

REVIEW ESSAY

UCRAINICA

Roman Cholij

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In December 1991 Ukraine became an independent nation. Since that time there has been an all round renewed interest in its past and in its place today within the family of independent nations.

Scholars, and in particular cultural and ecclesiastical historians, now have access to archival materials, and to a free exchange of ideas with native scholars, that have for a good part of this century been heavily restricted. The works listed above illustrate the rebirth of Ukrainian academia and of interest in Ukrainian cultural and ecclesiastical history.

Ihor Ševčenko's *Ukraine Between East and West* is an excellent introduction for non-specialists to the cultural origins and development of today's Ukraine. The author is a well-known historian, and his book presents in a highly scholarly but non-pedantic way the influences that shaped the Ukrainian people from the time of the introduction of Christianity up to the early eighteenth century. Influences from Byzantium—"the most important non-Slavic component of the upper-class culture of early Kiev" (Preface, p. xiii)—and from the West (especially the Polish West) are analyzed in a lively style that reflects the lecture origins of the twelve essays that make up this book, seven of which have already been published separately elsewhere. There is plenty of material to interest the ecclesiastical historian—the essays on religious polemical literature of the 16th and 17th centuries and on Peter Mohyla (essays 10 & 11) being particularly stimulating to this reviewer. Essays are followed by up-to-date bibliographic references for the serious student to pursue, and at the end of the book there are helpful chronological tables, maps, and an index.

Religion and Culture in Early Modern Russian and Ukraine is more for specialists, containing a collection of interdisciplinary articles born of a workshop held at Stanford University in 1993 that focuses on religious and cultural life in the seventeenth century—a time of innovation, creativity, and social upheaval. The authors include historians, art historians, and experts in literature and cultural studies whose research elucidates various aspects of life in Russia, with particular sensitivity to Russia's interaction with neighboring East Slavs, especially the Ukrainians. The book (as

with the workshop) addresses the secularist bias in much of past Russian historiography as well as the unsatisfactory, selective, and tendentious content of a good proportion of church historiography. This is particularly odd given that the Russian Orthodox Church for much of its history “provided the vocabulary for ethics, creative expression, political ideas, and for most social mores, ritual and symbolic activity” (p.4). The book furthers the study of the interaction of culture and religion in its interesting and often provocative discussions on issues as varied as popular religiosity, as expressed in supplicatory prayers and hagiography, humanism in icons and literature, “backwardness” among the peasants, social tensions and society, and social identity. Ukrainian scholars should be particularly interested in the contributions of authors such as David Frick, who explores cultural identity on the boundaries of Russia and Ukraine, Frank Sysyn, who examines Ukrainian political change—especially the Khmel’nyts’kyi uprising—using structural categories, and those others who (like Ševčenko in the previous review) examine the interplay of European, Byzantine, and Ukrainian Orthodox elements in seventeenth-century religious and cultural life. All in all, this is a valuable resource book for those interested in the history of Russia, Ukraine, and early modern Europe.

The two sets of essays edited by Borys Gudziak are the first two volumes of a prospective six-volume series that discuss the sixteenth-century Union of Brest that brought significant parts of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church into the bosom of Rome, to create what is now called the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The Union, whose 400th anniversary fell in 1995/96, was, and still remains, a controversial issue (especially for Orthodox churchmen and scholars) and it is to the credit of the newly (re)established Institute of Church History of the Lviv Theological Academy, headed by the editor of these volumes, that a series of symposia was organized to try and analyze and reinterpret the meaning and significance of this event. The first volume concerns itself with the background to the Union and what occurred to the first generation of Unionists. The

second volume focuses on questions of State, Society, and Church in post-Union seventeenth-century Ukraine. Papers are followed by extensive discussion, with an index given at the end of each volume. Perhaps the main value of these two works is in bringing the issue to the fore once again, burying the polemical and tendentious approaches of the past, and inviting present-generation scholars to re-examine the fundamental reasons for the alliance with Rome in a religious-cultural context that is sensitive to the full social context of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The only major drawback of these two publications is that they restrict themselves to the Ukrainian reading public. It would be highly desirable if a translation, or at the very least a synopsis, of these proceedings were made available to the wider scholarly world. Union of Brest scholarship would surely be the beneficiary.

Andrii Krawchuk's *Christian Social Ethics in Ukraine* is a monograph on the social thought of Andrei Sheptytsky (1865–1944), the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church for almost half a century and an exceptionally influential figure in Ukrainian society during this period. What Krawchuk attempts to do—and he does this successfully—is to show that the Metropolitan, although a patriot, was not a 'nationalist' in a political sense and did not support nationalist ideals and aspirations uncritically and without measure. Nor did his social teaching—based on contemporary Roman Catholic thinking (especially Pope Leo XIII's social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*)—depart from what was expected from a leader of a Catholic Church. Political Nationalists, therefore, claim the Metropolitan as a kindred ideologue without foundation. Krawchuk sees his study also as an exercise in the 'contextualization' of Catholic social teaching by a local church in eastern Europe (cf. p.xix). Certainly, his study makes extremely interesting reading as a study in the social history of Western Ukraine in the first half of this century, and he presents a very well-documented analysis of the Metropolitan's interaction with the social and political forces of the day (ranging from the Austrian State to Communism and Nazism). He has done this with the aid of rare

archival material and with a wide range of other primary source materials. In fact, one very useful aspect of this study is the extensive (although unavoidably non-exhaustive) listing of primary sources, chronologically ordered and annotated (pp. 278–371). As a work of moral theology, however, this writer was a little disappointed not to see more analysis and evaluation of Sheptytsky as a thinker. Was he in any sense original, for example, in his interpretation of current Roman Catholic thinking? How did his thought interact with key papal documents and works of theologians, Catholic or otherwise? What were the intellectual influences on his thought? How does he stand in terms of the contemporary trends in Orthodox ethics? Did the life and thought of Theodore the Studite—after whom he founded his Studite order—influence him in any way (the ninth-century Theodore himself became heavily involved in the politics of his day and was exiled, imprisoned and witnessed the closure of monasteries and churches)? Perhaps these are questions for separate study, and it is evident that Krawchuk did not feel they were within the scope of his particular study. As it stands, nonetheless, Krawchuk's work remains an indispensable aid to all Sheptytsky scholars.

Finally, Bohdan Bociurkiw's study on the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939–1950) brings us almost up to date with Ukrainian ecclesiastical affairs. This book is the best analysis that this writer has ever seen on the dubious event called the Lviv Sobor of 1946, and the politico-ecclesiastical motives behind it, that formerly 'reunited' the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church with the Russian Orthodox Church. This work, published on the 50th anniversary of this event, is, as the fly-cover states, "the fruit of a lifetime of painstaking research" by a highly respected scholar. Using "the major publications on the subject, Soviet and non-Soviet periodicals, documents in Soviet, Vatican, and Ukrainian Catholic archives, eyewitness accounts, letters and interviews," Bociurkiw tells the story of the Kremlin's motives behind the 'reunification' of the Ukrainian Catholic Church "without the gross distortions that characterized the Soviet rewriting of the his-

tory of the “reunion of the Uniates” and without the sentimentalism, exaggerations, or superficialities of émigré “martyrology.” Given the ongoing tensions in today’s Western Ukraine over this very issue and its real effects in terms of ownership of church property and allegiance of parishes, Bociurkiw’s study merits careful consultation by Orthodox and Catholic church authorities alike.

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