

EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY FROM OUR ARCHIVES – MORE ON NOTED PERSONALITIES

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



YULIAN BUTSMANIUK,
Photo, Ukrainian Museum and Library of
Stamford

Another noted personality, also an artist, who was deeply involved in World War I and the Ukrainian Independence movement, was Yulian Butsmانيuk (1885-1967). He lived through the tumultuous years of World War I and the Ukrainian Independence movement, as did many of his contemporaries, some of whom died tragically as a consequence of the brutal war and political harassment and ordeals. Butsmانيuk, however, was fortunate enough to have survived that destructive period and even lived to an old age. Throughout his lifetime, from his youthful days during the War to later years in Halychyna, in the cities of Zhovkva, Lviv, and later in Edmonton, Canada, and elsewhere, he continued to work professionally as an artist and to be actively involved in Ukrainian causes. He was devoted to his heritage and culture, to its preservation and popularization. Butsmانيuk made substantial contributions in the field of historical documentation, in art, and especially in

ecclesiastical art.

In our Museum and Library's archives we have copies of some of Butsmانيuk's art works, which he had produced while serving with the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen during the War. These works depicted wartime activities: the call to arms to fight for freedom, heroic deeds in battles, and tragic episodes. They were used as illustrations in newspapers and journals, and later were published as postcards, of which we have a good number. While serving in the army, one of Butsmانيuk's assignments was to photograph war scenes, which he and a few others, (e.g., Mykola Uhryn Bezhrishnyi) were assigned to do. In our archives we have a few thousand glass negatives of such scenes. Each negative is identified by the date when it was taken, the place, and the name of the photographer.

Yulian Butsmانيuk was born in the Brody district of western Ukraine. Orphaned at an early age, he was taken care of by his elder sister and her husband. They sent him to school in Lviv where he finished high school. Showing an aptitude for drawing and painting, he enrolled in a trade school where he was taught some elements of architecture, drawing, painting, carving, and the like. Since he had to earn his own keep, he was often given jobs by his teachers to help them in their painting of decorative murals in various public buildings and chapels where they were employed. This gave Yulian a special opportunity to learn the art of mural painting. Manifesting unique talent, he was soon hired independently to do murals in churches.

Fortunately, he was assigned to work with Modest Sosenko (a known painter in Halychyna and much admired by Metropolitan Sheptytsky) to be Sosenko's assistant in the painting of churches in various towns. Through Sosenko's intervention and the financial assistance of Metropolitan Sheptytsky, Butsmانيuk

went on to study at the Cracow Art Academy. As an exceptional student and, at the end of his studies, he was awarded a scholarship to go abroad and continue his education.

However, World War I broke out and he joined the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen. In addition to his regular military duties, he was assigned to be a Wartime artist, photographer, and reporter. He participated in battles, was wounded several times, and in 1920 was interned in POW camps.

Once freed he settled for a while in Czechoslovakia where he attended the Prague Art Academy and produced many paintings, especially portraits of various individuals. In 1927 he returned to Lviv where he taught drawing in schools for a time.

From 1932 to 1937 and 1939 he was commissioned to paint the Basilian Fathers Church of Christ the Lover of Mankind in the town of Zhovkva. Murals and decorative elements of this Church are considered to be masterpieces in church painting and superb examples of the artistic combination of the traditional byzantine, neo-byzantine, and art nouveau styles.

During World War II he immigrated to Western Europe, and in 1950, at the invitation of Bishop Neil Savaryn of Edmonton, he moved to Canada. Here from 1951 to 1956, with the help of his son and wife, he did the monumental work of painting the interior of St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Edmonton with its many murals and seven domes. The paintings, which he had done before the war and had left housed in the Lviv National Museum, were destroyed by the Soviets.

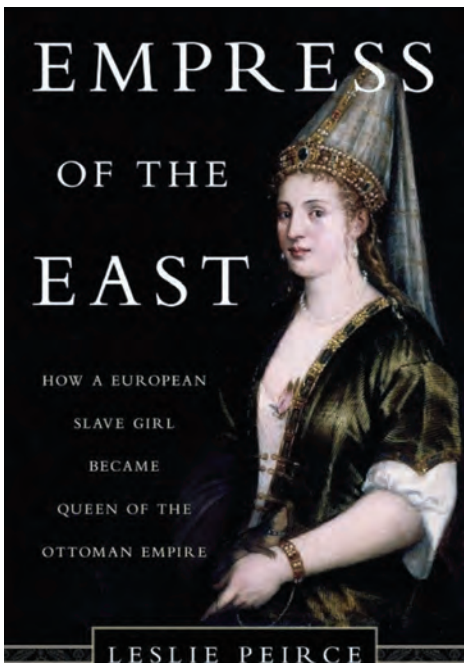
One of his friends and a brother-in-arms, himself a writer and poet, expressed this tribute to Yulian Butsmانيuk: "Above life he loved his Motherland... and into church art he placed his creative soul in order to extol the glory of the Ukrainian nation and the history of our Church."



POSTCARDS FEATURING WORKS OF
BUTSMANIUK,
Ukrainian Museum and Library of
Stamford

BOOK REVIEW:

EMPERESS OF THE EAST: HOW A EUROPEAN SLAVE GIRL BECAME QUEEN OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE / by Leslie Peirce
(New York : Basic Books; 2017 – ISBN 978-0-465-03251-8)



So much has been written in many different languages about Roksoliana, the sixteenth-century figure of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, whose roots hail from the town of Rohatyn, Ukraine. History, legend, romance, political intrigue are all blended in the literature about this fascinating person who really has little to do with contributions to Ukrainian history and civilization.

I was surprised to come across a new English-language book devoted to her by a Turkish scholar, Leslie Peirce, a professor at New York University. Roksoliana is known in the Turkish world by her Islamic name, Hurrem, the wife of the great Ottoman sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent; however, the author uses the name of Roxelana throughout her book. She is characterized as being Ruthenian or Russian, hailing from the sixteenth century Polish Kingdom on the present-day territory of Ukraine.

I found this biography easy to read in the form of historical narrative. It charts briefly her early years. There is some conjecture that she was the daughter of an Orthodox priest and Ukrainian sources identify her as Anastasia Lisowska born approximately 1504 AD. Just about every Ukrainian simply knows her as Roxelana. Her life reads like fiction but is real. Captured by the Crimean Tatars – sold into slavery – eventually reaching the Ottoman capital of Constantinople and placed into the harem of the court – prepared to be one of many concubines for the young sultan – a romance between the two that leads to the unthinkable – Suleyman marries her and has six children with her (Turkish mores lim-

ited concubines to one encounter with the sultan) – freed from slavery, she eventually becomes the sultana or Queen of the Ottoman Empire (the only one with such a title in the history of this Turkish Empire).

The book is full of intrigue. Some examples are: climbing the ladder of success with rivals along the way, a sharp acumen, lots of political intrigue with viziers, executions, the competition for becoming the successor to Suleyman – Turkish law had no principle of primogeniture, but rather based on earning the nomination while the sultan was still alive. It was their son Selim II, who wins the prize over brothers and half-brothers.

The book also educated me quite a bit about Turkish mores of the royal court and the relationship between the Koran and the first five books of the Bible. Roxelana goes down in history as a major planner in the Islamic architecture of Istanbul. She is admired for her great philanthropy in Islamic society with outreach to such institutions as hospitals and soup kitchens. I like the author's blunt assessment: Roxelana was the right person in the right place at the right time! ■

*Monsignor John Terlecky,
Director, Ukrainian Museum and
Library of Stamford*

Journalist from Ukraine Meets with Local Community

STAMFORD - The well-known Ukrainian journalist and historian Mr. Vakhtang Kipiani met with the local Ukrainian community at the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford on Friday evening, November 17.

Mr. Kipiani is currently visiting and doing research at the Ukrainian Research Center on the invitation of Mrs. Lubow Wolynetz. His ongoing interest lies in collecting Ukrainian diaspora press. In Ukraine, Mr. Kipiani founded the Museum of Press, is the editor of the online publication "Istorychna Pravda" and teaches at the Ukrainian Catholic University School of Journalism in Lviv. ■



MR. KIPIANI [center], answers questions following the meeting

For more information about The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, please, visit www.ukrainianmuseumlibrary.org, call 203-324-0499 or 203-323-8866. The museum is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., or by appointment, and is located at 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06902.