

## Yosyf Botsian: Bishop of Lutsk and Dreamer of the Revival of Eastern Catholicism

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### Abstract

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Yosyf Botsian (1879–1926) is one of the important figures in the twentieth-century revival of Eastern Catholicism in Ukraine. Following his formation in several intellectual centers of Austria-Hungary, Botsian was brought into the circle of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky and appointed rector of the Lviv Theological Seminary, which he helped reform according to Jesuit models, emphasizing spiritual development rather than rigorous external discipline. He also continued scholarly work and encouraged the social and political engagement of both seminarians and clergy. During the First World War, Botsian was sent into exile in Russia; before they were separated, Metropolitan Sheptytsky secretly ordained him as bishop of Lutsk, thus closely associating Botsian with his own dream of the restoration of Eastern Catholicism throughout the historical lands of the Kyivan Metropolia. Unfortunately, Botsian was never able to occupy his see. While Lutsk was incorporated into the new Polish republic following the First World War, neither Sheptytsky and Botsian nor the Oriental Congregation could overcome the opposition of the Polish government and of some Polish Roman Catholic hierarchs to the renewal of the Byzantine rite in eastern Poland. Effectively deprived of his episcopal rank in the last years of his life, Botsian endured disappointment, persecution, illness, and an untimely death. Groomed as Sheptytsky's successor, Botsian never fulfilled this role, and his dream of the spread of Eastern Catholicism beyond Galicia and its return to the rest of Ukraine would not be fulfilled until after his death.



### List of Abbreviations

AAN	Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie
AAW	Archives of the Archeparchy of Winnipeg
ACO	Archivio della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali
AEE	Archives of the Eparchy of Edmonton
AES	Archivio della Sacra Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari (Segreteria di Stato)
AHV	Archive of Bishop Michael Hrynchyshyn, Vincennes
ArOSBMR	Archivio dell'Ordine Basiliano di San Giosafat, Roma
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
BPIO	Biblioteca della Pontificia Istituto Orientale
HHStA	Haus, Hof und Staatsarchiv (Wien)
PIaSM	Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum (London)
РГВИА	Российский государственный военно-исторический архив
РГИА	Российский государственный исторический архив
ЦДІАУЛ	Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України місто Львів

### Archival Fonds

<i>Arch. Nunz. Varsavia</i>	<i>Archivio della Nunziatura di Varsavia</i>
<i>Arch. Nunz. Vienna</i>	<i>Archivio della Nunziatura di Vienna</i>
<i>NB</i>	<i>Most Rev. Nicetas Budka</i>
<i>MSZ</i>	<i>Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych</i>
<i>MWRiOP</i>	<i>Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego</i>

### Publications

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
ANP	Acta Nuntiaturae Poloniae (tomus LVII, ed. Stanislaus Wiłk (Romae: Institutum Historicum Polonicum Romae, 1995–2002).
МАШЖД	<i>Митрополит Андрей Шептицький Життя і Діяльність</i> , vol. 1, <i>Церква і Церковна Єдність. Документи і Матеріали 1899–1944</i> (Львів: Свідчадо, 1995).
МАШГКР	<i>Митрополит Андрей Шептицький і Греко-Католики в Росії. Документи і матеріали, 1899–</i>

1917, ed. Юрій Аввакумов and Оксана Гайова  
(Львів: Видавництво Українського католицького  
Університету, 2004).

### Archival Abbreviations

арк./ark.	аркуш
an.	anno
ф.	фонд (fonds)
f.	folio/s
fasc.	fascicle
no.	number ( <i>numero</i> )
оп.	опис (inventory)
par.	paragraph
per.	period (archival)
P.O.	Posizione Originale
pos.	position ( <i>posizione</i> )
prot.	protocol
r/v	facing/reverse ( <i>recto/verso</i> )
RP	<i>Rzeczypospolita/ej Polska/iej</i> , referring to the embassy of the Second Polish Republic
rubr.	rubric ( <i>rubrica</i> )
спр./д.	справа/дело (item)
sygn.	sygnatura (call number)
vol.	volume

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**Примітка:** У всіх цитатах творів австрійського та міжвоєнного періодів збережено правопис оригіналу.

*He was like a meteor, that shone  
perhaps in order to burn out.*<sup>1</sup>

Yosyf Botsian was a scholar, an idealist, and a dreamer.<sup>2</sup> His dream was to see the Eastern Catholic Churches restored in the lands of Eastern Europe where they had been suppressed by the Russian Empire. This dream was given to him by his mentor, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky. Botsian spent part of his ecclesiastical career in scholarly pursuits and in seminary formation, but the crux of his ministry was to be the key player in Sheptytsky's restoration project, of which he became a living example when the metropolitan named him bishop of the suppressed Eparchy of Lutsk. Yet the revival of the Eastern Catholic Church outside Galicia encountered serious political and religious opposition. Botsian was blocked from taking up his post in Lutsk and his dreams of a Greco-Catholic restoration were to remain unfulfilled. In sacrificing himself as an instrument of Sheptytsky's controversial plans, Botsian was destined to endure disappointment, persecution, illness, and an untimely death. Groomed as Sheptytsky's successor, Botsian ultimately served as the precursor to Yosyf Slipyi, who was later to succeed Sheptytsky as metropolitan of Lviv-Halych.

### ***Early Life – From Busk to Lviv***

Yosyf Ivan Botsian was born March 10, 1879 in the village of Busk, Kamianets district, in Austro-Hungarian Galicia, and was baptized by the local pastor, Father Emilian Petrushevych.<sup>3</sup> His parents, Ivan Botsian and Yulia Kapii, already had two older children, Vasyl and Ivanka, while a younger

<sup>1</sup> Дамаскин Попович, "Луцький Єпископ Йосиф Боцян: У Тридцятьліття Його Смерті," *Світло / The Light* 19, no. 11 (407) (November, 1956): 17–21.

<sup>2</sup> "Отець-ректор доктор Боцян Йосиф [... був] замало реальний." Йосиф Сліпий, *Спомини*, ed. Іван Дацько and Марія Горяча (Lviv: Ukrainian Catholic University, 2014), 108.

<sup>3</sup> Emilian Petrushevych (1830–1901): parish priest of Busk in 1860; dean in 1863; father of Yevhen Petrushevych (1863–1940), president of the Western Ukrainian National Republic in 1918.