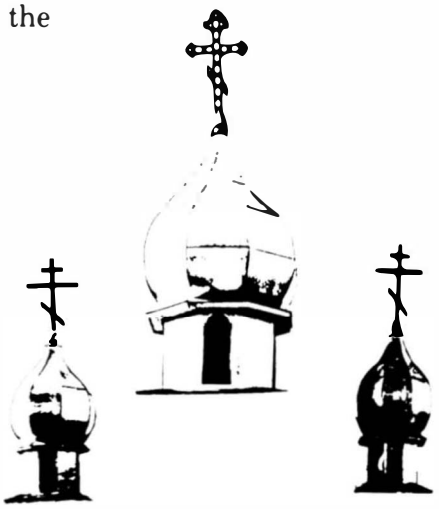
[39]The Byzantine Cross atop the three onion-shaped domes:



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

[41]There 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*).

The description we are offered of the various symbols and events around which those public occasions are organized is provocative, but insufficiently analytical. The syncretism seems in these occasions to be composed of equal parts of religious ritual, loyalty to the "old country," and a born-again American nationalism. Why? Why, this time to borrow a metaphor from the author, are the "new bottles for the old wine" shaped by nationalism? Was the old wine made from grapes of Slavic nationalism? Was Byzantine Catholicism always so imbued with patriotism, with nationalistic ritual, or is that element merely a response to the immigrant experience? There are many highly religious immigrant populations in this country whose syncretic adaptations have not included the intense nationalism that characterizes the populations at issue here. What differentiates Byzantine Catholics from those other groups?

One particular area suggests itself for further exploration in this context: we are aware that under czarist rule, certain Slavic nationality groups were inflamed against Jews for political ends through the church and by means of symbols. Infamous pogroms, for example, grew out of Easter/ Passover rituals. Is that bit of history germane to this analysis? Structural approaches of the sort undertaken by Skovira are of value and interest only if the descriptions of symbols and structures serve as vehicles for substantive analysis that leads to meaning. One is led by the article to wonder mightily why nationalistic emblems and rhetoric should figure so significantly in Byzantine Catholic religious structure-here or in the old country. We are not offered even a suggestion of an answer.

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Critique

Unraveling the tangle of theses that shape the Skovira essay, "Some Symbols of Identity of Byzantine Catholics," exposes not only the intersecting dimensions of ethnicity but also the complex nature of semiotics. Before we can accept the author's concluding remarks on symbols, we need to consider the ramifications of these various theses. It so happens that the two major theses clash: one suggests ethnic assimilation; the other implies a strengthening of national identity. Perhaps some clarity can be achieved if we consider these themes separately.