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# The Polemical Impetus of a Far-Reaching Act. The Polemical Works of Fr. Piotr Skarga in the Perspective of the Spiritual Life of Ukraine

Polemiczny impet dalekosiężnej ustawy.  
Twórczość polemiczna ks. Piotra Skargi  
w perspektywie życia duchowego Ukrainy

### Abstract

The aim of this article is to trace the influence of the polemical works of the Jesuit priest Piotr Skarga (1536–1612) on the religious life of Ukraine and on the Ukrainian culture of his era. The writings of Piotr Skarga, Stanisław Orzechowski, Benedict Herbest, Herasym Smotrytsky, Ivan Vyshensky, and Hypatius Potius are the sources examined in the author's scholarly study. Works about Skarga and his era by Józef Tretiak, Ludowik Piechnik, Janusz Tazbir, and Stanisław Cieślak, writings about interfaith polemics concerning the Union of Brest by Volodymyr Antonovych, Nikolaj Skabalanovich, Stepan Golubev, Vladimir Zavitnevich, Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Hrushevskyy, Kyrylo Studynskyy, Porfyriy Yaremenko, Ihor Mytsko, Borys Gudziak, Vitalii Shevchenko, Leonid Tymoshenko, and Ruslan Tkachuk, as well as courses in the history of Ukrainian literature are analyzed to comprehensively

present Skarga's impact on Ukrainian culture. A comparative methodology is applied. Skarga's writing talent was brought out during his stay in Vilnius – one of the centers of Reformation movements in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the residence of Kyiv Orthodox Metropolitans (1416–1795). The multi-confessionalism of Vilnius challenged Skarga. He wrote *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* (1577) – a book in which he expounds Tridentine ecclesiology, enumerating from his point of view heresies and schisms characteristic of the Orthodox East. He outlines the prospects of returning the Church of Kyiv to unity with the Apostolic See of Rome. In 1596 the Synod of Brest proclaimed union with the Catholic Church. Skarga was present at the synod as an observer and adviser. He published a documentary description of the synod's proceedings – the book *Synod Brzeski* with an appendix – *Obrona Synodu Brzeskiego* (1597), which defends the canonical validity of the synod, adding a historical retrospective to justify the need to overcome schism. These works became important catalysts in the development of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which proved its viability during the period of persecution and entered the post-communist era as a most creative spiritual force, combining the careful nurturing of local church tradition with the universality of the apostolic mission.

**Keywords:** Piotr Skarga, Synod of Brest, church, polemics, baroque, Ukrainian literature, Jesuits.

### Abstrakt

Celem artykułu jest prześledzenie wpływu polemicznych dzieł księdza Piotra Skargi (1536–1612) na życie religijne Ukrainy i kulturę ukraińską ówczesnej epoki. Źródłem badań są prace Piotra Skargi, Stanisława Orzechowskiego, Benedykta Herbesta, Herasyma Smotrzyskiego, Iwana Wyszeńskiego, Hipacego Pocięja. Podstawą naukową analizy wpływu Skargi na kulturę ukraińską są poświęcone jego osobie i czasom, w których żył i tworzył, prace: Józefa Tretiaka, Ludowika Piechnika, Janusza Tazbira, Stanisława Cieślaka oraz publikacje traktujące o międzywyznaniowej polemice epoki unii brzeskiej: Volodymyra Antonovycha, Nikolaja Skabalanovicha, Stepana Golubeva, Vladimira Zavitnevicha, Ivana Franki, Mykhaila Hrushevskiego, Kyryla Studynskiego, Porfyrego Yaremenki, Ihora Mytska, Borysa Gudziaka, Vitalija Shevchenki, Leonida Tymoshenki, Rusłana Tkachuka, a także kursy z historii literatury ukraińskiej. W analizie preferowana jest metoda porównawcza. Przebudzenie się pisarskiego talentu Skargi związane jest z jego pobytem w Wilnie, jednym z ośrodków ruchów reformacyjnych w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów, katedrze głównej prawosławnej metropolii kijowskiej (1415–1795). Wyzwaniem dla Skargi stała się wielowyznaniowość Wilna. Napisał książkę *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* (1577), w której wyklada trydencką koncepcję eklezjologiczną,

odstania obraz herezji i schizm prześladowanych prawosławny Wschód, zarysowuje perspektywy powrotu metropolii kijowskiej do jednoś i ze Stolicą Apostolską. Książka ta, wznowiona w 1590 r., była ważnym impulsem do rozpoczęcia polemiki międzywyznaniowej i poszukiwania przez ukraińskich i białoruskich biskupów prawosławnych środków do przewyciężenia schizmy. W 1596 r. Synod Brzeski ogłosił zjednoczenie z Kościołem katolickim. Skarga był obecny na synodzie jako obserwator i doradca. W 1597 r. opublikował dokumentalny opis jego przebiegu – księgę *Synod Brzeski* i jej załącznik: *Obrona Synodu Brzeskiego*, które bronią kanonicznej ważności synodu, dodając retrospektywę historyczną uzasadniającą konieczność przewyciężenia schizmy. Dzieła te stały się ważnym czynnikiem w rozwoju Ukraińskiego Kościoła Greckokatolickiego, który udowodnił swoją żywotność w okresie prześladowań i wszedł w epokę postkomunistyczną jako najbardziej twórcza siła duchowa, łącząc staranne pielęgnowanie lokalnej tradycji kościelnej z uniwersalnością misji apostołskiej.

**Słowa klucze:** Piotr Skarga, Synod Brzeski, kościół, polemika, barok, literatura ukraińska, jezuci

The “black legend” of the Jesuits, used by European monarchs for the suppression of the Society of Jesus on July 21, 1773<sup>1</sup> and its expulsion from the Russian Empire on March 25, 1820,<sup>2</sup> left a heavy imprint on the reception of the works of Piotr Skarga by modern Ukrainian culture. In the romantic discourse of the 19th century, the generalized figure of the “Polish Jesuit” was fixed as the culprit of inter-confessional divisions and conflicts which caused the existential catastrophe of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. One of the most well-known works of Taras Shevchenko, the poem “The Haydamaks,” directly accuses “Polish Jesuits” of igniting Ukrainian-Polish antagonism:

Such was the horror that prevailed  
Throughout the whole Ukraine!  
The slaughter was far worse than hell...  
Why must these folk be slain?  
For they are of one common stock.  
Could they not live as brothers?

1 Zhan Laktiur, *Yezuity u 2 t.*, vol. 1: *Zavoiovnyky* (Lviv: Svichado, 2011), 433–472.

2 Marek Ingot, *Tovarystvo Isusa v Rosiiskii imperii (1772–1820) i yoho uchast u zahalnomu vidnovlenni ordenu*, (Lviv: Svichado, 2009), 149–150.

But no! it was against their will  
That each should love the others!..  
One's heart aches as these brother Slavs  
Tear brother Slavs to bits.  
Who is to blame for such crimes –  
The Polish Jesuits.<sup>3</sup>

The conflicts of the past were interpreted in such a way for a number of reasons. Primarily this was by the Ukrainian national-cultural movement's integration with the general context of the Slavonic renaissance, the ideology of which becomes pan-Slavism.<sup>4</sup> The early modern history of Europe is depicted in its retrospective opposition of the Greco-Slavonic East against the Germano-Latin West. In this geopolitical context, the Counter-Reformation appears as a means of the assimilation of Orthodox Slavs, infringing upon their ethno-confessional identity. One can see that prevalent in the Russian Empire was the theory of "official nationality", the cornerstone of which was the triad "Orthodoxy – Autocracy – Nationality."<sup>5</sup> In light of this theory, the history of Eastern Europe shows itself to be an ancient opposition of Orthodox Rus', in which were united three parts of one people, against the Germano-Latin Western enemy. Finally, a definitive influence on the patriotic environment in Ukraine in the 19th–20th centuries was exercised by the "Cossack myth," by which the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the end of the 16th century and to the liquidation of the Zaporozhian Sich in 1775 by Catherine the Great, were the main carriers and protectors of national tradition. The Cossacks' strategy of action was dependent on the slogan they proclaimed: "For the Orthodox faith!" This myth became harmonious with propagandist markers which formed the image of the enemy of imperial Russia in the figure of the Catholic Pole. The threat of "Polish separatism," embodied in the November Uprising of 1830–1831 and the January Uprising of 1863, motivated both the targeted efforts for the banning and destruction of

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3 Taras Shevchenko, *The Poetical Works. The Kobzar*, transl. C.H. Andrusyshen, Watson Kirkconnell (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 98–99.

4 Hans Kohn, *Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1953).

5 Richard Vortman, "«Oficial'naya narodnost'» i nacional'nyj mif rossijskoj monarhii XIX veka", in: *Rossiya/Russia 3* (11): *Kul'turnye praktiki v ideologicheskoy perspektive. Rossiya, XVIII – nachalo XX veka* (Moskva: OGI, 1999), 233–244; Andrej Zorin, "Ideologiya «pravoslaviya – samoderzhaviya. – narodnosti»: opyt rekonstrukcii", *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 26 (1997): 71–104.

the Uniate Church, and the deformation of societal consciousness in which the epoch of the First Polish Commonwealth was to show itself to be a time of national conflicts and religious discrimination.

Taras Bulba, in a story of the same name invented by Nikolai Gogol, appears as a significant figure of the “Cossack myth.” His historical enemies are Catholic Poles. Together with Bulba against the enemies “the whole nation had risen... to avenge ... the insults to the faith of their fathers and their sacred customs, the outrages upon their church, ... and all that had aroused and deepened the stern hatred of the Cossacks for a long time past.”<sup>6</sup> In this context an interpretation of Skarga’s participation in the project of Union was formed by Ukrainian humanities. The first prominent Ukrainian historian and ideologue of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, Nikolay Kostomarov, presents Skarga in such a form. He proposes the image of a cunning agitator, who in his book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* and missionary work, attempts to incline the Orthodox to union with “Latinism” and by it “throw discord and quarrels among the Ruthenians,”<sup>7</sup> demonstrating the superficiality and lack of respect for the [Church-]Slavonic language.<sup>8</sup> Vladimir Zavitnevich (1853–1927) recognizes the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* as “Jesuit traps,” laid out for simple-minded Ruthenians.<sup>9</sup> Stepan Golubev (1848–1920) notes the extremist nature of the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* and evaluates it with the categories of military opposition: like the first shot fired against the Orthodox.<sup>10</sup> For Volodymyr Antonovych, Skarga was “the most zealous missionary” – who had as an instrument of societal influence “being pleasing, the arousal of personal self-love, the respect of science, superficial humility, etc.”<sup>11</sup> Another Kyivan historian, Orest Levytsky, evaluates the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* as a detailed program of Union.<sup>12</sup>

6 Nikolaj Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij* (Sankt-Peterburg; Moskva: Izdanie tovarishchestva M.O. Volf, 1899), 285–286.

7 Nikolaj Kostomarov, “Yuzhnaya Rus’ v konce XVI veka”, in: *Istoricheskie proizvedeniya. Avtobiografiya* (Kiev: Izd-vo pri Kievskom universitete, 1989), 115.

8 *Ibidem*, 124.

9 Vladimir Zavitnevich, “Palinodiya” Zaharii Kopystenskogo i ee mesto v istorii zapadno-russkoj polemiki XVI i XVII vv. (Varshava, 1883), 37–49.

10 Stepan Golubev, *Kievskij mitropolit Petr Mogila i ego spodvizhniki (Opyt istoricheskogo issledovaniya)*, vol. 2 (Kiev: Tip. S.V. Kul’zhenko, 1898), 241.

11 Volodymyr Antonovych, *Shcho prynesla Ukraini unii: Stan Ukrainskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvy vid polovyny XVII do kintsia XVIII st.* (Vinnipeh: Ekkleziia, 1991), 11.

12 Mykhailo Hrushevskiy, Orest Levytskyi, *Rozvidky pro tserkovni vidnosyny na Ukraini-Rusy XVI–XVIII st.* (Lviv: Nakladom Naukovoho tovarystva imeny Shevchenka, 1900), 4.

Ivan Franko, the most authoritative figure among the Ukrainians of Galicia in the 19th and 20th centuries, recognizes *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* as the departure point of the Uniate process,<sup>13</sup> and at the same time accuses Skarga of an unethical approach to opponents.<sup>14</sup> The creator of the modern doctrine of Ukrainian history, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, noting Skarga's talent for preaching and his strong influence on Ukrainian writers, compares the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* with an explosive, and accuses the author of insincerity. Skarga's participation in the polemics surrounding the Union is attested to by Oleksander Barvinsky,<sup>15</sup> and in his historical literature course Mykhailo Vozniak even dedicates a separate sub-chapter "Skarga and his Uniate propaganda," including in it a brief description of the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*.<sup>16</sup> In Serhiy Yefremov's most popular textbook of the history of Ukrainian literature, Skarga's works are an element of the struggle between Polish feudal culture and Ruthenian culture, which grew out of Byzantine sources.<sup>17</sup> He attributes the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego* to three main motives for the development of polemical literature, together with the calendar reform and the Synod of Brest in 1596.<sup>18</sup> He highlights another book, *Synod Brzeski i jego obrona*, as the first literary interpretation of the synod "from the Uniate position."<sup>19</sup>

After the defeat of the Ukrainian War for Independence of 1917–1921 and the occupation of Ukraine by Bolshevik Russia, the official model of history was to come into line with the Marxist-Leninist doctrines of the change of socioeconomic formations, class struggle, the ratio of base and superstructure, the struggle of two cultures in every national culture. As part of this, from the beginning of the Cold War in the Spring of 1946,<sup>20</sup> the communist regime deployed a propaganda war against the Catholic

13 Ivan Franko, *Narys istorii ukrainsko-ruskoj literatury do 1890 r.* (Lviv: Nakladom ukrainsko-ruskoj vydavnychoi spilky, 1910), 51.

14 Ivan Franko, "Istoriia ukrainskoj literatury. Chast I", in: *Zibrannia tvoriv: u 50, t. 40* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1983), 230.

15 Oleksander Barvinskyi, *Istoriia ukrainskoj literatury*, (Lviv: Nakladom knyhnarni Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka, 1920), 180.

16 Mykhailo Vozniak, *Istoriia ukrainskoj literatury*, vol. 2. *Viky XVI–XVIII. Ch. 1* (Lviv: Nakladom tovarystva "Prosvita", 1921), 45–46.

17 Serhii Yefremov, *Istoriia ukrainskoho pysmenstva*, vol. 1 (New York: Nakladom Rady oborony i dopomohy Ukrainy UKK Ameryky, 1991), 123.

18 *Ibidem*, 132.

19 *Ibidem*, 134.

20 Robert J. McMahan, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26–28.

Church. This war was waged by mean of mass repressions against clergy, monastics, and active laity, both on the territory of the USSR<sup>21</sup> as well as in those countries that fell in the zone of Soviet occupation.<sup>22</sup> The Greek-Catholic Church is banned, and its history is explained as “a road of shame and betrayal.”<sup>23</sup> In this context Skarga becomes the subject of accusations in the incitement of religious hatred and the persecution of the Orthodox Church.<sup>24</sup>

The fullest Soviet interpretation of polemical literature is embodied in Petro Zahaiko’s 1957 monograph “Ukrainian Polemical Writers at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th Centuries in the Fight Against the Vatican and Union.” In it there are several pages dedicated to the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*.<sup>25</sup> Zahaiko found in it a program of the expansion of aristocratic Poland to the east and the separation of the Ukrainian people from Orthodox Russia. Markedly more restrained in his rhetoric, researcher of inter-confessional polemics Porfyriy Yaremenko (1910–1989) highlights Skarga as the most prominent Jesuit figure of the Polish Commonwealth, and recognizes his book as an ideological basis and program for the 1596 Union of Brest.<sup>26</sup> In the eight-volume “History of Ukrainian Literature” (1967–1973), despite its desire for apparent objectivity, Skarga figures among “Jesuit Catholic ideologists of the nobility and magnates.”<sup>27</sup>

The legalization of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, the revival of structures of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, the fall of the system of militant atheism, and the restoration of the independence of the Ukrainian state conditioned the rejection of atavistic anti-Catholic rhetoric. What became an important impetus to review the outdated assessments of Skarga’s role in the ecclesial and literary history of Ukraine was the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Union of Brest and

21 Ołga Licenberger, *Rimsko-Katolicheskaya Cerkov' v Rossii: Istoriya i pravovoe polozenie* (Saratov, 2001), 309–314.

22 *Represje wobec Kościoła w krajach bloku wschodniego: Komuniści przeciw religii po 1944 roku*, ed. Józef Marecki (Kraków: WAM, 2011), 270.

23 Serhii Danylenko, *Dorohoiu hanby i zrady: Istorychna khronika* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka 1970), 360.

24 *Narys istorii ukrainskoi literatury*, eds. Serhii Ivanovych Maslov, Yevhen Prokhorovych Kyryliuk (Kyiv: Vyd-vo AN URSSR, 1945), 59–60; *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Vyd-vo AN URSSR, 1954), 63, 67.

25 Petro Zahaiko, *Ukrainski pysmennyky-polemisty kintsia XVI – pochatku XVII st. v borotbi proty Vatikynu i unii* (Kyiv: Vyd-vo AN URSSR, 1957), 9–11.

26 Porfyriy Yaremenko, *Ivan Vyshenskyi* (Kyiv: Vyshcha shkola, 1982), 12, 54, 59.

27 *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury: u 8 t.*, vol. 1 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1967), 219.

“The Brest Readings,” a cycle of academic conference hosted on this occasion by the Institute of Church History of the Lviv Theological Academy, which took place through 1994–1996 in eighteen cities in Ukraine.

Analyzing in detail the book *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, religions expert Vitaliy Shevchenko excitedly evaluates Skarga as “an example of the type of ecclesial figure, whose conscience was guided by the good of the Homeland”<sup>28</sup> and gives him the place of “main leader of the Uniate doctrine of the 1570’s and 1580’s”<sup>29</sup> Researcher of Uniate publicism Ruslan Tkachuk also assigns to Skarga (together with Benedykt Herbest) the role of author of the conceptual project of the Union of Brest.<sup>30</sup> Doctoral research author Natalia Poplavska respectfully recognizes Skarga as “the author of the first project of religious union.”<sup>31</sup>

Despite the fact that Skarga did not have any connection with Ukrainian culture, an overview of his works was included in the new university textbook on the history of Ukrainian literature of the Baroque period because of exceptional influence on the entire body of national polemical writings.<sup>32</sup> For the 400th anniversary of Skarga’s death, we held in Kharkiv an international academic conference “The Ukrainian Perspective of the Literary Works of Fr. Piotr Skarga,” the materials of which were published by Acta Publishers.<sup>33</sup> Finally, in 2021, Skarga’s works were published for the first in their original language and in translation by Rostyslav Paranko by this publisher.<sup>34</sup>

Skarga’s encounter with the Ukrainian-Belarusian Church tradition took place fairly late. He was born February 2, 1536 in the town of Grójec, not far from Warsaw, and grew up far from the realities of an eastern-Slavic ethno-confessional environment, in Mazovia. This region became part of the kingdom of Poland not long before Skarga’s birth: in 1526 the

28 Vitalii Shevchenko, *Pravoslavno-katolytska polemika ta problemy uniinosti v zhytti Rusy-Ukrainy doberesteiskoho periodu* (Kyiv: Presa Ukrainy, 2002), 227.

29 *Ibidem*, 237.

30 Ruslan Tkachuk, *Tvorchist mytropolyta Ipatia Potiia ta polemichna literatura na mezhi XVI – pochatku XVII st.: Dzherela. Rytoryka. Dialoh* (Kyiv: Vydavnychiy dim Dmytra Buraho, 2011), 28.

31 *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury: u 12, vol. 2* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2014), 106.

32 Ihor Isichenko, *Istoriia ukrainskoi literatury: Epokha Baroko. XVII–XVIII st., pidruchnyk dlia studentiv filolohichnykh fakulitetiv universytetiv* (Lviv; Kyiv; Kharkiv: Sviahohorets, 2011), 105–111.

33 *Ukrainska perspektyva literaturnoi tvorchosti o. Petra Skarhy: Zbirnyk statei* (Kharkiv: Akta, 2013).

34 Piotr Skarga, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego: Dzieła polemiczne*, original project, preface, comments, remarks abp Ihor Isichenko; transl. Rostyslav Parańko (Kharkiv: Acta, 2021).



Mazovian Sejm swore an oath of fealty to the king, and in 1529 the General Sejm of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which took place in Piotrków, announced the incorporation of Mazovia. Mazovians often became the subject of laughter due to the economic stagnation and the imaginary provincialism of its inhabitants, which combined with the militant ambition of the local nobility. In addition, this region distinguished itself from the Polish-Lithuanian state in its religious conservatism. The last Mazovian prince of the Piast dynasty, Janusz III (1502–1526), as early as 1525 forbade with the threat of the death penalty the spreading of Lutheranism within the territory of the principality.<sup>35</sup> Mazovian “freedom from heresy” was heard of even in Spanish monasteries, and in 1568 the papal nuncio Giulio Ruggiero compared this land with Italy for its faithfulness to Catholicism.<sup>36</sup> The Krakow academy, where Skarga studied from 1552 to 1555, impressed him not by the level of studies (at the time it was going through obvious decline), but by the atmosphere of steadfast Catholic religiosity. For this he later named the academy a “pillar of the Catholic Church.”<sup>37</sup>

Later Skarga moved to Lviv and came into contact with Archbishop Paweł Tarło (d. 1565), who was enthroned in the Lviv Roman Catholic cathedral in 1561. The Galician Roman Catholic diocese was established after the union of the Kingdom of Galicia–Volhynia with the Kingdom of Poland by Pope Gregory XI's bull *Debitum pasiombs officii* (February 13, 1375), and in 1414 the see was transferred to Lviv.<sup>38</sup> At the time the city had a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character: “here lived together five great ethno-religious groups: Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Poles, Germans, Jews, and Armenians, each of which comprised over 5% of the population.”<sup>39</sup> Though, in the 16th century the process of polonization of the Ukrainian, German, and Armenian communities,<sup>40</sup> stimulated

35 Julian Bukowski, *Dzieje reformacji w Polsce od wejścia jej do Polski aż do jej upadku*, vol. 1: *Początki i terytoryalne rozprzestrzenienie się reformacji* (Kraków: Nakł. Autora, 1883), 329–330.

36 Juliusz Ruggieri, “Sprawozdanie ze stanu Królestwa Polskiego złożone świętemu Piusowi V Papieżowi na dworze Zygmunta Augusta za swoim powrotem z Polski r. p. 1568”, *Czas: Dodatek miesięczny* 3/12 (1858): 563–618.

37 Piotr Skarga, *Żywyoty świętych polskich* (Kraków: WAM, 2011), 267.

38 *Katedra łacińska we Lwowie*, eds. Jakub Adamski, Marcin Biernat, Jan K. Ostrowski (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013).

39 Yaroslav Hrytsak, “Istoriia dvokh mist: Lviv i Donetsk u porivnialnii perspektyvi”, *Ukraina moderna. Spetsialnyi vypusk. Lviv-Donetsk. Sotsialni identychnosti v suchasni Ukraini*, 12 (2) (2007), 32.

40 Fryderyk Papée, *Historia miasta Lwowa w zarysie* (Lwów: Nakładem gminy król. stoł. miasta Lwowa, 1894), 59–69.

by juridical preferences for the Roman Catholic population, was quickened. Lviv impressed Skarga with its conservatism, especially religious. In contrast with Vilno, Gdańsk, or Poznań, there was practically no sign of reformation movements. For this Skarga in his rhetoric designates Lviv with the honored title “*urbs catholicissima*” – “most-Catholic city.”<sup>41</sup>

It does not seem that Skarga had any contact with the Orthodox population of Lviv, which centered around the church of the Dormition. Though practically at the same time Benedykt Herbest (around 1531–1598), having been in Lviv, found opportunity for visiting the Orthodox church and speaking with the priest. He described his impressions in traveler’s notes – *Wypisanie drogi* (1566). In a several-hour conversation Herbest’s interlocutor did not deny the possibility of union with Rome and the recognition of the primacy of the pope, but placed the responsibility for union on his bishop. Herbest expressed his conviction, that with the proper diplomacy of the Catholic hierarchy, a dialogue with the Ruthenian Church was possible in order to reconcile it with the Apostolic See. Such a union could be, according to Herbest, compensation for the loss of peoples tempted by the Reformation.<sup>42</sup>

Skarga left Lviv in 1568. He headed to Rome, where on February 2, 1569 he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus. Without a doubt, the decision to join a new religious order was not spontaneous. The Jesuits were already well known in the Christian world as brilliant preachers, sensitive confessors, active missionaries, and skilled spiritual leaders. The Collegium Hosianum, the first Jesuit College in the Polish Commonwealth, began to operate in 1565 in Braunsberg, a town in Warmia.<sup>43</sup> Its organizer, Czech Jesuit Baltazar Hostounský (1534–1600) could have met with Skarga from 1564.<sup>44</sup>

The priestly state and the experience as a preacher that was attained in Lviv promoted the quick passing of Skarga’s novitiate. Already on August 6, 1569, he was sent to the Collegium Romanum – a school founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1551, and the future Pontifical Gregorian University. Skarga studied Latin and theological studies, and confessed Slavs at the Basilica of Saint Peter. He was presented to Pope Pius V (1504–1572).

41 Janusz Tazbir, *Piotr Skarga: szermierz kontrreformacji* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1978), 24.

42 Benedykt Herbest, “Wypisanie drogi” (1566), in: *Pamiętki polemichnoho pysmenstva kintsia XVI i poch. XVII v.*, Vydav d-r Kyrylo Studynskyi (Lviv: Nakladom NTSh, 1906), 8–9.

43 *Uczniowie – sodaliści gimnazjum jezuitów w Brunsberdze (Braniewie) 1579–1623*, ed. Marek Inglot in cooperation with Ludwik Grzebień (Kraków: WAM, 1998), 5–17.

44 Tazbir, *Piotr Skarga*, 30–31.

After a year and a half Skarga made his first vows (“vota simplicia”), after which the general prior of the Society of Jesus Francisco de Borja (1510–1572) sent him to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the Spring of 1571, Skarga returned to his own Mazovia and received an assignment to the collegium of Pułtusk, founded in 1565.<sup>45</sup>

But Skarga’s writing talent would awaken in another city, in the second capital of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – Vilno. There, in 1570, a Jesuit collegium was founded.<sup>46</sup> Skarga arrived in Vilno in March of 1573, and that same year he was appointed as vice rector. Vilno’s societal atmosphere was radically different from the calm conservative life in Pułtusk. In the city the doctrines of the Reformation began to spread through the mediation of the Lutheran enclaves of Prussia and Livonia. A leading role in the spreading of Protestantism was played by Prince Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł Czarny (1515–1565). Radziwiłł gave his own palace for the Calvinist assembly in Vilno. In the third quarter of the 16th century, Calvinism factually became the dominant religion among the magnates and gentry of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After the death of his brother, Mikołaj Radziwiłł Rudy (1512–1584) took over the leadership in the Calvinist community, and at the time of the creation of the Vilno Jesuit collegium he was the Vilno Voivode. Lutheranism found followers among the wealthy city-folk of German origin, and a Polish Lutheran community also emerged. Unitarianism (Socinianism) was spread under the patronage of the Vilno Castellan Jan Kiszka (1552–1592). Not far from Vilno, in the town of Iwye, which in 1558 belonged to the Kishka family, there was established a school of “Polish Brethren.”<sup>47</sup>

The historical capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania naturally had within itself many representatives of east-Slavic peoples, which comprised the majority of the population of Lithuania. The first Orthodox church in Vilno, Saint Nicholas, according to tradition was founded by Olgerd’s second wife Princess Juliana (c. 1330–1391).<sup>48</sup> In 1514, the great Lithuanian hetman Prince Konstanty Ostrogski (1460–1530), founded a temple in the

45 Stanisław Załęski, *Jezuici w Polsce. T. 4. Dzieje 153 kolegiów i domów jezuitów w Polsce* (Kraków: Drukiem i nakładem drukarni W.L. Anczyca i sp., 1905), 38–44.

46 Ludwik Piechnik, *Początki Akademii Wileńskiej: 1570–1599* (Rzym: Apud „Institutum historicum Societatis Jesu”, 1984), 41–49.

47 Marceli Kosman, “Reformacja na Litwie: Przebieg – programy – realizacja”, in: *Chrzest Litwy: Geneza. Przebieg. Konsekwencje*, ed. Marek T. Zahajkiewicz (Lublin: KUL, 1990), 181–207.

48 *Vialikaye kniastva Litoŭskaie: Encykłapedyia u 2 tamakh*, vol. 1 (Minsk: Belaruskaya encykłapedyia imya Petrusya Broŭki, 2007), 416.

Gothic style on the location of the first church.<sup>49</sup> Not long after, a monastic community was formed around this church. In the 1580's, there arose at this monastery the Vilno Holy Trinity Brotherhood,<sup>50</sup> one of the most active in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, at the beginning of the 1600's, in the monastery itself there was only one monk...<sup>51</sup>

Alessandro Guagnini dei Rizzoni (1534/1538–1614), in the 1578 book *Sarmatiae Europaeae descriptio*, mentioning the appointment of Gregory Tsamblak as Metropolitan of Kyiv in 1415, says: “This metropolitan had his own capital in Vilno, the main city of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, in the church of the Most-holy Virgin, whom Rus’ calls Most-pure.”<sup>52</sup> Truly, from 1415 Vilno became the main seat of the Kyivan metropolitans, and the church of the Dormition of the Most-pure became the metropolitan cathedral church and kept this status until the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. The metropolitan residence was built near the cathedral.<sup>53</sup> Generally, Guagnini stated that in Vilno in the 1570's, “half of the city-folk are Ruthenians, and therefore there are as many Ruthenian as Roman churches.”<sup>54</sup>

The multi-confessionality of Vilno and the alienation from the Catholic Church of a large portion of the native population of Lithuania became challenges for Skarga. He loved challenges and promptly responded to them. Furthermore, the religious ferment that plagued Lithuania indicated the general centrifugal tendency in ecclesial life in renaissance Europe. In Skarga's vision, this threatened a civilizational catastrophe and completely opposed the societal mission of the Church – to unite God's people around one single throne led by the Bishop of Rome as the canonical successor of Peter the Apostle.

A retrospective glance at Church history revealed the not-very ancient experience of overcoming the dramatic schism at the Ferrara-Florentine Council, convened by Pope Martinus V (1368–1431) in 1431, and led by

49 Juliusz Kłos, *Wilno: przewodnik krajoznawczy* (Wilno: Drukarnia artystyczna Grafika, 1937), 180.

50 D.B. Kochetov, A.V. Kuz'min, G.P. Shlevis, “Vilenskij vo imya Svyatoj Troicy muzhskoj monastyr”, in: *Pravoslavnaya enciklopediya*, vol. 8 (Moskva: Cerkovno-nauchnyj centr “Pravoslavnaya enciklopediya”, 2004), 476–477.

51 *Narys istorii vasyliianskoho chynu sviatoho Yosafata* (Rome: Vyd-vo OO. Vasyliian, 1992), 101.

52 Alexandro Gwagnini, *Sarmatiae Europaeae Descriptio, quae regnum Poloniae, Lituaniam, Samogitiam, Russiam, Masouiam, Prussiam, Pomeraniam, Liunioniam, & Moschouiae, Tartariaeque partem complectitur* ([Kraków]: Typus Matthiae Wirzbiętae, 1578), 17.

53 Kłos, *Wilno: przewodnik krajoznawczy*, 247–249.

54 Gwagnini, *Sarmatiae Europaeae Descriptio*, 17.

his successor Eugenius IV (1383–1447) in the years 1437–1445.<sup>55</sup> “The Bull of Union with the Greek *Laetentur Caeli*,” approved July 6, 1439, declared a renewal of unity with the Orthodox East on the basis of preserving its previous ritual identity.<sup>56</sup> Truthfully, with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Orthodox patriarchates of the Near East departed from the Union of Florence.<sup>57</sup> The Muscovite Church used the situation to escape out from under the jurisdiction of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch and declared autocephaly.<sup>58</sup> Kyivan Metropolitan Isidore (1385–1463) proved himself to be the most consistent supporter of Church unity and ensured its observance in the Kyivan Orthodox metropolia.<sup>59</sup> The consciousness of unity with the Apostolic See was preserved in the Ruthenian Church until the end of the 15th century, which is indicated in the letter of metropolitan-nominee Mysail to Pope Sixtus IV, dated 14 March 1476.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, the stance of the Catholic hierarchy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with regards to the perspective of the union with the Kyivan metropolia of the Byzantine rite was rather cold. From the side of Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki (1389–1455) and Vilno bishop Maciej (c.1370-1453), there was *de facto* opposition to the introduction of the Union.<sup>61</sup> King Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk (1427–1492), despite the fact that Isidore continued to occupy the Kyivan metropolitan throne until 1458, at first *de facto* (1449) and then formally (1451) recognized the jurisdiction of Jonah (+1461), appointed in Moscow without the approval of the Constantinopolitan Patriarch, over it.<sup>62</sup>

Krakow professor Johannes Sacranus (1443–1527) was invited as an expert in connection with the discussion regarding the possibility of

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55 Joseph Gill, *Florentiiskyi sobor*, transl. Mariana Prokopovych (Lviv: Vydavnytstvo UKU, 2016), 57–348.

56 *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Armenian, Polish, vol. 3 (1414–1445), layout and editing Arkadiusz Baron, Henryk Pietras (Kraków: WAM, 2004), 458–477.

57 Steven Runciman, *Velikaya Cerkov' v plenenii: Istorija Grecheskoj cerkvi ot padeniya Konstantinopolya v 1453 g. do 1821 g.*, transl. L.A. Gerd (Sankt-Peterburg: Izdatel'stvo Olega Abyshko, 2006), 122–193.

58 Anton Kartashev, *Ocherki po istorii Russkoj Cerkvi*, vol. 1 (Moskva: Terra-Terra, 1993), 356–366.

59 Mykola Chubatyi, *Istoriia khrystyianstva na Rusi-Ukraini*, vol. 2 (Rym: Vydannia UKU, 1976), 166–231.

60 Nazar Zatorskyi, “*Poslannia Mysaila do papy Syksta IV*” 1476 roku: *rekonstruktsiia arkhetypu*, 2nd edition (Lviv: Vydavnytstvo UKU, 2019), 256–392.

61 Chubatyi, *Istoriia khrystyianstva na Rusi-Ukraini*, 229.

62 Ihor Monchak, *Florentiiskyi ekumenizm u Kyivskii Tserkvi: Uniina ideia v pomisnii ekleziialnii tradytsii*, transl. Roman Skakuna (Lviv: Vydavnytstvo UKU, 2012), 197.

partnerships between the Roman Catholic Church and Christians of the Byzantine Rite. He was regarded as one of the leading theologians of his time, and more than once was chosen as rector of the Krakow Academy, was chaplain and confessor of Kings Jan I Olbracht (1459–1501), Aleksander Jagiellończyk (1461–1506), and Zygmunt I Stary (1467–1548).<sup>63</sup> Sacranus prepared a quite critical theological analysis of the religious life of the Orthodox Church: *Elucidarius errorum ritus Ruthenici* (1501), where he listed forty peculiarities of Eastern Christianity, which he regarded as mistakes, and on that basis denied the possibility of recognizing the equality of the two Rites within the Catholic Church.<sup>64</sup>

The critical position regarding Christians of the Eastern Rite, which at this time comprised nearly 40% of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's population of eight-million<sup>65</sup> was expressed in doubts regarding the grace of the Orthodox Sacraments, and the propositions of full baptism of Orthodox Ruthenians upon their transfer to the Latin Rite. This motivated Stanisław Orzechowski to address Archbishop of Gniezno Piotr Gamrat (1487–1545) in 1544 with a letter titled *Baptismus Ruthenorum*, which proved the preservation of Apostolic Succession (lat. *successio apostolica*)<sup>66</sup> by Orthodox Rus'.

Orzechowski interprets the mission of the Primate of the Catholic Church in Poland as the leading of Christians of all Rites, which requires their implementation by way of consent. Orzechowski sees the reason for schism of Churches as one confession despising the other in religious discrimination. He underlines his own identity as “a person of the Ruthenian birth, of the Roman rite” (lat. *homo ex Ruthenis ortus, Romano tamen ritu*). He characterizes the Ruthenian people as “most-gentle,” pleasant, and pious. Orzechowski finds the accusations of heresy as unfounded, and points to Ruthenians' firm adherence to their own ritual tradition. He looks into the past for evidence that Ruthenians aspired to unity with the Catholic Church. Orzechowski prefers to see Archbishop Gamrat as

63 *Bibliografia Literatury Polskiej – Nowy Korbut*, vol. 3: *Piśmiennictwo staropolskie* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1965), 72–73.

64 Joannes Sacranus, *Elucidarius errorum ritus Ruthenici* [Kraków: Jan Haller, ca 1507] XXXIII, 2; Marek Niechwiej, Waław Walecki, *Johannes Sacranus. O błędach rusińskiego obrządku to jest Elucidarius errorum ritus ruthenici (1501) czyli Jan z Oświęcimia wobec idei unii kościelnej z prawosławnymi Rusinami* (Kraków: Collegium Columbinum, 2012), 483.

65 Antoni Mironowicz, *Kościół prawosławny w państwie Piastów i Jagiellonów* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2003), 208.

66 Andrzej Kaim, “Baptismus Ruthenorum Stanisława Orzechowskiego z Rusi”, *Archiwa, biblioteki i muzea kościelne* 73 (2000): 227–251.

an advocate of peace and harmony, able to lead Ruthenians to unity, as well Armenians, Wallachians, and even Muscovites.<sup>67</sup>

Skarga was a person of a totally different sort than Orzechowski, who was unstable in his views. He uncompromisingly treated oscillations in Faith, and shortly after moving to Vilno achieved glory as a fiery preacher, whom crowds of listeners gathered to hear. His polemical escapades, directed against Protestant doctrines, sparked the painful reactions of opponents: biographies of Skarga even mention street attacks and insults.<sup>68</sup> Skarga challenges to a verbal duel the leader of the Vilno Calvinists Andreas Volanus (1530–1610), whose works were very popular not only in Lithuania, but also in German Protestant Princedoms and among the Huguenots of France.<sup>69</sup> Skarga dedicated his book *Pro Sacratissima Eucharistia contra haeresim zuinglianam...*<sup>70</sup> to criticizing Volan's teaching on the Lord's Supper.

The realities of ecclesial life in the Kyivan Orthodox metropolia could have at best evoked Skarga's sympathies. The lack of higher-level educational institutions, archaic theological ideas, self-sufficient ritual conservatism, low culture of the clergy, vulnerability to Protestant preaching, and dependence on foreign spiritual centers on the territory of hostile Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth all made for a pretty bleak picture in the eyes of the Polish Jesuit. But Skarga's missionary strategy was determined by the Ignatian "magis" appropriate to his character.<sup>71</sup> His fellows in the Society of Jesus went far to the east – to India and the islands of the Pacific Ocean, like Francis Xavier,<sup>72</sup> and to China, like Mateo Ricci.<sup>73</sup> In this mission the doctrine of "accommodation" was developing – adapting

67 Stanisłai Orzechowski, "Baptismus Ruthenorum, Bulla de non rebaptisandis Ruthenis. Kraków, 1544" [26] k., in: *Orichoviana: Opera inedita et epistulae Stanisłai Orzechowski, 1543–1566*, vol. 1, ed. Ioseph Korzeniowski (Cracoviae: Typis Ephemeridum "Czas" Francisci Kluczycki et sociorum, 1891), 36–47. Ukr. translation: Stanislav Orikhovskiy, *Tvory*, per. Volodymyr Lytvynov (Kyiv: Dnipro, 2004), 567–575.

68 Ks. Piotr Srarga SJ (1536–1612): *Życie i dziedzictwo. Rok jubileuszowy*, eds. Roman Darowski, Stanisław Ziemiański (Kraków: WAM – Ignatianum, 2012), 34–35.

69 Maciej Ptaszyński „«Papież litewskiej reformacji» czy późny humanista? Uwagi na marginesie najnowszej biografii Andrzeja Wolana", *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 67/ 3 (2010): 107–120.

70 Petrus Scarga, *Pro sacratissima Eucharistia contra haeresim Calvinianam, et Andream Volanum, praesentiam corporis D. N. J. Christi ex codem Sacramento auferentem* (Vilnae: Typographia ...Radiuili, 1576), 468.

71 Willi Lambert, *Słownik duchowości ignacjańskiej*, transl. Olga Fendrych (Kraków: WAM, 2001), 110–111.

72 Laktiur, *Yezuity*, 128–168.

73 Giulio Andreotti, *Jezuita w Chinach*, transl. Eugeniusz Kabatc (Kraków: WAM, 2004), 28–112.

to local traditions, using elements of customary rituals in liturgy, listening to ethnic cultural codes when translating the truth of the Gospel for different peoples.<sup>74</sup> From this position the preserving of the Byzantine rite by the Christians of Rus' appears to Skarga as a wholly acceptable requirement for coming out of the state of schism.

Eventually Skarga entered into close contact with King Stephen Báthory (1533–1586), who just in 1576 ascended the Polish throne.<sup>75</sup> It is not likely that Skarga approved of the new king's preservation of loyalty to the Warsaw confederation of January 28, 1573, which Mirosław Korolko and Janusz Tazbir name the "Magna Carta" of Polish religious tolerance.<sup>76</sup> Heading towards war with the Muscovite kingdom, Stephen Báthory visited Vilno in 1579, where he was solemnly greeted in the Jesuit college.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps it was then that he took notice of Skarga, who won his trust after several weeks by the announcement of the capture of Polotsk.<sup>78</sup> By 1577 Skarga had not yet achieved the societal influence that would allow him to this or that political or ecclesial strategy. Nonetheless, he boldly falls within the scope of competence of higher ecclesial authority, proposing a whole program of Orthodox Rus' entering into the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See. Already successfully beginning to convert to the Catholic Faith individual persons, he thirsted for "magis," for greater things, and cast his missionary eye upon the whole great ecclesial province – the Kyivan metropolia.

Skarga dedicates his book to the most influential Orthodox magnate in the Commonwealth, Prince Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski (1526–1608). Having gained a considerable inheritance after the death of his older brother Ilya (c. 1510–1639), the prince married the daughter of the Grand Crown Hetman Jan Amor Tarnowski (1488–1561) Zofia, and in 1559 he became the Kyivan Voivode. In this way he concentrated in his own hands a great estates, and he made the city Ostroh in Volhynia the center of his own possessions.<sup>79</sup> With dreams about turning Ostroh into

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74 Andrés I. Prieto, "The Perils of Accommodation: Jesuit Missionary Strategies in the Early Modern World", *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4/3 (2017): 395–414.

75 Kazimierz Tyszkowski, *Stefan Batory* (Lwów: Nakładem Macierzy Polskiej, 1933), 25–38.

76 *Konfederacja warszawska 1573 roku: wielka karta polskiej tolerancji*, eds. Mirosław Korolko, Janusz Tazbir (Warszawa: PAX, 1980).

77 Stanisław Cieślak, *Marcin Laterna SJ (1552–1598). Działacz kontrreformacyjny* (Kraków: WAM; Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna „Ignatianum”, 2003), 100–101.

78 *Ibidem*, 105.

79 Oleksander Tsynkalovskyi, *Stara Volyn i Volynske Polissia*, vol. 2 (Winnipeg: Volyn, 1986) 197–199; *Kniazi Ostrozki* (Kyiv: TOV „Baltiiia-Druk”, 2006), 96–118.



a university center of the Orthodox East, the prince founded the Ostroh Academy around 1576.<sup>80</sup> Despite the informal status of the leader of the Orthodox community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski did not suffer from confessional exclusivity. His wife was a Catholic, and according to the customs of that time, both of the prince's daughters were baptized in the Latin Rite. Then, they both married Protestants – the Arian Jan Kiszka (1552–1592), and the Calvinist Krzysztof Mikołaj Radziwiłł “Piorun” (1547/1548–1603). And though the sons of Prince Ostrogski were baptized as Orthodox, two of them transferred to the Latin Rite at an adult age.<sup>81</sup>

Skarga's address to the prince was motivated by two episodes. The first of them was a personal meeting with Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski at the funeral of his relative Jan Krzysztof Tarnowski (1537–1567), when Skarga gave the homily, and the prince listened attentively.<sup>82</sup> The second episode was the prince's inviting Skarga to Ostroh, which, truth be told, did not come to pass. Regretting the lost opportunity for spoken interaction, Skarga proposed that he accept his book as a written compensation for a personal conversation. Skarga was looking for signs of the prince's desires for Church unity. Appealing to the Sarmatian ideals of the Ostroh magnate, Skarga opened before him a picture of the past as an obvious epoch of triumphant unity of the Christian world. In his interpretation, this unity was ruined by the ambitions of the Byzantine rulers, both secular and ecclesiastical. Skarga interprets the conversion of the prince's children to the Catholic Faith as a significant signal for the father: for the children have undertake “to enlighten the home of your princely mercy with the light from the West, which has been extinguished in the East.”<sup>83</sup>

The main text of the book is preceded by two important additions: a presentation of the chronology of the Ecumenical Councils up to Ferrara-Florence, and a list of Greek authors – theologians and historians – which the author cites.<sup>84</sup> By this the essential idea of the book is immediately declared: the preservation by the Catholic Church of the continuity of the conciliar tradition and the Orthodox Fathers' of the Church opposition to schism, associated with the intrigues of imperial

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80 Ihor Mytsko, *Ostrozka sloviano-hreko-latynska akademiia (1576–1636)* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1990), 19–30.

81 *Kniaz Ostrozki*, 112.

82 Piotr Skarga, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem i o greckim i ruskiem od tej jedności odstąpieniu* (Wilno: Z drukarni ... Mikołaja Chrystopha Radziwiła, 1577), 8–9 nn.

83 Skarga, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 10 nn.

84 *Ibidem*, 20–22 nn.

power and the ambitions of the Constantinopolitan patriarchs. The book is comprised of the following sections: 1. On the unity of the Church of God; 2. On Greek departure from the unity of the Church of God and the throne of the Holy Apostle Peter; 3. On exhortation and enlightenment to the Ruthenian peoples who hold to the Greeks, that they would unite themselves with the Holy Church and the Roman throne.

In the first part<sup>85</sup> there is an explanation of the Tridentine ecclesiastical conception, according to which the Church appears a strictly authoritarian institution headed by the successor of the Apostle Peter, the Bishop of Rome. The main argument in determining the supreme statues of the Apostle Peter are for Skarga the words of Christ: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt 16:18–19)<sup>86</sup> and his three-fold commandment to Peter: “Feed my lambs” (Jn 21:15)<sup>87</sup>; “Tend my sheep” (Jn 21:16); “Feed my sheep” (Jn 21:17).<sup>88</sup> To support the Rome-centered interpretation of these words, Skarga uses the expositions of Origen, Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, and other Fathers of the Church, consciously giving priority to representatives of the Christian East. In Eastern patristics and the acts of the Ecumenical Councils, Skarga gathers recognition of the special status of the Pope of Rome and his general ecclesial authority.

The second part<sup>89</sup> unfolds a repulsive picture of heresies and schisms, which in Skarga’s view, persecuted the Orthodox East. The departure of four Eastern patriarchates (Alexandrian, Antiochian, Jerusalemite, and the youngest, Constantinopolitan) from Union with Rome is explained by the love of honors by the ecclesial hierarchy, which did not consent to obey the Pope of Rome, the spread of heresies in the eastern Mediterranean, of which Skarga counts over 90, the brutal interference of emperors and their vengeance in Church life, as the emperors claimed power over the Latin West. In this sad retrospective, the leader of schism

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85 *Ibidem*, 1–182.

86 *The Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version, 2nd Catholic edition (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015) NT 30.

87 *Ibidem*, 195.

88 *Ibidem*, 195.

89 *Ibidem*, 153–330.

Patriarch Photios I (820–893),<sup>90</sup> canonized by the Greek Church as “Saint Photios the Great”<sup>91</sup> is a significant figure. Opposite him is Patriarch Joseph II (+1439), who supported the promulgation of the Florentine Union and commanded that union with Rome be maintained. The history of the signing of the union is described quite thoroughly. Both the act of union itself and the text of the declaration of Patriarch Joseph. Especially noted is the active role of Kyivan Metropolitan Isidore, who, according to Skarga, “brought and announced to them [the ancestors of the Ruthenian people – A.I.] union, and like a true apostle and one sent by Christ, proclaimed peace on earth from heaven to people of good will.”<sup>92</sup> But here Skarga states with sadness the denial of the Florentine Union by the Greek East and by Rus’, the payment for which was, in his interpretation, the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

The third part<sup>93</sup> is directed to the real addressee – the Ruthenian Orthodox community, and more specifically, its societal elite. The condition of spiritual life in Rus’ is seen by the author as fairly hopeless. He lists a whole array of symptoms of crisis of religious life: uneducated clergy; simony; neglect of confession; and, giving preference to formal elements of worship (ritual actions, the cult of the saints, honoring icons) over personal confession of faith. This shows signs of the non-acceptance of Eastern Christian identity. Where the Eastern Rite or Orthodox interpretation of dogmas and canons is different from the Latin equivalents, he unconditionally deems it necessary that they be conformed to Western tradition. Three things scandalize Skarga the most: the married priesthood; the Church-Slavonic language; and, the laity’s lack of subordination and obedience to the priesthood in the Church. Despite that, Skarga confirms the Ruthenians’ right to the cultivation of their own ritual identity and hastens to ensure them that union with the Church of the Latin tradition does not require the leveling of forms of liturgical life.

Skarga explains his vision of the Union of the Kyivan Church with the Roman Catholic Church. He distinguishes three steps: 1. The installation of the metropolitan of Kyiv must occur with the blessing of the Bishop of Rome; 2. It is necessary to achieve full consent with the Apostolic See in regards to the truths of the faith; 3. There must be administrative subordination of the Ruthenian Church to the Apostolic See. Skarga does

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90 *Ibidem*, 212–220.

91 Makarij Simonopietrskij, *Sinaksar: Žitja sviatych Pravoslavnoj Cierkvi*, vol. 3 (Moskva: Izdatielstvo Srietenskovo Monastyria, 2011), 563–570.

92 Skarga, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego*, 266.

93 *Ibidem*, 331–404.

not spare compliments for the Ruthenian people, contrasting it with the proud Greeks: “The Lord God willed to make habitual for you [Ruthenian people – A.I.] courtesy and friendliness to every authority, so it will be easy for you to break yourself and with humility and Christ-like meekness pass over to saving governance.”<sup>94</sup> By favorable factors he admits the state and lingual-cultural unity with Polish Catholics, occasionally contrasting Ruthenian Christianity with the semi-idolatrous and xenophobic Orthodoxy of Moscow.

Skarga touches upon painful parts of Ruthenian ecclesial reality. His book was a challenge, which demanded answers – whether agreement or disagreement. But the reaction of the addressees was rather lethargic. Except, to believe the words of Skarga, a majority of the circulation “Richer Rus’ bought out ... and burned.”<sup>95</sup> The first polemical publication which came out of the intellectual environment of the Ostroh Academy, the book of Herasym Smotrytskyi with two pamphlets – *Key to the Kingdom of Heaven* and *The New Roman Calendar*<sup>96</sup> – avoids the questions put forward by Skarga. Smotrytskyi prefers to repeat anti-Catholic anecdotes from Protestant publicists and to ironize incidents connected with the calendar reform of Pope Gregory XIII. The Kyivan Metropolia at the time simply did not have theologians capable of equal dialogue with Skarga on the themes he proposed. And the metropolia’s episcopate was painfully undergoing both conflict with disobedient laity, who fought to become independent from the local hierarchy because of the status of “patriarchal stauropegion,”<sup>97</sup> and the disappointment from the first visit in history of Constantinopolitan Patriarch Jeremias II Tranos (1536–1595), which took place during his trip to Moscow in 1588–1589.<sup>98</sup> The treatise *Ἀντιρρησις* (1599), the author of which is regarded as Hypatius Potius,<sup>99</sup> cites a very notable episode with Lviv Bishop Hedeon Balaban, who led a long conflict with the disobedient Lviv Brotherhood: for he “himself came to

94 *Ibidem*, 374.

95 *Ibidem*, 198.

96 Herasym Smotrytskyi, *Kliuch Tsarstva Nebesnoho* [Ostroh, 1587], reprint (Zhytomyr, 2005).

97 Denys Zubrytskyi, *Khronika stavropihiiskoho bratstva*, transl. Ivan Svarnyk (Lviv: Apriori, 2011), 70–91.

98 Borys Gudziak, *Kryza i reforma: Kyivska mytropolia, Tsarhorodskiy patriarkhat i heneza Beresteiskoi unii*, transl. Mariia Hablevych (Lviv: Instytut istorii Tserkvy Lvivskoi Bohoslovskoi akademii, 2000), 212–270.

99 Nikolaj Skabalanovich, *Ob Apokrisise Hristofora Filaleta* (Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiya K.V. Trubnikova, 1873), 55–57; Kyrylo Studynskiy, “Khto buv avtorom Ἀντιρρησιςа z r. 1599?”, *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva imeny Shevchenka* 35–36 (1900): 1–20; Tkachuk, *Tvorchist mytropolyyta Ipatiiia Potiia*, 60–74.

His Merciful Father the Archbishop of Lviv, to Dunaiv (deliberately), where with tears and falling to his feet, he asked that he be freed from the captivity of the Constantinopolitan patriarchs.”<sup>100</sup>

King Sigismund III Vasa (1566–1632), elected to the Polish throne on 19 August 1587, not long after his coronation (27 December 1587), on 1 January 1588 he arrived for liturgy at the Jesuit church of Saint Barbara in Krakow, and after this in January of 1588 he appointed Skarga as house preacher. And already the second edition of the polemical work, published in 1590 with the name *O rządzie y iednosci Kosciola Bozego pod iednym pasterzem: y o Greckim i Ruskim od tey iedności odstapieniu*<sup>101</sup> (1590) had a dedication to the new king.<sup>102</sup> Skarga urges Sigismund III to care for the strengthening of the union of the Commonwealth by overcoming Church schism and converting the Ruthenians to the Catholic Church. At the same time, beginning in June of 1590, the Orthodox bishops of the Kyivan metropolia at their yearly synods were working out propositions concerning transferring to under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See, cautious about the preservation of their Rite.<sup>103</sup> A letter with a notification of this decision, addressed to King Sigismund III, was dated June 24, 1590.<sup>104</sup> By March 18, 1592, the king’s response was dated, in which there was a promise of support in carrying out the Uniate plan.<sup>105</sup> There are no doubts about the roll Skarga played in forming the king’s position toward the process started by the bishops. It is unlikely that any of the bishops even read Skarga’s resonant book and took into account his vision of the union. Moreover, in the second edition of the book, Skarga remedied those places where there was an overly critical assessment of the Ruthenian spiritual tradition.

In the Fall of 1595, Bishops Cyril Terlecki and Hypatius Potius headed out to the Holy Father. On September 24, 1595, the King by his universal

100 “ Αντιρρήσις abo apologia przeciwko Krysztofowi Philaletowi, ktory niedawno wydaw ksiazki imieniem starozytney Rusi religii greckiey przeciw ksiazkom o Synozdzie Rrzeskim napisanym w R. P. 1597”, in: *Russkaya istoricheskaya biblioteka*, vol. 19 (Sankt-Peterburg: Senatskaya tipografiya, 1903).

101 *O rządzie y iednosci Kosciola Bozego pod iednym pasterzem: y o Greckim i Ruskim od tey iedności odstapieniu* [On the Administration and Unity of the Church under One Pastor and on the Greek and Ruthenian Departure from this Unity]. Pisanie X. Piotra Skargi Societatis Iesu (Kraków: W Drukarniey Andrzeia Piotrkowczyka, 1950)

102 Skarga, *O jedności Kościoła Bożego: Dzieła polemiczne*, 196–207.

103 Ivan Khoma, *Kyivska mytropoliia v beresteiskim periodi* (Rym: Wydannia Ukrainskoho katolytskoho univertytetu im. sv. Klymenta papy, 1979), 67–75.

104 *Documenta Unionis Berestensis eiusque auctorum (1590–1600)*, collegit P. Athanasius, G. Welykyj (Romae: PP. Basiliani, 1970) 7–8.

105 *Ibidem*, 9–11.

proclaimed the approval of the decision of the Ruthenian bishops regarding the renewal of unity achieved at the Council of Florence.<sup>106</sup> Finally, on December 23, 1595 Pope Clemens VIII (1536-1605) accepted the Ruthenian delegation and, having listened to its address to the episcopate, accepted the confession of faith of both bishops present.<sup>107</sup> The same day was made public the Bull *Magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis*, by which was announced the return of Rus' to Church unity.<sup>108</sup>

In Brest, from October 6–10, 1596, there took place a synod of bishops of the Kyivan metropolia, which proclaimed union with the Roman Catholic Church. Skarga together with his fellow Jesuits Justus Rabb (1543–1612), Marcin Laterna (c. 1552–1598) and Kasper Nahajus (c. 1550–1613) was present at the synod as an observer and advisor.<sup>109</sup> It was entrusted specifically to him to give the homily at the Sunday Liturgy in the Saint Nicholas Church in Brest, by which the synod was solemnly closed. It was foreseen that Skarga would take part in discussion with opponents of Church Union. Though the opposing synod, called by Prince Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski in the building of Socinian M. Raiskiy where the prince had stopped,<sup>110</sup> refrained from theological discussion. Despite the success of the Synod of Brest, its course immediately became the object of falsifications. Therefore, Skarga very quickly published a documentary description of the synod of union – the book *Synod Brzeski* (1597)<sup>111</sup>. He lists all the synod's participants and proves its legitimacy from the perspective of ecclesial law (nearly all the bishops of the Kyivan metropolia were present, as well as three Catholic bishops, and the synod took place with the blessing of the Primate of Poland), as well as from the perspective of state law (King Sigismund III gave permission for the holding of the synod and sent his representatives to it). The record of the Uniate synod describes it as a great action, while in Skarga's image the opposing synod appears as a chaotic gathering of armed Protestant nobles and simple priests. The appearance at this synod of Bishops Hedeon Balaban and Mykhaylo Kopystensky is explained by the pressure on them by Prince Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski. Skarga, emphasizing the Uniate

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106 *Ibidem*, 154–156.

107 Edward Likowski, *Unia Brzeska* (r. 1596), (Warszawa, 1907), 134–136.

108 *Ibidem*, 338–348.

109 Leonid Tymoshenko, *Beresteiska unii 1596 r.: Navchalnyi posibnyk* (Drohobych: Kolo, 2004), 90–91.

110 Ivan Vlasovskiy, *Narys istorii Ukrainskoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvy* (New York – Kyiv, 1990), 270–274.

111 [Piotr Skarga], *Synod Brzeski* (Kraków: W Drukarniej Andrzeja Piotrkowczyka, 1597).

synod's openness to dialogue with opponents, records a speech of the royal representatives before the Orthodox synod. The solemn liturgical services at the closing are described; the official text of the proclamation of the Union is recorded.

To the description of the synod is added *Obrona synodu Brzeskiego*,<sup>112</sup> where Skarga defends the canonical validity of the synod, adding historical retrospective to justify the need to overcome the schism. In twelve small chapters he briefly repeats arguments laid out in the treatise “On the Unity of God’s Church”: on the exclusive competency of bishops to handle affairs of ecclesial subordination; on the evangelical principles of the primacy of the Pope of Rome in the Universal Church; on the acceptance of this primacy by the Christian East before the schism. Skarga mentions the Union of Florence and rebukes the Greeks for their refusal to take advantage of its effects. The work finishes with the chapters *Christian Enlightenment to the Ruthenian Peoples* and *A Warning Before the Slander of Opponents of the Synod of Brest*.

This time the response of opponents was very proactive. The very same year from the circle of Prince Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski was issued a treatise *Απόκρισις abo Odpowiedź na xiążki o Synodzie Brzeskim, imieniem ludzi starożytney religiey Greckiey przez Christofora Philaleta w porywczą dana* and was quickly reprinted in the Ruthenian language. Due to the absence of the place of publishing, it was first identified with Vilno<sup>113</sup> and then with Ostroh,<sup>114</sup> and modern Ukrainian historians of the book indicate that the publication of the Polish text was at the Krakow printing house of the Socinian Oleksa Rodetskiy, and the Ukrainian edition in Ostroh.<sup>115</sup>

Józef Tretiak identified the person of the author with Marcin Broniewski (c. 1564–1624) – a Protestant who belonged to the “Czech Brethren” and was one of the ideologues of coordinated opposition to religious dissidents to the royal support of the Catholic Church as of the one state.<sup>116</sup> Later, Meletius Smotrytsky mentions that for his book the author of *Apokrysis* received from the king a generous honorarium – a town with

112 *Ibidem*, 19–54 nn.

113 Skabalanovich, *Ob Apokrysisie*, 2–3.

114 *Ukrainski pysmennyky: Bio-bibliohrafichnyi slovnyk*, vol. 1: *Davnia ukrainska literatura XI-XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Derzhlitvydav, 1960), 593–594.

115 Yakym Zapasko, Yaroslav Isaievych, *Kataloh starodrukiv, vydanykh na Ukraini, kn. 1 (1574–1700)* (Lviv: Vyd-vo LDU, 1981), 32.

116 Józef Tretiak, *Piotr Skarga w dziejach i literaturze Unii brzeskiej* (Kraków: Nakładem Akademii Umiejętności, 1912), 183–185.

a few villages.<sup>117</sup> Deftly manipulating source texts, the author wished to simplify the interpretation of ecclesial unity by Piotr Skarga. He defends the legitimacy of the Orthodox synod of 1596, and the rights of secular people to decide the fate of the Church, and explains the position of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. Much later, the Athonite monk Ivan Vyshenskyi reacted to Skarga's work. He received the second edition of the book *O rządzie i jedności Kościoła Bożego pod jednym pasterzem i o Greckim i Ruskim od tej jedności odstąpieniu* (1590) from Patriarch Meletius Pegas in Constantinople. After a superficial familiarization with the book, he first wrote in the genre of letter "A short response of Theodulos, who lives out his life in a skete on the Holy Mountain of Athos, against the godless, lying and slanderous writing of Piotr Skarga, inventive with the wisdom of this world, and not of the Gospel, on the so-called order and unity of the Church of God under one pastor and on the Greek and Ruthenian departure from this unity"<sup>118</sup> and then later, in the form of a dialogue: "Provocation of a wise Latin with a foolish Ruthenian to dispute, and to put it simply, to disagreement or conversation: in questions and answers."<sup>119</sup> Despite the offensive accusatory tone in both works of the polemicist, who was recognized as the most talented in his environment, they betray a certain perplexity of an inexperienced ascetic before the great erudition of Skarga. Therefore, as an instrument of polemics the opposition of Skarga, as the representative of the wisdom of this world, against the evangelical simplicity of spirit, identifying with the Eastern spiritual tradition, is chosen. Finally, neither of the two works were published in their time.<sup>120</sup>

Opponents of the Union of Brest never forgot Skarga. In the second half of the 20th century, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Canada Ilarion Ohienko (1882–1972) – translator of the Bible into the Ukrainian language, well-known philologist, bishop of Kholm and Podlachia during the Second World War, and one of the spiritual leaders of the post-war diaspora – named Skarga "the greatest enemy and disorganizer of the Ukrainian people."<sup>121</sup> At the same time, Skarga's books stimulated

117 Meletiusz Smotrzycki, *Apologia peregrynateiy do krajów wschodnich*, original project, preface, comments, remarks abp Ihor Isichenko, transl. Rostysław Parańko (Charków: Acta, 2020), 266–267.

118 Ivan Vyshenskyi, *Tvory* (Kyiv: Derzhlitvydav, 1959), 159–187.

119 *Ibidem*, 197–231.

120 Ivan Vishenskij, *Sochineniya*, ed. I.P. Eremina (Moskva; Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1955) 316–325.

121 Ilarion [Ohienko], *Kniaz Kostiantyn Ostrozkyi i yoho kulturna pratsia*: Istorychna monohrafiia (Winnipeg, 1958), 56.



the appearance of the greatest body of Ukrainian literary texts of the end of the 16th century to the beginning of the 18th century – polemical journalism. And the ideas of ecclesial unity, accepted and internalized by the episcopate of the Kyivan metropolia, embodied in the institution which proved its viability in the times of state discrimination, the Cossack terror of the 17th century, and the Bolshevik terror of the 20th century, and entered the post-communist day as the most creative spiritual power, that united in itself the careful nurturing of local ecclesial tradition and the universality of apostolic mission. This alone indicates that Skarga had, in his own way, a unique role in the history of the Church and the national history of Ukraine.

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