

John-Paul Himka and Franz A. J. Szabo, editors. Eastern Christians in the Habsburg Monarchy

Anatolii Babynskyi

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John-Paul Himka and Franz A. J. Szabo, editors. *Eastern Christians in the Habsburg Monarchy*. Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies P / in co-operation with the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, U of Alberta, 2021. xiv, 254 pp. Illustrations. \$34.95, paper.

When Sofiia Andrukhovych's novel *Feliks Avstriia: Roman* (*Felix Austria: A Novel*) was named *BBC News / Ukraina* Book of the Year in 2014, many admirers of modern Ukrainian literature got their first chance to discover the world of Habsburg Galicia. Of course, the literary text does not claim academic accuracy. But the author skilfully captures the spirit of the period in various notable ways. One of the novel's main characters is a Greek Catholic priest—which is quite natural, given the particularities of that time of Galician history. The Habsburg period in Galicia or in Transcarpathia cannot be adequately addressed without considering the influence of church institutions on almost every aspect of societal life. Similarly, it would be difficult to fully understand modern Eastern Catholicism and Orthodoxy in Central Europe in the absence a correlating social history. And as one contributor to the book under review (Joel Brady) convincingly shows, such a strong connection also holds true when examining individual religious processes in emigrant communities overseas.

To date, most of the research on the history and religious culture of Eastern Christians in the Habsburg realm has been devoted to ecclesiastical communities residing within specific political boundaries inside the empire. The collection of essays under review, *Eastern Christians in the Habsburg Monarchy*, edited by John-Paul Himka and Franz A. J. Szabo, is the first attempt to move away from this type of theoretical approach. It offers an analysis of the shared experiences of Eastern Christian communities across the crown lands of the monarchy. It is difficult to disagree with the editors (see their introduction [x–xiv]) in their assertion that such a scholarly tack not only helps to better understand the logic of socio-religious processes in those communities but also “promise[s] a more nuanced assessment of the complex historical reality that was the Habsburg Empire” (xi). After all, as many as 8.5 million (18.7%) of the empire's 39 million citizens belonged to various Eastern Catholic or Orthodox Churches (2).

The starting point for this volume was a 2009 conference jointly held in Edmonton by the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies and the Research Program on Religion and Culture of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies (University of Alberta). This collection contains essays by ten authors, which are divided into three thematic blocks: a general introduction with an overview (x–xiv, 1–23), a section on selected historical issues (24–101), and a section on sacral culture (102–253).

The book's opening essay, "Eastern Christians in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1526–1918" (1–23), by Paul Robert Magocsi, offers a dense presentation of the history of Eastern Catholic and Orthodox dioceses and metropolitan provinces in the territories incorporated by the Habsburgs at different points in time. Magocsi's balanced broad panorama depicts the diversity of Eastern Christianity under the sceptre of the Habsburgs; the author also describes the varying historical trajectories of those ecclesiastical communities. Furthermore, Magocsi notes that although the empire's Eastern Christians remained an uninfluential minority throughout history, they did, in fact, leave their mark—primarily on city landscapes and on sacral art.

The third section of the collection (102–253) is devoted precisely to this aspect of the religious life of Eastern Christians in the Habsburg Monarchy. It begins with Bernadett Puskás's essay "The Art of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo: Sacral Painting of the Eighteenth Century" (102–36). Here, Puskás explores trends and changes in the religious art of the Mukachevo eparchy. Prior to the eighteenth century, the environment was more aesthetically conservative, but in fresh conditions, a new, baroque style of icon painting and religiosity was gradually adopted—owing largely to the influence of workshops and painters from Galicia. Contributor Olesya Semchyshyn-Huzner centres on the development of sacral art in Galicia during the period from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century (see 206–38). She bases her study on the life and oeuvre of Modest Sosenko (1875–1920), examining how Sosenko's training in Western European schools along with a creative rethinking of his own (ancient) tradition, including that of Kyivan Rus', contributed to the emergence of a new direction of sacral art in Galicia—neo-Byzantinism. Andriy Zayarnyuk's essay "Facing East: References to Eastern Christianity in Lviv's Representational Public Space ca. 1900" (170–205) surveys the development of sacred architecture of the Greek Catholic Church during the late Habsburg period. In the first part of the essay, Zayarnyuk describes the search by Ukrainian architects for appropriate architectural solutions reflecting national character—to give Lviv's public spaces and cityscape more "Ukrainian elements." In the latter half of the essay, the author points out how the sacred architecture of the Greek Catholic Church that incorporated Eastern and local features played an essential role in defining the urban space. Two other essays in this section also deal with the subject of sacral art produced in Galicia. Roksolana Kosiv looks at the characteristic attributes of sacral and heraldic symbols and images on Ukrainian banners of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (137–69), while Natalia Dmytryshyn delves into the phenomenon of sacral needlework in Eastern Galicia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (239–53). All of the essays in this section are accompanied by rich illustrative material, which adds to the value of the whole volume.

The second section of the book ([24–101]; backtracking slightly) has as much scholarly merit as the section on sacral culture. It covers specific areas of the history of the Greek Catholics and the Orthodox in the Habsburg Monarchy that are currently less studied than, for instance, the history of the Galician Greek Catholic metropolitanate or that of the Mukachevo eparchy. The first two essays in this section explore the history of the Romanian Greek Catholics, who in the middle of the eighteenth century went through a process similar to the one that had occurred in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the first half of the seventeenth century within the context of the Union of Brest. In the essay “Politics, Religion, and Confessional Identity among the Romanians of Bistrița: A Case Study” (24–43), Sever Cristian Oancea convincingly demonstrates how Uniate hierarchs in northeastern Transylvania found themselves on shaky ground after signing the Union with Rome without the broad consensus of their flock and without explaining the meaning of the Union to the clergy or to ordinary believers. On account of the activity of Serbian Orthodox emissaries—who quickly persuaded many peasants to defend the “old Greek law” (33)—Uniate bishops ended up needing the support of the state; later, the Union was able to survive in this region owing to assistance from the government. The Orthodox opposition to the Union spawned a different process—which the Ruthenian community at one point also experienced—known as *Konfessionsbildung* ‘confession building.’ This trend was accompanied by the emergence of Romanian polemic literature. Ciprian Ghișa closely analyzes the latter topic in his essay “Aspects of Confessional Alterity in Transylvania: The Uniate–Non-Uniate Polemic in the Eighteenth Century” (44–62). The third text in the “historical section,” by Marija Petrović (63–83), looks at the Serbian Orthodox community on the southern border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Petrović describes the specific ways in which Josephine reforms were incorporated into the life of the Orthodox community (holidays were reduced; education was improved; the management of the metropolitanate and of suffragan dioceses was upgraded; the number of monasteries was diminished; and so on). This topic has not been researched to the same degree as similar processes in the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches have been.

The last essay in the “historical section,” by Brady, entitled “Transnational Conversions: Migrants in America and Greek Catholic Conversion Movements to Eastern Orthodoxy in the Habsburg Empire, 1890–1914” (84–101), examines the impact of transnational ties on the conversion of Eastern Catholics to Orthodoxy both in the United States and in the Old Country. Using the transnational paradigm as a theoretical framework for his analysis, Brady proposes a more nuanced explanation for conversions to Orthodoxy among Greek Catholic emigrants from the

Habsburg Empire. Earlier scholars for the most part focused primarily on the conflicts between Greek Catholic priests and the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United States (US) around the issue of celibacy. However, this avenue of inquiry does not adequately explain the massive conversion of the laity. Thus, Brady's innovative approach seems to be more productive, and it may shed additional light on the internal conflicts within the Ruthenian community in the US during the tenure of Soter Ortynsky.

The collection under review will be of especial importance to scholars interested in the history of Eastern Christianity in the Habsburg Empire and in its religious diversity. A particular strength of the volume (some could also perceive it as a weakness) is the editors' effort "to study the Eastern Christians of the Habsburg Monarchy, or of Central Europe, together" (xii). That being said, the book does not cover the entire spectrum of Eastern Christianity that we see presented in Magosci's introductory survey. It can be reasonably assumed, though, that such a task cannot be properly undertaken in the space of just one book. Thus, there is the hope that this volume will become the first tome in a series exploring the topic more broadly. There are, in my opinion, two subject areas that warrant closer attention. First, I would pursue the question of liturgy. The liturgy and liturgical texts constituted the core of the identity of Eastern Christian communities in relation to the dominant Roman Catholicism in the Habsburg Monarchy, and it would be useful to trace the mutual influences among various Eastern Catholic eparchies in this context. Second, I would like to see a deeper analysis of the idea of the creation of a united Eastern Catholic Church—that is, patriarchate—in the empire; such a notion was raised several times during the pontificates of Popes Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII.

Anatolii Babynskyi
Ukrainian Catholic University

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