

Some Symbols of Identity of Byzantine Catholics¹

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Introduction

This essay is a description of some of an ethnic group's symbols of identity²; its aim is to explore the meanings of the following statement:

[Byzantine Catholics] are no longer an immigrant and ethnic group. Byzantine Catholics are American in every sense of the word, that the rite itself is American as opposed to foreign, and that both the rite and its adherents have become part and parcel of the American scene.³

This straight-forward statement claims that there has been a reinterpretation and reexpression of identity within a new political and sociocultural environment.⁴ It is commonsense, for example, to think that individuals as a group do, re-do, rearrange, and change the expressions of values and beliefs in new situations. But, in order to ensure continuity in the midst of change, people will usually use already existing symbols—or whatever is at hand and familiar. Byzantine Catholic identity is a case of new bottles with old wine.

Ethnic groups and their members rely upon any number of factors to symbolize the values and beliefs with which they identify and by which they are identified. Such symbols of identity are manipulated, exploited, reinterpreted, or changed, over time, according to the requirements of the context. In any event, people always use whatever is present to them for maintaining some continuity of identity while, at the same time, adjusting to new states-of-affairs. Herskovits shows, for example, that

We are dealing with a basic process in the adjustment of individual behavior and of institutional structures to be found in all situations where people having different ways of life come into contact. This process we term *reinterpretation*, whereby sanctions and values of a given tradition under contact with another are applied to new forms, combining and recombining until syncretisms develop that rework them into meaningful, well functioning conventions.⁵

Such reconstructions are represented by the items taken to be or designated to be symbols of an ethnic identity or ethnicity.

Symbols express the world view of an ethnic group. The symbols are generated and maintained in the forms of group life and by the leaders of the group, functioning as frames of reference and definitions of context. Symbols are signs of awareness, moving members of the group to act; thus, structuring and ordering the behavior of the group's

members toward commonly-held ends and shared reasons for being:

The symbol becomes associated with human interests, purposes, ends, and means, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred from the observed behavior.⁶

A symbol, then, is a channel of social, political, and psychological allegiance to the values and beliefs of the group. A configuration or set of symbols becomes the basis for ethnicity, i.e., an ethnic identity.⁷

Ethnicity is taken to be a self-ascribed identity which maintains social networks and boundaries. A self-ascribed identity consists of the origin and background of individuals, the environment into which they are born, and the conscious and unconscious value and belief system which they use to differentiate themselves from other groups; the factors of identity are usually expressed in judgments about themselves and others. The following examples are used among Byzantine Catholics: "I am Slovak" or "We're Hunkies." Judgments about styles of behavior and what a "good" Slovak is like are also important. It is the self-ascribed identity, represented by various symbols, which determines the network of social relations and how individuals interact with others.⁸

Among the symbols of self-identity, the name of a group can symbolize political, social, cultural and religious points of view, i.e., a name channels patterns of behavior. Thus, the name Byzantine Catholic represents the social boundaries and the identity of an ethnic population. Consequently, one of the important symbols of group membership is the knowledge and use of the "correct" name or names, for there are public and private names. With Byzantine Catholics, for example, the "correct" name formerly was Greek Catholic. Only within the last twenty years has the name been replaced with Byzantine Catholic. Change is still occurring. On a souvenir ribbon of a mortgage burning in 1981, the inscription read: "St. George Catholic Church, Byzantine Rite." The emphasis of identification has shifted to Catholic rather than Byzantine.

Historically, Byzantine Catholics have always struggled with a choice of religious and national identities, and the appropriate symbols.⁹ There is difficulty separating nationalism (however unformed or incipient it may be) and the religious function of the church.¹⁰ In Eastern European countries, a religious identity or allegiance often signaled a national identity or patriotism.¹¹

Byzantine Catholics are members of the Eastern/Oriental Catholic rites. The rites are Alexandrian, the Antiochene, the Chaldean, and the Byzantine. The Byzantine rite is divided into the following churches: Bulgarian, Greek, Melchite, Romanian, Russian,

Ukrainian, Ruthenian,¹² and Slovak¹³ as the most recent addition. The Byzantine Catholics in this essay are of the Ruthenian church.

The Ruthenians¹⁴ have been called Greek Catholics or Byzantine Catholics since the Union or Uzhhorod, April 24, 1646.¹⁵ An exarchate for Greek Catholics was established in the U.S. in 1913 with Bishop Ortijnskyj as its head. The ecclesiastical structure combined Galicians (Ukrainians) with Ruthenians, Croatians, Hungarians, and Slovaks. In 1924, the Ruthenians *et aliter* and Galicians were divided into two exarchates: Pittsburgh (or Munhall) for Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics, and Philadelphia for the Galicians or Ukrainian Byzantine Catholics.

In 1963, the eparchies of Munhall and Passaic, New Jersey, were created for Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics. In 1969, the Metropolitan Ruthenian Province of Munhall was formed: Munhall became an archeparchy: Passaic and Parma remained as eparchies under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Munhall.¹⁶ In December of 1981, a third eparchy under the Metropolitan of Munhall was established at Van Nuys, California.¹⁷

Ecclesiastical authority, much like secular governments, has ignored the actual diversity of its population by designating them all Ruthenians. Byzantine Catholics have been known or counted variously as Russians, Slovaks, Hungarians, Austro-Hungarians, Austrian, Subcarpathian Rus, Uhro-Rusins, Carpatho-Russians, Carpatho-Ukrainians or Carpatho-Rusins (or Rusyns). More popular names among members of the group are Slavish, Hunky, and Rusnaks.¹⁸ What one is called, or what name a person uses in self-reference, is of major concern as was demonstrated by a series of articles in the *GCU Messenger*¹⁹ arguing for a specific spelling of Rusin and not Rusyn.²⁰

Although there is a confusing array of "nationality" names, Byzantine Catholics represent their identity by a configuration of symbols other than names. Being Byzantine Catholic is a commonly-held identity which is based upon a specific system of religious traditions. The customs and traditions of religious orientation have managed to withstand the forces of assimilation in the United States better than the cultural traditions associated with being Ruthenian or Rusin.²¹

Symbols of ethnic identity for Byzantine Catholics appear in many forms, and specific activities and events of communal participation can be symbols which establish group boundaries.²² There are customary activities conducted in the course of the year for members of the group. To outsiders, the symbols are public signs of differences in worldviews.

Symbolic Expressions of Identity

There are “private” ceremonies and “public” events which symbolize the customs of Byzantine Catholics. The private occasions are part of parish or communal life; the public events are Byzantine Catholic Day or Russkij Den and The Our Lady of Perpetual Help Pilgrimage. These traditional and customary events provide the forms by which thoughts, feelings, and behavior are structured.

Communal Ceremonies

One example concerning the symbolic nature of Byzantine Catholic identity is St. Nicholas Day, December 6. The people celebrate this day as a major event; they have a communal meal in the church hall; there is a visit by St. Nicholas of Myra in his *ecclesiastical* robes, bringing some small gift for all the children present. There is usually some form of entertainment and some speech-making. Older informants have related that St. Nicholas Day was the day for gift-giving in the Old Country and even in the early days in the New Country. Should St. Nicholas Day fall on a Sunday, the following song is sung as part of Divine Liturgy.

Okto, kto Nikolaja lúbit,
Okto, kto Nikolaja sluzit.
:Tomu svjatuj Nikolaj
Na vsjaky čas pomahaj
Nikolaj, Nikolaj.

O who loves Nicholas the saintly
O who serves Nicholas the saintly
:Him will Nicholas receive
And give help in time of need,
Holy Father Nicholas.²³

The traditional song to St. Nicholas is always sung by the whole group.

Another communal event which helps to focus the identity of the group’s members and maintains social networks is the celebration of St. Thomas’ Sunday with a parish meal—always the Sunday after Easter. Members of the group arrive at the church hall with dishes of Easter food.²⁴ People greet one another with the traditional seasonal salutation: “Christos Voskrese” to which is answered “Vostinnu Voskrese” (“Christ is Risen; indeed, He is Risen”). A special Easter paska, called the Artos, is baked by a member of the parish. It is much larger than the normal paska, measuring about fourteen to sixteen inches in diameter and about six to eight inches thick. It must be large enough so that everyone present at St. Thomas’ Day dinner will receive a portion of it. There is some singing of traditional Easter

hymns and a talk by the priest or a visitor on the meaning of the meal; the meal usually lasts two to three hours.

Another tradition symbolic of Byzantine Catholic identity is the placing of green-leaved branches on the altar of the church, and decorating the home with them on Green Sunday. Green Sunday for Byzantine Catholics is Pentecost Sunday, which in the Roman rite is signified by the color red. One informant stated that even in America on the eve of Green Sunday the men of the patches would go out into the surrounding countryside to cut green branches, and carry them through the streets to their homes.²⁵

The preceding events are examples of communal functions, serving as symbols of identity. The events are, to a degree, private occasions. The remainder of this essay is concerned with two events which are public symbols of identity: Byzantine Catholic Day and The Theotokos Pilgrimage.

Byzantine Catholic Day (Russkij Den)

Russkij Den was held for the 59th time in 1979; it lasts for one day and only has regional participation. This festive day is held at Kennywood Park, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania; it is a public event, for the activities are conducted while the park is open for business-as-usual. Kennywood Park advertised the event in 1979 as Byzantine Catholic Day; when the park was called to enquire about the affair, the name "Russkij Den" was not immediately recognized. The advertisement for the 1981 event announced: "Byzantine Catholic Churches Day of the Greater Pittsburgh Area."²⁶

While Byzantine Catholic Day is a symbol of identity, it is also an occasion for the use of other, more particular, symbols. An example is the program booklet for 1979; the color of the cover is red, white, and blue—symbolizing the patriotic feelings the group holds for the USA;²⁷ there is an American flag pictured with the heraldic national emblem of Ruthenia;²⁸ a pair of clasped hands represents the idea and feelings of fraternalism; and the cover's wording reads, *The Fifty-ninth Annual Russkij Den, Byzantine Catholic Day*. In comparison, the cover of the 1980 booklet reads: *The Sixtieth Annual Russkij Den, Byzantine Catholic Churches Day of the Greater Pittsburgh Area*. Its cover is adorned with a drawing of a church topped with three onion-shaped domes with the traditional Byzantine Cross on them, a picture of the flag of the United States, and emblems representing the two fraternals which serve the people: The Greek Catholic Union and United Societies of the U.S.A.

Byzantine Catholic Day begins with athletic contests between teams from area Byzantine Catholic Churches. The activities begin

with an affirmation of a dual identity: American and Rusyn or Ruthenian. The participants and spectators sing the “Star Spangled Banner,” and then “Ja Rusyn Byl,” the Ruthenian national anthem.²⁹ The Ruthenian national anthem focuses the commonality of the group. Later, during the evening program, a similar pattern develops. The “Star Spangled Banner” and “America the Beautiful” are sung, and the “Pledge of Allegiance” is recited. Members of Rusyny—a Carpatho-Rusyn folk dance group—lead the recitations. Afterwards, the national anthem of Ruthenia is sung:

Ja Rusyn byl, jesm i budu,
Ja rodilsja Rusynom.
Cestny moj rod, ze zabudu
Ostanus jeho synom.

I was, am and will be Rusyn
I was born a Rusyn,
I shall never forget my honorable heritage
I shall remain its son.³⁰

After remarks by officers of the fraternals, athletic trophies are given to competing Byzantine Churches by the Metropolitan Archbishop of Munhall.

While emblems and signs of a foreign nation or religious identity are displayed, their symbolic force is manipulated largely by religious leaders—not a new phenomenon for this group. The clergy, for the most part, were the first to articulate a Ruthenian identity in the Old Country if they were not magyarized or Russophiles. The clerics, because of their educational opportunities (once seminaries were organized), naturally became the intellectuals and leaders of the mostly peasant group. The few lay people who were educated usually migrated to other countries to teach and write. It was only in the late 19th century in Eastern Europe and upon arrival in the United States that lay people became active competitors for the group’s leadership. In many ways, the competition continues.

During the evening program, there is another public affirmation of American identity in conjunction with the importance of being Byzantine Catholic. Father Rosack, the main speaker for the evening program in 1979, focused the audience’s attention upon being Byzantine Catholic in America and emphasized that this rite is no longer a foreign ritual.

Though we as a nation of Catholics of the Byzantine Rite were not here when this nation was founded, we call ourselves Americans, nevertheless, and justly for two reasons. First, this is the land of promise to which our ancestors came and this is the nation which they came to call their own through citizenship. As

soon as they were eligible, our ancestors pledged their allegiance to these United States and were adopted as its own by this country. Secondly, we of succeeding generations call ourselves American by virtue of our birthright and we have demonstrated our allegiance by the services which we have given our country in peace as well as in war with distinction.³¹

Within this frame of reference, Rysny entertained the crowd with a selection of traditional Ruthenian songs and dances.

The program leaflet of the Rusyny gives more force to the symbolization of Byzantine Catholic identity. There is a drawing of an "oriental" dome topped by the traditional Byzantine Cross with the words: "Slava Isusu Christu" (Glory to Jesus Christ); it also mentions the "Ruska Vira" (Rusyn faith) demonstrative of the Rusyns' traditionally strong belief in God and allegiance to the Byzantine Church. Use is made of the term "po nasomu" (for our own kind) which refers to the Rusyn Ruthenian-Byzantine identity.³²

The final symbolic expression of identity during the evening program of the 1979 Byzantine Catholic Day was the singing of a traditional Marian hymn in Old Slavonic, which is the traditional language of Byzantine Catholic liturgy. The hymn is as follows:

Dostojno jest' jako voistinnu plaziti t'a
bohorodicu, prisenoblazennuju i preneporočnuju
i Mater' Boho našeho. Čestnijšuju Cheruvim
i slavnijšuju bez sravnenija Serafim, bez
istlinija Boho Slova roždšuju, suščuju
Bohorodicu, t'a veličajem.

It is truly to glorify you, who have borne
God, the ever blessed Immaculate, and the
Mother of our God, More honorable than the
Cherabim, and beyond compare more glorious than the
Seraphim, who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly
the Mother of God, we magnify.

Just as the day began with symbols of an American identity, it ended with a symbol of Byzantine Catholic identity (and, implicitly, Ruthenian/Rusyn).

The Theotokos Pilgrimage

The pilgrimage in honor of the *Theotokos*, Most Holy Mother of God, takes place at Uniontown, Pennsylvania. It customarily begins on the Thursday or Friday before Labor Day and ends on Labor Day. It is an annual celebration. This explicitly religious event draws a large crowd of pilgrims from Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania. The people arrive in private cars and chartered buses. The groups arriving by bus go in a procession led by a cross-bearer and

singing hymns to an altar in front of the main building on the grounds. There, a priest blesses the group. People arriving in cars also go to the same place to be blessed; after the blessings the pilgrimage moves to another stage.

The original locale of the Theotokos Pilgrimage was St. Nicholas Orphanage in Elmhurst, Pennsylvania; the first pilgrimage took place in 1928. After 1935, it was held at Mt. St. Macrina, Uniontown. Unlike many other pilgrimages, no miraculous event initiated the Theotokos Pilgrimage or the choice of Mt. St. Macrina as the pilgrimage site. The first Ruthenian bishop, Takach, began the pilgrimage to engender and maintain a religious consciousness among Ruthenian Byzantine Catholics. Thus, from its inception, the Theotokos Pilgrimage was a deliberate religious *and* social form created to help a population maintain its identity.³³

The annual Theotokos Pilgrimage at Uniontown is a ceremonial arena which incorporates symbols of Byzantine Catholic identity and Ruthenian identity. The pilgrimage is an important symbol of unity as well as a context for symbolic presentations. In this context, the Byzantine Catholic symbols function in a way to transcend foreign national identities. For example, while Divine Liturgies are celebrated in Hungarian and Rusyn, the dominant languages are English and Old Slavonic.

Although the Theotokos Pilgrimage is a religious and social event, some evidence of Byzantine Catholic foreign national identity was present in 1979.³⁴ This identification, usually in terms of county, town, or village of the Old Country, occurred as individuals met and talked with one another.³⁵ This kind of fragmentation occurs at Byzantine Catholic Day. And, in many conversations overheard at the parish level, information about Old Country origin is asked for and readily given if it is not already known. "Being from the same village or county" is an identity marker for individuals born in the United States, even for third and fourth generation people. The kraj (region or country) becomes a symbol of identity.

During the pilgrimage, in a centrally-located building on the grounds, there are tables set up with booklets and other materials. In 1979, a person could have found the official pilgrimage program, a leaflet describing Carpatho-Ruthenian identity and its emblems, a booklet entitled *Our Martyred Bishop Romzah*, and a picture of Pope Paul II with the bishops of the Byzantine Rite. In 1981, besides the program of pilgrimage events, souvenir buttons were available.³⁶

That there was a separate leaflet on Carpatho-Ruthenian identity in 1979 becomes significant when the title of the program is compared to the 1974 program. It was the Forty-fifth Annual Pilgrimage to the

Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in 1979, while in 1974 it was the Byzantine Ruthenian Province Fortieth Annual Pilgrimage. In 1981, it was the Forty-seventh Annual Pilgrimage in Honor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Any nationalistic reference serves as a pointer toward the more generalized religious identity.³⁷ A similar example was found in a parish bulletin of February 22, 1981: "Professor _____ has graciously accepted to teach our Slavic language. Here is your chance to learn your native tongue."³⁸ In a way, even the language which normally symbolizes a nationality is a vehicle for a religious identity.

At a booth on the grounds of Mt. St. Macrina in 1979, bumper stickers and decals for cars were being sold. This was also the case in 1981. These read "Slava Isusu Christu" (Glory to Jesus Christ) and "S Nami Boh" (God with us) and were combined with a drawing of the Byzantine Cross.³⁹

At the 1979 pilgrimage, and again in 1981, there were booths where copies of the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help were being sold to the Pilgrims; the icons help to focus Byzantine Catholic identity. Some booths sell recordings of folk songs, dance tunes, and religious music. Others give away prayer cards and religious articles; a store sells Byzantine and Roman rite religious articles.⁴⁰ Greeting cards in Slovak, Old Slavonic, and English are displayed. Still other booths sell traditional foods and pastries such as honey cakes; such items reinforce the values, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings of the pilgrims. The linkages are the symbols of an identity different from the "American identity."

Elsewhere on the grounds, groups of people are sitting, standing, or kneeling in front of various open-air shrines. Banks of votive candles are burning. At one such shrine, people gather to pray, light candles, and fill containers with the water coming from the spring over which the shrine is built. People also gather at set times, either in a chapel in the main building or before an altar covered with an awning and decorated with wreaths of flowers, for the celebration of Divine Liturgy which at one time is in Hungarian, or Rusyn, another time Old Slavonic or in English. And at several places on the grounds, confessional lines stretch back from a simple kneeler with only a fabric screen between the priest and the person confessing.

Conclusions

Self-identification as Byzantine Catholic causes the people to participate in private ceremonies and public events, reinforcing foreign national identity—for being Byzantine Catholic is also Ruthenian, Rusyn, Slovak, Hungarian, and Croatian. The Theotokos Pilgrimage, as a symbol and element of an ethnic group's lifeworld,

renews the spirit—the *Duch* of this group.⁴¹

Certain traditional affairs and objects function to symbolize a self-ascriptive identity. The group uses foreign nationalistic emblems to signal the dominant identity patterns of Byzantine Catholics. However, symbols of Byzantine Catholic identity also function to form foreign national identity patterns.

As new situations are encountered, as new social forces develop, as positions and educational achievement change, as individual and group statuses are perceived of as changed, symbols of identity are adapted and meanings are transformed; Byzantine Catholic Days are being held in locations other than Kennywood Park as people migrate and relocate throughout the United States. Finally, an informant said: “I was born in this country and I’m an American.” However, this same individual listens to local polka programs on Sundays after Divine Liturgy, a program called, “The Slovak Hour,” and is a member of the Greek Catholic Union.

NOTES

¹This article is based upon fieldwork and research on Byzantine Catholic Day (Russkij Den), 1979, the annual Pilgrimage of the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 1979 and 1981, and fieldwork in a Byzantine Catholic parish in Southwestern Pennsylvania, 1977 to 1980. The author wishes to thank Dr. Arthur Tuden, Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh, and Mary Elizabeth Machuga Skovira for their assistance in developing this presentation.

²While the term “ethnic groups” is used here and elsewhere in this article, the name “Byzantine Catholic” covers several groups as the section on names demonstrates.

³Edward V. Rosack. “Two Springboards.” *Byzantine Catholic World*. XXIII, 52 (December 31, 1978) 4.

⁴Melville J. Herskovits. *Cultural Anthropology*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955) 492.

⁵Melville J. Herskovits. *The Human Factor in Changing Africa*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) 292.

⁶Victor Turner. *The Forest of Symbols*. (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1967) 20.

⁷Fredrik Barth, ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969) 14.

⁸*Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁹Walter C. Warzeski. *Byzantine Rite Rusins in Carpatho-Ruthenia and America*. (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1971) v.

¹⁰Herskovits, 1962, 428.

¹¹Paul Robert Magocsi. *The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus 1848-1948*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) 21; hereafter cited as *National Identity*. While in the article "Carpatho-Rusyns," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Stephen Themstrom, ed. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1980), Magocsi states that the Carpatho-Rusyns (who are usually identified as Byzantine Catholics) never formed their own nation-state, it is commonly held among members of this group that they did, and do form a nation of people. See the dissertation: Peter George Stercho. *Carpatho-Ukraine in International Affairs, 1938-1939*. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1962) 47-49; see especially 49, 52, 62, 73.

¹²Basil Shereghy. *The Byzantine Catholics*. (Pittsburgh, 1981) 7-16. See also: "Rites, Canonical." *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. XII (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1967) 516.

¹³J.M. Kirschbaum. "Historical Background on the New Diocese of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Canada." *Jednota*. 9, 4779 (March 18, 1981) 1, 5.

¹⁴The name "Ruthenian" was first used by Greek and Latin historians when they referred to the people inhabiting parts of Eastern Slovakia (in the shaded area of map below). The name "Ruthenian" while it does have historical and contemporary ecclesiastical use is not the name commonly used by members of the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church. See: Lecture notes of Basil Shereghy, Spring, 1979. Pittsburgh, Pa.



¹⁵Magocsi. *National Identity*, 21.

¹⁶A. Pekar. *Our Past and Present: Historical Outline of the Byzantine Ruthenian Metropolitan Province*. (Pittsburgh: Byzantine Seminary Press, 1974) 40-44.

¹⁷The eparchy of Van Nuys covers California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska.

¹⁸Shereghy. *The Byzantine Catholics*. See also: John Slivka. *The History of the Greek Rite Catholics in Pannonia, Czechoslovakia and Podkarpatska Rus 1863-1949*. (Pittsburgh, 1974). See further, Paul R. Magocsi. "Rusyn American Ethnic Literature." *Ethnic Literature Since 1776: The Many Voices of America, Part II*. Wolodymyr T. Zyla and Wendall M. Aycock, eds. (Lubbock, Texas Tech Press, 1978) 514-515, especially note three; Slavish and Hunky appear to be pan-Slav while Rusnak is specific.

¹⁹Daniel F. Tanzone. *Fraternalism and the Slovak Immigrant*. (Reprint from the *Jednota Annual Furdek 1978*, prepared and edited by Joseph C. Krajsa. Cleveland: First Catholic Slovak Union, 1978) 8.

²⁰The *Greek Catholic Union Messenger* is one of the oldest fraternal newspapers for Rusins (Ruthenians) in the United States.

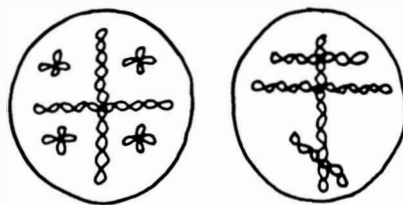
²¹Michael Roman. "The Correct and Historical Spelling of the Name is . . . Rusin!" *Greek Catholic Union Messenger*. LXXXIII, 22 and 23 (October 30 and November 13, 1980).

²²One religious tradition that did not survive is that of married clergy. The Roman Catholic hierarchy successfully petitioned Rome to stop this practice because it viewed the practice as scandalous, resulting in a ban against married clergy in 1929. See: A. Pekar. "The Carpatho-Ruthenians in America." *A Historical Album*. Basil Shereghy, ed. (McKeesport, PA: 1979) 99.

²³Abner Cohen. *Two Dimensional Man*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974) 23-34.

²⁴St. Nicholas Day is celebrated by many groups originating in Eastern Europe. However, some groups from Northern and Western Europe also celebrate it. For example, some German Americans in Texas remember St. Nicholas Day.

²⁵The traditional Easter food for Byzantine Catholics includes kielbasa, bacon and ham, hrutka (a special cheese made with milk and eggs), horseradish (colored with beet juice), hard-boiled eggs (dyed various colors), butter, salt, and a special bread, paska. Some people bake paska with two doughs—yellow and white—and put designs on the top using dough. See the examples below.



Before it is used for any meal, the paska, butter, salt and portions of the other foodstuff are blessed at the Easter Divine Liturgy. Some food is usually frozen to be eaten later in the year.

²⁵The term “patch” was and is used to refer to the workers’ houses which were built around the coke ovens and coal tipples in Western Pennsylvania.

²⁶GCU Messenger. 89, 1 1 (May 28, 1981) 3. “Russkij” is an ambiguous and disputed word. A. Pekar, in an article “Father Alexander Duklinovich—Ruthenian, Not A Russian,” *Byzantine Catholic World*, (April 23, 1978) 5, states that the term “Russkij” is used by some to mean “Russian” but that Father Duklinovich used the term to mean “Ruthenian.” Many do not like the name because they think it means “Russian” and they are definitely not that in their eyes. Paul R. Magocsi uses the term “Rusnaks” in a recent article “Misreading History: A Reply.” *Carpatho-Rusyn American*. IV, 3 (Fall, 1981) 6. Consequently, the foreign national identity of American society whereas Byzantine Catholic, being a religious identity, (as some would seem to hope) is not a disadvantage (and becomes less so when “Byzantine” is dropped and “Catholic” or “Christian” is emphasized). It seems that a differentiation in terms of a religious identity is *legitimate* in this society while diversity based on foreign national origin is not. See: Mark Schneider. *Ethnicity and Politics*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1979) 261.

²⁷Colors may be important some of the time, but we cannot attach too much significance to them except in a specific context, because the colors of the booklet’s cover change. The 1980 cover, for example is beige and blue.

²⁸The Ruthenian national emblem is divided into two fields. The right field has a red bear rampant on a white field. The left field consists of four blue and three yellow bars.



²⁹As a further point about how Byzantine Catholics identify themselves, it should be noticed that many do not know “Ja Rusyn Byl.” But since they refer to themselves as Slovaks and use the Slovak anthem “Hej Slovaci!,” one should keep in mind that being Slovak can also be Byzantine Catholic.

³⁰This song has been introduced and sung at other kinds of gatherings of Byzantine Catholics. For example, at the St. Nicholas' Day celebration, December 10, 1978, of St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church, "Ja Rusyn Byl" was included with other traditional folksongs.

³¹Edward V. Rosack. "America Needs Us." *GCU Messenger*. LXXXCII, 26 (August 2, 1979) 1.

³²"Po nasomu" translated as "for/of our own kind" is usually used by first and second generation members of the group as a self-ascriptive reference term. One informant consistently used the term to mark how individual names were really written and pronounced as opposed to the "American" spelling and pronouncements. Also, "Po nasomu" is the title of a column in the *GCU Messenger*. And, a recent advertisement of a recording of Slavonic Christmas carols reads: "Traditional Christmas Carols, sung both po nasomu and in English, are included in an album which features Bortniansky's 'Slava Vo Vysnich.'" *GCU Messenger*. LXXXCIII (November 13, 1980) 7.

³³A. Pekar. "The Carpatho-Ruthenians in America." *A Historical Album*. Basil Shereghy, ed. (McKeesport, Pa., 1978) 116.

³⁴I was unable to attend the 1980 pilgrimage. Friends collected pamphlets and other material of a religious nature, however. They did pick up a pamphlet "Carpatho-Ruthenians in America." I had collected the same in 1979. This same pamphlet had been handed out at various times in 1979-1980 in the Byzantine Churches. In 1981, I returned to do more observation and collecting. Outside of a brochure announcing the Golden Jubilee of the Byzantine Ruthenian Province, there were no explicit materials concerning Ruthenian identity.

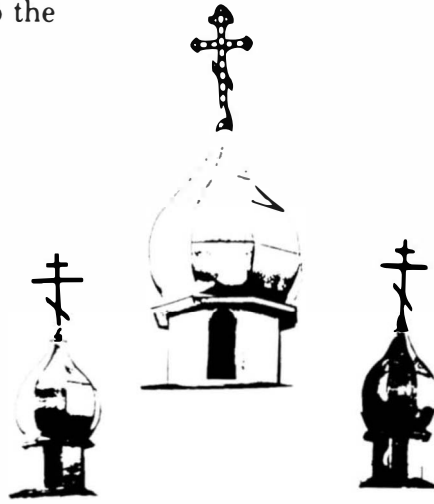
³⁵If the individuals find that they (or their parents or grandparents) came from the same village, town or county, the interaction shifts to another basis. They are krajani (compatriots). They are no longer strangers.

³⁶These were about an inch in diameter, white with blue design. In the center was a cross and around the edge of the button was written: O.L.P.H. Pilgrimage (Our Lady of Perpetual Help Pilgrimage).

³⁷A similar phenomenon seems to have had force in the Old Country. There, whole villages are referred to as being "rusnaci" (rusnatsi), which was corrupted to "Russnaks" (see note 18); in other words, the village was Byzantine (Greek) Catholic.

³⁸The language is Slovak and an eastern Slovakian dialect.

³⁹The Byzantine Cross atop the three onion-shaped domes:



⁴⁰In 1981, paperweights with Ukrainian pysanki motifs could be bought. Shoulder patches with an embroidered Byzantine Cross were on sale.

⁴¹There is some conflict among members of the group about “Duch.” The conflict indicates the close relationship (perhaps interpenetration) of national identity and religious identity via “Duch.” See the debate between Fr. Edward V. Rosack and Fr. Robert J. Bater in the *Byzantine Catholic World*, October 7, 1979, and November 25, 1979.

Critique

Two primary assumptions appear to inform this descriptive article about Byzantine Catholic communities in the United States: (1) old traditions are maintained in new environments through “syncretism”; and (2) the symbols that emerge in those syncretisms are reflective of the world view of the ethnic group that created them.

Beginning with the name of the group in question, “Byzantine Catholics,” the author describes various symbols that illuminate political, social, cultural, and religious points of view of the various, mostly Slavic, national groups about whom he writes. Disposing rather quickly of what he calls the “private” ceremonies that “help to focus the identity of the group’s members and maintains social networks” the author moves to the “public” events which he claims serve as “public” symbols of identity: Byzantine Catholic Day and the Theotokos Pilgrimage (*Russkij Den*).