

Language and Religion as Community-Building Factors in the Moldavian Csángó Society in the Second Half of the 19th and in Early 20th Centuries

As it may be observed in numerous studies, in the course of the centuries the two most evident features which marked the Moldavian Catholics as different from the Romanian society were their language and their religion. The aim of the present study¹ is to highlight some of the aspects of the religious and language peculiarity of the Moldavian Csángós, as well as to show several mechanisms which contributed both to the preservation of their unique collective identity and to their gradual assimilation within the Romanian nation.

Language Command among the Moldavian Csángós in United Romania

The question of language peculiarity of the Moldavian Catholics in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century constitutes a complex problem. Various sources from this period depict the Catholic rural population of Moldavia mainly as bilingual: »I spoke to the cantors [...] who all agreed that many people speak Hungarian, but the Moldavian [Romanian] language is known by everyone, even by the Hungarians; during the four months of my continuous journey in Moldavia I got to know almost all its peoples and even though I can't understand them, I'm able to distinguish [...] which language they speak, and I got convinced that Moldavian is the language used by all the peoples of the Duchy, which cannot certainly be said about the Hungarian language. Thus, to me it is absolutely clear that the affirmation »all Hungarians speak Moldavian« cannot be reversed so that one could say »all Moldavians speak Hungarian.«² However, the sources confirm that even sixty years later the language of the Catholic rural population of Moldavia, despite a widespread knowledge of Romanian, continued to use the Hungarian language: »The widely used language is Romanian, but – espe-

¹ The present study is a part of the author's PhD dissertation written at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The research was conducted thanks to the two years of financial support of the Gerda Henkel Foundation (Düsseldorf).

² Archivio della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o *de Propaganda Fide* [APF], Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11 (1848-1861) ff. 805-845: Relazione della Visita della Missione di Moldavia A Sua Eminenza Reverendissima Il Sig. Cardinale A. Barnabi Prefetto della S. C. di Propaganda Data dal Visitatore Generale F. Giuseppe Tomassi MinConventuale Nell'Anno 1858; Sezione quarta: De Principali Officii di Missionarii; Articolo Primo: Dell'Ufficio della Predicazione (f. 831v).

cially in villages – a dialect more Hungarian than Romanian is particularly popular [...].³ At the same time the sources underline the advancing process of language assimilation of the Moldavian Csángós with the Romanian-speaking population, enumerating as well its exact reasons: »About one-fourth [of the population] uses Hungarian at home, and in three parishes it is used also in church, but it undergoes a gradual Romanianization in schools, through military service and due to the influence of the society.«⁴

Factors influencing the Language Command within the Csángó Society

The language command of the Moldavian Csángós in United Romania was deeply influenced by the character of this society itself. Many documents mention that the rural society of Moldavian Catholics was characterized by a certain conservatism. In 1887 it was noted that: »[...] despite in most of the villages those Hungarians called Csángós don't speak their [Hungarian] language [...], they stick particularly to their traditions.«⁵ As a conservative society the Moldavian Csángós considered using their own language a very important issue: »[...] people in the village say: we are Hungarians, so our children should study in Hungarian [...].«⁶

According to the accessible sources, it seems that it was women who contributed largely to the preservation of the Hungarian language in the Moldavian Csángó society. Those who became mothers at the beginning of the second half of the 19th century were not reached by the compulsory education: that is why the majority of this group remained illiterate. Thus, the Csángó women spoke the language they had learned at home from

³ APF, Nuova Serie [N. S.], Vol. 655, Rubr. 109/1920, No. 1740, ff. 380-400 [printed leaflet]: Anno 1919, N. 12, LUGLIO, Prot. N. 1740/19. Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide, ponente l'eminentissimo e reverendissimo signor cardinale Michele Lega: Relazione Circa la nomina del Vescovo di Jassy. Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, f. 382 (p. 5): a) Notizie statistiche.

⁴ Archivio Segreto Vaticano [ASV], Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari [A. E. S.], Austria-Ungheria (1916) Pos. 1096, Fasc. 469, No. 16802, ff. 19-26: Corrispondenza riguardante la provvista della diocesi di Jassi, rimessa poi alla S.C. di Prop. Fide. Relazione di Mons. Domenico Jaquet, Arcivescovo tit. di Salamina, circa la situazione politico-religiosa della medesima Diocesi. Rzym, May 12, 1916, f. 21v.

⁵ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia 13 (1881-1892) ff. 173-202: Nicola Giuseppe Camilli: Relazione della Visita pastorale nei Distretti del Trotus e di Roman della Missione di Moldavia diretto a Sua Eminenza Reverendissima Il Signor Cardinale Giovanni Simeoni Prefetto della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide da Mons. Nicola Giuseppe Camilli Vescovo titolare di Mosinopoli e Visitatore Apostolico della Moldavia. Săbăoani, December 15, 1883, f. 199.

⁶ *Részletek Kovács Ferenc gyulafehérvári hittanár úti-naplójából, Moldva 1868.* In: *Asszimiláció vagy kivándorlás? Források a moldvai magyar etnikai csoport, a csángók modern kori történelmének tanulmányozásához (1860-1989).* Ed. Gábor Vincze. Budapest/Kolozsvár 2004, 80.

their illiterate mothers and grandmothers, i. e. Hungarian, and passed it to their children.

The situation remained practically unchanged even after compulsory education had been introduced in United Romania by the 1866 Constitution (Art. 23): the majority of the hungarophone mothers did not want to send their children to schools with Romanian as the language of instruction. This caused that most of the Csángó children did not attend classes. The fruit of this situation was the further spread of illiteracy and the continuous use of the Hungarian language at home. By the end of the 1860s the religion teacher from Gyulafehérvár (*Alba Iulia*) Ferenc Kovács during his Moldavian journey took down the following dialogue:

»– [...] there are people here who don't know a word in Wallachian [Romanian]; women do not really speak [Romanian].

– How about your children, do they know Wallachian?

– Not really; our people among them speak Hungarian.

– Is there a school in the village?

– Of course, there is!

– Do the children attend school?

– Very few do; our people don't like it that the children study in Romanian; we are Hungarians.«⁷

The role of women in the preserving of the Hungarian language in the Moldavian Csángó society was also stressed by Bernát Munkácsi who at the beginning of the 20th century distinguished four types of Csángó settlements on the basis of the extent to which Hungarian was spoken there. The first of those groups were villages where women spoke exclusively Hungarian, in spite of the fact that men knew the Romanian vocabulary which was necessary in trade; the population of those villages rarely met with Romanians beyond the commercial field.⁸ The Romanian language, therefore, was popularized in Moldavia in the 19th and in the early 20th centuries mostly by men, who were forced to learn it at work. Thus men constituted the majority of the bilingual layer of the Moldavian Catholic rural communities. Perhaps this could explain why the Catholic missionaries claimed that the Moldavian Csángós were all bilingual – it could have happened that the Italian priests did not take into account neither women nor children, thus judging exclusively the language command of the heads of the families and formulating maybe not really accurate opinions.

The greatest influence on the gradual language assimilation of the Moldavian Csángós with the Romanian-speaking population was that of the Roman-Catholic priests. One could presume that the Italian and Polish priests learned much more easily the melodious, resembling both Italian

⁷ *Részletek Kovács Ferenc gyulafehérvári hittanár úti-naplójából* 73.

⁸ Bernát Munkácsi: A moldvai csángók eredete. In: *Ethnographia* 13 (1902) 434. Quoted in: Erdmann Doane *Beynon*: The Eastern Outposts of the Magyars. In: *Geographical Review* 31 (1941) 1, 75.

and the Slavonic languages Romanian than Hungarian, with its incomprehensible vocabulary and grammar. Apart from political reasons for choosing Romanian for the official language of the Moldavian mission, the missionaries supported Romanian simply because the Hungarian language proved to be too difficult for them to master. Regardless of that, the priests were perfectly aware of the fact that a large part of the Moldavian Catholics spoke only Hungarian, and that the language to be used there should have been Hungarian: »It is beyond question that the parish of Fărăoani is mostly Hungarian, and that it has an absolute need of a Hungarian-speaking priest.«⁹ However, the perspective of political benefits that could be obtained by the Catholic Church through the popularization of Romanian resulted in the introducing of this language into churches also in the Hungarian-speaking villages. Since for an uneducated, conservative – especially in the religious matters – rural society a priest used to be the embodiment of a great authority, the people learned the Romanian versions of prayers and church songs and repeated them without understanding, even though they didn't like it, just because of their great respect for the priest. The lack of acceptance for the mentioned situation is confirmed by the great number of mostly Hungarian-language petitions to the bishop of Iași, prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, or directly to the Vatican.¹⁰ These petitions reported an urgent need for Hungarian or Hungarian-speaking priests and expressed dissatisfaction with the activity of the Italian missionaries: »[...] we cannot further support the suffering we are bound to bear every day, because the priest Cipolone Nadarone [Nazareno Cipolloni] does not know the Hungarian language, and we can

⁹ APF, N. S., Vol. 234, Rubr. 109/1902, No. 47992, ff. 477-481: Dominique Jaquet, Vesc. Jassy: Risp. N. 47464 informando su ricorso dei cattolici del comune dei Faraoni per cambiamento di parroco. Jassy, January 10(23), 1902, f. 477v.

¹⁰ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11 (1848-1861) f. 900: [petition of the inhabitants of the Grozești parish to the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in which they ask for the return of their Hungarian-speaking priest; the petition is written in Hungarian], [no date]; Részlet a gorzafalvi híveknek Scitovszky János hercegprímáshoz papjuk, Fun-ták Kozma érdekében írott levélből. Gorzafalva, 1860. március 16. In: *Asszimiláció vagy kivándorlás* 63-67; APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862-1880) ff. 169-171: [petition of the inhabitants of the Grozești parish to the prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in which they ask for the return of their Hungarian-speaking priest; the petition is written in Hungarian]. Gorzafalva, March 29, 1864; APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862-1880) ff. 172-174: [petition of the inhabitants of the Grozești parish to the Pope Pius IX in which they ask for the return of their Hungarian-speaking priest; the petition is written in Hungarian]. Gorzafalva, March 29, 1864; APF, N. S., Vol. 234, Rubr. 109/1902, No. 47464, ff. 472-476: Cattolici del Com. Faraoni, Rumenia: Si lamentano dell'attuale parroco Rev. Cipolone Nadarone e domandano l'antico Rev. Bernardo Budolle, Fărăoani, December 1(13), 1901 [written in Romanian]; A kákovai, nagypataki és újfalui csángó-magyarok könyörgő levele XI. Pius pápához. Nagypatak 1930. In: *Asszimiláció vagy kivándorlás* 170-177.

see that hardly anybody cares about it.«¹¹ The petitions, regardless of their huge number, failed their mission. Due to some political reasons, the Vatican did not support the Moldavian Csángós in their attempts to preserve the part of their identity constituted by their mother tongue. Thus, it can be concluded that the Moldavian Csángós in a sense became a victim of the international politics of those days.

Religion – The Status of the Roman-Catholic Religion in Moldavia

The particular role of religion as the most distinctive feature characterizing the Moldavian Csángó society can be noted in the majority of the accessible sources.

The Catholic religion in the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries could evolve relatively freely in Moldavia. The Moldavian gentry had a rich Catholic tradition which could be traced back to the Middle Ages, when it was initiated by the Voivode Lațcu.¹² In the first half of the 19th century one of the laws in vigor in Moldavia was the so called “Organic Regulation” (*Regulamentul Organic*, 1832), according to which only the Orthodox Romanians were accorded full political rights, but already in November 1857 Mihail Kogălniceanu exposed to the Temporary Assembly of Moldavia (*Adunarea Ad-Hoc a Moldovei*) a project of law which would introduce equality of rights for Christians belonging also to other churches.¹³ Religious freedom for the Moldavian Csángós was eventually guaranteed by the Constitution of United Romania in 1866; this guarantee was repeated afterwards by the 1923 and 1938 Constitutions.¹⁴ As soon as in 1852 the missionaries noted that »generally the Catholics are no more being persecuted, and no obstacles are being created for the practicing of the Catholic religion«,¹⁵ while by the end of the 19th century the Catholic religion could already be »diffused and practiced freely and everywhere«. ¹⁶ Thus, despite the prejudices showed by a part of the Orthodox Romanians, the Moldavian Csángós could practice their religion and not fear to be persecuted and

¹¹ APF, N. S., Vol. 234, Rubr. 109/1902, No. 47464, ff. 472-476: Cattolici del Com. Faraoni, Rumenia: Si lamentano dell'attuale parroco Rev. Cipolone Nadarone e domandano l'antico Rev. Bernardo Budolle. Fărăoani, December 1(13), 1901, f. 475.

¹² Voivode Lațcu ruled most probably in years 1365-1373.

¹³ Ferenc *Pozsony*: A moldvai csángó magyarok. Budapest 2005, 41.

¹⁴ *Monitorul-Jurnal Oficial al României* No. 142, June 1/13, 1866, Art. 21; *Monitorul Oficial* No. 282, March 29, 1923, Art. 22; *Monitorul Oficial* Part I, No. 42, February 20, 1938, Art. 19. The data can be found at www.constitutia.ro.

¹⁵ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11 (1848-1861) ff. 225-230: Antonio *de Stefano*, Visitatore Apostolico della Missione di Moldavia: Relazione della Missione di Moldavia. Rome, January 18, 1852, f. 226r.

¹⁶ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862-1880) ff. 746-752: Fidelis Dehm, Episcopus Colophoniensis, Visitator Apostolicus Moldaviae. Bacău, October 31, 1878, f. 747v: »Fides Catholica undique libere praedicari et exerceri potest [...]«

they could remain »attached to their faith«. ¹⁷ It can also be said that the Roman-Catholic religion was in a way popular also among the Orthodox Romanians, as a feature which today could be called *trendy* or even *religious snobbery*: »[...] the Orthodox come to our churches during the principal holidays, and in Iași they [the churches] are often visited even by ministers.« ¹⁸ It is striking that an opposite situation, i. e. visiting Orthodox churches by the Catholics, was absolutely unimaginable: »Neither do Catholics share the religious issues with the Orthodox, nor go to their churches to worship the God of Truth.« ¹⁹

Segregation

Regardless of the fact that in Moldavia there existed villages inhabited exclusively by Catholics, the Catholic rural population of that region in the 19th and 20th centuries was described as »dispersed in the midst of Orthodox and Jews in many towns and very many villages«. ²⁰ By the end of the 19th century the author of one of the relations regarding Moldavia reported that »Catholics had occupied [i. e. were the only inhabitants of] some villages, but the majority of the members of the district live dispersed in the Orthodox settlements«. ²¹ A similar image can be found in a report from the years of World War I: »[...] in Moldavia there are a little more than a hundred thousand Catholics, but their villages are dispersed among the Orthodox settlements.« ²²

Despite the Catholic population shared the space with the Orthodox, on the basis of eye-witness relations can be noticed that the rural Catholic communities of Moldavia – at least until World War I – were actually always separated from the Orthodox communities. In the course of the studied period the mentioned phenomenon can be observed even within the frames of *mixed* (i. e. inhabited both by Catholics and Orthodox) settlements, as for example in a 1883 report: »[...] Sagna [is] a mixed village, but the 610 Catholics [...] are actually separated from the Orthodox [...].

¹⁷ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11 (1848-1861) ff. 225-230: Antonio *de Stefano*: Visitatore Apostolico della Missione di Moldavia: Relazione della Missione di Moldavia, Rome, January 18, 1852, f. 227v.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862-1880) ff. 831-835: Anacleto *da Sanfelice*, Consultore: Relazione sulla Missione Moldavia, 1878, f. 832r-832v.

²¹ APF, N. S., Vol. 355, Rubr. 109/1906, No. 22579, ff. 466-473: Dominique *Jaquet*: [relazione sull' organizzazione della diocesi di Jassy]. Jassy, March 5, 1897, f. 467.

²² ASV, A. E. S., Austria-Ungheria (1916) Pos. 1096, Fasc. 469, No. 16802, ff. 19-26: Corrispondenza riguardante la provvista della diocesi di Jassi, rimessa poi alla S. C. di Prop. Fide. Relazione di Mons. Domenico *Jaquet*, Arcivescovo tit. di Salamina, circa la situazione politico-religiosa della medesima Diocesi. Rome, May 12, 1916, f. 21r-21v.

Oțeleni is a mixed village, but the 828 Catholics who live here are separated from the Orthodox [...]. Oțeleni has three minor churches: 1. Petrești [...], 2. Boghicea [...], 3. Buhoanca [...]. Those three villages are mixed like Oțeleni, but the Catholics always live in a part of the village that is separated from the Orthodox. [...] Caracași [...] This village is mixed, but the 121 Catholics who can be found there inhabit places separated from the Orthodox. [...] Scheia – also this village is mixed, but its 474 Catholics don't share even a part of the ground with the Orthodox [...]. Mogoșești [...] the Catholics whose number is 190 occupy places separated from the Orthodox. [...] Bărgăoani is a mixed village, but the 594 Catholics who live here are separated from the rest of the population who are Orthodox [...].²³ The situation did not change during the first twenty years of the 20th century: according to the report of Raymund Netzhammer,²⁴ the Moldavian Catholics lived »in closed villages«,²⁵ while »in the religious questions they avoid[ed] community with Orthodox Romanians, even if there are many similarities in their customs and costumes.«²⁶ Similarly, in the light of a 1914 document the Moldavian Catholics appear as »living in villages gathered in groups; there are many villages which are completely Catholic, but in the mixed villages the Catholics are usually gathered in one [i. e. separate] place«.²⁷

»we all are of Hungarian faith«²⁸

The particular *separatism* between the Catholic and the Orthodox rural communities of 19th and 20th century Moldavia was not limited only to the distribution of the families belonging to one or another religion in two opposite angles of a settlement. A remarkable manifestation of the division of the society into two camps was constituted among others by an almost complete lack of Catholic-Orthodox marriages: »Catholic-Orthodox mar-

²³ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13 (1881-1892) ff. 173-202: Nicola Giuseppe Camilli: Relazione della Visita pastorale nei Distretti del Trotus e di Roman della Missione di Moldavia diretto a Sua Eminenza Reverendissima Il Signor Cardinale Giovanni Simeoni Prefetto della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide da Mons. Nicola Giuseppe Camilli, Vescovo titolare di Mosinopoli e Visitatore Apostolico della Moldavia. Săbăoani, December 15, 1883, ff. 191-197: Distretto di Roman.

²⁴ Raymund Netzhammer, O. S. B (1862-1945), archbishop of Bucharest in years 1905-1924.

²⁵ Raymund Netzhammer: Über religiöse Verhältnisse in Rumänien. Skizzen aus der römisch-katholischen Mission. Sonderabdruck aus der Katholischen Kirchenzeitung. Salzburg 1902, 8.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ APF, N. S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, No. 470, ff. 183-205: Diomede Ullivi: La Diocesi di Jassi in Romania. New York, USA, February 10, 1914, f. 188.

²⁸ *Részletek Kovács Ferenc gyulafehérvári hittanár úti-naplójából* 72.

riages happen hardly ever, and everything is being done to avoid them.«²⁹ According to a source from the end of the 19th century, the Moldavian Catholics were »attached above all to their religion and wouldn't get married with the Orthodox«. ³⁰ A similar picture emerges from a 1893 relation of an Austrian diplomat, where both the religious and the nationality criteria are mentioned: »marriages of Catholic Hungarians with Orthodox Romanians are completely unknown.«³¹

In some cases the Catholic-Orthodox *separatism* in the villages of Moldavia would turn into an open conflict displayed both by the Catholic Hungarian-speaking population and by the Orthodox Romanians. Those last mentioned were accused by the Csángós of having a hostile attitude towards the Catholic religion and lack of morality: »[...] the Wallachians [Romanians] committed ugly things against Hungarian women and girls and made a lot of children [...].«³² This antagonism, especially as far as the Orthodox attacks on the Catholic Church are concerned, can be observed both in micro- (within one settlement) and macro-scale (within the whole state): »A fanatic agitation of an Orthodox priest against a Catholic priest. Căndeia, a professor and priest, whom we already know for his extreme viewpoints and [...] religious aims, already last year spoke with complete hatred against the Catholic Church from the pages of the Glasul Bucovinei daily. He called the Orthodox clergy, as well as the [Romanian] government not to accept, under any circumstances, the concordat with the Pope [...] [for it] would assure the rights of the Catholic citizens of the Romanian state. He was shouting: ›we don't want a state in a state!‹, since, according to his narrow understanding, through the concordat in Romania a separate state for the 4 million Catholics would be created. He does not want to recognize their [i. e. of the Catholics] real existence within the frontiers of the realm; he is still not able to avoid fanaticism and particularistic chauvinism, [being] suspicious and hostile towards all the elements who differ from him in the field of religion or nationality. He can't – and maybe even doesn't want to – understand that the nationalities of other religions in-

²⁹ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11 (1848-1861) ff. 225-230: Antonio *de Stefano*, Visitatore Apostolico della Missione di Moldavia: Relazione della Missione di Moldavia. Rome, January 18, 1852, 227v.

³⁰ Bartok Géza levele Slauch Lőrinc szatmári püspöknek, a Szent László Társulat egyházi elnökének a romániai magyar oktatás támogatásának lehetőségeiről. Budapest, 1890. október 23. In: *Asszimiláció vagy kivándorlás* 123.

³¹ Lajos *Gecsényi*: Ein Bericht des österreichisch-ungarischen Vizekonzuls über die Ungarn in der Moldau. Jassy, 1893. In: Ungarn-Jahrbuch 16 (1988) 157-191, here 173.

³² APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862-1880) ff. 172-174: [petition of the inhabitants of the Grozești parish to the Pope Pius XI regarding the case of Kozma Funták]. Gorzafalva, March 29, 1864, f. 173.

habiting the Romanian state, especially the Catholics, can be and indeed are the best and the most loyal Romanian citizens.«³³

The author of the quoted article rightly underlines Căndeia's »hostility towards all the elements« who in the religious or national perspective differed from the »Orthodox Romanian« syntagm. Observations on the Romanian classification as *Romanians* (i. e. Orthodox) and *alien elements* appear as well in the reports of the Catholic missionaries working in Moldavia: »The Romanian Orthodox describe Catholics as belonging to the German or Hungarian religion; Germans, Hungarians and Catholics for them are synonyms. It means, first of all, that they label those who convert to Catholicism as »traitors of the state«. How many souls turned back to the bosom of the Schism because of the terror aroused by this diabolical prejudice!«³⁴ Thus, the nominally existing and law-guaranteed religious freedom was not put into practice. The Catholics were treated by the Romanians as *foreigners*, since a real Romanian could only be an Orthodox Romanian citizen: »[...] in this land the »Hungarian church« is the synonym for the Catholic church, like among us [...] a »Hungarian priest« and the »Hungarian church« are synonyms for Calvinism.«³⁵ The mentioned phenomenon was also noticed by archbishop Netzhammer: »[...] for many Romanians the term [...] »Catholic« means only »German«, while for all Romanians the word »Catholic« sounds anti-patriotically. [...] since ages, especially in the Iași district the Romanians call every Catholic church »biserica nemțească«, German church. In the Ministry of Cults of the new Greater Romania there exists a »Department for Foreign Cults; among those cults, officially called foreign, there are the Roman Catholic, the Uniate, the Protestant religions [...].«³⁶ The archbishop draws particular attention to the condition of the members of the Roman Catholic church of the Iași district in the light of the politics conducted by the above-mentioned ministry: »[...] the Roman Catholics of the Iași district, who [...] all do speak Romanian and are considered [ethnic] Romanians are part of the Department of »Foreign Cults; they suffer from many restrictions, while the local clergy would not at all

³³ ASV, Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Romania (1922) Pos. 366: [Francesco Marmaggi, Nunzio Ap. in Romania]: Viaggio di Mons. Nunzio in Bucovina e Moldavia. Bucharest, January 31, 1923 (the quotation comes from the attached to the report issue of the Polish-language newspaper GŁOS LUDU, Tygodnik Demokratyczny, Organ Polskiej Rady Narodowej na Bukowinie. Czernowitz, No. 188, Year V, p. 1).

³⁴ ASV, A. E. S., Austria-Ungheria (1916) Pos. 1096, Fasc. 469, No. 16802, ff. 19-26: Corrispondenza riguardante la provvista della diocesi di Jassi, rimessa poi alla S. C. di Prop. Fide. Relazione di Mons. Domenico Jaquet, Arcivescovo tit. di Salamina, circa la situazione politico-religiosa della medesima Diocesi. Rome, May 12, 1916, f. 25v.

³⁵ Részletek Ballagi Aladár történész "A magyarság Moldvában" című útleírásából. Budapest, 1888. január. In: *Asszimiláció vagy kivándorlás* 111.

³⁶ ASV, A. E. S., Romania (1922-1930) Pos. 19, 22, Fasc. 2, No. 739, f. 2: L'Arcivescovo di Bucarest "riferisce sul conto in cui è tenuta la Chiesa Cattolica in Romania", 1922.

be considered as equal with the Orthodox priests.«³⁷ As a result, the Catholics discriminated by the Romanians – not only in Moldavia – felt that they were »treated as second or third class citizens«,³⁸ which, in turn, could have deepened their impression of being different.

*

Of course, there are many more aspects of the development of the collective identity of the Moldavian Catholics. One should as well, or maybe even in the first place, take into consideration the influence of international politics of those days, in which the Csángós usually constituted an *object* and not an active part. As it often happened in the past and, I would risk to say, continues to happen also today, a small and forceless group of people would only be used as a tool in the hands of the powerful. But, as it can well be seen from the Csángó example, sometimes even a tiny culture through its particular features can withstand the politically motivated evident aggression of great powers.

³⁷ ASV, A. E. S., Romania (1922-1930) Pos. 19, 22, Fasc. 2, [no number], ff. 11-17: Pro-memoria dell'Arcivescovo di Bucarest sull'antico Regno di Romania: considerazioni generali, i Latini di Bucarest, i Ruteni, gli Armeni cattolici. Bucharest, November 25, 1923, f. 11v.

³⁸ ASV, Archivio della Nunziatura Apostolica in Romania (1922) Pos. 366: [Francesco *Marmaggi*, Nunzio Ap. in Romania]: Viaggio di Mons. Nunzio in Bucovina e Moldavia. Bucharest, January 31, 1923 (the quotation comes from the attached to the report issue of the Polish-language newspaper GŁOS LUDU, Tygodnik Demokratyczny, Organ Polskiej Rady Narodowej na Bukowinie. Czernowitz, No. 188, Year V, p. 1).