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Kievan Christianity and the "Church Universal"

ISTORIIA KHRYSTYIANSTVA NA RUSY-UKRAÏNI. Vol. 1: VID POCHATKU DO 1353 R. By *Mykola Chubatyi (Nicholas Chubaty)*. Rome and New York: Ukrainian Catholic University Press, 1965. xi, 816 pp. \$10.00.

The basic thesis of this book is that Kievan Christianity started as representative of the "Church Universal" and finally abandoned that position in the thirteenth century because of the influence of Byzantium and despite a counter-vailing influence from Rome. The thesis is supported with a quantity of persuasive evidence and argumentation.

Universalism is shown in the teachings of Saints Cyril and Methodius (p. 109), in the attitudes and activities of the Pechersky Monastery of Kiev (p. 367), in Metropolitan Ilarion's deemed unwillingness to condemn the pope in 1054 (p. 318), and in Kiev's initial unwillingness to support Byzantium in the schism of that year (p. 399). Pro-Roman proclivities, offering additional evidence of universalism, are implicit or explicit in such matters as the continuity of Saint Vladimir's relations with Rome (p. 250), Western influence on the Cathedral of Saint Sophia (p. 307), the marriage of Iziaslav of Kiev with the Catholic Gertrude of Poland (p. 355), support of Petrine supremacy in the Life of Saint John Zlatoust (p. 368), tolerance toward Catholics (p. 371), the building of the Church of Saint Peter in Kiev (p. 398), the Kievan view of the legend of Saint Andrew the Apostle (pp. 58–66, 507), the pro-Catholicism of Prince Roman of Galicia (pp. 551 ff.), and the crowning of his son Daniel (p. 640).

Byzantium, however, had an early influence (p. 237), and gave Saint Vladimir insignia of rule (p. 277). The view that only Greeks should be saints (p. 410) and the Grecophilism of Prince Vladimir Monomakh of Kiev were among the elements which foreshadowed Byzantine dominance (p. 436). By the end of the metropolitanate of Mikhail (1131–45) all the bishops were Greek (p. 454), and Suzdalia adopted the Byzantine emphasis on prayers, fasting, and ritualism (pp. 532–33) in opposition to the Kievan de-emphasis of ritualism (p. 369). The Byzantine cause was furthered, *inter alia*, by the strong opposition of Metropolitan Cyril II to the idea of church union (p. 630), and Muscovy helped to undermine the separate Galician metropoly (p. 699). None-

theless, Rome played a major role in the first Russian hierarchy (pp. 244–45) and organized a defensive league against the Tatars (p. 604). These and other steps were insufficient. Additional developments condemned a Rome-Kiev axis: the loss of the autonomy of the Kievan church in the time of Yaroslav the Wise (p. 302), a loss which was re-enforced by the division of lands among Yaroslav's sons (p. 325) and the ruin of Kiev in 1169 (p. 493), the strengthening of the bishopric of Suzdal in order to increase effective mission work among the Finnic peoples (p. 422), the modesty of support for the idea of church union (p. 685), and the political weakening of Kiev (p. 756). Still there were native challenges to the Byzantinization of the church: Efrem was made metropolitan (1090–96) without the patriarch's approval (p. 419), Prince Iziaslav of Kiev and the cleric Klim Smoliatich "prepared a dynamic reaction against Byzantium" (p. 464), and Kievan emphases on love, the equality of peoples, scriptural authority, and social justice, among others, were different from Byzantine attitudes (pp. 757–59).

By extensive reference to *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum Historiam Ucrainae Illustrantia* (Anal. OSBM. T. 1, Rome, 1953), Chubaty creates the impression of having applied much new evidence to his basic thesis. In fact, all of the documents he cites from that volume have been published before. He sometimes makes that clear, but at other times, by failing to supply alternative citations, he leaves the impression that they have not been published before. He has incorporated the findings of other scholars, permitting him dispassionately to disagree with such authorities as Amann, Soloviev, Hrushevsky, and Golubinsky (pp. 504, 520, 607–8, 697). Moreover, he sometimes uses evidence against positions which he himself had formerly adopted—for example, against the Ochrid theory of the beginning of the Kievan hierarchy (p. 253). In disagreeing with Dölger, he notes that Dölger improperly relied on a later text to establish data relating to the year 989 (pp. 277–78). Unfortunately Chubaty himself improperly relies on the *Tserkovnyi Ustav* of Vladimir to establish that Vladimir supported the church with a tithe in the late tenth or early eleventh century, even though no *Ustav* texts from that time or from an immediately subsequent period are available to scholars (p. 270). He notes that Byzantine and Muscovite prelates censored the chronicles and church literature, thus depriving us of much needed information (pp. 1, 210, 310) about which he occasionally speculates. Chubaty uses the *Slovo o polku Igoreve* as a source for early history (p. 297), an incautious procedure, especially in view of the doubts cast recently by Zimin and Fennell on the earliness of its composition. He does not adequately recognize the contributions of Ludolf Müller (pp. 225, 241); in particular, Chubaty's suggestion of an early autocephalic church in Kiev is not persuasive. Regrettably, works useful to Chubaty's thesis have been ignored—for example, Manfred Hellmann, "Staat und Recht in Altrussland," *Saeculum*, 5, no. 1 (1954), and Igor Smolitsch,

Russisches Mönchtum: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Wesen, 988–1917 (Würzburg, 1953). In arguing reasons for Byzantine dominance, Chubaty does not consider the position maintained by Wilhelm Haussig that Christianity, as ultimately adopted in Bulgaria and later in Kiev, was in part shaped by pre-Christian Byzantine local culture, and he plays down aggressive behavior on the part of Rome.

In his use of documents and scholarly authorities, Chubaty is often logical and imaginative. He places some, but not excessive, reliance on hypotheses anent Ilarion's disapproval of the schism of 1054 (p. 318), the probability that Ioann II was no longer metropolitan in 1077 (p. 389), nor Efrem late in 1096 (p. 420), and that Metropolitan Nikifor's Greek attitudes kept him from the burial of Sviatopolk (p. 432). Yet some hypotheses seem forced—the papacy could not call on Kiev for help in the crusades because of the attacks by the Polovtsy (p. 443), a patriarchal synod gave approval to Metropolitan Maxim's move to Vladimir-Suzdal (no evidence is offered, p. 659), and the protest by Prince Lev Danilovich against that move "must have been" communicated to Maxim (p. 664). Occasionally but rarely Chubaty seems irrelevant (or at least unclear): when he solipsistically argues that Klim Smoliatich was not from Smolensk (p. 465), or when he argues *in abstracto*, on the basis of canonical principle and not on the basis of data about issues of the time, that Maxim had canonical difficulties because of his move to Vladimir-Suzdal (pp. 655–56). Chubaty sometimes simply asserts that there is no evidence to back views maintained by other scholars—for example, that Tmutorokan was a bishopric in the ninth century (p. 98), that Prince Mstislav of Kiev was a Grecophile (p. 323), that Archbishop Peter shifted to Catholicism (p. 606), and that Metropolitan Cyril II was a Suzdalian (p. 627).

Technically the volume is hardly acceptable. Errata in the text are noted on page xi, and we have discovered only three more in the text proper. The bibliography, however, contains numerous mistakes and inconsistencies: Russian words and names are misspelled, and prerevolutionary book titles are sometimes left in the original spelling and sometimes transcribed, either in whole or in part, into modern Russian spelling. Chubaty occasionally omits specific page references (e.g., p. 23, n. 2), once puts page references in the main body of the text (p. 560), and at times includes matters which might better have been disposed of in a footnote—for example, the discussion of the papal bishop Oleksy, about whose existence Chubaty is uncertain (p. 301). A spot check of Latin citations in the footnotes reveals about 10 percent to be free of errors. Useful lists are appended of popes, patriarchs, the heads of the Kievan church, and of Kievan great princes, as well as genealogical tables of the Riurikovichi, a substantial bibliography, and an index of a moderate degree of detail.

It should be clear that we are confronted with a scholarly work of impor-

tance in which analyses and information are offered that may not be ignored. That is especially true of the main thesis: although the view of a dominant Byzantine influence in the Kievan church at an early time has strong support in the scholarly literature, our knowledge is so fragmentary as to make hazardous a total rejection of Chubaty's thesis as it relates to Byzantine influence. Moreover, we are not disposed to challenge Chubaty's view that Kievan Christianity started as representative of the "Church Universal." Widespread acceptance of the importance of this work is, however, endangered by three major flaws: emotionalism, terminological imprecision, and factual inaccuracy. Chubaty's emotionalism will offend Russian specialists; yet, taken alone, it is probably the least serious of the three. He regards the victory of Muscovite autocracy as a tragedy that helped to make possible the triumph of the Byzantine church. Byzantine churchmen blocked the early canonization of Saint Vladimir (p. 284), and Nastas, who betrayed the Kievan church's treasure to Sviatopolk and Boleslav, is termed a Judas (p. 294)—Chubaty sees both these events as undermining the autonomy of the Kievan church, so vital to its early universalism. The schism of 1054 was a tragedy in the Christian church (p. 341), the death of Prince Roman was a catastrophe for Rus' (p. 556), and the death of the last Romanovich was tragic (p. 693). Chubaty's emotionalism is reflected even in implications—for example, he suggests that an anti-Latin like Metropolitan Cyril II should not have had great sentiment for Kiev (p. 650); that is, only a pro-Latin should. In a word, Chubaty has overdramatized whatever rivalry there may have been. Chubaty's emotionalism may have contributed to his terminological imprecision.

Without definition of nationalism and imperialism, Chubaty asserts that "Russian historical science" was in their service (p. 14)—a highly debatable generalization. His reference to the Ukrainians at an early time is, we believe, anachronistic. For the term, as usually understood, is not applicable to persons who lived during the period covered by this volume. Moreover, he distinguishes the Ukrainians from others—Belorussians, Muscovites, and Novgorodians. Clarity in the last two terms is reduced when he asserts that a political satire against the Novgorodians was directed against the northern Slavians, whom he identifies as one of the ancestors of the Muscovite people (p. 60). He views separatism—for example, of Polotsk and Suzdal—as "ethnic" (p. 298) without defining that crucial adjective. Christianity of the Slavonic rite is not defined (p. 101), so it becomes representative of a "national" Christian tendency in opposition to Latin forms supported by Germans (p. 232), yet "all Christians of the Slavonic rite were obviously Catholics and recognized the rule of Rome over themselves" (p. 233). Terms are used without proper foundations: the *Nomokanon* (simply equated with the *kormchaia kniga*, although the latter was more extensive, p. 44, n. 1), or the *Drang nach Osten* of Otto III (p. 248), or the "planned assault" of Byzantinism on Kievan Christianity in

the first half of the twelfth century (p. 429). Even more serious is Chubaty's shifting use of the term "Church Universal"—sometimes it seems to be equated with Rome and at other times actually seems to represent the united church before the schism. Moreover, perhaps as a consequence, Chubaty fails to reveal the possible motivation underlying apparently pro-Roman attitudes expressed especially in the period prior to the schism of 1054, and so the extent of support for what he calls the "Church Universal" remains unclear.

The case for factual inaccuracy is strongest. May Chubaty be heard to say that Moscow sought to "exterminate" the Christianity of the Ukrainian people (p. 3) or that Russia used the partitions of Poland to suppress Catholicism in the Ukraine (p. 17)? He unconsciously challenges the Soviet scholar L. V. Alekseev by such exaggerated generalizations as the following: the Tripole population was "exclusively" in the Ukraine (p. 21), therefore not in what was later to be Belorussia, and Polotsk and Smolensk (traditional Belorussia) were the land of the Krivichians (p. 320), and, by implication, of no other Slavic tribe and of no Lithuanians. May Chubaty ignore the role of the Huns in making Kiev a capital (p. 32), and evidence of a Varangian presence in the south prior to the mid-ninth century (p. 37) presented in Vasmer's lengthy article on Dnieper place names and in others' archaeological work, as well as evidence of Scandinavian influence on Kievan law (pp. 162, 322) and of Finnic elements in Novgorod (p. 462)? May he late in his tome properly play down Finnic elements in Suzdalia (pp. 523 ff.)? By his omissions does not Chubaty deprive his own theory of ethnic separatism of support? Or does he feel that such a theory should be based primarily on differentiations among the Slavic tribes: the Antes may be included among them, but despite Chubaty's avowed rejection of anti-Normanism, possible Scandinavian and even Lithuanian, Finnic, and Hunnic influences deserve little or no attention. Chubaty makes questionable assertions without supporting evidence: "Olga wished by her baptism to bring Rus' into the broad Christian world" (p. 180)—that is, Olga was an early supporter of Christian universalism—and "at all times" there was a *kormchaia kniga* in Kiev (p. 730). May the fact that the jurisdiction of the church courts did not extend into pagan settlements really be taken as proof of religious toleration (p. 271)? Does fishing support collectivism, as Chubaty maintains in an attack on Muscovy (p. 159)? Folklorists have stressed the solitary quality of the life of the fisherfolk as a reason why folkloristic traditions thrive longest among them. These are only some examples of factual inaccuracy, whether directly through misstatement or indirectly through omission.

These three major flaws are evidence that the book under review must be used with care. Although taken together they suggest that Chubaty has engaged in some special pleading, they do not negate the merits of the book which have been noted here.