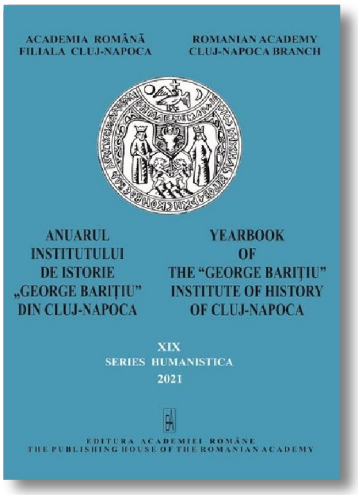


ISSN 1584-4404

# Yearbook of the George Barițiu History Institute of Cluj-Napoca Series *Humanistica*

humanistica.ro

## Crisis management and moral discomfort: the case of a catholic clerk

*Tünde Komáromi*

**How to cite this article:**
Komáromi, Tünde (2021) *Crisis management and moral discomfort: the case of a catholic clerk*, Yearbook of the George Barițiu History Institute of Cluj-Napoca, Series Humanistica, Vol. 19, pp. 7–17. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22963934

© 2021: The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy.
Humanistica Yearbook is published online since 2003.
Submit your article to Humanistica Yearbook: secretariat.dcsu@acad-cj.ro

*SOCIOLOGIE ŞI ANTROPOLOGIE*

# CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND MORAL DISCOMFORT: THE CASE OF A CATHOLIC CLERK[1]

**Tünde Komáromi**

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Abstract.** *The paper presents the case of a Hungarian Catholic clerk, an 81 year old lady from the Transylvanian countryside. Her daughter has sent her a bigger amount of money, but she understood soon that the post officer, a women herself, has stolen a significant part of it. A procedure of reclamation followed, but the case remained unsolved. The director of the post-office and the local policemen did not help. Then she turned to the Romanian Orthodox priest for help and offered some money in change. Although it is quite widespread among the local Hungarians of different religious affiliation (but almost never Orthodox) to ask Romanian Orthodox priests for help in times of personal crisis (or the crisis of a family member), this is a highly contradictory solution for a pious Catholic clerk. She's never been before to any Orthodox priest, but she was aware of similar help seeking activities among the local Hungarian, Romanian or Roma. The same is true for the use of magic during her long lifetime. But using magic is regarded less sinful by the old clerk, than going to the Orthodox priest for the solution of a legal case. She senses God's intention behind her failure!*

**Keywords:** *personal crisis, divine punishment, moral discomfort, Orthodox priest, interethnic and interconfessional relationships.*

I am going to present and analyze a case which is of some interest not only in a local context, but for the whole Transylvania. Auntie Teréz[2], an 81 years old Hungarian Catholic woman, a former cantor, did something without precedent in

[1] The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC grant agreement № 324214. A different version of the paper was published in Hungarian: Krízishelyzet, megoldási kísérletek és bűntudat: egy katolikus kántornő esete (Crisis situation, attempts to solve it and the sense of guilt: the case of a Catholic cantor), In: Jakab, Albert Zsolt – Kinda, István (eds.): Aranykapu. Tanulmányok Pozsony Ferenc tiszteletére (Golden Gate. Studies in Honour of Ferenc Pozsony), Kriza János Ethnographic Society - Hungarian Open Air Museum – The Szekler National Museum, Cluj Napoca, 2015, 693-701.

[2] The name of the woman is a pseudonym.

her life, which contrasted her religious convictions and values: sought help from the local Romanian Orthodox priest in a crisis situation caused by theft. She has been witnessing during her lifetime that many of her neighbors and acquaintances managed in a similar way their crisis situations and seemed to reach their goals.

I met auntie Teréz in the village Hagymás[3], in central Transylvania. The village has a relatively large population (about 4500 people) of mixed ethnic origins: Romanians, Hungarians, and a few Roma families. There have been major changes during collectivization (the 1950's) and in the following decades of the socialist regime. The land of the local farmers went under state ownership and farmers started to work at the collective farms or the factories of the nearby city. About two thousand Romanians from the Western Carpathians were convinced by Communist Party leaders to move to Hagymás (in the 1960's, 1970's). Gardens of formerly rich farmers (and not only kulaks) were partly offered to newcomers, and they started to construct new houses. New streets appeared as well and the village extended. Migration was perceived as serving the socialist modernization and urbanization processes. Many of them considered this village an urban space (because of its closeness to the city and its contrast to the villages from the mountains).

The ethnic composition of the village and power relations changed quickly. Romanians became the majority and the former Hungarian elite and leadership of the village was marginalized. From the beginning of the nineties, there has been a second wave of big changes. Land retribution was full of tensions and compromises. A high percent of the population returned to the traditional methods of agricultural production when most of the factories were closed down and made a living by selling vegetables in the markets of the region. A few regularly paid jobs are available even in the village, and those having one might consider themselves lucky, not depending on the harvest and its low prices. In general, money is a want and even a low pension is much appreciated.

Auntie Teréz comes from the second biggest landowner's family of the village. Not only their land, but even their house was taken by the communists and the offices of the collective farm were installed there. They had to start constructing a new house in a cold November, and lived for a period in a secondary building of a neighborly household. She did not tell very much about her career, but we know that she has been enrolled in the Marianum, the former Catholic Pedagogical Institute for girls[4], and she wished to become a medical doctor, but her father convinced her about the uselessness of such a job for a well situated and pretty girl. She has never become

[3] Hagymás is a pseudonym I used in earlier publications in order to protect my informants. I did most of the fieldwork for my doctoral dissertation on contemporary witchcraft in this village. The dissertation resulted in a monograph (Komáromi, 2009). Hagymás is in Cluj County, and historically was part of Aranyos seat (Hungarian *Aranyosszék*, Romanian *Scaunul Aries*), one of the seven Secler seats, and a territorial administrative unit of Transylvania from the Middle Ages until the late 19th century. In Secler seats, nobility constituted the highest percent of the population.

[4] The Marianum functioned in Cluj between 1911 and 1948. Today, the building is used by the Faculty of Humanities ("Babes-Bolyai" University).

a builder of the socialist regime, but served the Catholic Church instead, as a cantor. This meant even caring of the sick, as she was not allowed to call the Catholic priest to „*every sick alcoholic*". She actually could call him only when somebody needed the last unction. In less difficult cases, she was the one offering solace.

Auntie Teréz had a good knowledge of the local population. She grew up among them and served some of them as a cantor. Besides having many good acquaintances, she was in good terms with her neighbors and had some friends in the village or faraway places, among them Jewish women. When I met her, she was a widow living alone; her children were married for decades and lived in different places of the country. Because of her job at the Roman Catholic Church, she had no pension and was depending on the material support of her daughter. She received a monthly amount for the needs of the household. The money was sent by post and one of the local post officers (a middle-aged woman, Margit[5]) delivered it.

Once, before Easter, her daughter sent her a bigger amount of money than usually. The post officer knew about the bad eyesight of auntie Teréz and made use of the situation. She gave only part of the money to her, which was close to the usual amount and kept the rest (still a high amount). Auntie Teréz was unsuspicious and signed the receipt as she would have got all. Then, she sent a mail to her daughter saying thanks for the money. When the daughter understood from her letter that she had got only part of it, she immediately started to clarify with her mother what happened. Auntie Teréz went to ask the head of the local post office about the amount of money she received from the daughter and handed out to Margit. The chief of the office admitted she had given the whole amount of money to Margit, but there was no proof of what happened afterwards.

When auntie Teréz understood there is no solution at the post office, she went to the local police station and presented her complains. The policemen called Margit, the accused post officer, and asked her to attest (under oath, with her hands laying on the Cross and the Bible) that she did not steal the old woman's money. Margit took the oath shamelessly and the case was shortly closed. When auntie Teréz came back, one of the policemen even took her to the room where they keep the cross and the Bible closed down in a cupboard. She was impressed by the presence of religious symbols at the police station and also by their use, but felt absolutely hopeless and revolted in the same time. Her money was stolen and there was no legal way for justice. She got sick. Nothing seemed more important than vengeance and the publicity of the theft case. Everybody should know "*she is an ignominious snot*".

As there was no proof of what happened, a legal case cannot be opened at the court. In similar cases, locals have recourse to solutions of alternative justice by witchcraft or with God's help. In some of the cases, people are visiting a witch or perform witchcraft by themselves[6]. In other cases, they approach the members of the

[5] Margit is also a pseudonym.

[6] Witchcraft is thought to be used when one has major conflicts or economic damages caused by an unknown person. It is, as well, often understood as an explanation, as the imaginable or accepted

Romanian Orthodox clergy and ask them to pray and serve liturgies instead of an amount of money offered as benefaction. Only the Orthodox priests are known as accepting to help in similar cases. They are supposed to mediate between people and God, and the ordered church services to determine God to solve the case and unmask the guilty person. The judgment is discernible by observing the events following the ordered liturgies, also a period of severe fasting for the unfortunate person[7]. The outcomes are believed to be fatal: cases of serious illness and even death (similarly to cases of witchcraft), also cases of fire can arise, and they are interpreted as a right judgment of the guilty. The damage smites the guilty or his/her family members: if the case of theft is real, the guilty person is punished, if the accusation is a libel, the judgment falls on the accuser. Nobody will condemn the person who "orders liturgies"; it is accepted by the members of the community[8], although it is rarely confessed and only among very close acquaintances or relatives.[9]

*And then I was told to go and ask for anathema[10]. (Who told you?)[11] The acquaintances. They told me to go to the priest, to the Romanian priest, and hand it in! And I will see, that she will… ER… That's how I was impelled to sin! I was impelled to sin! I offered the precious thousands to the priest. And finally I accepted even the blah… if only God would punish her. Just punish! The pig… and let the world see, she is an ignominious snot… Thence God is punishing her! Thence… She doesn't care at all!* (Here I cut an irrelevant sequence of the dialogue.) *That's why I tell you, my dear. Bewitching is like that. You might bewitch, ER, it worth nothing!*

cause of some health, social, or economic problem. These are the main domains where witchcraft is believed to work. Religiosity is a complementary system, and the Orthodox priests are regarded as playing a major role as specialists in healing, 'unbewitching' (the term is used in Favret-Saada, 1988), or solving legal cases with the help of God (Komáromi, 2009).

[7] Villagers say the priests usually advise them to fast and pray (for a period or in special days of the week).

[8] Similarly to what describes Evans-Pritchard for the Azande, magic is considered right (and good) when attacks the guilty (Evans-Pritchard, 1937, 108).

[9] I have written in detail about alternative justice in Hagymás in one of the chapters of my book: Alternative justice: curse and 'bewitchment' (Hungarian local term: *csináltatás)* with the help of the 'Romanian priest' (Komáromi, 2009, p. 100-112). The case of auntie Teréz presents something missing from the book: I did not analyze there any cases of theft followed by a similar solution. I can't give here more details on the larger topic of the services of the Romanian Orthodox priests and their role in the help-seeking activity of the local people: there is a long list of papers addressing this topic from different points of view: Czégényi (1999, 2004, 2015); Gagyi (2010a, 2010b); Keszeg (1996, 1999); Komáromi (1995, 1996, 2001, 2007, 2009, 2010); Mátyus (2004); Pócs (2001, 2002). A young historian, Valer Simion Cosma, has written his doctoral thesis on the role of the Romanian Orthodox priests among the Transylvanian peasants of the 19th century (Cosma, 2013).

[10] Auntie Teréz used the word "furészáltatni" which is originating from the Romanian "*afuresenie*" meaning anathema. On anathema (*„afurisanii"*) see Cosma (2013, pp. 315-322).

[11] The quotation is from an interview with the old auntie Teréz. My own questions are put into round brackets. 'Bewitching' in the original Hungarian is *csináltatás*. It is extremely interesting how she uses the local terms for cursing, bewitching or divine justice mediated by the priest. The alternative use of these terms is common in the village and indicates the alternative use of solutions like cursing, bewitching or divine justice (which is mostly believed to be an anathema) in local crisis management.

*God has many more things to care about! (And which priest you went to?) The Romanian priest. (This one?) Yes, this one from Hagymás. Because the Catholic priest does not deal with these things, nor the Unitarian or the Calvinist. The Romanian one does! Our priests are not dealing with things like that. They say: if somebody sinned, he/she should ask for redemption directly from God, without the mediation of the priest. You know, these Romanians believe in that… (But how to bewitch somebody? Nobody is afraid of what will happen?) No, not at all! Even the priests are not afraid! Do you know, what he did? He told (...*incomprehensible word*); he was praying. Just praying. He kneels in front of the altar and – from a book – he says what he has to say, what is written there. (And how is he dressed up? Is he dressed in his priestly robe?) Yes, of course! (But you were there?) Me? No, not!* ***I only laid the charge on him/trusted him****: please, pray, let the perfidy unfold. Let the dishonesty being discovered, that she have stolen my money. No, I am not mixing up with them![12] I only know the Catholic priest does not do things like that, only the Romanian priests.*

I quoted this part of the interview in order to introduce auntie Teréz's thinking and style, also to show why and how she finally went to the local Romanian priest (*I was impelled to sin!*). We understand that she let herself convinced – and most probably she was determined by her memories as well. During her long life, she listened to so many stories about the efficient help-giving activity of the Romanian Orthodox priests. When she considered all the possible official ways of conflict management, she finally turned to a traditional method which is widely known, but, especially among the Hungarians coming from the formerly rich and more educated families, its use is usually hidden from publicity. One should notice that seeking help from the Orthodox priests in case of theft wasn't the only solution available at the time of my fieldwork. Many people remembered in detail a formerly common way of discovering the thief by looking into a vat (see Keszeg, 1992), but I never witnessed that ritual. I also know that some villagers approached the seers from the region in order to discover how thievery happened and who the thief is (when animals were stolen from the household or the milk of the cows was stolen by magic). In our case, it is absolutely clear who is the thief; subsequently, these techniques were useless. Seeking help from the Romanian priest had a different purpose: auntie Teréz wanted to punish Margit and to achieve the public acknowledgement of the thievery (*let the world see, she is an ignominious snot*).

[12] In the original Hungarian, we have: *nem* ***maszkotyálak*** *én velük.* I would like to suggest her attitude toward the Romanian Orthodox priest – and, more generally, toward this practice by explaining the highlighted word *maszkotyálak* (and the sentence in Italics). In the local everyday speech, the word is used for mixing up one's hands in some adhesive material which makes you filthy; in the same time, the whole action is absolutely purposeless and meaningless. In this context, the woman suggests the uncleanness of mixing up with the Orthodox for a catholic woman whose family formerly was highly ranked in the local society.

After 1989, many cases of theft happened in the village. People got back the land, and, if they were able to cultivate it (being healthy, not yet aged, or not busy with other jobs), they were never sure to get some of the products, the harvest often being stolen. Big household machines, cars, domestic animals were stolen as well, mostly during the night. The same for jewelry – but jewelry used to be stolen during socialism as well, mostly by close people, who came to help. All these cases of theft are hopeless, unless one asks for God's help, and it is believed by the locals that God will listen more to the prayers of the Orthodox Romanian priests or hieromonks. It is worth noticing that thievery from the cooperative was a usual practice in socialist times, but property was collective and the loss did not hurt personally anybody. When thievery arises in the context of private property after '89, it affects harshly the subsistence of the farmer. The stolen agricultural products or other goods got a different meaning. The thievery of golden jewelry in socialist time was affecting as well the households. Sometimes, high amounts of money were spent on gold; it was an easy and relatively safe investment. In the analyzed case, the old woman is totally depending on the money sent by her daughter. If the money is stolen, she can't maintain herself.

Ethnic and religious identities are historically linked (interconnected) in Transylvania (see Komáromi, 2010). Most of the local Romanians are Orthodox Christians (some of them converted to neo-Protestantism after 1989, for example, they became Jehovah's Witnesses). The Hungarians from the village are Calvinist or Unitarian Protestants (members of local historical protestant churches). There is also a minority of Roman Catholic Hungarians, but neo-protestant Hungarians are only a few. The believers of the "Hungarian" churches (the Catholics, Calvinists, and Unitarians) visit each other's churches; even more, the Protestants occasionally might take the communion in the church of the other protestant denomination. There is no similar intimate relationship with the "Romanian" church, the Orthodox. In the last decades, ethnically mixed marriages became more common (they used to be rare even in the communist time). The wedding ceremony in this case is attended by the Hungarian family members as well, but one has to listen to their comments in order to understand how strong the prejudices are and how the distance and the borders are maintained. If there are no mixed marriages in the family, a Hungarian person from the village hardly enters an Orthodox church. If it happens to 'order a liturgy', he/she is not attending it; he/she only pays a secret visit to the priest, in his home. The local Romanians do not attend 'Hungarian churches' as well.

Not only in this village, but more generally in Transylvania one can experience the keeping of a certain distance between the members of different ethnic (and religious) communities. The religion and religious culture of the 'others' are mostly unknown, even in the case of neighbors. It doesn't mean they are not in connection, or do not communicate. They actually share a lot of life experiences, but, as far as I am not wrong, people rarely talk in detail about their religion with people of different religious affiliation. They do speak about the religion of the others in their absence, and only use stereotypic surmises (for example, Hungarian Protestants often say the

Romanian Orthodox are superstitious, that they have an unreasonable religious belief/exaggerated belief). Local people might know each other's language (nowadays, more often, Hungarians the Romanian language), they might have some knowledge on the other people's culinary culture (which most often means the acceptance and consumption of several dishes, like the Romanian *ciorba* or the Hungarian *paprikas*). In Hagymás, the newly settled Romanians learned a lot from the local Hungarians on gardening, especially on the cultivation of the vegetables. There is a considerable amount of shared knowledge, but knowledge on religion and religious life in general is not shared.

It seems that only the possibilities for an instrumental use of religion are discussed or at least this is what Hungarians learn from Romanian Orthodox believers and use in cases of need. A special practice of crisis situation management developed this way. In case of serious problems, illnesses, or loss, local Romanians, Hungarians, and Roma, as well, seek help and support from the Romanian Orthodox priests, but there is a remarkable difference among them in how they address the same priests and what they think about. The Romanian Orthodox goes on a usual basis to the Orthodox Church, not only in crisis situations. They take part at the liturgy and it is something usual to pray there, and also to ask the Orthodox priest to pray for them and for their living or dead family members (by handing on the small pieces of paper, the *pomelnic*, containing the list of family members). Fasting is as well part of their life, even if varies how seriously is taken into consideration by different believers, or by the same believer, in different periods of her/his life, or in different periods of fasting in the same year. But all these techniques (or methods) used as well as methods of alternative justice do accommodate in a natural way in their culture and life history in comparison with the Hungarian Protestants, who usually do not participate at liturgies and other Orthodox church services and do not fast.[13] For the (mostly) rational Hungarian Protestants, these rituals and practices seem superstitious or magical, while, for the Orthodox people, these are part of the normal religious life. Even the 'ordered liturgy' and praying or fasting with a special purpose (in our case, the divine justice) are an organic part of the tradition. An Orthodox Romanian believes in a different way in the life changing power of the religious belief than a believer of one of the historical Protestant Churches from Transylvania. They were socialized in completely different religious cultures. For an orthodox, miracles are possible. But there are crisis situations when a Hungarian is no less in need of a miracle than a Romanian and, in these situations, the need is overwriting the scientific and rational viewpoints supported or at least publicly stressed otherwise.

As I mentioned previously, other solutions were also available in Hagymás in case of theft. For example, one of Ferenc's (another pseudonym) horses was stolen

[13] There is another important difference: most of the Hungarians do not confess (only the Roman Catholics). This is of major importance in case of religious healing. The Orthodox Church recognizes a direct relationship between illness and sin.

and he went to a seer living thirty kilometers away who thought him how to defend his household by magic in the future. Ferenc went to the seer with a mediating person, whom he trusted a lot, and believed in the seer's helping capacity. Nonetheless, he was unsuccessful: the thief's identity wasn't discovered and the horse was never found. There were a few traditional seers, healers, tin-casters, herbalists (people healing with herbs), osteopaths in the region, whose help-giving activity was largely demanded, even if the help-seeking was rarely acknowledged in public. Trying out these methods was considered a necessary compromise and was widespread. Taking into consideration the publicly held opinions, one would think these practitioners and their methods lost their importance for decades. And this is somehow understandable: educated people consider that rational thinking ranks higher in the society. Most of the local Protestants and the former party officials were proud of their rational thinking (and some of them of their atheism). The veracity of opinions is extremely difficult to verify. One can know only the publicly shared opinions and nobody can find out what the same Protestants or atheists did in crisis situation if only they assume telling. My experience is that it depends on the nature of relationship between the anthropologist and the local people what people share about their thinking and life history. In any case, usually not the opinions, but their assuming and sharing changes in a research process and, if trust develops, nobody worries about contradicting earlier statements. A more realistic self appears once people are convinced about your tolerance and capacity to understand different standpoints. To be sure, nobody wishes to become undignified for the sake of a research. We must be careful in distinguishing between 'fronts' (Goffman, 2000) regulated by imagined or real expectations, between appearances and real beliefs and practices.

In spite of the significant differences between the religious culture of Hungarians and Romanians, the studies from the last decades testify the existence of **a shared culture of crises** throughout Transylvania[14]**.** People mostly know that the best method to solve an otherwise not solvable legal case is to ask a Romanian Orthodox priest for spiritual support, and they mostly do ask the local priests, or travel far away to do so. In such cases, even the protestant Hungarians will pray and fast as the priest recommends, and they believe in his ability to help. If Romanians believe the religions of the Hungarians are not powerful, the Hungarians, on the contrary, believe that Romanian Orthodox people have strong religious belief (which is taken seriously in case of misfortune, even if otherwise it is regarded as superstition). They also believe in the power of the Romanian Orthodox priest, even if they have no access to their religious beliefs and rituals, and often they are only told about what the priest does, what happens in the church, and they hardly ever enter a church or meet a priest personally[15].

[14] See the same studies as in footnote 9.

[15] There are also Hungarians keeping long term relationships with a Romanian priest, usually serving as a spiritual father. In any Transylvanian region, several Romanian Orthodox priests have the reputation of powerful helpers.

People do not seek help from the Romanian Orthodox priests only in cases of theft: most probably, their incidence is less frequent than the cases of serious illness or family problems, which are common reasons of visiting a Romanian priest (more detailed description and analyses of the topic in Komáromi, 1996, 2009, 2010). The help-seeking of Hungarians appears to be very similar to the help-seeking of the Orthodox Romanians, but they have a completely different relationship with the priest, do interpret in a different way his mediatory role. Romanians always have the possibility to pray to the Savior, the blessed virgin, or the saints. Icons from their churches and houses are present as well with a mediatory role and help praying in the same way as they have helped for centuries[16].

The case of the old clerk is special in several respects. First of all, it is an unusual case of theft. Auntie Teréz originated from an enlightened Hungarian family and she was very proud of her culture. Her father hated superstitions and she tried to be faithful to his education. But life produced situations which were crying for a compromise (for example, when, as a young and beautiful lady, she got the evil eye in the train and accepted the magical healing ritual of a local Gipsy woman, which finally healed her). After the case of theft, she has been living with a strong wish for justice and publicity for the case. She wanted to punish the thief at least by raising her shame. The old clerk made an unusual step for her, in deep contradiction with her whole life and culture: she went to the Romanian Orthodox priest, first time in her life, and asked him to serve a liturgy and pray for God's help. She even donated money for the priest. She did not take part at the liturgy; she only addressed the priest at his house. She followed the advice of the locals, but felt deeply confused because of her step. Nevertheless, she's been waiting very much for a misfortune which can uncover the truth, but nothing has happened to the guilty post officer. She was unhappy, since she's been told the curses find their way if they are right. She witnessed such cases earlier, when a neighborly woman cursed her husband after being beaten by him eagerly, and the husband was lying in the bed for many years. She knew as well about the power of the Romanian Orthodox priests from the stories coming from the Romanian neighbors about the pilgrimages to Nicula, where there used to be big liturgies with thousands of participants and also great exorcisms performed for the possessed.

In this study, I wished to argue that social origin and religious culture highly determines our attitudes toward others and their different practices; it is limiting our thinking and activity; but there are situations which press us to transgress the usually respected barriers. Nonetheless, we will experience a sense of guilt and moral discomfort if we do so. Hungarians from Transylvania try to be faithful to their cultural and religious traditions, but they are continuously challenged by the beliefs and practices of people living nearby (of different ethnic and religious affiliation or

[16]Many parallels can be discovered between the religiosity of the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, but there are important differences as well, which influence the demand and supply in matters of seeking help from the Orthodox priests.

only coming from different social strata and believing in 'superstitions'). At a young age, auntie Teréz was able to resist the stories of the Gypsy woman about devils stealing the real child and replacing him/her with a sick devilish creature, and was brave enough to leave her children unguarded in the streamlined pram at the sunny terrace. At an old age, she can't resist a much stronger 'superstition'[17], the temptation of the Orthodox religious belief and practice. After the case of theft all, the officially available methods were tried. Only divine justice was left and she knew that her own Catholic priest does not accept a mediatory role. She went to the Orthodox priest, but nothing happened to the guilty post officer. The only result was her moral discomfort. Although she felt often puzzled listening to stories of exorcism or ordered liturgies, she did not learn more about Orthodox religiosity and did not change her opinion radically. The stereotypic formulations and the unsophisticated judgments testify her low level of knowledge on the religious culture of the other ethnic group, which is even more significant in the case of a cantor.

## REFERENCES

Cosma, V. S. (2013). *Molitve, cetanii si afuresenii. Preotul in lumea taraneasca a romanilor ardeleni din secolul al XIX–lea* [Prayers and anathema. The priest in the world of the Transylvanian peasant in the 19th century] (PhD thesis). Cluj-Napoca: Babeș-Bolyai University, Faculty of History and Philosophy.

Czégényi, D. (1999). Magyar-román interetnikus kapcsolatok vallási vetülete. A román pap alakja egy erdélyi közösség hiedelemrendszerében [The religious aspect of the Hungarian-Romanian inter-ethnic relations. The figure of the Romanian priest in the belief-system of a Transylvanian community]. In É. Borbély, D. Czégényi (Eds.), *Változó társadalom* [Society in change] (pp. 29-43). Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca: Kriza János Néprajzi Társaság.

Czégényi, D. (2004). A román pap alakja egy szilágysági közösség hiedelemrendszerében (Gyógyítás és rontás) [The figure of the Romanian priest in the belief-system of a community from Salaj (Healing and bewitching)]. In É. Pócs (Ed.), *Áldás és átok, csoda és boszorkányság. Vallásetnológiai fogalmak tudományközi megközelítésben* [Blessing and curse, miracle and witchcraft. Notions of the ethnology of religion in an interdisciplinary approach] (pp. 382-401). Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.

Czégényi, D. (Ed.) (2015). *A mágikus erejű pap. Szerepek és helyzetek* [The priest with a magical power. Roles and situations]. Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca: Erdélyi Múzeum–Egyesület.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Favret-Saada, J. (1988). Unbewitching as therapy. *American Ethnologist, 16(1),* 40-56.

Gagyi, J. (2010a). „Elítélt, hogy én haljak meg…" Rontás, büntetés, betegség: egyéni és közösségi magyarázatok ["He/she judged me, in order to die…" Bewitching, retribution, illness: personal and collective explanations]. In É. Pócs (Ed.), *Mágikus és szakrális medicina. Vallásetnológiai fogalmak tudományközi megközelítésben* [Magic and sacral healing. Notions of the ethnology of religion in an interdisciplinary approach] (pp. 300-312). Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.

[17] I am quoting the term 'superstition' used by auntie Teréz in order to help understand how she explains her wish to keep distance. She used the same term when she talked about the Gipsy woman who believed in the possibility of changing babies by the devils. In her opinion, Romanians and Roma are more superstitious than Hungarians, but she admits the existence of superstitious people even among her own ethnic group.

Gagyi, J. (2010b). *Amire vágyunk, amitől félünk, amit remélünk* [What we wish, what are afraid of and what we hope]. Marosvásárhely/Târgu-Mureş: Mentor Kiadó.

Goffman, E. (2000). *Az én bemutatása a mindennapi életben* [The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life]. Budapest: Thalassa Alapítvány – Pólya Kiadó.

Keszeg, V. (1992). A cseberbenézés. Egy mezőségi hiedelem eredete és szemantikája [Looking into a vat. The origins and the semantics of a belief from Câmpia Transilvaniei]. *Néprajzi Látóhatár, 1–2*, 70-80.

Keszeg, V. (1996). A román pap és hiedelemköre a mezőségi folklórban [The Romanian priest and the related belief-system in the folklore of Câmpia Transilvaniei]. *Ethnographia, CVII*(1–2), 335-369.

Keszeg, V. (1999): *Mezőségi hiedelmek* [Beliefs from Câmpia Transilvaniei]. Marosvásárhely/Târgu-Mureş: Mentor Kiadó.

Komáromi, T. (1995). *Hétköznapi betegségszemlélet* [Everyday conceptions of illness] (MA Thesis). "Babes–Bolyai" University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Hungarian Language and Literature – Ethnology, Cluj-Napoca.

Komáromi, T. (1996). Rontásformák Aranyosszéken. A gyógyító román pap [Forms of bewitchment in the Arieş Valley]. *Néprajzi Látóhatár, V(1–2)*, 87-98.

Komáromi, T. (2001). Az ijedtség. [The magical fright]. In: V. Keszeg, D. Czégényi (Eds.), *Emberek, szövegek, hiedelmek. Tanulmányok* [People, texts, beliefs. Studies] (pp. 112-140). Kolozsvár/ Cluj-Napoca: Kriza János Néprajzi Társaság.

Komáromi, T. (2007). Cipő és talizmán. Egy megszállott fiatalember története [Shoe and talisman. The case of a possessed young man]. In É. Pócs (Ed.), *Maszk, átváltozás, beavatás. Vallásetnológiai fogalmak tudományközi megközelítésben* (Tanulmányok a transzcendensről, V) [Mask, shape-turning, initiation. Notions of the ethnology of religion in an interdisciplinary approach. (Studies on the transcendent, V)] (pp. 448-468). Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.

Komáromi, T. (2009). *Rontás és társadalom Aranyosszéken* [Witchcraft and society in Arieş Valley] (PhD thesis). Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca: Babes-Bolyai University, Department of Hungarian Ethnography and Anthropology (published by Kriza János Ethnographic Society).

Komáromi, T. (2010). Crossing Boundaries in Times of Personal Crises: Seeking Help from Orthodox Clergy in Transylvania. In G. Valtchinova (Ed.), *Religion and Boundaries. Studies from the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey* (pp. 155-166). Istanbul: The Isis Press.