

VOLUNTARY BROTHERHOOD: CONFRATERNITIES OF LAYMEN IN EARLY MODERN UKRAINE. By Iaroslav Isaievych. Peter Jacyk Centre for Ukrainian Historical Research Monograph Series, no. 2. Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2006. xxxi, 324 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index. ISBN (cloth) 1-894865-02-2; ISBN (paper) 1-894865-03-0.

Iaroslav Isaievych's pioneering book on lay religious confraternities has been published in English for the first time. The first edition was published in Ukrainian in 1966, and released after considerable censorship by the Soviet authorities. The newly revised and updated translation not only claims to be free of Soviet-imposed terminology, but also seeks to broaden the scope of discussion, while taking into account the secondary literature that has been published on the matter over the past forty years. The book is organized topically, addressing the key issues revolving around Ukrainian confraternities, beginning with their origins, social composition and organizational structures, activities in public life and religious conflicts, publishing, education, and finally, archiving practices.

Professor Isaievych's book will undoubtedly be of interest not only to scholars of comparative history of the region but also to scholars examining common features of European culture. From the beginning, the author seeks to show that the development of Ukrainian Orthodox confraternities was parallel with those that existed elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, both were involved in common prayer, the celebration of religious rituals and holy days, charitable activities, and material assistance to their members. However, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a fundamental shift in direction took place between the two. Catholic lay fraternities became increasingly subject to episcopal authority, while their Orthodox counterparts sought to liberate themselves from the control of local bishops, increasingly taking a more anticlerical stance in the process. Starting in 1586, the Lviv Dormition Confraternity defined its mission by means of a patriarchal charter, taking on the mantra of ecclesiastical reform

and thus positioning itself as the seminal institution of its kind. Its stauropegic status granted it independence from local bishops (thus perpetuating the lay-clerical conflict) while making it the senior confraternity and a model for future confraternities in the region. As Isaievych demonstrates, this degree of autonomy put the Lviv confraternity at odds with the episcopate for much of its existence and gave rise to a level of lay religious activism that, accordingly, was analogous to (if not necessarily influenced by) the Protestant Reformation (p. 99). This stands in contrast with the origins of lay confraternities in Left-Bank Ukraine. The Kyiv and the Lutsk confraternities remained subordinate to clerical control, never developing the autonomy possessed by the Lviv (Stauropegion) Dormition. Isaievych demonstrates that with the passing of a confessional Catholic threat from the West, Left-Bank Ukraine confraternities gave up their activism against clerical influence, particularly following the ascension of Petro Mohyla to the seat of the Kyiv metropolitan.

The two seemingly diverging currents of development in the lay Orthodox confraternities found common ground in their dedication to education through printing and the founding of schools. The author explicitly demonstrates that, as in the West, the notion that education served a key role in forging and protecting confessional identity played a crucial role in the East.

While pointing out that confraternity membership was theoretically open to all, Isaievych dispels any notion of equal access. Social historians will take note that what resulted was a microcosm of the social structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the early years, (active) confraternity membership was made up primarily of craftsmen. By the eighteenth century, however, most of the important posts were monopolized by noble elites.

As with other ecclesiastical bodies, the confraternities sought to resolve disputes among their members themselves, with an appeal to Crown authorities as a last resort. This is, again, in keeping with the general trend by which authority devolved from the center in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In this description of confraternities as self-contained entities, Isaievych makes an insightful observation regarding the confraternities' role in policing the behavior of their members. This assertion fits with existing scholarship on Western Europe (particularly on German cities in the confessional age), but in this book it could benefit from an expanded analysis.

The third chapter is arguably the highlight of *Voluntary Brotherhood*, offering a thorough and sophisticated description of the political activities of the Ukrainian confraternities. I would strongly suggest that it be offered as required reading not only in specialized courses on Muscovy or Eastern Europe, but also in more general European Reformation courses, as it provides an important insight into the impact of Europe-wide intellectual and religious processes on peripheral regions where cultures overlapped.

Perhaps of greatest interest to scholars of the confessional era will be the author's description of the Lviv Stauropigion's resistance to any episcopal (and sometimes lay) claims of administrative superiority, be it Orthodox or Uniate. The ability to appoint its own parish priests was perhaps the most telling sign of a confraternity's independence. However, by 1709, in a stroke of Counter-Reformation diplomacy, the papacy was able to take advantage of the Orthodox confraternities' autonomous streak by offering direct subordination to the Holy See, thereby echoing earlier arrangements struck with Orthodox patriarchs. The author aptly demonstrates that despite the Orthodox confraternities' apparent success in removing the interference of local bishops in their affairs, those confraternities that turned Uniate had to contend with the same interference from papal legates. Thus, union with Rome did not yield the same degree of autonomy as stauropigion status had earlier. Likewise, by the early eighteenth century, Uniate bishops became active in establishing confraternities that were under the direct jurisdiction of the episcopate; thus, in keeping with Counter-Reformation trends, they tightened the reins on lay religious activities.

In its content, the sixth chapter on confraternity archives stands apart from the rest of the book. Far from trivial, it offers a short synopsis of the archiving activities of the confraternities, detailing the fate of their holdings and providing invaluable clues as to their whereabouts today. Given the fate of the confraternities, ranging from decline to outright dissolution, and combined with the generally stormy history of the region, it seems certain that the book's wealth of information will prove to be a great service to new and established scholars alike.

In *Voluntary Brotherhood* the author provides a detailed treatment of the lay confraternities' projects of education and publishing, along with their cultural and social mission in fostering "the early stage of the Ukrainian and Belarussian national and cultural movements" (p. 269). Unfortunately, this comes at the expense of examining the interconfessional conflicts taking place within the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy. For example, in the conclusion, the author acknowledges that by the end of the seventeenth century Uniate bishops were busy creating new confraternities subordinate only to their respective authority (p. 268). Undoubtedly, the creation of rival "schismatic" confraternities must have caused some degree of consternation for Orthodox elites, whether within the confraternities or on the episcopal level. The author, unfortunately, does not proceed further in examining the activities of these entities. Indeed, while the examination of Orthodox lay confraternities is one of the great strengths of Iaroslav Isaievych's book, its analysis of their Uniate counterparts is one of its more visible weaknesses. Though the author provides many descriptions of the Orthodox confraternities' resistance to encroachments by Roman Catholic clergy and their later resistance to union with Rome, virtually no space is provided, sadly, for an analysis of the Greek Catholic confraternities' pro-union activities

that he himself acknowledges were present on the regional religious landscape. Lastly, a minor typographical error in the numbering of footnotes in chapter 6 is also in need of correction.

These criticisms, however, ought not detract from the tremendous accomplishments of this book. At its best, it is a detailed and thoughtful analysis of the lay confraternity movement in the Ukraine, worthy of scholarly attention far beyond the audience of regional specialists.

Wojciech Beltkiewicz
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor