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ЕКЗИСТЕНЦІЙНИЙ ВИМІР ЧЕСНОТ МИТРОПОЛИТА АНДРЕЯ ШЕПТИЦЬКОГО

(Рецензія на: Per amore del suo popolo. La vita eroica del metropolita Andrea Szeptyckyj (1865-1944).
Augustyn Babiak. Trapani: Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, 2023. 392 p.)

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У цій рецензії читач ознайомлюється з книгою Августина Баб'яка “З любов'ю до свого народу. Героїчне життя Митрополита Андрея Шептицького (1865–1944)”, в якій розкривається чеснотливе життя харизматичної постаті в історії української нації та церкви. Дослідник систематично висвітлює духовні сторони митрополита Андрея Шептицького і доносить італійським читачам постать українського громадського і духовного лідера.

Ключові слова: віра, надія, любов, кардинальні чесноти, євангельські ради.

EXISTENTIAL DIMENSION OF VIRTUES OF METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY

(Review of: Per amore del suo popolo. La vita eroica del metropolita Andrea Szeptyckyj (1865–1944).
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The review provides an overview of Augustyn Babyak's book “For love of his people. The heroic life of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky (1865–1944)” envisaging a virtuous life of apostolic and prophetic voice, a charismatic figure in the history of the Ukrainian nation and church. The researcher shapes heroic virtues of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky's spirituality providing a more systematic presentation of his historical mission among the Italian audience.

Keywords: faith, hope, love, cardinal virtues, evangelical counsels.

Thinking about the architecture of Ukrainian elites in the XXI century drawn us to inquire into why so many charismatic persons in the last century require further identification within the inner experience and assumptive worldviews. The brought connection between future and past bridges, the gap between forgetfulness and memory, assert the primacy of contemporary heroes. The change of focus was made fundamentally possible by the assumption that the human culture was clarified in

its orientation by the medium of virtues. The relation between cultivating the virtuous life and political activity constitutes the human “thrownness of being there” in the world and arranges a new horizon of self's place in historical circumstances. Augustyn Babiak suggested that as a result of virtuous orientation, the Andrey Sheptytsky innate reasonability can be reliable trace in the world of wars and changing regimes of our time. The role of history and the silence of God's will are thusly an

obvious thesis to have an insight into phenomenological revision of the “phenomenon of Sheptytsky”. The “relevance of his witness for the Ukrainian people” contextualizes different approaches in building a Sovereignty of Ukrainian state and restoring “*Positio* [which] emanates their living and firm faith in united Ukrainian church” [Babiak, 2023: 381]. In this regard, Augustyn Babiak relates to Thomas More’s narration of an ideal society, where the significance of good counsel in political life requires high cultural awareness of the leader: “If you can’t completely eradicate wrong ideas, or deal with inveterate vices as effectively as you could wish, that’s no reason for turning your back on public life altogether. You wouldn’t abandon ship in a storm just because you couldn’t control the winds... You must handle everything as tactfully as you can, and what you can’t put right, you must try to make as little wrong as possible” [More, 1965: 64–65]. What distinguished the Sheptytsky capacity of political engagement from that of nationalistic blindness, nonetheless, was his inner wisdom in harmony with the national identity, as well as in consensus with the most sophisticated regimes of political vulnerabilities in XX century [Nowak, 2018: 430–592]. Augustyn Babiak approaches the Sheptytsky sense of theological understanding of political mission a century ago and his perception of the indispensable relation between the teleological destiny of Ukrainian history and the theological Mystery of the Incarnation [Babiak, 2023: 15].

In the given important work entitled “For love of his people. The heroic life of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky (1865–1944)”, Augustyn Babiak poses the problem in relation to the spiritual status and Christian praxis of Archbishop Sheptytsky, its implications for historical “*Vox Ucrainorum*” and European identity. It should be noted at the outset that the author of the book is a long-time researcher of Andrey Sheptytsky’s heritage in France and in Italy. The main goal of his historical approach is to discover the origins of Church history in Ukraine and to mark event notably the 160th Anniversary Birth and 80th Anniversary of Andrey Sheptytsky’s Death. Therefore, he makes a valuable contribution to Italian readers about getting to portray the lives of prominent Ukrainian figures in Italian language space. Using biographical methods and archival data analyses, on the one side, the author presents the Metropolitan Andrey as a human being, namely: patriotic, tragic, existentially exhausted between the two World Wars and multiple political regimes, but, on the other side – heroic, caring and virtuous man. Likewise, Moses of the Ukrainian people, he opposed the Nazi regime, Polish chauvinism and the violent atheism of Bolshevik dictatorship. When the path of Aristotelian golden mean

was unachievable, Metropolitan called the minority into a relationship of prayer, giving people the hope to anticipate an enemy threat with listening to a voice of Christian wisdom.

The proper intention of Babiak’s research is to explore the spiritual vocation of Andrey Sheptytsky’s testimony, namely: the fulfillment of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience and the living out the Christian virtues on the path to *vita beata*. In the introduction, Babiak rightly notes that Sheptytsky represents the man of God who reveals the gift of prophecy as the ability of *homo capax Dei* to read the signs of the time and, by the presence of sapiential vision of the future, to accomplish the mission germinated in the history of a people [Babiak, 2023: 16]. It is not surprising, that the author of book acknowledges his gratitude to prof. Giovanni Codevilla who wrote the Preface and Appendix concerning the origins of the Greek Catholic Church in the Russian Empire. The former researcher at the University of Trieste Giovanni Codevilla reveals to the Italian population the existence of Ukrainian religious community and explores the historical efforts of russians to destroy the Greek Catholic Church during the 15th–19th centuries. To cover the main aspects of Metropolitan Sheptytsky’s transversal perspectives, the author deals with different approaches and clarifies the role of temporary and eternal dimensions in the dynamics of spirit.

Father Augustyn Babiak structures the content of the book by organizing the life story of archbishop Andrey Sheptytsky in a balanced correlation between biographical and spiritual *telos*. As we see, the research paper consists of an introduction, eleven chapters, and a conclusion, averaging 384 pages. The first seven chapters include the comprehensive biographical narratives, letting a reader to imagine a dynamic season of Sheptytsky’s life flourishing: birth, childhood, adulthood, elderly age and death. In the passage of Andrey Sheptytsky’s human life cycles, we discover the structure of solid equilibrium between his being in the world of possibilities and being an active listener capable of saying “Here I Am” in front of God’s divine calling invitation. As a result of a hesitation, the vital voice of Andrey’s spirit discerns and resounds through a number of successes and denials, and finally, he responds to the inner fundamental and radical appeal. Exposed to multiply the different charisma and ready to challenge his ego-centrism on the battlefield of history, the integral synergy of human and divine models allowed Andrey Sheptytsky to perceive the life’s challenges according to the logic of inward light of given over to God’s Providence according to the logic of the Fall, namely: a “*failure is the Christic secret*” [*l’échec, c’est le secret christique*]. While

different national, political, historical, social, linguistic, ecumenical, pastoral and ecclesiastical initiatives were supported by this extraordinary, modest person, nevertheless, Andrey Sheptytsky has tended to eliminate the inward or outward cross-national divergences by his impossible passivity.

Babiak provides a more systematic argument for Sheptytsky's implications in a large multi-faceted engagement in the regeneration of ideas for achieving the Metropolitan's pastoral activity in favour of religious and national unity in Ukraine. If we weigh the horizon of dialogue on the experience of communication with different Churches, Sheptytsky repeatedly convinced himself that he had failed to manage the complicated relations between Ukraine and Poland. After Metropolitan, the reconciliation fades from the interpersonal and political scene, neither by a lack of good will nor by a rhetoric of nationalist populism. No doubt, without the role of *paideia* in learning virtue and contribution to the intellectual upbringing of clergy, the nation and the Church suffer from loss of a lifelong experience and sapiential insight. Sheptytsky expands this intuition by preaching and writing to different audiences, which might play attention to the historical models of peace approach. Metropolitan expands the possibility of ecumenical dialogue with the Eastern Slavic Churches, pacification of the Polish-Ukrainian conflicts, fulfillment of promises and the basis for peace. He relies on the role of monasticism and secular clergy in favour of cultural, religious and national prosperity in Ukraine [Chapter 3–7].

Attempts to make great efforts to save Jews during the World War II let, Sheptytsky to voice anxiety about war atrocities under Soviet occupation (1939–1941) and the German Regime (1941–1944). Some key themes resonate in three letters that Sheptytsky had written to the pope Pius XII and cardinal Eugène Tisserant about “atrocities of the diabolic Nazi regime” in Galicia dated on 28 March 1942, 29–31 August 1942 and finally 3 September 1942 [Babiak, 2023: 223–224]. Nothing better additionally demonstrates this attitude than the five pastoral letters of the archbishop of Lviv from 9 October to 14 August 1943. Written letters explore such subjects, namely: “On sin of murder”, “Thou Shalt Not Kill”, “On mercy”, and “Do not succumb to provocations and don't lead up to acts of terror” [Babiak, 2023: 225–224].

In addition to seven first chapters, the second part of the mentioned book relates to the subject of virtues. Babiak tries to cover the beatification process of “Servant of God”, initiated on 28 January 1955 by the Apostolic Visitor for the Ukrainians in Western Europe archbishop Ivan Buchko. In the gathering of evidences and witness testimonies relating to Metropolitan Andrey

Sheptytsky, the Beatification process was suspended in 1959 and 1962 by Polish cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, etc. Examining the objection claims, Babiak argues that so-called Sheptytsky's betrayal of “*la noblesse polonaise*” embodies Polish chauvinism based on social immaturity and destructive efforts to fragilize the Ukrainian national identity [Chapter 2]. After some historical evidence, Andrey Sheptytsky was perceived by Polish clergy and politicians as a “king of Ukrainian resistance against Polish colonization”, fearless guide to comprehensive revitalization of the historic memory of Ukrainian Stathood [Babiak, 2023: 192–195]. In contrast to the long fertile pause since the request for beatification, the Vatican recognized the ‘heroic virtue’ of venerable Andrey Sheptytsky. In other words, the Sheptytsky's initiatives examine the value of virtues proper to humanity, how they sanctify the human behavior beyond the restricted historical (im)-possibilities.

In the second part of the book [Chapters 9–11], Babiak emphasizes the spiritual qualities of Metropolitan Andrey, who irrevocably reached the height of holiness on the way to evangelical counsels, theological and cardinal virtues. Therefore, the author of the research defines the methodology and reveals the virtues of Metropolitan Sheptytsky [“*Summarium testificale*”; “*Informatio*”], resulting from the sequence of documents and testimonies about the sainthood of the candidate. The *Positio super virtutibus vel super martyrio* (*Position on virtue or martyrdom*) of the Servant of God Andrey Sheptytsky reports more closely the whole procedure of his beatification and canonization process.

Visualizing stories with text sequences of Sheptytsky's virtues, Babiak acknowledges the extraordinary life's challenges of Metropolitan who faithfully followed the pathway to sainthood. The experience of two World Wars, the change of six regimes radically strengthened the metropolitan's personality. His Christian experience of the cross and the hope of resurrection encouraged him during times of suffering to find a harmonious solution. Looking from the perspective of the time, the author exhorts a reader to pay attention to metropolitan's practice of theological and cardinal virtues. In Chapter Nine, Babiak emphasizes the role of faith, hope and love, which are the basis of theological virtues. The metropolitan's faith was centered around liturgy, prayer practices and theological culture. According to Josaphat Jean, it is no less significant to focus of the effects of hope, since its optimism did not allow the metropolitan to abandon God's mercy [Babiak, 2023: 250]. But, more importantly, the Server of God indicates that the only virtue of love translates the bilateral relationship to God and neighbor. For the Metropolitan, love places

him against violence and hatred; love skillfully restrains violence and tests the communicative meaning of openness [Chapter 9].

If faith, hope and love come from God, the emergence of cardinal virtues can appropriate another aspect of the metropolitan's spiritual experience [Chapter 10]. Prudence manifests the value of words, the balance of gestures, and the purity of intentions. Justice reveals equality, respect for authority, social issues, and the injustice of the capitalist system. The virtue of temperance fosters moderation in a person, which the Italian expression describes as "thinking on your knees" [*pensare in ginocchio*]. The fourth virtue in terms of intensity is a fortitude, thanks to which Metropolitan Andrey fought for 27 years with illness. Fortitude helps him to overcome a fear on the way to a good life and in spirit readiness to embrace his martyrdom. In the final chapter, the author reveals a portrait of the metropolitan's monastic vocation in the Basilian Order. Babiak reveals the content of three evangelical virtues that correspond to the three monastic vows: poverty, obedience, and chastity, united by the virtue of humility [Chapter 11].

In conclusion, it should be recognized that some aspects of Babiak's book raise certain reservations regarding the structure and methodological component. The presentation of the material, for example, related to the metropolitan's virtues seems to be a little exaggerated concerning the number of testimonies and quotations. Nevertheless, Augustine Babiak's study not only envisages a worthy result of his years of work, but will certainly surprise the Italian reader with the personality of the servant of God, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky.

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