

History

UDC 94(477)"1918/1939":271.5(477):726.5

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16519942>

**The Role of the Greek Catholic Clergy in the Reconstruction of Parish
Infrastructure after World War I**

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Accepted: 06.07.2025 | Published: 27.07.2025

***Abstract.** The article is devoted to analyzing the role of the Greek Catholic clergy in the reconstruction of parish infrastructure in Eastern Halychyna after World War I. A comprehensive study was conducted to examine the socio-economic and cultural conditions surrounding the restoration of church buildings, parish houses, farms, and educational centers.*

The purpose of the article is to analyze the specifics and scope of the participation of the Greek Catholic clergy in the processes of reconstruction of parish infrastructure in Eastern Halychyna in the interwar period, to identify the main models of behavior of priests, vectors of interaction with the laity and institutional mechanisms for mobilizing resources in difficult post-war conditions.

The results of the study indicate that the reconstruction of parish infrastructure after World War I became one of the determining factors in the preservation of not only the religious, but also the national life of Ukrainian communities in Eastern Halychyna. In conditions of material hardship, political

instability and destruction of institutional structures, it was the Greek Catholic clergy that took responsibility for the restoration of churches, parish residences, schools and public buildings that were damaged during the hostilities. The effectiveness of the restoration processes was directly related to the level of personal initiative of the priest, his authority among the faithful and the ability to establish cooperation with the parish community. In the absence of proper state support for Ukrainian denominations, the main source of funds was donations from the faithful, parish fees, income from church land ownership, and in some cases the sale of part of the parish property. Such a model forced the clergy to resort to independent search for resources - through interaction with patrons, Ukrainian organizations, as well as through the involvement of cooperative structures. The GCC as an institution played a special role in coordinating the restoration processes. The episcopacies approved the creation of specialized societies, such as "Tekton", and also encouraged priests to collaborate with architects, engineers and artists.

Keywords: *Greek Catholic Church, Halychyna, interwar period, clergy, parish infrastructure, reconstruction.*

Роль греко-католицького духовенства у відбудові парафіяльної інфраструктури після Першої світової війни

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Анотація. *Стаття присвячена аналізу ролі греко-католицького духовенства у процесах відбудови парафіяльної інфраструктури в Східній Галичині після Першої світової війни. Здійснено комплексне дослідження*

соціально-економічних і культурних умов, у яких відбувалося відновлення церковних споруд, парафіяльних будинків, господарств і освітніх осередків.

Метою статті є проаналізувати специфіку та масштаби участі греко-католицького духовенства в процесах відбудови парафіяльної інфраструктури у Східній Галичині в міжвоєнний період, виявити основні моделі поведінки священиків, вектори взаємодії з мирянами та інституційні механізми мобілізації ресурсів у складних повоєнних умовах.

Результати дослідження свідчать, що відбудова парафіяльної інфраструктури після Першої світової війни стала одним із визначальних чинників збереження не лише релігійного, але й національного життя українських громад Східної Галичини. В умовах матеріальної скрути, політичної нестабільності та деструкції інституційних структур, саме греко-католицьке духовенство взяло на себе відповідальність за відновлення храмів, парафіяльних резиденцій, шкіл і громадських будівель, що постраждали під час воєнних дій. Ефективність відновлювальних процесів була безпосередньо пов'язана з рівнем особистої ініціативності священика, його авторитетом серед вірян та здатністю налагодити співпрацю з парафіяльною громадою. За відсутності належної державної підтримки українських конфесій, основним джерелом стали пожертви вірян, парафіяльні збори, прибутки від церковного землеволодіння, а подекуди й реалізація частини парафіяльної власності. Подібна модель змушувала духовенство вдаватися до самостійного пошуку ресурсів — через взаємодію з меценатами, українськими організаціями, а також через залучення кооперативних структур. Особливу роль у координації реставраційних процесів відіграла ГКЦ як інституція. Єпископати схвалювали створення спеціалізованих товариств, таких як «Тектон», а також заохочували священиків до співпраці з архітекторами, інженерами та митцями.

Ключові слова: греко-католицька церква, Галичина, міжвоєнний період, духовенство, парафіяльна інфраструктура, відбудова.

Problem statement. Following the end of the First World War, Eastern Halychyna found itself in the midst of a profound socio-economic and humanitarian crisis. The military operations that had persisted in the region for several years led to substantial human losses, the destruction of infrastructure, and the disintegration of local communities. The parish infrastructure of the Greek-Catholic Church (GCC) suffered particularly severe damage: hundreds of churches, parish houses, and auxiliary buildings were destroyed; liturgical items, church archives, and libraries were lost. Under such circumstances, the Greek-Catholic clergy emerged not only as spiritual shepherds but also as key agents in organizing post-war reconstruction.

The role of the priest in the postwar period extended beyond traditional religious ministry. He functioned simultaneously as a spiritual leader, administrator, liaison with state authorities, and initiator of cooperative and educational activities. Given the limited resources available both to the Church and to governmental institutions, the restoration of parish infrastructure largely depended on the personal qualities of the pastor — his organizational skills, the degree of trust from the community, and the existence of horizontal ties with Ukrainian civic and financial institutions.

Research into the role of the Greek-Catholic clergy in the reconstruction of church buildings allows for a comprehensive understanding of the GCC's functioning as a form of social leadership. It also reveals the mechanisms for mobilizing parish resources during a time of systemic transformation. The study considers not only the material rebuilding of churches but also the creation of new forms of religious community grounded in cooperation, mutual support, and the cultivation of spiritual continuity.

Review of recent research and publications. In the scholarly discourse of independent Ukraine, there has been a growing interest in understanding the role of the clergy in the sociocultural development of Ukrainian society. A substantial body of research has focused on the multifaceted activities of ecclesiastical figures, particularly their involvement in the processes of national revival, the organization of educational and cultural space, and the provision of social support to the faithful. In this context, significant contributions have been made by Ukrainian historians and scholars of religion, including I. Andrukhiv, O. Lysenko, I. Pylypiv [1], L. Hentosh [2], Yu. Hrabets [3-4], V. Marchuk [8], I. Pylypiv [10] and T. Horan [11], S. Predka [12], E. Bystrytska and Yu. Hrabets [18].

Certain aspects of the activities of the GCC have been reflected in foreign historiography. Scholars from Europe and North America have primarily focused on the Church's role in shaping national identity, its position within the multiethnic context of Eastern Halychyna, and its relations with the state authorities of interwar Poland. Particularly noteworthy are the works of **A. Sorokowski** [20], who extensively analyzed the social role of Greek-Catholic clergy in Halychyna between 1900 and 1939, as well as **M. Strutyński** [21], who examined the socio-political thought of the GCC in the Second Polish Republic. Their research highlights the dual function of the Church as both a spiritual institution and a socio-political actor that contributed to the preservation and development of Ukrainian national consciousness under challenging political conditions. In his article J. Koredczuk explores the complex legal relations between the Polish state and the Greek Catholic Church during the interwar period. He highlights the tensions arising from the ambiguous legal status of the Church and the challenges of balancing state interests with religious autonomy [19].

The research of these authors provides a deeper insight into the institutional evolution of the GCC, its adaptation to the political challenges of the twentieth century, and the identification of the clergy as a key social stratum that shaped the

national-cultural landscape of Ukrainian territories during periods of transformative crisis.

Identification of previously unresolved aspects of the general problem.

Despite the presence of a number of studies on the activity of Greek-Catholic clergy during the interwar period, the issue of their involvement in the postwar reconstruction of parish infrastructure in Eastern Halychyna remains insufficiently explored in historical scholarship. Unresolved topics include the degree of initiative shown by individual clergymen in mobilizing communities, the mechanisms for accumulating material and human resources in the context of limited state support, and the dynamics of interaction between eparchial authorities, local parishes, and lay organizations. Legal, economic, and administrative tools used by the clergy to influence the pace and scale of reconstruction projects have not been adequately studied, nor have the obstacles that hindered or prevented their implementation. Equally important is the analysis of how church lands and property were utilized as a source of funding for infrastructure initiatives.

Formulation of research goals. The aim of this article is to analyze the nature and scale of the Greek-Catholic clergy's involvement in the reconstruction of parish infrastructure in Eastern Halychyna during the interwar period. It seeks to identify behavioral models of the clergy, the vectors of interaction with laypeople, and the institutional mechanisms used to mobilize resources in the challenging conditions of the postwar environment.

Methodology. The methodological basis of the study rests on the principles of historical reconstruction and interdisciplinary integration, drawing upon a broad range of primary sources including diocesan consistory archives, periodicals, memoir literature, and church documentation. A systematic approach is employed to ensure a comprehensive and balanced interpretation.

The research utilizes descriptive and comparative historical methods to reconstruct the processes of parish infrastructure restoration. Statistical methods are

used to assess the scope of material damage and recovery efforts across various deaneries. The case study method allows for a detailed examination of selected examples of clergy and communities that succeeded in rebuilding their churches and parish facilities. A prosopographical approach provides insight into the social and moral profile of Greek-Catholic clergy as a factor of spiritual cohesion in Ukrainian society during the postwar devastation.

In the methodological section, it would be appropriate to provide a more detailed justification for the selection of specific research methods and to explain their application to the analysis of historical material. This clarification would strengthen the transparency of the research design and enhance the validity of its findings.

Research objectives of the article:

1. To analyze the involvement of the Greek-Catholic clergy in organizing the reconstruction process, focusing on their initiative, coordination of community efforts, and interactions with both the church hierarchy and state institutions.
2. To examine the financial sources used for reconstruction activities, including parishioner donations, state subsidies, the sale of church property, and cooperative initiatives.
3. To assess the role of priests as community leaders in consolidating efforts aimed at restoring both religious and social infrastructure in the postwar period.

Presentation of the main research material. In the early 1920s, one of the key challenges in the cultural and religious life of Halychyna, as identified by the leadership of the GCC, was the urgent need to restore the sacred infrastructure destroyed during the First World War. During the war, approximately 300 Greek Catholic churches sustained significant damage, many of which were valuable examples of traditional wooden architecture and sacred art dating back to the 16th–18th centuries [13, c. 2].

In certain cases — such as in the villages of Ishkiv and Horodyshe of the Kozliv Deanery — by 1918, only a handful of households had survived, with merely three remaining intact. Due to the total destruction of residential buildings, local inhabitants were forced to live temporarily in dugouts or partially repaired structures. Parish residences were entirely demolished. In the village of Kupchyntsi, the local church was seriously damaged as a result of the war, and the estimated material loss amounted to around 60,000 Austrian crowns. The daughter church in the village of Yosyfivka was also affected. The scale of destruction and loss reflects not only the physical devastation of religious infrastructure but also the complex challenges of postwar spiritual revival at the local level [3, c. 124–125, 7, c. 319, 460, 504, 544].

In the Kozliv Deanery, the parish complexes in the villages of Byshky and Potik were completely destroyed during the hostilities [7, c. 288]. In the Velykobirka Deanery, the villages of Kalne and Shchepaniv suffered substantial losses, with more than half of the households destroyed, alongside severe damage to churches and clergy residences [7, c. 319, 430]. In the Terebovlia Deanery, the destruction was widespread: churches in the villages of Zazdrist, Strusiv, Darakhiv, and Zastinochok sustained significant damage or were partially demolished [14, c. 220].

Responding to the scale of destruction, the Greek Catholic Metropolitanate launched a broad reconstruction campaign that engaged leading Ukrainian engineers and architects of the interwar period. Coordination of church architectural restoration was entrusted to a specially established society named Tecton (from Latin *tecton* – “carpenter”), whose main objective was to implement the principles of a national architectural style in ecclesiastical construction [9, c. 3].

The head of this organization was the renowned architect and scholar of sacred architecture, Oleksandr Lushpynskyi. As noted by Ilarion Svetsitskyi in his article "Church Reconstruction", Lushpynskyi had established himself as a profound expert on Ukrainian ecclesiastical architecture. This was particularly evidenced by his

contribution to the National Museum in Lviv's publication of an album featuring wooden churches of Halychyna from the 16th to 18th centuries [9, c. 3].

Sventsitskyi also emphasized Lushpynskyi's strong sense of national identity and his ability to balance stylistic integrity with the practical needs of parish communities. "Architect O. Lushpynskyi will not compromise either the national architectural spirit or the aesthetic appeal of our villages; on the contrary, he will strive to maintain the postwar churches at a proper stylistic level," Sventsitskyi affirmed [9, c. 3].

To strengthen the Church's restoration efforts, in 1930 Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky formally invited Oleksandr Lushpynskyi to collaborate within the framework of the Metropolitanate's Conservation Commission, granting him the authority of chief restorer of sacred architecture for the Greek Catholic Metropolitanate.

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's postwar reconstruction initiative received considerable support in the Ukrainian periodical press. Leading newspapers of the interwar period regularly covered the progress of restoration works and circulated appeals to the faithful, encouraging participation in the rebuilding of damaged churches. These publications emphasized the importance of peasant involvement in community work efforts (*toloky*) and called for donations to support local parish communities.

Such appeals framed church reconstruction not only as a religious duty but also as an expression of national responsibility. "Whatever the case may be, the people must rebuild their churches!.. It is necessary to join cooperative and communal building efforts," one publication declared, underlining the nation-building mission of the Ukrainian peasantry in restoring sacred architecture [9, c. 3].

Parishioners' active involvement in reconstruction initiatives following World War I was shaped both by the personal qualities — charisma, authority, and organizational skill — of the local clergy and by the community's level of religious

consciousness and its rooted spiritual-national needs. In parishes with strong lay self-organization, financial contributions took on a systematic form, with collections held during religious holidays, public festivals, and other communal events.

In the village of Duliby (Stryi Deanery), the parish community was able to implement part of its reconstruction plan for parish infrastructure for the first time in 1928, focusing on the construction of auxiliary buildings. That same year, the parish committee resolved to sell a portion of parish land to cover mandatory fiscal obligations and complete the construction of a stable. The plot was sold for 800 zlotys to a local resident, Vasyl Vytrykush. Of the proceeds, 500 zlotys were allocated to tax payments, while the remaining 300 zlotys were used to finish construction on the parish stable. The issue of building a new residence for the priest remained unresolved until the late 1930s. It was only in 1937–1938 that Fr. Mykola Matkovskyi initiated construction of a new parish house, which was built by Petro Dulysh, a renowned master builder involved in the erection of landmark sacred buildings, including the Church of St. George and the church in the village of Hrushova-Krasne [15, c. 1433].

In 1934, the parishioners of the village of Semakivtsi (Chortkiv Deanery) donated money collected during Christmas caroling for the construction of a chapel [5, apk. 26]. In 1938, the administrator of the parish in the town of Kosiv, Fr. Mykhailo Vovchuk, petitioned the Chortkiv County Starosty for permission to organize a public fundraising event aimed at restoring the local Greek Catholic church [5, apk. 38–39]. That same year, a similar request was submitted by Fr. Mykola Drahomyretskyi, parish priest of the village of Mukhantsi, who planned to hold a parish fair (*festyny*) on August 7, 1938, with the proceeds earmarked for the construction of a new church [5, apk. 41].

Conversely, in a number of parishes, the low level of community involvement compelled clergy to seek alternative funding sources independently. For instance, in 1921 Fr. Hryhorii Muzychka, the parish priest in the village of Holeshiv (Khodoriv

Deanery), appealed to the Ukrainian community in the city of Stanyslaviv for assistance. The funds received enabled repairs to the church and parish house and provided partial support to local peasant households. Between 1922 and 1925, the priest succeeded in constructing a new residence with utility buildings and in founding a parish brotherhood — an example of the successful integration of social, spiritual, and material ministry [16, apк. 7–9].

In the postwar period on the territory of Eastern Halychyna, a pronounced need emerged to reconstruct parish infrastructure, particularly in providing residential accommodations for clergy. A significant number of parish houses had been either destroyed or severely damaged due to military operations, rendering it impossible for priests to fulfill their pastoral duties effectively and creating additional difficulties for the functioning of religious communities [6, с. 89].

The construction of new clergy residences took place amid a general economic depression and acute scarcity of financial resources. Despite these adverse circumstances, parish communities demonstrated a strong sense of civic and religious responsibility. The recognition of the church as a spiritual and social center fostered communal mobilization: parishioners often assumed part of the expenses or directly participated in construction labor. Documented cases exist where individual residents contributed personal funds to the parish to ensure dignified living conditions for the priest [17, apк. 59].

A particularly illustrative example occurred in the town of Khyriv in the Staryi Sambir county, where parish infrastructure had been entirely destroyed during wartime. The absence of a parochial residence forced the local parish priest to rent temporary housing. Confronted with this critical situation and the limited material means of the community, the episcopal consistory granted permission to sell a portion of the church's erection lands as an exceptional measure. The proceeds — over 10,000 zlotys from the sale of 13.5 hectares of arable land — were allocated to

the construction of a new parochial house and subsidiary farm buildings [11, c. 50-55].

This case exemplifies the pragmatic approach adopted by the ecclesiastical leadership, which, despite its general commitment to preserving church land holdings, acknowledged the necessity of adapting to local circumstances and permitted the alienation of church property in situations where the continuity of pastoral activity was directly threatened.

Conclusions and prospects for Further research. The results of this study demonstrate that the reconstruction of parish infrastructure following the First World War was one of the crucial factors in preserving not only religious but also national life among Ukrainian communities in Eastern Halychyna. Amid material deprivation, political instability, and the breakdown of institutional structures, it was the Greek-Catholic clergy who assumed responsibility for restoring churches, parish residences, schools, and community buildings damaged during the war.

Analysis of the sources reveals that the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts was directly linked to the priest's personal initiative, his authority among the faithful, and his ability to cooperate with the parish community. In those cases where the pastor enjoyed a high level of trust and exhibited leadership capabilities, the process of rebuilding progressed more efficiently and effectively. The experiences of Fr. Hr. Muzychka, Fr. V. Lysko, and Fr. M. Tsehelskyi illustrate the capacity of individual priests not only to manage material reconstruction but also to establish new centers of spiritual and cultural life.

At the same time, the financial framework of these efforts proved to be complex. In the absence of sufficient state support for Ukrainian denominations, the main sources of funding included parishioners' donations, local collections, income from church landholdings, and in some cases, the sale of parish property. This model compelled clergy to independently seek resources — through cooperation with

benefactors, Ukrainian civic organizations, and the engagement of cooperative networks.

The Greek-Catholic Church played a particularly important role as an institutional coordinator of reconstruction processes. The episcopacy approved the formation of specialized associations such as "Tecton", and encouraged priests to collaborate with architects, engineers, and artists. This contributed not only to the technical renewal of sacred structures but also to the preservation of national stylistic elements and spiritual symbolism within the architectural landscape.

Further scholarly inquiry should focus on in-depth exploration of local reconstruction cases based on archival materials from deaneries and episcopal chanceries, examining the role of women's and youth church organizations in these efforts, as well as conducting comparative analyses of Greek-Catholic clergy and representatives of other confessions in the postwar recovery of Western Ukrainian territories. Another valuable research direction is the study of interactions between church institutions, the cooperative movement, and Ukrainian secular organizations in the context of postwar rebuilding.

In summary, the Greek-Catholic clergy emerged not only as religious leaders but also as cultural, economic, and organizational pillars of Ukrainian communities. Their activities during the postwar period laid the foundation for the formation of a modern parish model, grounded in church-community cooperation and built on principles of responsibility, solidarity, and national affirmation.

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