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## Multitude of Images of Hryhorii Skovoroda in the Works of Kyiv Theological Academy Teachers and Students (19th – early 20th Century)

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## Multitude of Images of Hryhorii Skovoroda in the Works of Kyiv Theological Academy Teachers and Students (19th – early 20th Century)

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### Abstract

This is the first article recreating the full history of research on the Ukrainian philosopher Hryhorii Skovoroda made by students and teachers of the Kyiv Theological Academy in the second half of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century. The analysis highlights the qualitative diversity of research interpretations of Skovoroda's figure and his creative work in cultural, historical, and biographical contexts, while identifying common features that unite those different scientific perceptions. The article demonstrates that the academic research interest in Skovoroda's heritage was both due to the desire to introduce this little-known at that time figure of the Ukrainian thinker by creating a variety of attractive images, and to prove that idealistic direction prevailed in local philosophy since the beginning of its formation. Disclosing the multilayered structure of interpretations of Skovoroda present in the scientific studies of theological academic researchers, enabled the author to show simultaneous unity and diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches found within the national academic interpretational field and determined by different philosophical, scientific, cultural, educational, and sociopolitical priorities of researchers.

**Key Words:** Kyiv Theological Academy, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Hryhorii Skovoroda, religious philosopher, idealism, mysticism, moral doctrine.



One task of modern Ukrainian studies is to explore a local history of research into Hryhorii Skovoroda's life and heritage in Ukrainian science and culture. This story of "knowledge" about Skovoroda intends to represent a full picture-reconstruction of the stages of biography and research in the Ukrainian intellectual space, simultaneously, identifying certain patterns in the development of ideas about the Ukrainian thinker.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of writing down the history of intellectual journeys around Skovoroda, in

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1 A lot of work was done in this direction: bibliographical records were published – see Tetiana Dobko, "Suchasnyi rozvytok bibliohrafichnoi Skovorodiany [Modern Development of Bibliographic Skovorodiana]," *Bibliotechnyi visnyk* 3 (2007): 9–13; scientific studies were conducted about the perception of Skovoroda's heritage by some writers, philosophers, historians, and others. At the same time, there is a lack of generalizing works, which would reconstruct not only the chronology of studies of this subject, but also conceptually interpret the history of research. Most of all in this field was done by a Kharkiv researcher Leonid Ushkalov who gave a full bibliographic record of studies about the life and work of Skovoroda and presented the first attempt to

our opinion, should not be to discover the original or true image of this Ukrainian philosopher, abandoning numerous false interpretations that can distract us from truth. It should rather be a question of self-reflection and of illumination of the Ukrainian intellectual space where the figure of Skovoroda can serve a certain litmus test demonstrating its main features and trends. Therefore, the matter of search will no longer be the essence. It will be an image, or to be more precise, multiple images, multiple faces of the one in many research figure of Hryhorii Skovoroda, historically changing and unique. It becomes more important to shed light on the diverse perceptions of this figure, discovering which recipients become co-creators of his constantly renovating image.

This explorative study is the first attempt to identify the history of Skovoroda's image creation in a certain academic surrounding in Ukraine; namely, in the Kyiv Theological Academy of the 19th – 20th century. Professors and students of the new Academy, experiencing an inextricable connection and historical continuity of their *Alma Mater* with the Old Academy, could not stay away from the figure of the most famous student of the latter in their studies. It is especially because the history of studies about Skovoroda in the 19th and early 20th century coincides with the history of the pre-revolutionary Kyiv Theological Academy. Exemplified in one of the fields of work of professors and students in the Kyiv Theological Academy – Skovoroda's heritage studies in this institution during that period, we can find out the main features for understanding this prominent figure in the local theological and academic tradition. We can also show how colorful and multidimensional the intellectual world of the Kyiv Theological Academy was.

The history of Skovoroda studies in the Academy should begin even before the Kyiv Theological Academy was opened, with the first publication of the Ukrainian philosopher's works in 1789 owing to the efforts of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy graduate, Mykhailo Antonovskiy.<sup>2</sup>

Viktor Askochenskyi, a student (1835–1839) and a professor (1839–1846) of the Kyiv Theological Academy, a well-known early 20th century writer, publicist, and historian, can be called a founder of the Kyiv theological and academic scientific studies about Skovoroda. He is the author of one of the first biographies of Hr. Skovoroda (1855),<sup>3</sup> which was the first study in domestic and Russian science, based on the memories of Skovoroda's student and a friend, Mykhailo Kovalynskiy.<sup>4</sup> It is

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systematize and classify studies about Skovoroda. See Ushkalov, Leonid. *Hryhorii Skovoroda: seminarii [Hryhorii Skovoroda: Seminary]* (Kharkiv: Maidan, 2004).

2 See “Narkiss. Razglagol o tom: uznai sebe [A Reflection about: Get to Know Yourself],” in *Biblioteka dukhovnaia, sodержashchaia v sebe družheskie besedy o poznanii samogo sebia [Spiritual Library, Consisting of Friendly Conversations of Knowing Thyself]*, (Sankt-Peterburg: Izdanie Akademii nauk, 1798), 1–193.

3 See Viktor Askochenskii, “Grigorii Savich Skovoroda [Hryhorii Savych Skovoroda],” *Kievskie gubernskie vedomosti* 42 (1855): 269–71; 43 (1855): 273–75; 44 (1855): 278–9.

4 As Viktor Askochenskyi mentioned in his biographical essay, the manuscript *A Story about the Life of Skovoroda, Prepared by his Friend and Atudent Kovalynskiy* was presented to a Russian historian M. Pohodin in 1850, and kept in Empire Public Library.

considered the most reliable source about the life of the Ukrainian thinker. An explorative study was written about Skovoroda by Askochenskyi as a part of his historical essay “Kiev s drevneishim ego uchilishchem Akademiei” (1856; *Kyiv with its Oldest School – the Academy*).<sup>5</sup> This essay is still significant since it is one of the first attempts to reconstruct the period of formation of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy as an academic institution. Through the prism of cultural approach, actualizing the cultural historical and personal dimensions in the historical knowledge, the author realizes his idea to reproduce the history of an educational institution on the background of contemporary church and socio-political life. At the same time, the author demonstrates the history of interrelated educational, clerical, and political life through a wide range of persons, including Hryhorii Skovoroda, who actually created this history. Askochenskyi depicts this Ukrainian thinker in a popular literary manner – as a Byronic hero, rejected by the established society for his eccentric beliefs and unusual behavior. Being eager for knowledge and having an active inner spirit, in the author’s reception, Skovoroda belongs to those who could not be satisfied with their actual place and surrounding people; to those who, consequently, chose the path of “a free guest in this world.”<sup>6</sup> In the manor of a Kyiv landowner Tomara,<sup>7</sup> Askochenskyi got acquainted with handwritten records of Skovoroda works. Thus, in his exploratory study, he attempts to describe Skovoroda’s philosophical heritage. Determining the style and direction of his philosophizing, the author concludes that the main intention of Skovoroda’s philosophical searches was an attempt to read and decode the one great book of nature. In his desire to capture the wisdom of nature, Skovoroda can be named a “liubomudr” (loving wisdom), and due to prevailing in his doctrine religious-mystical components – a theosof. Defining Skovoroda as a “single and original philosopher of scientific and educated Ukraine,”<sup>8</sup> Askochenskyi puts his philosophy in one row with famous Western European mystical teachings of the 17th and 18th centuries: “Skovoroda became here, in Rus, what in the West were Behems, Helmonts, Pordecis, Swedenborgs and other thinkers known as theosofs.”<sup>9</sup>

Considering that in his philosophical inspiration Skovoroda sometimes deviates from the Orthodox Church doctrine, Askochenskyi does his best to protect the memory of this “outstanding person” and “national thinker” from the journalistic attacks of contemporary nihilistic intellectuals.

Ivan Yanovskyi – a bright representative of the Poltava church intellectuals, a 1881 graduate of the Kyiv Academy, shows some similarity in the characteristics

5 Viktor Askochenskii, *Kiev s drevneishim ego uchilishchem Akademiei* [*Kyiv with Its Oldest School, the Academy*], vol. 2 (Kyiv: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1856).

6 Askochenskii, “Grigorii Savich Skovoroda,” 44 (1855): 278.

7 Probably, here, Stepan Tomara is meant, a son of Skovoroda’s student and friend Vasyl, who inherited lands from his grandfather in the Pereiaslav region.

8 Askochenskii, “Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda,” 42 (1855): 270.

9 Askochenskii, “S odnoi storony obmolvka, a s drugoi nedomolvka [Slip of the Tongue on One Side, Omission on the Other Side].” In Viktor Askochenskii, *Za Rus Sviatuiu!* [*For Saint Rus!*] (Moscow: Institut russkoi civilizacii, 2014), 423.

combined with the different conclusions about the Ukrainian philosopher. While teaching in the Poltava Theological School,<sup>10</sup> Ivan Yanovskyi conducted the research about Ukrainian church history and archeology, and most of his studies were devoted to the prominent personalities of the Poltava region. No doubt, in his studies, Yanovskyi could not omit the figure of his compatriot and colleague through the years in the Academy whom he called “a prominent and powerful engine and a voice of the intellectual life of Malorossia in the previous century.”<sup>11</sup>

In his exploratory study, Yanovskyi first aims to popularize and to acquaint contemporary average readers with the inaccessible for many at that time works of Skovoroda. Yanovskyi provides a detailed biography of the Ukrainian philosopher, gives a list of known works at that time, and summarizes the ideas in the main works of the Ukrainian philosopher using abundant direct quotations from his texts. Yanovskyi characterizes the worldview and life interpretation of the thinker, emphasizing the close interrelation between his life, his worldview intuitions, and his philosophical beliefs. Based on the analysis (which was, in our opinion, incomplete) of the moral doctrine of Skovoroda, the author concludes that philosophical views of the thinker were not original and independent. Philosophy of Skovoroda, according to Yanovskyi, is an artificial imitation of ancient Greek doctrines developed by such philosophers as Socrates and Plato, fathers of patristic studies, as well as by medieval “alchemists, mystics and cabalists,”<sup>12</sup> mainly the representatives of Hermeticism (Agrippa Nettessheim and Paracels). This author also accounts for the influence of European mystical teachings of Bavarian Frank-Masons and Illuminates, which became possible thanks to Skovoroda’s glorious foreign journeys. At the same time, Yanovskyi discusses the close relation between Skovoroda’s philosophy and the widespread in Ukraine teachings of Doukhobors and Molokans. Thus, he denotes this topic in a broader context which was the role and significance of the Russian reformist movements (sectarianism) at that time – an issue vividly discussed at the end of the 19th century by historians and theologians of the Kyiv Theological Academy. Yanovskyi finds some correlation between the teachings: in their common basis of mysticism and the religious basis of German rationalism. Despite external similarity, the teachings retain internal differences: it was mystically idealistic in Skovoroda but mystically active in the religious movements, aimed at implementing the believed principles into life. Yanovskyi has doubts about the figure of Skovoroda as an original philosopher and theorist while respecting him as a national teacher and practitioner. In essence, the only trait of this personality which attracts the author is his endless love for his nation

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10 Ivan Yanovskyi originated from the Poltava region, and even since student times, he dreamed of being a teacher in his native land. On his own request, he taught Greek in the school from 1882 and till the end of his sport life. See N. Fialkovskii, “Ivan Petrovich Yanovskii [Ivan Petrovich Janovskyi],” *Poltavskie eparkhialnyie vedomosti* 35 (1900): 2262.

11 Ivan Yanovskii, “G. S. Skovoroda [H. S. Skovoroda],” *Poltavskie eparkhialnyie vedomosti*, 5 (1884): 218.

12 *Ibid.*, 9 (1884): 516.

and concern about their unsatisfactory moral and mental development. The provided characteristic must be an echo of the guidelines of a socio-ideological movement which was powerful in the 1870's, the so-called "walking to the people."

Orest Novytskyi, a student (1827–1831) and professor of the Kyiv Theological Academy, discusses the important research topic of the relation between Skovoroda's ideological guidelines with the teachings of local reformists in his scientific exploratory study about Dukhobors.<sup>13</sup> Particularly, analyzing the roots of Dukhobors' creed he assumes Skovoroda's authorship of the text "Creed of the Dukhobors from Yekaterinoslav." As evidence for this, Novytskyi lists such features of this source, as literacy of the text, good knowledge of the Scripture and foreign languages, linguistic elegance, and the use of Ukrainian words. This Kyiv professor assumes that poorly educated Dukhobors could probably ask Skovoroda as a national teacher to formulate and write down the foundations of their faith.<sup>14</sup>

The figure of Skovoroda attracts the research interest of two well-known Ukrainophiles from the Poltava region, a student of the Kyiv Academy, Pamfil Levytskyi (Archbishop Parfenii) and Pavlo Zhytetskyi. In his essay about the history of Pereiaslav Theological School published on the pages of a Ukrainian periodical "Kievskaiia Starina" (Kyivan Antiquity) Levytskyi, who studied at the Academy in 1880–1884, has memories of Skovoroda as a teacher who belongs to the famous persons in the history of Ukrainian culture.<sup>15</sup>

Heritage of Hryhorii Skovoroda is also one of the objects of interest in the literary studies for a famous researcher of Ukraine Zhytetskyi (a student of the Kyiv Theological Academy in 1857–1860). In a well-known exploratory study "Eneida' Kotliarevskogo i drevneishii spisok ejo" (Aeneid by Kotlyarevsky and its Most Ancient Record),<sup>16</sup> published in the Ukrainian journal "Kievskaiia starina," Zhytetskyi attempts to portray the spirituality of Skovoroda in detail. The final scene of the image he portrayed looks like a text within a text, which is not accidental. This specific feature of Zhytetskyi's creative approach was accurately defined by an expert in Ukrainian literature Serhii Yefremov: he tried to present the past in all his diversity, "as a complex consequence of life with its diverse cross-linked influences."<sup>17</sup>

13 See Orest Novitskii, *Dukhobortsy. Ikh istoriia i verouchenie* [*Dukhobors. Their History and Creed*] (Kyiv: Tipografia universiteta, 1882).

14 Ibid., 211.

15 See Pamfil Levitskii, "Proshloie pereiaslavskogo dukhovnogo uchilishcha [The Past of Pereiaslav Theological School]," *Kievskaiia starina* 24, (1889): 433. In this essay, there is a detailed description of educational-pedagogical processes in the school, a reconstruction of the general atmosphere of teaching in this school in the times of Skovoroda.

16 Pavlo Zhitetskii, "Eneida' Kotliarevskogo i drevneishii spisok yeyo ['Aeneid' of Kotliarevskyi and Its Most Ancient Record]," *Kievskaiia starina* 47 (1899): 127–66.

17 Serhii Yefremov, "Pamiati P. I. Zhytetskoho [In the Memory of P. I. Zhytetskyi]," *Rada* 53 (1911): 43.

On the other hand, at the end of the 19th century, contemporary intellectual life on the Ukrainian and Russian territories experienced a surge of research interest in the heritage of Skovoroda, primarily due to the celebration of the centenary of his death in 1894. Following the method of search for diversity in the past, Zhytetskyi approaches to understand the image of Skovoroda from several angles and raises several questions important for the contemporary development of the Ukrainian studies and Ukrainian national movement. First of all, it was the question of language. Describing how in the 18th century the Ukrainian version of the book *Slavic-Russian language* was gradually replaced with its Russian invariant and the Russian literary language as a result of the annexation of Ukrainian lands to the Russian Empire, and basing on the works of Skovoroda, Zhytetskyi proves the fact that “Slavic-Malorossian language” was used outside academic surrounding of that time. On the other hand, an activist of “Stara Hromada” and a representative of Ukrainian populism, Zhytetskyi raises an important for the Ukrainian national movement question. Previously raised by Ukrainian writers since 1870s, the question of relation between intellectuals and the people, interest to their interests, needs and life,<sup>18</sup> was finally vocalized in 1890 by Trokhym Zinkivskyi in his call to become intellectuals for their own people. From this perspective, Zhytetskyi presents a so-called destruction of Skovoroda’s established image of a national teacher, questioning his attitude to native people and Ukrainian history, and the extent to which his ideas were widespread and available to unsophisticated people. Zhytetskyi defines the main features of Skovoroda’s philosophical outlook denying a widespread opinion that his philosophy was eclectic and tries to find the main idea of his philosophy which would show the integrity of his doctrine while demonstrating that his emergence in the contemporary Ukrainian society was not accidental.<sup>19</sup> This basic intention, according to Zhytetskyi, is a desire to comprehend the moral question of what true happiness for a person is. Answering this question, Skovoroda appeals not to the external but through self-perception to the internal world of a person. This explains his indifference to society, to the world of human coexistence, socio-political and church realities, indifference to the past of his homeland, and “the lack of historical sentiment.”<sup>20</sup> The feat of self-denial, placing the sense of life into freedom from the desires of this world makes Skovoroda, according to Zhytetskyi, a representative of a widespread in his time strata of Ukrainians known as wandering diaks (priests) who emerged from the academic surrounding, did not have a permanent job and place of residence, and who were a kind of educated adventurers of that time.<sup>21</sup> Despite self-denial of all sorts of social norms and wandering lifestyle Skovoroda, in the opinion of Zhytetsky, nevertheless, did not become a national teacher and a philosopher for

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18 Serhii Yefremov, *Istoriia ukrainskoho pysmenstva [History of Ukrainian Writers]* (Kyiv: Femina, 1995), 497.

19 Zhitetskii, “Eneida’ Kotliarevskogo,” 136.

20 Ibid., 139.

21 Pavlo Zhitetskii, “Stranstvuiushchie shkolniki v starinnoi Malorossii [Itinerant Students in Old Malorossia],” *Kievskaiia starina* 36 (1892): 194.

average people. It is true that the energy of his personality which was realized in the integrity of his own ideological principles and life, had a certain educational impact on contemporary society. However, the place where he found shelter, support, audience of listeners, and students was not among unsophisticated people, but among the Ukrainian intellectuals.<sup>22</sup> Zhytetsky refuses to call Skovoroda a national writer considering his style, expressive form, language of his works, but most importantly, for the lack of social consciousness, for the lack of “serious concern about the fate of people among which he was born.”<sup>23</sup> Based on these features, Zhytetskyi compares Skovoroda to Hohol, considering them both typical representatives of the Ukrainian intellectuals who “broke the historical, cultural and ideological ties with the people.”<sup>24</sup>

An opposite appraisal of the life understanding of Skovoroda can be found in Mykola Stelletsykyi, an alumnus of the Kyiv Theological Academy (1884–1888) and a prominent representative of the Kharkiv University Intellectual Circle. Honoring the 100th anniversary of the death of Skovoroda, in 1894, Stelletsykyi simultaneously publishes a comprehensive biographical sketch about the Ukrainian thinker in two well-known Kyiv journals,<sup>25</sup> supplemented by the description of his fundamental philosophical principles. A brief biography of Skovoroda is also presented in the exploratory study of Stelletsykyi devoted to the Kharkiv Collegium.<sup>26</sup> Stelletsykyi creates an image of Skovoroda as a national mentor and enlightener (directly opposed

22 Zhitetskii, “Eneida’ Kotliarevskogo,” 147.

23 Ibid., 152.

24 Pavlo Zhitetskii, “Gogol – propovednik i pisatel [Hohol – Preacher and Writer],” *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia* 23 (1909): 47–8.

25 See Nikolai Stelletsykyi, “Stranstvuiushchii ukrainskii filosof Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda [Itinerant Ukrainian Philosopher Hryhorii Savvykh Skovoroda],” *Kievskie eparkhialnyie vedomosti* 20 (1894): 609–626; N. Stelletsykyi, “Stranstvuiushchii ukrainskii filosof Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda [Itinerant Ukrainian Philosopher Hryhorii Savvykh Skovoroda],” *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 7 (1894): 449–478; 8 (1894): 608–29. The content of both articles is almost identical, except for that in the academic journal a vaster exposition of Skovoroda’s philosophical teaching is given. In this work, Stelletsykyi substantiated the need in creating a full detailed biography of Skovoroda, analyzing the previous efforts of biography making more as certain impressions about his personality than full scientific biographies.

26 See Nikolai Stelletsykyi, *Kharkovskii kollegium do preobrazovaniia ego v 1817 godu [The Kharkiv Collegium after Its Transformation in 1817]* (Kharkov: Tipografia gubernskogo pravleniia, 1895). This work presents the history of foundation of this institution, specifics of educational-pedagogical practices of this school, information about teachers and famous alumni of this collegium. The author has no doubt that Skovoroda was one of the first famous teachers of this Collegium. The preserved short biography of Skovoroda more concerns the Kharkiv period of his life. The author describes academic activities of Skovoroda and gives his own interpretation of the reasons for Skovoroda’s discharge from the collegium as unfriendly and jealous attitudes among his colleagues, who were incapable of reaching the top of his philosophy. His friends among teachers of the Collegium are also mentioned: a rhetoric teacher Ivan Dvyhubskyi who lately became a professor in the Moscow University.

to the one provided by Zhytetskyi). Stelletsnyi proves that being among plain folk not only was a typical behavior of the Ukrainian philosopher and a manifestation of his sympathies to the people, but also a conscious theoretical principle. Being permanently among plain folk, Skovoroda, in the reception of Stelletsnyi, tried to study their nature, will, language and customs. As well as Zhytetskyi, Stelletsnyi analyzes the work of Skovoroda accounting for the hard social-political reality on the 18th century Ukrainian territories, expressed in the serfdom of peasantry and deprivation of freedoms and political rights from the Cossacks. However, conclusions he makes are different. Stelletsnyi comprehends the figure of Skovoroda as “a vivid protest against the developing serfdom and humiliation of the rural population,”<sup>27</sup> and his creativity – as the first literary protest in Ukraine against the humiliation of common people. In our opinion, Stelletsnyi’s description of Skovoroda as a national enlightener and a defender of national interests is not accidental. It becomes evident in the context of the other topics of his works. Another important object of studies for this Kharkiv professor was the phenomenon of rapidly spreading socialism<sup>28</sup> – a social ideology which became a kind of moral outlook and a religious doctrine among local intellectuals. While deconstructing and de-masking the principles of socialism, and contrasting them to Christian idealistic moral virtues, in his description of Skovoroda Stelletsnyi purposefully emphasizes the aspects close to the ideological fundamentals of socialism (emancipation of people, fight for their rights and other) to show similarities between socialism and Christianity in terms of welfare for the human. He tries to draw attention of his contemporaries to the Ukrainian ethical and socio-political ideas, performing an apology of the moral doctrine of Skovoroda based on idealistic foundations of the Christian worldview. Moreover, in this respect it seems important how the author appeals to Skovoroda’s figure as a vivid realization of his own moral ideals and principles (first of all, of the most important idea of the good).<sup>29</sup> An expert in the field of moral theology, Stelletsnyi tries to prove the direct connection of Skovoroda’s philosophy with the church tradition, describing his teaching as a philosophical interpretation of latent, concealed biblical meanings, thus protecting Skovoroda from being accused of deviation from orthodoxy.<sup>30</sup> Making

27 Stelletsnyi, “Stranstvuiushchii ukrainskii filosof,” *Trudy* 8 (1894): 614.

28 Nikolai Stelletsnyi, “Sotsializm – ego istoriia i kriticheskaia otsenka s khristianskoi tochki zreniia [Socialism: Its History and Critical Evaluation from the Christian Point of View],” *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 8 (1904):469–89; 9 (1904): 160–79; 11 (1904): 381–99; 2 (1905): 220–45; 4 (1905): 576–97; 6 (1905): 191–212; 8 (1905): 560–605.

29 Stelletsnyi, “Stranstvuiushchii ukrainskii filosof,” *Trudy* 8 (1894): 628.

30 Mykola Stelletsnyi stresses the coherence between the philosophical teaching of Skovoroda and Christianity. Nevertheless, he had to admit that the chosen allegorical means of reasoning, with the help of which he attempted to add philosophical sense to biblical images, not always led to correct, or coherent with orthodox, interpretations. In the 1895 work “The Kharkiv Collegium before its transformation in 1817,” he mentioned that in its theoretical aspect the philosophy of Skovoroda is much alike the mystical philosophy of Jacob Behem; meanwhile, in his later essays at the beginning of the 20th century, he omits such comparisons.

emphasis on such a unique feature of Skovoroda as religious enthusiasm, Stelletskyi pictures Skovoroda as a Russian Socrates, a prophet who announces the beginning of a new era – the era of philosophy in Russia.

Beginning of the 20th century was the time when another perspective in the interest of Kyiv Theological Academy thinkers to Skovoroda's figure appeared. These studies were conducted during intense preparation for celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy<sup>31</sup> founding, the educational and theological traditions of which were followed by the Kyiv Theological Academy (this fact was constantly emphasized). Intellectual events of the first decade took place in search of the image of the original Old Academy and were marked with an increase in the number of well-grounded historical studies, edition of archives about the history of the Academy (Fedir Tytov, Stepan Holubiev, Mykola Petrov, Dmytro Vyshnevskyi, etc.). In this field of research, scientific interest in Skovoroda arises; above all, as in one of the most prominent alumni of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. In the published in 1904 by Petrov archival sources about the history of this institution, we find the name of Skovoroda in the nominal lists of the Kyiv Academy students (in particular, among the students of Theology in 1748–1752), and also his short biography in the information about notable secular people who graduated from the Academy.<sup>32</sup> The same year, describing the record of manuscripts of the Kyiv Theological Academy archive kept in the Kyiv-Sofia Library, Petrov attributed a preserved manuscript to Skovoroda, in particular, his work *Knyzhechka, shcho nazyvaetsia "Silensus Alcibiadis," tobtto icona* (A Small Book called Silenus Alcibiadis. That is Alkiviad's Ikon).<sup>33</sup> Later, in 1916, Petrov's student, a graduate of the Kyiv Theological Academy (1907–1911) Oleksandr Lebediev, continuing his mentor's work (whom he calls the "king of Kyiv archives"), publishes an updated description of the manuscript collection of the Church-Archaeological Museum at the Kyiv Theological Academy, and attributes the

31 This task was given in the academic speech of the rector of the Kyiv Spiritual Academy in 1901, bishop Dymytrii (Kovalnytsky), who proves there is a need in vast research to prepare for the celebration of the Academy's anniversary: "Before the day the Academy enters its fourth century, we have to present the image of our Mother to all the Russian educated people in all its three hundred years magnitude [...]." See "K priblizhaiushchemusia trehsotletnemu yubileiu Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii [For Approaching Third Hundred Anniversary of the Kyiv Theological Academy]," *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 11 (1901): 1.

32 See *Akty i dokumenty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Kievskoi Akademii. Otdelenie II (1721–1795)* [Statements and Documents Related to the History of the Kyiv Academy: Section II, 1721–1795], vol. II (1721–1750), pt. 2 (Kyiv: Tipografia Chokolova, 1904), VIII, 267, 312, 430; *Akty i dokumenty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii Kievskoi Akademii. Otdelenie II (1721–1795)* [Statements and Documents Related to the History of the Kyiv Academy (1721–1795)], vol. I (1721–1750), pt. 1 (Kyiv: Tipografia Chokolova, 1904), 298.

33 Nikita Petrov, *Opisanie rukopisnykh sobranii, nahodiashchikhsia v g. Kieve. Biblioteka Kievo-Sofiskogo sobora* [Description of the Manuscripts Situated in Kyiv. The Library of the Kyiv Sofia Cathedral] (Moscow: Tipografia universiteta, 1904), 65, 208.

preserved in the museum 12 volumes of manuscripts to Skovoroda (10 of which were autographs).<sup>34</sup>

In the special scientific studies devoted to Skovoroda, we see how the focus of attention concentrates on the Kyiv period of life of the Ukrainian philosopher. In particular, in the research of prof. Mykola Petrov *Pervyi (malorossiiskii) period zhizni i nauchno-filosofskogo razvitiia Grigoriia Savvicha Skovorody* (The First [Malorussian] Period of Life and Scientific Philosophical Development of Hryhorii Savych Skovoroda)<sup>35</sup> for the first time in scientific literature, the emphasis on the local academic sources of Skovoroda's work is made.<sup>36</sup> In this paper, Petrov proves that the basic principles of Skovoroda's philosophical worldview were formed mainly during the period of his studies in the Kyiv Academy, where he received a "scientific philosophical leaven: here, he began formulating his original philosophical worldview but revealed and started spreading it in Slobidska Ukraine."<sup>37</sup>

Determining the circle of academic influences on the formation of philosophical outlook of Skovoroda, Petrov insists on the idea that during the period of his studies, the Academy had rather favourable conditions for the definition of "the philosophical goals of Skovoroda the main features of which were formed here."<sup>38</sup> It became possible owing to a gradual transition to a more progressive system of education in the 18th

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34 Alexandr Lebedev, *Rukopisi tserkovno-arkheologicheskogo muzeia Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* [Manuscripts of Church Archeological Museum of the Kyiv Theological Academy], vol. 1 (Saratov: Elektro-tipografiia "Volga", 1916), 133–4. Lebedev describes the way of this manuscript: offsprings of Kovalynskyi handed over the manuscripts to a famous historian of church Archbishop Filaret (Humilevskyi). Probably, this event took place when Filaret was the bishop of Kharkiv and Akhtyrka in 1848–1859. Later, one of Filaret's descendants passed the manuscripts to Serhii Myropolskyi who taught philosophy and pedagogy in the Kharkiv Spiritual Seminary in 1860s. Myropolskyi presented those manuscripts to the museum. As Lebedev mentioned, the works preserved in the museum are unique regarding their completeness and authenticity. That is why prof. Bahalei used exactly this collection.

35 See Nikita Petrov, *Pervyi (malorossiiskii) period zhizni i nauchno-filosofskogo razvitiia Grigoriia Savvicha Skovorody* [The First (Malorussian) Period of Life and Scientific Philosophical Development of Hryhorii Savych Skovoroda] (Kyiv: Tip. I. I. Gorbunova, 1902). This work is based on the lecture at the 12th archaeological meeting in Kharkiv. Compared to the essay written by Stelletsykyi, Petrov's version better corresponds to the norms of historical science because it includes all the necessary quotations; first of all, on archival sources.

36 Skovoroda's biography presented in the lecture was later updated when the new information about Skovoroda's studying in the Academy appeared (years of studies were specified, as well as the names of his professors and the courses he took) and the period when he taught for "additional classes" in the Kharkiv Collegium. See Nikolai Petrov, "K biografii ukrainskogo filosafo Grigoriia Savicha Skovorody [For the Biography of the Ukrainian Philosopher Hryhorii Savych Skovoroda]," *Kievskaiia starina* 81 (1903): 10–8.

37 Petrov, *Pervyi (malorossiiskii) period zhizni*, 1.

38 *Ibid.*, 25.

century, with the introduction of new subjects into the curriculum (history, mathematics, foreign languages), and qualitative changes in the courses. Petrov appreciates the scientific reformatory effort of Teofan Prokopovych he made in the development of academic education on the new groundings, with a spirit of renaissance of classicism. His followers, the direct mentor of Skovoroda, Hryhorii Konyskyi and his academic colleague Samuil Myslavskyi continue the course started by Teofan Prokopovych. Expanding the interpretation of classicism as a certain ideological paradigm, Petrov considers Skovoroda one of the prominent representatives of the renaissance of classicism, because in classical and contemporary literature, he found the necessary means to solve modern ethical problems and tasks. In his earlier essays on the history of Ukrainian literature, Petrov shows the role and significance Teofan Prokopovych had on the reformation of humanities in the Kyiv Academy and the revival of the principles of classicism and humanism in the theory of poetics and rhetoric. Influence of Prokopovych affected the transformational processes in contemporary literature with the appearance of the new literature, different from the dead scholastic one, which represented “vivid literal interests of south-Russian students,”<sup>39</sup> and was aimed at developing the national feeling and taste. Presenting the literary dramatic and poetic works of Skovoroda as a reflection of those transformational processes, Petrov distinguishes such its specific features as the tinge of local Ukrainian secular color, raising church social issues, and focusing on personal lyrical experiences of the author.

According to Petrov, starting from the first half of the 18th century, the transformational processes took place in the field of teaching philosophy in the Academy. They were indicated by the attempts to reform the philosophical course based on the new principles moving forwards the denial and rejection of scholastic moments and modernization of education. Petrov shares a negative view on scholastic philosophy in the Academy. He considers it a reactionary old-fashioned phenomenon, an obstacle in the way of academic education and science and contrasts it to the achievements of modern philosophy. Popovych introduced the course of ethics and added the analysis of Hexameron and the achievements of patrology to the course of natural philosophy. Those innovations indicated the modernization of education. Skovoroda's teacher Konyskyi, in his philosophical course, replaced dialectics with ethics, which had a significant impact, according to Petrov, on the direction of thought of Skovoroda. Petrov observes the direct influence of Konyskyi on the formation of philosophical views of Skovoroda, notes the consent of their ethical views, expressed in their similar understanding of philosophy as a good (happy) human life, and their

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39 Nikita Petrov, “Kievskaja iskusstvennaia literatura 18 veka, preimushchestvenno dramaticheskaja [Kyiv Fiction Literature of the 18th Century, Mainly Dramatic],” *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 4 (1879): 453; Nikita Petrov, *Ocherki iz istorii russkoi literatury 18 v. Kievskaja iskusstvennaia literatura 18 veka, preimushchestvenno dramaticheskaja [Essays on the History of Russian Literature in the 18th Century, Mainly Dramatic]* (Kyiv: Tipografia Korchak-Novitskogo, 1880), 17, 19, 26, 93.

interpretation of ethics as a means of getting to know oneself and neighboring people. Petrov believes that the Kyiv Academy created all the proper conditions for the intellectual growth of Skovoroda, which is why its alumni had the best educational and scientific potential to continue their education abroad. At the same time, Petrov emphasizes on the equal access to education in the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy for all strata of population, which created the best conditions for further communication of its students because the formation of space for intellectual interaction contributed to their further self-education, as Skovoroda's experience demonstrates. Skovoroda develops the philosophical directions cultivated in the Academy further, as Petrov shows, during the Kharkiv period of his life, rejecting the scholastic elements and focusing on the ancient classics, Bible, patristic and contemporary literature.<sup>40</sup>

In a biographical essay, Petrov presents the personality of Skovoroda as a pronouncer of idealistic direction in philosophy and a defender of moral and religious principles:

Skovoroda, being a philosopher and a moralist, both in his own life, and vivid words, and his works, demonstrated a superior moral ideal to the contemporary society and held a constant struggle against materialism and a utilitarian mindset, suppressing higher demands of the soul.<sup>41</sup>

The description given by this historian makes evident how timely the representatives of the Kyiv Theological Academic community turned to the heritage of Skovoroda, especially regarding his moral doctrine. One of the specific features of the Kyiv Theological Academic thought in the second half of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century was an effort to withstand the rapid spread of a materialistic and positivistic worldview in the contemporary society, based on the principles of exact sciences, and within which the “harmful” influence of metaphysical theories and religious beliefs were rejected. Supporting the idealistic worldview,<sup>42</sup> admitting the absolute importance of religious and moral values and imperatives, arguing for the priority of internal spiritual life of people over its external material realizations, Kyiv thinkers turned to the works of Skovoroda as a bright example of values and priorities they stood for. The appeal to the figure of Skovoroda and to his heritage should be considered not only an attempt to remind the contemporary society of this prominent thinker, but also an attempt to convince the positivistic and materialistic society of the priority of idealistic worldview and outlook on life. That is why those works permanently emphasize the role of Skovoroda as a founder of Ukrainian philosophy, which means

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40 Petrov, *Pervyi (malorossiiskii) period zhizni*, 31.

41 *Ibid.*, 1.

42 We can state that philosophical views of Skovoroda and of Kyiv Theological Academic philosophers were coherent and based on philosophical idealistic intuitions of Platonic type.

he was a founder of a new era in the native culture, marked by the formation of authentic philosophy, which, from its very beginning, was developed on metaphysical and religious principles.

Interpretation proposed by Petrov is further developed in the exploratory studies of another student of the Kyiv Theological Academy (1900–1904) Vasyl Leontovskiy. He must be the only author<sup>43</sup> in history of the Academy who wrote a candidate's thesis devoted to the philosophical heritage of Skovoroda on the topic *Religious and Philosophic Speculations of H. S. Skovoroda in their Relation to and Dependence on the Philosophical Courses Taught in the Kyiv Academy* (1904).<sup>44</sup> Dissertation of Leontovskiy reflects the typical features of the Kyiv Theological Academy student philosophical outlook in the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, it can be a good illustration of student scientific and creative interests and priorities. The research question put in the thesis statement suggested the problematics for this search: to determine the extent to which philosophical courses listened by Skovoroda in the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy influenced the formation of his philosophical views. In essence, the candidate aimed at expanding the scientific statements formulated by Professor Petrov. In his scientific studies, Petrov concluded that the influence of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy courses on Skovoroda's works was direct, mainly, based on the analysis of the philological courses in the theory of poetics and rhetoric, not exactly on the philosophical and theological courses. The candidate's thesis of Leontovskiy, as we assume, had to fulfill this research gap, especially because such a perspective of the research topic had not been realized earlier. Leontovskiy achieves that objective through the text analysis of the handwritten lists of courses which were taught during Skovoroda's education in the Kyiv Academy; first of all, the philosophical courses of Heorhii Konyskiy (his courses of ethics and metaphysics) and the theological course of Stefan Liaskoronskiy. The conclusion of this comparative analysis of the content and form of the Kyiv Mohyla courses and Skovoroda's philosophical works was directly opposite to the stated topic. According to Leontovskiy, "quasi" philosophical or "quasi" theological systems, developed in the courses of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy professors, have nothing to do with the authentic philosophy of Skovoroda. Therefore, one could not claim there was any philosophical

43 Our search among candidates' works has not resulted in finding specific studies dedicated to Skovoroda. The topic of this thinkers' teaching activities in Slobidska Ukraine is covered (insufficiently, according to the reviewers) in the candidate's thesis "Church life of Slobidska Ukraine in the 17th – 18th centuries" of 1915 alumni Borys Volobuiev. See "Izvlachenie iz zhurnalov Soveta Imperatorskoi Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii za 1914–1915 uchebnyi god [Extract from Records of the Kyiv Theological Academy Council, 1914–1915 Academic Year]," *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* 1 (1916): 299–304.

44 See Vasiliy Leontovskii, *Religiozno-filosofskie vozzreniia G. S. Skovorody v sviazi s prepodavshimisia v Kievskoi Akademii kursami filosofii i v zavisimosti ot nikh* [*Religious and Philosophic Speculations of H. S. Skovoroda in Their Relation to and Dependence on the Philosophical Courses Taught in the Kyiv Academy*], 1904 [Manuscript] (Manuscript Institute, V. I. Vernadskiy National Library of Ukraine, f. 304, dissertation 1815).

or theological dependence of the religious and philosophical views of Skovoroda on the philosophy in the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. This conclusion was directly influenced by the world outlook and research bias of Leontovskyy (which he inherited from Petrov and most of the Kyiv Theological Academy historians) because the scholastic philosophy used in philosophical and theological courses in the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy was thought to be not viable and out-of-date: “limited to scholastic interpretations and comments which resemble of the so-called dead philosophy, alien to real research of the facts of life and mental processes.”<sup>45</sup>

Consequently, in his work, Leontovskyy denies, in his own words, the genetic connection between the dead scholastics of Mohyla courses and a vivid, up-to-date philosophy of Skovoroda, which was ahead of its time regarding the way the questions were asked. There is nothing similar between the Mohyla’s philosophy: non-independent, traditional, immersed in the infinite process of more and more precise divisions and classifications;<sup>46</sup> and the philosophy of Skovoroda, with its original spirit and diverse content and shape.<sup>47</sup>

At the same time, the research manner of Leontovskyy and the way he considers basic ideas in the philosophy of Skovoroda reflect the ideas interesting for the students of the Academy of that time. In particular, he explores the philosophy of Skovoroda from the point of view of the relation between faith and reason<sup>48</sup> – one of the core questions for the Kiev Theological Academy philosophy. Philosophical interests of the author are illustrated when he compares philosophical ideas of Skovoroda to the ideas of Kant and Nietzsche. In addition, when Leontovskyy tries to describe the unique style of Skovoroda’s philosophizing, he appeals to the works of a famous Kyiv Psychiatrist Prof. Ivan Sikorskyi in the field of studying the specifics of the psyche of gifted people. In particular, Leontovskyy explains the chaotic, internally contradictory, and strange teaching of Skovoroda is due to his original mental constitution. The author reckons Skovoroda among that type of strange personalities who have sensitive morbid mental organization (such as Fedir Dostoievsky, Mykola Hohol, Friedrich Nietzsche), and explains that the phenomenon of a “strange Ukrainian poet” emerged due to the cultural and historical circumstances, which was the moral decay of contemporary society.<sup>49</sup>

Later, Leontovskyy partially published the thesis statements of his dissertation in a separate exploratory study,<sup>50</sup> and in the collection of “Trudy Poltavskoi uchenoi

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45 Ibid., 21.

46 Ibid., 25.

47 Ibid., 29.

48 In this work Leontovskyy describes Skovoroda’s worldview as religious and philosophical, originally synthesizing the faith and the reason, thus contrasting both to the extremes of scholastics and to the folk superstitions. See Leontovskii, *Religiozno-filosofskiiie vozzreniia*, 106, 138–9.

49 Ibid., 148–52.

50 In his student years, Leontovskyy already published a brochure under the pseudonym – see Veiel, *Strannyi filosof* [*Strange Philosopher*] (Kyiv: Izd. zhurnala “Yugo-Zapadnaia Nedelia”, 1903).

arkhivnoi komissii” (Works of Poltava Academic Archival Commission).<sup>51</sup> It is worth noting that Leontovskiy was the first to publish (in 1904) the work of Skovoroda *A Small Book Called Silenus Alcibiadis. That is Alkiviad’s Ikon*.<sup>52</sup> Leontovskiy made a copy of this work during his student years using a handwritten record of the Kyiv Theological Academy archive kept in the Kyiv Sofia Library and added it to the text of his candidate’s thesis as an appendix.<sup>53</sup>

In preface to his dissertation, as well as in his later publications, Leontovskiy raises a rather topical question, disgraceful for the history of the Kyiv Theological Academy’s philosophy – the question of destructive, peremptory criticism against the idealistic theological-academic tradition, by the nihilistic representatives among the Russian journalists. In his publications, Leontovskiy mentions bellicose critical attacks on Skovoroda’s heritage from a famous Russian publicist Vsevolod Krestovskiy in 1861, which stand in one row with the similar sort of impudent literary attacks of the leaders of the Russian democracy, Mykola Chernyshevskiy, Maksim Antonovich, and others, on the Kyiv Theological Academy philosophers Orest Novytskyi and Pamfil Yurkevich. Leontovskiy, applying the scientific principles of impartiality and objectivity in his explorative studies, advances a slogan of complete deconstruction of the established

51 Vasyl Leontovskii, “Kharakterniye cherty lichnosti G. S. Skovorody i ego ‘Zmii izrail’skii’ [Specific Features of H. S. Skovoroda’s Personality and His ‘Serpent of Israel’],” *Trudy Poltavskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii* 4 (1907): 173–210; Vasyl Leontovskii, “Poltavskii myslitel-poet Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda i genezis ego filosofii (Opyt arhivno-filosofskogo analiza) [Poltava Thinker-Poet Hryhory Savvich Skovoroda and the Genesis of His Philosophy (Experience of Archival-Philosophical Analysis)],” *Trudy Poltavskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii* 5 (1908): 107–33; Vasyl Leontovskii, “K tekstu ‘Zmii Izrail’skii’: vospolneniie probela [Back to the Text ‘The Serpent of Israel’: Filling the Gap],” *Trudy Poltavskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii* 5 (1908): 226–8. The content of dissertation on the comparative analysis between Kyiv-Mohyla courses and Skovoroda’s philosophy is not shown. It can be due to the sharp criticism of the author’s statements by the reviewers of this candidate’s work, assistant professor Pesotskiy and Professor Petrov – see *Izvlechenie iz zhurnalov Soveta Imperatorskoi Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii za 1903–1904 uchebnyi god* [Extract from Records of the Kyiv Theological Academy Council, 1903–1904 Academic Year] (Kyiv: Tip. I. I. Gorbunova, 1904), 321–6. Instead, the author makes a short conclusion that Skovoroda received the general background or the scientific philosophical leaven of his worldview during his studying in the Kyiv Academy. This statement was not covered in the previously mentioned articles. It was a simple repetition of the summary of Petrov. Probably, the authoritative view of the respected scientist and mentor prevailed above Leontovskiy’s own view on this matter.

52 Vasyl Leontovskii, “Kharakterniye cherty,” 173–210. The most famous researcher of Skovoroda’s heritage Leonid Ushkalov was mistaken while saying that the first edition of the full text of this work was in Saint-Petersburg edition of Skovoroda’s works in 1912. See Hryhorii Skovoroda, *Povna akademichna zbirka tvoriv* [Complete Academic Collection of Works], ed. Leonid Ushkalov (Kharkiv; Edmonton; Toronto: Maidan; Vydavnytstvo Kanadskoho Instytutu Ukrainskykh Studii, 2011), 755.

53 Leontovskii, *Religiozno-filosofskiie vozzreniia*, 169–274.

pseudo-images of Skovoroda and far-fetched schemes of his creative work which developed during the history of research. He suggests purifying this history from subjective and biased layers formed within ideological and tendentious frameworks of researchers.<sup>54</sup> The original philosophy of Skovoroda, according to Leontovskiy, cannot be limited to any established parameters, frameworks, or schemes. The poetic philosophy of Skovoroda is a kind of unique synthesis which is explained only by his psychological motives and by specific features of his unique personality. His philosophy combined contradictory principles and opposite trends of that time, such as academic mysticism and individualistic rationalism, in a strange and original way.<sup>55</sup>

Another publication dedicated to the figure of Skovoroda marked the beginning of the 20th century. Its author was a well-known Ukrainian religious and socio-political activist and an alumnus of the Kyiv Theological Academy (1892–1896) Oleksandr Lototskyi. He wrote the exploratory study about Skovoroda<sup>56</sup> which had the educational goals<sup>57</sup> while living in St. Petersburg, willing to show the Russian readers a new and unknown view of the inner world of the Ukrainian philosopher. In addition to biography, the author of the exploratory study tried to reproduce specific features of Skovoroda's outlook on life which were demanded in contemporary Russian society. Among them was the thinker's active public work on the promotion of new ideas, which was a natural outcome of his own active personality. As Lototskyi shows, a modern person may turn to the figure of Skovoroda as a role model because this Ukrainian philosopher managed to solve one of the sharp problems of modernity – the tragic gap between ideological principles and real actions. Practical philosophy of Skovoroda, concentrated around the lofty moral ideals, according to Lototskyi, may become a guide for modern attitudes, burdened with the loss of universal ideals and values. First of all, Lototskyi highly appreciates the socio-political views of Skovoroda which he calls democratic, that is, close to people. It is democracy along with the love to his native people in their socio-cultural uniqueness which Lototskyi considers leitmotifs of Skovoroda's philosophical works. Lototskyi believes that conscious democracy directed Skovoroda to comprehending the idea of the nation, which in a broader sense meant the idea of nationality.<sup>58</sup> Being a supporter of the idea of Ukrainian national and church revival, Lototskyi constructs an image of Skovoroda as one of the ideologues and advocates of the idea of nationality in his time. This belief of Skovoroda,

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54 Leontovskii, "Kharakternie cherty," 173–5.

55 Ibid., 177.

56 Alexandr Lotockii, "Zabytyi reformator zhizni – ukrainskii filosof Skovoroda [A Forgotten Reformer of Life – the Ukrainian Philosopher Skovoroda]," *Vestnik znaniia* 12 (1905): 72–81.

57 A Russian magazine *Vestnik znaniia* where the article was published was aimed at educational and popularizing goals – to acquaint Russian readers (mainly, the lower strata of population) with scientific achievements. Regarding such format of this edition, Lototskyi also had educational and public, not strictly scientific goals and did not stick to the rules of academic style (quotations, citations and other).

58 Lotockii, "Zabytyi reformator," 77.

in the author's opinion, became a new trend of the 18th century, while the Western European thought, overwhelmed by the ideas of cosmopolitanism, started understanding the ideological principles of nationalism much later.

The next wave of research interest of Kyiv Theological Academy scholars to Skovoroda's works can be seen in 1918 within the framework of the Kyiv professors' participation in the Academic Council at the Ministry of Religions in Skoropadskyi's government,<sup>59</sup> which aimed at supporting the renewal of religious and church life in Ukraine. In particular, one of the directions of cultural and scientific activity of this Committee was declared to be a scientific edition of Skovoroda's philosophical works.<sup>60</sup>

Research interests in Skovoroda's creative work are also realized within the framework of cooperation between the Kyiv Theological Academy Professorship and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Here, it is worth noting an explorative study about Skovoroda of a graduate (1902–1906) and a lecturer of the Academy Victor Ivanitskyi,<sup>61</sup> which he wrote in 1928 as part of his scientific studies for the Jewish Commission. In his work, this Kyiv professor questions a well-established and self-evident among researchers' opinion that Skovoroda had a perfect knowledge of the Hebrew language, often used in his works. One of the best experts in the Hebrew language and culture in the early 20th century, based on the analysis of the texts of the Ukrainian philosopher, Ivanitskyi argues for the thesis that Skovoroda knew the Hebrew language at a rather elementary level. The researcher makes the conclusions on the evidence that the Ukrainian philosopher never read the Hebrew Bible in the original, and on the convincing proof that his interpretation of Jewish words was made with the use of auxiliary sources, including the textbooks of the old Academy professors.

Important details of the biography of Skovoroda can also be found in a historical and cultural explorative study *Educational Journeys of the Kyiv Academy Alumni Abroad* (1930) prepared by a student (1888–1892) and a teacher of the Kyiv Theological Academy Petro Kudriavtsev, within the framework of his work for the Commission on the historical research of Kyiv and Right-Bank Ukraine of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. Describing a specific feature of education in the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy – its orientation towards the Western European educational models, the author provides an example of a common phenomenon in the contemporary academic-educational life which was foreign journeys of the Academy students in order to supplement their knowledge in the European universities. When Kudriavtsev classifies the directions of

59 The academic council was headed by a professor of the Kyiv Theological Academy Petro Kudriavtsev who gathered the best experts in different fields of humanities around the committee. Most of them were professors of the Academy (V. Rybyskyi, M. Mukhin, F. Mishchenko, V. Ekzemplierskyi).

60 See Vasyl Ulianovskiy, *Tserkva v Ukrainskii Derzhavi 1917–1920 rr. (doba Hetmanatu Pavla Skoropadskoho)* [*Church in the Ukrainian State in 1917–1920 (the Period of Pavlo Skoropadskyi's Hetmanate)*] (Kyiv: Lybid, 1997), 56–7.

61 Viktor Ivanitskyi, "Zhydivska mova u H. S. Skovorody [The Jewish Language of H. S. Skovoroda]," in *Zbirnyk prats zhydivskoi istoriko-arkheohrafichnoi komisii*, vol. 1 (Kyiv, VUAN, 1928), 98–104.

educational journeys of the Ukrainian knowledge seekers and their representatives, he marks Skovoroda as a discoverer of the Hungarian path in educational journeys (the Tokai mission). Based on the information provided by prof. Petrov, in his work, Kudriavtsev agrees with the former in his conclusions about the high level of education of students in the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Kudriavtsev literally repeats Petrov's statement that student foreign journeys were due to and because of their high-quality training at the Academy:

Here, the basis for their education was laid, which gave them an opportunity to go forward, further. Moreover, the very idea of a journey to improve one's education, could not be alien to someone who was not himself alien to the Kyiv Academy.<sup>62</sup>

Considering essays about Skovoroda present in the 19th – early 20th century research field, written by the students and teachers of the pre-revolutionary Kyiv Theological Academy, what impresses is the discovered diversity and dissimilarity of the created images of the Ukrainian thinker. Interpretations remain ambiguous and multi-dimensional, even though studies of the specified period have similar narratives, same manner of biographical descriptions, and so-called “drifting” identical phrases and characterizations. Representatives of the Kyiv Theological Academy shared general attitudes of the Russian historiography of the 19th century: they paid most attention to the figure of Skovoroda, regarding his creative work as an addition to his unique personality.<sup>63</sup> It was mainly due to the realized necessity in the creation of a full, precise, scientifically objective biography of Skovoroda because the period of data collection and approbation had to precede the further period of analysis of his heritage.

On the other hand, interest in the personality of Skovoroda is explained based on philosophical and ideological frameworks of the middle 19th – early 20th century. That was the time when the positivist and materialistic ideas were spread, moral and faith experienced a crisis, and religious and moral norms, absolute ideals and values were depreciated. In that period of moral drought in the society, there was a need to create a kind of mythologized, yet concrete, vivid ideal and hero, capable of being a role model of the worldview and outlook on life for the contemporary community. The image of Skovoroda as a founder of Ukrainian authentic philosophy, the image which overcame the tragic gap between ideas and deeds, became a symbol which united the progress and memory, and a sign of the beginning of a new era in the local cultural and philosophical development. At the same time, alumni of the Kyiv Theological Academy, whose philosophical and ideological principles formed during their studies in the

62 Petro Kudriavtsev, “Osvitni mandrivky vykhovantsiv Kyivskoi Akademii za kordon u 18 ct. [Educational Journeys of the Kyiv Academy Students Abroad in the 18th Century],” *Kyivski zbirnyky istorii i arkeolohii, pobutu i mystetstva* 1 (1930): 293.

63 A. Golubeva, “G. S. Skovoroda v russkoiazychnoi istoriografii 19 veka [H. S. Skovoroda in the Russian Historiography of the 19th Century],” *Vestnik Russkoi khristianskoj gumanitarnoi akademii* 17.1 (2016): 64.

idealistic direction, in their research of Skovoroda's images, argued for the supremacy and priority of the idealistic direction in philosophy from the beginning of its formation on the territory of Ukraine. This unity of ideological beliefs of the Theological Academy researchers was supplemented with the diversity of their personal research principles and ideological preferences, which uncovered the multiple dimensions of intellectual research efforts in the Kyiv Theological Academy, and the multitude of its inexhaustible interpretational potential.

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