

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SHEPTYTSKY'S THEOLOGY

We now turn more directly to the contents and emphases of Sheptytsky's religious writings. The traditional divisions of theology – Revelation, Trinity, Christology, etc. – will provide the categories. I will attempt a more comprehensive and balanced portrait of his theology than is presently available. Bazylewycz's lengthy overview of Metropolitan Andrei's writings – legitimately considered the best introduction to date¹ – is sometimes impressionistic and selective, stressing those of his views most congenial to post-Vatican II Easternizing Ukrainian Catholics. Also, Bazylewycz's focus is more ecclesiastical than theological.

Petro Bilaniuk's shorter work, "Sheptyts'kyi's Theological Thought"² is a good introduction, but, again, greater comprehensiveness is warranted. Other books and dissertations, most of them already cited in Chapter 1, offer reflections on individual aspects of Sheptytsky's theology and will be cited as necessary.

My attempt at comprehensiveness raises the following question: As scholarship usually investigates the significant, of what value is comprehensiveness when large portions of Sheptytsky's writings are simply paraphrases of standard post-Vatican I Catholic thought, albeit tailored to the specificities of East Galician life?³ My response is two-fold: First, in addition to what was stated in the Introduction about illustrating the "conflict" between his *lex orandi* and "*divina doctrina*," Sheptytsky's theology deserves a full portrait because while he was not always a seminal thinker, he was usually a seminal "actor" – especially in the Eastern European context. His imposing stature begs the question: What ideas, whether original or not, grounded this grandeur? This is particularly germane as our study treats the theological underpinnings of Sheptytsky's (seminal) liturgical work.

¹ Michael Hrynchyshyn, "Western Historiography and Future Research," in Magocsi, M&R, 427.

² Magocsi, M&R, 165–83.

³ For the more significant developments in Catholic theology just before and during Sheptytsky's lifetime see Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Seabury, 1977); Hubert Jedin, Konrad Repgen, John Dolan, eds., *The Church in the Modern Age*, vol. 10 of *History of the Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1981) 260–81; and John Auricchio, *The Future of Theology* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1970) 1–221.

Second, notwithstanding the aforementioned, Sheptytsky did develop ideas and theological emphases that were important. Of course, presenting *only* the ideas that stimulate thought today would be more rewarding, but the time has come for a “full-length,” “three-dimensional” portrait of him as theologian, if only because the over-all impression created by the dynamic churchman clamours for a portrayal “from all sides.”

This portrait will be a mosaic. As is evident by now, except for *Christian Righteousness* Sheptytsky’s style was not usually academic; his writings were generally evocative and iridescent reflections, not systematic tracts interpreting faith in the light of reason. But his works’ coherence makes him a theologian all the same.

There is also the problem of genre. Because our approach is thematic, pastorals written for poor immigrants will be studied alongside treatises intended for clergy and theologians. Such a juxtaposition is usually imprudent, and to the author unfair. However, in addition to the rationale of thematization, there is the fact that Sheptytsky’s decisions concerning liturgical revision emanated from the totality of his worldview – from his *operative*, as well as discursive, theology. Besides, worship is a common, public reality. When revising it Sheptytsky had to consider the mentality of his entire flock, a mentality formed, in part, by his own pastorals and catechisms. Consequently, if in the early 1940s Sheptytsky believed that scandal would ensue from making the *Filioque* facultative (as the new *Recensio ruthena* did for certain territories), it helps to know that in earlier popular works he condemned the *Filioque*’s omission as heretical! In either case, our footnotes will usually provide enough clues to indicate the work’s level of sophistication.

Finally, a comment about our incessant use of quotations. Citing Sheptytsky verbatim several times per page may seem pedantic. However, most of his works remain untranslated and sometimes it is Kyr Andrei’s manner of expression more than the idea *per se* that inspires. Another reason, and probably the most important for doing so, is that Sheptytsky’s views are frequently misrepresented owing to the Ukrainian language’s inaccessibility to a larger (and more objective) pool of scholars.

I. SHEPTYTSKY’S NOTION OF THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL METHOD

Sheptytsky’s reflections on the nature of theology and its method probably rank among his more creative contributions to religious literature. Most of these insights appear in *The Gift of Pentecost*, a tract on authority and Church teaching, the nature of Revelation, and the characteristics and method of true theology. The tract and several other works indicate that for Sheptytsky