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Educational Level of Parish Priests in Pyriatyn Protopopy in the Second Half of the 18th Century

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Abstract

The article analyzes the educational level of the parish priests in the Pyriatyn Protopopy in the second half of the 18th century. The paper discovered that the protopopy was one of the largest administrative units of the Kyiv Metropolitanate. It is determined that the education of the clergy in it began in the 1720-1730s. The Kiev Metropolitan Petro Mohyla was at its origins. Legislative norms were traced and guidelines of church hierarchs concerning the level of education of the Metropolitan's hierarchs in the 18th century were considered. It was determined that the candidate for a priest had to have a philosophical or theological degree. Based on statistical information, the educational level of the priests of the Pyriatyn Protopopy is determined and analyzed. It has been established that more than half of them did not meet legal educational norms. This was conditioned by the influence of the parishioners and the traditions of heredity during the ordination of the priest to the parish in the Metropolitanate. At the same time, it was proved that the church leadership took into account the level of education when choosing parish applicants. The geography of obtaining education by priests of the protopopy is established. Factors influencing the choice of place of study were identified as well. It was found out that the Kyiv Academy was the basic educational institution for the protopopy priests.

Keywords: Kyiv Metropolitanate, education, parish priest, Pyriatyn protopopy, Kyiv Academy, legislative norms.

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Introduction

To begin with, let us note that the Protopoty is a church-administrative district, into which the metropoly / eparchy was divided in the second half of the 18th century. The main task of the operation of the protopoty was to improve the management and implementation on the ground of the orders of the supreme church leadership. The size of the protopopies, as well as their number, were not constant. During the 18th century, they have changed many times. The Kyiv Metropolitanate, as of 1768, was divided into 23 protopopies with Pyriatyn among them. By its size, it was one of the largest in the Metropolitanate (Prokopyuk, 2012, p.19).

Gregory L. Freeze in the monograph "The Russian Levites: The Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century", expressed the idea of the radical changes that took place in the formation of the parish clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 18th century. In the section "New World of the Seminary", the scientist notes that during the reign of Peter I, compulsory seminary education for the priesthood children was introduced. This and subsequent initiatives of the government led to an enlightened clergy in the empire (Freeze, 1977, p.77). However, the Ukrainian researcher Maksym Iaremenko notes that the "educational discipline" of the clergy in the Kyiv Metropolitan's began much earlier. The author doubts the educational initiatives of the Russian authorities in the 18th century (Iaremenko, 2015, p.296).

Literature review

The beginnings of educational discipline of the Orthodox clergy within the Kyiv Metropolitanate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are considered in the works of Alfons Brüning (2000) and Peter Wawrzeniuk (2005). Researchers analyzing various aspects of the reform activities of Kyiv Bishops Petro Mohyla and Yosyp Shumlyansky conclude that the spread of education among priests should be linked to their initiatives, which were consistent with the reform process in Europe at the time. However, the question of the effectiveness of their measures at the grassroots level is considered debatable.

At the same time, Peter Znamenskiy (1873) and Gregory Freeze (1977) link the growing demands on the level of education among the clergy with the activities of the Russian emperors Peter I and Catherine II. They emphasize that those acting under the influence of the ideas of "enlightened absolutism" took effective measures to improve the literacy of the clergy. In his monograph "The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century", Gregory L. Freeze noted the radical changes in the education of the parish clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church in the eighteenth century.

Modern Ukrainian researcher Maksym Iaremenko (2015) notes that in the Kyiv metropolitanate the "educational discipline" of the clergy began during the time of Petro Mohyla, and the effectiveness of Russian government's educational initiatives in the eighteenth century is questionable. In general, the scholar notes that the low level of education of the ordinary clergy was common not only in Orthodox but also in union and Catholic parishes.

Methodology

The research methodology considers the trends of modern humanities and is based on the following principles: anthropological, systematic, and interdisciplinary. The main methods used in the study are: bibliographic and archival heuristics, historical-genetic, historical-comparative, and statistical ones. Agreeing with M. Iaremenko, we believe that the issue of the introduction of education

among the clergy in this period needs to be clarified at the level of individual regions. Especially in those where educational reforms began under the influence of the Reformation before the era of “enlightened absolutism”. As an example, we can take the Pyryatyn Protopopy – one of the largest in the Kyivan Metropolis. In particular, we can find out the educational level of the parish priests of this church-administrative unit in the second half of the 18th century.

The sources

The source of the study was the legislation of the Russian Empire of the 18th century, collected within the fourth to twenty-fifth volumes of the “Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire” and published in 1830. Based on them, the authority’s requirements for the educational level of the parish clergy are analyzed. To find out the level of education of the parish priests of the Pyryatyn archdiocese, the following were used: cases of ordination of priests dated 1758-1799, which legally accompanied the appointment of the priest to the parish and sometimes contain information about his education. Another source is so-called “Audit tales” – the census including data on the number of clergy and members of their families for 1782 and 1795 and information about the number of churches and clergy in 1785, 1786, and 1793, which were submitted from the archdiocese to the metropolis and which also contain information about the level of education of pastors. Indirect evidence of the literacy of the priests are metric books and confessional paintings kept by the priests of the archdiocese. All the above sources on the Pyryatyn archdiocese are stored in the fund 801 of the State Archives of Poltava region (Case 821, Case 860, Case 1142).

The source base of the study is also formed by the information on the number of churches and clerics, reports of the priests, the affairs of the priests to the parish, which are kept in the fund #127 (Kyiv Conservatory, Kyiv, 1700-1930) of the Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in the city of Kyiv.

Beginning of the “educational discipline”

The initiator of the policy of the “educational discipline” of the Orthodox clergy in the Ukrainian lands in the early modern days was Metropolitan Petro (Mohyla). In his treatise “The Orthodox Confession of the Faith” (1640), he emphasized that the education of the uneducated is the salvation of spiritual pastors. Subsequently, in the preface to the “Trebnik” (1646), he represented priests, first of all, as teachers. In general, the reforms of the Metropolitan were aimed at strengthening the Orthodox Church and the codification of faith. It is considered by researchers as an orthodox version of confessionalization. The training of well-educated pastors received a prominent place in the reforms. The opening of the Kyiv Collegium, with the participation of Petro (Mohyla), has become one of the most important steps towards improving the educational level of the Orthodox clergy.

The instructions of Petro (Mohyla) about the need for priests to acquire education were supported by the next generations of church hierarchs of the Kyivan Metropolitanate. Thus, the Lviv bishop Joseph (Shumliansky) in the 1680s, depicting a portrait of an ideal parish priest, also worried about his education. It had to include the study of the Polish language and Latin, and therefore, meant the training of future hierarchs in the collegium. The Bishop also drew attention to the need of training the priestly sons as followers of the parental affairs (Wawrzeniuk, 2005, pp.68-76).

In 1687, the Kyiv Metropolitanate became subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate. Educational initiatives continued. The guidelines of the Kyiv Cathedral in 1691 emphasized the compulsory

education of priests' sons in the Kyiv Collegium. Responsibility for this affair was laid on the father-lords and the archpriest. The decision of the Council established the term of such training in 7 years. Such seven-year studios should end up with a classroom rhetorician and open the door to a class of philosophy.

Requirements for the education of priests in the 18th century.

Royal decrees. In the 18th century, the requirement for compulsory education for priests and their sons were assigned at the state level. In particular, on January 15, 1708, the tsar's decree "On the appointment of dormant and deacons' children in Greek and Latin schools and the non-appointment of those who refused to study there the priests and deacons" was issued (Complete collection, 1830, p.401); November 11, 1710 – "On the teaching of priests, deacons and other church children in Greek and Latin schools" (Complete collection, 1830, p.581). In 1721 the Spiritual Rules were adopted, and in 1722 – the Appendix to the Spiritual Rules. The latest documents regulated the life of the Russian Orthodox Church in the synodal period of its history (1721-1917 – the time when the post of the Patriarch was abolished, at the head of the Church was a collective body – the Synod, which was actually subordinated to the Emperor). They contained requirements for the compulsory education of clergy.

The instructions of the Kyiv metropolitans. Subsequently, these requirements were specified in a number of epistles of the Kyiv metropolitans. Thus, in a letter of Kyiv Metropolitan Arseniy (Mohylyansky) to the rector of the Samuel Academy of April 30, 1761, it was stated that students under the age of 30 were required to complete a full course of study in the class of theology (Case 52, p.4). The decrees of June 16 and September 15, 1765 established that the applicant for a post of priest should have been a graduate of the class of philosophy or theology of the Kyiv Academy. They also forbade protopes to send the illiterate priests to the parish (Case 52, p.3-6). The decree of June 16 clarified that the size of the parish should depend on the educational degree of the future priest. Thus, graduates of the class of philosophy should be appointed to a parish consisting of 60-80 courtyards. The owner of the theological degree could claim a parish in 80 yards or more. When the parish had fewer than 60 yards, it was allowed to appoint a person without a philosophical degree. However, the requirement for education remained (Case 52, p.3). It should be noted that in the absence of state funding, the number of parishioners influenced the level of wealth of the priests.

Consequently, the "educational discipline" of priests on the territory of the Kyiv Metropolitanate started at the beginning of the 17th century. The next century has become a logical continuation of previous initiatives. However, in this period, the requirements for the educational level of priesthood were increasing. Ideally, a person who completed a theological or philosophical class had to take up a parish.

The level of education of priests

Now we will find out the educational level of parish priests of the Pyriatyn Protopopy. According to our calculations, in the second half of the 18th century, 134 people carried out priest's duties in the Pyriatyn Protopopy. We were able to find the information about the educational level of 72 of them. Summarized information about their educational level is presented in the form of a table, the percentages of which are rounded.

Table 1. Educational level of parish priests of the Pyriatyn Protopopy

Degree of education	Number of people	%
Theology	10	14
Philosophy	19	26
Rhetoric	14	19
Poetics	2	3
Russian writing	27	38

It should be noted that the lack of information about the level of education of other members of clergy does not indicate their illiteracy. The archival materials on the Pyriatyn Spiritual Board for 1758-1865 contain documents confirming the literacy of priests. For example, the confessional registers they have formed each year since 1737. This allows us to assert that pastoral priests were able, at least, to read, write, and count. Therefore, we can attribute them to the category of persons who knew “Russian grammar”.

These tables indicate that only 40% of priests had a theological or philosophical education. However, in most cases, sources say: “studied in the class of theology” or “student of the class of philosophy”. It does not answer the question of whether the figure completed the full course of study or studied in this class only for some time.

Some 38% are marked as “trained in Russian grammar”. That is, these priests had only an initial level of education, which included mastering the skills of reading, writing, and counting. Thus, the level of education of priests of the Pyriatyn Protopopy did not meet official requirements.

Influence of the level of education on the choice of the applicant for the ordination

We have examples that allow us to answer it positively. For example, when in January 1763 the abbot of the Church of St. George died in the village of Bondari, two candidates appeared in his place. One of them was Vlas Yanovskiy – a student of the class of theology of the Kyiv Academy, the other - Petro Chernetskiy, who studied in the rhetoric class of the same Academy. The advantage in such circumstances was given to Vlas Yanovskiy. Moreover, the letter of the Metropolitan emphasized that exactly the level of education allowed him to properly preach the word of God among believers (Case 23, p.9-12). That case was not unique. Similar decisions were made at the appointment of monks in the church: the Great Martyr Demetrius in the village of Savynets (1763) (Case 23, p.18-19), the Church of the Holy Trinity in the City of Pyryatyn (1765) (Case 53, p.32), the Pokrov Church (The Protection of Virgin Mary) in the village of Postavmuky (1766) (Case 53, pp.42-46), Saint Nicholas Church of the village of Dashchenky (1768) (Case 189, pp.20-21).

Hence, the level of education influenced the choices of the pastor. However, when there was only one contender for the parish, the church authorities did not always pay attention to his education. Thus, in 1770, the 65-year-old man of the Saint Nicholas Church of the village of Kokhnyvka, Fedir Danilov, appealed to appoint a 30-year-old Yakym Lukyanov as the “half pastor” of his parish. Speaking about the educational level of the last one, it is known that he studied in the Pereyaslav Seminary and did not complete the training. However, he had other advantages – he was the son of a priest and son-in-law of Fedir Danilov. The insistence of the priest Fedir and the lack of other contenders did their job.

Yakiv Lukyanov was ordained for half of the parish. However, Yakiv was ordered to pay a fine of 2 rubles, and Fedir – 4 rubles. This money was to be used for the repair of the Academy (Case 252, pp.35-37).

We can explain the relatively low percentage of the priests who had a philosophical or theological education by the order of their appointment. An important role in this process belonged to the parish community or the owner of the village where the church was located. We discovered 38 archival cases on the ordination of the new parish pastor in the Pyriatyn Protopopy in the period from 1758 to 1783. In the petitions of the laity to the Bishop on the appointment of the future pastor, contained in these cases, the merits of the applicant were listed. In particular: sobriety, honesty, integrity, literacy etc. Moreover, the reference to the specific educational level of the applicant is only found in eight appeals. Typically, these people had a philosophical or theological degree of education. For comparison – the fact of family ties with the predecessor or an indication of his origin from the priest’s family is noted in 29 applications.

Such results suggest that the level of education of the priest was not a determining virtue for his flock. Obviously, a much greater role in his perception was the succession, the “correct” origin of the candidate, and the agreement on the amount of remuneration for the future pastoral priest.

Geography of education.

The question of where the future education was acquired is not less important. We succeeded in finding out the place of study of the 28 protopopy clerks. We summarized the information in the form of a table, the percentage counts of which are rounded

Table 2. Geography of the formation of parish priests of the Pyriatyn Protopopy

Degree of education	Kyiv Academy	Pereiaslav College	Other educational institutions
Theology	8		
Philosophy	5		1
Rhetoric	4	3	
Poetics	2		
Russian writing	2	3	
%	75	22	3

We see that 75% of the hierarchs of the protopopy received education at Kyiv Academy. There were almost 93% of them among the owners of the educational degree of philosophy or theology of such persons. A certain paradox of such a situation was that the territory of the protopopy was closer to Pereyaslav, where the Collegium was located. In particular, the distance from Pyrianty to Kyiv is about 157 km, while the distance from Pyrianty to Pereyaslav is 92 km.

However, looking at the reality of the 18th century, this picture seems to be natural, because the Kyiv Academy was considered the most prestigious school that provided the full scope of education. In addition, it the Kiev Metropolitan, to which the priests of the protopopy obeyed, took care of it.

The Pereyaslav Collegium, founded in 1738, provided for studios in six classes: pharas, infiuma, grammar, syntaxes, poetics, and rhetoric. So is graduates did not meet the official requirements of the nomination for the parish priest. In addition, the Pereyaslav Collegium was located in a city that was the center of the Pereyaslav-Boryspil diocese. In the 18th century, it was only nominally under the control of the Kyivan Bishop. The diocese had a broad ecclesiastical autonomy and subordinated to the Moscow Patriarch, and subsequently the Synod. However, six of the academy's students were consecrated to the pastors by the Kyiv Metropolitan.

The only documented case when the priest of the protopopy did not study at the Kyiv Academy or the Pereyaslav College is associated with the hierarch of the Church of the Great Martyr Demetrius in the village of Savynets. Andriy Sviatohor claimed to be a priest since 1763. He was a student of the school of philosophy at the Seminary of the Trinity-Sergius Lavra, located near Moscow. His opponent, the local deacon Demyan, was illiterate. However, Andriy had to confirm his ability to read sermons. Metropolitan Arseniy of Kyiv sent him to the rector of the Academy of Samuel. Metropolitan ordained the competitor only after the positive conclusion (Case 23, pp.18-19). We did not find any cases in the protopopy, if such a procedure was applied to the applicant who studied at the Academy or the Pereyaslav Collegium. For example, in the above case, with two applicants for a priestly place in the village of Bondari, the matter was confined to the statement of the fact of training candidates in different classes of the Academy (Case 23, pp.9-12). So, we believe that the choice of educational institution influenced, above all, the subordination to "his" master.

Conclusions

Summing up the above, we can draw the following conclusions:

- first, the "educational discipline" of the priests of the Kyivan Metropolitanate was started by Petro Mohyla at the beginning of the 17th century. It continued in the 18th century. Royal decrees and bishopric guidelines of this time were marked by increased requirements for the educational level of priests. Ideally, a person who completed a theological or philosophical class had to take up a parish. The following examples of the appointment of priests in the protopopy allow us to conclude that the Bishops took into account the educational level of the applicants. However, the existence of the tradition of inheritance of the parish and the great influence of the laity on the process of nomination often forced the hierarchs not to take into account the inadequate educational level of future pastors. Especially when there were no candidates for office;

- second, 40% of the 72 investigated cases corresponded to the official requirement of the theological or philosophical education. This confirms the conclusions of P. Znamensky, that a significant part of the clergy finished no more than two or three classes of the seminary. They had the skills of reading, writing, and counting, and only initially mastered "Latin science" (Znamenskiy, 1873, p.124). If we compare these data with the educational level of the hierarchs of the uniate parishes of the Right-Bank Ukraine, then, as of 1798, only 50% of them had proper education (Skinner, 2009, pp.71-75). Therefore, the authorities did not succeed in fully implementing the official instructions on the priesthood protopopy;

- third, 97% of the priests of the protopopy received education at the Kyiv Academy and Pereyaslav College. The basic institution for the clergy of the protopopy was the Academy, in which studied 75% of the priests of the protopopy. The choice of this institution was conditioned, first of all, by the fact that it was subordinated to the Kyiv Metropolitan, so the graduation made the employment easier.

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