

## The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford

by Curator Lubow Wolynetz

Most religions have holy places or shrines which achieve such devotional and morally uplifting significance that the faithful of that particular religion deem it important, necessary, and sometimes even obligatory (if imposed as a penance) to journey to those places, no matter how far the location, how dangerous the journey, or how costly it might be.

Danylo, from the Chemihiv area went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Upon his return, he wrote about his travels in a work entitled *Zhytjie i khozheniie Danyla ruskijazemli Ihumena* (The Life and Travels of Danylo Abbot from Rus Land), also known as *Palomnyk monakha Danyla...* (Pilgrimage of the Abbot Danylo...). This work which was one of the most interesting and popular works of early Kyievan (Ukrainian) literature. The compilers of the modern day travelogue to the Holy Land decided that their pilgrimage, seven centuries later, would in essence follow in the footsteps of A b o t



our prayers, so that our life bursts forth from this tomb; let our Church, our land, our cities and villages draw strength to a new life." Prior to the homily the pilgrims' choir sang *Plotiui usnuv* (You have fallen asleep in the flesh...) and *Preterpivy za nas strasty*. The soloist of both hymns was the world renowned opera singer Oleksander Myshuha (1853-1922). As described by the compilers of the book, the emotional impact of all this on the pilgrims was beyond words.

Although there are many well-known and frequently-visited holy places for Christians pilgrimages – even within their own national or close by territories, still the fervent desire of most Christians is to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Pilgrimages to faraway places, such as the Holy Land, were usually group undertakings for convenience, economy, and safety.

In our Library we have a book which describes a pilgrimage of Ukrainians to the Holy Land which took place September 5–28, 1906 and was organized under the auspices, patronage, and with the participation of Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. The book, under the title, *Yak to Rus khodyla slidamy Danyla; Propamiatna knyha pershoho rusko-narodnoho palomnytsva v Sviatu Zemliu* (*How Rus Walked in the Footsteps of Danylo; a Commemorative Book of the First Rus-people (Ukrainians) Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*) was published in Zhovkva, Ukraine in 1907.

According to the World Catalog, our Library and the Library of Manor College in Philadelphia, PA are the only two libraries that possess a copy of this publication. There was a specific reason for the compilers to choose this particular title for the book. In the early part of the 12th century, a monk named

Danylo, hence the above title.

From this book we learn that in the 1906 pilgrimage there were 505 Ukrainians and 51 Poles participating with Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky as their spiritual leader. There were 389 men and 116 women. The majority of the pilgrims were farmers (232 men and 66 women) from various western Ukrainian regions. There were 89 priests, 18 priest-wives, 11 theologians, and 4 Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. The rest were members of various other professions and 11 children. For organizational purposes all were divided into five groups and each member received a number.

The compilers of the travelogue included an alphabetical list of all the members of the pilgrimage and also gave their age, their profession, their village or town, and the group to which they belonged. From this list we have selected a few to write about.

First and foremost among them was Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. In the Chapel of the Holy Sepulcher the Metropolitan delivered the following homily: "You have fallen asleep in the flesh and have died for us, and we the living, as if dying, go to the tomb to live again. Where will we find grace if not at Your tomb? Let us lay down our entreaties,

our prayers, so that our life bursts forth from this tomb; let our Church, our land, our cities and villages draw strength to a new life." Prior to the homily the pilgrims' choir sang *Plotiui usnuv* (You have fallen asleep in the flesh...) and *Preterpivy za nas strasty*. The soloist of both hymns was the world renowned opera singer Oleksander Myshuha (1853-1922). As described by the compilers of the book, the emotional impact of all this on the pilgrims was beyond words.

The choir director of the pilgrimage was Father Yevhen Turula (1882-1951) who was also a composer and a pedagogue. He published quite a few collections of Ukrainian folk songs arranged for choirs. For this pilgrimage Oleksander Myshuha brought along his twenty-year old nephew, Luka Myshuha (1887-1955) who, later on in life, became an important civic and political leader and journalist. He carried out special assignments for the government of the Western Ukrainian National Republic, one of which was as head of a mission in Washington, DC (1921-19232). In the United States, he became actively involved in the Ukrainian Émigré life, and for many years he was the chief editor of *Svoboda*.

Even the artist Modest Sosenko (1875-1920), known for his many portraits, among which is one of Metropolitan Sheptytsky, was among the pilgrims. As a painter he did large-scale murals and iconostases for churches in western Ukraine. Another pilgrim, a twenty-year old theologian, Iosafat Kotsylovsky (1876-1947), was later to become Bishop of Peremyshl. In 1945 he was arrested by the Polish authorities, handed over to the Soviets, and sentenced to a Siberian concentration camp where he died in 1947.

The first Ukrainian Catholic priest in the United States Father Ivan Volansky (1857-1926), also came on this pilgrimage. He was a constant wonder to all of the pilgrims since he knew many languages and brought with him English, French, and even Arabic books and newspapers which he read, to the admiration of all. Father Volansky grew a long beard, and some-

times wore the Arabic head covering and was even given an Arabic name *Khavadzha*, meaning *Master*.

Last, but not least among the pilgrims was a young theologian named Panteleimon Shpylka (1883-1950). To most, the name does not mean anything, but to me it does. When I

Pilgrims in Ukraine were called Palomnyky from the word palma (palm) because on their return from the Holy Land they brought back palm leaves as proof that they were there.

was attending grammar school (grades 2-4) in the Displaced Persons Camp in Regensburg, Germany, Father Shpylka was my religion teacher (catechist). He was elderly and ailing, but always kind and thoughtful. He was often recuperating from some illness in the hospital, and since the hospital was located on the second floor above our classrooms, a couple of my friends and I would visit him after classes and choir practice. He would always greet us warmly and would smile affectionately, happy to know that we remembered him.



There were many other fascinating individuals who took part in this pilgrimage.

A highlight of the journey home, aboard the ocean liner *Tirol*, was a concert organized by the pilgrims to honor and to show their gratitude to Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky.



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