

André Lossky – Goran Sekulovski – Thomas Pott (éd.)

LITURGIE ET RELIGIOSITÉ

64^e Semaine d'études liturgiques
Paris, Institut Saint-Serge, 26–29 juin 2017

 **Aschendorff**
Verlag

Semaines d'Études Liturgiques Saint-Serge (SÉtL)

Actes édités par

André Lossky et Heinzgerd Brakmann
avec la collaboration de Barbara Hallensleben

vol. 64

Comité scientifique :

Heinzgerd Brakmann – Nicolas Cernokrak – Nicholas Cochand – Gilles
Drouin – Flemming Fleinert-Jensen – André Lossky – Marcel Metzger –
Anatole Negruta – Thomas Pott – Goran Sekulovski

(STUDIA OECUMENICA FRIBURGENSIA 86)

Publié avec l'aide du Conseil de l'Université Fribourg Suisse

www.aschendorff-buchverlag.de

© 2018 Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Münster

Das Werk ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Die dadurch begründeten Rechte, insbesondere die der Übersetzung, des Nachdrucks, der Entnahme von Abbildungen, der Funksendung, der Wiedergabe auf fotomechanischem oder ähnlichem Wege und der Speicherung in Datenverarbeitungsanlagen bleiben, auch bei nur auszugsweiser Verwertung, vorbehalten. Die Vergütungsansprüche des § 54 Abs. 2 UrhG werden durch die Verwertungsgesellschaft Wort wahrgenommen.

Printed in Germany

Gedruckt auf säurefreiem, alterungsbeständigem Papier 

ISBN 978-3-402-12215-0
ISBN 978-3-402-12217-7 (E-Book-PDF)

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Présentation	9
--------------------	---

EXPOSÉS INTRODUCTIFS

Thomas POTT, L'étude de la piété liturgique comme complément indispensable de la science liturgique. Questions phénoménologiques, théologiques et méthodologiques	11
Marcel METZGER, La religiosité dans les premiers siècles du christianisme	21

ASPECTS BIBLIQUES

François ORFEUIL, Vie, culte et liturgie : le message des prophètes du 8 ^e siècle av. JC.	35
Sandrine CANERI, De Hoshana rabba au Dimanche des Palmes : l'attente ardente du Salut	47
Nicolas CERNOKRAK, L'expulsion des vendeurs du Temple : analyses littéraires et sens symbolique liturgique	63

ESSAIS DE PHÉNOMÉNOLOGIE DES ACTES CULTUELS

András DOBOS, Interaction between Superstitious Beliefs and Liturgical Life. Phenomenological and Philosophical Reflection on the Practices of the Carpathian Byzantine liturgical tradition	73
Charbel NASSIF, Liturgie et religiosité chez les grecs melkites catholiques aux XVIII ^e -XIX ^e siècles : entre « latinisation » et conservatisme	91
René TETEGAN, L'Eucharistie de guérison de l'arbre généalogique au Togo	109
Gohar HAROUTIOUNIAN, L'influence de la religiosité non-chrétienne sur le rituel arménien : le cas du sacrement du mariage ..	119
Daniel OLTEAN, Un rite de passage conservé dans la pratique liturgique byzantine : la tonsure post-baptismale	131

LES INDULGENCES : UN REPENTIR DÉFORMÉ

- Marco GALLO, Le peuple de Dieu a-t-il toujours du flair ? Les indulgences, une pratique pastorale qui nous interroge 157
- Flemming FLEINERT-JENSEN, Les quatre-vingt-quinze thèses de Luther sur les indulgences (1517) 169

SOLENNITÉS PASCALES

- Mateusz POTOCZNY, An Accommodation of the Syriac Holy Week Celebrations in the Cultural Context of the Syro-Malankara Church 177
- André LOSSKY, Hymnographie byzantine récente : exemples de religiosité actualisatrice ou réductrice 193

USAGES DE L'ENCENS

- Liju KOSHY, The Reconciliatory Nature of the Rite of Incensing : A Liturgico-Theological Analysis in the Syro-Malankara *Qurbano* and Syro-Malabar *Qurbana* 209
- Cyrille VAEL, Symboles méta-culturels et ritualité : l'encens comme paradigme 223

ESPACE LITURGIQUE

- Gabriele TORNAMBÉ, La Chapelle palatine dans le Palais des Normands de Palerme, carrefour de traditions liturgiques et religieuses 233
- Gilles DROUIN, Des lieux pour le culte de la Vierge et des saints dans la France post-tridentine 261
- Bruno BÜRKI, Chemin de crèche à Neuchâtel (Suisse) 273
- Charles RENOUX, La fête de la Transfiguration à Jérusalem et l'église de l'Ascension dans les Lectionnaires géorgiens 281

LES ARTS DANS LA LITURGIE

- Maura BEHRENFELD, Abstract Art as Embodied Medium for Releasing Natural Religiosity 299
- André HAQUIN, Le chant liturgique avant et après Vatican II. Contextes, tâches, défis 311

DEGRÉS HIÉRARCHIQUES

- Vitaliy YEFIMENKOV, The rank of the Reader in the Ancient Church: Russian Liturgical Research 327

Christophe D'ALOISIO, Point de vue ecclésiologique et pastoral sur les titulatures cléricales et les distinctions honorifiques	343
---	-----

PRATIQUES PARA-LITURGIQUES

Andrew WADE, Individual Prayer in the Monastic Cell between Alexandria and Mount Sinai in the Thirteenth Century : the Hours in Sin. Ar. 232	353
Maksim KIVELEV, The Development of the « Paraliturgical » Ele- ments in the Russian Orthodox Church of the Synodal Period. Observations of the Order of Moleben	375

EUCARISTIE: QUESTIONS CONTEMPORAINES

Pascal SEVENI, Un culte de consolation et de reconstruction. Re- gards croisés sur les pratiques « pro-liturgiques » relatives aux prières de guérison au Rwanda	385
Richard ONGENDANGENDA MUYA BIN LOKOLA, Mystère eucha- ristique et indigence humaine en Afrique aujourd'hui. Le cas des Grands Lacs	417
Roshan FERNANDO, Iustitia Pacem Spondet: A Liturgical and Theological Exploration of the Collect of the Mass Formulary for the Preservation of Peace and Justice	437
Joris GELDHOF, La religiosité chrétienne comme collaboration à la sanctification du monde. Une lecture de l'Ordo Missae 2002/2008 à partir de quelques idées d'Antoine Vergote	449

<i>Index thématique</i>	465
<i>Collaborateurs</i>	467

INTERACTION BETWEEN SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS
AND LITURGICAL LIFE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION
ON THE PRACTICES OF THE CARPATHIAN BYZANTINE
LITURGICAL TRADITION

1. INTRODUCTION: WHAT DO PEOPLE UNDERSTAND BY THE
TERM “SUPERSTITION” IN DIFFERENT AGES?

If we want to make a scientific investigation into the subject of superstitious elements in the liturgical life of any Christian confession, first of all, we must be aware that the notion “superstition” is a rather relative notion. A good sign of this is the fact that nobody has been able to give a convincing etymological explanation of the origin of the word.

Several attempts at giving such an interpretation are known from antiquity. Cicero tried to derive the sense from the Latin adjective *superstes*, which means “survivor”: the superstitious are parents who – moved by deep anxiety – pray and offer sacrifice to the gods the whole day, in order that their children may survive them, and thus be able to perform the necessary funeral rites¹. Other authors, like Lactantius, criticized Cicero’s interpretation, yet he still used the same root from which Cicero derived his etymology: For Lactantius, the true cult of the divinity, namely Christianity, is defined by him as *religio*, superstition is false worship and rooted in the veneration of deceased ancestors, who are considered as *superstites*. So while Cicero considered superstition to be an exaggerated cult, Lactantius defined it is altogether false². Leaping ahead historically, Martin Luther calls

¹ Nam qui totos dies precabantur et immolabant, ut sibi sui liberi superstites essent, superstitiosi sunt appellati, quod nomen patuit postea latius; qui autem omnia, quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent, diligenter retractarent et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo.” CICERO, *De natura deorum* II, 28,72, in J. B. MAYOR (ed.), II, Cambridge 1883, 27.

² Nimirum religio ueri cultus est, superstitio falsi.” LACTANTIUS, *Divinae institutiones* IV, 28, in S. BRANDT (ed.), *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 19, Pragae-Vindobonae-Lipsiae 1890, 390.

the pope the “source and author of all kind of superstition”³, and considers the concept of Holy Mass, in the form in which it was celebrated at that time, also to be superstitious. And just two centuries later, the representatives of the Enlightenment reckoned the whole Christian religion to be a superstition. For Immanuel Kant, even prayer seems to be a superstitious act⁴. Perhaps the closest definition to the one which Catholic and Orthodox believers share today, is the one of Marcus Terentius Varro, transmitted by Saint Augustine⁵: the true believer has a relation to God like that which he has with his own parents, the superstitious ones fear him as if he were an enemy. In any case, we must be aware that the meaning of the term “superstition” varies according to historical eras and religious confession.

2. THE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH CUSTOMS SEEN FROM OUTSIDE: LITURGICAL ABUSES OR FAITHFULNESS TO HER OWN TRADITION?

The previous examination into the evolution of the notion “superstition” is useful for understanding the relation between superstition and liturgical life in the Carpathian Byzantine tradition. Byzantine Christians with Slavic Ruthenian, and in part Romanian origins, had been living in this region of the Hungarian Kingdom since at least the High Middle Ages. In a land, where the ruling classes were Catholic or Protestant, these Orthodox Christians had neither a well-established ecclesiastical structure, nor any rights in society, such as having an education. They relied upon the *igumen* of the monastery of Mukachevo, who had for a long time held an episcopal title. It was only when, in the middle of the seventeenth century, a part of the local clergy and the bishop accepted union with Rome (Union of Uzhgorod), that they obtained some recognition and opportunities for development.

We have few liturgical sources from this period. Even the first witnesses did not come from within the Byzantine world, but from the Latin hierarchy or the Catholic and Protestant landowners, in whose

³ *Romanus pontifex, superstitionum omnium fons et autor*”, M. LUTHER, *De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae, Straßburg 1520, f iii.*

⁴ „Das Beten, als ein innerer förmlicher Gottesdienst und darum als Gnadenmittel gedacht, ist ein abergläubischer Wahn (ein Fetischmachen)”; I. KANT, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*, Königsberg 1793, 284.

⁵ „Quale autem illud est, quod cum religiosum a superstitioso ea distinctione discernat, ut a superstitioso dicat timeri deos, a religioso autem tantum uereri ut parentes, non ut hostes timeri”; AUGUSTINE, *De civitate Dei* VI, 9, in B. DOMBART – A. KALB (ed.), *Corpus Christianorum – Series Latina* 47, Turnholti 1955, 178.

territory the Ruthenian population had settled. The Hungarian nobility were shocked by the poverty and simplicity of this newly arrived ethnic group. “As far as the proprieties of the people are concerned” – writes one of the landowners – “with respect to their nature they are wild, quite simple and regarding the rules of conduct, entirely ignorant”⁶. “Their manners were until our time exceedingly wild” – wrote another nobleman of the 18th century⁷. It is remarkable that among the first observations from their side about the habits and customs of the Slavic Byzantine people, that of superstition was the most reiterated. One of the most important characteristics of the “rude and vulgar”⁸ population was that they were “infinitely attached to their superstitious customs”⁹. It is of great interest to us to note the observation of the landholder K. Fejérváry, who left us a valuable ethnographical description of the Ruthenian people:

They insist on their ancient traditions and religion in such a measure, that, if they don't observe the ceremonies around the nativity, matrimony, funerals and such things according the old rite, they don't consider them valid. The superstition is highly characteristic of them, namely the fact that the superstition is mixed so much in all their customs, both secular and the sacred, that the opinion seems to me true of one who says about the Ruthenians: “without superstition they cannot luckily be born, nor conduct a pious life, nor happily die.” And probably that is one of the reasons, why it is difficult to understand their traditions, of which they have many, and among them several superstitious ones. Moreover, they are very wary, that foreigners may not inquire into them and penetrate into their minds¹⁰.

⁶ „Indolem gentis quod attinet, natura sua sunt feroces, simplices admodum, inculti penitus et decori leges ignorantes, extra modum audaces et ad laborum patientiam facti, parvo contenti, divitiis non inhiant, dummodo sufficiat, unde victitent et imposita pendant tributa.” A. PETROV, *K. Fejérváry, De moribus et ritibus Ruthenorum и аналогичныя свѣдѣнія М. Беля А. и Сурмаи*, Библиотека «Записок Чину Св. Василия Вел.», ч. 6, Жовка 1929, 6.

⁷ „*Mores eorum, usque nostram fere aetatem nimis feri erant.*” A. SZIRMAY, *Notitia topographica, politica inclity comitatus Zempleniensis*, Budae 1803, 52.

⁸ „Атрох et ignobile genus”; A. PETROV, *Предѣлы угрорусской рѣчи въ 1773 г. по официальнымъ даннымъ*, Материалы для истории угорской Руси VI, Санкт-Петербургъ 1911, 264.

⁹ „Est enim plebs infinita dedita superstitionibus”; *ibid.* 269.

¹⁰ „Antiquorum morum et religionis adeo tenaces, ut, nisi puerperia, nuptiae, funera et id genus solennitates ritu patrio absolvantur, irrita esse putant. Superstitio vel maxime iis propria, ritus enim omnes gentis huius, tam sacri, quam et profani, adeo quadam superstitione sunt permixti, ut ex vero demum is mihi dixisse videatur, qui asseruit *Ruthenos sine superstitionibus nec feliciter nasci, nec pie vivere, nec beate mori posse*. Et profecto haec una causa est, cur in cognitionem rituum eorum difficulter perveniamus, quia et multi sunt, et superstitiosi adeoque singulari per eos cavetur studio, ne alienigenae in eorum deveniant cognitionem.” PETROV, *K. Fejérváry, De moribus et ritibus Ruthenorum*, 6.

This testimony is more subtle than others. It not only charges the Ruthenian people with superstition, but admits that they are faithful to their traditions, and that foreigners are not able to understand the deeper meaning of these customs.

While, for the Hungarian nobility, the supposed superstitious behaviors of the Byzantine Ruthenians constituted a curious ethnological phenomenon, in the mind of the Latin hierarchy it was a strong argument against their efforts to achieve independence. The Greek Catholics, since their union with Rome in 1646, were subjects of the Roman-Catholic bishop of Eger; the Byzantine bishop was regarded as the vicar of latter with regard to the Byzantine rite. When, during the reign of Maria Theresa, the Greek Catholic clergy increasingly struggled for ecclesiastical autonomy, the Latin Ordinary, the bishop of Eger, repeatedly made the argument that the Byzantine priests and their parishioners were not yet mature enough to have an independent diocese because their life was full of abuses such as, among other things, superstitious beliefs.

So let us examine now what the Hungarian nobility and the Latin clergy considered to be superstitious elements. We will look first at the accusations we find frequently in the accounts of Hungarian nobles: the Ruthenian people have strange marriage customs¹¹: parents engage their children at five and six years, girls are stolen during pilgrimages, the clergy, especially monks in some monasteries, permit divorce on any pretext, and they don't baptize children until they are at least two years of age¹². These, and other similar charges, are the criticisms of the landowners. If the landowners recall any explicitly superstitious practices, they mention wedding and funeral traditions. On this last point, for example, one author, a Lutheran pastor, finds the funeral tradition astonishing. He recounts that the coffin is open until the end of the service, and is not closed, till all those present approach to the corpse and give the last kiss to the deceased¹³. Anyone familiar with the Byzantine rite, knows that the "last kiss" is an integral part of the funeral ceremony. For an evangelical pastor, who was by the way a polymath of Hungarian Enlightenment, this rite seemed a superstitious practice.

¹¹ Cf. PETROV, K. *Fejérváry, De moribus et ritibus Ruthenorum*, 11–13.; ID., *Предълы угорусской рѣчи*, 268.

¹² Cf. *ibid.* 267–268.

¹³ *Sepulturam instituunt hoc modo. Impositum tumbae cadaver defertur in delubrum nec operculatur prius, quam a singulis amicis oscula extrema accipiat. Peractis enim iustorum solemnibus prodeunt ex ordine parentes aut consanguinei patensque cadaver osculo devovent humo singuli et postea coopertum imponunt sepulcro. Ibid.* 269.

As for the criticisms of the Hungarian Latin clergy, it is not so easy to distinguish between abuses, errors and superstitions, with which the Roman-Catholic priests continually reproach the uniate clergy. The register is large: the Byzantine priests are reluctant to recite the *Filioque* in the Creed, they consider that for the anointing of the sick seven priests are necessary, they observe special days for commemoration after a death, they hear the confession of more than one penitent at the same time, they sell the sacraments for money, they despise the sacraments of the Latin Church, and don't permit to their parishioners, even as *viaticum*, to receive the Eucharist from them. And when the parishioners do it anyway, they tell the family of the deceased, that he will be damned, because he received communion from the hand of a Latin priest. They don't observe the rules for fasting on Saturday, neglect the rosary, and ignore the *Angelus* prayer. They teach that if someone receives communion in the state of mortal sin, then he doesn't receive the real Body of Christ. Moreover, they cure illnesses with obscure exorcisms during which they beat the head, or other parts, of the sick person¹⁴.

Surveying these charges, one would not call most of them abuses, and still fewer, superstitions. The representative of the empress Maria Theresa, arguing to the Pope in for the canonical creation of the Greek Catholic eparchy (i.e. for a self-governing ecclesiastical entity) defends the Byzantine clergy against the charges of the Bishop of Eger:

The Ruthenians celebrate the divine Mysteries in the Greek rite and in the Slavic language, of which the Latin bishops don't have any knowledge [...] For they know only the rite, customs and usages of the Latin church, if they see anything that they aren't familiar with, they mistakenly suspect abuse, superstition, error, and, what is more, heresy¹⁵.

¹⁴ Cf. A. BARAN (ed.), *De processibus canonicis Ecclesiae Catholicae Ucrainorum in Transcarpathia*, Monumenta Ucrainae Historica, XIII, Roma 1973, 104-105; 172-178; 207-250.

¹⁵ „Latini siquidem latina lingua, ritumque utuntur; Rutheni vero ritu greco, slavonicaque lingua divina Mystera celebrant, cujus quidem Ritus, ac Linguae peritiam nullam habent Episcopi Latini in tota, qua late patet Hungaria, ita ut an aliqui inter Ruthenos abusus irrepserint, aut aliquis Presbyter sui Ritus ignarus sit, aut eos intervertat, dijudicari ab illis nullo modo possit. Immo cum solius Latinae Ecclesiae ritus, mores, ac consuetudines calleant, si quid vident cum his minime convenire, abusum, vanam religionem, errorem, atque etiam haeresim esse, falso suspicantur, ac praedicant.” BARAN, *De processibus*, 57.

3. ACTUAL SUPERSTITIOUS ELEMENTS IN THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE RUTHENIANS

Of course, we cannot imagine that the liturgical practices of Greek Catholics in the Carpathian region were free from all superstition in the sense in which we now use the word. We find some of the actual superstitious elements among the accusations of the Latin clergy too. Not everything can be justified as faithful attachment to the ancient traditions.

However, one could ask what characteristic distinguishes abuses in general from superstitious actions. There are certainly many ways to respond, but we will try to do so in a simple, spiritual way: superstition begins where the praying person cannot entrust himself to God, because of an incorrect fear of the Lord, as if He were not clearly benevolent towards mankind, or because the praying person is not convinced of His omnipotence and performs the prayer as a magical act, as if God needed some human help in the fight against evil. In this category belongs the erroneous idea of trying to explain the action of evil in a simplified way, as if there were always some direct connection between an affliction and an evil spirit. Superstition can certainly be defined otherwise, but regarding the relation between liturgy and superstition, a definition on the basis of a false image of God seems to us suitable.

Returning to the Carpathian tradition, at this point we must specify a fundamental classification, so that we can more easily find our way in the world of liturgical superstition. Magical actions may be divided into two groups: 1. Practices performed by a priest (or by the faithful with his consent) during official services, i.e. in the name of the Church; 2. Magical actions performed by lay people, which have some relation to liturgical services, feast days, or with blessed objects.

3.1 Superstition in liturgical services

From the first category we have relatively few examples. About real superstitious actions in the liturgical services we have two types of evidence: some suspect elements on the occasion of the commemoration of the departed and the practice of exorcism in the case of diseases.

Funeral services and commemorations of the dead were often the object of criticism, as we saw, most of the time just because of the misunderstanding of the Latin clergy. It is undeniable that these commemorations gave rise to real abuses, both because of the greed of

the priests¹⁶ and the indecent, debauched behavior of the people¹⁷. Peculiarities could be observed even in the church service, but these confined themselves, by and large, to the elevation of the special funeral bread¹⁸ by the priest, which was then supposed to be touched by as many people as possible. To this custom, which is soon likely to vanish completely even in remote villages, strange beliefs were attached by believers¹⁹. At any rate, the role of the priest is not central here, and can be also omitted.

More widespread and controversial were the prayers of exorcism over sick persons. That such abuses were indeed practiced is proved not only by the prohibition of the Greek Catholic ecclesiastical authorities²⁰, but also by textual witness of the prayers. A. Petrov described, and in part published²¹, a curious manuscript, coming from the Carpathian region, which is manifestly a *trebnik* (ritual) and which –

¹⁶ See the relevant section of the instruction of Barkóczy, Bishop of Eger, composed in 1749 for the byzantine clergy: „Illud quoque nostrum pulsavit auditum, quod Presbyteri plebem, cui alioquin res est angusta, domi immanibus exactionibus divexent occasione sepulturarum, populum item solius lucelli causa eo impellunt, ut haeres, et propinqui quaternis vicibus aut amplius Evangelia publice in plateis, dum cadaver defertur divis stationibus per Presbyteros faciant decantari. Caveant proin Sacrosanctum Evangelium fuligine avaritiae profanare, sed moderata pensinacula contenti, eas duntaxat coere monias adhibeant, quae in Euchologiis approbatis continentur, et sobriae pietati consentiunt”; T. VÉGHSEŐ (ed.), *Barkóczy Ferenc egri püspök kiadatlan instrukciója az Egri Egyházmegye területén élő görögkatolikusok számára (1749)*, Collectanea Athanasiana II/2, Nyíregyháza 2012, 117–118.

¹⁷ „Doceant [presbyteri] demum commensationes illas, quas anniversaria superstitione induxerunt, dormienti in Domino fideli nihil prodesse, et pravum hunc abusum ex omnibus locis illico eradicent.”; „[...] superstitiones annuum observationes eliminantur”; *ibid.*, 118. 123. About the treating of the guests in occasion of funeral commemorations see also: E. BARTHA, „Adalékok a görög katolikusok eucharisztikus szentelményeinek néprajzához”, in GY. MÓDY (ed.) *Néprajzi tanulmányok. Dankó Imre tiszteletére*, Debrecen 1982, 805.

¹⁸ The custom is probably of Romanian origin; the bread is called in Romanian *paos*; cf. also: E. BARTHA, “L’influence de la liturgie sur les coutumes fixées par le calendrier dans les milieux uniates de la Hongrie”, in *Ethnographica et folkloristica Carpathica*, II, Debrecen, 1981, 249–257.

¹⁹ For example: the more people that touched the bread, the more souls were released from purgatory (note the Latin influence in the eschatological conception!); cf. E. BARTHA, „A görög katolikus magyarság vallási néprajza”, in *Magyar Néprajz*, VII, Budapest 1990, 439–441.

²⁰ See for instance a circular of Bishop Andrej BACHINSKY (1732–1809): „Insuper exorcismos super diversis naturali morbo laborantibus per aliquos adhuc legi solitos serio inhibeat, et excedentes mihi deferat, proponat simul in Congregatione quorumnam librorum Ruthenicorum in specifico sit defectus in Ecclesiis, quem defectum quilibet parochus recenseat, et cathalogus mihi submittatur.” Episcopal Archive of Hajdúdorog (= GKPL) IV–1–a Fasc. 8. No. 3 fol 2.

²¹ A. PETROV, *Статьи объ Угорской Руси*, Материалы для истории угорской Руси IV, Санкт-Петербург 1906, 51–64; Id., „Угросские заговоры и заклинания начала XVIII в.” in *Живая Старина* 1891/4, 122–130.

among the usual and official prayers of water blessing and exorcisms²² – contains several texts of exorcism and join these to formulas for instances of various sicknesses and other cases²³. The formulas would be followed by strange gestures, like beating the head of the sick with a prayer book and other similar actions²⁴. One circular letter mentions not only exorcisms over sick persons, i.e. performed in unjustified cases, but also other obscure practices, implemented by priests, such as magic cures, nocturnal benediction of houses, and divinations²⁵.

Concerning the Divine Liturgy we found only one testimony²⁶. A Roman-Catholic dean reports that in the 18th century during the great entrance children laid on the floor and the priest transferred the gifts in such a way that he stepped over them. The dean doesn't explain

²² PETROV, *Статьи объ Угорской Руси* 52–53.

²³ General characteristic of such texts is that the sickness is personified. The formulas initiate often with a fabulous introduction: the Lord goes on the road of the heavenly Kingdom, and comes across the illness, in the person of a man or women, sometimes with all of the “family”. The Lord asks, where he or she is going, and the answer is: they are going to prepare such or such suffering for a person. Then the Lord forbids them the realization of their plan (this general scenes remind us the story of Job). Similar formulas are known not only in Slavic area – cf. V.D. PRILUCKIJ, *Частное богослужение в Русской церкви в XVI и первой половине XVII в.*, Киев 1912, III. Приложение, VI–XII. –, but also in Greek manuscripts, cf. M.I. SOKOLOV, „Новый материал для объяснения амулетов, называемых змеевиками”, in *Труды славянской комиссии Московского археологического общества*, т. 1., Москва 1895, 147–155.

²⁴ „Ceremoniis utuntur [presbyteri Graeci], quae superstitionem redolent. Presbyter Tokajensis super infirmarum infantium Latini Ritus capita solet aliquid recitare, ex aliquo Libro, quo caput infantis, aut cujuscumque alterius infirmi percutit [...] Praeterea dum aliquam Processionem peragit, in via subsistere solet, et supra faeminas, quas subinde de nomine vocat, certas preces legit, earum caput libro percuteis; hac caeremonia putant capitis dolores dispelli.” BARAN, *De processibus* 249.

²⁵ „Dein licet ipse Spiritus S. per Apostolum Iacobum dicat: Infirmatur quis in vobis, inducat sibi presbiteros Eccl[esi]ae ut orent super eum. Quia tamen tantos circa id abusus apud complures irrepisse fide digne intelligam, un non nulli D.D. Parochi ad longinquas etiam parochias cura spirituali aliis probis animarum curatoribus creditas, cum diminutione honoris ipsorum excurrere, et evagari diversis sortibus, nocturnis domorum benedictionibus, sortilegiis, librorum apertionibus, atque non tam oratione, qua in se laudabilis et bona est, homine juvare, quam artibus magicis eosdem dementare, et poenam suam cum manifesto sacri ritus nostri, et totius cleri vilipendio augere non erubescant. Hinc omnibus et singulis sub poena canonica tam in sua, quam in aliis parochiis super phreneticis aut artreticis, sub quocumque protextu exorcismos legere nocturno tempore domus benedicere, aut sortilegis quibus modis divinando homines rudas dementare, disctrictie inhihero, eo addito, ut si quis tale quid tentare prosumessit, mihi illico diferatur, severa procerto poena a Sua Excellentia Proesule nostro afficiendus.” Quotation from the circular of Michael BRADACH, general vicar, dated on 22 March 1792; finding place: protocol book of the parish Abatjászántó, GKPL III–2–1.

²⁶ Reported by the roman-catholic dean of Hegyköz against the Byzantine priests of his district: „Dum Graeci Ritus Presbyteri aram circumeunt, Offertorium faciendo, collocantur infantes ordine per girum in terra, et Presbyter calicem manutenens, per infantes gradatim transit.” BARAN, *De processibus*, 249.

the meaning of the rite, only condemns it. Since one of the symbolical explanations of the great entrance alludes to Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, could this perhaps be a custom reminiscent of the children by this gospel scene? At any rate, this curious action does not concern liturgical formulas in the strict sense. It is also true that for an outsider, not familiar with the liturgical rules, even the superstitious abuses that are mingled in the liturgical acts of the priests are the most difficult to notice since these are not easily seen. Furthermore, these can only be observed by the few people who are in the sanctuary, behind the iconostasis, close to the altar.

3.2 Superstitious customs related to the liturgical life of laypeople

While we have not found any other evidence concerning superstitious practices among the clergy, there is quite a lot for such practices among the laity. P. Bogatyryev, the noted Russian ethnographer, calls this phenomena "double belief":

Christian rituals that were formerly, and still today, closely linked to folk rites are frequently encountered [...] In most cases the peasants do not see in this dualism two opposed systems of belief, but generally a single set of beliefs represented by a synthesis of magical actions, prayers, folk rites, and religious rites proper²⁷.

Bogatyryev presents in his work about the magical acts, rites and beliefs among the Subcarpathian peasants numerous categories of superstitious phenomena, but does not treat them from a theological point of view. We will try now to give a classification, which can help us to better understand this colorful field. We have distinguished four types of superstitious manifestations of the faithful:

- parallel practices during church ceremonies;
- religious omens;
- actions performed or avoided out of religious fear or exaggerated anxiety of the profanation of something sacred;
- abuses concerning blessed objects.

To the first category belong acts performed within the framework of sacred services. Several examples can be observed in the wedding service. Bogatyryev describes one of them: "When the couple place two fingers on the Gospel at the moment of making their vows²⁸, each tries

²⁷ P. BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians. Magical Acts, Rites, and Beliefs in Subcarpathian Rus'*, Classics of Carpato-Rusyn Scholarship 10, New York 1998 (= *Actes magiques, rites et croyances en Russie subcarpathique*, Paris 1929), 31.

²⁸ The vow constitutes a particularity of the wedding ceremony of all the great confessions in the Hungarian Kingdom, i.e. the Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran churches, and its origin goes back in the middle ages (cf. P. RADÓ, *A megújuló istentisztelet*, Budapest 1973, 88.). It entered in the wedding liturgy of the Greek Catholics as well. Although not one of the above mentioned churches teaches that it belongs to the

in competition with the other, sometimes repeatedly, to place his or her own on top. Thus at the most solemn moment of the religious ceremony the couple are performing magical practices". The meaning of the gesture is obviously to predict, who will be the leading role in the marriage²⁹.

To the second group, we count omens³⁰, which have a religious connection. A few examples: If on the day of the holy Forty Martyrs it rains, it will continuously rain for next forty days. If the feast of the Annunciation falls on a Monday or a Sunday, the year will be lucky; if the feast falls on Friday, it will be unlucky³¹.

The third category is somewhat complex; we put here all the actions produced by a false religious fear. Let us consider some examples: according to folk beliefs it is prohibited for a whole week to wash linens in the river blessed on the Feast of Epiphany³²; on the Feast of the beheading of Saint John the Baptist nowadays, too, it is not permitted to eat round vegetables or to serve anything on dishes³³. Another form of this superstitious manifestation is if someone fears to omit a sacred action. Although the peasants would have never failed to observe some religious obligation, it was, however, not always a praiseworthy endeavor, but a superstitious constraint: the woman who rose from childbirth had to go to receive a special blessing in the church, or else she remained unclean, and if she had gone to work in the fields, she could destroy the crops³⁴.

essential elements of the wedding, it is considered as the most relevant liturgical act in the service. The popularity of the vows is due probably even to the fact that it is a common component in each liturgy, and that was a not-negligible aspect if we take in account the frequency of the mixed marriages. See GY. KOVÁTS, *A házasságkötés Magyarországon egyházi és polgári jog szerint*, Budapest 1883, 87–88. The word, corresponding to "wedding", in Hungarian is *esküvő*, which means something like „swearing an oath ore a vow”. The first and only one synod of the Greek-Catholic bishops in the Hungarian Kingdom, celebrated in Vienna 1773, discussed the topic of the vows as well, and the bishop of Mukachevo argued in favor of the inclusion of the formula in the new *sluzhebnyk*, because it makes clear the indissolubility of the matrimony in the Catholic Church, which a couple of decades ago had not been so evident among the Ruthenian people; cf. M. LACKO, *Synodus episcoporum ritus byzantini catholicorum ex antiqua Hungaria Vindobonae a. 1773 celebrata*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 199, Romae 1975, 61–62.

²⁹ Authors know similar variations of this wedding-practice and many other customs around marriage, cf. PETROV, *K. Fejérváry, De moribus et ritibus Ruthenorum*, 12–13; “Свадебный обрядъ въ Угрюрусской Руси” in *Живая Старина* 1891/3, 145–147.

³⁰ The omens are characterized by a total spontaneity. More about these phenomena see BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians*, 28–29.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.* 60–61.

³² Cf. *ibid.* 59.

³³ There are fables, that from sliced or cut round vegetables, like cabbage, flow blood out; cf. *ibid.* 78–79.

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.* 96–97. Something like this mentality can be observed in the funerals. The peasants didn't want to spare expenses, and also the poor families tried to have all

The last category is very easy to specify: to it belong all the abuses associated with blessed or consecrated objects, like holy water, *antidoron* or *prospora*, blessed willow branches from Palm-Sunday, blessed herbs from the feast of Saint John's Nativity (June 24)³⁵, blessed candles from the feast of the meeting of our Lord (February 2) or Easter-food. In folkbeliefs, any kind of object can receive a magical character³⁶, and logically the things blessed in the church even more so. This is a field in which the creativity of the people was very high, and a lot of the practices are still to this very day a living tradition. The majority of them have an apotropaic sense: to drive away the storm clouds (with lighting a blessed candle or throwing a willow branch into the fire), to cure domestic animals (for example with *antidoron*³⁷ or paschal bread). The same object could be used for more than one aim, and their effects are due to different laws³⁸. For example, the flowers, blessed on the feast of Saint John's nativity, are considered to have a great efficiency. To avoid a storm some flowers should be thrown in the fire. They can be used for incensing the livestock as well, as to protect against death. In some villages, they used to put a special type of blessed herb into the water in which a newborn was bathed in³⁹. Finally, they retain their original function, since some of the flowers are real medicinal herbs.

Concerning the benediction of the flowers or herbs on the feast of Saint John we allude to an interesting interaction between liturgy and superstition. Why the blessing of the flowers or herbs in the Greek Catholic Churches of the Carpathian region is bound to the feast of St. John, is not quite clear. The text of the blessing⁴⁰ is a translation of a prayer from the old *Rituale Romanum*, which is destined for the feast of the Assumption. The Greek Catholic breviary refers to N. Nilles, who describes a flower-blessing (carnation), celebrated on the

the funeral services and prayers celebrated; *ibid.* 115–116. It may be another reason, why the latin hierarchy was opposed so categorically to some funeral customs; see above the note 16.

³⁵ Cf. the appendix of the in Hungarian language edited breviary *Dicsérvjétek az Úr nevéért*, Ménologion VIII., Miskolc 1938, 60–62.

³⁶ Cf. BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians*, 35.

³⁷ About the misuses with the *antidoron* cf.: BARTHA, „Adalékok”, 804.

³⁸ J.G. FREZER distinguishes in generally two types of sympathetic magic: homeopathic (imitative) and contagious; *The golden bough*, London 1959, 11–45. Sometimes this law is applicable in the mentioned cases.

³⁹ Cf. E. BARTHA, „Virágszentelés Észak-Magyarországon”, in A Miskolci Herman Ottó Múzeum Közleményei 20 (1982), 109–115; BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians*, 92.

⁴⁰ Cf. the appendix of the in Hungarian language edited breviary *Dicsérvjétek az Úr nevéért*, Ménologion VIII., Miskolc 1938, 60–62.

feast of St. John the Precursor in the Archbasilica of St. John Lateran⁴¹, and adds, that we have a Christianization of a pagan custom, and thanks to the benediction “the erroneous superstition has been transformed in a right devotion”⁴². A special force was indeed attributed to the flowers collected during the night on the Feast of St. John⁴³. Did the Church succeed in banishing these “pagan customs” just through the introduction of a benediction formula? Sometimes it seems, that through the blessing of the Church the superstitious beliefs just increased, because some believers attributed an even more special power to the objects. From the other side, it is more probable, that, by using the blessed objects in the same manner as earlier, the people at least called the Creator to mind.

There is also a remarkable duality around the use of some blessed objects: on the one hand there is an excessive respect for them, on the other hand there is a tendency to extend their usage to the most common moments of everyday life. So, in some villages at Easter “the eggs are taken to church with the shells removed” because otherwise one would have to put the blessed shells in the garbage. In other local traditions, these shells possess a special power, and are put in the garden to “prevent the worms from doing harm”⁴⁴.

3.3 Possible explanations of the origin of superstitious beliefs and practices

Many of the blessed objects have lost their original meaning, and remain without purpose: the willow branches, that once served for the procession on Palm Sunday, or the blessed candles, which in the Roman Catholic liturgy are used for the solemn entrance in the church on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. The Uniates started practicing the blessing without the procession. It is clear that such abuses also exist in churches in which these objects still have a particular function in the liturgy. For example, it is obvious for the faithful, that the blessing of the crops⁴⁵ is done to pray for abundant harvest, but nonetheless they often tear up some corn-stalks, which were then consid-

⁴¹ Cf. N. NILLES, *Kalendarium manuale utriusque Ecclesiae Orientalis et Occidentalis*, I, Oeniponte 1896, 186. 249.

⁴² „Falsa superstitione scilicet in veram pietatem mutata.” *Ibid.* 249.

⁴³ Cf. A. FRANZ, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, I, Freiburg 1909, 411–416

⁴⁴ BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians*, 67.

⁴⁵ It is celebrated usually around the feast of Saint George (April 23) or Mark (April 25).

ered as “blessed”, though in fact the fields are the object of the blessing⁴⁶. Anyway, the “empty spaces” between rite and original function can provide an excellent “breeding ground” for superstitious actions.

While in the case of sacred objects, superstitious actions are destined to fill the space created with the loss of the original sense, in the case of the obscure healing practices, these practices themselves seem to rise because it was an empty space in the official church services, i.e. a need that was not satisfied by the sanctifying activity of the Church. Perhaps if the official liturgical books had contained more specific prayers for various illnesses, and not only the difficult anointing of sick, the people would not have compiled a series of apocryphal prayers⁴⁷. Often in the areas of life which the Church doesn't sanctify with its sacramental presence, the people try to give a supernatural meaning. An eloquent example: in previous times when it was not allowed to bury unbaptized children in a consecrated cemetery, such babies were considered “demons and a source of disquiet to their parents”⁴⁸.

It is more difficult to determine why peasants felt it necessary to perform special domestic practices, although they had attended the church ceremonies. In the greatest feasts the *typikon* prescribes the *litia* with *artoklasia*, i.e. blessing of bread, wine, oil and wheat kernels. In the prayers, God is asked to grant abundance in these products. Although the faithful are present and listen to the prayers, on many of the feasts, the peasants performed, and perform even to this day, some domestic rites, which aims at a good harvest. How can this double action be explained? Perhaps the faithful feel themselves not involved enough in the church services? Or maybe it is simply an anthropological necessity to have domestic rites?

⁴⁶ Nowadays this idea is strengthened by the strange usage, introduced in many parishes for convenience reasons, according which the community doesn't go more to the fields, but in the church are blessed some cut corn-stalk. This act borders on superstition, because the holy service is performed not about the reality, for that the community is praying, but for a similarity (a kind of homeopathic magic; see the note 38.).

⁴⁷ The Church once knew more creativity in this field. The Slavonic Euchology of Sinai contains dozens of healing prayers, which „never fall in banality or superstition”; M. ARRANZ, „La liturgie de l'Euchologe Slave du Sinai”, in *Christianity among the Slaves. The Heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 231), Roma 1988, 43. About this prayers cf.: ID., „Christologie et ecclésiologie des prières pour les malades de l'Euchologe Slave du Sinai”, in *L'Église dans la liturgie. Conférences Saint-Serge, XXVF Semaine d'Études liturgiques, Paris, 26–29 juin 1979*, A.M. TRIACCA, A. PISTOIA (ed.) (Bibliotheca „Ephemerides Liturgicae” Subsidia 18), Roma 1980, 19–66. We note, that among these prayers we can find several exorcisms against personified illnesses as well.

⁴⁸ BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians*, 92–93. 133.

4. FIGHTING AGAINST SUPERSTITION

In addition to the fact that since the 18th century the state has been acting more and more against superstition⁴⁹, the Church authorities as well have fought against the noxious phenomena. The extinction of the superstitious customs was considered as one of the most praised results of the union with Rome, and the argument was often raised: in the regions where the union was endangered; the Catholic self-identity became weaker as the superstitions again gained ground⁵⁰. The hierarchy urged the Greek Catholic clergy to preach against superstition and to teach the faithful correct and healthy devotion⁵¹.

⁴⁹ In the Hungarian Kingdom especially Maria Theresa, and her son, Joseph II, were zealous in the fight against superstition, cf. A. MISKOLCZY, „Felvilágosodás és babonáság”, in *Valóság* LVIII/5 (2015), 74–82. One of the most famous decrees of Joseph II was one in 1783 that prohibited the bells being rung against the coming of storms; cf. *Sammlung der Kaiserl. Königl. Landesfürstlichen Verordnungen für das Jahr 1784*, Laibach, 5. The argumentation of the prohibition is ironically a “technical” superstitious belief: the peal of bells doesn’t help banish the storm clouds, and what is more, the metals of the bells attract lightning, cf.: H. BAUSINGER, “Aufklärung und Aberglaube”, *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 37 (1963), 349–350.

⁵⁰ After the death of bishop De Camelis (1706) the cathedra had remained for a long time vacant. The general vicar of the eparchy in his letter urged the Archbishop of Esztergom to find a bishop as soon as possible, because in the Maramuresh region a schismatic bishop was ordaining a lot of priests, who spread “superstitious” rites. For example, they baptized persons after their death (they poured water on the tombs), and gave to the sick instead of the *viaticum* water. The reason was that the rebel parishes, which abandoned the union with Rome, didn’t want to accept the sacraments, celebrated by the uniate clergy. However, the orthodox priests arrived often too late for the baptisms of the children, and they would die without the sacraments. These practices, however, should be considered rather real heresies, than superstitious acts. The alarming report of the general vicar: „Ep[isco]pus idiota plus quam 60 nostros dioecesanos in presbyteros ordinavit, qui omnes schismatici actu manent administrantque unito populo sacramenta, si non possunt publice, privatim. Ex his sunt 3 aut 4, qui in tam gravem errorem sunt prolapsi, ut svadeant populo, ne quis etiam in articulo mortis confiteatur aut viaticum sumat aut baptizetur vel baptizari curet per unitum in absentia ipsorum, verum illi, si quis ex ipsorum asseclis moriatur sine baptismo aut confessione, accedunt sepulchrum et hic baptizant superfluendo aquam terrae et absolvunt post mortem. Et jam in tantum labefactata est unio s., ut jam 16 integri pagi cum suis sacerdotibus in cottu Biharensi in districtu Beretó dicto non solum ab unione ad schisma, verum ad Calvinismum sunt prolapsi, et nupernis diebus imagines, cruces, libros, altaria in unum cumulum congregarunt et taliter confregerunt, conculcarunt et combusterunt. Eisdem imitari et sectari videntur Valachi, ipsi vicini in cottu Szathmariensi, qui novam haeresim quodammodo instituunt, dando suis viaticum solam aquam absque ulla particula consecrata atque imposita, nec quidem ulla peccatorum confessione praemissa. HODINKA A., *A munkácsi görög szertartású püspökség okmánytára*, Ungvár 1911, 469–470.

⁵¹ „Ab inutilibus quaestiunculis absteineant, prout et a miraculis ab Ecclesiae iudicio necdum approbatis, assiduus sit in meditando verbo Dei, inde sine facie superstitiosae vanitatis hauriat, et propinet fluenta Coelestis Doctrinae.”, VÉGHSEŐ, *Barkóczy Ferenc egri püspök kiadatlan instrukciója*, 111.

It should be noted that the superstitious spirituality of the Ruthenians was not only a factor against which one must fight. When it was convenient, the Catholic missionaries, just like the Protestant pastors, manipulated the naivety of the simple people. The following case remained in the yearbook of the Jesuits⁵². In 1625, evil ghosts had been frightening the peasants of some villages near Preshov. The demons appeared sometimes in shape of a black horse, sometimes in shape of a big wild boar, which invaded in the villages; the cows stopped giving milk, the goats died, as did some of the peasants as well, because of fear. The landowner asked the Jesuit fathers to resolve the matter. The action of the Jesuits proved to be effective. They brought the holy images of the Saints of their order, they sprinkled with holy water the agricultural tools, and filled with wax of blessed candles the cracks in the buildings. The demons stopped tormenting the population of the village, but in neighboring villages, where only the local Ruthenian clergy performed exorcisms, the hauntings continued. Such a successful action in the eyes of the peasants was more convincing than any nice homily or theological argument in favor of the union with the Catholic Church. The scene seems to bring us to remote lands where the Christian missionaries overcome the local shamans or wizards⁵³. However, what is more surprising, it seems, that the Ruthenian peasants had recourse even to Calvinists in the hope of receiving from them powerful healing practices⁵⁴. Still, in the first half of the 20th century, priests could be invested in the people's imagination with magical powers, as if they were sorcerers⁵⁵.

⁵² Eperiesini domum et in alio pago praedium aqua benedicta et similibus, uni lustrassemus, lemores nocturnis eam infestare desierunt. Praedium illud nunc ingenti equo nigro, nunc apro, nunc alia turpi forma incursabatur, adimebatur lac vaccis, anseres mactabantur, homines in furorem agebantur, imo contalescebant quidam, et aliis prae terrore expirarunt, ad has querelas excitus Dominus Magnus cuius praedium erat, sacerdoti nostro committit negotium. Qui postquam Sanctorum nostrorum imagines ibi astixisset, calas aqua benedicta conpersisset, per rivnas aedificii universi cerae sacrae particulas collocasset, tantum malum a praedio universo abegit. Itaque non amplius ibi grassatur, sed vicinas tantum domos rusticorum horribili specie infestat. Rusticani vero a suis batikonibus (popparum Rutenorum nomen est) nullum remedium nancisci queunt. Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Litterae Annuae Provinciae Austriae, vol 135, fol. 382. I thank to István BAÁN for making me available the quotation, which he is referring in his article to: „Adalékok a jezsuiták tevékenységéhez a magyarországi rutének uniójának terén”, in: A. MOLNAR & others (edd.), *Historicus Societatis Iesu. Szilas László Emlékkönyv*, Budapest 2007, 124–125.

⁵³ BAAN, „Adalékok a jezsuiták tevékenységéhez”, 125.

⁵⁴ „[...] rudis plebs ad Oratorium Calvinistarum Recursum fecerit, propter certas precatiunculas, rectius incantationes, quibus sperabant aegros sanandos”, BARAN, *De processibus*, 249.

⁵⁵ So for example in a village the peasants were convinced, that for long time the crops had been destroyed by the storms because of their parish priest. Once the priest had

The fight against superstition took place on two levels. First, at the level of Church authority, the bishops had to enlighten the clergy, then, in a second step, the priests tried to convince the people. This gradualism is reflected in the canonical visitations of the bishops. While during the visitations between 1750–1752 in the parishes of the Eparchy of Mukachevo, the questionnaire focused on the superstition among the clergy⁵⁶. One century later, the church authority wasn't as much worried about the priests, as they were about the parishioners⁵⁷. We can find that the effort to reduce superstitions proved itself to be efficient. Thanks to education, the mentioned superstitious beliefs and practices mostly have become extinct today. Of course, superstition vanishes not necessarily with the raising of the level of erudition, sometimes it becomes just subtler. What can vanish thanks to education is just the idea about an occult science, which is only in the possession of the ignorant⁵⁸. In any case, it would be utopian to believe that superstition can be banished entirely from the life of the Christian. Yes, the rites of the Church can be purified, but, experienced confessors know well that, even in our days, there are not a few among practicing believers who resort to magical practices; one may not have to go personally to see a sorcerer, because television channels offer abundant programs in this area.

5. CONCLUSION

Can we draw some general conclusions from this historical overview of superstitions in the Eparchy of Mukachevo? First, it admonishes us to be cautious, and not judge superstitious beliefs hastily. Due to the geographical location of their eparchy, the Greek Catholics in the Hungarian Kingdom coexisted with other confessions, and were often victims of misunderstanding. Especially when dealing with superstition, we cannot rely only upon external sources. We do not say that everything about the vain beliefs of the Ruthenian people was only a

been transferred, the crops became good; cf. BOGATYRJEV, *Vampires in the Carpathians*, 32–33.

⁵⁶ „Questio Nr. 26: An quaestum non exerceat cum Exorcismis Sacrisque Ritibus et benedictionibus Ecclesiae non abutatur? Et an observationes superstitiosas non teneat, et doceat?” VEGHSEO T. & AL., *Források a magyarországi görögkatolikus parókiák történetéhez. Olsavszky Mihály Mánuel munkácsi püspök 1750–1752. évi egyházlátogatásainak iratai*, Nyíregyháza 2015, 239.

⁵⁷ „Questio Nr. 157: Recenseantur superstitiones inter fideles dispersae?”, Archív Gréckokatolického Arcibiskupstva Prešove, Inv. č. 480, Rok 1877, Sign. 53.

⁵⁸ BOGATYRJEV reports a case, when peasants thought they had seen a miracle. The local clergy tried to convince the people, that it wasn't a real miracle, but in vain: the peasants said that only common people could it see “the gentlemen can't see them”; *Ibid.*, 128.

fiction of the enlightened Hungarian nobility, the unfamiliarity of the Latin clergy with the Byzantine liturgical tradition, and the puritan Calvinist pastors. As we saw, there are several practices which cannot be justified, and at least must be regarded as anomalies in the devotional life of the faithful. However, on the basis of the evidence, no one can declare that the Greek Catholics in the Carpathian region, or the Rumanian, or the Russian Orthodox were more superstitious than other ethnicities or confessions.

But even within the framework of the same confession, we must be cautious in passing judgement. It is not always so clear, for example, what is behind superstitious prayers for healing. A primitive concept of the disease does not mean automatically that the prayer is superstitious.

Our conclusion is, in particular, that we have not found any direct evidence for the existence of superstitious elements infiltrated into the celebration of the Church's mysteries, except in the case of certain funeral rites and services concerning the sick. Certainly, further archival research could enrich our current knowledge.

This research has been based mostly on written sources. A synchronical exploration would require another paper, and could reveal some surprising results, because – as mentioned above – it is hardly possible to imagine a religiosity without any vestige of superstition. A young priest from the Eparchy of Košice recently told the following story from his own experience. He had been fighting for long time against a superstitious tradition, which was very current in his parish: he observed that the babies brought for the baptism were wearing a red ribbon on their arm, like a sort of bracelet. He learned that the mothers put it on the hand of their children to protect them against evil because – according to them – till the baptism nothing else protects the newborn. After years of inefficiently trying to convince the mothers that such of custom is unneeded nonsense, he decided to change his tactics: now he solemnly cuts off the ribbon, explaining that Jesus Christ saved the baby through baptism from the power of the devil. Can such a liturgical innovation be justified? History always shows, that the Church was always creative in the battle with the world of superstition. It cannot be excluded that at some point in the future we might even find this rite in some official liturgical book.

SUMMARY

Due to the geographical location of their eparchy, the Greek Catholics in the Hungarian Kingdom coexisted with other confessions and were often victims of misunderstanding, both before and after their union with Rome (1646). Among the many charges laid against them, that of superstition was the most prominent. Most of the accusations were pure fiction of the enlightened Hun-

garian nobility, the unfamiliarity of the Latin clergy with the Byzantine liturgical tradition, and the puritan Calvinist pastors. However, several practices of the Uniate communities cannot be justified. This paper analyzes the superstitious phenomena and classifies them in two main groups: 1. Superstition in liturgical services, and 2. those outside the official Church celebrations, but related to the liturgical life in the activity of the laity. Finally, it attempts to give a possible explanation of the origin of the superstitious phenomena.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans le Royaume de Hongrie, en raison de leur situation géographique, les fidèles de l'Église greco-catholique vivaient ensemble avec les fidèles d'autres confessions chrétiennes. Souvent ils ont été victimes de certains malentendus, soit avant, soit après l'Union avec Rome (Union d'Oujgorod en 1646). En particulier, ils ont été attaqués à cause de leur présumée superstition. En réalité, la plupart des critiques n'étaient que des fictions inventées et divulguées par la noblesse hongroise éclairée, par certains prêtres du rite latin inexpérimentés dans le rite byzantin et par des pasteurs calvinistes, connus pour leur rigorisme. Toutefois, certaines pratiques de l'Église uniate ne pouvaient pas être justifiées. La présente étude propose d'examiner ces phénomènes superstitieux, divisés en deux catégories de base: 1. Les éléments superstitieux intégrés dans la liturgie. 2. La superstition en-dehors des services religieux, mais liée au contexte de la vie religieuse des fidèles. Enfin, l'étude tente d'expliquer les phénomènes superstitieux qui se posent dans le domaine liturgique.

András DOBOS