

## EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

## The Establishment of the Ukrainian Nation (1917-1921) - Part II

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



2 hryvnias, V. Krychevsky

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During the years of the restoration of the Ukrainian Statehood (1917-1921), all three forms of government of the free and independent Ukraine - the Government of the Central Rada, the Hetman Government, and the Government of the Directory were equally concerned. They were actively involved in the cultural development of the nation, imbuing the general populace with their national identity, reviving in their outlook the magnificent historic past, giving them the incentive to support and to fight for their freedom and independence from the usurpers, who had enslaved them for centuries and who were currently attempting to continue to do so.

The Government of the Central Rada founded the Ukrainian State Academy of Arts (Ukrainska Derzhavna Akadmiia Mystetstv) (1917). The Hetman Government founded the Ukrainian Academy of Science (Ukrainska Akademiia Nauk) and the Ukrainian State University (1918). This

state university was a separate institution of higher learning, which was established to follow the ukrainization policy of Hetman Skorodsky, as compared to the original Kyiv State University, which in previous years followed a russification policy. The Government of the Directory supported and financed the Ukrainian Republican Kapelle (Ukrainska Respublikanska Kapela) (1918), founded by Oleksander Koshyts (1875-1944) (a noted

the various cultural and scholarly institutions were founded, then artists, scholars, and writers from wherever they worked or resided flocked to Kyiv to be a part of the rebirth of Ukraine and to do their utmost to help and contribute their talents to this glorious reinvigorating moment.

The Government of the Central Rada, having introduced the *Karbovanets* as a monetary unit, before its demise, also introduced the *bryvnia* as an additional monetary unit. The *bryvnia* was a monetary unit (a counting system) used in Kyivan Rus and was often mentioned in *Ruskaia Pravda* (a 11th and 12th centuries collection of Ukrainian-Rus Law). The introduction of this term into the monetary system of modern-day Ukraine underscored

the Hetman Government to put them into circulation. A 2 *bryvnias* value banknote was prepared by Vasyl Krychevsky (1873-1952) a prominent architect, art scholar, graphic artist, and set designer. His application of folk art traditions into architecture, interior design, and graphic art produced a very distinct style. For the Government of Central Rada he designed the state emblems and seals and a number of bank notes. Krychevsky's use of folk art traditions and symbols can be seen in the 2 *bryvnia* banknote. On the front side of the banknote, besides the necessary identifying wording in a distinct graphic type, there was centrally positioned the folk symbol of the Tree of Life (highly stylized) with five wavy lines (branches) on each side of the trunk with triangular-like shapes hanging from the lowest branch symbolizing fruit. The back side of the banknote, besides wording and the number 2, is completely covered with *pysanka* (Ukrainian Easter eggs) in triangular motifs. The rectangular shape of the front and back of the banknote is enclosed with a twisted rope-like linear motif, which in folk art tradition symbolized the eternity line. Banknotes of 10, 100, and 500 *bryvni* were also issued by Central Rada, but placed into circulation by the Hetman Government and were designed by Heorhi Narbut. The 100 *bryvni* front side has a large luxurious wreath composed of the fruits of the Ukrainian land flanked by two figures. On the right side there is a peasant with a sledgehammer entwined with a laurel branch. On the left side there is a peasant maiden attired in the traditional folk costume, a floral wreath on her head, symbolizing her youthfulness, with a sheaf of wheat and a scythe in her hand. The depiction of the maiden symbolized the youthful, newly independent Ukraine. The sledgehammer with the laurel leaf in the peasant's hand was not a weapon for fighting, but a tool for hard peaceful work to produce the bounty of the land.

Each artist in his own artistic way communicated to the population a deeply meaningful symbolic enlightening.

TO BE CONTINUED



100 bryvni, H. Narbut

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composer and choirmaster), which in 1920 was reorganized into the Ukrainian National Choir (Ukrainskyi Natsionalnyi Khor). For seven years this Choir toured Europe, and North and South America performing concerts, acquainting the world with Ukrainian choral music and culture, and trying to win support for the Ukrainian Republic.

Once the independent governments of Ukraine were established and

the continuity of the Ukrainian State from Kyivan-Rus days to the present. The *karbovanets* and the *bryvnia* circulated, as monetary units alongside each other, and in the territory of Ukraine were considered to be legal tender.

Before its demise, the Government of the Central Rada commissioned artists Vasyl Krychevsky, Heorhi Narbut, and others to prepare an artistic rendition of additional monetary units, which they did, but it fell upon

## Book Review by Museum Director

Msgr. John Terlecky

СВЯТІ ЗЕМЛІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ  
(English translation: *The Saints of the land of Ukraine* by Halyna

*Sapozhnikova and Iuliana Andrusiv*) ISBN - 9789663959788, [Lviv : Svichado Press, 2016].

This a wonderful book for anyone interested in the hagiography of Ukrainian saints venerated by either the Ukrainian Catholic Church and/or The Ukrainian Orthodox Church. This book is a joint project by two qualified academics: Halyna Sapozhnikova and Sr. Iuliana Andrusiv.

The book, published in Ukraine by the Catholic publisher Svichado, is aimed at adults and specializes on saints associated with Ukraine and its church history.

What distinguishes this book from other books is that it is not arranged by a liturgical format (calendar date) but by historical periods. How many Ukrainian Catholics know, for example, that two popes died in exile imposed by Roman emperors on Ukrainian soil - Saint Clement and Saint Martin? How many are familiar with the roots of Ukrainian Christianity that were nourished by missionaries, such as Saints Cyril and Methodius? The book continues with biographies of the periods of Kyivan Christianity, of the Middle Ages, and of the polemic strife in the history of Ukrainian Christianity. What I valued

most were biographies of the "Blessed Ones" of the twentieth century who suffered for their Catholic faith. The book also includes biographies of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi and Patriarch Iosyf Slipyi.

Additional features that the book can hail are the wonderful color icons of just about everyone mentioned in the book. There also is an appendix that lists and compares saints that are venerated by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Catholic Church (e.g. our Church reveres the great Orthodox metropolitan Petro Mohyla, while the Orthodox

Church has canonized him)

I hope that someone takes the time to translate this book of five hundred sixty-nine pages into the English language. It would be a great witness of the historical treasures of Ukrainian Christianity for the whole world!

Copies of this book may be hard to find. One can order directly from the publisher. The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford has a limited number of this book available for sale. The cost is \$28, plus, seven dollars for shipping and handling (contact information is provided below). □