARY¹

Abstract: In the press discourses of the groups of Hungarian Jewry pursuing different strategies the T'nach (biblical) concept of the tsadik and his figure as it appears in Eastern European Hasidism was determined and reformulated by the split between the communities striving for traditionality and those consciously embracing modernism. The Hasidic stories can be regarded as a seeming point of encounter between urban Orthodoxy and Neology.

In the research the author examined Neology Jewish community values and the responses given to Hungarian civil religion in the Hungarian-language Budapest Neology weekly papers between 1918 and 1938. These are the responses of a journalism elite of an urbanising religious community to the trends towards the change in the Hungarian nation conception. The Kálló rebbe's rooster has become a symbol expressing Hungarian Jewishness.

Keywords: Hasidism, Orthodoxy, Neology, tsadik, civil religion, Kaliver Dynasty

In this case study I examine the problem of national self-identification and classification outside the group as reflected in the discourses of the editors behind the Jewish Reform weekly *Egyenlőség* (Equality). In interwar Hungary there was a change in the mainstream concept of the Hungarian nation that impacted also the life-worlds of the Jewish denominational trends. I analyse the process of symbolisation whereby Eizik Taub, chief rabbi of Nagykálló, regarded as the precursor of Hasidism in Hungary became by the early 1930s a symbol of the integration of Hungarian Jewry. Behind this process there was a change in the mainstream discourse within Reform Jewry. While before the First World War the Reform publications, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, criticised the Jews of Galicia for their "backwardness", in the interwar years the Jewish Reform weekly *Egyenlőség* endowed the chief rabbi of Nagykálló who had studied in Galicia with the romantic features of the rural Hungarian peasant. In the last decades of the 19th century Reform Jewish publicists had looked on Hasidism as obstacles to the

1 The author is a grant-supported member of the MTA-SZTE Research Group on Religious Culture (03 217).

inclusion that arose from Jewish emancipation (1868). This is why the Hasidic Jew as a possible symbol of integration was so novel.

The folkloristic reinterpretation of the figure of the righteous man of Kálló² pointed far beyond the question of folklore. It bore the imprint of the society in which the reinterpretation came about and the strategies of the community that used him as a symbol can be followed through it. The questions raised by the study refer mainly to this societal reading. How are the assimilative and the ethnic concepts of nation reflected in these narratives? What symbolical contents are attributed to the figure of the “Hungarian Hasid”? What processes are reflected in the radical change in the Reform judgement of the Hasidim of north-east Hungary? Who made the former chief rabbi into a symbolic political figure?

The “demonised” Hasid immigrant

The modern European self-image is built up of hierarchised pairs of opposites.³ This was true also for the elite of the new urban modernising Jewish communities who had a complex and ambivalent attitude towards the rural communities they had left. This meant criticism of the rural way of life and at the same time its religious and romantic idealisation.⁴ The press was one of the forums for these trends. Abrevaya Stein regarded the press as being both a manifestation and a mechanism of the change among Jews in the Modern age. The press was linked to the urbanising population.⁵ Its readings of the Hasidim were determined by the life-world and self-image of the different groups. The interpretations appearing in the Budapest Jewish press were in line with the general trends of Jews in the German-speaking territories, offering its own adaptation of them. The rabbis, scholars and artists, the writers and publicists who took part in shaping the discourses could be linked only with difficulty to a single nation-state. Through their studies, the new posts they occupied, their travels or other connections, they acted as intermediaries among the centres playing a significant role in shaping Jewish culture.

The readings of the Hasidim given by institutions and movements close to the Orthodox, Reform and Zionist trends differed radically. At the same time this also comprised the responses given to the parallel readings, in polemical debate with other strategies.⁶

In the Reform readings, the discourses on the Hasidim on the one hand took place along the lines of expectations and the demand for conformity, and on the

2 The concept of *tzadik* reaches back to Antiquity. While the concept was always present in Judaism, it was only in Hasidism that it came to the fore and began to be identified with specific individuals. A differentiated view of the concept shows that there are Hasidim who are not linked to a *rebbe* and not all *tzadikim* belong to Hasidism. GREEN 1997. 444.

3 ANTTONEN 2005.

4 HYMAN 1993: 191.

5 ABREVAYA STEIN 2004: 5, 7-9, 16, 213.

6 See: GLÄSSER 2013.

other were determined by the sense of a mission to spread Jewish enlightenment and by nostalgia for the world they had left behind. In the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918) great emphasis was placed in the Reform press on the idea of belonging to the nation.⁷ In this context the mission of Reform Jews was two-fold: on the one hand in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy protection of the interests of the Hungarians through Hungarian culture that could be acquired, and in areas inhabited by minorities through the representation and spread of Hungarian culture, and on the other hand an internal mission within Jewry to spread enlightened European culture. The criticism expressed by representatives of the internal cultural mission was directed mainly at education and the new generation. This pointed beyond the question of the immigration of Eastern European Jews through Galicia and can be regarded rather as a general criticism of the strategies aimed at traditionalism. In the cultural mission writings that appeared in *Egyenlőség* the figure of the Eastern European Jew became the vehicle of features showing an inability to assimilate.⁸ The cultural mission discourse was also intertwined with the universalist moral mission of Reform Jewry, that reinterpreted the eschatological features of Judaism. In the new historical mission of the Jews the ideal Jew became a champion of modernity, setting an example for the whole of mankind. The cultural mission aspirations targeting the Jews of Galicia became the most intense during the First World War. These processes were nourished by the experiences of the Galician refugees and the certain hope of a victorious war.⁹

In his apologetic writings Miksa Szabolcsi (1857-1915), editor-in-chief of *Egyenlőség*, confronted the more important reforms of the Haskalah as the sole advisable path, with the demonised Hasid image. Because of the “failures” in bringing about the cultural transformation of the Hasidim, as a solution Szabolcsi urged that the Galician Jews should be kept away from Hungarian Jewish denominational life and at the same time kept outside the borders of the country.¹⁰ The cultural mission provided an important frame for the social interpretation of the Hasidim, but it was not the only one. Parallel with the mainstream discourse in *Egyenlőség*, within Reform Jewry there was also an attempt to reinterpret the world of the Hasidim that was seen as an example to follow – even if they did not always discover in it their own idealised, longed-for worlds – or a more understanding attitude was shown towards Hasidism.

This understanding attitude was not closely associated with *Egyenlőség*, despite the fact that approaches departing from the rigid cultural mission discourse can also be found in that weekly. The cultural mission of the modernised Jews in itself also strengthened the legitimacy of the “Hungarian Israel” in the mainstream Hungarian concept of the nation before the First World War. This was because the representatives of that view made adoption of the language and culture

7 *Egyenlőség* 30 December 1882. / 4. A zsidóság missziója [The mission of the Jews], cf. ZIMA 2008. 247.

8 E.g. *Egyenlőség* 16 June 1912. / 1-4. Külföldi és Magyarországi orthodox vezérek [Orthodox leaders abroad and in Hungary] [by:] Miksa Szabolcsi

9 See: ZIMA 2013.

10 *Egyenlőség* 24 October 1897. / 5. Csodarabbik Magyarországon. – Magyarázat egy közre nem adott hirre. [Miracle-working rabbis in Hungary. – Explanation of an unpublished news item].

and identification with the vital issues of the Hungarian people as a criterion for belonging to the nation.

Following the death of Miksa Szabolcsi, his son Lajos Szabolcsi (1889-1943) took over the editing of the paper. Partly under the influence of the changing social conditions, and partly in the frame of self-representation closely intertwined with attempts to create denominational unity, the Reform weekly began to devote space to Orthodox news and articles by Orthodox rabbis or prominent Orthodox figures. Later this led to creation of the topos of the "Hungarian Hasid", "the holy priest of Kálló". All this occurred in an environment where, as a result of Hungary's loss of territories in 1920, the Reform trend gained numerical superiority over the Orthodox and there was a radical change in the mainstream concept of nation.¹¹

Symbolic politics and old-new self-definition

The figure of Jicchák Eizik Taub, the "holy priest of Kálló", and his song became an important symbol of Reform Jewish self-definition in the 1920s and 1930s. The song of the "Hungarian tzadik" interpreted by *Egyenlőség* was part of the Reform symbolic politics of the period. Interpreting the song opened up the possibility of merging denominational-religious determination and the nation-religion. The phenomenon is well illustrated by the words of Dr. Géza Dési, Reform MP on the song of the "holy priest of Kálló": "And however bad the times, the rooster always crowed at dawn, the sun always came out again, the flood waters subsided and the wild morals grew tamer. People could become brethren again."¹² Compared to the time of the Reform mainstream culture mission discourses before the First World War, the creation of a symbol based on ghetto nostalgia adapted from Western Europe was a significant change. This process was marked by a distinctive duality: below the surface of responses ensuring a feeling of changelessness, important social changes were taking place, while at the level of narrative strategies the mainline community discourses were being modified to reinforce the feeling of changelessness.

In the late 1920s the *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon* (Hungarian Jewish Encyclopaedia) edited by Péter Ujvári who often published in *Zsidó Szemle* defined the miracle-working rabbi in a way that included both moderate culture mission commonplaces and literary/philosophical reinterpretations of Hasidism.¹³ The commonplaces well known from the press debates and widely held by consciously modernising Jews in the 1920s and 1930s could be found in the encyclopaedia.

The joint Hungarian-Jewish first settlement narrative of the emancipated Jewish bourgeois stratum in Hungary and the internal Jewish culture mission in the

11 FROJIMOVICS 2008; ROMSICS 2010.

12 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 2. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing...].

13 UJVÁRI 2000. 188.

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy together provided the basis for self-definition as “Hungarian Jew”. The narrative of the joint first settlement assumed that there were both Khazars and Hungarians who had converted to the Jewish faith among the Hungarian tribes that occupied the territory of what became Hungary. In the changed concept of nation and the changed social environment following the First World War this Khazar theory played an important part only in the apologetics of the attacks against Galician Jews, often referred to in anti-Semitic discourses as Khazars. While Reform chief rabbi Sámuel Kohn’s narrative of the joint first settlement was retained, after reaching a peak during the First World War the culture mission idea was gradually pushed into the background and transformed. The Reform journalism elite also drew on the symbolic political interpretations appearing in the Orthodox press that had been passed down from the previous period or formed part of a broader Hungarian Jewish apologetics. In this way, Mózes Teitelbaum, the miracle-working rabbi of Sátoraljaújhely could be fitted into the cult of national heroes arising from the memory of the 1848 revolution. The legend of a meeting between Lajos Kossuth and Teitelbaum became a historical topos attached to the Hasid rebbe in the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and also in the 1930s. In the Reform historical writing of Zsigmond Groszmann, the speech made by Kossuth in the Nagyvárad synagogue and the declaration of emancipation in Szeged were linked to the legend of the miracle-working rabbi.¹⁴ In the interpretations of the Independence Party, the common “Hungarian-Jewish deprivation of rights” suffered because of Jewish participation in the 1848 revolution was a symbolic expression of belonging to the Hungarian nation.

The Hasidim appeared in the Reform paper as parts of the Hungarian nation. They appeared together with the Hungarians of the territories annexed in 1920 and as individuals suffering for their Hungarian identity in the frame of Reform symbolic politics linked to the borders.¹⁵ In addition they were also presented as helpers of the Hungarian presence and the assertion of minority political interests in the apologetics of anti-Semitic accusations in Hungary directed against the “Khazars”.¹⁶ In contrast with the earlier assimilative nation concept and its expression as a culture mission, under the changed circumstances of the 1920s and 1930s in its apologetic writings the Reform trend presented the Hasidic Jews as integral parts of Hungarian society. The “Hasideus” appearing in the real social space also became a manifestation of universal social values. In 1933 for example, *Egyenlőség* reported that in the main street of Sátoraljaújhely two Hasidic Jews, father and son, saved the Roman Catholic priest Stunz who had fallen under horses

14 *Egyenlőség* 18 June 1936. / 10. Dr. Zsigmond Groszmann: Kossuth Lajos és a rabbi áldás [Lajos Kossuth and the rabbi’s blessing].

15 GLESZER – ZIMA 2010. 41.

16 *Egyenlőség* 5 January 1935. / 6. Munkács, a zsidó város Helyszini riport Munkácsról, melyet a zsidók mentettek meg a magyarságnak [Munkács, the Jewish town. Report from Munkács, rescued for the Hungarian people by the Jews] By: Gyula R. Vozáry, vice-chairman of the Rusinsko Party

alarmed by the whistle of a train. "The rescued priest gratefully thanked the heroic Hasidic Jews for their self-sacrificing act"¹⁷ – wrote *Egyenlőség*.

An interview in 1936 with the former Lord Lieutenant of Máramarossziget Zsigmond Perényi, Keeper of the Crown and interior minister in the government of István Tisza, was also an apologia for Hasidim appearing in the current political space. The statement, made by the scion of a noble family with a long past that had played an active part in the country's history, was presented as a refutation of the common accusations levelled against the immigrants from Galicia. Connecting to the discourse on Galician immigrants during the era of Dualism and responding to police raids against foreigners in Hungary after the war, the Keeper of the Crown clarified the question of the citizenship of the Hasidim in Hungary and in the annexed territories.

"I must say that there is a great deal of confusion over the designation "galicianer". It is generally used to mean the Jews with ear locks and wearing kaftans, *although even their great-grandfathers were born in Hungary, they were raised in the Hungarian spirit and are bringing up their own children in the Hungarian spirit too,*"¹⁸

– said Zsigmond Perényi.

The former minister also criticised the ethnic-based concept of nation that had been changed by the "numerus clausus" act. With this he touched on one of the central issues of Lajos Szabolcsi's paper.

"I can say that there have never been any complaints about their reliability and loyalty to the state. The question of national minorities was always a delicate one causing much concern in Upper Hungary and especially in Rusinsko. However, despite their strong religious separation, I never had any problem with the Jews – who I never regarded as a separate ethnic group."¹⁹

Among the many accusations made against the Jews of the annexed territories, it was said that they turned away from the Hungarian people and that they had

17 *Egyenlőség* 3 June 1933. / 25. Hírek – Chaszideus, aki megmentette egy katolikus pap életét. [News – Hasideus who saved the life of a Catholic priest].

18 *Egyenlőség* 16 September 1936. / 5. A "galíciai" beszélgetés báró Perényi Zsigmonddal az ünnepi Egyenlőség számára A koronaőr, Tisza István belügyminiszter, a volt máramaroszigeti főispán megható nyilatkozata a felvidéki zsidóságról ["Galician" conversation with Count Zsigmond Perényi for the anniversary issue of *Egyenlőség*. Moving declaration by the Keeper of the Crown, Interior Minister under István Tisza, former Lord Lieutenant of Máramarossziget] – Béla Kornitzer

19 *Egyenlőség* 16 September 1936. / 5. A "galíciai" beszélgetés báró Perényi Zsigmonddal az ünnepi Egyenlőség számára A koronaőr, Tisza István belügyminiszter, a volt máramaroszigeti főispán megható nyilatkozata a felvidéki zsidóságról ["Galician" conversation with Count Zsigmond Perényi for the anniversary issue of *Egyenlőség*. Heart-warming declaration by the Keeper of the Crown, Interior Minister under István Tisza, former Lord Lieutenant of Máramarossziget] – Béla Kornitzer

not been loyal to the Hungarian state before Trianon. Through the Keeper of the Crown *Egyenlőség* strove to refute these accusations against the Hasidim.

“Politically too, the Jews were the element in which we could always trust. (...) Seventeen years have passed since the occupation, but the Jews of Upper Hungary are still the strongest pillar and guarantee of the Hungarian people. It is heart-warming to see how the Jewish intelligentsia of Upper Hungary continues to support the idea of Hungarian statehood,”²⁰

– said the former Lord Lieutenant.

Perényi also spoke with recognition of Orthodoxy and the miracle-working rabbis of Máramaros. In the changed social and political context of the Horthy era, *Egyenlőség* incorporated the positive opinion of the Keeper of the Crown on the Hasidim into its Reform strategy – in contrast with its critical tone regarding the Hasidim a generation earlier.²¹

The causes for the Reform journalists’ change of attitude are complex. Firstly there were the anti-Semitic attacks that were increasingly affecting also the Reform trend now in an uncertain situation. Secondly, there was the changed nation concept that could not be opposed in all respects by the Reform journalists’ strategy that had been aligned to the old mainstream nation concept. However the culture mission commonplaces did not disappear entirely after the First World War either, they only dropped out of the main line of Reform discourses. A good illustration of this is the example of Dr. Géza Dési, member of parliament. Besides praising the historical and mythical figure of the “holy priest of Kálló”, in another article citing earlier topoi the MP took a stand against the “miracle-working rabbi” of Kisvárda, when the Budapest papers confused the local Orthodox chief rabbi with the miracle-working rabbi showing “Galicianer” features.²²

In addition to the writings of Secundus and Lipót Grünwald in *Egyenlőség*, the paper’s editor Lajos Szabolcsi also played a significant role in the creation of “Hungarian Hasidism”. In December 1921 Szabolcsi gave a literary lecture in

20 *Egyenlőség* 16 September 1936. / 5. A “galíciai” beszélgetés báró Perényi Zsigmonddal az ünnepi Egyenlőség számára A koronaőr, Tisza István belügyminiszter, a volt máramarosszigeti főispán megható nyilatkozata a felvidéki zsidóságról [“Galician” conversation with Count Zsigmond Perényi for the anniversary issue of *Egyenlőség*. Moving declaration by the Keeper of the Crown, Interior Minister under István Tisza, former Lord Lieutenant of Máramarossziget] – Béla Kornitzer.

21 *Egyenlőség* 16 September 1936. / 5-6. A “galíciai” beszélgetés báró Perényi Zsigmonddal az ünnepi Egyenlőség számára A koronaőr, Tisza István belügyminiszter, a volt máramarosszigeti főispán megható nyilatkozata a felvidéki zsidóságról [“Galician” conversation with Count Zsigmond Perényi for the anniversary issue of *Egyenlőség*. Moving declaration by the Keeper of the Crown, Interior Minister under István Tisza, former Lord Lieutenant of Máramarossziget] – Béla Kornitzer.

22 *Egyenlőség* 21 January 1933. / 1-2. A “kisvárdai csodarabbi” [The “miracle-working rabbi of Kisvárda]. By: Dr. Géza Dési, member of parliament.

the Józsefváros synagogue on the history of Hungarian Hasidism.²³ The narrative built up of Hasid stories becomes important in the way it shaped the internal Reform image of the Hasidim in the Horthy era along the lines of the idea of the common Jewish fate and belonging to the Hungarian nation.

“Legends always arise in periods of Jewish persecution. The tortured Jewish soul brings forth colourful flowers, and who knows how many wonderful legends the present time will leave for the future. But one thing is certain: the memory of the miracle-working rabbi of Kálló is a living relic today too, a living sacrament of Hungarian Jewry, especially of conservative Jews,”²⁴
 – said Szabolcsi.

Szabolcsi linked his interpretation of Hasidism to Jews striving for traditionalism in Hungary rather than to independent, nationally motivated interpretations of the Jewish renaissance and Jewish ethnography. The ethnographical writings of the Viennese rabbi Grunwald, and the appearance in Budapest of the question of the Jewish popular mind were connected to the crisis of the mainstream Hungarian assimilative nation concept and the debates on Jewish self-definition among consciously modernising Jews. Through the political pieces in *Zsidó Szemle* András Zima pointed out that the Zionists on the one hand with the disintegration of the Monarchy raised the question of self-definition of the national minorities even before the peace talks began, and on the other saw the anti-Semitic attacks and the change in the mainstream Hungarian concept of nation as confirmation of the general failure of the Reform strategy.²⁵ Already in February 1919 after the *Egyenlőség* editorial office was ransacked by Communist and Zionist youth, Szabolcsi used the anti-Zionism of Hasidism appearing within the frame of Orthodoxy to condemn the secular Jewish national movement that had come into confrontation with the paper. Szabolcsi also reported on the case. After the Social Democrats and the Communists prevented Chajesz, the chief rabbi of Vienna from giving his lecture in the Vigadó – that had been organised by young Zionists in Pest – the angry youth marched to the editorial office of *Egyenlőség* and ransacked it, threatening to lynch Szabolcsi and the rabbis in Hungary.²⁶ Szabolcsi compiled the following issue of the paper on the theme of the dangers of Jewish national self-definition under the circumstances in Hungary. In an article by Lajos Grünwald published here the author drew on his youthful experiences concerning

23 *Egyenlőség* 10 December 1921. / 7-8. Lajos Szabolcsi: A chaszidizmus, [Hasidism]; *Egyenlőség* 14 January 1922. / 8-9. A chaszidizmus. II. előadás. A kállói pap. [Hasidism. 2nd lecture. The priest of Kálló]. Given in the Józsefváros Jewish temple by Dr. Lajos Szabolcsi. Summary of the lecture recorded in shorthand.

24 *Egyenlőség* 14 January 1922. / 8-9. A chaszidizmus. II. előadás. A kállói pap. [Hasidism. 2nd lecture. The priest of Kálló]. Given in the Józsefváros Jewish temple by Dr. Lajos Szabolcsi. Summary of the lecture recorded in shorthand.

25 GLESZER – ZIMA 2010. 44.

26 *Egyenlőség* 15 February 1919. / 5. Cionisták garázdálkodása az Egyenlőségénél. [Outrage by Zionists in *Egyenlőség* office].

the Hasidic rabbi of Sátoraljaújhely to confirm the interpretation of Zionism as a “wrong track” given by Lajos Szabolcsi as editor. Grünwald updated his article with autobiographical elements and classified it among the scholarly works of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. In contrast to the earlier cultural mission argument, Grünwald saw as positive figures in the process of becoming Hungarian, the *tzadik* and the Hasid who rejected the new Jewish national movement within religious frames and wished to shelter the youth entrusted to their care from it.²⁷ The emphasis on Hungarianising and the turning towards Orthodoxy did not mean the entire disregard of the Western modern literary and philosophical interpretation of Hasidism, also linked to Jewish national self-definition. Szabolcsi reinterpreted these trends as the general interest above denominations shown by the educated world. In this way he resolved the contradiction between them and the aims of the paper.

“And if we see that in Zurich, Berlin and Vienna great Christian and Jewish scholars in one book after another turn their attention to the Baal Shem and Hasidism, then we too can devote a pious hour to our Hungarian saint, who was Jewish, because he drained the cup of suffering and was Hungarian, remained Hungarian, taught Hungarianness to his suffering followers, even in prison, amidst persecutions, in the days of bitterness and distress. The miracle-working rabbi of Kálló is for us the Master whose example we too wish to follow at all times,”²⁸

– said Lajos Szabolcsi.

Szabolcsi also reinterpreted Hasidism, in the wake of the Hungarian “holy priest,” Baal Shem Tov and his followers became the historical forerunners of Hungarian Hasidism. Instead of the particular historical-social and martyrological interpretation of Hasidism, he placed the Hasidic teachings in the continuity of Jewish tradition, showing them to be an integral part of that tradition. And in using the expression “holy priest” he raised the Hungarian name widely used by the local Christian population into the interpretation that was taking shape of the Jewish denomination.

“There is a manifestation of such depth and such a wonderful philosophy here, just as in the teachings of the Baal Shem with which he brought a veritable rejuvenation and new birth for the whole of Eastern Jewry. It is not a new belief that the Hungarian saint of Hasidism proclaimed, but simply the rejuvenation of the old.”²⁹

27 *Egyenlőség* 1 February 1919. / 13-14. Lajos Grünwald: Chasidizmus, cionizmus, atheizmus [Hasidism, Zionism, atheism].

28 *Egyenlőség* 14 January 1922. / 9. A chaszidizmus. II. előadás. [Hasidism. 2nd lecture].

29 *Egyenlőség* 14 January 1922. / 9. A chaszidizmus. II. előadás. [Hasidism. 2nd lecture].

At the same time Szabolcsi's historical narrative reinterpreted the Hasid in the high culture of the "educated world". However the articles in *Egyenlőség* clearly drew attention to this literary and artistic transformation, to the symbolisation that was moving away from real-life Hasidim, when they presented the Hasid living next door to the "modern world" as a curiosity of an unknown, mystical and exotic world.

"Modern Western Jews know about Hasidism only from what they have heard and read. [...] The works of Russian-Polish Jews in German translation also reached broad strata of Western Jewry and directed attention to the great moral and spiritual treasures slumbering in the souls of our Eastern brethren. **But few people know that Hasidism has many followers in Pest** and anyone who wishes a glimpse into the customs and traditions of this unusual world does not have to travel to ghettos in distant countries."³⁰

But the search for curiosities did not stop at descriptions of the world of Hasidic prayer-houses in Pest, the paper's reporters and correspondents also offered a glimpse into the Hasidic courts of Munkács, Belz and elsewhere.³¹ *Egyenlőség* presented the mystical world of the Hasidim not only in the form of legends, tales and travel writings, it also gave a gesamtkunst reinterpretation of that world in the frame of a cultural evening. The evening held in 1931 used the topos of the Kálló tzadik to show how the Jews belonged to the Hungarian people, their internal development merged with Hungarianness, the country and its people. In this process the "holy priest of Kálló" and the Hasidim of the Felső-Tiszavidék, Nyírség and Hortobágy regions became representatives of Hungarian Hasidism, the familiar figures and themes of the sacred writings of the Jews appeared in the setting of the Hungarian countryside, becoming part of it.

The rooster is crowing ...

At a cultural evening in the Academy of Music organist Géza Wehner performed Jewish melodies from the Tisza region, the Hungarian Jewish Female Choir and the male choir of the National Hungarian Jewish Cultural Association (OMIKE) under the direction of cantor-conductor Jakab Krausz performed

30 *Egyenlőség* 20 May 1936. / 11. Kabbalisták Budapesten A Teleki-téri Klauszban a pesti chaszi-deusok lakomával, dallal és tánccal búcsuztatják el Szombat-Királynőjét – Egy különös világ, amelyről alig tud valaki [Cabbalists in Budapest. The Hasidim of Pest bid farewell to the Sabbath Queen in the Klausz establishment in Teleki Square – A strange world that hardly anyone knows about] (From the *Egyenlőség* reporter).

31 For a few examples, see: *Egyenlőség* 23 March 1929. / 9. A mikulincei "caddik" [The "tzadik" of Mikulince]; *Egyenlőség* 4 May 1935. / 16. Máramarosi rabbicsaládok fényes esküvője, melyre megnyitották a csehszlovák határt is... [Splendid wedding of Máramaros rabbi families, for which the Czechoslovak border was opened...]; *Egyenlőség* 22 October 1936. / 7-8. Trónörökös a belzi rabbinál [Heir to the throne of the Belz rabbi] (From *Egyenlőség*'s correspondent in Lemberg).

arrangements of Jewish religious songs said to be Jewish folk songs as the cheerful and sad music of Hungarian Hasidism.³² In the next part of the programme a selection of music and prose, performed by Jewish artists of the Comedy Theatre and the Hungarian Royal Opera House, illustrated the Galician roots of Hasidism in Szabolcs County. The names given to the individual parts of the cultural evening reflected Lajos Szabolcsi's interpretation of Hungarian Hasidism.³³ The music was selected by cultural councillor Ármin Frisch and rabbi Dénes Láczer "on the basis of old Hungarian Jewish music and Hasidic documents".³⁴ The newspaper items announcing the event also interpreted the performances on the programme. "Faith, history and poetry, heaven and earthly life, this mood of Jewish folk life shines through the legends of the Jews. Before the many blows of history the Jews fled into the regions of religion and closeness to God,"³⁵ – in the words of the advertisement for the cultural evening. Earlier interpretations of the song of the Kálló priest could be found in the advertisement in which – independently of Miksa Szabolcsi's cultural mission – the Kabbalah and mysticism had now become a phenomenon adapted into the folklore of the Hungarian environment. By the 1930s the Jewish world that had already been slated for elimination in the frame of the culture mission had become the manifestation of Hungarian Jewish culture and consciousness. *Egyenlőség* presented this as the demand of Reform Jews.³⁶ The "holy priest", that is, a Hasid living in Hungarian territory and acculturated in external appearance could become the basis of a new Hungarian-Jewish self-definition, rising to a place beside the joint first settlement. In this narrative the emphasis was placed on the Hungarianisation of the "foreigner" who arrived later, on the mutual adaptation and merging of groups that had been living together over the centuries. With the figure of the "holy priest" and what were regarded as Christian, "folk" interpretations showing a positive attitude towards the Jews, they were able to find common ground. In this way too they emphasised the all-permeating, integral nature of coexistence. In this Reform self-interpretation, Hungarian Jews who had been classified as a race with the numerus clausus act could once again find the path to the nation in the social environment with many phenomena it regarded as pathological, as distortions arising from the lost war and the Trianon dictated peace, but at the same time also as ephemeral within the frame of the idea of revision widely held in Hungarian society.

32 The rooster is crowing..., The kaddish of Csenger, the prophet Elijah at the Debrecen fair *Egyenlőség* 3 January 1931. / 11. Framed page: Az egyenlőség nagy kulturestje január 18-án, vasárnap este felé 9 órakor a Zeneakadémia nagytermében [Big *Egyenlőség* cultural evening at 8.30 pm on Sunday, 18 January in the main hall of the Academy of Music].

33 First part: The holy priest of Kálló; second part: The Baal Shem; third part: Music of the ghetto.

34 *Egyenlőség* 3 January 1931. 11. Framed page...

35 *Egyenlőség* 10 January 1931. / 9. Framed advertisement: A zsidó legendák, a zsidó népköltészet, a zsidó zene misztikus álmvilága az egyenlőség nagy kulturestjén... [The mystical world of Jewish legends, Jewish folk poetry, Jewish music in the big *Egyenlőség* cultural evening...].

36 *Egyenlőség* 10 January 1931. / 9. Framed advertisement: A zsidó legendák, a zsidó népköltészet, a zsidó zene misztikus álmvilága az egyenlőség nagy kulturestjén... [The mystical world of Jewish legends, Jewish folk poetry, Jewish music in the big *Egyenlőség* cultural evening...].

“Let us trust in our roosters, on when to raise their voices. They know when they must speak and when they must remain silent. Because sometimes it is wiser to remain silent than to speak and it requires greater courage ... The real rooster is neither too early nor too late in announcing the dawn, he crows when dawn is breaking, when he is certain that the sun will shine...”³⁷

– declared Géza Dési MP at the *Egyenlőség* cultural evening.

With the “holy priest of Kálló” the ghetto nostalgia of the turn of the century reached its peak in a novel interpretation of Hungarian-Jewish culture, representing the desired idyllic past. However, this in itself was also a selection among the phenomena of a lost world traces of which could still be found in the present, and an adaptation to the demands and cultural forms of expression of the educated middle class following Western patterns. Lajos Szabolcsi’s introduction placed the Hasidism of Galician origin into the Hungarian Jewish past, and regarded it as part of the past of a community that had immigrated mainly from the Czech-Moravian lands and through its family floating capital created the Jewish bourgeoisie of Pest as a life-world clearly distinct from that of the poor Jewish immigrants from Galicia. The context of the rabbinical cultural adaptation of the Hasidic world, making it Hungarian Jewish, became a concept of Jewish folklore originating from the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Rabbi Simon Hevesi – following the conception of the culture mission strategy of the past that made a distinction between the Hungarian-Jewish Reform elite and the rural Orthodox-Hasidic communities – introduced the Hasidic legends refined into literature as phenomena of the “Jewish legend poetry” bearing aesthetic value. The editor-in-chief of *Egyenlőség* and author of a number of literary adaptations gave a talk on the founder of Hasidism and his “miraculous mystery legends”.³⁸

The cultural adaptation of the figure of the “holy priest of Kálló” was related to the social situation of Reform Jews and the new judgement of him that was taking shape in line with the concept of nation. In the leading article written after the cultural evening, in the reading of Dr. Géza Dési MP the Hasidism of Kálló had become an expression of apologetics for equal rights and belonging to the nation.

“I would like to speak today about the holy and great priest disappearing into the mists of time, and about the miracles and legends associated with his name. (...) Our cause is far too sacred to be mentioned together with day to day politics. They say there were two pillars in the temple of Solomon (...) Our temples were built on Hungarian soil and they look up to the heavens. Love of the Hungarian land and veneration of our ancient religion merge in the Hungarian

37 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1-2. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing...].

38 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1-2. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing...].

Jewish temples. This wonderful unity is like a good marriage, in which one plus one is not two but one,"³⁹
– said the member of parliament.

The speaker contrasted the changing events of current politics with the universal moral values and spirit of reformed Judaism. In the member of parliament's interpretation, man's moral rise and advancement began in the recognition of belief in God, where the initiative for action shifted to man. The emphasis was no longer on divine revelation. The speech can be understood as encouragement to accept the faith of the Jews, as reinforcement of a positive Jewish self-image, but with the moral laws arising from the Ten Commandments it also refers to ways in which rights are curtailed and to the commonplaces of prejudices. "Our faith is simple and clear. There is no superstition in it, nothing to veil or hide. Everyone can understand it. It is not a secret reserved for privileged castes, it is equally open to kings and commoners. We have given the world a great deal,"⁴⁰ – said Dési. In his interpretation the soaring and fertility of Hasidic poetry appeared as a manifestation of Jewish intellectual genius under circumstances of affliction, with allusions to the deteriorating economic conditions and the segregation laws restricting access of Jewish youth to university studies.

"The Jewish soul is full of poetry, song, tales and legends. The Jewish genius breaks out and demands the sky. *If it is not allowed to walk, it grows wings and flies into endless distances and invisible heights.* The more strongly it is oppressed, the greater its will to live. The more it is pressured and *shackled in closed numbers*, the greater the effort it makes, the stronger its will, the more certain the irresistible impetus of its struggle for life."⁴¹

Dési grasped the mysticism interpreted within scholarly frames from the angle of its social explanations and placed it within a Jewish martyrology. In his interpretation persecution was a factor ensuring the survival of the Jews. With this Dési also threw light on one aspect of the contemporary Reform use of "Hasidism". At the same time he separated Hungarian Hasidism from its original location and made it a characteristic of Hungarian territory.

"It is amazing that the darker the environment was, the less the rights and freedom, the more wonderful were the wings on which the poetry of mysticism soared. Ethnographically and geographically it can be shown that Russia was the birthplace of Jewish mysticism and it was the Russian influence that gave it impetus. The further south we go, from the icy world of the mountains towards the

39 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1. Dr. Dési Géza: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing...].

40 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1. Dr. Dési Géza: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing...].

41 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1. Dr. Dési Géza: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing...].

freedom and warmth of the endless steppes, the more the poetry of mysticism changed. (...) It was on this plain of sunshine and rainbows, on Hungarian land, on the Nyírség puszta that the hero of legends, the holy priest of Kálló lived...⁴²

In painting a picture of the Jewish environment of Szabolcs County, the speech turned back to the successful Reform discourses of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The speaker traced the presence of Jews in Szabolcs County back to Antiquity and to the Khazar theory of the joint first settlement, while also following the line of symbolic political discourses regarding the homeland in the interwar years.

“A beautiful, tough, stubborn, proud people inhabit Szabolcs. They loyally cling to the land of their birth, to the sacred Hungarian soil, in peace and war, through good and bad. But they also loyally cling to the old religion. Their love of the homeland goes together with deep religious sentiments. A whole series of legends have arisen on the Szabolcs plain.”⁴³

The “holy priest of Kálló” became a Hungarian Jewish priest who moved among the Hungarian people, lived with them, sang with them. Dési’s interpretation – that drew on earlier writings in *Egyenlőség* – was a reinterpretation within national frames, but in a period when belonging to the nation was linked not to the common sentiment, language and culture, but to birth and ethnicity.

“He lived there in the star-studded Szabolcs fields, among shepherds and horsemen, he heard their songs and sang together with them. He looked up into the summer night and sought traces of the old God in the Hungarian heavens. He united the sacrament of belief with the sacrament of the Hungarians. He taught not within the stark walls of the yeshivas, but outdoors, in the infinite freedom of nature,”⁴⁴

– said Dési, also drawing on the earlier culture mission commonplaces.

In the speech made at the cultural evening, just as most of the tales published in the paper, “holy” did not refer to a pattern arising from the chain of tradition but to the religious authority manifesting it. “Holy became a mysterious word of the mystical and fairy-tale world endowed with moral teachings and timely messages, and its meaning shifted from the religious towards the cultural conveyed in literature. This is also confirmed by Dési’s selective attitude towards religious authorities and traditions. Amidst the closed numbers, the economic crisis and the anti-Semitic phenomena, these tales, songs and legends were intended to

42 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing ...].

43 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 1. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing ...].

44 *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 2. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing ...].

contribute to socialisation and shaping attitudes. An article written a year later by Pál Vidor on the subject of the Reform Jewish Scouts, confirms the aspirations evident in the MP's speech with his description of the summer camping practice. The Reform youth sang the song of the holy priest of Kálló around the campfire.⁴⁵ According to Dési "the song should be taught to all children so that they will not be afraid if dark times come but wait for dawn to break, and if they are in the high noon of happy times they will not be over-confident but remember that bright sunshine is always followed by dusk."⁴⁶ Pál Vidor regarded the reinterpreted Hasidic song – in the columns of the press – as the hymn of Reform Jewry, of "Hungarian Israel".

"The campfires three times a week also keep alive and nourish the Jewish sentiment. The flames leap high in the dark night (...) The wonderful melody of the Jewish waiting for dawn is like a sighed prayer: 'The rooster is crowing...' I watch the flames, listen to the melody. The past comes to life before my eyes, I see the dark, starless present, but I feel beside me the builders of the Hungarian Jewish future and I hear the hymn of the future, the song of the future: 'The rooster is crowing, dawn is breaking',"⁴⁷

– wrote rabbi Pál Vidor on the spirit of the Scouts camp.

However, the Hasidic example appearing in the religious socialisation of the next generation differs fundamentally in the case of the Reform and the Orthodox journalism elite in Budapest. While the youth-related Orthodox piety held up for its readers the chain of religious tradition and the community frames, transmission of the Torah and respect of the Commandments as the path to be followed, the youth socialisation strategy of the Reform paper focused on the moral content of the denominational culture expressed in literary form, nostalgic memories and attitudes strengthening religious ties. While, in addition to loyalty to the state, Orthodoxy proclaimed withdrawal into religious / community life, the Reform strategy tried to combine religious life with state and national goals, but in its denominational discourses and its symbolic politics it ignored the fact that there had been a radical change in both the state and its nation concept. This is also reflected in the speech made by the Reform MP Dési:

"We believe and proclaim, in words and deeds, with every manifestation of our life, our loyalty to God and our country. We trust in the past and we trust in the future. The miraculous bird will return

⁴⁵ *Egyenlőség* 3 August 1932. / "Szól a kakas már..." a tábornütz mellett (A budai zsidó cserkészek táborozása) ["The rooster is crowing ..." beside the campfire (Camping for Jewish Scouts of Buda)] By: Pál Vidor.

⁴⁶ *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 2. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing ...].

⁴⁷ *Egyenlőség* 3 August 1932. / "Szól a kakas már..." a tábornütz mellett (A budai zsidó cserkészek táborozása) ["The rooster is crowing ..." beside the campfire (Camping for Jewish Scouts of Buda)] By: Pál Vidor.

and it will bring freedom, benevolence, justice. God will hear the prayers of we who have suffered for the past and the future,"⁴⁸
– as the song of the "holy priest of Kálló" became the national prayer of Hungarian Jews.

Institutional strategy in the light of micro-community trends

Egyenlőség presented various discourses in its articles on representatives of Eastern European Jewish piety. There were shifts in emphasis with the ghetto nostalgia, the influx of refugees during and after the First World War and the change in the social environment. However, beyond the universal frame of the history of Jewish suffering in the Diaspora, a number of authors of those articles made a distinction between the Polish-Russian Hasidim and the "Hungarian Hasideus". At the same time this distinction with its implied value judgement also opened the way for new symbolic identification strategies. Lajos Szabolcsi and the journalism elite grouped around *Egyenlőség* in the changed social and political circumstances shaped the stories and songs of the "holy priest of Kálló" into a cultural capital that was intended to strengthen Reform Jewry in its self-interpretation as "Hungarian Israel", along both social and denominational lines. The song of the "holy priest of Kálló" symbolised the change in the social circumstances and the approaching end of the state of affairs that was regarded as temporary. The tzadik who had become one with the Hungarian land was intended to reinforce the readers of *Egyenlőség* in their self-identity, in their belonging to the nation that had been questioned, while the background of Hasidism and the sufferings of the Jews of Eastern Europe appearing in the Hasidic legends were supposed to become edifying examples of commitment to the faith. If we accept András Gerő's interpretation, in the present case the response given to economic anti-Semitism was a continuation of the "functioning logic of social assimilation", a furthering of the 19th century Reform strategy. The "holy priest of Kálló" became a new expression of the idea "that assimilation makes the citizens of the country more united socially, while acceptance of national – Hungarian – identity makes them more united politically and psychologically."⁴⁹ However in the present case the concept of assimilation is better used in the sense of integration. Within the nation, as part of the middle class the Reform journalism elite not only adopted numerous routines, customs, norms and ideals but also strove to strengthen denominational and national ties. And with the song, in Hungarian and Hebrew, of the tzadik of Kálló awaiting redemption, "Hungarian Israel" was able to express in symbolic form both resignation in face of the situation and the awaited better turn of their fate. However it can be rightly assumed that there was a discrepancy between the institutional strategy and the discourses of the local micro communities. Because

⁴⁸ *Egyenlőség* 24 January 1931. / 2. Dr. Géza Dési: Szól a kakas már... [The rooster is crowing ...].

⁴⁹ GERŐ 2004. 270. In place of identity it would be better to use the concept of identification that better expresses the active shaping role played by the group's elite.

of its edited nature, the press as a source cannot tell us about its readers, individual opinions and the internal discourses of micro communities. Consequently, my source material does not throw any light on how its own idea of the Jewish national ideal was able to spread behind the official readings from the end of the First World War among individuals belonging to the Reform institutional system. The probability that this was spreading from below is confirmed by András Zima's studies on the Zionist press,⁵⁰ and the micro history research on Óbuda by Larissa Hrotkó. Pál Vidor who popularised the song of the "holy priest of Kálló" as the hymn of Hungarian Jewish Scouts, in the 1930s no longer strove to pass on among Jewish youth the Reform Hungarian Jewish denominational self-definition. After the Second World War the Zionist activists built the "khén" (Zionist nest) on the remnants of the Buda Scouts group. Traces of this can be found using the tools of oral history among the old "Újlaki" (now Frankel Leó úti) synagogue. *The rooster is crowing* could then be reinterpreted as a Hasidic song expressing the expectation of a Messiah and the longing to return to Zion within the frames of the modern Jewish nation ideal urging planned resettlement in the Holy Land. As a Scouts leader, Pál Vidor encouraged the Reform Jewish youth of Buda to build an independent Jewish identity within the existing community life.⁵¹ A Jewish national reading of the song of the "holy priest of Kálló" also emerged and still has an influence today even though many representatives of Hasidism in Hungary who can be regarded as the original community have dissociated themselves from the modern Jewish national aspirations.⁵²

From a distance of close to a hundred years the late-modern use of the song of the Kálló tzadik clearly illustrates the multivocality, intensity and unifying force of the symbol. In spite of the language shift from Yiddish-Hungarian to Yiddish-English, at their celebrations and *jahrzeit* commemorations held in Hungary the intellectual descendants of the Kálló rebbe sing in Hungarian the song that has become sacred, endowed with mystical content, as a tradition of their fathers. Besides these, many interpretations can also be found outside the community. The Kálló rebbe's rooster has become a symbol expressing Hungarian Jewishness, from the symbol of the Chabad Lubavich outreach in Budapest, through the flash mobs of Jewish mailing lists, to the Hanukkah celebration of the Hungarian Jewish Cultural Association. This interpretation has been reinforced in the wider society by the settings of the song beginning with the words *The rooster is crowing* available on the folk music and world music market and performed at various concerts.

50 ZIMA 2014. 91-92.

51 Personal communication by Larissa Hrotko. Cf. HROTKÓ 2007.

52 Cf. RAVITZKY 2011

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The **MTA-SZTE Research Group for the Study of Religious Culture**, a research group supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and attached to the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Szeged began its activity on 1st July 2013. It sees itself as situated in the border zone of various disciplines dealing with social, historical and cultural aspects of religions, the churches, present-day culture and society. It focuses on ethnographical, anthropological, sociological, historical and spiritual approaches to religious culture, also investigating the changing social background, especially in the 19th–21st centuries.

The research group operates in a historically Christian (Roman Catholic and Protestant) social and cultural environment with a strong interest in the Jewish and Muslim religious cultures. The multidisciplinary, inter-religious and ecumenical perspective provides a stimulating environment for the research, making a distinctive contribution to both the local and the international academic community. In cooperation with theological and religious studies, it strives to carry out its work with a sound historical basis in which theory and practice, empirical facts and their interpretation, historicity and normativity are closely intertwined.

