
Abstract. The purpose of the research is to elucidate one of the aspects of the nobility’s social evolution at the end of the 18th – the beginning of the 20th centuries, in particular, the nobility entry into the members of the parish clergy. The methodology of the research is based on the principles of historicism, scientific research, verification, as well as the use of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and special historical (prosopographic, historical typological, historical systemic) methods. The scientific novelty consists in reviewing and refuting the prevailing assertions in the national historiography about the mass involvement of the nobility in the clergy members. It has been determined that their quantity was only 10 – 14% among the ordinary clergy. Social factors that prompted the nobles to choose spiritual service have been analyzed. The Conclusion. During the Austrian era, the nobility of Galicia continued to consider priesthood as one of acceptable spheres
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of activity. During the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries people of a noble origin made up 10 – 14% of the clergy. The indicator was much lower than the data, which were used previously by domestic historians, claiming that almost a third of this clergy were noblemen. Such discrepancy was due to incorrect calculations based on incorrect methodological principles. However, even the percentage of 10 – 14% was a rather significant indicator, taking into account the fact that the nobility percentage was smaller and did not exceed 3% among total population of Galicia. Hence, the nobility (shliakhta) considered church service not only as entirely possible, but also desirable for self-realization in social field. Primarily, it was due to the social evolution of the Ukrainian nobility and the clergy in the Austrian Empire. If the former declassified gradually and turned into ordinary farmers, losing their social significance, on the contrary, the latter – with the growth of public demand for education and professionalization, managed to find their niche and occupy an important great place among the elite of the modernizing Galician society. It was evidenced by unique examples from the history of individual families, in which the clergymen were invariably present alongside government officials, lawyers, doctors, and teachers.

Key words: nobility, Greek-Catholic clergy, Przemyśl eparchy, Galician society of the 19th century.

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The Problem Statement. The Galician nobility within the Austrian Empire continued to remain a separate stratum with a clearly determined status. However, the Galician nobility sought for its place among other socio-professional groups actively in the process of development and modernization of society during the 19th century. One of them was the clergy of the Eastern Rite in the Catholic Church at all its levels, starting with the highest hierarchs and ending...
with the parish clergy. This process of interaction and social diffusion was certainly interesting, because its analysis allows us to find out or clarify a number of aspects, for example quantitative parameters of the noble origin people integration into the clergy; awareness of prestige / non-prestige of a church career among the nobility, etc. Hence, the answer to these questions will make it possible to refute or confirm stereotypes that arose in the 19th century. In particular, this is the idea of a dominant role of the nobility among the clergy, which supposedly almost completely formed its backbone and determined its behaviour and public demands largely.

In *historiography*, the issue under analysis is present to the same extent both in the papers of church history researchers of the 19th century and in the researches on the nobility of the Austrian era. The Polish historian Kr. Ślusarek did research on the nobility of the end of 18th – the first half of the 19th centuries. In his monograph, he singled out the chapter on social evolution of the petty nobility and indicated the niches it occupied or could potentially occupy (Ślusarek, 1994, pp. 127–132), although the church service was not considered among them. L. Slyvka, another scholar of the nobility history, wrote the article “Noble Origin of the Greek-Catholic Clergy of the Przemyśl Diocese (the 19th – the 30s of the 20th centuries)”, however, apart from quantitative calculations, which caused certain comments, the content of the rest of publication provisions did not correspond to its title (Slyvka, 2014, pp. 150–156).

The purpose of the research is to elucidate one of the aspects of the nobility’s social evolution at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, in particular its entry into the parish clergy members.

The Results of the Research. The pastoral activity was one of the few spheres that the nobility regarded as a worthy nobility in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the 18th century the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) nobility did not shy away from a priestly path. Their representation among the parish clergy of the Przemyśl eparchy numbered up to a hundred families. They usually headed parishes in family settlements, as well as in the royal villages of Sambir economy, Drohobyskyi, Stryiskyi, Peremyshlskyi, Horodotskyi, and Lviv starostv (Smutok, 2017, pp. 369–386).

During the Austrian era, the church service was not out of the nobility’s focus, and it replenished the composition of the white clergy actively. Hence, in 1831, according to the schematism data of the Przemyśl eparchy, out of seven hundred and fifty parishes in 32 deaneries, there were priests of a noble origin whose characteristic surnames were Kulchytskyi, Yavorskyi, Chaikivskyi, etc., and there were 70 people. It was 9% of the entire composition of the white clergy (Schematismus, 1831, pp. 21–197). In the following decades, their number increased gradually, although not too much. For example, in 1856 their number reached about nine dozen of people (12 %) (Schematismus, 1856, pp. 15–151), and in 1887 it exceeded one hundred (109) and made up 14% of the total number of the parish clergy of the Przemyśl Diocese (Skhymatysm, 1887, pp. 24–283). Geography of parishes, where there were people of the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) nobility, had not undergone significant changes either. At the beginning of the 19th century the majority of them were concentrated (up to 30%) in Vysochanskyi (6 parishes), Starosambirskyi (9), Drohobyskyi (5), Zhukotynskyi (5), and Mokrianskyi (2) deaneries, where the greatest number of the noble families were concentrated. In several decades, there was a tendency to expand geographic characteristics. Obviously, this trend was caused by permanent moving from one parish to another, which was practised by the consistory in the 19th century widely. However, despite this trend, the leadership in the number of priests of a noble origin remained in Staryi Sambir (14), Mokriany (7), Drohobych (7), and Vysochansk (4) deaneries.
L. Slyvka, calculating the nobility percentage among the parish clergy, noted that their number was much higher and made up to a third of the clergy (Slyvka, 2014, p. 152). Hence, the scholar tried to substantiate the opinion, predominant as early as the middle of the 20th century, that the majority or a significant percentage of priestly families originated from a privileged status (Sokhotskyi, 1951, p. 31). L. Slyvka’s method of calculations was also based on identifying surnames that may indicate belonging to the nobility. Consequently, the following question arises: what is the reason for such difference in the percentages obtained by us (9–14%) and by L. Slyvka (32%)? In our opinion, the researcher’s calculations have several drawbacks, which ultimately reduced their significance. In particular, L. Slyvka included a number of priestly families names that were not part of the nobility. At least it is not indicated by any documents of both the Old Polish period and the Austrian era. These are the surnames of priestly families, in particular, the Barvinski, the Kordashevychi, the Lysiaky, the Maksymovychi, the Yaroshevychi, the Bilevychi, the Chekhovychi, the Hornitski, the Karpinski, the Kotovychi, the Vankovychi, etc. (Slyvka, 2014, pp. 152–153). Another part of surnames, indeed, was recorded among the Galician nobility, but they could be also used among other strata of population, in particular among the clergy, so their presence does not automatically indicate a noble origin.

For example, let’s consider the following family surnames: the Fedorovychi and the Levytski. The first family surnames were known among the nobility of Przemyśl since the end of the 1720s (CSHAUL, f. 13, d. 1, c. 233, p. 61; c. 237, p. 165; c. 243, pp. 57, 59; c. 248, p. 31). In 1782, the Fedorovychi family, represented by Anton and the brothers Luka, Pavlo, Matzei and Blazhey confirmed their nobility at Lviv and Terebovlia Town Courts (Smutok & Smutok, 2016, p. 438), and Gabriel – in the Estates Department in 1799 or 1819 (Smutok & Smutok, 2020a, p. 66). There were also two families the Fedorovychi Yatskovski, who received legalization at Lviv Zemstvo Court in 1782. Those were Matzei, Joseph and Sebastian (Smutok & Smutok, 2016, pp. 495–496). During the following decades, the descendants of Gabriel, Blazhey, Matzei renewed their noble status many times in the Estates Department in Lviv. According to the documents, it was the Polish family that was quite wealthy in the 19th century. For example, Jan, the son of Andriy Fedorovych, owned the estates of Okna, Chernihivtsi, and Verniaky. His son Vladyslav Valentyn owned 9 villages and was an ambassador to the State Council. None of the family member was mentioned as a clergyman at the parish level (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6а, c. 40, pp. 4, 186; c. 43, pp. 41–43; c. 44, pp. 481–485, 523; c. 45, p. 142; c. 46, pp. 199–204). Thus, several priests of the Fedorovychi family had no relation to the nobility with a similar surname. It can be assumed that there were many families with the surname the Fedorovychi on the territory of Galicia and they were present both among peasants, townspeople and other layers of society.

There was also a fairly common surname the Levytski. In 1782 and later, 9 representatives of the above-mentioned family confirmed their nobility at Lviv, Bets, Buzky, Chkhivsky Zemstvo and Town Courts (Smutok & Smutok, 2016, p. 252). Subsequently, the materials of the Estate Department for the 19th century recorded only the two Levytski families who were involved into the clergy activity. It was a priest Jan, whose sons lived in Mokriany and received confirmation of the nobility in 1834 (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6а, c. 41, p. 34), and Ilia – a parish priest in Shchavny, Jan’s son in Rosokhachi, Hryhoriy – a grandson’s priest in Vysotske Verkhnie, who, together with his son Jan, received the nobility certificate in the Estates Department in 1890 (Viddil Staniv) (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6а, c. 45, pp. 66–67). The rest of the Levytski families of the coat of arms of Rohalia and Pravdych were of the
Polish origin and quite distant from the Greek-Catholic clergy (Smotok & Smotok, 2020b, pp. 8–11). The surname Levytskyi (derived from a word “levyt”, which was used to nominate the priests among the Jews of the Old Testament period) was widely used among the Greek-Catholic clergy and indicated a hereditary belonging to a spiritual rank. Hence, L. Slyvka managed to find out fifty representatives of the Levytskyi family among the parish priests of the Przemyśl eparchy. The majority of them originated from old priest families, which, in fact, should be evidenced by the surname they used, and only a few representatives of this family community managed to become ennobled.

A similar situation could be traced among the Litynskyi family, in which only Jan, a parish priest from the village of Chukva, who came from Bilyna Velyka, belonged to the Litynskiy Piskorovychi family and received the nobility certificate in 1906 (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6a, c. 46, pp. 299–301). The rest thirteen people with the Litynskyi surname, mentioned by L. Slyvka, were probably the families of a priest or burgher origin. This group should also include the following family surnames: the Krynyshtski, the Polianski, the Leshchynski, the Borkovski, the Yanovski, the Kachkovski, the Kozlovski, the Savytski, the Vyslotski, the Volianski, etc. (Slyvka, 2014, pp. 152–153).

Hence, the nobility representation among the clergy of Przemyśl eparchy did not reach 30% or more. Obviously, it was much lower, between 10% and to 14%. However, even the following ratio – every tenth to seventh priest was a nobleman – indicates a considerable concentration of the nobility among the Greek-Catholic clergy. The data on the ratio of the nobility to the rest of the population illustrate the above mentioned. According to the calculations of Kr. Ślusarek, based on the military conscription, adult noble men made up only 3.0 – 3.7% of the rest of the inhabitants of Galicia at the end of the 18th – the beginning of the 19th century. During the following decades, until the middle of the 19th century, the increase among the nobility amounted to only 5%, while the population of Galicia increased by 60%. (Ślusarek, 1994, pp. 139–140). Hence, the amount of the nobility among the population was several times lower than the amount of the nobility among the Greek-Catholic clergy of Przemyśl Diocese.

It is obvious that priestly service attracted the Ukrainian nobility and was considered as one of the possible means to increase one’s social capital and occupy a worthy position in society. The above-mentioned attitude became more distinct during the 19th century, which was due to the gradual social evolution of both states. The authorities, under the Austrian rule, made efforts to raise the educational level of the Greek-Catholic clergy, and it paid off. Under the conditions of the Galician society modernization, when the demand for educated people engaged in intellectual work increased and they began to rise in the social hierarchy, the clergy also found themselves in this upward trend and despite the fact that the clergy’s material support remained modest (Himka, 1984, pp. 426–452; Kolb & Mysak, 2022, pp. 39–49; Pakholkiv, 2014, pp. 59–70; Kolb, 2015, pp. 34–54). At the end of the 19th century, from the point of view of social stereotypes, among “successful” professional groups, priesthood occupied its place alongside government officials, doctors, lawyers, and educators. The contemporaries stated about it the following: “at that time, relatives thought only that their son would finish High School studies, would pass the matriculation exam, would go to university and “make one’s way in life”, would become a priest, or a High School Professor, or a doctor, a judge, a lawyer, or in the end – a provincial government official, i.e. a government official in the imperial royal administration” (Shukhevych, 1991, p. 137; Godsey, 1999, pp. 73–77).

On the other hand, the Greek-Catholic nobility evolved in the opposite direction. Being not too wealthy, the Greek-Catholic nobility was declassified during the 19th century and at
the end of the 19th – the beginning of the 20th century turned into ordinary farmers. They were distinguished from the peasants only by certain elements of an everyday life, which among those around them were received rather as curiosity and anachronism (Ślusarek, 1994, pp. 127–132; Smutok & Lyseyko, 2019, pp. 69–70).

Hence, a priestly path was considered by the ordinary nobility as one of the means of improving their social position. Indirectly it was indicated by the fact that in noble families, where there were priests, as a rule, there were also lawyers, civil servants, teachers, military personnel, etc. A vivid example could be the Litynski Piskorovychi family from Bilyna Velyka. By the middle of the 19th century it was a typical Ukrainian noble family, one of hundreds of such families that lived in the noble estates in Sambir, Stryi and Przemyśl districts. They were engaged in agriculture, having at their disposal, according to the land cadastre of the 1780s, three hectares of land for two farms (CSHAUL, f. 19, d. XIV, c. 207, pp. 24–348). In the 1820s, their land ownership increased by several more hectares. Since that time, Yakym, John’s son, had 6 hectares, and Mykolai, Hryhoriy’s son – 3.5 hectares (CSHAUL, f. 20, d. XIV, c. 91, pp. 19–350). In the 1850s, the family was represented by Ivan (1797 – 1858) only (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6a, c. 41, p. 301; f. 201, d. 4a, c. 6250, pp. 4, 34). He had two sons, Mykhailo and Petro, and was married to Sophia Uyeiska, a Catholic. Mykhailo was known as a deputy of the Regional Diet in 1877 – 1882 (CSHAUL, f. 146, d. 4, c. 3172, p. 23). In 1878 – 1881, 1901 – 1903 Petro was elected as a deputy in the povit (district) department in Sambir, (Szematyzm, 1878, p. 266; Szematyzm, 1881, p. 261; Szematyzm, 1901, p. 329; Szematyzm, 1903, p. 352).

The next generations continued society career. Mykhailo had two sons. There was Boleslav among them, who studied for five years at the Faculty of Law at Lviv University in 1886 – 1891, and obtained Degree in Law. During the next two decades, his activities were one way or another connected with jurisprudence, he held various positions at the Povit (district) Courts in Sambir, Dolyna, Zhovkva, Kolomyia (Szematyzm, 1894, p. 71; Szematyzm, 1901, p. 86; Szematyzm, 1903, p. 89; Szematyzm, 1914, p. 147).

Petro’s sons chose a priestly path. Joseph and Ivan studied at Sambir gymnasium, both received theological education later. Joseph died suddenly on September 2, 1885, while he was a third-year student of either seminary or university (CSHAUL, f. 201, d. 4a, c. 6250, p. 46). Ivan graduated from the seminary, in 1883 he received priestly ordination and was sent to the parish in the village of Kamiana, Hrybivskyi deanery, where he served as a church administrator for three years. In 1886, Ivan was sent to the village of Hanchovy in Horodotsky deanery. In 1886 – 1887, he performed the duties of a church administrator, and from 1887 to 1897 he was appointed a pastor of a church in Hanchova. In 1897, Ivan moved to the village of Chukva of Sambir deanery and remained a parish priest in Chukva until his death (he died on April 15, 1908) (Blažejovskyj, 1995, p. 747). Petro’s third son, Mykolai, was the head of the community (gmina) in Bilyna Velyka (Szematyzm, 1911, p. 365; Szematyzm, 1914, p. 408).

The example of the Litynski Piskorovychi family is far from unique. For instance, Petro Bachynskyi Pukshyn, a parish priest in Voyutichy in the 1780s, had two sons, who also chose a priestly service: Basil became a parish priest in Tysovytsia, Mykolai – in Zhashkiv. Mykola had three sons in his marriage with Karolina Shpakovska. Among them, Emilian continued the career of his father and grandfather, and Ferdinand became a “conductor of regional roads”. Basil’s son Hilarion studied law and was an attorney in Stryi (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6a, c. 42, pp. 393, 487; c. 44, pp. 65–67; c. 45, p. 89). Hryhoriy Kuchytskyi Kolodchak, “a counter-inspector of the administration of excise taxes in Lviv” had two sons. Timotei Jan became a parish priest in Zadviria, and Mykolai
worked in the Regional Treasury Directorate (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6a, c. 46, pp. 353–356). Andriy Krynytskyi, a priest in Kryvyi, had a son – Lucian, the President of the District Court in Ternopil, and a son Bohdan Yulian Onufriy, a Doctor of Law and adviser to Lviv Regional Court in Stanislawiv (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6a, c. 46, pp. 192–194). The two sons among the descendants of Yuriy Topilnytskyi, a parish priest in Isaiyi, who chose the priesthood: Stefan was a parish priest in Topilnytsia, and Basil – in Rabchytsi; his third son, Jan, became a civil servant. Teofil Stefanovych was known from the next generation, who became an official at the Povit (District) Treasure Directorate. Basil’s son Yakub was a teacher, and his brother Anton performed pastoral duties in the village of Vanchyny of Berehzanskiy district. Jan’s son Ignatius was a government official of Lviv-Chernivtsi-Iaska railway. In the fourth generation of this family, Henryk Yosif, Anton’s son, stood out, who served as a povit (district) judge in Khodoriv (CSHAUL, f. 165, d. 6a, c. 42, p. 326; c. 43, p. 63; c. 44, p. 613, 685–687, 706–708, 885–888, 916).

The Conclusion. During the Astrian era, the nobility of Galicia continued to consider religious service as one of the spheres of life that were very important for them. During the 19th and early 20th centuries people of a noble origin accounted for 10–14%. The indicator was much lower than the data, which were used by domestic historians previously, claiming that almost a third of this clergy were the noblemen. Such a discrepancy was due to incorrect calculations based on the incorrect methodological principles. However, even 10–14% was a rather significant indicator, taking into account the fact that the nobility percentage was smaller and did not exceed 3% among the total population of Galicia. Hence, the nobility (shliakhta) considered church service not only as entirely possible, but also desirable for the self-realization in a social field. Primarily, it was due to the social evolution of the Ukrainian nobility and the clergy in the Austrian Empire. If the former declassified gradually and turned into ordinary farmers, losing their social significance, on the contrary, the latter – with the growth of a public demand for education and professionalization, managed to find their niche and occupy a great place among the elite of the modernizing Galician society. It was evidenced by unique examples from the history of individual families, in which the clergymen were invariably present alongside government officials, lawyers, doctors, and teachers.

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