

Bachelor Thesis Supervisor's Review

Author: Artemiy Bykov

Thesis title: History as Political Weapon: Conflicting narratives of Autocephaly in Ukraine

Reviewer: František Kalenda

In his bachelor's thesis, Mr Bykov took up the challenge of analyzing autocephalous movements throughout Ukrainian history. He posed two research questions: 1) What are the narratives that define Ukrainian autocephaly?, and 2) What is the impact of the state on the autocephalous movements? To answer these questions, he divided his thesis into two main parts, the first one focusing on the theoretical and historical context, the second one dealing with the distinctive periods when Ukraine experienced autocephalous attempts in the modern era.

While I generally evaluate Mr Bykov's thesis positively, it needs to be stressed that it is quite seriously hindered by formal errors, especially the often problematic level of English that on occasions complicates the understanding of the text. He sometimes tends to use terms that are not appropriate for the context (e.g. *The self-identification and the feeling of Byzantine emperors in those power relations contribute to the denial of the initial definition of symphonia*, p. 16) and there is also a number of typos throughout the thesis, the maybe most common one being Urkainian. On another occasion, Joseph Gill is made into *Joseph Hill* (p. 19) etc.

Other formal issues include the missing page in the quotation of Van der Essen (p. 17), the failure to inform the reader that the highlighted sentences in the quotations were his, not present in the original (e.g. p. 15) and not making distinction between different types of sources (e.g. academic literature vs. newspaper articles) neither in the bibliography nor in the text itself.

On the other hand, I believe Mr Bykov chose a unique and important topic and satisfyingly answered his research questions, providing the reader of his thesis with a robust analysis of an extremely wide body of historical primary sources in at least three languages (English, Russian and Ukrainian), ranging from the Byzantine chronicles to the contemporary political speeches. Both in discussing the key theoretical concepts (such as autocephaly and symphonia) and providing historical development, he delved in detail into crucial academic debates and different points of view, thus avoiding excessive descriptiveness and one-sidedness of his account.

While I would appreciate filling a couple of blank spaces (especially giving the reader at least a hint of the discussions over autocephaly in pre-Poroshenko's Ukraine and providing Russian political reaction to the contemporary autocephaly), overall, I consider Mr Bykov's thesis to be a valuable addition to the historical research of State-Church relations in Orthodox countries that more than fulfils the expectations from a bachelor's student. For this reason, I propose evaluating this thesis with the grade '1' (excellent) or '2' (very good), depending on the quality of his defence.

Prague, 09 September 2021

František Kalenda