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The Moldavian Csángó Identity (1860–1916): Social and Political Factors

Introduction

The present study¹ aims to examine diverse factors which influenced the identity of the Moldavian Csángós in the years 1860–1916. The Moldavian Csángós constitute a very small group who, despite having been subjected to tendencies of assimilation for several centuries, has somehow managed to preserve its own, unique identity. In these circumstances, it is a real challenge to explain why and how it has been possible for them to withstand the continuous attempts of denationalisation.

The choice of the researched period is not accidental. Between 1860 and 1918, one of the primary goals of the relatively young Romanian state was a complete ethnic homogenisation of its population, which resulted in a particularly aggressive nationality policy conducted by the Romanian ruling parties.

The study examines factors of both social and political character which influenced the identity of the Moldavian Csángós. Since identity is, above all, a stratified social phenomenon, I have considered it necessary to devote a part of the study to the factors working “within” the Csángó society. The other part contains an analysis of factors generated beyond the Csángó society. Such an approach should make the conducted analysis as complex as possible, because the method used operates on both the internal and the external aspects of the stratified identity of the researched group.

The archival documents which constitute the basis for my study were collected in the Vatican Secret Archive (*Archivio Segreto Vaticano*) and the Historical Archive of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (*Archivio Storico della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli/de Propaganda Fide*). The research could be completed thanks to the generosity of the Gerda Henkel Foundation (*Gerda Henkel Stiftung*) of Düsseldorf which supported my work for two years within the frame of a doctoral scholarship.

¹ The present study is a part of my Ph.D. dissertation to be completed at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The Image of the Moldavian Csángó Society, 1860-1916

Numbers

The continuous existence of the Csángós as a group characterized by a distinct collective identity surprises particularly when one considers the size of the group during the researched period. In the period 1860-1916 the Csángós made up merely a few percents of the Moldavian population; however, the size of the group varies depending on the criteria used in the research.

The Number of the Moldavian Csángós according to Practiced Religion

Religion is the criterion most researchers use when estimating the number of the Moldavian Csángós. "It is common knowledge that the Moldavian Catholics are of Hungarian descent, and thus, that the Hungarian origin and the concept of Catholicism are almost equal" (Szabados 1989: 89–102, 91). The roots of such a research tendency should probably be sought in the categories used in the 18th century by priests who compiled church statistics.

Between 1858 and 1914 the number of the Moldavian Catholics changed as follows:

Year	Source	Number of Catholics
1858	Giuseppe Tomassi, OFMConv. ²	50,135
1859	official census data ³	52,881
1874	<i>Prospectus Missionis Catholicae in Moldavia Existens</i> ⁴	58,829
1875	[<i>Schematismus Dioecesis Jassiensis</i>] ⁵	58,809
1879	Fidelis Dehm, OFMConv. ⁶	60,000
1885	Nicola Giuseppe Camilli ⁷	62,101
1896	Dominique Jaquet ⁸	70,000
1899	Dominique Jaquet ⁹	74,600
1900	Dominique Jaquet ¹⁰	75,000

² 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. Barnabì Prefetto della S. C. di Propaganda Data dal Visitatore Generale F. Giuseppe Tomassi MinConventuale Nell'Anno 1858.*

³ *Population de la Moldavie*. Bucharest, 1859. Quoted in: Szabados 1989: 94–95.

⁴ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862–1880), ff. 541–556: *Prospectus Totius Missionis Catholicae in Moldavia Existens Anno Domini 1874.*

⁵ Data quoted by Pál Péter Domokos (Domokos 2001: 108–111).

⁶ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12 (1862–1880), ff. 836–849: *Status S. Missionis in Moldavia A.D. 1879. Relatio de statu S. Missioni in Moldavia juxta quaestionarium S. Congreg. de Propag. Fide. Eidem exhibita mense Decembri, A.D. 1879.*

⁷ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), 5208, ff. 286–289.

⁸ APF, N.S., Vol. 142, Rubr. 109/1898, 17382, ff. 2–18: Jaquet, Dominique, *Informazione sul seminario di Iași e l'Archid. di Bukarest*, Iași, March 6, 1896.

⁹ APF, N.S., Vol. 165, R. 109/1899, 36637, ff. 314–327: Jaquet, Dominique, *Relazione dello stato della diocesi, Iași*, December 2, 1899.

¹⁰ APF, N.S. Vol. 190, R. 109/1900, 41602, ff. 453–466: Jaquet, Dominique, *Relazione della Diocesi*, Rome, November 23, 1900.

Year	Source	Number of Catholics
1901	<i>Schematismus Dioecesis Jassiensis</i> ¹¹	75,356
1902	church census data ¹²	64,601
1911	Giuseppe Malinowski, OFMConv. ¹³	90,000
1912	official census data ¹⁴	97,771
1914	Diomede Ulivi ¹⁵	85,000

Table 1: *The Number of Catholics in Moldavia, 1858–1914.*

As shown above, in about sixty years the number of Catholics in Moldavia increased from 50,135 to 85,000. However, as Vilmos Tánčzos claims, this phenomenon was not the result of mass migrations, but a natural consequence of widely understood modernization and development (Tánčzos 1999: 7–32, 12). Still, even if Tánčzos is right, one should not forget another phenomenon that led to the growth in the number of Catholics in Moldavia, namely the relatively high number of converts to the Catholic faith: “their number [i.e. the number of Catholics] grows every day, also due to the fact that [...] many Jews and some Protestants ask to be baptized every year [...]”¹⁶.

Language Criterion

The language map of 19th-century Moldavia was at least as colourful as that of Eastern Galicia. In the second half of the 19th century, language use in the four districts of the Moldavian Catholic mission was as follows:

Year	District of Iași	District of Roman	District of Bacău	District of Trotuș
1857	DE/PL/RO/IT/FR	RO/HU/DE/PL	HU/RO/DE/PL/RUS	HU/RO/DE
1874	RO/PL/DE/IT/FR/ILL	RO/HU/DE/PL	RO/HU/DE/PL	HU/RO
1879	DE/PL/RO/FR/IT	RO/HU/DE/PL	HU/RO/DE/PL/RUS	HU/RO/DE/PL/FR

Table 2: *Languages Spoken by the Moldavian Catholics, 1857–1879*¹⁷.

¹¹ APF, N.S., Vol. 234, R. 109/1902, 47926, ff. 454–471: Nerset, Mariano, *Cose della diocesi (Schematismus Dioecesis Jassiensis Anno Domini 1901 compositus)*, Bucharest, January 3, 1902.

¹² Auner 1908: 79. Quoted in: Tánčzos 1999: 12.

¹³ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, R. 109/1916, 732, ff. 122–126: Malinowski, Giuseppe, *Memoriale in cui si espongono i motivi, che hanno messo S.Ecc.Illma. e Rma. Mons. Nicola Giuseppe Camilli, Arcivescovo-Vescovo di Jassi, a fare il 18 Giugno 1909 il “Regolamento per l’amministrazione temporale delle parrocchie”*, Rome, April 19, 1911.

¹⁴ Az adatokat Tánčzos Vilmos közli (Tánčzos 1999: 7–32, 12).

¹⁵ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, 470, ff. 183–205: Ulivi, Diomede, *La Diocesi di Jassi in Romania*, New York, USA, February 10, 1914.

¹⁶ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11. (1848–1861), ff. 225–230: de Stefano, Antonio, Visitatore Apostolico della Missione di Moldavia, *Relazione della Missione di Moldavia*, Rome, January 18, 1852.; f. 227v.

¹⁷ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11. (1848–1861), f. 619: *Prospectus Missionis Catholicae in Moldavia Existens Anno 1857, eiusdem Missionis Praefectus atque Apostolicus Visitator Illustrissimus ac Reverendissimus D.D. Antonius de Stefano, Ord. Min. Convlum, Eqyes Incltyi Ord. S. Sepulchri Dei et Apostolicae Sedis Gratia Episcopus Bendensis*; APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 541–556: *Prospectus Totius Missionis Catholicae in Moldavia Existens Anno Domini 1874*;

The Hungarian language was thus used by the population of three districts. A sole exception was constituted by the district of Iași where, regardless of the fact that its language composition was the most diversified, Hungarian was not mentioned among languages spoken by the local population. It is worth noting that in the districts of Bacău and Troțuș Hungarian was the language of the majority of the inhabitants, and in the district of Roman it was regarded as a second language: it can be assumed that priests listed the languages according to the number of their users, so the language with the largest number of users was placed first. Thus, one could conclude that the population of the three districts was at least bilingual, speaking mostly Hungarian and Romanian. A similar picture emerges from the 19th and 20th-century reports by missionaries who worked in Moldavia: “[...] a considerable part of this Catholic people speaks a more or less pure variant of the Hungarian language (from the 15th century). In some of the villages besides the Romanian language a mixture of Hungarian and Romanian is also in use. Finally, there are also numerous villages where Hungarian is not spoken. The Hungarian language is gradually vanishing. According to the opinion [...] of some of the priests, the extinction of Hungarian has a bad influence on faith, since Hungarian [here] means as much as Catholic”¹⁸.

Therefore, it can be stated that a vast majority of the Moldavian rural population at least at the beginning of the researched period knew and used the Hungarian language. The number of people of Hungarian nationality, or rather the number of those within the Catholic population of Moldavia whose mother-tongue was Hungarian in the years 1859–1916 developed as shown in the chart below:

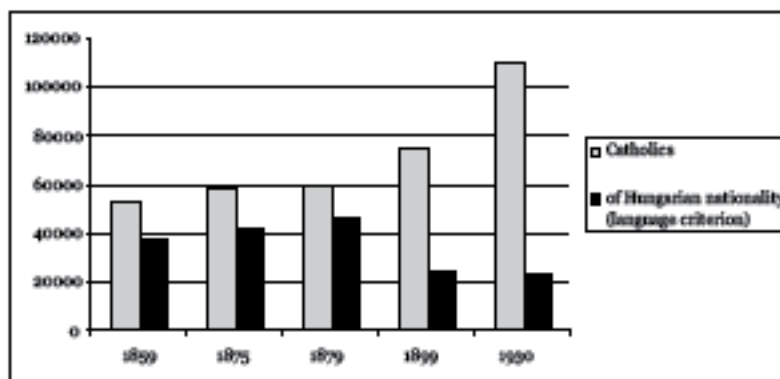


Chart 1: The Number of People of Hungarian Nationality within the Catholic Population of Moldavia, 1859–1930¹⁹.

APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 836–849: *Status S. Missionis in Moldavia A. D. 1879. Relatio de statu S. Missioni in Moldavia juxta quaestionarium S. Congreg. de Propag. Fide. Eidem exhibita mense Decembri, A.D. 1879.* DE – German, FR – French, HU – Hungarian, ILL – *lingua illirica* (most probably Southern Slavonic dialects), IT – Italian, PL – Polish, RO – Romanian, RUS – *lingua ruthenica* (most probably East-Slavonic dialects of Bucovina and Transcarpathia).

¹⁸ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, 470, ff. 183–205: Ulivi, Diomedes, *La Diocesi di Jassi in Romania*, New York, USA, February 10, 1914; f. 189.

¹⁹ Based on data included in Table 1.

The same data illustrates the change in the proportion of the number of Catholics whose mother-tongue was Hungarian within the Catholic population of Moldavia:

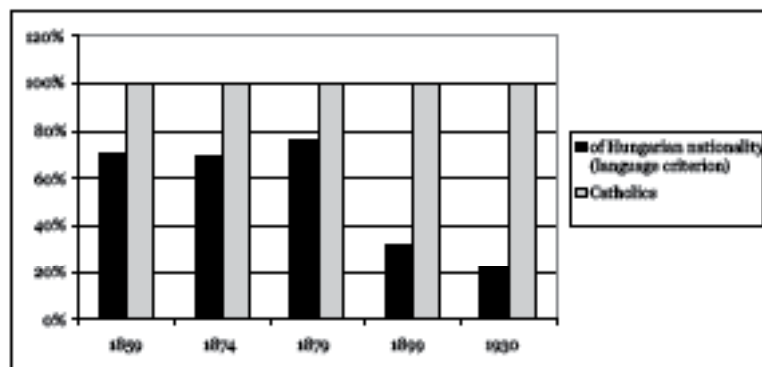


Chart 2: *The Percentage of Native Speakers of Hungarian within the Catholic Population of Moldavia, 1859–1930²⁰.*

As revealed by the chart, in spite of the fact that in the second half of the 19th century over 70% of the Catholic population of Moldavia spoke Hungarian, due to political and social factors the number of Hungarian native speakers dropped drastically within only twenty years. This situation resulted from two important events, namely the 1881 Constitution of the Romanian Kingdom, and the establishment of a Catholic bishopric in Iași in 1884, since the development of both the Romanian civil administration and the government-controlled Catholic Church structures was of great importance for the gradual elimination of the Hungarian language from the Csángó-inhabited region in the course of the two decades between 1879 and 1899.

²⁰ Based on data included in Table 1.

The Percentage of Catholics in the Population of Moldavia, 1859–1930.

During the researched period the percentage of Catholics and native speakers of Hungarian within the population of Moldavia evolved as shown below:

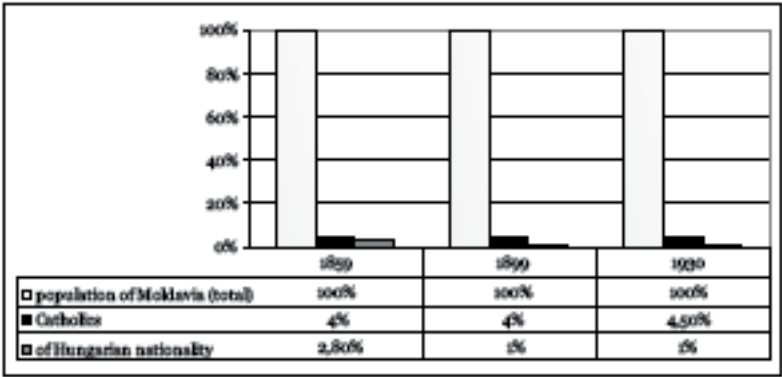


Chart 3: Change in the Number of Catholics and Persons of Hungarian Mother-Tongue within the Population of Moldavia, 1859–1930 (%)²¹.

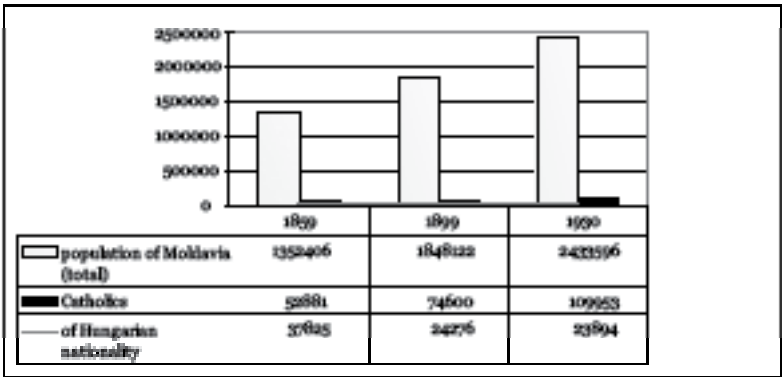


Chart 4: Change in the Number of Catholics and Persons of Hungarian Mother-Tongue within the Population of Moldavia, 1859–1930²².

As shown above, the number of Catholics increased, but at the same time the number of native speakers of Hungarian dropped by approximately 60%. This means that since

²¹ Based on data included in Table 1.

²² Based on data included in Table 1.

the union of the Romanian duchies the Hungarian language spoken by the Moldavian Catholics would be gradually replaced by the official Romanian language.

Still, regardless of which criterion we use to estimate the number of the Moldavian Csángós in the researched period, the quoted data show clearly that this group has always represented a small linguistic and religious minority in the Romanian society.

Social Structure

Due to the political, economic and historical circumstances, during the researched period, the Moldavian Csángó society was made up almost exclusively of rural population.

Moldavian Csángós as an Incomplete Social Structure

In the 14th and 15th centuries Hungarian and German populations played a meaningful role in the development of the Moldavian towns (Benda 1988: 37–86, 67). In Iași, in the 15th and 16th centuries the majority of the local tradesmen were Hungarians and Germans. The situation was quite similar in other Moldavian towns.

Beginning with the second half of the 17th century the number of the Hungarian-speaking urban population of Moldavia started to decrease²³. Between the 15th and 18th centuries, the continuous Turkish and Tatar attacks, coupled with various outbursts of epidemics contributed to the almost complete devastation of the Hungarian-speaking urban communities in the Moldavian towns. As a result, by the end of the 18th century the Moldavian Csángó society was composed almost exclusively of rural peasant population (Vincze 2004a: 17).

At the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, and along the researched period, most of the Hungarian-speaking Moldavian Catholics were peasants who lived around the towns of Bacău and Roman (Negruți 1997: 86). The character of the Hungarian-speaking Catholic population of Moldavia is well depicted by a document from 1878: “On August 24 we reached Prezești²⁴, a village and parish located in the Bacău district. [...] The local Catholics are peasants, just like all the population of the rest of the Moldavian parishes [...]. Catholics in Prezești speak exclusively Romanian, but the parish includes also villages where the Hungarian language is still in use. [...] On September 11 we departed from Dărmănești to Troțuș [...]. The Catholics here speak both Hungarian and Romanian, and in the nearby town of Ocna²⁵ German and Polish are also spoken. [...] In the parish of Focșani there live about 1,200 souls; there are three well-maintained churches. The ma-

²³ Data regarding the number of Hungarian-speaking urban population is quoted by László Gazda (Gazda 2005). Information on the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Moldavian towns in the 17th century is provided by Gh. I. Năstase in his work entitled *Ungurii din Moldova la 1646 după „Codex Bandinus”* (Năstase 2003). A very helpful source regarding ethnic and linguistic structure of Moldavian towns is Iosif Gabor's dictionary of the Moldavian Catholic settlements (Gabor 1996).

²⁴ The Moldavian settlement names are given in Romanian, this form being the currently used official one.

²⁵ Or *Târgu-Ocna*; in Hungarian *Aknavásár* and in German *Stadt Okna*.

majority of the Catholics in the parish speak Hungarian and Romanian, while in the towns the languages spoken also include German, Polish and French”²⁶. According to the quoted report, many inhabitants of the rural Catholic parishes in Moldavia were Csángós assimilated to a great extent with the Romanian-speaking population, while urban Catholic communities were composed mostly of Polish and German speakers. The same situation is revealed by an 1893 report whose author, then Austro-Hungarian vice-consul, Stefan Lippert von Granberg, calls the Csángós “peasants” or “village-dwellers” (Gecsényi 1988: 170). As far as urban population is concerned, Lippert writes that “[...] 11,000 Catholics, mostly of Polish and German nationality, live in bigger towns” (Gecsényi 1988: 173). An almost identical image is reflected in a petition written in 1910 by the inhabitants of Roman: according to the document, around this Catholics town populated by Germans and Poles there were over ten villages inhabited exclusively by Hungarians²⁷. Similarly, in 1914 only a very modest number of Hungarian speakers were found among the inhabitants of the Moldavian towns: “the Catholic urban population is composed of Poles, Germans (from Austria) and Italians – representatives of other nationalities are very few”²⁸.

Considering the above, it could be stated that during the researched period the Moldavian Csángó society lacked middle and upper social layers. Because the Csángós were peasants and lived in villages, they had very limited access to educational institutions and the possibilities for intellectual development of this society were significantly reduced. Besides, one should consider that in a peasant society land would be passed down: the younger Csángó generations were thus in a way forced to continue the work of their parents. In such a context, it is not surprising that the Csángós did not consider formal education an absolute necessity. Furthermore, the lack of upper social layer in the Csángó society resulted also from the fact that all the Hungarian initiatives aimed at helping the Csángós to preserve their language and culture were torpedoed by both the Romanian government and the Italian Catholic missionaries who worked in Moldavia. The only opportunity to create a group of intelligentsia in the Moldavian Csángó society was brought by the opening in 1886 of a Seminary in Iași, but it should be noted that the mentioned institution, administrated by Italian and Polish priests, was partly sponsored by the Romanian state and thus future priests were educated in the spirit of Romanian nationalism²⁹. This is why instead of preserving the unique character of the Csángó society, the small group of Csángó intelligentsia contributed to the Romanianization of this group (Pozsony 2005: 175).

²⁶ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 768–755; Fidelis Dehm, Episcopus Colophoniensis, Visitator Apostolicus Moldaviae, *Relazione della Visitazione Apostolica in Moldavia l'anno 1878*, Bacău, December 1/13, 1878; ff. 771–774.

²⁷ APF, N.S., Vol. 488, R. 109/1910, 1404, ff. 82–24; [Letter of Julius Pancratz and Stefan Poglut, Catholic inhabitants of Roman to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith]; f. 82.

²⁸ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, 470, ff. 183–205; Ulivi, Diomedes, *La Diocesi di Jassi in Romania*, New York, USA, February 10, 1914; f. 189.

²⁹ Agreement regulating the financial support for the seminary was signed by the Romanian government and Dominique Jaquet, the bishop of Iași on January 16, 1899 (see: Tocănel 1965: 773–783).

Language

During the researched period one of the principal features which distinguished the Csángós from the Romanians was the Hungarian language.

(Use of Hungarian Language among the Moldavian Csángós in United Romania)

The language spoken by the Moldavian Catholics during the researched period is a very complex issue. Documents from those days prove that the Catholic rural population of Moldavia was bilingual. As one of the Italian missionaries noted in 1858, “[...] the opinion [of the cantors] is that many people speak Hungarian, but the language known by everyone, also by the Hungarian inhabitants, is Moldavian [i.e. Romanian]; during the four months of my journey I got to know all the peoples who inhabit Moldavia, and although I don’t understand them, on the basis of the intonation and the vocabulary I was able to distinguish what language they speak, and I saw that Moldavian is the language used by every people living within the frontiers of the Duchy, which cannot be said about Hungarian. Thus, to me it is certain that the statement »every Hungarian speaks Moldavian« can’t be replaced with »every Moldavian speaks Hungarian«”³⁰.

In spite of the increasing spread of Romanian, even sixty years later, the language of the Catholic rural population of Moldavia was still Hungarian. “The language used by everyone is Romanian, but – particularly in villages – a Hungarian rather than Romanian dialect is frequently spoken [...]”³¹. At the same time, various sources underline the advancement of language assimilation among the Moldavian Csángós and enumerate its reasons: “About one-fourth [of the population] speak Hungarian at home, and in three parishes even in church, but regardless of that they are assimilated at school, in the army and through social contacts”³².

(Internal Factors Influencing Language Command among the Csángós)

Language use of the Moldavian Csángós in United Romania was deeply influenced by the character of this society itself.

³⁰ 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'Officio della Predicazione*; f. 831v.

³¹ APF, N.S., Vol. 655, R. 109/1920, 1740, ff. 380–400 [printed]: 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 Iași*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma; f. 382 (5. o.): a) *Notizie statistiche*.

³² ASV, A.E.S., Austria-Ungheria (1916), Pos. 1096, Fasc. 469, 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. 21v.

Many documents mention that the rural society of Moldavian Catholics was characterized by certain conservatism. In 1887 it was noted that “although in most of the villages those Hungarians called Csángós don’t speak their [Hungarian] language [...], they stick particularly to their traditions”³³. 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...”³⁴.

According to the accessible sources, women contributed largely to the preservation of the Hungarian language in the Moldavian Csángó society. Women who became mothers in the middle of the 19th century were not reached by 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 their illiterate mothers and grandmothers, i.e. Hungarian, and passed it to their children.

The situation remained practically unchanged even after compulsory education was introduced in United Romania by the 1866 Constitution (Art. 23): the majority of the Hungarian-speaking mothers did not want to send their children to schools where Romanian was the language of instruction. This caused most Csángó children not to attend school. The outcome was further spread of illiteracy and the continuous use of the Hungarian language at home. By the end of the 1860s, a religion teacher from 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 speak Hungarian to each other.

– Is there a school in the village?

– Of course there is!

– Do the children attend school?

– Very few do; our people don’t like their children to study in Romanian; we are Hungarians”³⁵.

The role of women in preserving the Hungarian language in the Moldavian Csángó society was also stressed at the beginning of the 20th century by Bernát Munkácsi, who distinguished four types of Csángó settlements depending on the extent to which Hungarian was spoken there. The first of those groups were villages where women spoke exclusively Hungarian, although men knew Romanian as much as was necessary in trade; the population in those villages rarely met with Romanians beyond the commercial field (Munkácsi 1902: 434, quoted by Beynon 1941: 75). The Romanian language, therefore,

³³ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 1. (1881–1892), ff. 173–202: Camilli, Nicola Giuseppe, *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.

³⁴ *Részletek Kovács Ferenc gyulafehérvári hittanár úti-naplójából, Moldva, 1868* (Vincze 2004b: 80).

³⁵ *Részletek Kovács Ferenc gyulafehérvári hittanár úti-naplójából, Moldva, 1868* (Vincze 2004b: 73).

was popularised 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 – perhaps the Italian priests did not take into account either women or children, judging the Romanian language skills exclusively of the heads of families and reaching erroneous conclusions about the community's language command.

The greatest influence on the gradual linguistic assimilation of the Moldavian Csángós by 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 Romanian language, resembling both Italian and the Slavonic languages, than Hungarian, with its less familiar vocabulary and grammar. Apart from political reasons for choosing Romanian as 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 Făărăoni is mostly Hungarian and that it has an absolute need of a Hungarian-speaking priest"³⁶. However, the perspective of political benefits that could be obtained by the Catholic Church through the popularization of Romanian resulted in introducing this language into churches also in the Hungarian-speaking villages. Since for an uneducated and – especially religion-wise – conservative rural society a priest used to be the embodiment of a great authority, the people learned the Romanian versions of prayers and hymns and repeated them without understanding, even though they didn't like it, just because of their great respect for the priest. Resentment of the above 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 Vatican³⁷. These petitions reported an urgent need for Hungarian or Hungarian-speaking priests and expressed dissatisfaction

³⁶ APF, N.S., Vol. 234, R. 109/1902, No. 47992, ff. 477–481: Jaquet, Dominique, Vesc. Jassy, *Risp. N. 47464 informando su ricorso dei cattolici del comune dei Faraoni per cambiamento di parroco*, Iași, January 10 (23), 1902; f. 477v.

³⁷ E.g. in: 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]; 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], Grozești, 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, R. 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*, Făărăoni, December 1(13), 1901 [written in Romanian]. There are also similar texts published by Gábor Vincze (see: Vincze 2004b: 63–67, 170–171).

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 [It. Nazareno Cipolloni] does not know the Hungarian language, and we can see that hardly anybody cares about it”³⁸. The petitions, regardless of their huge number, failed their mission. Due to 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 in a sense the Moldavian Csángós were victims of the contemporary international politics.

Religion

(Segregation: Catholic–Orthodox Relations in the Moldavian Csángó Villages)

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.

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”³⁹. By the end of the 19th century the author of one of a report about Moldavia stated 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”⁴⁰. A similar image is revealed in a report written during World War I: “in Moldavia there are a little more than a hundred thousand Catholics, but their villages are dispersed among the Orthodox settlements”⁴¹.

Although the Catholic population shared their space with the Orthodox, according to eye-witnesses, the rural Catholic communities of Moldavia – at least until World War I – were actually always distinct from the Orthodox communities. In the course of the studied period the mentioned phenomenon can be observed even within “mixed” (i.e. inhabited both by Catholics and Orthodox) settlements, as stated, for example, in an 1883 report: “[...] Sagna [is] a mixed village, but the 610 Catholics [...] are actually separated from the Orthodox [...] Oțeleni is a mixed village, but the 828 Catholics who live here are separated from the Orthodox [...] Oțeleni has three minor churches: 1. Petrești [...],

³⁸ APF, N.S., Vol. 234, R. 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.*

³⁹ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 831–835; da Sanfelice, Anacleto, Consultore, *Relazione sulla Missione Moldavia*, 1878; f. 832r–832v.

⁴⁰ APF, N.S., Vol. 355, R. 109/1906, No. 22579, ff. 466–473: Jaquet, Dominique, [relazione sull'organizzazione della diocesi di Jassy], Iași, March 5, 1897; f.467.

⁴¹ 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.

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 share none of their 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 [...]”⁴². The situation did not change during the first twenty years of the 20th century: according to a report by Raymund Netzhammer⁴³, the Moldavian Catholics lived “in closed villages”(Netzhammer 1902: 8), while “in the religious questions they avoid[ed] community with Orthodox Romanians, even if there are many similarities in their customs and costumes”(Netzhammer 1902: 8). 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”⁴⁴.

(“... we all are of Hungarian faith”)⁴⁵

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 poles of a settlement. A remarkable sign of the society’s division into two camps was, among others, the almost complete absence of Catholic-Orthodox marriages: “Catholic-Orthodox marriages happen hardly ever, and everything is being done to avoid them”⁴⁶. According to a source from the end of the 19th century, the Moldavian Catholics were “attached above all to their religion and wouldn’t marry an Orthodox”⁴⁷. A similar picture emerges from a text written in 1893 by an Austrian diplomat, which mentions both the religious and the nationality criteria: “marriages of Catholic Hungarians with Orthodox Romanians are completely unknown”(Gecsényi 1988: 173).

⁴² APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), ff. 173–202: Camilli, Nicola Giuseppe, *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*.

⁴³ Raymund Netzhammer, O.S.B (1862–1945), archbishop of Bucharest in years 1905–1924.

⁴⁴ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, No. 470, ff. 183–205: Ulivi, Diomede, *La Diocesi di Jassi in Romania*, New York, USA, February 10, 1914; f. 188.

⁴⁵ Vincze 2004b: 72.

⁴⁶ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11. (1848–1861), ff. 225–230: de Stefano, Antonio, *Visitatore Apostolico della Missione di Moldavia, Relazione della Missione di Moldavia*, Rome, January 18, 1852; 227v.

⁴⁷ Bartok Géza levele Slauch Lőrinc szatmári püspöknek, a Szent László Társulat egyházi elnökének a romániai magyar oktatás támogatásának lehetőségéről, Budapest, 1890. október 23. (Vincze 2004b: 123).

In some cases the Catholic-Orthodox “separatism” in the villages of Moldavia would turn into an open conflict fuelled by both the Catholic Hungarian-speaking population and the Orthodox Romanians. The latter 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”⁴⁸. This antagonism, especially as far as the Orthodox attacks on the Catholic Church are concerned, can be observed at both the micro- (within one settlement) and the macro-scale (within the whole state): “A fanatic agitation of an Orthodox priest against a Catholic priest. Cădea, a professor and priest, whom we already know for his extreme viewpoints and [...] religious aims, 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 cries out, »we don’t want a state in a state!«, since, according to his narrow understanding, through the concordat a separate state would be created in Romania for the 4 million Catholics. He does not want to recognize their [i.e. the Catholics’] real existence within the frontiers of the kingdom; he is still not able to avoid fanaticism and particularistic chauvinism, [being] suspicious and hostile towards all the elements who differ from him in religion or nationality. He can’t – or maybe doesn’t want to – understand that the nationalities of other religions inhabiting the Romanian state, especially the Catholics, can be and indeed are the best and the most loyal Romanian citizens.”⁴⁹. The author of the quoted article rightly underlines Cădea’s “hostility towards all the elements” that differed from the “Orthodox Romanian” in religious or nationality. 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! [...]”⁵⁰. 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 citizen could only be an Orthodox Romanian: “[...] in this land the »Hungarian

⁴⁸ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 172–174: [petition of the inhabitants of the parish of Grozești to the Pope Pius XI regarding the case of Kozma Funták], Grozești, March 29, 1864; f. 173.

⁴⁹ ASV, Arch. Nunz. Romania (1922), Pos. 366: [Marmaggi, Francesco, 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).

⁵⁰ 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.

church« is a synonym for the Catholic Church, like among us [...] a »Hungarian priest« and the »Hungarian church« are synonyms for Calvinism”⁵¹. The mentioned phenomenon was also noted by Archbishop Netzhhammer: „for many Romanians the term [...]»Catholic« means only »German«, while for all Romanians the word »Catholic« sounds anti-patriotic. [...] for ages, especially in the Iași district, the Romanians call every Catholic Church »biserica nemțească«, (i.e. the German church). In the Ministry of Cults of the new Greater Romania there is a »Department for Foreign Cults«; among those cults, officially called foreign, there are the Roman Catholic, the Uniate, the Protestant religions”⁵². 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 be regarded as equal with the Orthodox priests”⁵³. As a result, the Catholics discriminated by the Romanians – not only in Moldavia – felt that they were “treated as second or third class citizens”⁵⁴, which, in turn, could have deepened their impression of being different.

External Factors Influencing the Moldavian Csángó Identity (1861–1916)

Romanianization of the Hungarian-Speaking Population of Moldavia within State Structures

After the union of Moldavia and Wallachia the young Romanian state started introducing a centralized national homogenization policy which included the development of state education and public administration.

Assimilation through Education

In the 1860s, the Romanian government started working on the development of the state educational system, based on four-class elementary schools. Regulations concerning public elementary education in Romania were formulated in November 1864; they stated

⁵¹ *Részletek Ballagi Aladár történész A magyarság Moldvában című útleírásából*, Budapest, 1888. január. (Vincze 2004b: 111).

⁵² 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.

⁵³ ASV, A.E.S., Romania (1922–1930), Pos. 19, 22, Fasc. 2, ff. 11–17: *Promemoria 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.

⁵⁴ ASV, Arch. Nunz. Romania (1922), Pos. 366: [Marmaggi, Francesco, 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).

that education on this level was free and compulsory for children under 12 years (Vincze 2004a: 20). A similar regulation can be found in the 1886 Romanian constitution (article 23), which outlined the development project regarding the Romanian elementary education (Scurtu–Alexandrescu–Bulei–Mamina 2002: 10). According to the above-mentioned article, education in elementary schools was free and compulsory for those children of Romanian citizenship who lived in an area where an elementary school already existed or where such a school was to be opened in a short time (Scurtu–Alexandrescu–Bulei–Mamina 2002: 10).

In the second half of the 19th century, state elementary schools opened mostly in the Romanian-inhabited regions of Moldavia. According to the report of the Austro-Hungarian vice-consul Lippert the Romanian government acted on purpose when it excluded the area inhabited by Moldavian Csángós from the elementary education-development project. In Lippert's opinion the government was convinced that in this way, i.e. rendering access to education difficult for the Hungarian-speaking population, it could effectively prevent this group from developing a distinct political identity. Thus, few elementary schools opened within the area inhabited by the Moldavian Csángós (Gecsényi 1988: 179).

Regardless of the original plans, though, several public elementary schools opened in the parts of Moldavia inhabited by Hungarian-speaking Catholics. Regarding this issue, a lot of information can be found in documents from 1860s. In the schools which opened in the Csángó villages, the language of instruction was Romanian, even though the majority of students spoke only the language they used at home, i.e. Hungarian. Furthermore, all teachers who were employed in those schools were Orthodox Romanians (Gecsényi 1988: 179). The already quoted religion teacher, Ferenc Kovács noted in 1868 that in Luizi-Călugăra “a Romanian teacher teaches purely Hungarian-speaking Catholic children – a teacher who doesn't understand a word in Hungarian and who is schismatic [Orthodox]”⁵⁵. The author of the quoted report rightly underlines the question of the teachers' religion. The fact that the teachers were Orthodox could have influenced the assimilation of the Csángó children, since the teachers would often take the students to Orthodox churches. “It is quite a frequent phenomenon that in mixed settlements teachers take the Catholic children together with the Orthodox to Orthodox church and force them to participate in their traditions [i.e. sermons]” (Gecsényi 1988: 180).

The situation remained unchanged till the end of the 19th century. According to an 1882 report “not even one of the Romanian teachers knows Hungarian, and the *language of instruction* is and can be exclusively *Romanian*”⁵⁶. The author of the quoted report gives the reader a concise definition of the Romanian nationality policy of those days: “the primary goal of the Romanian teachers is not to teach [...], but to stop the few Hungarian priests who are still there, or the cantors, from teaching *in Hungarian*”⁵⁷. Of course, there were a few exceptions. Some of the Romanian teachers tried to learn

⁵⁵ *Részletek Kovács Ferenc gyulafehérvári hittanár úti-naplójából*, Moldva, 1868 (Vincze 2004b: 76).

⁵⁶ *Részletek László Mihály „Keleti testvéreink” című röpiratából*, Budapest, 1882 (Vincze 2004b: 104).

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

Hungarian so that they could communicate with their Hungarian-speaking students, but such teachers would soon be removed from their posts by the Romanian government which viewed them as threats to the unity of the state. The removed teachers would then be replaced with “loyal Romanian citizens”: “The Romanian teacher from *Cleja*, since he couldn’t do much in Romanian [...], learned Hungarian and started to teach in this language, but the government [...] replaced him with one who suited its intentions. This is what in Moldavia-Wallachia is called *educational freedom*”⁵⁸.

Neither did the nationalist character of the Romanian elementary education fade at the beginning of the 20th century. In a 1908 document the author, himself a teacher, pointed at the dark side of the Romanian nationality policy. “In all public schools [...] teachers are the same, be it an ethnically Bulgarian, Turkish, Serbian, Greek, Russian or Hungarian territory of Romania. The official Romanian education plan [...] can only be carried out in Romanian by teachers who don’t know the mother-tongue of the students (Prussian system, based on the following: a mother doesn’t understand the speech of her baby [...], but in 2-3 years [the baby] learns its mother’s language. Teachers are expected to obtain such a result in 5 years)”⁵⁹. A part of the quoted report is devoted to some very spectacular assimilation methods and instruments used in Romanian state schools. “The walls in the rooms are full of superb quality colour pictures [...]. They present the royal couple, [...] Ștefan cel Mare, Michael the Brave looking at the head of András Báthory etc.; there is also a second group of pictures, which portray all the Romanian (?) rulers from Traian and Decebal to king Charles I.”⁶⁰

The consequences of the educational system introduced by the Romanian government were of two kinds. In the first case, Hungarian-speaking parents who were against compulsory education in Romanian, paid a fine and didn’t let their children go to school. “In richer Csángó communities the Csángó families pay a fine and *do not* give their sons into the hands of a Romanian teacher. [Such] children would rather *not* learn either to read or to write”⁶¹. Still, as the majority of Csángó families didn’t have the money to pay the fine, children of poor parents had to attend the Romanian schools, which in numerous cases resulted in a particularly fast assimilation.

Thus, the Romanian system of state education proved to be an effective part of the plan of ethnic homogenization of the society. The part of the Csángó society which did not fulfil the compulsory education duty remained illiterate, also due to the fact that the repression measures taken by the Romanian government created difficulty for the educational activity of the few Hungarian Catholic priests and cantors who remained in Moldavia. This, in turn, led to the situation in which a considerable part of the Csángó society lacked its own political identity and, as such, it could not endanger the “unity” of

⁵⁸ *Részletek László Mihály „Keleti testvéreink” című röpiratából*, Budapest, 1882 (Vincze 2004b: 104).

⁵⁹ *Részletek Barabás Endre tanár „Románia nemzetiségi politikája és az oláhajkú magyar polgárok” című helyzetjelentéséből*, 1908 (Vincze 2004b: 154).

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 152.

⁶¹ *Részletek László Mihály „Keleti testvéreink” című röpiratából*, Budapest, 1882 (Vincze 2004b: 104).

the Romanian state. As for those of the Hungarian-speaking children who took part in the Romanian state education, within four years they were assimilated to a great extent, as shown by the following dialogue registered in 1908:

- “Do the children speak Romanian when they enter school?”
- No, sir, they are like a blank page [...], but they learn it already in the first grade!
- It is great that you manage to teach Romanian those little savage Hungarians in one year.
- Well, in a year’s time only few learn it well, but they remain in the first grade until they do learn it.
- How long does it usually take?
- Only few of them spend the third year in the first grade. [...]”⁶²

That the Orthodox teachers were the embodiment of danger for the Csángó society is also confirmed by reports written by missionaries of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith. In a 1914 report, the first point of the part entitled “Dangers for the Catholic Rural Population” speaks exactly about teachers employed in public schools. “All elementary schools belong to the state; teachers are appointed directly by the government. They [the teachers] are all Orthodox (I know only one Catholic teacher). Those teachers are fanatic Orthodox heretics”⁶³. The missionaries’ view was that the Romanian elementary education in such a form made it difficult, if not completely impossible, to teach Catholic religion: “our activity becomes more and more difficult, while teaching religion [...] [becomes] impossible. Teachers who are all Orthodox, especially when there is no Catholic priest to supervise religion teaching, conduct a religious propaganda and force children to learn the Orthodox catechism [and] to go to Orthodox Church”⁶⁴. Thus, it could be said that the Romanian educational system became an integral part of the Romanian government’s plan of total national homogenization of the country and that it contributed largely to the gradual loss of important components of the particular identity which characterized the Moldavian Csángós.

Offices

The gradual assimilation of the Moldavian Csángós by the Romanian population happened also in the field of public administration.

Article 4 of the 1866 Romanian constitution divided the state into large administrative units (*județ*), which were further divided into smaller units (*plăși*), the latter being composed of what could be named “community” (*comună*), i.e. villages or groups of villages

⁶² *Részletek Barabás Endre tanár „Románia nemzetiségi politikája és az oláhajkú magyar polgárok” című helyzetjelentéséből*, 1908 (Vincze 2004b: 153).

⁶³ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, 470, ff. 183–205; Ulivi, Diomede, *La Diocesi di Jassi in Romania*, New York, USA, 1914.02.10; f. 190.

⁶⁴ APF, N.S., Vol. 576, Rubr. 109/1916, 732, ff. 122–126; Malinowski, Giuseppe, OFMConv., Vicario Generale di Jassi: *Memoriale in cui si espongono i motivi, che hanno messo S.Ecc. Illma. e Rma. Mons. Nicola Giuseppe Camilli, Arcivescovo-Vescovo di Jassi, a fare il 18 Giugno 1909 il “Regolamento per l’amministrazione temporale delle parrocchie”*, Rome, 1911. 04. 19.; ff. 123r–123v.

(Scurtu–Alexandrescu–Bulei–Mamina 2002: 9) administrated by one mayor (*primar*). Every mayor had a secretary and a council whose members (at least two, at most eight) were elected from the local population (Gecsényi 1988: 177). The mayors, the secretaries and the councils usually represented the interests of the Orthodox Romanian population. It is true that because of what we today call “political correctness” in the area inhabited by Csángós there were a few Catholic mayors, but in practice it didn’t change much in the actual situation of this group because the Catholic mayors were given Orthodox Romanian secretaries. The secretaries’ duty was to control the mayors who the government regarded as enemies of the Romanian state (Gecsényi 1988: 178). Moreover, the majority of the council members were also Orthodox, like in Grozești, where by the end of the 19th century from among six council members only two were Catholics (Gecsényi 1988: 178).

Higher administrative posts were absolutely inaccessible for the Moldavian Catholics. Consequently, as the Romanian clerks didn’t know Hungarian it became a hard task for the Csángós to communicate with them. According to an early 20th-century report, “in public administration nobody uses Hungarian. Secretaries don’t know Hungarian at all. And a great part of the people doesn’t understand Romanian”⁶⁵.

Many problems emerged from the fact that the administrative posts were filled with representatives of the Orthodox Romanian population. Above all, in this way the Romanian government made it impossible for the Csángós to have their own representatives who would know their problems and help solving them. It cannot be excluded that it was a conscious decision taken by the Romanian government in order not to let the Csángós emancipate in the field of politics. Furthermore, the often illiterate Csángós, who either didn’t know Romanian or spoke it very badly, couldn’t really communicate with the Romanian clerks, and so the possibility to exercise their rights, guaranteed as equal to those of the Orthodox Romanians by article 10 of the Romanian constitution, was really limited (Scurtu–Alexandrescu–Bulei–Mamina 2002: 9).

A separate problem linked to the domination of the Romanian clerks was the Romanianization of the Moldavian Csángós’ Hungarian names. This process is also recalled by the already quoted Lippert-report: the vice-consul informs that the Romanian secretaries always translated or at least transliterated the Hungarian Csángó names into Romanian (Gecsényi 1988: 178). The Romanianization touched mostly family names which were either nouns indicating professions or nouns which previously had been used as nicknames (Gecsényi 1988: 178). These names had their exact Romanian translations and so the Hungarian name *Asztalos* (carpenter) became *Tămplar*, while *Veres(s)* (red) was turned into *Roșu*⁶⁶. The names which couldn’t be translated into Romanian would be transliterated according to the rules of Romanian grammar. A good example can be

⁶⁵ *Részlet György Endrének a Rubinyi-cikkhez írt kiegészítéséből*, Budapest, 1900 (Vincze 2004b: 142).

⁶⁶ *Részletek Barabás Endre tanár „Románia nemzetiségi politikája és az oláhajkú magyar polgárok” című helyzetjelentéséből*, 1908 (Vincze 2004b: 157).

the Hungarian name *László* (Ladislás) transliterated into Romanian as *Laslău*⁶⁷. Still, in this case the Romanian government's action didn't meet with complete success, since, although "in public" the Csángós used their new Romanian names, among themselves they continued to use exclusively their old names and nicknames.

Church

The Question of Nationality of Missionaries Working in Moldavia. Hungarian Language in the Catholic Churches of Moldavia

The Catholic clergy's attitude had a great influence on the use of Hungarian among the Moldavian Csángós, as well as on the shape of this group's collective local identity.

As confirmed in documents from the archive of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, due to the territorial range of the Hungarian language in the 17th and 18th centuries " [missionaries] sent to Moldavia were either Italians or Hungarians, in case Hungarian would be the language spoken in one or other village" (Ferro 2003: 201). Later, the number of Hungarian missionaries working in Moldavia decreased, while there were more and more priests who came from the local Moldavian population.

Year	1852	1878	1879	1919
Number	8 Italians,	21 Italians,	1 local [Csángó],	5 Italians,
and	8 Poles,	6 Poles,	22 Italians,	7 local [Csángó],
nationality	7 Hungarians,	3 Germans,	6 Poles,	1 Transylvanian,
	4 Slavs ⁶⁸ ,	2 Hungarians,	2 Hungarians,	2 Belgians,
	3 Germans,	1 Slavs.	2 Germans,	1 from Holland,
	1 Bosnian,		1 Slavs.	1 Maltese.
	1 Maltese.			

Table 3: Nationality and Number of Missionaries Working in Moldavia, 1852–1919⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ *Részletek Barabás Endre tanár „Románia nemzetiségi politikája és az oláhajkú magyar polgárok” című helyzetjelentéséből*, 1908 (Vincze 2004b: 157).

⁶⁸ Most probably Southern Slavs.

⁶⁹ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11. (1848–1861), ff. 225–230: de Stefano, Antonio, Visitatore Apostolico della Missione di Moldavia, *Relazione della Missione di Moldavia*, Rome, January 18, 1852.; f. 227r; APF. Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 746–752: [Answers of Fidelis Dehm to a questionnaire of sent by the Congregation], Bacău, October 31, 1878; f. 749r; APF. Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Vol. 12. (1862–1880), ff. 836–849: *Relatio de statu S. Missioni in Moldavia juxta quaestionarium S. Congreg. de Propag. Fide. Eidem exhibita mense Decembri, A.D. 1879*, Iași, December 3/15, 1879; f. 846; APF, N.S., Vol. 655, R. 109/1920, 1740, ff. 380–400: *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 Iași*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma; f. 387v (16. o.).

The mentioned situation resulted from the fusion of the political activity of the Romanian government and that of the missionaries of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith.

(The Hungarian Perspective)

From the beginning of the researched period the Hungarian activities regarding the Moldavian Csángós were coordinated and supported by the Society of Saint Ladislás (Hun. *Szent László Társulat*). The task of the Society since its creation in 1861 was to monitor the situation of the Hungarian-speaking Moldavian Catholics. Monitoring was carried out by special controllers who were sent to Moldavia by the Society. One of such visits was described by a *Propaganda Fide* missionary in 1868: “Three men arrived – two priests and one civilian. One of the priests was the Canon of Pest (in Hungary) and head of the seminary”⁷⁰. The mentioned Canon – not of Pest, as the missionary supposed, but of Kalocsa (Vincze 2004a: 24) – Mihály Kubinszky, wrote a detailed report containing observations he made during his journey in Moldavia. Among others, he suggested that more Hungarian priests and monks who would take good care of the Hungarian-speaking Catholics should be sent to Moldavia⁷¹. The missionaries of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith noted the suggestion, and wrote that the Hungarian delegation “wanted to send more Hungarian priests [in Moldavia], [...] to popularize the use of Hungarian during the Holy Mass and to place Hungarian priests wherever possible”⁷².

Kubinszky’s suggestion which in the meantime reached the Holy See was accepted by the Pope. In 1869, Pius IX obliged the bishoprics of Iași and Bucharest to accept missionaries chosen by the Society of Saint Ladislás (Vincze 2004a: 25). The real aim of the Hungarian side, however, was to gain control over the Moldavian Catholic bishopric and later on to place it under the jurisdiction of Esztergom. The idea was not a new one. “As early as 1776, the provincial of the Transylvanian Conventual Minorites wrote to Giuseppe Martinotti, sub-prefect [of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith], that Italian missionaries were useless in Moldavia [...] because they didn’t know Hungarian. [...] The following events show that the provincial’s activity was stimulated by both church and lay Hungarian authorities. The aim of both these and the subsequent attempts was to remove the mission from under the supervision of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, and to put it under control of the Hungarian church, which was to be followed by replacing the Italian missionaries with Hungarian priests and monks. The argument

⁷⁰ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Bulgaria/Valachia, Vol. 14 (1865–1874), 220, ff. 473–474 [Report of Anton Joseph Pluym to the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith], Bucharest, August 25, 1868; f. 473r.

⁷¹ Kubinszky Mihály *kalocsai kanonok javaslatai a moldvai katolikus magyarok ügyében*, Pest, 1868. október 21. (Vincze 2004b: 85–88).

⁷² APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Bulgaria/Valachia, Vol. 14. (1865–1874), 228, ff. 475–477 [Report of Anton Joseph Pluym to the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith], Bucharest, August 31, 1868; ff. 475–476.

of no knowledge of the Hungarian language was regarded only a pretext which could influence the Congregation, since it was repeated that without the Hungarian language Catholics would lose their faith" (Tocănel 1960: 18). Because of the aforesaid one can't deny completely the Congregation missionaries' criticism of the Society of Saint Ladislav. The missionaries accused the Society of conducting Hungarian nationalist propaganda: "I've got enough reasons to believe that the Society of Saint Ladislav [...] is acting under the influence of the Hungarian Ministry [of External Affairs]. Magyarizing the country would make it easier to seize Wallachia, Moldavia and Bulgaria, and thus [...] to re-establish the kingdom of Louis the Great. This is the Hungarian goal, and nobody keeps it secret"⁷³. Indeed, although it refuted the accuse of popularizing Hungarian nationalism, in 1874 the Society of Saint Ladislav asked the Hungarian Ministry of Cults and Public Education for financial aid: "The aim of the Society of Saint Ladislav is not to make political propaganda [...]: still, it is certain that in the case of our Csángó brethren the Catholic faith and the Hungarian nationality fused to the extent that in places where the Csángós leave the Catholic church due to the lack of schools and of Hungarian priests, and become schismatic, the language of their ancestors is not spoken any more. [...] I turn to Your Excellence [...] with trust and ask you with deep respect to support the Society of Saint Ladislav [...] and to grant it two thousand forint per year [...]. The society will account for that amount [...] every year and will use it [that money] only and exclusively to cover educational and religious needs of the Csángós"⁷⁴. An end was put to the issue by the Holy See itself by putting the bishopric of Iași founded in 1884 under the jurisdiction of the archbishopric of Bucharest. From that moment on the Hungarian-speaking Catholic population of Moldavia had even fewer chances of using their mother-tongue: the bishops⁷⁵ did not approve of the Hungarian "Csángó-rescue" policy due to the fact that, if continued, it could have led to an open conflict with the Romanian government.

(The Romanian Perspective)

On the basis of the missionaries' reports one could presume that the Romanian government considered the priests who arrived from Hungary as elements endangering the state unity. The Romanian fear and hostility towards the Hungarian priests became so strong that the latter would even be accused of espionage. "we, Italians, are loved, contrary to the Hungarians, who are hated [...] and seen as spies of the Hungarian government"⁷⁶, wrote one of the missionaries who worked in Moldavia at the end of the 19th century.

⁷³ Ibidem, f. 476.

⁷⁴ *A Szent László Társulat elnökségének átirata Trefort Ágoston vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszterhez*, Budapest, 1874. október 10. (Vincze 2004b: 95).

⁷⁵ Nicola Giuseppe Camilli (1884–1894; 1904–1915), Dominique Jaquet (1895–1904).

⁷⁶ APF, N.S., Vol. 116, Rubr. 109/1897, 24582, ff. 50–55: [Letter of the priest of Târgu-Ocna, Domenico della Posta, to the Secretary of State in Vatican; information regarding the Moldavian bishopric], Târgu-Ocna, July 12, 1897; f. 51.

At the beginning of the researched period the mentioned conflict seems particularly sharp in the light of the Society of Saint Ladislav emissaries' visit to the Romanian Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction. "Prelate Vechely [Veszely] [...] visited the Director [sic!] of the Ministry of Cults and Public Instruction"⁷⁷, the head of the Wallachian mission reported from Bucharest in 1868. In the Ministry it was soon discovered that the Hungarian priest's visit was not just an act of politeness and that the information collected by the Society of Saint Ladislav was to serve as key argument in the financial negotiations between the Society and the Hungarian government. This discovery caused much anxiety in the Romanian government. According to the quoted report, "the Director was furious [...]; he said, among others, »I had no idea that I had been introduced to spies; [...] these people want to Magyarize our country, but we won't let them do it; this is why we prefer to receive Italian priests, who don't speak Hungarian and must learn the language of the state«"⁷⁸.

The Hungarian missionaries' image as perpetrators of Hungarian nationalist propaganda remained unchanged in the subsequent years. "Missionaries of Hungarian nationality have always been considered political agents who want to sustain the Hungarian national spirit among over fifty thousand of our Catholics – a population who, regardless of their Hungarian roots, in the course of several centuries have become Romanian citizens of full civil and political rights"⁷⁹. As far as the continuation of the Hungarian missionaries' work in Romania is concerned, the Romanian government's attitude was clear: the Romanian authorities wanted to remove all Hungarian priests from the country. The plan was to be put into practice with support from the authorities of the Roman-Catholic Moldavian bishopric. As one of the bishops of Iași puts it, "neither King Charles nor his ministers [...] left any doubt: since I am unable to produce clergy out of the local population, missionaries must be invited, first of all from Italy, while Hungarian missionaries must be banned forever"⁸⁰. It was only the Hungarians who were accused of espionage: according to a written accusation dating from 1916, "immediately after the war had started there began a sort of hunt of Catholic priests that touched especially those who originated from the local population, possibly due to their Hungarian descent. Italian priests were left [in peace] [...], just like Belgians [...], the locals, however, accused of espionage, became the target [of the Romanians]"⁸¹.

⁷⁷ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Bulgaria/Valachia, Vol. 14 (1865–1874), 276, ff. 486–487 [Anton Joseph Pluym jelentése a Hitterjesztés Szent Kongregációjának], Bucharest, October 15, 1868; ff. 486r–486v.

⁷⁸ Ibidem.

⁷⁹ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), 6313, ff. 318–321: [Nicola Giuseppe Camilli to the Prefect of the Congregation of Faith: letter regarding Hungarian attempts to place Hungarian priests in Moldavia], Iași, January 15, 1887; f. 321.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ APF, N.S., Vol. 627, R. 109/1919, 239, ff. 382–383 [Ulderico Cipolloni, OFMConv. reports on the relation between Romanian authorities and Catholic clergy], Iași, November 28/December 11, 1916; f. 382v.

To remove “dangerous Hungarian individuals” from the country, the Romanian government planned to use the missionaries. At the end of the 1880s, the secretary of the Romanian Embassy in Hungary wrote to the bishop of Iași: “The Government of His Royal Highness [...] wishes that priests working in Catholic villages in Romania be of Latin origin, if possible Italians. The [...] Minister⁸² is convinced that it depends exclusively on Your Excellency, and hopes that his desire, which is also the wish of His Royal Highness, will be fulfilled thanks to the Your Excellency’s wisdom”⁸³. The importance of the issue is also confirmed in sources written at the beginning of the 20th century: in his letters to the Secretary of State in the Vatican, the nuncio in Vienna, Gennaro Granito di Belmonte, pointed at the Romanian authorities’ hostile attitude towards Catholic priests, particularly those of Hungarian origin. “The Romanian government does not want either Hungarian, German or French influence, especially regarding the instruction of local clergy; thus, it finds it pleasing that missionaries who arrive in Moldavia are Italians, because they are maybe the only ones who don’t use their activity for making their own nationalist propaganda, and Italy has no interest in this land”⁸⁴.

Unopposed by the Italian missionaries, the policy of the Romanian government caused the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith to stop employing Hungarian priests. The situation is reflected in various reports written by the bishops of Iași. In 1887, bishop Camilli wrote: “Due to the particular pressure of the government [...] I had to promise to the king and his ministers that as long as it depends on me I won’t let new Hungarian missionaries arrive in Moldavia”⁸⁵. Similar was the situation in the following years. On the threshold of the 20th century, the bishop of Iași, a Swiss Dominique Jaquet put it sharp and short: “the Romanian government forbade us to call missionaries from Hungary”⁸⁶.

It seems then that in the researched period the strongest weapon in the hands of the Romanian government was money. The seminaries in Iași and Hălăucești were partly financed by the Romanian state, but the aid came with strings attached. For the allocated amount, the government demanded absolute loyalty to the state. Moreover, it could be said that the Orthodox Romania tried to render the Catholic Church instrumental in the process of creating a nationally homogeneous state. “Sturdza was explaining that the government granted a certain amount of money to the seminaries in Iași and Hălăucești

⁸² Dimitrie A. Sturdza, President of the Council of Ministers (*Președinte al Consiliului de Miniștri*), February 14, 1901–December 20, 1904.

⁸³ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), 2600, ff. 324–327: [Nicola Giuseppe Camilli reports to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith on Hungarian attempts to place more Hungarian priests in Moldavia. Attachment: letter of the secretary of the Romanian Embassy in Hungary], Iași, May 12/24, 1887; ff. 324v–325r.

⁸⁴ ASV, A.E.S., Austria-Ungheria (1904–1905), Pos. 943 bis, Fasc. 413, 7470. A.E., ff. 48–49: *Rapporto del Nunzio Apostolico in Vienna sulle condizioni religiose in Romania*, Vienna, September 17, 1904; f. 48r.

⁸⁵ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), 6313, ff. 318–321: [Nicola Giuseppe Camilli reports to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith on Hungarian attempts to place more Hungarian priests in Moldavia.], Iași, January 5, 1887; f. 321v.

⁸⁶ APF, N.S., Vol. 142, Rubr. 109/1898, 17382, ff. 2–18: *Jaquet Mgr. Dom., Vesc., Rumenia: Informazione sul seminario di Iași e l'Archid. di Bukarest*, Iași, March 6, 1896; f. 9v.

to gain the support of that part of the clergy who came from the local people and who, being loyal to their Romanian fatherland, wouldn't participate in external politics, especially [in contacts] with Hungarians, and thus wouldn't create problems for the Romanian government. [...] Romania, said Sturdza, is surrounded by great powers. If the Catholic clergy continues its pro-Hungarian politics, the [Austro-Hungarian] Monarchy will have a reason to interfere with the inner matters of the [Romanian] Kingdom"⁸⁷. Therefore, one of the key elements of the governmental plan were the Italian priests, whom Romanians considered their "close relatives" and who for their own reasons did not support or protect the use of the Hungarian language in Moldavia. The Romanian government expected the Hungarian-speaking Catholic inhabitants of Moldavia to turn into loyal Romanian citizens. For that reason, as it can be presumed, the government threatened the missionaries with stopping the subsidies for the Catholic educational institutions if they continued to employ Hungarian priests. Such a move from the Romanian side would render the further activity of the Catholic mission in Moldavia impossible due to financial difficulties. Still, we must add that Romanian nationalism did not only target Hungarians. In fact, Romanians considered all other nationalities potential enemies of both the Romanian nation and the Orthodox Romanian state. Particular hostility was displayed by the Romanian authorities in contacts with the Catholic clergy: "Foreigners – above all, priests – are received with suspicion, [for] they are considered spies [...]. The Romanian slogan is: »Romania for Romanians«"⁸⁸.

(Attitude of the Missionaries and the Vatican)

Since they found it hard to learn Hungarian, the missionaries, mostly Italian Franciscans and Polish Jesuits, with few exceptions, did not oppose the Romanian government's orders. According to the available documents, a vast majority of the missionaries were supporters of the Romanian language. There were two main reasons for that situation. Firstly, as it was already mentioned, the Italian, Swiss, French, Belgian or Polish missionaries were not able (or were too lazy) to learn Hungarian. Besides, the original goal of the Moldavian mission was not only to protect the local Catholic population, but to convert as many as possible of the "lost on the way of the Schism" Orthodox Romanians. Thus, the missionaries were actually right in their belief that the goal – of course, the second mentioned – could only be achieved if they used the language of the Orthodox population.

⁸⁷ APF, N.S., Vol. 260, R. 109/1903, 58145, ff. 415–417: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammr., Iași, Moldavia, Romania: Sulla visita fatta al Ministro Presidente Rumeno per l'affare del Seminario Francese di Halauceti*, Iași, November 17/30, 1903; f. 415v.

⁸⁸ APF, N.S., Vol. 325, R. 109/1905, 61635, ff. 123–128: [Joseph de l'Étanche, parish priest from Văleni reports to bishop Camilli on the political situation in Romania and on the situation of Catholics in Romania], Văleni, June 24, 1904; f. 125v.

At the beginning of the researched period, directly after the union of Moldavia and Wallachia, when there were still many Hungarian priests working within the frontiers of the mission, the question of the Hungarian language became a serious problem among the missionaries: “there is a great difference in what the missionaries think – a difference which has always divided them into two camps: the Hungarians and the Italians. The former say theirs should be the main, or rather the only, language of the mission. Since they are absolutely convinced [that they are right], not only do they explain the Gospel and celebrate the Holy Mass in Hungarian, but they forbid their congregation to use Romanian and say that Romanian is the language of the Schismatics. The latter [...] support Romanian: they learn this language, they use it in sermons and this is the only language they use to administrate their parishes”⁸⁹.

Thus, it can be stated that the missionaries of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith used the Romanian language both because of their own comfort and to strengthen the position of the Catholic church in Orthodox Romania. “The principal language of the mission is Romanian. Unchanged remains my opinion that this language is the most important and the most necessary language in our mission. Our task is not only to protect our Catholics, but also to turn the unfortunate victims of the Schism back from this way. [...] And how can we [...] achieve this, if we don’t know the language of the Schismatics? [...] [The Orthodox] [...] raid our churches out of curiosity, to listen to our sermons which their priests do not celebrate. Thus, if the mass is in Hungarian, they [i.e. the Orthodox] leave the church because they don’t understand a word. However, if [the mass] is in Romanian, they remain to listen willingly [...]. Thus, it would be easy for us to [...] lead all our brethren to the House of our Father, and there is no other way to do it but through the use of the Romanian language”⁹⁰.

The missionaries knew that the majority of the Catholics they were responsible for spoke Hungarian; however, with some exceptions, they were convinced that the local Hungarian-speaking population was bilingual, like the Moldavian Poles, Germans or French. Therefore they didn’t consider it harmful to use Romanian during the Holy Mass, since they were sure that the Catholics, regardless of their nationality, would understand them anyway. “I can say without hesitation that the principal language of the mission is Romanian. In our opinion the Hungarian language belongs to the same category as German, Polish or French. These nationalities, whose members constitute a patchwork part of the population of the kingdom, know the Romanian language very well [...], since they need it in every-day life [...]. If the Poles, the Germans or the French who settled here only temporarily, can speak Romanian, this language should be known [...] [also] by the

⁸⁹ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11. (1848–1861), ff. 805–845: Tomassi, Giuseppe, OFMConv., Visitatore Generale della Missione di Moldavia, *Relazione della Visita della Missione di Moldavia a Sua Eminenza Reverendissima Il Sig. Cardinale A. Barnabi, Prefetto della S. C. di Propaganda*, Bacău, December 10, 1858; ff. 831–832.

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

Hungarians who are linked to their mother-nation only by origin and name, who were born and brought up here, and who [...] have lived here for centuries”⁹¹.

The missionaries saw the activity of the Society of Saint Ladislav regarding the Csángó question as one of the signs of the Hungarian-Romanian diplomatic conflict. “The report [written by representatives of the Society of Saint Ladislav] was published in the Hungarian press... here is its concise version: In Romania (they usually speak of the whole country, that is, of two former duchies, Moldavia and Wallachia) the poor Hungarians are facing the danger of losing their nationality and faith. Hungarian priests should be sent there immediately [...]. Mr. Mayer (the lay delegate) suggested that instead of Germans or Slavs one should send here Hungarian [...] consuls, and *pro coronide* one of the members of the Society recommended the occupation of both duchies by the Hungarian Crown as the best, the easiest and the most effective [solution]”⁹². The missionaries knew that it would make no sense to openly oppose to the Romanian government – under a continuous threat of a diplomatic conflict any move which wouldn’t fit into the Romanian politics could have weakened the position of the Catholic Church in Romania. “I was told that in the interest of the Holy Church I should not irritate the Romanian government by employing new Hungarian priests”⁹³. Thus, the sources confirm again that, in order to protect their own business and to keep the possibility to convert the Orthodox population to Catholicism, the missionaries did everything to satisfy the Romanian authorities. The reduction of the number of Hungarians among priests who worked in Moldavia was facilitated by the already mentioned Hungarian-Italian conflict about the use of Hungarian in contacts with the congregation. The Italians, who supported the primacy of the Romanian language continued to criticize the Hungarians and would send reports reflecting their negative features to Rome: “Father Funták is an inexplicable phenomenon. This priest of immoral manners has brought shame to our mission [...] for 19 years [...]. Impudent in words and behaviour, salacious in acts, anywhere he goes there is only stench left after him [...]. Priest Ferenc Molnár. Hungarian. Parish priest in Vallemare [i.e. Valea Mare]. [...] He drinks until he faints; he curses”⁹⁴. Moreover, Hungarian priests were accused of poor command of Romanian as well. Among the accused were also those who were fluent in Romanian, criticized because instead of Romanian they continued to use the Hungarian language⁹⁵. Basing its opinion on such reports, the Congregation for the Propagation of

⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁹² APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Bulgaria/Wallachia, Vol. 14. (1865–1874), 266, ff. 484–485: [Report of Anton Joseph Pluym to the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith], Bucharest, October 9, 1868; ff. 484r–484v.

⁹³ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), 6313, ff. 318–321: [Nicola Giuseppe Camilli reports to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith on Hungarian attempts to place more Hungarian priests in Moldavia.], Iași, January 5, 1887; f. 321v.

⁹⁴ APF, Scritture Riferite, Moldavia, Vol. 11. (1848–1861), ff. 805–845: Tomassi, Giuseppe, OFMConv., Visitatore Generale della Missione di Moldavia, *Relazione della Visita della Missione di Moldavia a Sua Eminenza Reverendissima Il Sig. Cardinale A. Barnabi, Prefetto della S. C. di Propaganda*, Bacău, December 10, 1858; ff. 820–822.

⁹⁵ Ibidem, f. 831r.

Faith couldn't have developed a particularly positive opinion of the Hungarian missionaries who worked in Moldavia. Moreover, since the authorities of the Congregation weren't really familiar with the actual needs of the Csángós, they didn't question the decisions of the bishops of Iași not to admit more Hungarian priests, as was that the decision made by bishop Camilli in 1887. As Camilli explained, "Hungarian priests who have worked in Moldavia so far have all been dark figures, even those who arrived here with best possible recommendations [...]. Since the death of father Petrás⁹⁶ [...] in Moldavia there has only been one Hungarian priests, who himself wants to leave. I really thank God for that. It's true – one could say that I am being unjust when, those who should arrive now and whom I don't know personally, I condemn judging by the behaviour of the Hungarian missionaries who have worked in Moldavia before. However, it is common knowledge that the Hungarian priests' religious instruction hasn't improved and that the province of the Hungarian Conventual Minorites [...] remains the same"⁹⁷.

Thus, it can be said that, fearing loss of their political influence, regardless of the fact that they were familiar with the needs of their Hungarian-speaking congregation, the missionaries acted *unisono* with the Romanian politics. In such a way, the missionaries' focus on further spreading the Catholic faith among the local Orthodox Romanian population had a considerable influence on the process of the cultural dissolution of the Csángós in the Romanian nation.

Church Education

In the first half of the 19th century there were still many parishes in Moldavia where Hungarian was the language of instruction in schools. In 1838 the head of the Moldavian mission, Raffaele Arduini created a system of elementary schools in the area inhabited by Csángós. Besides religion, they taught reading, writing and arithmetic. Hungarian language manuals were imported by Arduini from Transylvania, while Hungarian- and Romanian-language readers and catechisms were printed in Iași (Seres 2003: 325).

The situation changed diametrically after the union of the Romanian duchies. Beginning with the 1860s, the aim of the Romanian authorities was to remove Hungarian from the Catholic educational institutions. Steps taken by the Romanian government were supported by the Italian missionaries. As early as in 1866, separate Hungarian- and Romanian-language catechisms were replaced by a bilingual one-volume edition, and from 1893 on, only the Romanian version remained in use (Seres 2003: 326; Domokos 2001: 120).

⁹⁶ Petrás Incze János (1813, Fărăoani – 6.IX.1886, Cleja) – between 1839 and 1886 priest of Moldavian Catholics.

⁹⁷ APF, Scritture Riferite nei Congressi, Moldavia, Vol. 13. (1881–1892), 6313, ff. 318–321: [Nicola Giuseppe Camilli reports to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith about Hungarian attempts to place more Hungarian priests in Moldavia.], Iași, January 5, 1887; ff. 318r–318v.

Between 1859 and 1916, there were the following Catholic educational institutions in Moldavia:

- 2 seminaries (since 1886 in Iași, and since 1897 in Hălăucești),
- 2 institutes for girls “Notre Dame de Sion” (Iași and Galați),
- 2 elementary schools for boys (Iași and Galați),
- 2 elementary schools for girls (Iași and Galați),
- 1 school of cantors (Hălăucești).

These institutions were considered as a source of potential danger by the Romanian government. Just like in the case of Hungarian priests in Moldavia, the Romanians were also afraid that the Catholic educational institutions could turn into “nests of Hungarian propaganda”. Therefore, the Romanian-Hungarian fight for the identity of the Catholic Hungarian-speaking inhabitants of Moldavia took place not only in churches, but also in schools.

(The Hungarian Perspective)

The Society of Saint Ladislav aimed to encourage the Csángós to adapt the ideas of Hungarian nationalism. To put it in practice, apart from the activity within the frames of the Catholic Church, the Society also wanted to popularize the Hungarian language and culture through educational institutions. The Society explained the necessity for taking such steps in the following way: “Csángó communities do not care for their schools as much as this important issue [...] would require it. [Thus], the Society of Saint Ladislav included the development of constructing schools”⁹⁸.

Since the option to teach the Hungarian-speaking Catholic youth of Moldavia in Hungary, the activity of the Society of Saint Ladislav focused on developing a local educational system with Hungarian as the language of instruction. In addition to opening new schools sponsored by both the Hungarian government and the Hungarian Catholic authorities, the Society intended to provide the local population with Hungarian-language books⁹⁹, but eventually the only publications which were brought to Moldavia were those given to the Hungarian-language Catholic parishes and churches (Vincze 2004a: 26).

By the end of the 19th century, the Hungarians, who were aware of the problematic financial situation of the Moldavian bishopric, decided to use the financial argument in their activity which aimed at the development of the Hungarian-language education in Catholic schools. Certain amounts of money were offered to the missionaries of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith, in the hope that the missionaries would feel obliged to improve the situation of their Hungarian-speaking faithful. “Reverend Jaquet received 2000 francs annually from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna. [...] I know

⁹⁸ A Szent László Társulat alelnöke, dr. Balogh Sándor Liegerhoffer Nepomuk János puszttinai lelkésznek, Budapest 1875. június 21. (Vincze 2004b: 96).

⁹⁹ Kubinszky Mihály kalocsai kanonok javaslatai a moldvai katolikus magyarok ügyében, Pest, 1868. október 21. (Vincze 2004b: 87).

the Austro-Hungarian government sent this amount for the seminary in Iași to pay the Hungarian language teacher”¹⁰⁰, reported one of the missionaries at the beginning of the 20th century. The financial aid from the Hungarian government continued to arrive even after it had turned out that Hungarian was included in the program only as an optional subject, while other subjects were taught in Romanian (Vincze 2004a: 26).

In 1895, the situation became more convenient for the Hungarian plans. As he had to improve the financial situation of the Moldavian bishopric, the new bishop, Dominique Jaquet, sought for help in Hungary (Seres 2003: 330). Dezső Bánffy, the Hungarian prime minister promised financial aid for the seminary in Iași on condition that certain subjects would be taught in Hungarian and that the seminary would also employ Hungarian teachers (Seres 2003: 330). Still, the alliance between the bishop and the Hungarian government lasted rather short and was ended by a decision of the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Agenor Goluchowski. Goluchowski’s opinion was that Bánffy’s activity was dangerous for the already tense Hungarian–Romanian relations, and thus he recommended to the Prime Minister to cut the provisions for the Iași seminary (Seres 2003: 333; Pozsony 2005: 83–84).

(The Romanian Perspective)

Initially in the seminaries and school of cantors in the bishopric of Iași the languages of instruction were Romanian and Hungarian. Later, however, the Romanian government managed to remove Hungarian from all the Catholic schools in Moldavia.

In order to understand that the Romanian educational system aiming at the production of Romanianized Catholic clergy was explicitly hostile to all non-Romanian national elements, it is enough to examine its basis. A set of rules was laid out for the seminary in Iași as early as in the phase of planning it. According to those rules, only Catholic candidates of Romanian citizenship could be admitted (article 2) and all the subjects covered by the program were to be taught exclusively in Romanian (article 11)¹⁰¹. Among the languages taught there were Romanian, Latin, French and, as an optional subject, German (article 14); the Hungarian language, however, was not included in the list¹⁰². The discriminative character of the program accepted by the Romanian minister of justice, cults and public instruction, Nicolae Crezzulescu also applied to teachers. The only ones who could teach in the seminary were “Romanians or naturalized Romanians”, and – in particular cases – also foreigners, on condition that their command of Romanian was good enough to use it as the

¹⁰⁰ APF, N.S., Vol. 260, R. 109/1903, 58145, ff. 415–417: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammr., Iași, Moldavia, Romania: Sulla visita fatta al Ministro Presidente Rumeno per l'affare del Seminario Franceseano di Halaucesti*, Iași, November 17/30, 1903; f. 415v.

¹⁰¹ ASV, A.E.S., A.I.II Austria (1859–1865), Pos. 326, Fasc. 169, ff. 51–54: *Estratti di giornali nei quali si parla dell'erezione di un Seminario Cattolico a Iași*; f. 52–54: *Extrait du 51 daté 10 Novembre 1864 de la Voix de la Roumanie*.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

language of instruction¹⁰³. The mentioned principles were introduced in the seminary in Iași. “The seminary [...] will follow the Italian pattern. [...] Students [...] are never allowed to go home [...], not even to visit their parents. Students learn [...] Romanian, French, Greek, Latin, and – I suppose, although I’m not completely sure – also German, but [...] not a word of Hungarian, I know it for sure. Even so, one could imagine a situation, when a 12 or maybe 14-year old child [...], not allowed to speak a word of Hungarian for more than ten years, except in secret or in whisper, [...] should not forget the Hungarian language, and be able to speak Hungarian to his faithful and [...] complete other functions after he comes out. [Would it be possible that] such a priest would [...] learn it [i.e. the Hungarian language] again while it would expose him to bad treatment by both the church and the civil authorities? [...] In Hungary the Hungarian issue is lost”¹⁰⁴.

On the threshold of the 20th century the Romanian government issued a set of rules regulating the faith-based education system. The document underscored that the language of instruction could be exclusively Romanian and forbade the teaching of and in Hungarian. “The Prime Minister read the points of the contract signed by the government and Reverend Jaquet. I quote from memory [...]:

a) the language of instruction in the seminaries in Iași and Hălăucești, as well as in the school of cantors, will be Romanian,

b) philosophy and theology will be taught in Latin,

c) teaching Hungarian is forbidden in both the seminaries and in the school of cantors [...]”¹⁰⁵.

Thus, as a result of the Romanian government’s decision, candidates for priesthood who originated from Moldavian towns and villages could learn in Romanian, French, Italian or German, but not in their mother-tongue.

Moreover, the Moldavian Catholic institutes for girls were forced to employ an Orthodox priest or religion teacher. Since among the girls who attended such schools were also Orthodox Romanians, the Romanian government decided to protect them from “the Catholic propaganda”: “The Ministry orders [as follows]:

Orthodox Romanian girls can be taught religion only by an Orthodox priest or another person of Orthodox religion appointed by the Ministry.

The Direction of the Institute is obliged to employ at least one Orthodox priest. If the Institute refuses, the Ministry itself will employ one [to work there]. [The priest] will make sure that the Orthodox students fulfil their religious duties.”¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ ASV, A.E.S., A.I.II Austria (1859–1865), Pos. 326, Fasc. 169, ff. 51–54: *Estratti di giornali nei quali si parla dell’erezione di un Seminario Cattolico a Iași*; f. 52–54: *Extrait du 51 daté 10 Novembre 1864 de la Voix de la Roumanie*.

¹⁰⁴ Balla Gyula Lajos *dormánfalvi plébános levele Csák Alajos Czirjék aradi minorita rendfőnöknek*, Dormánfalva (Dărmănești), 1896. március 2. (Seres 2003: 338).

¹⁰⁵ APF, N.S., Vol. 260, R. 109/1903, 58145, ff. 415–417: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammr., Iași, Moldavia, Romania: Sulla visita fatta al. Ministro Presidente Rumeno per l’affare del Seminario Fransescano di Halaucești*, Iași, November 17/30, 1903; f. 415v.

¹⁰⁶ APF, N.S., Vol. 290, R. 109/1904, 62452, ff. 463–466: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammr., Iași, Moldavia: Circa ostilita del Ministro dei Culti verso gl’Istituti delle Suore de Sion*, Iași, August 10/23, 1904; ff. 463r–463v.

The primary aim of the introduction of Orthodox clergy into the Catholic institutions was to control the Catholic priests. A similar directive can be found in the already quoted regulations ruling the seminary in Iași: “f) the government withholds the right to control the fulfilment of the rules concerning teaching in Romanian”¹⁰⁷. Thus, in practice, under the pretext of controlling the educational process, the Romanian government could influence inner matters of the institution. One could well suppose that the real aim of the above-mentioned regulations was to increase the control of and to isolate the students from the Hungarian language and culture. Candidates for priesthood educated “in the Romanian national spirit” (Demény 1997: 7 quoted in Seres 2003: 332) continued their studies in theological institutes in Italy, and after their return to Moldavia they “continued the forced assimilation of the Csángós” (Demény 1997: 7 quoted in Seres 2003: 332).

Not only did the Romanian politics of isolating the Csángós from the Hungarian culture concern languages used in the Catholic educational institutions. Following the example of the 1864 regulations regarding the seminary in Iași, at the beginning of the 20th century the authorities forbade the seminaries to admit young men who originated from beyond the Romanian frontiers. Therefore, Austro-Hungarian citizens could no longer study in the Moldavian schools – a fact regarded by the government as an ideal way to isolate the Csángó students from all elements of the Hungarian culture. The decision was articulated by the Romanian government in one single phrase: “d) Only Romanian citizens can be accepted in the seminaries”¹⁰⁸.

Apart from the above-said, the Romanian government forbade the bishopric of Iași to accept the financial aid provided by the government of Austria-Hungary: “e) the bishop will not accept money from foreign (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) governments”¹⁰⁹. In spite of that, though, the money continued to arrive, which pushed the Romanian government to seek a more radical solution. Again the financial argument proved to be the most effective: the Romanian government’s idea was to forbid all the Romanian citizens of Romanian nationality (that is, properly said, all the Orthodox citizens of Romania) to attend Catholic schools, and thus to drag the Catholic educational institutions in a financial crisis. “On 11/24 November, in the evening, before I went to Bucharest, I had spoken with Reverend [...] August Kuczka. He told me that the Romanian government was getting ready to prepare a law which would forbid accepting Romanian children, even Catholic ones, in Catholic schools [...]. As a result, the nuns from Iași and Galați (bishopric of Iași) [...] would be forced to close their schools, because without Orthodox students they

¹⁰⁷ APF, N.S., Vol. 260, R. 109/1903, 58145, ff. 415–417: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammr., Iași, Moldavia, Romania: Sulla visita fatta al Ministro Presidente Rumeno per l'affare del Seminario Fransescano di Halaucesti*, Iași, November 17/30, 1903; f. 416r.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁹ APF, N.S., Vol. 260, R. 109/1903, 58145, ff. 415–417: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammr., Iași, Moldavia, Romania: Sulla visita fatta al Ministro Presidente Rumeno per l'affare del Seminario Fransescano di Halaucesti*, Iași, November 17/30, 1903; f. 416r.

wouldn't be able to [maintain the institutions]"¹¹⁰. Surprisingly, this radical step taken by the Romanian government resulted not from the situation in Moldavia, but was the consequence of the activity of Bucharest bishop Hornstein. Because in the Romanian capital there were numerous Hungarian-speaking Catholics, the bishop decided to open a school for them. Another reason for the opening of the school was that many young Catholic Hungarians who wished to study in their mother-tongue were forced, due to the restrictive Romanian politics, to choose the Calvinist schools, which often resulted in conversions¹¹¹. Hornstein thought that if he opened a Hungarian-language Catholic school he could stop the conversions and thus not only help his Hungarian faithful, but also prevent the further weakening of the position of the Catholic Church in Romania. The Romanian government, however, was against Hornstein's initiative, since the bishop was considered an enemy of the Romanian nation. Shortly after this, Hornstein had to leave his post to another candidate, who was more suitable from the Romanian perspective.

In conclusion, in the researched period one of the principal goals of the Romanian national policy was the complete assimilation of the Hungarian-speaking Catholic population of Moldavia. The government's view was that even the slightest trace of the Hungarian language and culture should be eliminated in order to create a complete ethnic, language and cultural homogeneity in Romania. In consequence, until 1916 the majority of the Catholic population of Moldavia "forgot the language of their fathers and were Romanianized"¹¹². This, however, was not enough for the Romanian government: even when less than 25 % of the Csángós continued "to use the Hungarian language at home and in three parishes also in church"¹¹³, the Romanian authorities required from the bishop of Iași "the Romanianization of those parishes through putting pressure on the priests and the congregation"¹¹⁴.

(The Missionaries' Perspective)

The missionaries knew that the majority of their congregation wanted to send their children to schools with Hungarian language of instruction. Some of the priests, like Dominique Jaquet, who acted as bishop of Iași in late 19th century, tried to provide the Hungarian-speaking faithful with education in their mother tongue. "I tried to explain to the Minister of Cults and Public Instruction that [...] the Hungarian-speaking Catholics

¹¹⁰ APF, N.S., Vol. 290, R. 109/1904, 58595, ff. 331–334: *Malinowski P. Giuseppe, Ammre. Iași, Moldavia: Sua intervista col Ministro Presidente della Romania. Notizie varie.*, Iași, November 19/December 02, 1903; f. 332v.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*; ff. 332v–333r.

¹¹² ASV, A.E.S., Austria-Ungheria (1916), Pos. 1096, Fasc. 469, 16802, ff. 19–26: *Relazione di Mons. Domenico Jaquet, Arcivescovo tit. di Salamina, circa la situazione politico-religiosa della Diocesi di Jassi*, Rome, May 12, 1916; f. 21v.

¹¹³ ASV, A.E.S., Austria-Ungheria (1916), Pos. 1096, Fasc. 469, 16802, ff. 19–26: *Relazione di Mons. Domenico Jaquet, Arcivescovo tit. di Salamina, circa la situazione politico-religiosa della Diocesi di Jassi*, Rome, May 12, 1916; f. 21v.

¹¹⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 22r.

didn't want education in Romanian"¹¹⁵, wrote Jaquet in 1896. Still, because of the political interests of the Vatican, the missionaries usually chose what from their perspective seemed to be less harmful. In order to prevent the weakening of the Catholic Church in Romania, they acted according to the directives given by the Romanian government. The excuse for such a behaviour was the following: "Our great [...] interest is to make our congregation speak Romanian (now they use a Hungarian dialect)"¹¹⁶.

In the first decade of existence of the Iași seminary, although the majority of students were Hungarian-speaking Moldavian Csángós (Gecsényi 1988: 184)¹¹⁷, there was no Hungarian language class (Seres 2003: 329). At the same time, regardless of the fact that the official language of instruction in the seminary was Romanian, students could take some of the exams in Hungarian (Gecsényi 1988: 184). The only hope for a lasting change in the situation was the arrival to Iași in 1895 of the already mentioned Dominique Jaquet. In order to improve the bad financial situation of the bishopric, Jaquet decided to negotiate with the Hungarian government¹¹⁸. After the Hungarian Prime Minister Dezső Bánffy had promised subsidies for the bishopric, Jaquet decided to introduce Hungarian into the Moldavian Catholic educational institutions. "I respect the Hungarian language, which is used by a large number of my congregation members [...]. I intend [...] to order that in the two seminaries and in the school of cantors sons of Hungarian and Polish parents should improve their knowledge of their mother tongue, at least during the philosophy and theology classes [...]"¹¹⁹, wrote Jaquet in 1899. A slightly different picture of the situation is reflected in reports by the head of the Jesuit seminary, Feliks Wierciński. According to information provided by Wierciński, in this institution Hungarian was also taught in the preceding years. "The overwhelming part of the students learn Hungarian for three years"¹²⁰, wrote Wierciński in 1896 to the Hungarian primate in Esztergom, Kolos Vaszary; Wierciński promised that as long as it remained his responsibility the local Catholic clergy would take care of the Moldavian Csángós and monitor their knowledge of their mother tongue.

Jaquet's idea was no easy task and required excellent diplomatic skills. After the bishop had arrived to Moldavia, the Romanian Minister of Cults and Public Instruction, Spiru Haret¹²¹ informed him that according to the law in force all the private schools in Romania, including the Catholic schools, had to be accredited by the Ministry. Moreover,

¹¹⁵ APF, N.S., Vol. 142, Rubr. 109/1898, 17382, ff. 2–18: *Jaquet Mgr. Dom., Vesc., Rumenia: Informazione sul Seminario di Iași e l'Archid. di Bukarest*, Iași, March 6, 1896; f. 8v.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, f. 9v.

¹¹⁷ According to Lippert, in 1893 13 from 18 students spoke Hungarian.

¹¹⁸ See *The Hungarian Perspective* within chapter *Church Education*.

¹¹⁹ APF, N.S. Vol. 165, R. 109/1899, 32384, ff. 204–213: *Jaquet Mgr. Domen., Vesc., Iași, Moldavia: Relazione dello stato della diocesi; implora sussidio*, Iași, January 15/27, 1899; f. 209v.

¹²⁰ *Felix Wiercinski, a jászvásári jezsuita szeminárium rektorának levele Vaszary Kolos esztergomi hercegprímáshoz*, Jászvásár, 1896. december 2. (Vincze 2004b: 135).

¹²¹ Spiru Haret, Minister of Cults and Public Education (*Ministrul Cultelor și Instrucțiunii Publice*), March 31, 1897–March 30, 1899; February 14, 1901–December 20, 1904; March 12, 1907–December 27, 1908; December 27, 1908–March 4, 1909; March 4, 1909–December 28, 1910.

Haret informed the bishop that the seminary in Iași did not have the required accreditation. Jaquet knew that there was a hidden message in the Minister's words: the accreditation requirement made it possible for the government to control the education process and the staff employed in the seminary (Tocănel 1965: 773–774). To avoid provoking the Romanian authorities, Jaquet, who made no secret of his own neutral position in the nationality conflict in Romania, as well as his loyalty to his “second fatherland”, started to negotiate with the government. The negotiations resulted in, signing the agreement regulating the Moldavian Catholic educational institutions on January 16, 1899 (Tocănel 1965: 773–774, Netzhammer 2003: 97). According to the agreement in both the seminaries and in the school of cantors, history, geography, arithmetic, natural sciences and other subjects were to be taught in Romanian, while Latin was chosen the language of instruction for philosophy and theology classes. The Hungarian language could not be included in the curriculum as a compulsory subject, and only students who spoke Hungarian at home and intended to work in the Moldavian Hungarian-language settlements after completing their studies could learn it as an optional subject (Tocănel 1965: 775, Netzhammer 2005: 547). Furthermore, since the Romanian Government promised to pay a yearly amount of 41,000 francs to those three schools, Jaquet had to guarantee that he would not accept foreign, that is Hungarian, students any more¹²². Thus, because he did not want to risk the position of the Catholic church in Moldavia, by accepting the conditions of the agreement Jaquet, contrary to his initial intentions, contributed to the marginalization of Hungarian in the Moldavian Catholic schools, and consequently to the Csángós' further assimilation.

In the following years, the Catholic clergy's attitude toward the Hungarian-speaking congregations remained unchanged. Besides the political and the economic interests, the situation was also influenced by the fact that, like in the case of the Catholic archbishop of Bucharest, Hornstein, the Catholic priests who worked in Moldavia were permanently exposed to Romanian threats. As a result, the missionaries were forced to fulfil all orders of the Romanian government – otherwise they risked not only their own work, but also the position of the Catholic Church in the Orthodox Romanian state. Therefore, it can be said that, although it protected the religious component of the Csángó identity, the missionaries' activity contributed to the linguistic assimilation of the Hungarian-speaking Catholic population of Moldavia and thus supported the Romanian home politics in achieving one of its principal goals (Pozsony 2005: 82).

¹²² See *The Hungarian Perspective* within chapter *Church Education*.

Conclusions

Based on diverse sources, we can state that during the researched period the Csángós were a small group of predominantly rural population. In such a context it seems natural that, due to their proportion out of the total population, as a group dominated by the Orthodox Romanian population, the Csángós did not fight openly for either cultural or political autonomy. It is interesting to analyse the role of education as an influencing factor of the Csángó identity; on the one hand, the fact that the majority of the Csángós were illiterate – or little more than illiterate – peasants could have facilitated the Romanian plan of complete assimilation of this group; on the other hand, since in illiterate communities oral tradition is the basis for identification, illiteracy contributed to the partial survival of a distinct Csángó identity.

In my view, the Csángó society managed to maintain its distinct identity also due to the fact that it continued to live in closed enclaves – a phenomenon which can be observed within villages. According to the available sources, both the Csángós and the Orthodox Romanians reduced their reciprocal contacts to the absolute minimum in all fields of life, and thus the two societies lived next to one another rather than “together”.

Initially the frontier separating the Csángós from the Romanian population was defined by three main factors, namely religion, language and traditional, exceptionally conservative lifestyle. From among the enumerated factors, one – language – became undoubtedly the victim of Romanian assimilation policy. Thus, since the Csángós were assimilated linguistically, I think that the most important components of their identity were, at least in the researched period, their Catholic religion and their conservatism.

Apart from the above-said, some conclusions can also be drawn from the analysis of the political factors.

In the eyes of the Romanians the source of danger was not directly the fact that Csángós spoke Hungarian, but rather the consequences of the use of Hungarian, above all the interest for the Csángós displayed by the Hungarian state. To stop the Hungarian initiatives concerning the protection of the Csángós, the Romanian government intended to use the Catholic missionaries who worked in Moldavia. The Romanian goal was to destroy all the traces of Hungarian national thought in Moldavia, and – through the Romanianization of the Csángós – to create an ethnically, linguistically and culturally homogeneous Romanian state.

Under such circumstances, the Vatican, fearing the loss of its political influence in the Orthodox Romanian state, neglected the needs of the Hungarian-speaking Catholics in Moldavia. In consequence, the cooperation between the Holy See and the Romanian government contributed to the fusion of the Csángós and the Romanian population.

The Romanian nationality policy and the activity of the Holy See were opposed by Hungarians, but due to their relatively aggressive character and the ideological context, the Hungarian attempts to help the Csángós preserve their distinct identity made the Romanian-Vatican political cooperation more intensive.

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