

Franciszek Wasyl

ORCID: 0000-0002-2589-5272

(Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, Poland)

Observing and taking notes. Customs of parishioners in a small town in the eyes of the parish priest

The article attempts to examine the customs and behaviors of parishioners in a Galician town at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries through the lens of church-related sources (such as “status animarum” books). The analysis is based on the moral commentaries provided by priests regarding the families and individuals residing in the parish. This allowed the identification of “moral transgressions” (lack of religiosity, intimate misconduct, having extramarital offspring, physical disabilities, and character flaws), as well as conversions to other religions. The author presents the extent of these “immoral attitudes” towards religion and the Church, while outlining the main cause of their existence as the emancipation of elites formed within the sphere of positivist scientific ideas.

Keywords: Galicia, microhistory, customs, Armenians, Kutu on Czeremosz

Kutu is a small town located on the border between Galicia and Bukovina, at the foot of Mount Owidiusz [Ovid], on the left bank of the Czeremosz River [Cheremosh]. It was founded in the early 18th century by the Kiev voivode in Old Poland Józef Potocki.¹ From the beginning, it was doomed to provincialism in economic terms. This was caused primarily by factors regarding its location: remoteness from major trade routes and from major economic centres. Situated at the meeting point of lands and ever-changing national borders, the town also lived under the constant threat of war. Finally, the city’s parochial character was also due to dictates of the surrounding nature – the Carpathian Mountains to the south-west of Kutu, and to the south-east the mountainous Czeremosz River, beyond which lay the Bukovina region.

¹ For more on the circumstances of the founding of the town see: F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi. Historia wieloetnicznej wspólnoty w Kutach*, vol. 1: *Chrześcijaństwo (rekonstrukcje rodzin)*, Kraków 2017, pp. VII–IX.

This isolation meant that Kutry was left on its own. It was the economic potential of the local people, and, to put it bluntly, their entrepreneurial spirit, that determined that, despite its relatively inconvenient location, the centre was able to develop to the best of its ability into a relatively thriving, albeit, as mentioned, provincial organism.

Local entrepreneurship had cultural and ethnic origins. The first settlers in Kutry were representatives of trading nations – Jews and Armenians. They created ethnic occupational niches in the early days of the city, which enabled them to make a living from trade and more sophisticated and community-based businesses, such as ‘tabacharnie’ (leather processing manufactories), rather than solely from farming and the simple crafts.² The latter were initially practised only by Poles and Ruthenians living in the suburbs.

Ethnic and occupational divisions overlapped with religious divisions in Kutry. Almost every ethnic group mentioned had its own religious or ritual institutions. There was a Jewish synagogue near the city ramparts to the south-west, an Orthodox church to the south-east and an Armenian Catholic church to the east. Interestingly, the Latin rite Catholics did not possess their own church; initially, they used the Armenian temple. It was not until 1841 that a local Latin rite chaplaincy was erected, which was administered by Father Michał Kłosowski until 1858. It is worth noting, however, that due to the lack of their own temple, Latin rite Catholics celebrated their masses in other churches, specifically in a Greek Catholic one. It was larger than the Armenian church and thus accommodated the growing population of Roman Catholics. The Latin church in Kutry was not consecrated until 1861.³ The building was wooden and probably of a rather flimsy construction, since as early as 1890, Father Zygmunt Pawłowski, the dean of Kolomyia, mentioned that the church “has already been reinforced with anchors, and although it will remain standing for some time, it is necessary to think about a new church”.⁴ In 1895, a fire brought the ultimate destruction of the church. Almost immediately a new brick church, designed by Łukasz Bodaszewski, was erected.

Two groups of inhabitants were deprived of their own separate religious institutions: the Protestants, who appeared in Kutry with the development of the Austrian bureaucracy and larger industry, and the few Armenians of the Apostolic faith who came to Kutry. These were marginal groups in number, although they did not escape the observation of the local clergy.

² See F. Wasyl, „Kto czym się bawi i z czego żyje”. *Profesje Ormian z Kut nad Czeremoszem na tle innych nacji w końcu XVIII wieku*, „Lehahayer. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Ormian polskich”, vol. 7, Kraków 2020, pp. 69–190.

³ G. Ruszczyk, *Kościół parafialny P.W. Najśw. Serca Jezus w Kutach* [in:] *Kościół i klasztor rzymskokatolickie dawnego województwa ruskiego*, ed. J.K. Ostrowski, vol. 14, Kraków 2006, p. 192.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

As mentioned before, the Catholics formed close-knit communities, not only due to the fact that they belonged to the same Church, but also due to the fact that their population lived in close proximity, coexisting in the same part of the town. Thus, Kutry was basically divided into two worlds: the Jewish and the Catholic, both with relatively similar proportions in terms of demographics (Table 1). And this second social microcosm will be shown here from the point of view of religiosity and customs.

Table 1. Number of Jews and Christians in Kutry at the turn of the 20th century

Year	Jews %	Christians %	Total %
1890	3045 47,9	3308 52,1	6353 100
1900	3137 46,9	3552 53,1	6689 100
1910	3197 47,4	3543 52,6	6740 100

Source: *Pinkas Hakehillot Polin*, "Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities, Poland", Volume II, Jerusalem, p.460.

View from the presbytery windows

The Catholic world covered the eastern part of Kutry, where all the Catholic churches and the presbyteries attached to them were situated. A person familiar with the topography of Kutry will notice that all these buildings were erected on the edge of a plateau, separating the town proper from the suburbs below in the Czeremosz valley. Even the inhabitants of Kutry at that time spoke of an 'upper' and a 'lower' area. If someone announced that they were going to the "upstairs" area, it meant that they were heading for the market square, offices, school or church; if they said they were going "downstairs", they were heading towards the Czeremosz river and the mills, sawmills, 'tabacharnie' (tanneries) and other businesses that lived off the river there.

The location of Kutry was charming, and perhaps most charming was the location of the Catholic vicarages, the terraces of which overlooked the eastern part, right on the cliff. The priests had a view – literally and symbolically – of the whole community of the town. From them, especially from the terrace of the Roman Catholic vicarage, there was an extensive view of the Czeremosz valley and the rather densely populated suburbs there. From the western side – the view was less attractive, encompassing the crowded Tudiowska and Śniatyńska

streets, which were traversed by everyone involved in business in the market square. A cemetery, at the opposite end of Śniatyńska Street, was a common burial place for Catholics.

The vicarages were located a few hundred steps away from each other, as were the churches attended by the faithful, often interchangeably, i.e. once to a Roman Catholic church and at other times to an Armenian church, as a result of frequent inter-religious marriages and habits. The situation was somewhat different for more important family celebrations: baptisms, weddings and funerals. The choice of church in this case depended on the religious affiliation of the main protagonists of these events.⁵ Nevertheless, the priests' knowledge of their parishioners eluded ritual divisions. This knowledge was comprehensive: the Roman Catholic priests in Kutý wrote down their observations in the parish book which they kept and which has happily survived to the present day; an invaluable source of information on the customs of the time.⁶

'The family census of 1901–1945', as this document is referred to, includes a list of names of the majority of the inhabitants of the Roman Catholic parish in Kutý, as well as of those representatives of other rites who, as a result of inter-religious marriages (or some other family circumstances), found themselves in the sight of the Roman Catholic priests watching them. The census in the Kutý parish was most likely taken by Father Józef Filipek (b. 1881), who was the administrator there after the death of Father Jan Smagowicz (d. 1912).⁷ However, in later years the book "swelled" with additions by other priests, as evidenced by the different handwriting of some of the notes. Above all, it is vital to mention the figure of Fr. Wincenty Smal (b. 1875), initially a catechist and later the administrator and parish priest of the Kutý parish, whose editorial activity in this book fell in the inter-war period (less relevant for the present article).

The priests adhered to the originally structured outline of the relevant book *Status Animarum* printed by J. Dankiewicz's printing house in Stanisławów. It

⁵ See F. Wasyl, *Ormianie w świetle zapowiedzi przedmałżeńskich rodzimej parafii w Kutach. Edycja źródła, cz. 1: Lata 1860–1914*, „Krakowskie Pismo Kresowe”, vol. 8, Kraków 2016, pp. 93–267; idem, *Nieznana metryka zaślubionych ormiańskokatolickiej parafii w Kutach z lat 1868–1882. Uwagi źródłoznawcze i edycja*, „Lehahayer. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Ormian polskich”, vol. 4, Kraków 2017, pp. 149–233.

⁶ Archive of Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak in Kraków (AEBK), *Spis Familji. Status familiarum do r. 1945. Kutý, powiat: Kosów*, ref. C-CXIV-7, no pagination. This source has been published and supplemented with other genealogical material. See F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, pp. 568.

⁷ This is evidenced by the annotation placed above the original first page of the manuscript – that is, above the entry concerning the family of Józef Antoniewicz: “Compiled [census] by Rev. Jozef Filipek – administrator”. See AEBK, ref. C-CXIV-7, *Spis familji...* Biographical information about Rev. J. Filipka see Mariusz Leszczyński, *Księża diecezjalni emigranci archidiecezji lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego: słownik biograficzny*, Warszawa 2020, p. 199.

is worth recalling here a standardised document which included a typical questionnaire of issues that could arise during a pastoral visitation.

The first column recorded the number of the house, the second: the first name and the surname of the landlord, the next three columns recorded the dates of birth, marriage and death of successive family members, then there was a column entitled “they made an Easter confession”, and at the very end there was a column for “remarks”.⁸ This rigid division of issues was not able to accommodate the wealth of social attitudes of the small town and thus did not satisfy the observers and users of the sheet. The meticulous clergy of the Kutry parish did not stop at the elementary stock of knowledge about the faithful. The document contains a number of notes on morality, moral attitudes, bodily and character ailments, attitudes to the Church, personal relationships (including those of erotic nature), illegitimate children, family pathologies, illnesses and eccentricities, neighbourhood relations, changes of rite or confession, emigration (long distance, e.g. to America or France, and short distance, migration to another town). This source also provides information about suicides and violent deaths, documents war crimes and the participation of Kutry residents in armed conflicts. It is a picture of Kutry’s Christian society encapsulated in a photograph; in this case, a historical source.

Originally, the book was kept alphabetically. This order proved difficult to maintain over time. Every now and then, there were pasted-in pages in the ledger with entries for families outside the alphabetical order. The document was also partially damaged by more than four decades of use. The edges of the book wore away and some of the pages fell out and were misplaced by successive users. Nevertheless, the text itself presents no problems for the historian to read. Its content provides considerable cognitive satisfaction, encouraging reflection on the characteristic features and customs of a small community. It is a colourful overview of the characters of the inhabitants of all classes and professions, as seen from the unofficial perspective – by a well-informed, but also biased and unsparing priest-chronicler.

For the purpose of this article, I have chosen to analyse the part of the document that relates to Galician times, i.e. the entries up to 1918.

Insufficient religiosity

The priests’ remarks concerning the parishioners in Kutry can be divided into several groups. The first of these, the most numerous, noted transgressions against the Church and stigmatised insufficient religiosity. Here is a brief, selective, statistical presentation of them:

⁸ See AEBK, Ref. C-CXIV-7, *Spis familji...*

- Błażej Baran (b. 1858), secretary to the magistrate: “never goes to confession – vile character – volatile – low – avoid him”, “he was driven out of the secretariat because he stole the cash”;
- Szczepan Chrzanowski (b. 1885), trader: “rants against the Lord and religion, does not want to go to confession, does not recognise holidays and Sundays, but before his death he confessed”;
- Paweł Cudzich (b. 1884), government surveyor: “drunkard, never goes to church – non-believer, atheist – storyteller”;
- Wacław Dubicki (b. 1868), manager of the mill: ‘does not know God at all, never goes to church – has affairs with other women’;
- Józef Góral (no date), gymnasium professor: “atheist”;
- his wife (no date): “an even bigger atheist [than her husband]”, “a whiner”, “doesn’t know God”;
- Franciszka Józefa Marciszów (b. 1887), wife of clerk Jan Drewnicki: “a shrew, vindictive, never goes to church”;
- Michał Sochacki (b. 1869), manager of chamber forests: “does not go to church, sometimes, but rarely”;
- Aleksander Stabieski (b. 1844), court superadviser: “disgustingly miserly, nastily, unforgiving, never going to confession”;
- Longin Strzelecki (born 1874), postmaster: “lives without God, a drunkard, does not practise his religion”;
- Józef Rosenberg (b. 1862), geometer: he is ‘a non-believer, a man of little worth’;
- Edward Edmund Widephul (b. 1860), pensioner from the fire brigade, photographer: “with his wife dead, he cohabits with Sabina Braun, (...) he died unreconciled to the Lord, he did not want to expel his concubine from the house”;
- Karol Wierzejski (no date), court official: “doesn’t know God, bachelor, won’t even take off his hat in front of the church, rascal [baciarn]”;
- Władysław Wojtasiewicz (b. 1874), gymnastics teacher, official of the Joint-stock Timber Company: “does not go to church”;
- Ludwik Zagajewski (no date), retired headmaster of the school in Świątniki, gymnasium professor: ‘never practices religion, does not go to church’;
- Stefan Mieczysław Zaremba (born 1845), notary: “he walks around dressed like a peasant, an oddity, eccentric, he never goes to church or to confession”;
- Józef Żumański (born 1866), court clerk: “never goes to church or to confession”.⁹

As can be seen, insufficient religious fervour, avoidance of the sacraments or open departure from the Church were combined in the observation of priests with other reprehensible features of behaviour and manners (unconventional appearance, foul language, wicked personality traits, disrupted interpersonal relationships). Lack of faith or weak faith thus gave explanation, by extension, to the entire life of the stigmatised person. In this intriguing enumeration of non-believers and black sheep, however, something else is important: the social background and status of the persons mentioned. Analysing the entries on religiosity and attitudes to the Church, it can be seen that officials, school teachers

⁹ F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, passim.

and other representatives of the local elite had the most problems in this respect. In other words, the people “in the limelight” were the least exemplary!

This issue is worth greater attention.

People described unfavourably are mostly newcomers, not connected by birth to Kutu. They acquired their education and professional position in larger urban centres. Apparently, they introduced liberal, secular customs into the provincial town, which, in the eyes of the local priests, brought demoralisation and corruption. They also competed with priests when it came to professional prestige and social authority.

From the point of view of generations – if their dates of birth are compared: they represented the post-Uprising generation; their spiritual formation took place in the age of positivism. It is therefore possible to find in their biographies and attitudes the characteristic features of that epoch: a belief in science and education as a source of progress and social advancement, a departure from spirituality in favour of materialism and atheism (at least formally, because they took part at least in the most important religious rites, such as baptisms, weddings and funerals); at the same time, they emancipated themselves from traditional religiosity, associated with plebeianism (the folk Church).

The question arises: what was the scale of the phenomenon of resentment towards the Church among the local elite and did all its representatives have ‘problems with the faith’? Is this phenomenon measurable at all? This question can only be partially answered by comparing the surviving book with ‘the Galician shematyzm’ [an annual handbook of institutions and officeholders] (with the proviso, however, that for now there are no available sources of similar quality for other ethnic groups, especially the Jewish group, strongly represented among the local elite). Thus, the comparison of the *Census of Families...* with ‘the Galician shematyzm’ can only be applied to the Roman Catholic community (in some cases to Ruthenians and Armenians). It seems, however, that even this selective study may prove useful as an attempt at a general assessment of the religious-moral reputation of representatives of provincial elites.

In 1911, the mayor of Kutu was Piotr Bielecki (1857–1912).¹⁰ The chronicler-priest spoke of this figure only in superlatives, mentioning in the margins of the Kutu family census: “a righteous, hard-working, energetic man” (evidently, the exception confirms the rule).¹¹ Piotr Bielecki’s subordinate, however, in

¹⁰ The reconstruction of the local clerical elite from Kutu was based on: *Szematyzm Królestwa Galicyi i Lodomeryi z Wielkim Księstwem Krakowskiem na rok 1912*, Lwów 1912, pp.: 33, 66, 122, 452, 589, 700; *Szematyzm... na rok 1913*, Lwów 1913, pp.: 32, 77, 79, 123, 124, 126, 311, 646, 765, 1124–1125; *Szematyzm... na rok 1914*, Lwów 1914, pp. 32, 77, 124, 125, 127, 252, 286, 313, 510, 564, 651, 775, 776, 950, 1032, 1138–1139, 1360–1361.

¹¹ F. Wasyl, *Sqsiedzi...*, p. 34.

the position of secretary and controller, was the aforementioned Błażej Baran – “a vicious, volatile, low character”, and suspected of financial embezzlement (see above). The police inspectorate in Kutry, which was then subordinate to the magistrate, rested at that time in the hands of Jan Bajera (b. 1863). Although the Kutry clergy did not comment on him (apart from the fact that he “made a confession in 1913”), his daughter Anna (b. 1889) was criticised. The priest’s notes say that formally being married to Antoni Hładil, “she does not live with her husband but cohabits with Jan Pławnik”.¹² It is also recorded that she later sought an annulment of her marriage and that Antoni Hładil began to achieve professional success in his work for the Czechoslovak consulate in Lviv, but that is another story.

The powiat court in Kutry was represented by the warden Karol Tunikowski (1868–1931), who “is alright as a Catholic” and that “he studied theology for a year”.¹³ The personnel of the court in 1911 was numerous (5 judges, 5 officials, 2 clerks, 1 notary, 4 attorneys) and although the family situation of these people are thoroughly reported on, even more detailed personal description about several officials can be found in the pastoral book. For example, the judge Ludwik Łęczyński (b. 1877) was “a decent man and a good Catholic”, although his father-in-law Jan Staszyszyn, a folk teacher, was dubbed a “drunkard”.¹⁴ Another judge, Benedykt Pniewski (born 1874), married to an Armenian woman, Eleonora Bohosiewicz (born 1882), was regarded by the parish priest as “a womaniser”, “who hardly ever goes to church”.¹⁵ The wife of the court official Jan Drewnicki, of Ruthenian origin, was given the reputation of being “a shrew, a vindictive woman” (see above). The then court clerk Atanazy Kurbanowicz (or Kubranowicz, b. 1879), also a Ruthenian, became an object of interest to the Roman Catholic clergy through his wife Helena Kowalska (b. 1882) “who has no left hand” and who, more importantly, “renounced her rite” and is “the same” as her husband, who received the opinion “a radical, a terrible atheist”.¹⁶ Similar indiscretion in religious matters was shown by the already mentioned town notary, Mieczysław Zaremba, who received the opinion of a freak “dressing like a peasant”, who “never goes to church or to confession”. Of the fifteen employees of the Kutry court, four earned a rather bad reputation with the priests.

Let’s take another look at the tax office, which in 1911 was headed by Jan Miltsovitz (1860–1933). Next to his name there is the note: “a socialist, does not know God, never goes to church”.¹⁷ The official at Miltsovitz’s office was a Eu-

¹² Ibid, pp. 42–43.

¹³ Ibid, p. 494.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 421.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 360.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 264.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 335.

geniusz Kałyniuk, a Ruthenian, whose daughters Anna and Julia are described as “stolen by a Ruthenian priest in Kutny”.¹⁸ This should perhaps be understood in such a way that the girls, probably at their father’s will, despite being baptised in the Latin rite, to which Jadwiga Kałyniuk, wife of the aforementioned official, belonged, attended religious rites at the Greek Catholic church. Another employee of the tax office in Kutny, in the rank of assistant, was the already mentioned Karol Wierzejski (Wierzajski). He obtained a very negative entry in the parish book, reading: “doesn’t know God, bachelor, won’t even take off his hat in front of the church, rascal [baciarsz]”.

The list of representatives of local elites in conflict with the Church does not end there. In 1911, the head of the Private Gymnasium in Kutny was Józef Góral, a newcomer from outside Kutny, who had previously been a professor at the gymnasium in Gródek Jagielloński – he too was disliked by the priests, and was labelled “an atheist”, while his wife, who was not mentioned by name, was described as “an even bigger atheist, a shrew, who does not know God at all”.¹⁹ Another representative of the teaching staff, Władysław Wojtasiewicz (b. 1874), a gymnastics teacher and, incidentally, an official of a joint-stock timber company, has the following description: “does not go to church”.²⁰ Wojtasiewicz’s professional colleague, employed at the Kutny gymnasium in 1912, Mieczysław Kubala (b. 1889), came from the family of the forester Wilhelm Kubala (1859–1933), described with the following moral note: “never goes to church, drunkard, non-believer, poor character, won’t even take off his cap before church”. Mieczysław’s brother Józef (b. 1887), “a mining student (...) in Suchedniów, powiat Kielce”, who, in the priest’s opinion, could be depicted in a similar way: “does not know God at all”. The Kubala family, although prominent in terms of the prestige of their professions, definitely did not enjoy the sympathy of the host of the local Roman Catholic Church. It is worth mentioning, however, that in the records concerning this family there is another teacher from Kutny – Kamila Damazja Romaszkan (b. 1853), a sister-in-law of Wilhelm Kubala, who lived with her husband’s family in one house. Her surname indicates that she was Armenian on her father’s side, her mother having been baptised in the Roman Catholic rite. The priest provided a very favourable description of Kamila Romaszkan “a very respectable woman”.²¹

In the full-time male and female school, the Latin Rite religion teacher was Fr. Wincenty Smal – co-author of the parish book in question. One of the teachers whom the catechist priest often met in the school building was Amalia

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 265.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 136.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 530.

²¹ Ibid, pp. 220–221.

Cudzich, née Migocka (born 1886). Although she herself did not come into disrepute, she was not spared in the book either: she was the wife of the aforementioned Paweł Cudzich, an engineer, government geometrician, and according to the priest, “a drunkard, atheist and rascal [baciarz]”. Speaking of surveyors, it is worth mentioning that Paweł Cudzich’s supervisor at the time was a senior government geometer, engineer Stanisław Lang, who was reputed (expressed by an appropriate note in the parish book) to be “a good Catholic”²².

The manager of the forests and state property was, mentioned earlier, Michał Sochacki (1869–1928). Although he lived in the nearby village of Kutry Stare, he belonged to the Roman Catholic parish in Kutry by virtue of his religion. *The Census of Families* records that he “does not go to church, sometimes, but rarely”.²³

Based on the unique source, this brief outline of the attitudes of the provincial clerical elite towards the Church and religion in Galicia at the dawn of the 20th century, leads to several conclusions. This was a predominantly secular group, not practising, or occasionally practising, religious rituals. This does not mean that the representatives of the local elite became apostates; on the contrary, they took an active part in religious life, attended the most important religious and family ceremonies, such as weddings, baptisms and funerals, and probably also all major festivals. Their religiousness from the formal, external side was beyond reproach, but this external, general picture is disturbed by the opinions of the priests, looking at the individuals closely, through the prism of pastoral visits, frequency of confessions or opinions heard among neighbours. These opinions remain, as already mentioned, unequivocally critical. Probably a major influence on the indifference towards the Church was the fact of the positivist formation of these elites, i.e. a climate of scepticism, rationalism and sometimes open hostility.²⁴ All of them grew up in the gloomy “shadow” of the January Uprising; the defeat of that uprising and the ideals that guided it was an event that for decades formed the attitudes of the post-Uprising intelligentsia on Polish soil, also in the Austrian

²² Ibid, p. 279.

²³ Ibid, p. 423.

²⁴ This ideological formation was mentioned by Kazimierz Chłędowski when describing the philosophical fashions that followed the fall of the January Uprising. It is worth quoting here a relevant passage from his *Memoirs*: “At that time Büchner popularised materialist philosophy in his book *Force and Matter*; the novelty struck young minds. So they started reading enthusiastically books inspired by the materialist direction. Works by Moleschott, Carl Vogt, Comte, etc., were imported, and snatched from each other’s hands and when Buckle later wrote his *History of Civilisation in England*, nothing but materialist science was dreamt of. (...) Religion seemed unnecessary, and all the more so Catholic religion, of which Buckle said that under its guidance nations morally fall. Thus, in the fervent youthful minds, the idea naturally arose that materialism was the highest mental conquest, and that it should be propagated by all means (K. Chłędowski, *Pamiętniki*, tom I: *Galicja (1843–1880)*, prepared for publication, with an introduction and footnotes by Antoni Knot, Kraków 1957, p. 194).

partition. It is no coincidence that ambivalence towards the Church and religious matters involved people of the highest social status, those with the best education and in the most prestigious professions. However, these were not people who had roots in Kutry, but visitors who had acquired their education and professions in large urban centres, some of whom – like the Imperial Royal tax assistant Jan Miltsovitz – brought atheistic socialist ideas to the province.

In the Kutry book of families, next to the names of renowned and respected citizens, the priest several times wrote down a completely inappropriate noun: *baciarz*. The term, which originated in the Polish dialect of Lviv, referred to a vagabond, a rascal, a man outside the law. Out of the two opposite forms: *batiar* and *baciarz*, the first one had a rather positive connotation, indicating the fertile imagination and peculiar culture of people from the suburbs, while the second one was negative. It was used to describe a poor person, a wretch, a neglected person, physically and mentally.²⁵ The name was supposedly coined by Antoni Lam, and, following his footsteps, Kazimierz Chłędowski argued that a *baciarz* was: “(...) an individual, living from day to day, neglected, dirty, drunk, spoken of only with contempt (...)”.²⁶

It is clear from the Kutry pastoral book that a clerk or a grammar school professor who compromised their morals, “fell by the wayside” in the opinion of the priests, or stooped to the level of the dregs of the society. “Baciarz” was the key word with which priests – powerless in the face of their parishioners – pronounced them degenerate. It is another matter that, on occasions, among such atypical figures there are people who have found their lives difficult or even derailed due to individual and generational dramas.

An example of such an essentially tragic figure from the Kutry social kaleidoscope was Tomasz Bojankiewicz. Born in 1836 in Podzwierzyniec near Łańcut, he took part in the January Uprising, fighting under Walery Antoni Wróblewski.²⁷ He “turned up” years later in Kutry, where he took up a job as a court clerk. Next to his name the priest made some notes which read as follows: “he took part in the 1863 uprising, court diarist, old man, lives in cohabitation for a dozen years, does not go to church, lives like a brute”, “widower of the late Olympia; [his] concubine N.N. – two men live with her. Katarzyna Sylwester, a divorcee, is only his housekeeper”, “the woman looks like a witch”.²⁸ The note “he was took part in the

²⁵ See Urszula Jakubowska, *Mit lwowskiego batiara*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 13–14.

²⁶ K. Chłędowski, op. cit., p. 280.

²⁷ Józef Białynia Chołodecki, *Pamiętnik Powstania Styczniowego w pięćdziesiątą rocznicę wypadków*, Lviv 1913, p. 176.

²⁸ In this last entry found in the left margin of the notebook, it is unclear which woman the priest was referring to, whether the aforementioned Katarzyna Sylwester or the “concubine” identified as N.N. See: F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, pp. 29–30.

uprising” should make the priest think about the consequences and psychological costs of this experience and its impact on the parishioner’s behaviour. According to the source, Bojankiewicz was reconciled with God in October 1916 and died in Kutu on 22 February of the following year of senile decay (*marasmus senilis*), having not lived to see his youthful ideals come true, i.e. Poland’s independence. It seems that further archive searches will confirm a similar fate for other men of the insurgent generation (from Kutu and the surrounding areas), who could not find themselves in the new realities of the positivist era, constituting a group of people who were on the fringes of society, or local freaks with a legendary past (known to the older inhabitants) and a degenerate present.

Intimate transgressions and cohabitation

A separate group of transgressions, apart from tenuous religiosity, consisted of – often related – reprehensible behaviour in the intimate lives of parishioners. The pastoral book is rich in various indiscretions in this respect. The main ones are marital infidelities, unformalized relationships and having illegitimate offspring.

Jan Kaczkowski (1854–1927) a shoemaker by trade, a representative of the local pauperised gentry, is described as follows: “does not live with his wife” Maria (born 1864), because she – “ran away to Czerniowce with some baron”.²⁹ Similar marital problems were experienced by Teodor Zasadny, of Ruthenian origin, who “does not live with his wife” Eugenia, because she “cohabits with Dr. Franciszek Kędziński”.³⁰ Kędziński (born 1889) received even more extreme assessments a while later. Next to his person there are annotations, added at different times, which indicate a radicalisation of his attitudes towards the Church: “left the Roman Catholic Church (Lviv 22.02.1924), student – rascal [baciarsz] – atheist – takes faith away from people – instigates lawsuits – machinations – rotten to the core”.³¹

A certain Smagłowski, an official of the court, “a confirmed bachelor, cohabits with the same woman as Bojankiewicz, two men live with one woman”.³² The aforementioned Benedykt Pniewski, secretary of the imperial royal court in Kutu, was described as a “womaniser” who, in addition, “hardly ever goes to church”. Michalina Stolz, on the other hand, “left her husband [Edward Win-

²⁹ Jan Kaczkowski was the son of Michał eques Kaczkowski (b. 1816). See F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, p. 219.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 530.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 409.

dyk] after 3 months, because besides her he had two more side wives”.³³ Mikołaj Paradowski (b. 1898) “abandoned his wife [Anna] and shacks up with Aniela Chorakowa”.³⁴ Józef Tymoczko (b. 1852), cooper, “a drunkard, shacked up, got better at death”.³⁵ Michał Kłyymiuk (b. 1873) “shacks up with another woman in America” and his wife Petronela (b. 1882) “cohabits with Jan Bortnicki”.³⁶ A certain Stefan Tarnowiecki (b. 1883), a shoemaker, “had an illegitimate child with his wife’s sister, Bronisława Gredżukowa, widow of Józef”.³⁷ Similar family turbulences were recorded in the case of Michał Ciszewski (b. 1878), whose wife Anna Hołub (b. 1874) testified that “(...) with her and dependent on her is the illegitimate son of her husband and her sister Maria – Jan (...)”.³⁸

The catalogue of suspected bigamy and illegitimate relationships did not end there, as another parishioner named Pleban (b. 1887) was reported as follows: “does not live with his wife [Antonina] but cohabits with Józefa Piechota, daughter of Katarzyna, and has a child with her” (see below). On the other hand, Stanisław Urbański (b. 1887), a gamekeeper from Kutry, stated – probably during a pastoral visitation – that he would “rather be at the bottom of hell than leave” Stefania Woźniak (b. 1894), with whom he cohabited despite his official marriage, concluded in 1901, to a Zofia.³⁹

Some offences bordered on incest. In the case of Antoni Broszkiewicz (b. 1884) there is a note: “he does not go to Church or to confession – he shacks up with his niece”.⁴⁰

The editor of the census also sometimes used the term ‘buhaj’ [a bull; a sire; a stud] to refer to men with disorderly personal lives. The epithet was given to: Herman Jekel (1855–1927), a local financial tycoon and mill owner, but also Józef Ciołek (b. 1868), a modest shoemaker, next to whose name there is the following note: “shoemaker – rascal [baciarcz], drove out his wife – and lives with a wench – a sire [buhaj]”.⁴¹

Some cases show the tragic fate of lovers. For example, August Gustav Kolmer (b. 1861) and his unofficial partner Otylia Fereńczuk, née Kinzhuber (b. 1858), as the priest notes, “before their marriage, cohabited for several years,

³³ The priest further completed the note on Michalina’s fate: “she lives in a home for the poor in Czerniowce, her mother has died, in view of these conditions even in the face of death it is impossible to save this soul”. See: F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, p. 537.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 493.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 534.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

until the death of Jan Fereńczuk,” Otylia’s husband, to whom she had been related since 1888.⁴² It was not until 1920 that Otylia entered into marriage with her life partner August Gustav Kolmer.⁴³ In 1886, i.e. before her marriage to Fereńczuk, Otylia gave birth to an illegitimate son, Leopold – a future professor at the gymnasium in Rzeszów.⁴⁴

Problems in intimate relationships in the Kutry community are plentiful and in all sorts of configurations. These problems affected people of various social and professional status. There were also more extreme cases. For example, Stanisław Ciołek, had – according to the priest – sexual intercourse with his aunt at the age of 16.⁴⁵ The priest was critical of the father of the aforementioned Stanisław – Wincenty (b. 1871). A note about him states: “he brings up his children terribly – he allows them to do everything, and constantly says that he is honourable”.⁴⁶

Interestingly, there is no information about homosexual and transsexual themes in the register in question. Undoubtedly, people displaying this type of behaviour were present in the Kutry community, but nevertheless they carefully concealed themselves, since the inquisitive author of the family book did not record a single case of this type. Puzzlingly, there is also absence of information on sexual violence in this transcription, including, above all, any mention of rape. It seems that this silence was the evidence of the existence of a strong taboo: rape was not called by its proper name. I will return to this problem later, in the final part of the article.

However, the priest’s attention did not escape the location of the “house of ill repute” in Kutry, i.e. in the house of the shoemaker Franciszek Pietrzykowski (b. 1874). His wife, a Ruthenian, Tekla Herkaluk (b. 1874), was said to have been involved in the foul practice. The priest noted the fact that the latter was “infected”, presumably he meant syphilis.

Illegitimate offspring

It would seem that the examples presented above are testimony to the extremely promiscuous life of the Kutry community. However, an analysis of baptismal records from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries (from the years 1890–1910) in terms of extra-marital births (*illegitimi*) reveals at first glance the opposite picture: a very morally restrictive community. During this period, 1246

⁴² Ibid, p. 224.

⁴³ Derżawnyj Archiw Iwano-Frankowskoji Oblasti (DAIFO), f. 11, desc. 11, case 51: nuptial metrics of the Roman Catholic parish in Kutry from 1877–1945.

⁴⁴ F. Wasyl, *Sqsiedzi...*, p. 213.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 84.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

baptisms were registered in the Roman Catholic parish, of which only 31 (2.5%) were baptisms of children from extramarital unions.⁴⁷ This is not the place for an in-depth analysis of this interesting issue; the subject undoubtedly deserves a separate study. In the meantime, it is worthwhile to make a preliminary attempt at systematising this practice in the case of Kutý.

It seems that the phenomenon of illegitimate births can be grouped into a number of categories – the indicator would be the personal situation of the woman who, often against her will or as a result of various unrelated circumstances, officially gave birth to a fatherless child.

The first group of mothers of illegitimate children included women in an informal emotional relationship with one man. A good example is the union of the maid Zofia Wilhowska (born 1851) and the Ruthenian Szczepan Tryharuk (Traheruk). Below is the information included in the Kutý baptism book.

Zofia gave birth to an illegitimate daughter Maria in 1879. Two years later (1881) the illegitimate Klotylda was born. In the latter case, the girl's godfather was a clerk, Karol Temple, from Stare Kutý, which proves that *illegitimi* baptisms were not a cause for shame, since they were attended by people of high social prestige. The pages of the baptismal register again mention the maid Zofia Wilhowska in 1887; this time the baptism of her next daughter Karolina took place in the church. And although it was an *illegitimi* baptism, Szczepan Tryharuk was already recorded in the section with the identity of the father. Interestingly, the couple appears in the pre-marriage announcement book under the year 1888. However, it ended not with a wedding, but with the annotation: "there was no wedding, they started to cohabit".⁴⁸ In January 1890, Zofia and Szczepan had another daughter, Michalina. For the last time in the baptismal register there is information about Zofia's child under the date 26 June 1893. This time a boy was baptised and given the name Piotr. The godparents were a Ruthenian, Dymitr Tarnowiecki (merchant) and Honorata Korzeniowska (wife of Mikołaj, *primo voto* Rudnicka).

This atypical family with four children was also duly noted in *the Census of Families*. There is a note that Szczepan Tryharuk "(...) born in 1849, a worker at the mill, cohabited with Zofia Wilhowska". The author of the note also mentioned their offspring ("her children with Traheruk"). It is worth noting here that Zofia

⁴⁷ DAIFO, f. 631, desc. 11, case 49: baptismal register of the Roman Catholic parish in Kutý from 1875–1941. For the purpose of the article I used entries from the years 1890–1894, 1897–1910. No entries from the years 1895–1896 have survived in this part of the document. The book from 1895 is stored in Civil Registry Office – City of Warsaw (The Section of Records from beyond the River Bug, ref. 628) and the data from 1895 were taken from this resource. Unfortunately, records from 1896 have not yet been found.

⁴⁸ AEBK, ref. C-CXIV-5: book of premarital announcements of the Roman Catholic parish in Kutý from 1875–1945.

Wilhowska, the mother of the illegitimate offspring, herself was born out of wedlock, “misbegotten”. She was born in Pistyn in 1851 as the illegitimate child of Józefa. Although the unformalized relationship of Szczepan and Zofia differed significantly from the accepted rules in the town, there are not any pejorative, malicious or any biased terms in *the Census of Families*⁴⁹ about their family.

The second group of women giving birth to illegitimate offspring is closely linked to their profession – the servant. Staying in an unfamiliar house, formal subordination to an employer, sometimes also violence, made these women vulnerable to forced sexual contact with those on whom they were dependent. This state of affairs was facilitated by the low prestige of this professional group. Such was the fate of, among others, Emilia Kobylowska from Stare Kutry, daughter of Józef and Antonina Schmid. While on duty, the woman gave birth to several children, most of whom died early or shortly after birth (as a result of the life-threatening risks of the newborns at the time, but perhaps also because of the material conditions in which the mother lived). In 1881, Maria was born, but died of dysentery the same year. In 1886 another daughter of Emilia died in childbirth. In 1889 a third girl was born, who was again named Maria (and this child died of convulsions the same year). In 1890 Michał was born (godparents: Paweł Migruk, Anna Dwojczuk), who died of diphtheria in 1891. A second boy appeared in 1893 and was given the name Dymitr at baptism (godparents: Dymitr Mazur, Anna Dwojczuk), and a third son, Józef, in 1898. The latter’s godparents were Szczepan Łucki and Anna Mojzesowicz (daughter of Grzegorz – an Armenian merchant); probably people with whom Emilia was associated by virtue of her profession.⁵⁰ Emilia’s family is not listed in *the Census of Families* presumably due to the fact that her father Józef (head of the family and the house) was a Greek Catholic. However, there are other such cases in this document, e.g. the case of the maid Maria Lisowska (d. 1920) from Piwniczna, who was a servant of the Chudkowski family in Kutry (or Stare Kutry). Maria had an illegitimate daughter Anna (born 1875), who, also being a servant, in turn gave birth to three illegitimate children (Jadwiga, Maria, Stanisław).⁵¹

The third group of women giving birth to illegitimate offspring were those whose pregnancies were the result of casual sexual contacts. This group was

⁴⁹ F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, pp. 489, 549; a similar informal relationship was shared by the aforementioned Józef Pleban and Józefa Piechota. The couple lived to have four illegitimate children, despite the fact that the aforementioned Józef was married to Antonina Guszpit (b. 1895).

⁵⁰ DAIFO, f. 631, desc. 11, case 49; case 50: metrics of the deceased of the Roman Catholic parish in Kutry from 1875–1945.

⁵¹ F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, p. 294. It is known that the aforementioned Anna Lisowska later left Kutry (fled?) to Lviv. The priest recorded this fact in the following words: “(...) she took the children [and] left for Lviv, she left her old mother”. However, the actual reasons for this departure are unknown. See *ibid.*

predominantly made up of women from the privileged strata and of a higher property status. Sometimes, after the birth of an illegitimate child, they married its father. In 1893, Jan was born – an illegitimate son of Ernestina Grzybowicz. The latter was the daughter of Emilian and Ernestine Strecker. Given the distinctive forenames, and given the fact that one of Jan’s godfathers was Antoni Jekel – it can be hypothesised that Ernestyna came from a circle of Austrian newcomers. And in the case of this woman, the priest confined himself to noting in the ledger only the succinct, non-evaluative remark: “her son illeg. Jan b. 28.7.[1]893 [d.] 1.12.1893”⁵².

In the same year, Józefa was born.⁵³ Her mother was Rozalia (Róża) Gärstel, daughter of Jan and Anna. The girl’s godparents were Marek Petrowicz and Maria Dubicka née Schafer (born 1844, wife of Jan Dubicki). Józefa’s godparents, especially Maria Dubicka, came from wealthy families from Kutý, connected (through business interests) with the family of wealthy millers and entrepreneurs the Jekels.⁵⁴ In 1895, the aforementioned Rozalia Gärstel gave birth to an illegitimate child again, this time to a son, Jan. He was, however, recognised by Antoni Jekel. The latter married Rozalia shortly afterwards in July 1895.

In 1897 Józef was born, the illegitimate son of Julianna Jakimowich (born 1875).⁵⁵ Julianna was the daughter of Prokop, a Ruthenian, who appears in the sources first as a soldier transferred to the reserves (in 1875) and later as a musician (from 1885); the woman’s mother was Katarzyna Kaczkowska. The godparents of the illegitimate boy were Ferdynand Paquet (b. 1865) a court usher and Adela Jekel. The latter was the daughter of Rudolf Jekel and Wiktoria Strecker. As can be seen, in this case too, the godparents were people of higher than average social status: a clerk and a representative of one of the wealthiest families living in Kutý.

The cases analysed concern times characterised by relative social stability. The situation was different during the First World War. Between 1916 and 1918, 94 baptisms were recorded in the parish records (Roman Catholic) of Kutý, of which as many as 13 (13.8%) concerned children born in unmarried couples.⁵⁶ Let us try, briefly, to look at these cases. On 28 February 1916, a boy, the son of Stefania Tymoczko (daughter of Andrzej), was baptised. The boy’s baptismal certificate notes: “(...) Adam Stanislaw Albinski declared to be the natural fa-

⁵² Ibid, p. 142.

⁵³ She gave birth to an illegitimate son, Józef, in 1918. In 1921 she married a certain Mieczysław Modzelewski (b. 1886). See F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, pp. 303–304.

⁵⁴ On Jan and Maria Dubicki, see: Tadeusz Dubicki, *Dubiccy i familianci*, Łomianki 2021, pp. 15–18.

⁵⁵ This woman gave birth to an illegitimate child again in 1917 – a boy named Tadeusz.

⁵⁶ There are no baptismal records for 1915. See: DAIFO, f. 631, desc. 11, case 49.

ther,” a gendarme from Jabłonica (*miles securitatis*). On 7 March of that year, the baptism of Stanisław, the illegitimate son of the aforementioned Anna Lisowska, a maid employed at the Chudkowskis, took place. However, nothing more is known about this case. On 12 September 1916, Rozalia, the illegitimate daughter of Stefania Polańczuk (b. 1896, daughter of Jan), was baptised. The priest’s note states that this was a child “from some officer on the staff”.⁵⁷ However, the priest did not provide more detailed information on this subject. What is known however, is that the woman married Łazarz Kłymiuk (born 1897) in 1921. On 23 January 1917, Jan, the illegitimate son of Julia Ilnitska (b. 1879), who at that time was married to Michał Maftijewicz (b. 1876), was baptised. The latter, however, had been ‘for many years’ gainfully employed in America. Next to the child’s name there is a note: “(...) the mother demands that the child should be assigned to her”.⁵⁸ On 5 June 1917, an illegitimate boy was baptised and given the name Stanisław. He was the son of the maid Józefa Łucka (b. 1888), daughter of Wojciech (b. 1856) and Filomena Tomaszewska. The aforementioned Wojciech probably did not enjoy a particularly good reputation with the parish priest, as the latter called him outright a “thief”.⁵⁹ The father of Józefa Łucka’s child is not mentioned in any of the sources analysed. Another illegitimate child on the pages of the Kutry baptismal register was Antonina, born on 17 August 1917, daughter of the maid Aniela Gruszecka, daughter of Antoni. This woman had already given birth to an illegitimate son Mieczysław (b. 1913), who, according to the priest, came “from a Jewish father”.⁶⁰ On 19 September 1917, Eufemia was born, the illegitimate daughter of Rozalia Chrzanowska, about whom it is only known that she was the daughter of Józef and Paulina Kurkowska. On 9 November 1917, Maria, the illegitimate daughter of Józefa Piechota, was born. The child’s father was the aforementioned Józef Pleban – husband of Antonina Guszpit.⁶¹ Another illegitimate child on the register is Marcin – son of Helena Kochanowska (b. 1894), daughter of the baker Antoni from Kutry. The child died on his birthday, i.e. on 11 November 1917.⁶² On 8 December of that year Marian – the illegitimate son of Stefania Kaczkowska (b. 1895) – was born. She was married to Józef Ciesielski, and the marriage was not a happy one. Józef Ciesielski “disappeared in the war”.⁶³ At that time his wife, who was left behind in Kutry, gave birth to the aforementioned Marian,

⁵⁷ F. Wasyl, *Sqsiedzi...*, p. 369.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 281–282.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 257

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

who was recorded in the book as: “illegitimate son of war”.⁶⁴ A clue that this might have been a child whose father was a soldier is confirmed by the fact that one of his godfathers was a certain Józef Frieman – a soldier.⁶⁵ On 17 January 1918, an illegitimate Józef was born, the son of Józefa Jekel (born 1893), daughter of (illegitimate) Rozalia Gerstel, who was married to Antoni Jekel. Józef died on the same day, his father being unknown. The aforementioned Józefa married Mieczysław Modzelewski in 1921 and had many more offspring.⁶⁶ On 22 March 1918, Tadeusz, the illegitimate son of Julianna Jakimowicz (b. 1875), daughter of Prokop, was born. The woman had already had illegitimate offspring – in 1897 Józef was born.⁶⁷ On 19 July, Aleksander was born, an illegitimate offspring of Karolina, daughter of Atanazy Horodyński (born 1861). Little is known about this child, other than a dry note from the priest: “illegitimate son”.⁶⁸

Analysis of the above metric entries allows making some working theses about illegitimate births in the Kuty parish during the First World War. Undoubtedly, at that time there were so-called “children of war”, as the Kuty priest put it. These were children who were probably born as a result of rape. If it had been otherwise (i.e. if they had been conceived, for example, as a result of a love affair in circumstances of war), the fathers would probably have bonded with the mothers of these children or not covered up their paternity. The term ‘rape’ was never mentioned in the source, but this is rather due to the avoidance of putting the disgraceful situation in writing. On the other hand – for the priest – it was not important under what circumstances the child in question was born. At the time of baptism, it was equal to other members joining the community of the Church, as evidenced by the ‘ordinary’ circumstances of baptism, the choice of godparents, etc. There was also never any record of any pejorative, stigmatising terms for the mother associated with her illegitimate offspring. During the war, children were also born to women who had already had offspring with different partners, but for lack of sufficient sources it is difficult to ascertain under what circumstances these offspring were conceived.

Defects of body, flaws of character

The pastoral book, if one looks at the section of additional annotations, appears to be a great summation of illnesses, misdemeanours, addictions and peculiarities. It also contained praises expressed by the clergy next to the names of

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ DAIFO, f. 631, op. 11, spr. 49.

⁶⁶ F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, pp. 179, 303–304.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 177.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 163.

their parishioners. For example, personal information about the carpenter Wiktor Chodzicki (born 1847) contains a flattering note: “righteous man, noble”.⁶⁹ However, it did not escape the priest’s attention that the son of the aforementioned Wiktor – Ferdinand (b. 1877) suffers from muscular dystrophy.⁷⁰

Some of the comments in the pastoral book therefore concerned the physicality of parishioners (infirmities of the body). The attitude to illness or disability is devoid of sentiment. Jerzy Babiuk’s (b. 1862) wife, Katarzyna, née Budnik (b. 1863), was called by the priest a “crooked hag”.⁷¹ A certain Jakub Tomaszewski (b. 1883) is listed as a “stammerer”.⁷² In the case of Antonina Ciołek (b. 1878), Jakub’s daughter, one clergyman noted “paralysed” and another (in a different handwriting) added “cripple”.⁷³

Quite a few of the priestly remarks assessed the physical and mental health of parishioners, including diagnoses of cases of insanity. For example, in the case of Stanisław Aleksander Piotrowski (b. 1873), a rotary, the priest noted outright that the man had “gone mad”.⁷⁴ An unnatural death was also always recorded, usually as a result of suicide. This is how Karol Paradowski, a court servant, died in 1910.⁷⁵ Zofia Kowalska (b. 1864) ended her life in a similar way in 1914, with the priest noting that she “drowned herself in a well as a result of misery”.⁷⁶

Cases of domestic violence also did not escape the attention of the priests. For example, in the case of Jakub Łucki, a local furrier, born in 1885, it was reported that he “tortures his daughter and ties her up with a rope”.⁷⁷ A certain Franciszek Broszkiewicz (born in 1883), apart from the fact noted by the priest that he did not attend church or go to confession, was said to have “(...) hated, beaten and sued his brother”.⁷⁸ Some female parishioners were also stigmatised, in a manner tantamount to misogyny. Franciszka Józefa of Marciszów, the wife of Jan Drewnicki, was described as a “vindictive shrew”. And a certain Maria Manugiewicz (b. 1892), was described by the priest as a “Satanic woman”, because she fled to America, having abandoned her child and her dying husband.⁷⁹

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 79.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 41.

⁷² Ibid, p. 471.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 92.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 383.

⁷⁵ Also, among others: Zygmunt Treszko (b. 1880), chamber forester; Edward Lisowski (b. 1878), engineer, chamber estate inspector. See: F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, pp. 288, 381, 502.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 524.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 295.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 55.

⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 505–506.

Promiscuous sexual habits did not escape the priest's attention. About Jan Chudkowski, a retired railway inspector, it is written that "he does not know God, has not been to confession since his marriage, an atheist, spent a year in theology, avoids church like the plague, has lived a life of debauchery, only likes to talk about girls and accost them, an old man of 74 years".⁸⁰

Of the addictions and character ailments, however, the biggest problem was mainly drunkenness. In the book there is a complaint against Michał Bortnicki (b. 1861), a furrier, who "like a ruffian, came to the vicarage to quarrel, a drunkard".⁸¹ Ambroży Mitrowicz (b. 1872), a saddler, was referred to as a 'drunkard', but so were a whole host of other men from Kutry. Priests reached for a list of different names, grading the alcohol problem present in the faithful. Thus, there were 'extreme drinkers' and 'big drinkers' (e.g. Kazimierz Ciesielski and his son Józef); ordinary, one might say 'common drunks'; and finally: moderate alcohol abusers, who were neutrally described as 'fond of drinking'.⁸² In the case of some of them, the priest noted the fact of their vows to live a life of sobriety. This was the case of the "compulsive drinker" Jerzy Ciesielski (b. 1884), a bricklayer by profession. Next to his name it is recorded: "(...) he vowed to abstain from all liquor for life in the church before the great altar on 30.10.1913, before Mass in front of the people".⁸³ It is not known whether Jerzy managed to persevere in his vow, as another note indicates that he "died in the war".⁸⁴

Conversions and other religions

As I mentioned at the beginning, Protestants did not have their own pastoral ministry in Kutry. But adherents of the Reformed Church themselves sometimes found their way into the notes of the Catholic parish priest. For example, Herman Jekel (b. 1855), owner of two mills, was called by the priest "a fierce Protestant", "a sire [buhaj]", and his second wife Aniela Wolska (b. 1871) "a chambermaid and a concubine".⁸⁵ It is difficult to judge whether this extremely hostile comment stemmed from a prejudice against Protestants in general, or just from a dislike of a particular person and the fact that Herman Jekel may

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 96.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 51.

⁸² For example, the shoemaker from Kutry, Szczepan Ciołek (b. 1844), was labelled as a person "fond of drinking". See: F. Wasyl, *Sąsiedzi...*, p. 94.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 72.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 205.

have depraved the local community with his disordered erotic life. It seems that both suppositions are correct. Jekel was undoubtedly an unconventional figure, standing out in the social landscape of Kutry. The local Roman Catholic priest was clearly annoyed that Jekel cultivated his separate religious denomination, in a flaunting manner, and – perhaps – values his religious beliefs more highly than those of the Catholic Church in Kutry. This would be evidenced by the fact, as noted by the priest, that this Jekel “(...) converted children baptised in our church by the starost’s office to Protestantism”.⁸⁶

The attitude towards representatives of other faiths can be read between the lines. Emilian Niebieszczański, a gymnasium professor, is, in the priest’s opinion, “a quiet character”, and his wife Janina, née Berger (born 1890) “converted from Judaism to Catholicism and never goes to church”.⁸⁷ Elsewhere, the same Janina and her sister Halina – daughters of the doctor Jakub Berger – were described as “converts” who “do not know God – they live a worse life than Jewish women”.⁸⁸ The aforementioned marriage of Emilian and Janina Niebieszczański lived to have a son, about whom the priest added a rather spiteful remark: “raised beneath contempt, a spoiled little devil”.⁸⁹ The fact that the aforementioned “spoiled little devil” was none other than Adam Kazimierz Niebieszczański (1911–1982) – an eminent national activist, long-standing president of the émigré National Party in the US, co-founder of the Paderewski Foundation in New York and the Roman Dmowski Institute in the same city – is proof of just how wrong the priest was in his assessment. The aforementioned case of the Niebieszczański family is also a testimony to the fact that patriotic and independence-minded attitudes did not always coincide with high religiousness. It is worth pointing out that Emilian Niebieszczański (“quiet character”) died in 1921 “returning from Bolshevik captivity”, which undoubtedly testifies positively to his patriotic attitude.

Occasionally, Catholics who cooperated with Jews on a commercial level or in terms of self-help were “reprimanded”, especially if this happened at an unfortunate time (e.g. on Catholic holidays). For example, Jan Kozirowski (b. 1884), a merchant from Kutry, lived to see an unfavourable note in the parish book about himself when he “carried a sawmill to the Jews on Ascension Day”.⁹⁰ It seems, therefore, that the host of the Roman Catholic vicarage was a vigilant observer, using not only pastoral visitation or confession, but also the more prosaic tools of observation – the window and the curtain.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 350.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 48.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 350.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 215.

Observing, taking notes... and being observed

Some ‘exploits’ performed by parishioners completely elude any attempt at classification. These undoubtedly included the religious performance played by Antoni Piskozub (b. 1877). During a funeral without a priest, he began to pretend and substitute for one, ‘sprinkling with holy water and singing’. Perhaps this was a protest against the absence of a priest at the funeral or, on the contrary, an attempt to arrange a secular funeral without a priest. Either way, an ordinary parishioner dared to step into the role of the priest and mimic his actions, pulling the ritual down to the level of ineffective parody. On top of this, Piskozub was supposed to rebel the people against the clergy. The son of Piskozub and an Armenian woman Katarzyna, née Zielińska, Jan Piskozub (born 1903) was called by the priest: “an idiot, a bit of a socialist” – which also indicates both a general dislike of the family and a prejudice against the political ideas spreading at the time.⁹¹

It sometimes happened that priests complained about excessive religiosity, and this was especially true of women who were too zealous in attending the sacraments. For example, Rozalia Dobrowolska (born 1855), an Armenian by origin and wife of Michał Zieliński, a shoemaker, was said to have irritated the priest by going to confession too often. The following note describes her: “constantly complains about priests, and goes to confession every week, a false woman and deceitful”.⁹²

In *the Census of Families* cases of conflict with the law were recorded. Next to the name of Dawid Chrzanowski (b. 1870) it is possible to find information that he “did time”.⁹³ There were also cases of peculiar transformations in the morals of Kutry parishioners, situations in which the priest was forced to verify the opinions once recorded about a person. This was, for example, the case of the retired railway secretary Wojciech Konturek (b. 1844), who was Fr. Smagowicz’s cousin, and who, in the opinion of Fr. Józef Filipek: “does not practise his religion”. This opinion, however, was crossed out, and next to it was added: “a man of laws, at death reconciled with God by confession and Holy Communion”.⁹⁴

The question arises as to how the clergy acquired knowledge about parishioners and for what purpose. Undoubtedly, they most often obtained this information during their pastoral ministry; sometimes priests also recorded news that they could only learn through indiscreet sources (gossip, slander), such as

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 362–363.

⁹² Ibid, p. 557.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 81.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 213.

those mentioning sexuality or attitudes towards clergy.⁹⁵ The obtained knowledge served to develop an appropriate strategy in priestly ministry, so that it was tailored to the ‘problems’ that plagued individuals and their families.

Observation, however, is a double-edged weapon. The clergy observed their parishioners, but the faithful also observed their priests. In 1908, a letter was sent from Kutu to the curia in Lviv, in which it was the person of the priest who was assessed and judged by the superiors. The case was serious, as it concerned a sexual offence.

The letter in question was received by the Armenian-Catholic consistory in Lviv in January 1908, and its author was Józef Żyła – a lower-level official of the State Forest and Property Board in Kutu. In the document, dated 7 January, he reported that his fiancée Stefania Manugiewiczówna, then a 17-year-old girl, had been raped by Father Mikołaj Mojzesowicz, the parish priest of the Armenian-Catholic parish in Kutu:

Horror! Horror! It makes my hair raise when I look at the affairs of the local catholic priest Fr. Mikołaj Mojzesowicz (canon). My blood clots in my veins, it makes my flesh creep! And with what dignity does this priest celebrate mass? No! This is not a priest, but a scoundrel and once again a scoundrel!!!

The case is as follows: apart from the priest, the rectory is inhabited by Mr. Józef Mojzesowicz, with whom his sister-in-law, 17-year-old Stefania Manugiewiczówna, a cousin of the Reverend Father Prelate Jakub Moszoro, was staying for a while. The priest, having eaten his dinner (30 December 1907), lay down on the ottoman in his distant room and called the kitchen (he needed something). There was no servant at the time, so the wife of Mr Józef Mojzesowicz asked Stefania to serve the priest.

So the poor girl went. And what did the priest do with this poor orphan? He said to her, “Come and groom me”, and when she would not, he said, “Give me a carafe of water”. The poor orphan, wishing to serve him, obeyed his wish and, approaching him, handed him the vessel with the water. And what does the priest do? He grabs the poor orphan by the hand, she breaks away from him – he grabs her and in the most brutal way violates her virtue, her innocence, saying that a priest is allowed to do so.

Having reported such a shameful act to the proper authority, I declare that in the shortest possible time the case will be handed over to the State Prosecutor’s Office on my part as the poor Stefania’s fiancé (the priest knew about it), also on the part of her mother, family and people with human feelings.

Kutu, 6 January 1907 [mistake: should be 1908], Józef Żyła.⁹⁶

One can see from the above letter a record of a dramatic scene, spiced up by the fact that it happened in the vicarage. The appalling incident was reported in

⁹⁵ Among the sources of information about parishioners, those coming directly from the Holy Confession should be excluded, as a clergyman disclosing such data was liable to excommunication under the law itself (*late sententiae*).

⁹⁶ Centralny Derżawnyj Istorycznyj Archiw Ukrainy u Lwovi (CDIAUL), f. 475, desc. 1, case 906.

the most urgent fashion, a week after the fact, and the style and mistakes in the dating indicate the writer's agitation.

What seems to be important are the social consequences of this event, how the case was perceived by the victim's immediate circle and how the perpetrator of the crime reacted to it, and finally, how the case was resolved by the priest's superior, the then Armenian-Catholic Archbishop Józef Teodorowicz. Some light is shed on the first of these questions by the fact that the initiator of the report of this crime to the Lviv Curia was the girl's fiancé, and not representatives of her immediate family, let alone the victim herself. The letter also testifies to the strong emotions of those closest to her, since it says that "in the shortest possible time the case will be handed over" to the law enforcement authorities. It is not clear from the letter directly what the victim's fiancé expected from Fr. Mojzesowicz's superior. It can be assumed that he was appalled by the fact that the Armenian-Catholic priest continued to celebrate the Eucharist, even though, according to Żyła, "he is not a priest, but a scoundrel and once again a scoundrel".

At the Curia, the matter caused great indignation. In the archives there is a letter, in the form of a rough draft, probably edited by Teodorowicz himself, in which the parish priest of Kutu is ordered to leave the town urgently and to make a two-week retreat in a monastery of his choice in order to reconsider his "mistakes". Subsequently, Archbishop J. Teodorowicz "unconditionally" forbade Mojzesowicz to return to Kutu "to avoid further scandal". The parish priest of Kutu was – according to Teodorowicz – to live with his brother "administrator in Śniatyn" or in any place of his own choosing and to await further instructions.⁹⁷

In the absence of relevant documents, it is difficult to ascertain how the perpetrator of the crime reacted to these recommendations, and whether he complied with them at all. Incidentally, it is known that Mojzesowicz continued to serve as the Armenian Catholic parish priest in Kutu in the following months – thus infuriating the local community of worshippers, among whom rumours of the incident at the parsonage had probably already spread. This is evidenced by the raped woman's letter of 5 September 1908, sent directly to Archbishop Teodorowicz. It is worth quoting it here in full:

Most Reverend Archbishop! After a long wait, I dare to write to His Holiness about a matter already known to the Archbishop. I could have prosecuted Fr. Mojzesowicz [for] his behaviour with me, I could have exposed his foul deed to the pillory of public opinion but I did not do all this out of the deep conviction that the Archbishop himself will administer justice on him. When up to now Fr. Mojzesowicz not only has not suffered any punishment, but what is worse, while still sitting in Kutu he indulges himself in slandering me in public, therefore I am forced to turn to His

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Holiness with the following request. I do not want to take revenge for the foul crime committed against me by Fr. Mojzesowicz, I leave this to God's judgement, however, I ask the Archbishop, as a mere compensation for my harm to take Fr. Mojzesowicz away from here immediately. My fiancé, Józef Żyła, who is so noble that in spite of all the misfortune, which has befallen me, does not hesitate to marry me, has made only condition that he will not do so until Fr. Mojzesowicz is transferred from here. All the despicable news spread with all insolence by Rev. Mojzesowicz is known to my fiancé, and this outrages him the most, so he imposed this condition on me. I think that my request for the immediate transfer of Fr. Mojzesowicz from here is most valid and justified. Therefore, I believe that it will be taken in His Holiness' gracious consideration. Kutry, 5 September 1908, Stefania Manugiewicz.⁹⁸

It can be seen from the above letter that the Armenian-Catholic parish priest most likely did not follow the Archbishop's instructions, or returned to his rectory after a brief banishment. It is also apparent from this document that with the passage of time – the letter was written more than nine months after the incident at the rectory – the expectation of the severity of the punishment to be meted out to the perpetrator of the crime had changed. Stefania Manugiewicz was already talking only about the immediate removal of Mojzesowicz from the rectory in Kutry, and not about taking criminal action and properly punishing the perpetrator of the crime. It is also possible to read between the lines of this text that the main driving force behind the explanation and solution to the problem was the aforementioned fiancé of the girl, Józef Żyła. It was he who made the marriage to the woman raped by the priest conditional on Mojzesowicz's removal from the rectory. On the one hand, the girl's Armenian milieu probably pressed for an amicable settlement (in order not to cause even more scandal), while on the other hand, the lack of action is a telling symbol of the impossibility of the Armenian-Catholic Curia in Lviv when dealing with criminal cases involving its priests. This fact was, in fact, pointed out by Teodorowicz himself in a letter addressed to the pastor of Kutry (dated 2 September 1908), mentioning yet another "scandalous act" of the Kutry clergyman, unknown to us:

For the act already first committed by Your Reverence, you deserved that you should be deprived of your benefice. I have in my hand irrefutable evidence of this, quite sufficient to adjudge Your Reverence *ex informata conscientia*. Despite this, we have not drawn the consequences in the hope that Your Reverence will mend his ways. But it seems that it is precisely this excessive leniency of ours, so different from the punishments applied to other priests for far lesser misconduct, instead of mitigating, has just encouraged Your Reverence's impunity. The second act was followed by a public outcry that affected not only the city of Kutry but, so to speak, our entire diocese. According to the letter of the law, Your Reverence, for this deed, one unconnected with the other, you once again deserve the privation of benefices combined with the complete loss of all salaries. In spite of this, our generosity and consideration for Your Reverence went so far that we did not actually apply any punishment.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ CDIAUL, f. 475, desc. 1, case 600.

Although Stafania Manugiewicz received an urgent reply from the Curia (the rough copy of which is preserved in the case file) about the fact of Mojzesowicz's "long-decided" resignation from the presbytery and his imminent removal, the reality does not confirm this decision by Archbishop Teodorowicz, but rather attests to the total insubordination shown by Fr. Mojzesowicz (which, on balance, also reflects negatively on relations within the archbishopric). Mojzesowicz not only celebrated the Eucharist, but was also active in long-term renovation work at the church, which would indicate that he still intended to exercise his function.¹⁰⁰ He also sent letters to the Curia that proved his total detachment from reality, including a letter on the inter-rite marriage of Leopold Kinzhuber (about whom I wrote above) and Aniela Donigiewicz, who, according to Fr. Mojzesowicz, was Armenian and should be married in her mother-church rather than a Roman Catholic one.¹⁰¹ Mojzesowicz, ironically, pointed out the legal adversities that resulted from this type of conduct of spouses-to-be, but it probably did not occur to him that this could have been the aftermath of the lack of authority among his own faithful, who went to another church because they simply preferred to take their marriage vows in front of a person of unblemished moral reputation. Let us add that the aforementioned letter was sent by Mojzesowicz to the Lviv Curia on 9 October 1909, i.e. more than a year after Archbishop Teodorowicz promised his 'imminent removal' from the Kutu rectory.

Fr. Mikołaj Mojzesowicz was eventually transferred to another parsonage in Tyśmienica, where he was appointed as the parish priest on 12 January 1910. After a few years, in 1917, he took over the parsonage in Łysiec.¹⁰² He died in this town on 28 September 1921.¹⁰³

It seems that Stefania Manugiewicz's fiancé did not keep his promise to marry her. There is no record of the couple tying the knot in either the Armenian Catholic or the Roman Catholic church.

An attempt at evaluation

An unambiguous assessment of the customs of parishioners in a small town at the end of the Galician era seems impossible. After all, social attitudes are

¹⁰⁰ This is evidenced by Mojzesowicz's letters to the Curia regarding the planned renovation works in the church and its surroundings (dated 18 August 1908) and the expectation of payment to the building contractor Chaim Stein for the costs of the first works "around the Church wall" (dated 23 October 1908). See CDIAUL, f. 475, desc.1, case 600.

¹⁰¹ CDIAUL, f. 475, desc. 1, case 906. See: T. Krzyżowski, *Archidiecezja lwowska obrządku ormiańskokatolickiego w latach 1902–1938*, Kraków 2020, p. 44.

¹⁰² CDIAUL, f. 475, desc.1, case 844.

¹⁰³ Mikołaj Mojzesowicz (1863–1921), www.wiki.ormianie.pl [access: 14.03.2023].

multifaceted, nuanced and not monolithic. It is also difficult to estimate such cultural phenomena statistically. It seems that the statistical method should be abandoned in this case in favour of a descriptive one.

In the case of the documentary material presented above, one may be tempted to paint a certain picture of the small town community at the beginning of the twentieth century, making two caveats right away. Firstly, this picture is of a predominantly Latin rite community, and only partially of a Ruthenian and Armenian one. The small, though influential, group of Protestants is also marginally presented. Almost completely outside the scope of observation was the Jewish community, which accounted for half of the town's population. The second reservation concerns the optics of the observation of the customs of the Kutý inhabitants: the quoted and analysed book was written by local priests. Thus, one can see the customs of the Kutý residents from the perspective of the clergy, representing different levels of cultural sensitivity, as evidenced by the linguistic layer of the priestly records. Much can be read from it, not only in terms of what was said and how it was said, but perhaps more importantly in terms of things that were kept quiet.

How does the Kutý community look in the eyes of the local clergy, observing parishioners during Christmas calls, confessions or simply through the curtain of the vicarage window?

It was undoubtedly a divided community. The intelligentsia, the clerical elite, representatives of the wealthiest families were far from traditional religiosity, strictly subordinate to the authority of their shepherds. These were people who contested the existing social order, setting the axis of their individual attitudes and life choices within the circle of secular values (education, office held, business conducted) rather than religious matters. On the other hand, the absolute majority of the inhabitants of Kutý were very close to their rituals, as can be seen in the widespread participation, even among people who 'did not know God', in the most important church rites: baptisms, weddings and funerals.

It seems that the Church in the Galician provinces at the dawn of the 20th century was in a considerable crisis. The elites were far from recognising it as a source of authority and did not adhere to the ethics it defined. After all, these elites had been formed by positivism, an era whose watchwords referred more to *profanum* (the profane) than to *sacrum* (the sacred) layer of human life. This was facilitated, if I may say so, by the mechanics of the Austrian state, which placed the figure of the bureaucrat on a pedestal. *Sacrum* seemed to have remained only in the popular, folk Church, from which the priests themselves were increasingly derived from. And this consequently further deepened the divisions – also on the level of disagreement and different languages, different semantics of describing reality. But even within the priestly milieu there were serious flaws, such as the

case of Father Mojzesowicz's rape of his parishioner. Archbishop Józef Teodorowicz did not draw any consequences from the rape case (apart from transferring the clergyman to an equivalent position in another parish).

What also emerges from the cited documents is a vibrant community, caught up in down-to-earth, human, everyday matters: neighbourly disagreements, economic interests, family connections. These were, so to say, 'people of flesh and blood', and therefore caught up in their bodily and emotional affairs. And although the reticence of the editor of the pastoral book did not allow him to dazzle with stories of amorous adventures, love affairs, betrayals or religious and moral excesses, circumstantial evidence suggests that that era not only equalled our own in this respect, but even surpassed it considerably.

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Obserwować i notować. Obyczaje parafian z małego miasteczka w oczach proboszcza

Streszczenie

Artykuł stanowi próbę spojrzenia na obyczajowość parafian w galicyjskim miasteczku na przełomie XIX i XX w. poprzez pryzmat źródeł proveniencji kościelnej (księgi o charakterze *status animarum*). Podstawą analiz były komentarze obyczajowe, zamieszczane przez księży w odniesieniu do rodzin i osób zamieszkujących parafię. Pozwoliło to wytypować „przewinienia” obyczajowe (niedostateczna religijność, występki intymne, posiadanie pozamałżeńskiego potomstwa, ułomności ciała i przywary charakteru), a także konwersje na inne wyznania. Autor prezentuje skalę tych „amoralnych postaw” wobec religii i kościoła, a także zarysowuje jako główną przyczynę ich zaistnienia emancypację elit uformowanych w kręgu idei pozytywistycznej nauki.

Słowa kluczowe: Galicja, mikrohistoria, obyczajowość, Ormianie, Kuty nad Czeremoszem