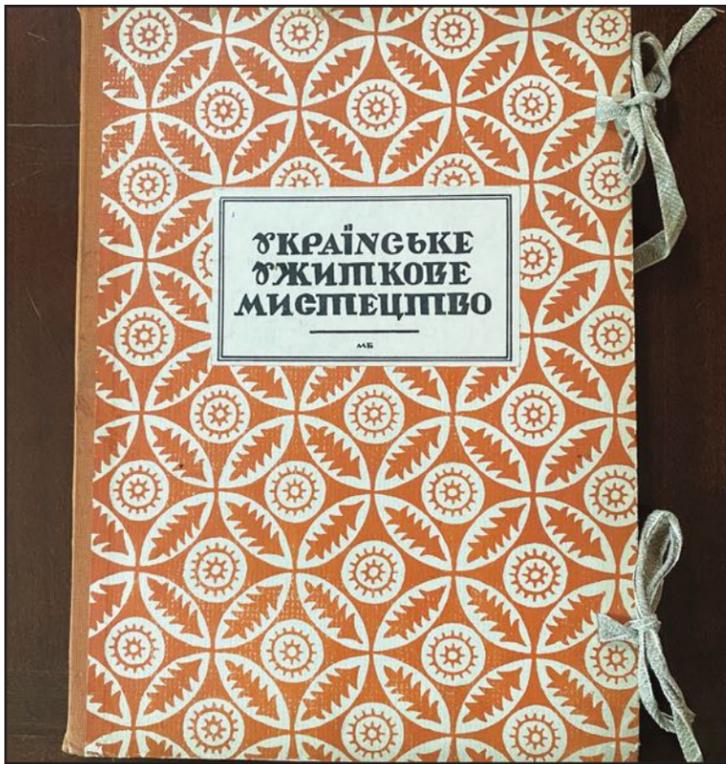


EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

A Notable Scholar and His Unique Publications

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



Ukrainske Uzhytkove Mystetstvo (Ukrainian Applied Art) by Volodymyr Sichynsky (1894-1962), Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz Publishing Company, 1944. The book – album portfolio consists of 47 plates of 500 drawings. The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

For the past few years, our library has quite regularly been receiving numerous personal book collections. Those owners or their children have decided to donate to institutions like ours for preservation and availability to scholarly researchers. Inadvertently among them there is often a unique find - a book that is noteworthy, but not well known, because of limited availability. In Ukraine, the existence and availability of certain books was regularly hindered by wartime circumstances or by the destructive actions of both tsarist-Russian and Soviet regimes.

The unique publication about which I would like to write about is the work of a notable scholar and architect

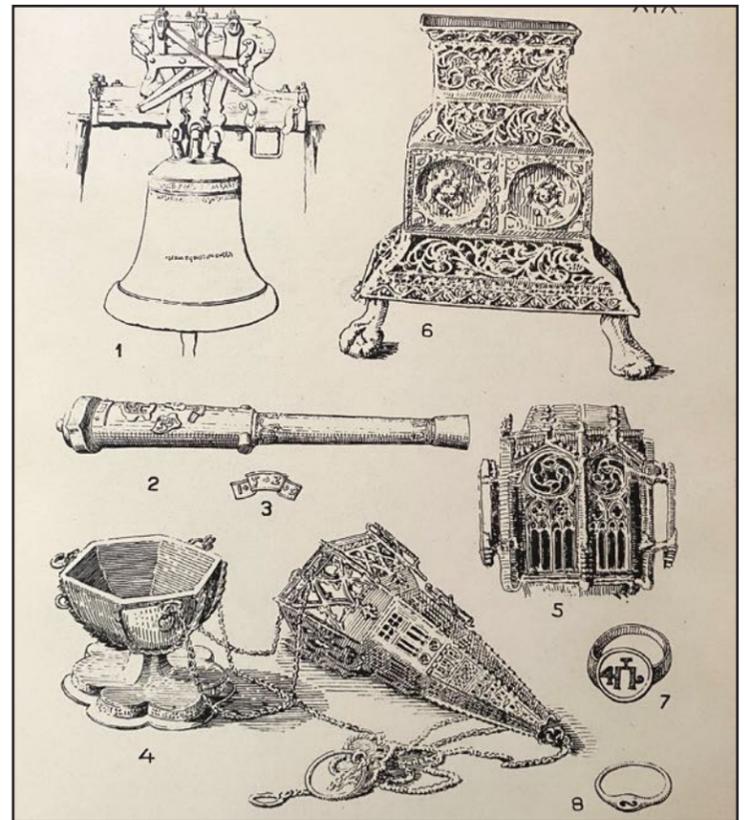
Volodymyr Sichynsky (1894-1962), entitled *Ukrainske Uzhytkove Mystetstvo (Ukrainian Applied Art)* published in 1944 by Otto Harrassowitz publishing company in Leipzig. The book – album portfolio consists of 47 plates of 500 drawings. The book contains a short introduction about Ukrainian applied arts, underscoring its historical development as well as a detailed description of each depicted item. The portfolio's cover was designed by the artist Mykola Butovych using the Kyievan block printing motifs. This work was also published in German. Upon checking the World Catalog, I have found that the only library that has a Ukrainian copy is ours, German copies can

be found in the Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum and in the Syracuse and Tennessee University Libraries. Presumably this publication, as well as other works of Sichynsky, can be found in private libraries. It is imperative that such rare publications be preserved.

The author of this book, Volodymyr Sichynsky, was born in the scenic and historically fascinating city of Kamianets-Podilsky. He was the son of Yevtym Sitinsky - historian, archeologist, pedagogue, civic activists, who having graduated from the Kyievan Theological Seminary was ordained and was assigned as Archpriest to the Cathedral Parish in Kamianet-Podilsky. Being exposed to his father's devotion to historical and archeological studies and to the research and preservation of cultural monuments influenced Volodymyr's scholarly interests in the same subjects and shaped his outlook towards cultural work accordingly. To this we need to add Volodymyr's natural intelligence, industriousness and diligence. Sichynsky completed his studies in civil engineering in Petersburg in 1917 and in 1923 he receives his doctoral degree from the University in Prague. During the short-lived years of Ukrainian independence in 1918, he organized the Architectural Institute in Kyiv and helped in the founding of the Kamianets-Podilsky University during Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky's reign.

After the loss of Ukrainian Independence, Sichynsky emigrates to Western Ukraine (Halychyna), but also lives and studies in Prague. From the 1920s to the 1940s, he continuously researched all aspects of Ukrainian culture, elite and folk art and its development through the ages, from prehistorical Trypillia culture through Kyievan Rus age, Cossack Baroque, up to contemporary times. He made numerous field trips to Karpatska Ukraina and other areas in Ukraine, where he lectured, attended international art congresses. He published works on the basis of his research as well as articles which appear in Galician, Czech and émigré journals and magazines. The greater part of his works he published through his own means since there were no other possibilities for them to appear. As an architect, churches based on his architectural plans were built in Priashiw, Brazil, Canada (Montreal) and United States.

Volodymyr Sichynsky wanted to bring about among Ukrainians an awakening and awareness of their culture and worked diligently on broadening and enhancing their knowledge of their cultural heritage. He was aware how the tsarist-Russian rapaciousness appropriated Ukrainian cultural accomplishments for themselves. As an example, we read about this in his article "Ukrainian artists in Russian vestments". He saw how the Soviet system was destroying Ukrainian cultural treasures, Ukrainian identity and felt it

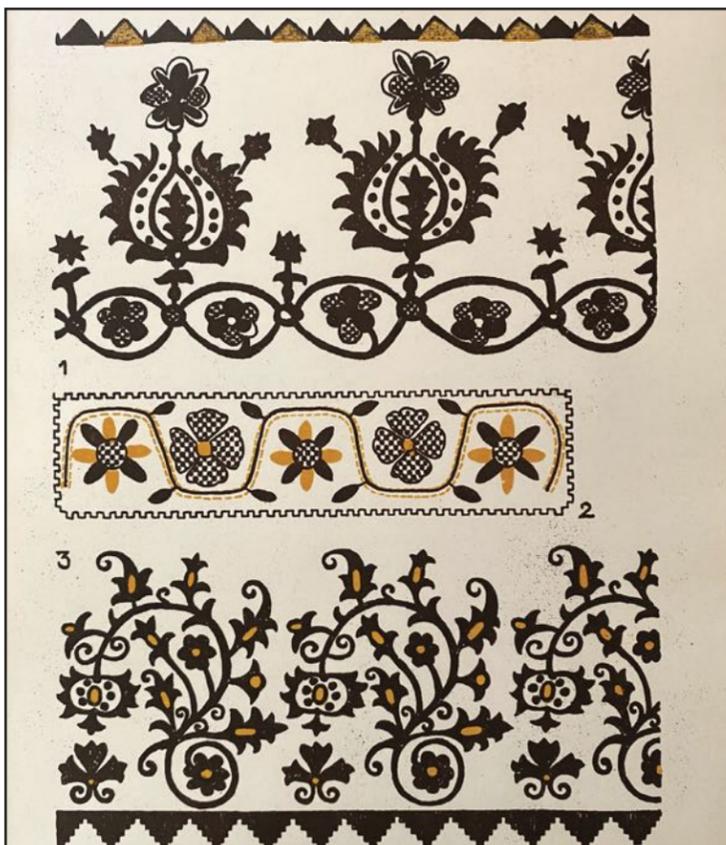


Ukrainian Applied Art by V. Sichynsky. St. George Cathedral Lviv Bell, 1341, kadylnytsia, St. Onufrii Church, Lviv, 16th c., collection box, 17th c., The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

was his duty and responsibility to disseminate knowledge about Ukrainian culture and rectify all the falsifications and lies of the terroristic Soviet regime. Besides scholarly publications Sichynsky began to publish albums which included illustrative material dealing with cultural and historical subjects so that readers, if not physically then visually, could become acquainted with their cultural heritage. Beside the album we are writing about he also published many others: "Ukrainian culture", "Ukrainian ornaments – historical", "Ukrainian embroidery", "Ukrainian ornaments – folk" etc. Some of these albums were published also in the German and French languages. In these albums the author noted that all

illustrations were "collected, arranged and technically prepared for printing" by him.

After the war Sichynsky lived in the Aschaffenburg Displaced Camp. Here he continued with his publishing and educational work. In 1949 he emigrated to the United States where he became actively engaged in Ukrainian cultural life. For me, Volodymyr Sichynsky holds a special place. I had the good luck to attend Ukrainian Saturday School in New York where he was teaching a course in Ukrainian culture. I still have and treasure my notes of his lessons. Perhaps his fascinating lessons influenced me to deepen my knowledge of Ukrainian heritage and devote my life's work to its preservation. ❖



Ukrainian Applied Art by Volodymyr Sichynsky. Embroidery 17-18th c., The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.



Ukrainian Applied Art by Volodymyr Sichynsky. Folk paper cutouts. The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

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 5:00 p.m., or by appointment, and is located at: 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06902.