Escape from Rome: Teofan Prokopovych and Ukrainian Orthodox Ties to the Eternal City, 1650–1721

Andrey V. Ivanov

Introduction

O ver the centuries of European religious history, Rome served as the ultimate destination for many spiritually rewarding journeys of devotion and pious learning. Rarely did a sojourn in Rome turn a devotee into a disillusioned rebel, with one exception: the famous case of the 1511 pilgrimage of a monk named Martin Luther. Another, less known, example was Teofan (Feofan) Prokopovych (1681–1736), a scion of a Kyivan merchant family who studied in the city between 1698 and 1701.

Although Prokopovych was one of the hundreds of Ukrainians who

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sought an education in Catholic colleges in Europe at that time, his turbulent experience in Rome played a crucial role in the shaping of his career as the most important religious reformer in the history of imperial Russia and Hetmanate Ukraine. This experience also played an important role in changing the trajectory of Ukrainian Orthodoxy’s relationship with Catholic European learning: from that of careful embrace to unequivocal repudiation. While Archbishop Teofan remains a much celebrated figure in both Ukrainian and Russian historiography, very little is known about his early life, particularly the period before his first encounter with Tsar Peter I (in 1706), before he arrived in St. Petersburg (in 1716) and before he inaugurated his famous synodal church reform in 1721. Since the 1931 publication of Robert Stupperich’s article, “Feofan Prokopovič in Rom” (the only existing publication on this subject), the time has come to revisit the issue of his earlier career and his sojourn in Italy, specifically from the standpoints of Roman archival collections.1

Prokopovych’s sensational escape from the Eternal City, however, was not just a private event in the life of an important bishop but, rather, a watershed moment in the larger narrative of Ukrainian religious history. The most notable outcome of his experience was the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s changing relationship with Catholic education. For almost a century, from the Union of Brest to the late 1710s, Ukrainian Orthodox men sought education in numerous Catholic colleges and academies, including Roman ones. After their return to Ukraine, they promoted Roman Catholic–influenced curricular models in their own pedagogical practice, particularly those teaching at Kyiv Mohyla Academy (founded as a confraternity collegium in 1615). Yet, by the middle of the eighteenth century, examples of Ukrainian Orthodox students enrolling in Catholic colleges abroad became “fairly uncommon [dovol’noro redki],” as Dmytro Vyshnevs’kyi put it.2 Throughout the eighteenth century Kyivan Orthodoxy repudiated Jesuit learning in favor of a Protestant-influenced curriculum, and Ukraine’s young, erudite clergymen would

1. Robert Stupperich, “Feofan Prokopovič in Rom,” Zeitschrift für osteuropäische Geschichte 5 (1931): 327–40. Among the works of Ukrainian and Russian historians on Prokopovych, the most significant contributions were George Shevelov, Two Orthodox Ukrainian Churchmen of the Early Eighteenth Century: Teofan Prokopovych and Stefan Iavors’kyi (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Ukrainian Studies Fund, 1985); Valeriiia M. Nichik [Nichyk], Feofan Prokopovich (Moscow: Mysl’, 1977); Viktor G. Smirnov, Feofan Prokopovich (Moscow: Soratnik, 1994); Petr Morozov, Feofan Prokopovich kak pisatel’: Ocherk iz istorii russkoi literatury v epokhu preobrazovaniia (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. S. Balasheva, 1880); Ilarion Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich i ego vremia (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1966 [reprint]).

2. Dmitrii Vishnevskii [Dmytro Vyshnevs’kyi], Kievskaiia akademiia v pervoi polovine XVIII stolettiia (Kyiv: Tipografiia I. I. Gorbunova, 1903), 327f.
come to seek foreign education in Protestant universities, such as Halle or Jena. Several long-term trends certainly contributed to Ukrainian Orthodoxy’s changing vector away from Rome and toward Germany: the decline in the quality of Catholic schools, the spread of the early Enlightenment (Frühaufklärung), Peter I’s affection for all things Dutch and German, and so on. Yet, Prokopovych’s experience in Rome (entailing a theological rejection of Catholic learning) stands out in the sources as a critical turning point in the context of the broader trends. Absent Prokopovych’s escape from Rome, it is difficult to imagine the Ukrainian church hierarchy’s eschewing Catholic education abroad and rejecting the Catholic-inspired curriculum in their pedagogy by the early half of the eighteenth century. Similarly, absent Prokopovych’s introduction of Protestant-inspired reform ideas, it is not easy to determine whether the entire course of Petrine socioreligious change in Russia would ever have been as successful as it was.

The Urban Pontifical Greek College

Some three hundred meters from the Spanish Steps is a quiet street called Via del Babuino, named after one of Rome’s most famous “talking statues,” Il Babuino. The street serves as an easy shortcut from the steps to the spacious Piazza del Popolo, connecting farther to an easier climb up to Villa Borghese. The shabby, decaying Church of St. Athanasius, with a limestone bridge connecting the church to the neighboring seminary building, sits quietly midway to the street’s end; it is the most attention-grabbing structure on the entire Via del Babuino (fig. 1, below).

This unimposing building played an important role in the history of Eastern Christianity, Uniate and Orthodox alike. Founded in 1577 by Pope Gregory XIII, the Pontifical Greek College served the explicit purpose of providing an education to Uniate believers from the Eastern Mediterranean. The majority of students had strong spiritual ties to Rome, stretching back to the Union of Florence-Ferrara (1447), but as

3. “Talking statues” constituted an early form of a free speech zone in Renaissance and post-Renaissance Rome. Small crowds congregated around designated statues to listen to various daring speakers, some of whom were not afraid to criticize the popes. For more on the institution of “talking statues,” see George H. Sullivan, Not Built in a Day: Exploring the Architecture of Rome (New York: Carroll and Graff, 2006), 116–17.

4. The term “Uniate” here is used as a historiographical convention to refer to the community of faithful who supported the 1447 Union of Florence and the 1596 Union of Brest. Today, it is more common to use such terms as Greek Catholic, Eastern Rite Catholic, or Byzantine Rite Catholic.
Figure 1. Collegio Greco: The Pontifical Greek College with the Church of St. Athanasius, facing northwest on Via del Babuino, Rome. Photo: Andrey Ivanov.
the official *Historia Collegii Graeci de Urbi* manuscript states, their faith was now “oppressed by the Turks” and they were in need of “safeguarding their true religious doctrines” through education.\(^5\) For much of the college’s existence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, eastern Mediterranean and Balkan Greeks as well as pupils from southern Italy (where Greek-heritage parishes still existed) constituted the majority of the student body. The institution, however, was not envisioned for Greeks alone. The above-mentioned Vatican manuscript states that the college also opened its doors to “Ruthenians.”\(^6\)

The founding of Collegio Greco, as well as its mission, was not unique in the early modern educational landscape of the Eternal City. It was very much a part of what Zdenko Zlatar identifies as a larger movement of establishing “Counter-Reformation schools,” during the pontificates of Gregory XIII and Clement VIII, including the Collegium Germanicum (1552), Collegium Anglorum (1579), Collegium Armenorum (1584), Collegium Scottorum (1600), and many others.\(^7\) The Southern Slavs, however, did not have their own college in Rome; Collegium Illyricum was established in Loreto in 1580.\(^8\) Thus, Prokopovych’s Rome was home to many diasporic communities of students and teachers from all across Europe and the Middle East, but not from the Slavic Balkans.

The Union of Brest (1596) undoubtedly sparked an influx of East Slavic students to Rome. The new body of faithful that the Union forged had educational needs that Collegio Greco was particularly well suited to fill because of its experience with the Greek Uniates. From the beginning of the seventeenth century to the first closing of the college in February 1798, hundreds of Ruthenians took classes in Rome; during the same period at least half of the Uniate metropolitans of Kyiv were alumni of the college.\(^9\)

What did these students learn in Rome? Despite its lofty name, the

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6. Ibid., fols. 38r–38v.
Pontifical Greek College provided only a basic education during the first two hundred years of its existence. There were courses in classical languages and literature, some philosophy and, in the field of theology, some basic catechetical instruction covering just the “initial rudiments of faith [initio fidei rudimenta].”10 Despite the fact that the original founding regulation of the college envisioned a wider array of subjects,11 a beginner’s curriculum was certainly adequate, as most of the resident students of the college were Greek boys or teenagers from wealthy Uniate families residing in Corfu and Crete. In the *Catalogus Alumnorum*, young Ukrainian men stand out as the odd exception to the wider body of 8-to-16-year-old Greeks, who formed the majority of the residents of St. Athanasius’s dormitories.12

Most of the Ukrainian students arriving at the college had already acquired the precepts of humanist education (the Greek and Latin languages and poetics), often from their previous studies at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy. Thus, their sojourn on Via del Babuino was mostly residential in nature: they stayed in the dormitories while attending classes around the city. After the Jesuits took over as the patron order of the college in 1622, Ruthenian students apparently had easier access to courses taught in the Jesuit-run Collegium Urbanum de Propaganda Fide and Collegium Romanum, not to mention access to the libraries that this order could provide.13

12. “Catalogus Alumnorum qui errant in collegio Graecorum de Urbe” (hereafter *Catalogus Alumnorum*), vol. 14, fols. 3–47, Archivio del Pontificio Collegio Greco. See also Raymund Netzhammer, *Das griechische Kolleg in Rom* (Salzburg: Schmitz, 1905), 19–21. The fact that most Ukrainian students were almost all adults, while the Greeks were boys, must have created an interesting dynamic in Collegio Greco. Why did the Greek College and other Roman academies not admit Ukrainian boys or adolescents? There is no answer in the *Catalogus Alumnorum*, but the phenomenon of dissimulative conversion to Catholicism practiced by the Orthodox students (which was predicated on the age of reason) may have been a factor, at least hypothetically. Virtually all the Uniate Greek boys from the Venetian or Ottoman possessions had their parents’ consent to study in Rome, something that would have been more difficult for the Ruthenians. It is worth mentioning that the Greek elites had presumably stronger ties to Rome (having been in the Union since the mid-fifteenth century) as well as to the Venetian elites (if La Serenissima protected them from the Ottomans).
In fact, quite a few East Slavic men chose to study at the Collegium Urbanum.\(^\text{14}\)

**Temporary Apostasy: An Art of Dissimulation**

Not all the students at the college came from Uniate families. Some were pro-forma Catholics who, having grown up as Eastern Orthodox, had converted to the Union and sometimes even joined the Uniate Basilian Order for the purpose of obtaining a coveted education. This temporary apostasy (for lack of a better term) or pretense to conversion came with different degrees of sincerity and allowed an Orthodox student to embrace the Union with Rome primarily for educational gain. Such dissimulative practice was extremely widespread and, at least until the early part of the eighteenth century, both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic hierarchies tolerated it.

Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremias II Tranos (tenure, 1572–1595) welcomed the college’s founding as an opportunity to provide a better education for Greek Orthodox youth from the Ottoman Empire.\(^\text{15}\) The fact that these students would become temporary converts to Catholicism did not seem to bother the Constantinopolitan patriarchs. By the early seventeenth century the college had gained such a high reputation among Orthodox Greeks that Patriarch Neophytos II (1602–1612) desired to send his nephew there.\(^\text{16}\)

The Orthodox lands in the north also provided many such temporary apostates who sought an education in Roman Catholic–established schools. Petro Mohyla (1596–1646) was one of the first hierarchs to encourage temporary conversion to the Union in a bid to staff his newly formed Kyivan college with Jesuit-educated teachers. In the 1630s, for example, he paid for Lazar Baranovych’s studies in the Jesuit colleges of Vilnius and Kalisz.\(^\text{17}\) Baranovych’s tonsure as a Catholic Basilian monk was not frowned upon. Indeed, it was celebrated in Kyiv. 

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Krshchonovych (d. 1704) composed a laudatory poem praising Lazar’s educational sojourns with the “Angellic Basilians”:

Ut te,  
serenissimum solem sub Angelicas Basilianae  
Religionis umbras occidere gaudeamus.\textsuperscript{18}  
(We rejoice,  
For you have killed the darkness of religious [ignorance],  
Under the most serene sun of the Angelic Basilians.)

What did the Jesuits and Roman hierarchs think about the Orthodox students’ practice of temporary apostasy? My preliminary archival explorations in Rome and elsewhere have failed to turn up any official and specific policy pronouncement from the Vatican that would explain the presence of so many Orthodox Ukrainians in Jesuit schools all over Europe. It is likely that the presumed silence in seventeenth-century official sources points to the silent toleration of the practice.

Corollary evidence, however, tells us more. First of all, the fact that the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith began to discourage this practice starting in the early eighteenth century indicates that this phenomenon had been (unofficially) tolerated earlier.\textsuperscript{19} Second, Dmytro Blażejowskyj’s analysis of the Book of Oaths taken by Ruthenian students enrolling in Rome’s prestigious Collegium Urbanum in the seventeenth century reveals a curious fact in support of the hypothesis of silent toleration. Students coming from the dioceses of Kyiv (and likely the Hetmanate at large) were exempt from taking the oath (\textit{il giuramento}) of loyalty and devotion to the Uniate Rite and the Holy See.\textsuperscript{20} It is possible that the administration of the college deemed such an oath as too problematic for the consciences of the Orthodox, freshly (and temporarily) converted to the Union. Moreover, the 1738 “Vita” of Teofan Prokopovych, written by Theophil Siegfried Bayer, a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, states that the “Jesuits” in Rome recruited non–Roman Catholics (including Prokopovych) to

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 19. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.  
19. See the Congregation’s discussion to end the practice of admitting Orthodox students below, 79–80.  
20. Blażejowskyj writes that there were no students from Kyiv in the college’s Book of Oaths (“Ukrainian and Bielorussian Students in the Pontificio Collegio Urbano,” 203), even though the college required the oath to be administered within seven months of enrollment. See Regole da Osservarsi dal Rettore, Alunni, Ministri, Ed Uffiziali del Collegio Urbano de Propaganda Fide (Rome: Stamperia Della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide, 1831), 5–6.
further the cause of propagating the Union. These students, he wrote, “would be sent [mittuntur] to the parts of the [Christian] Church and to those whom they call infidels [ad partes, vel Ecclesiae, vel quas vocant infidelium], to promote [promoveant] the union between Greeks and Latins as much as possible [ut quantum possint].”

The fact that such a dissimulative practice existed at all was neither exceptional nor confined to a particular geographic area in early modern Europe. The pan-European habit of *ars dissimulandi*, the prudent concealment or change of one’s true confessional affiliation, was quite widespread. As the recent works of Tamar Herzig, Maria Ivanova, Monica Martinat, Moshe Sluhovsky, and Michelle Viise (among others) have noted, the art of dissimulation had many practitioners: among Jesuit missionaries in South Asia, Jews in Spain, Huguenots in France; it was also common among the lower classes throughout early modern Europe. But it was also often codified. As David Frick noted in his biography of Meletii Smotryts’kyi, such texts as *Tractatus quintus de juramento et adjuratione* by Francisco Suárez, S.J. (1548–1617), were essentially handbooks of prudent dissimulation. The “apostasy” of Ukrainian students, therefore, fit rather well into a broader, early modern European setting, where the authenticity of one’s particular religious affiliation at a particular time was often fluid and circumstantial.

The practice of dissimulative, temporary apostasy generated direct benefits for the Ukrainian Church by swelling the ranks of its Orthodox clergy with well-educated men. In fact, by the end of the seventeenth century, virtually every professor in Kyiv and in Moscow’s Slavic Greek Latin Academy, as well as numerous Orthodox hierarchs in Ukraine, had studied abroad. Among them were the Kyivan metropolitan Varlaam Iasyns’kyi (1627–1707), who spent almost ten years studying in the Jesuit academies of Olomouc (Austrian Moravia) and Cracow,


Poland, as well as his successor to the metropolitan throne, Ioasaf Krokovskyi (d. 1718), who studied philosophy and theology at a "Roman academy [w akademii rzymskiej]." Among the rectors of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Hedeon Odorskyi (d. 1715) studied in Poland and Austria, Prokopii Kalachynskyi (d. 1707) in Poland, as did Lazar Baranovych, mentioned above. Some of the instructors in Kyiv were educated at the Jesuit academy of Ingolstadt in Bavaria. Among the foreign-educated hierarchs who later moved to Russia were the exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, Stefan Iavorskyi (1658–1722), who studied in Lviv, Lublin, Poznań, and Vilnius, Archbishop Teofilakt Lopatynskyi (1670–1741), who studied in Jesuit schools in Lviv and in Austria; hegumen Teofan Leontovych (d. 1700), who studied in Paris and Rome (and was the half-brother of Prokopovych); as well as the future bishop of Smolensk, Hedeon Vyshnevsykyi (1678–1761). The latter studied in Rome in the


1690s, after which he traveled north to complete a doctoral degree at the Jesuit College of St. Barbara in Cracow.

Throughout the seventeenth century this practice of temporary dissimulation enabled Kyiv and its academy to play a unique role in Ukrainian history by fostering lasting educational connections with the West, despite the ongoing political turmoil in the region before and after the Pereiaslav Treaty of 1654. As Stephen Horak noted, even though Kyiv had lost its status as an East Slavic center of political power, it became a cultural power center by fostering its seventeenth-century educational “revival.” This resurgence took place in the midst and in spite of the Muscovite-Polish rivalry that raged across the Dnieper River. Despite the division of the Ukrainian lands, Kyiv Mohyla Academy not only attracted talent from both banks of the Dnieper, but also sent numerous Left-Bank Ukrainians to study farther west: technically into and through the “enemy” territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Prokopovych in Rome

Among those who studied in Rome and in Catholic schools in general, perhaps the most famous Ukrainian was Teofan Prokopovych (figs. 2a and 2b, below). In Russian and Ukrainian historiography, he is best known as a celebrated Kyivan poet and dramatist, the shrewd architect of Peter I’s church reform, and the devoted ideologue of the “Petrine revolution” in the culture and politics of imperial Russia. He was also an astute politician, whose skilled diplomacy helped elevate tsarinas Catherine I and Anna I to the Russian imperial throne. Prokopovych’s


34. For numerous examples of Kyivan graduates seeking an education in Poland-Lithuania and beyond, see the biographical dictionary entries in Briukhovets’kyi and Khyzhniak, Kyievo-Mohylians’ka akademiiia v imenakh.

35. Nichik, Feofan Prokopovich, 6–17, 146–74; Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich, 147–
political fame stems from the positive impression he made on Peter I during the tsar’s visit to Kyiv in 1706, and later in 1709, when Prokopovych delivered his first sermon on the Battle of Poltava. Yet, in many ways his academic renown, resting on his theological writings, a manual of rhetoric, and his tragicomedy Vladymyr (1705), dedicated to Hetman Mazepa, preceded his political fortunes. His contributions to Ukrainian physics, mathematics, and astronomy have also been acknowledged; in 1972 the Ukrainian astronomer Liudmyla Zhuravľova even named an asteroid after him.

Yet, in the documents of the Roman hierarchy, he was best known for his “great scandal [scandalum omnium],” which prompted his escape from the city, subsequent travel to Germany, his rejection of Roman theology, and embrace of a new vision of Orthodox church reform, inspired by Protestantism and the early Enlightenment. As further discussion will demonstrate, this scandal remained firmly ingrained in ecclesiastical memory for decades after Prokopovych’s escape. Even as late as 1948, an Argentinian Ukrainian in Rome, Father Volodymyr Kowalyk, lamented Prokopovych’s abandonment of the learning he had acquired in Rome, arguing that the theologian’s subsequent support of the Petrine reforms in the Russian Empire was comparable to the Russian clergy’s support in the 1940s for Stalin’s consolidation of the neoimperial Orthodox Church in the USSR.

So, how did this young man from Kyiv become the object of scorn in Roman ecclesiastical circles in the eighteenth century and beyond?

Initially, Prokopovych was a student without reproach, who, much


37. Prokopovych’s Kyivan writings on philosophy, physics, mathematics, geometry, and other scientific topics are published in vols. 2 and 3 of Tvory. For information on the asteroid named after Prokopovych, see the NASA summary, https://ssd.jpl.nasa.gov/sbdb.cgi?sstr=6681#content (last accessed: 13 August 2020).

like his Orthodox coreligionists, enthusiastically sought a better education in the Catholic institutions of Central and Southern Europe. The future reformer was born in Kyiv as either Eleazar or Elysei Tsereis’kyi, in 1677 or 1681, into the family of the merchant Tsereis’kyi, who may have been involved in the wax candle trade, a highly profitable business in this holy city of ancient Rus’. Elysei was orphaned at a young age and raised by his maternal uncle, Teofan Prokopovych I (d. 1689), the rector and prefect of Kyiv Mohyla Academy. He would later adopt his mother’s maiden name, Prokopovych, and a monastic first name, Teofan, in honor of his uncle. Eager to pursue an academic career in the church, the young Tsereis’kyi-Prokopovych sought theological learning abroad. At the age of seventeen or eighteen (circa 1696), he moved to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, where he became a Uniate and took courses at the Lviv Jesuit Academy as well as a school in the city of Volodymyr (Volhynia). The Uniate metropolitan of Volhynia, Lev Sliubych-Zalens’kyi spotted Prokopovych’s erudition and within a year or so ordained him as a deacon and issued a recommendation for him to pursue further studies in Rome.40

The archives of the Greek College and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith indicate that the young Uniate “deacon” from

39. The word tserei refers to a wax church candle. His family did not own any land in the countryside and had no family connections to the landholding classes, a rarity among Ukrainian hierarchs of the time. See Nichik, Feofan Prokopovich, 10. Not much is known with certainty about his early life, although some information can be gleaned from his three extant eighteenth-century biographies. One is the above-mentioned official biography, written in 1736 by his colleague in the Academy of Sciences, Theophil Siegfried Bayer. Bayer’s personal relationship with Prokopovych is documented in his letter, “Brief von Theophil Siegfried Bayer an [Benjamin Schultz, Nikolaus Dal, Martin Bosse, Christian Friedrich Pressier, Christoph Theodosius Walther, Andreas Worm], 02.10.1732,” in Film ALMW/DHM 9/19:5, Microfilm Collection, Archiv der Franckeschen Stiftungen zu Halle (hereafter cited as AFSt). Another official biography was written in 1767 by the Göttingen-educated Bishop Damaskin (Semenov-Rudnev), “Vita Auctoris,” in Theophanis Procopowicz Archiepiscopi Novogrodensis Tractatus De Processione Spiritus Sancti (Gotha, 1772). The third is the 1731 polemical biography written by his later accuser, Markel Rodyshevs’kyi; see Markell Radyshhevskii, “O zhiti eti etika Feofana Prokopovicha, arkhipiskopa Novgorodskogo,” in the “Delo o Feofane Prokopovichie” collection printed in Chtenia v Imperatorskom Obshchestve Istori i Drevnosti Rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom Universitete, 1862, bk. 1 (January–March), sec. 2, “Material y otechestvennye,” 1–9.

“Kyiv [Chiovia]” enrolled on 14 November 1698 under the name Samuil Tsereis’kyi (Cereizcki).\textsuperscript{41} Although Tsereis’kyi was his paternal surname, the records of the Congregation contain a line (added after his scandalous departure from Rome) stating, “some say that he studied under a false name in Rome [studuisse Romae falso sub nomine].”\textsuperscript{42} The college’s records covering the years 1680 to 1740 indicate that he was the only student born in Kyiv; other Ukrainians (such as Hedeon Vyshnevs’kyi) had studied at Mohyla Academy prior to coming to Italy, but were not natives of the city.\textsuperscript{43} He did not come alone; two other Ukrainians, Inokentii Pikhovs’kyi and Germanus [sic] Kozachenko, arrived in Rome and enrolled at the same time as he did.\textsuperscript{44} Since the Greek College was largely a residential venue with a very basic curriculum, men like Prokopovych sought out advanced classes in theology and philosophy at various academies in the city, particularly the Collegium Urbanum de Propaganda Fide, just a short walk from Via del Babuino on the southern end of the Piazza di Spagna. The catalogue of the Greek College states that Prokopovych’s fellow sojourners, Pikhovs’kyi and Kozachenko, for example, completed their studies in theology (third and second level, respectively)—courses that were not offered at St. Athanasius.\textsuperscript{45} At the same time, the Registro dei nomi of the Collegium Urbanum listed Tsereis’kyi and Kozachenko among its students.\textsuperscript{46}

According to the records of the Greek College, Tsereis’kyi was a successful student. He demonstrated “superior progress and superior talents [ingenii optime optimeque progressus]” in his studies, and he also “publicly defended his thesis after the conclusion of a full course in philosophy with distinction [defendit publice totam philosophia cum laude].”\textsuperscript{47} The topic of his philosophical treatise at the Collegium Urbanum is not known. However, it should be kept in mind that the study of philosophy in the seventeenth century also included early modern physics, astronomy, and mathematics—all subjects that interested Prokopovych a great deal when he was in Russia.\textsuperscript{48} In addition to the Collegium Urbanum, he also likely took classes at the Jesuit-run

\begin{itemize}
  \item 41. \textit{Catalogus Alumnorum}, 14:45.
  \item 42. \textit{Acta SCPF}, 2:285n.
  \item 43. \textit{Catalogus Alumnorum}, 14:45; survey of records based on fols. 3–47.
  \item 44. Ibid, 14:44. The names are recorded as Innocentius Piechowski and Germanus Kozaczenko. They stayed until 1702, whereas Prokopovych left in 1701.
  \item 45. Ibid.
  \item 46. \textit{Acta SCPF}, 2:147.
  \item 47. \textit{Catalogus Alumnorum}, 14:45.
  \item 48. Ukrainian translations of his writings on philosophy, physics, mathematics, geometry, and other scientific subjects are printed in vols. 2 and 3 of \textit{Tvory}.
\end{itemize}
Collegium Romanum, known today as the city’s preeminent Catholic University, Pontificia Universita Gregoriana. Both Bayer’s source in the “Vita” and the 1735 record of Prokopovsky’s conversations with Pietists in St. Petersburg (such as Pastor Tobias Plasching) state that he took courses at this college. Collegium Romanum was the educational institution where the natural philosopher Giovanni Battista Tolomei (1653–1726) had taught and written his 1698 bestseller, *Philosophia mentis et Sensuum*, the first work that fully explained Galileo’s views to the Roman public; even as an orthodox Jesuit, Tolomei condemned them.

**Prokopovsky’s Doubts**

Although quite impressed by the educational offerings and libraries of the Eternal City, the young Ukrainian grew disappointed with the papacy. Hearing Innocent XII (d. 1700) denounce the Eastern “schismatics” left him “struck as if by a heavy bolt of lightning [brutus fulmen],” a metaphor used by Prokopovsky’s German biographer, Bayer, which resembled Martin Luther’s own lightning-strike experience. This condemnation of his fellow “non-Uniate Ruthenians” did not sit well with someone who had spent most of his adolescent life as an Orthodox believer and whose ties to the Union were fairly fresh and likely motivated by the desire to obtain an education, not to condemn the non-Catholic “infidels.”

His studies in Rome also exposed Prokopovsky to the more sinister aspects of events in the Church’s hierarchy. According to Bayer’s biography, Prokopovsky “investigated [investigavit] the ecclesiastic, civic, and military forms of the Pontifical regime” and was distressed when he “discovered the shadowy arts of the Tiberian muses” during the troubled Conclave of 1700, when the Holy See remained vacant from 27 September to 23 November. This was the beginning of the

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52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., 252.

54. Ibid., 254.
continent-wide War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) between the Bourbons and the Habsburgs. The previous pope (Innocent XII [Pignatelli]) was on the side of Louis XIV, but the pro-Austrian faction in Rome was very powerful, and Prince Eugene of Savoy was standing by, ready to cross the Alps to take Milan. The Conclave was bitterly divided but eventually agreed on the most neutral candidate, one who had strong familial ties to influential Roman clans: Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Albani (Clement XI).55

The two months of uncertainty during the Conclave of 1700 likely made an impression on Prokopovych, who, according to Bayer, was dismayed at the high level of intrigue and low level of spirituality in the Eternal City. “Nowhere do people doubt the truth of the Christian religion more than in Italy,” he used to say.56 In letters to his pupil Iakiv Markovych, a well-educated member of the starshyna, he expressed his low esteem for the papacy, confessing that he did not know “whether there are people more foolish than the pope.”57

Books and learning, which were plentiful in Rome, only amplified Prokopovych’s doubts. During his studies in the “Roman Jesuit seminary” (either Collegium Romanum or Collegium Urbanum de Propaganda Fide), he befriended an elderly Jesuit priest, who cared for the young Ukrainian with “fatherly love” and allowed him access to several “secret [arcana] libraries” in the city.58 In those libraries he discovered “unedited [non castratos]” volumes of classical and patristic authors, Renaissance literature (including works by Jacopo Sadoleto), as well as Protestant authors and books by condemned heretics like Aonio Paleario (1500–1570).59 Prokopovych took to reading this literature very seriously, “studying these books day and night…often abstaining from meals [saepe a cibo abstinens]; he pressed all the sap and juice from them.”60 According to a memoir written by his acquaintance, the pastor Albert Anton Vierorth of Reval (Tallinn), the book that made the deepest impression on his young mind was Martin Luther’s The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, found in “the library of the [Roman]

57. [Teofan Prokopovych], “Pis’mo k tomu zhe Iakovu Markevichu [from end of 1716],” in “Pisma Feofana Prokopovicha,” TKDA, 1865, no. 1 (January): 147.
mission-college.” After reading this treatise, Vierorth writes, “[Prokopovych’s] former anxiety [Unruhe] increased and he found himself forced to flee the place.”

**Escape from Rome: The “Great Scandal”**

Disillusioned with Rome, the young man fled the Greek College on 28 October 1701 “without a single cause and with a great scandal,” as the records attest. His departure must have caused a shock, because this line in his record contrasts sharply with the previous line’s accolades of his “superior talents.” A later entry in the records indicates an attempt to trace the whereabouts of the former student, as well as to provide an explanation for Prokopovych’s unusual move: He “returned to his homeland, Kyiv, and fell into dementia [in dementiam abiisse].”

The exact nature of this “dementia” was not altogether clear, but subsequent records in Rome talk about doctrinal deviation. The 1710 report on the status of the Uniate Church submitted to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith mentions a Samuil Tsereis’kyi, “a former Basilian monk and an alumnus of our Greek College,” who had become an “apostate.” Much later, in 1728, the Congregation discussed a certain “Teofan Prokopowicz…a schismatic and an alumnus of this city’s Greek College,” who was introducing “the heresies of Luther and

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63. His departure seems to have shocked the rector given the fact that an earlier entry in the Catalogus Alumnorum states that Prokopovych “ingenii optimi optimique progressus, defendit publice totam philosophiam cum laude.” Ibid.

64. Ibid.

Calvin” in Ukraine (Ukraine). The congregation seems to have been quite dismayed that a student of such an illustrious institution would embrace such heresies. The causes of Prokopovych’s “dementia” and apostasy were discussed at the Roman court as late as 1736, the year of the reformer’s death. In his letter to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Archbishop of Vienna Sigismund von Kollonitz argued that Prokopovych was perhaps not a very busy student, noting that the “drying up of the mind” and “retiring into idleness” caused the alumnus to fall into heresy. Needless to say, the memory of the “scandal” caused by Prokopovych’s abrupt departure in 1701 was alive in the Roman Curia for decades.

Return to Ukraine: The German Stopover

Prokopovych’s exact route back to Ukraine is not fully known. Bayer notes that he embarked on a difficult and perilous journey through Switzerland, via the St. Gotthard Pass (fig. 3, below), as opposed to the usual Brenner-Innsbruck pass that Ukrainians usually took on their way home. He did this to avoid the hostilities raging throughout central Europe during the War of the Spanish Succession. Although Bayer offers no further details on the exact itinerary of his subsequent journey, crossing that pass would have put him into German-speaking Protestant territory before his eventual arrival in Ukraine in 1701.

Prokopovych spoke repeatedly of his stopover in the German Protestant lands en route to Kyiv. In a conversation with Christian Haumann (1692–1734), a Halle Pietist and the headmaster of the Lutheran school in Moscow, he recounted that he traveled directly to Germany by crossing the Italian Alps. His travels in Germany and study of German

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66. “Schisma de Greci e dale eresie di Lutero, e di Calvino, principia in oggi a respirare sotto la condotta di Teofane Prokopowicz...Scismatico, gia Alunno del Collegio Greco di questa Città,” in Acta SCPF, 3:241. The report was presented by Petro Koss, a “noble Ruthenian from Ukraine,” to the General Congregation on 12 January 1728.
67. Ibid.
68. In 1736 the Archbishop of Vienna, Sigismund von Kollonitz, remarked in a letter to the Congregation in Rome that the “drying up of the mind” and “retiring into idleness” might cause Ukrainian students in Rome to leave the Catholic faith (Acta SCPF, 3:283–84).
Figure 3. St. Gotthard Pass area, today's Swiss Ticino Canton. Northwest direction. This was the most likely pass Prokopovych took to leave Italy at the end of 1701, as the Innsbruck route was closed. Photo: Andrey Ivanov.
theological works were also mentioned by Gottfried Himler (d. 1737), rector of the cathedral school in Reval, who met with Prokopovych in 1724 in St. Petersburg.  

The most detailed descriptions of Prokopovych’s route through Germany was the account of Josias Cederhjelm, Swedish ambassador to Russia, who was well connected to the Pietist circle in Halle (where Prokopovych also had contacts) and had met with him in 1727. The archbishop told him that he had suffered a disappointment in Rome and that from a young age he was “not satisfied in his conscience regarding the faith of the Greek teachers of the church.” He traveled through Germany on his return trip home, where “the writings of [Balthasar] Meisner [1587–1626] first opened his eyes.” The young student continued reading other Wittenberg theologians, including Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) and Nicolaus Hunnius (1585–1643), as well as the Strasbourg scholars Johann Danhauer (1603–1666) and Johann Schmid (d. 1671). From their books, “he took many of their theses [for his own writings] even if he did not name the authors.”

Prokopovych’s connection to Germany can also be gleaned from his prolific correspondence with German scholars, especially with his “dearest brothers [fratres carissimi]” of the Pietist circle in Halle. This city in Saxony was a focal point of the early Enlightenment in

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71. Gottfried Himler, “Brief von Gottfried Himler an Gotthilf August Francke. 19.04.1727,” AFSt Film Stab/F 29/31.1. For more on Himler, see Hieronymus Freyer, Programmata latino-germanica cum additamento miscellaneorum vario (Halle, 1737), 707; Johann Christoph von Dreyhaupt, Pagus Neletici et Nudzici, oder Ausführliche diplomatisch-historische Beschreibung des... Saal-Creyses..., Bd. 2 (Halle, 1755), 173.

72. The archives of the Franckesche Stiftungen in Halle contain many items of Cederhjelm’s correspondence with the Pietist center, such as AFSt Film Stab/F 29/46:6 (“Brief von Josias Cederhielm an August Hermann Francke. 07.04.1725”); AFSt Film Stab/F 29/46:6 (“Brief von Josias Cederhielm an August Hermann Francke 05.05.1725”). A discussion of the Pietist ministers’ meetings with Cederhjelm is in AFSt/H A 179:38b (“Bericht von August Hermann Francke über Gespräche während einer Einladung bei Kronprinz Friedrich in Preußen. 30.03.1725”).


74. These authors were strictly orthodox Lutheran. Ibid., 300.

Europe as well as a geographical corner of the Pietist and Enlightenment “Halle-Leipzig-Jena Triangle.” Among the Pietist scholars who regularly corresponded with Prokopovych were Johann F. Buddeus, Daniel Ernst Jablonski, August Hermann Francke, Johann P. Kohl, and Georg Bilfinger. He also demonstrated some familiarity with Germany in his 1717 St. Petersburg sermon that praised the country as “the first queen of Europe...banner of other kingdoms, mother of all countries [pervaiia tsaritsa est´ Evropy...tsarstv vsekh znamia, stran vsekh mater’].” “Whoever visits Germany,” he wrote, “discovers an orderly organization of public government [chinnoe obshchenarodnogo pravitel’stva ustroenie], a benevolence of customs, a pleasantness of mind and conversation.”

The very fact that Prokopovych visited and even studied in Protestant Germany was not unique in early modern Ukraine. A number of scions of Cossack officers (starshyna) studied in places such as Königsberg and Wittenberg in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Meletii Smotryts’kyi, for example, studied in Leipzig and Wittenberg between 1601 and 1610, imbibing Protestant knowledge “at the grave of Luther” (as he himself described the experience) and becoming a “disciple” of the philo-Calvinist Greek theologian and future controversial patriarch of Constantinople, Cyril Loukaris.


80. Frick, Meletij Smotryc’kyj, 32–33.
What makes Prokopovych’s sojourn in the Lutheran lands so exceptional is the silence on this topic in the records of his official biographers. Both Bayer’s work and the 1768 Gotha biography written by the Göttingen-educated Russian bishop Damaskin do not mention any stopover in Germany. One possible explanation is that Bayer wanted to ignore Prokopovych’s sojourn in Germany to free him from the taint of foreign influence, so as to emphasize the originality of his church reform and ideas. For example, it was common for Luther’s official biographers to exclude the German reformer’s previous contacts with the Hussites for this very reason, whereas Luther’s opponents made it a point to mention it. Another possibility is that the duration of Prokopovych’s visit was brief and that he developed his subsequently extensive intellectual contacts mostly through correspondence.

The Ukrainian Luther: Prokopovych’s “Revolution” in Kyiv and Beyond

Regardless of what happened in Germany, the young monk Samuil/Elysei Tsereisc’kyi arrived in Ukraine a new man. He quickly professed a commitment to Orthodoxy, taking up the new monastic name of Teofan Prokopovych II. Like other foreign-educated Ukrainian monks, he started teaching at Kyiv Mohyla Academy and rose through the ranks quickly. In 1705 he began teaching poetics, attaining, by 1707, the status of prefect and instructor of philosophy, and by 1708, the privilege of teaching theology, as stated in his handwritten manuscript of the course. In 1711 he became the rector of the academy.
Several factors contributed to Prokopovych’s rapid rise through the academic ranks. One was the circumstance that he joined the staff during a shortage of educators, when virtually all of the most valued faculty members (for example, Iavors’kyi and Lopatyns’kyi) had moved to Moscow. Another factor was his ability to cultivate positive relations with the most influential people in Kyiv, such as the aggressively anti-Jesuit metropolitan Varlaam Iasyns’kyi (d. 1707), who wrote anti-Catholic polemical works and corresponded with the Gdańsk-based Polish Protestant jurist and advocate Johann Ernst von der Linde (1651–1721). Among other important figures in Kyiv, Prokopovych enjoyed cordial relations with St. Sophia’s archdeacon Ioanykii Seniutovych, and the military governor Dmitrii Golitsyn.

A third and very important factor was the novelty of his teaching.

84. Starting in the 1690s, the tsar sought to revitalize Moscow’s Slavic Greek Latin Academy by plundering Kyiv of its best teachers. See Konstantin V. Kharlampovich, *Malorossiiskoe vliianie na velikorusskuiu tserkovnuiu zhizn’* (Kazan: Izdatel´stvo Knizhnago magazina M. A. Golubeva, 1914), 405–15.

85. Iasyns’kyi, e.g., expelled both Jesuits and Uniates from Kyiv. See Askochenskii, *Kiev*, 2:6. On Varlaam’s promotion of Prokopovych, see Evgenii Bolkhovitinov, *Slovar´ istoricheskii o byvshikh v Rossii pisateliakh dukhovnogo china greko-rossiiskoi tserkvi* (Moscow: Russkii dvor, 1995 [reprint]), 325. Prokopovych also enjoyed good relations with the next metropolitan, Ioasaf Krokovs´kyi (Askochenskii, *Kiev*, 2:10–19). Good relations between the rector and the metropolitan were not common, because the academy often took the side of the city burghers in their numerous disputes with the ecclesiastical authorities and property owners, as was the case during most of the 1720s. See E. Kryzhanovskii, “Feofan Prokopovich i Varlaam Vanatovich,” *TKDA*, 1861, no. 3 (March): 282–91.


87. Seniutovych held a lot of power in the city; during Varlaam’s absences and old age, he was the de facto metropolitan of Kyiv. He was also a friend of Tsarevich Aleksei. See Kryzhanovskii, “Feofan Prokopovich i Varlaam Vanatovich,” 282–91; Chistovich, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 21; Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671–1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 339. In 1717 Prokopovych wrote to Seniutovych from St. Petersburg, recalling his patronage warmly: “After God, I owe no one as much as I owe you. But I will never be able to express my gratitude enough. Not only did you refuse to desert me, hated and abandoned by all, but you also shielded me with your own self, protecting and supporting me” (Prokopovych, *Tvory*, 3:277).

88. Golitsyn was very influential in the affairs of the Cossack Hetmanate and had the power to approve or reject nominations for various chancellery posts in the Ukrainian Hetmanate government. Prokopovych enjoyed good relations with Golitsyn, who liked using his friend’s library. See Chistovich, *Feofan Prokopovich*, 21. See also T. G. Tairova-Iakovleva, *Ivan Mazepa i Rossiiskaia imperiia: Istoriia “predatel’ stva”* (St. Petersburg: Russkaia Troika, 2011). Prokopovych also maintained good relations with the members of Kyiv’s German Lutheran community, such as General von Eberstadt and the physician Reinhardt. It is likely that the Kyivan Lutherans kept in regular contact with German communities in Moscow and St. Petersburg, whose members frequently
When he taught philosophy, Prokopovych criticized the hitherto prevalent curriculum based on the works of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Albertus Magnus. He also rejected the geocentric physics part of the philosophy course by advocating the heliocentric views of Galileo, Copernicus, and Tycho Brahe.89 One of Prokopovych’s satirical poems blends his rejection of geocentrism with a virulent critique of the papacy:

Why do you shamelessly slander Galileo’s name, oh Pope?
His earth is real, while yours is false from the start,
God created his stars, your stars are made by the devil!90

In theology, his embrace of Protestant learning was also very pronounced. Just as he rejected the Jesuit and Thomist views of the universe, Prokopovych also overhauled Kyiv’s theology curriculum by rejecting Thomist scholasticism and replacing it with chapters from Lutheran and Reform authors, such as Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617–1688), Amandus Polanus (d. 1610), and Marcus Friedrich Wendelin (d. 1652), among others.91 His chapter on the interpretation of the Scriptures was borrowed wholesale from the work of the preeminent Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard, specifically his Tractatus de legitima Scripturae Sacrae interpretatione.92

89. A detailed description of Prokopovych’s philosophy course manuscripts is in Ia. M. Stratii, V. D. Litvinov, and V. A. Andrushko, Opisanie kursov filosofii i retoriki professorov Kiev-Mogilianskoj Akademii (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1982), 208–22.
91. P. Cherviakovskii, “Vvedenie v bogoslovie Feofana Prokopovicha,” Khristiansko chtenie, 1876, no. 1–2, 52; Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich, 14; Hans Koch, Die russische Orthodoxie im Petrinischen Zeitalter: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte westlicher Einflüsse auf das ostslavische Denken (Breslau: Priebatsch’s Buchhandlung, 1929). When choosing the authors for his Kyiv Mohyla Academy course, it is likely that Prokopovych followed some dictates of current fashion. Amandus Polanus, e.g., was also in vogue among the theologians who taught at Yale College in the early eighteenth century. See the title notations by Rev. Samuel Whittelsey of the Wallingford, Connecticut, colony and Rev. Chauncey Whittlesey of the New Haven colony (tutor at Yale College) on the Beinecke Rare Book Library’s (Yale University) copy of Polanus’s Syntagma theologiae christianae (Geneva: Iacobi Stoër, 1617; Beinecke call number: Me35 P356 +Sy5).
92. Prokopovych’s chapter, “De Sacra Scripturae legitima interpretatione,” is in his
Although Prokopovych’s official biographer, T. S. Bayer, praised his teaching as a “new, clear, and comprehensible method through which he awakened an entire new generation to charity and humanism,”93 some of Ukraine’s theologians at the time were very concerned. In 1710 Teofilakt Lopatynskyi and Metropolitan Stefan Iavors’kyi, exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate (both of whom were in Moscow at the time) complained about the decline in quality of Kyivan schools, while Metropolitan Iov of Novgorod observed in 1711 that schools were no longer “fully Orthodox and humble.”94 Markel Rodyshevskyi ’kyi, who witnessed the transformation of the Kyivan curriculum and later allied himself with Iavors’kyi’s philo-Catholic theological party of bishops in Moscow, accused Prokopovych of spreading heterodoxy. According to Rodyshevskyi ’kyi,

*Prokopovych* began to teach his heresy back in Kyiv, not only orally but also in written form in accordance with the Calvinist, Lutheran, and other heresies. Today, many of his disciples and others have his heretical books in Kyiv and many people are captivated by his heretical teachings.95

Prokopovych’s bold reformist worldview, along with his passionate rejection of the Catholic theological curriculum, was not confined to Kyiv, but set in motion the reform of Ukrainian and Russian Orthodoxy during the reign of Peter I, whose vision of molding the new empire into a “well-ordered police state”96 also included a desire to reorganize the clerical estate in accordance with Western European models. The resulting religious change and the emergence of the new Synodal Imperial Orthodox Church were profound and even controversial in church circles for the remaining two centuries of the Romanov dynasty, so much so that Anton Kartashev, Ober-Procurator of the Most Holy theological compendium, Feofan Prokopovich, *Christianae Orthodoxae Theologiae*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1792), 195–245. For a detailed comparison of this chapter and Johann Gerhard, *Tractatus de legitima Scripturae Sacrae interpretatione* (Jena: Tobiae Steinmanni, 1610), see Andrey Ivanov, “Reforming Orthodoxy: Russian Bishops and Their Church, 1721–1801” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2012), appendix 2.

93. Bayer, “Vita,” 255; Damaskin (Semenov-Rudnev) noted similarly that his teachings “brought forth light among the Russians” (*studiorum genere apud Russos exoriretur lux*) and that his “listeners avidly inhaled [his teachings] into their pipes” (*auditors sui avidissime calamo exceperunt*). See Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich, 17.


Governing Synod of the Orthodox Church in Russia and Minister of Religion in the Russian Provisional Government, once referred to this reform as a “coup de l’église [sic].”

One person’s coup is often another’s revolution. Just like Kartashev in 1917, Prokopovych’s contemporaries in the eighteenth century used equally forceful—but more accurate—terms to describe the storm that Prokopovych unleashed on the world of Orthodox theology. In 1736 the Danish observer in Russia Peder von Haven referred to the church reforms as “der Reformation der Geistliche.” In 1731 Professor Christian Martini also used the framework of the European Reformation to proclaim the new Orthodoxy created by Prokopovych and Peter I as “Russisch-Lutheranisirende Kirche,” which stemmed from the “changing [sich geändert]” of the “state of the church [Kirchen-Staat]” and the “improvement of learning [Verbesserung der Lehren].” Martini’s conclusions echoed the observations made earlier by Johann Peter Kohl in 1723, when the church historian published a book entitled Ecclesia Graeca Lutheranizans. There was no affront to Prokopovych in the term “lutheranization”; quite the opposite, as the reformist Holy Synod played a crucial role in inviting Kohl to the Academy of Sciences two years later, granting him an apartment and a 600-ruble salary. Even before the church reform of 1721, the Königsberg Pietist minister Christoph Friedrich Mickwitz (1696–1748) already sensed that the developments taking place in the Orthodox Church amounted to nothing but a spiritual “revolution.” Another influential Pietist, Prokopovych’s cordial friend and Estonian pastor Albert Anton Vierorth, who visited St. Petersburg in the 1720s, went so far as to compare him to Luther. “But as Martin Luther, through God’s help, was able to overcome his obstacles,” he wrote, “so he [Prokopovych] hoped that, little by little, the Lord’s favor would one day strike [Herrn Stunde schlagen werde] the Eastern Church.”

102. Vierorth, ”Lebenslauf,” 118.
Prokopovych’s opening to the Protestant West charted new directions not only in the study of theology, but also in seminarian education abroad. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church began its own educational escape from Rome: a disengagement from the hitherto widely tolerated practice of seeking further learning in the Catholic West. During the first decades of the eighteenth century there were notably fewer and fewer East Slavic students going to Rome. The records of the Greek College show a decline in the number of students hailing from traditionally Orthodox palatinates or dioceses well until the end of the century (when the college was closed temporarily). But the most significant change was seen in the education acquired by the clerical hierarchy (bishops, hegumens, seminary rectors, protopriests, etc.) after the start of the church reforms in 1721. Very few clerics of the (post-1721) reform period sought additional learning in Catholic schools, with seminaries in Ukraine and Russia as well as Protestant universities taking over the task of educating young Orthodox men.

There were essentially two reasons behind this change. First of all, the new church hierarchy of St. Petersburg’s Holy Synod (headed by Prokopovych from 1721 to 1727 and again from 1730 to 1736), encouraged the best and brightest minds from Kyiv Mohyla Academy to engage in further studies at Protestant universities rather than in Italy or Poland. Secondly, the Roman Curia had begun to question the value of educating Orthodox temporary apostates at Catholic colleges, arguing that such a practice did not always benefit the Roman Catholic Church. Both reasons are explained in detail below.

Although Prokopovych was a beneficiary of the fine Jesuit education that he received in Rome and Volhynia, he never spoke warmly of their curricula and criticized those Ukrainians who were proud of the

103. *Catalogus Alumnorum*, 14:10–20, shows a larger number of students from dioceses with a significant Orthodox population for the period of 1630–1700, including Kyiv, Podolia, Minsk, and Polotsk, while the period from 1731 to 1791 shows only students from Podolia (seven), one from Kam’ianets-Podilskyi, and one from Kyiv.

104. Khyzhniak and Nichyk show that most Ukrainian students who sought an education in Germany did so in the last two-thirds of the eighteenth century. See Nichyk and Khyzhniak, “Kyievo-Mohylians’ka akademiia,” 12–24; Nichyk, *Kyievo-Mohylians’ka akademiia i nimets’ka kul’tura*. The entries in the dictionary compiled by Metropolitan Evgenii Bolkhovitinov show a steep decline in the number of Ukrainian seminarians seeking an education in Polish or other Catholic schools in the eighteenth century (Bolkhovitinov, *Slovar’ istoricheskii*, 71, 121, 158, 184, 222, 258, 285, 290–91).
learning they had acquired there. For example, he ridiculed the doctoral degree and honorary beret of Hedeon Vyshnevs’kyi (1678–1761; bishop of Smolensk) earned at the Jesuit College of St. Barbara in Cracow, calling it “an ass’s ornament.”105 During the peak period of the struggle for church reforms in 1726–1728, he criticized his opponents at the court and the Synod as “Latinists [latynshchiki]” who were “drunk with the Jesuit schools’ papist spirit.”106 In his 1730 letter to the bishop of Chernihiv, he urged the hierarch to shun the “wretched scholars [panove shkoliariki] who respect and consider infallible anything that they hear from papist gossip [papezhskikh pogovorok]—madmen and dupes [sumazbrody, i neuki].”107 These people, he wrote later, “know theology as much as the nomads [Kalmyki] know architecture.”108

Whereas the Jesuit schools in Europe polluted Ukrainian minds with “gossip” and wretched scholarship, Germany offered “valor, science, and sharpness of mind [khrabrost’, nauku i ostroumie].”109 Prokopovych and his reformist colleagues introduced the practice of promoting some of the cleverest Ukrainians to pursue studies in Protestant German universities, which did not require Orthodox students to profess temporary apostasy as a condition of enrollment. Thus, between 1727 and 1729 Prokopovych prepared an erudite student from Kyiv Mohyla Academy, Symon Todors’kyi (1700–1754), for further studies in Europe by sending him to take German classes at the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg.110 After learning German, Todors’kyi went to Halle and

105. Chistovich, Feofan Prokopovich, 33; Prokopovych, Tvory, 3:197. Prokopovych’s letter of June 1718 to the professors of Kyiv was printed in Latin in Epistola illustrissimi ac reverendissimi Theophanis Prokopowicz ad professores academiae Kiovensis anno domini 1718 Augiusti 5 die Narva missa (S.I., 1767) and in Russian in [Prokopovych], “Pis’ ma Feofana Prokopovicha,” TKDA, 1865, no. 1 (January): 152. Hedeon claimed that he was “expelled” from the academy (ibid., 152–53).

106. “Delo o Feofane Prokopovichiche,” 24, 69. (See note 39 above.)

107. [Prokopovych], “Pis’mo k arkhierieiu chernigovskomu Irodionu Zhurakovskomu iz Moskvy ot 14 fevralia 1730 goda,” in “Pis’ ma Feofana Prokopovicha,” TKDA, 1865, no. 2 (February): 310. He also called them “pseudo-scholars who dipped their lips in Latin” (ibid., 309). In his letter of 14 March 1728 to abbot Irodion Zhurakovs’kyi, he referred to his opponents as “some theologians who opinionate from their Jesuit cheat-sheets [shpargal iezuitskikh]” ([Prokopovych], “Pis’ ma Feofana Prokopovicha,” TKDA, 1865, no. 8 [August]: 545).


the University of Jena, returning to Kyiv in 1738. In 1742 he accepted an imperial court position in St. Petersburg, where, as bishop of Pskov, he became the third-highest-ranking bishop in the synodal hierarchy. Todors’kyi is better known in Ukrainian and Russian history as the religious instructor of the future empress Catherine II, whom he taught the Ukrainian language and personally guided during her conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy. After her conversion by the Halle-educated bishop, Catherine noted that she saw “almost no difference between Lutheranism and Orthodoxy,” while Catherine’s mother (Johanna Elisabeth, Duchess of Anhalt-Zerbst) emphasized in her diary that Todors’kyi “showed a preference for the Lutheran confession [préférablement appliqué à la luthérienne].”

Although Todors’kyi was among the first high-profile Kyivan alumni to pursue an education in Protestant Germany, Prokopovych’s appointee and synodal colleague, the archbishop of Kyiv Rafail Zaborovs’kyi, continued the trend by sending more students. The archbishop, who was a well-known patron of Kyiv Mohyla Academy, financially sponsored the education of two more academy alumni in Halle shortly after Symon’s return: Varlaam Liashchevs’kyi (1702–1774) and Davyd Nashchyns’kyi (1721–1793); the latter also attended the University of Königsberg.

This educational turn away from Roman Catholic institutions toward Protestant ones was hardly limited to the most elite or most erudite alumni of Kyiv Mohyla Academy. After 1730 the spectrum of students

112. Todors’kyi refused to speak or preach in Russian at the court, and Catherine II recited her declaration of conversion in Ukrainian. Todors’kyi had taught her in German, and Catherine “memorized the Russian text like a parrot,” without realizing that the “Russian language” the bishop had taught her was Ukrainian. See Catherine II, *Zapiski imperatritsy Ekateriny Vtoroi* (St. Petersburg, 1907), 48–49. She had to learn Russian later from Senator Adadurov.
heading for early Enlightenment Germany broadened. In 1733 Vasyl´ Shcherbats´kyi, the Russian Embassy priest stationed in Potsdam, took classes in Halle and joined the circle headed by the Pietist professor Heinrich Milde. A number of Kyivan alumni studied in Kiel in the 1740s and 1750s; the city was likely stimulated by the dynastic union of Holstein with the House of Romanov. Among the students were hieromonk Iov Charnuts´kyi (future priest of the St. Trinity Monastery cathedral), Vasyl´ Khanenko, Stefan Mashkovych, Mykyta Maiboroda, Hryhorii Tymchenko, Ivan Advenin, and “hieromonk Venedikt,” who later served in the bishopric of Novgorod.

In addition to Kiel and Halle, the city of Breslau also attracted a number of Ukrainian students in the 1740s and 1750s, owing to the special relationship between the city’s book merchants and Kyiv Mohyla Academy. The former supplied theology textbooks, and printed Latin volumes of the works of Prokopovych for the latter. Königberg and Leipzig were other important destinations for Kyivan alumni, where students from ecclesiastical and Cossack elite ranks pursued their studies. Among the less frequented destinations were Lutheran gymnasia, such as the one in Pressburg (where Bishop Irynei Fal´kovs´kyi had studied) and Gdańsk/Danzig (where Kharkiv alumnus Pavlo Mariams´kyi took classes).

While studying abroad, students soaked up the social pleasures of Germany, not just theological learning. Thus, Advenin “spent [taskaias´] days and nights in coffee houses and other dangerous places” in Kiel, while Khanenko “practiced [uprazhnialsia] card playing and bowling.” Archimandrite Modest of Ukraine’s Nizhyn Monastery ran off with a married woman while he was studying in Breslau, and it took the Synod five years to track him down. As they abandoned Rome for new sources of learning in Protestant Europe, Ukrainian and Russian seminarians increasingly experienced this part of Europe in their own special ways.

117. Ibid., 56–57, 61.
118. Ibid., 61–62.
120. Dziuba, “Ukraïntsii,” 58; Bolkhovitinov, Slovar´ istoricheskii, 121. On the Pressburg gymnasium, see János György Bauhofer, History of the Protestant Church in Hungary: From the Beginning of the Reformation to 1850; With Special Reference to Transylvania, trans. J. Craig (New York, 1854), 198–99.
122. Ibid., 61.
Just as the reformers in the Holy Synod steered some Ukrainian seminarians toward Protestant Germany, Catholic academies abroad began closing their doors to Orthodox temporary apostates, believing that Prokopovych’s example might encourage more such scandals in the future. This fear was particularly evident in Jesuit and diocesan academic correspondence in at least three cases of expulsion or disciplining of students in Lviv and Vilnius between 1728 and 1730.

In Lviv, the school authorities decided to stop admitting all students from Orthodox backgrounds, “especially those from Kyiv [naipache zhe Kievskikh].” The academy then issued an expulsion [eksliuziia] to two such students, Veniamin Hryhorovych-Bars’kyi and Ivan Levyts’kyi, after learning that they had managed somehow to enroll.123 In the Vilnius case, the rector expelled the (formerly Orthodox) student Petro Koss sometime around 1728, despite the fact that he had graduated from Lublin’s Jesuit Collegium.124 A report sent by Ladislaus Dauksza, rector of the Vilnius Academy, to the Papal Nuncio in Warsaw in 1728 stated that admitting Ukrainian students (such as Koss) could be perilous, as they might emulate Prokopovych, who had “perverted the knowledge acquired in Rome that he carried to Kyiv to become a Muscovite archbishop and schismatic.”125 In the same report, the despondent Dauksza correctly assessed the current state of affairs in Ukraine as a major reform under the influence of Protestant Reformation, not as some minor religious change. “During the lifetime of the previous tsar,” the rector stated, “he [Prokopovych] commissioned a type of reformation of the Greek religion that smells [redolens] more like a Calvinist reform than the schismatic [Orthodox] religion.”126 Given the disheartening situation in Kyiv, there was an increasing danger that admitted Orthodox students would follow more in the footsteps of Prokopovych than those of his predecessors.

Petro Koss’s troubles did not end in Lithuania. The Ukrainian student eventually repented and obtained permission to continue his education in Rome, after which he moved to Lviv, where he received his “holy

124. Koss, who was from the “Muscovite part of Ukraine,” completed his studies at the Jesuit St. Annunciation School of Lublin in 1725. Sometime before 1728 he was expelled from the Vilnius Academy. See Acta SCPF, 3:241, letter no. 1065.
126. “[Q]uod adhuc adhuc vivente praeterito czaro, sit typis mandata reformatio religionis Graecae, plus de Calvino, quam schysmata redolens.” Ibid.
orders” (Uniate Basilian tonsure) and engaged in polemics with the Orthodox Confraternity in the city.\textsuperscript{127} Despite this level of devotion to the cause of the Union, he was not free of suspicion. In 1735 he traveled to Moldavia, where his superiors lost touch with him, prompting the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome and the archbishop of Vienna to worry that he might have reverted to Orthodoxy or, worse, become an anti-Uniate propagandist in Moldavia. The Congregation’s conclusion, in fact, presumed that Koss likely followed in the footsteps of bishops Hedeon Vyshnevs’kyi and Prokopovych, who “vomited and cursed against the religion and the Holy See.”\textsuperscript{128} There was still anxiety surrounding this preacher in 1736, when the archbishop of Vienna (in reporting on Transylvanian affairs) warned that formerly Orthodox monks (like Koss) were “in danger of abandoning the Catholic religion, as motivated by the miserable example of the two Pseudo-Prelates of Novgorod and Smolensk, both alumni of the College of St. Athanasius in Rome” (in qualche pericolo di abbandonare la religione cattolica, come si e motivato aver fatto miseramente i due presenti Pseudo Prelati di Novograd e di Smolensco, benche stati Alunni del Collegio di S. Atanasio di Roma).\textsuperscript{129}

\textbf{Conclusion}

The fact that a minor cleric like Petro Koss from Europe’s eastern periphery generated this much anxiety in the Roman hierarchy demonstrates that the Catholic Church seriously reconsidered its commitment to educating the Orthodox “temporary apostates.” The Catholic rejection of Orthodox students paralleled Prokopovych and his fellow reformers’ conscious reorientation of Ukrainian Orthodoxy toward the Protestant West, educationally, theologically, and intellectually. While these two processes—the Catholic rejection of Orthodox students and Orthodoxy’s rejection of Catholic learning—occurred simultaneously throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the single catalytic event that stands out among the various causes of this religious change was Prokopovych’s sojourn in Rome and the ensuing “great scandal.”

\textsuperscript{129}. “E.mo De Kollonitz” (His Eminence Sigismund von Kollonitz, Archbishop of Vienna) to the Congregatio Generali, 28 February 1736, in \textit{Acta SCPF}, 3:284.
Unlike Luther’s subsequent repudiation of Roman Catholic theology, Prokopovych’s case did not lead to the dramatic violent confrontation that engulfed Reformation Europe. The consequences were far more subtle and paved the way not only for the Orthodox clergy’s century-long exit from the sphere of Catholic theological influence, but also the eastern and central Ukrainian clergy’s increasing rift with their Eastern Catholic–rite compatriots. Thus, this escape from Rome only exacerbated the Uniate-Orthodox divide within Ukraine’s intellectual community, which, as far as education was concerned, had seemed rather superficial up to this point. The level of productive scholarly exchange that existed in the seventeenth century between the Hetmanate and the Ruthenian palatinates of Poland meant that in some ways the confessional lines from the eastern to western parts of Ukraine were less bitterly demarcated before 1721 than afterward. Prokopovych’s “revolution,” however, changed all of that, as it set in motion not only the confessionalization of the laity but also the confessionalization of Orthodox identity in Ukraine. For the Ukrainian laity, this identity would become increasingly subsumed under the larger cultural and religious sphere of imperial Orthodoxy, whose laws and institutions were engineered by Prokopovych himself. Thus, in fleeing Rome, the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy—in the long term and as a lasting consequence—eventually arrived in St. Petersburg.