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CONFLICTS IN THE FAMILIES OF PARISH PRIESTS IN 18TH CENTURY UKRAINE

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Abstract

The study demonstrates how the religious worldview of early modern humans influenced the formation of family values and relationships in the clergy families and the church. The paper is based on the analysis of religious texts that were the basis of the contemporary Orthodox idea of the ideal family, comparing them with notes on the daily life of religious figures of the early modern period, with archival sources. The thesis analyses the conflicts in priests' families in Ukraine in the early modern society which was lenient concerning “dosed” violence by the father in the family. In this time period, the priest decided what the “normal” patterns of behavior were, ignoring or interpreting in his own way the instructions of the bishop and the canonical precepts. More than 7% of the priests were unable to resolve family quarrels on their own, and they moved to the public sphere for conflict resolution. The majority of these conflicts were between the son-in-law and mother-in-law of the priest. The least frequently reported conflicts were between the priest and his wife. The archival sources contained reports of conflicts involving every family member role. The disputes took place over material values and personal animosity, and within the context of “professional” activities, as family members often held all positions in the parish.

Keywords: priest, family, conflicts, Kyiv Metropolitanate, *protopopy* (archdiocese), early modern society, Orthodox Christianity.

Introduction

Researchers of Ukrainian religious history of the eighteenth century show considerable interest in the study of the institution of the family and family relationships, because they were guided by church orders that played an important role in molding the life of the early modern human. Despite modernization efforts and secularization, the society of that time remained traditional at its core, largely due to the stability of family structures and relationships. The church played an essential role in the everyday lives of Ukrainians in the early modern period as the most momentous events of their lives were connected with it—from baptizing infants to conducting funeral services. Thus, the Orthodox society of that time was supposed to manifest the “folk piety” in all activities.¹ However, an overview of family conflicts helps to understand the inconsistencies between the desired ideal Christian family and the truth inside the communities. The families of the priests were not an exception from the rule even though they were considered the exemplar “minor orthodox parishes.” Despite the important historiographical tradition, relationships in the families of the parish clergy are poorly studied. It was the presbyters who were responsible for the control of marital and family relationships during this period of time, and these clergymen tried to influence the very culture of family relationships using their authority.² Therefore, the functioning of the family institution in the Orthodox environment is an important topic of study.

Historiography, Research Methods, and Sources

The issue of family conflict in the territory of Ukraine in the early modern era has been addressed in works by Yuriy Voloshyn, Volodymyr Masliychuk, Ihor Serdiuk, Nataliya Starchenko, and others. Thus, Natalia Starchenko examined in detail the conflicts in a separate regional community of the Volyn gentry, showing the bizarre intertwining of Christian norms,

¹ Oleksandr Lukyanenko; Vitaliy Dmytrenko; and Vita Dmytrenko, Liturgical Items in the Churches of the Pyriatyn Protopopy in the Second Half of the 18th Century," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, 2023, vol. 43, iss. 3 , p.80.

² Oleksandr Lukyanenko, Vitaliy Dmytrenko, & Vita Dmytrenko, Educational Level of Parish Priests in Pyriatyn Protopopy in the Second Half of the 18th Century. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 2020, no.9(4), pp.357-64.

gentry notions of honor, and material reason.³ Volodymyr Masliychuk⁴ and Ihor Serdiuk⁵ focused on children's roles and their place in the mystic and religious beliefs in the society of the Hetmanate and in the Slobozhanshchyna region.⁶ They pay great attention to the problems of domestic violence, child murder, and the use of child labor in the family. Yuriy Voloshyn revealed the specifics of everyday and conflicted family life in the city using the example of Poltava families in the middle of the second half of the 18th century.⁷ However, conflicts in the families of parish priests are covered in this research only peripherally. Conflictual relationships in the families of parish priests of the Pyriatyn Archdiocese have not been studied before in their entirety.

The research methodology takes into account the trends of modern humanities and is based on anthropological, systematic, and interdisciplinary principles. We used bibliographic and archival heuristics, as well as historical-genetic, historical-comparative, and statistical methods in the research. The method of bibliographic heuristics was used to determine the state of development of the topic of family conflicts during early modern times. It helped to identify poorly developed aspects of the problem, and to find out which social groups escaped the attention of researchers. The method of archival heuristics was used in the search for the source base of the study. This statistical method allowed us to calculate the number of conflicts in the families of the priests of the Pyriatyn archdiocese, grouping of the conflicts according to the actors involved in them, and identification of the main problems that caused the confrontations in the families. Derived from this process was the historical-comparative method that made it possible to distinguish between existing and secondary causes of family troubles. The historical-genetic method was used to trace the development of the conflict over time and to analyze its consequences.

³ Наталія Старченко, *Честь, кров і риторика. Конфлікт у шляхетському середовищі Волині (друга половина XVI – XVII століття)*. [Natalia Starchenko, *Honor, blood and rhetoric. Conflict in the aristocratic environment of Volyn (second half of the 16th – 17th centuries)*]. (Kyiv, Lauras. 2014).

⁴ Володимир Маслійчук, До історії родинної конфліктності. Насильство у родині на Лівобережній та Слобідській Україні у другій половині XVIII ст. *Соціум. Альманах соціальної історії* [Volodymyr Masliychuk, To the history of family conflict. Domestic violence in the Left Bank and Slobid Ukraine in the second half of the 18th century. *Society. Almanac of social history*], 2007, vol.7, pp. 243-64.

⁵ Ігор Сердюк, *Маленький дорослий: Дитина й дитинство в Гетьманщині XVIII ст.* [Ihor Serdiuk, *Small adult: Child and childhood in the Hetman State of the 18th century*]. (Kyiv: K.I.S., 2018).

⁶ It covers the central-southern part of Sumy Oblast, Kharkiv Oblast, the northern part of Luhansk Oblast and the northeastern part of Donetsk Oblast of Ukraine, as well as the western, eastern, southern parts of Bilhorod Oblast, the southern part of Voronezh Oblast, and the western part of Kursk Oblast of Russia within its modern boundaries.

⁷ Юрій Волошин, Конфлікти в Полтаві другої половини XVIII ст.: зміст, характер, мова. *Соціум. Альманах соціальної історії* [Yuriy Voloshyn, Conflicts in Poltava in the second half of the 18th century: content, nature, language. *Society. Almanac of social history*], 2010, vol.9, pp. 219-38.

The study uses works of Scripture, especially the epistles of the Apostle Paul, in which the Christian canonical norms of family relationships are most fully represented. Among the works of Ukrainian Baroque intellectuals, primary attention is paid to the works of Innocent (Innokentiy) Gisel (1600-1683), a rector of the Kyiv Theological School, especially to his treatise “Peace with God to Man...”, which reflects the views of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy⁸ professors on the norms of Christian coexistence. According to the genre of Orthodox theological literature, it can be attributed to the *Nomocanons*, a kind of instructions to priests on how to make confessions, prepare the flock for confession, impose penance and forgive sins. This work, in contrast to the *Nomocanons* previously published in Kyiv, was addressed not only to priests but also to the laity. It is a thoroughly developed, well-structured moral and ethical doctrine of sins.⁹ These sources are used to reconstruct the views on the family relationships of the “booklore” culture of early modern times.

Along with these fundamental works of Christian ethics, poems by Klymentiy Zinoviev (1640s/1650s - after 1712) are explored. Zinoviev was a Ukrainian Baroque writer, one of the first ethnographers, and a traveling priest, who lived from the middle of the 17th century to the beginning of the 18th century. His original and multifaceted work demonstrates diverse themes. His collection “Poems: The Tales of the Commonwealth” speaks of the author’s intimate acquaintance with the works of the Church Fathers, the Holy Scriptures, and with the way of life of the common people. The poet was probably of Cossack origin and likely became an orphan due to the death of his father in the war. He received his primary education in a church school, later continued his studies in a higher educational institution, and perhaps was a student of the famous Kyiv Collegium. There is no exact information about the poet’s family life: he could have married, but this marriage dissolved or he was widowed; regardless, the writer went to a monastery, where life became disappointing and a new test of character. Probably because of the intolerable conditions of monastic life, Klymentiy was forced to spend a lot of time traveling, which gave him considerable experience with the life of ordinary people. His collection of poems was concluded approximately in the first decade of the 18th century.¹⁰

⁸ An educational institution that existed in Kyiv from 1632 to 1817, founded by Metropolitan Peter Mohyla as the Kyiv-Brotherhood College that received the status of an academy in the second half of the 17th century.

⁹ Леся Довга, Уявлення про «честь» у трактаті Інокентія Гізеля «Мир з Богом чоловіку». *Соціум. Альманах соціальної історії* [Lesya Dovha. The concept of “honor” in the treatise “Peace with God to a Man” by Innocent Gisel. *Society. Almanac of social history*], 2005, vol.5, pp.249-59.

¹⁰ Максим Меркулов, *Творчість Климента Зіновієва в контексті української літератури доби Бароко* [Maksym Merkulov. *The work of Klymentiy Zinoviev in the context of Ukrainian literature of the Baroque era*]. (Phd diss., Kyiv, T. H. Shevchenko Institute of Literature at National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2020), p.6.

The main source of information for this study is the case material of the Pyriatyn Spiritual Board (consistory) from the State Archives of Poltava region (collection or 'fond' 801). We found 21 cases in which conflicts were recorded within priestly families. The submitted documents are only the tip of the iceberg and do not exhaust all the moments of conflict that arose within family life of that time. Concurrently, they can present the main sources of conflict around which family confrontations unfolded. The availability of this type of document is especially important given that family life is traditionally not made public.

Family Relationships in the Orthodox “Booklore” and “Popular” Culture

Christian canonical scriptures give much attention to the issue of ideal/desirable relationships in the family. Suffice it to recall the lines from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul (“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord...” (Ephesians 5: 22-33 (King James Version)). There we also find the instruction for children: “Honor thy father and mother: this is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6: 2-3 (KJV)).

Representatives of the Kyiv spiritual elite also addressed the topic of family relationships. In particular, Gisel urged husband and wife to live peacefully in respect and love, not to betray, not to humiliate, and not to beat each other. The couple had to manage together, to not deny each other the marital duty but also to not demand it by force, to have children, and to raise and provide for those children. In the treatise “Peace with God to Man” he describes in detail the rights and responsibilities of family members. Thus, a man had to provide for his family, and to not bully his wife but to care for her and take responsibility for her behavior. The wife was to be her husband’s assistant, was not to argue with him or manage him, and had no freedom to spend the family’s property without his permission.

Parental responsibility included instilling in the child Christian virtues, respect for people, hard work, and learning a craft. At the same time, Innocent Gisel emphasized that when instructing children, parents should not interfere excessively in their lives. Children were obliged to listen to and respect their parents, and when the parents grew old or ill, to support and take care of them until death.¹¹

Gisel outlines the traditional requirements for a Christian couple with a number of details, carefully defining the rights and responsibilities of each family member. The husband

¹¹ Інокентій Гізель, *Вибрані твори в 3-х томах. Т.І.* [Inokentiy Gisel, *Selected works in 3 volumes*, vol. 1]. (Kyiv-Lviv: Svichado, 2012), pp.164-9.

must work diligently and provide for the family. He does not own his wife as a slave, but treats her as a friend, weaker in strength but equal in dignity. He has no right to mock her, but he must not allow her to commit any atrocities, idleness or reckless behavior. The wife, for her part, does not argue with her husband and does not try to control him. She helps him in everything and does not spend her husband's property without his permission. However, a man should not be stingy and limit the family to the necessary things. Gisel states that the most important function of a good family is to raise children. Some rules of conduct in the treatise are written for the engaged, unmarried, and widowed.

These ideas about exemplary family relationships belong to the sphere of Orthodox “booklore” culture, and we know that the amount of carriers and consumers of books in the study period was limited. Therefore, a natural question arises: were Gisel’s family ideals known to the participants of our study? Information about the level of education of the priests of the archdiocese and the books available to them allow us to doubt that the priests read the works of Innocent Gisel. However, it should be noted that we are still dealing with educated people who, moreover, mostly studied at “Kyiv Athens”—in the Kyiv Theological School. So, we cannot completely exclude their at least fragmentary acquaintance with the views of Kyiv Mohyla Academy’s professors on family relationships.

In addition, as noted above, the issue of family relationships is considered in the fundamental Christian literature. Priests, by virtue of their professional duties, were familiar with their content. Thus, we believe that they, albeit at an elementary level, were aware of the canonical prescriptions for the desired rules and norms of behavior in Christian families. At the same time, we note the existence of a folk tradition that has also developed a certain set of views on family roles. The attitude toward a woman in it is twofold. On the one hand, she is the cause of the fall and human misery, and on the other hand, a mother without whom the continuation of the family is inconceivable. A woman was considered a person who yielded to a man’s mental abilities, so she should be under his control. In such a coordinated system, the man is responsible for family life. So, as Zinoviev writes: “Many men die when they succumb to their wives. Therefore, happy are those who hold their wives in their hands, because a woman by nature is evil and leads men to destruction.”¹²

This verse is a good illustration of the fact that such a view of gender roles could excuse and even encourage beatings, which members of the society of that time did not see as

¹² КЛИМЕНТІЙ ЗИНОВІЇВ. *Вірші. Притовісті посполиті*. [Klymentiy Zinoviev. *Poems. The Tales of the Commonwealth*]. (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1971), p.105.

extraordinary. A number of historians convincingly argue that violence was commonplace in early modern families.¹³ At the same time, folk tradition warned against going to extremes, stating that physical violence should not exceed a certain limit and lead to the death of a wife or a family member: “It is a sin to kill not only your father and mother, but also your wife, because you swore to live your life with her. So, remember God and do not dare to kill your wife.”¹⁴

The author’s attitude toward women is quite patriarchal: the main person in the house should be a man who has control over his wife; the woman herself, according to the conclusions of Maksym Merkulov, appears before the poet as the embodiment of sin. In general, the poet is a great supporter and defender of marriage as such, strongly condemning fornication and generally advising all worldly people to marry. At the same time, he advocates voluntary marriage between adults (by the standards of the time) and rejects coercive marriage, including the marriage of the young with the old. As for married life itself, the writer advocates strict discipline, arguing that disobedient women should be punished, but also condemns stubborn and envious men who themselves push their wives on the path of fornication, or who force them to work too hard in the fields.

From the Christian poet’s attitude toward women, as well as his attitude toward vagrants and smokers, the researcher draws conclusions about his androcentrism and heartlessness. However, the writer did not condemn all women, but only those who led an unjust life (the poet exposes unrighteous men in the same way); honest wives and mothers receive his praise. The poet continues to develop the theme of male infidelity in the poems as well, rebuking those men who do not like honest wives. The religious author contrasts the rigidity and debauchery of such men with the righteousness of their women, who are able to turn away from evil deeds. However, the author does not idealize good wives, saying that they can also sin, but adds that their unworthy deeds certainly deserve forgiveness.¹⁵

Klymentiy mentions the Christian basis of marriage—the union of two people, sanctified by the Creator: “God has united you, so live with each other in love...” referring the reader to the words of Apostle Paul, according to which harmony and peace should prevail between a man and a woman (Ephesians 5:25-26 (KJV)). Therefore, we note that women and children in both cultures were seen as subordinate to men, and at the same time we notice a cognitive

¹³ David Finkelhor, Richard J. Gelles, Gerald T. Hotaling, Murray A. Straus, eds. *The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research*. (Beverly Hills, 1983); Володимир Майслійчук, р.243.

¹⁴ Зиновій, р.70.

¹⁵ Максим Меркулов, pp.30, 151.

dissonance in the understanding of the permissible limits of “educational” measures for them. But while the level of assimilation of the norms of “booklore” culture by the priests causes certain reservations, the holy fathers were probably well acquainted with the ideas of their own flock about the norms of family life.

Statistics of Family Conflicts in the Families of the Priests

A review of the cases reveals that seventeen priests were mentioned in them. A little more than seven percent of the priests of the archdiocese were unable to resolve family quarrels on their own and went into the public sphere for assistance. For the convenience of the study, we divided the conflicts by participants and summarized the data in a table in which the percentages were rounded.

Table 1.

Parties to the conflict in the families of the priests

№	Participants	Number of cases	%
1.	Husband vs wife	2	10
2.	Son vs mother	3	14
3.	Son vs father	3	14
4.	Brother vs brother	3	14
5.	Son-in-law vs father-in-law	3	14
6.	Son-in-law vs mother-in-law	7	34
Total		21	100

Thus, the largest percentage of conflicts were those involving the son-in-law and mother-in-law of the priest. On the other end of the spectrum, there were only two instances, which actually concern the same case, in which the central figures are the priest and his wife. The number of cases in which other family members were involved is evenly distributed.

Husband and Wife Conflict

It would seem that this result is a good illustration of the well-reflected mutual “love” between son-in-law and mother-in-law in bawdy folklore. However, the above-mentioned conflict between husband and wife proved to be the most severe in its consequences.

Lukyan Fedorov, a priest from the village of Hrabarivka, was involved in the case. He said that he inadvertently pushed his wife, who fell through a threshold and into a room. The priest stated that he did not know where the numerous bruises on her body came from and why

she died, clearly trying to present the event as an accident. However, when the members of the spiritual board demanded that he take an “cleansing” oath, he refused to do so.

Note that the institution of the oath was widely used to promote justice. The oath taken in a judicial institution was equated to full-fledged evidence and in fact replaced the process of investigation and proof. With its help, a person could fully justify himself. Along with the suspect, his relatives, colleagues or neighbors were able to take the oath, thus confirming the innocence of the oath-taker. However, the oath was not applied under the conditions of obviousness of the perpetrator.¹⁶

A further investigation, which lasted from March 19, 1792, to September 6, 1793, proved the guilt of the priest Lukyan. He was accused of “immoderate beating of his wife” which led to her death and the priest was deprived of his dignity.¹⁷

This kind of act propels us to know more about Fedorov’s upbringing and life. Lukyan Fedorov was born around the year 1747 to a clergy family, and his father served in the same parish.¹⁸ There is no information about Lukyan’s studies. At the age of thirty he was ordained to the parish and served there for some time with his father. He married in 1768 at the age of twenty-one. His wife Anastasiya Mykytivna was two years younger than him.¹⁹ So, at the time of the murder, which took place in November 1791, the couple had lived together for twenty-three years, making Lukyan forty-four years old, and Anastasiya forty-two.

To answer the question of what caused the tension between the spouses, it will help to consider the circumstances related to the number and time of appearance of children in the family. Thus, the register of 1789 made by Lukyan Fedorov himself records four children in his family: twelve-year-old Petro, ten-year-old Feodosiya, seven-year-old Ahafiya and two-year-old Olena.²⁰ Petro was born in 1777. This is confirmed by the data of the confessional register of 1778 where a one-year-old son is recorded in the priest’s family.²¹ With the couple’s marriage in 1768, the data shows that for ten years they did not conceive children, or that any children that were born died immediately after birth. This period of childlessness likely created

¹⁶ Олександр Крупка, Присяга у кримінальному праві та кримінальному процесі Київщини і Волині у другій половині XVI – першій половині XVII ст. *Актуальні проблеми вітчизняної та всесвітньої історії* [Oleksandr Krupka, Oath in criminal law and criminal process of Kyiv and Volyn regions in the second half of the 16th – the first half of the 17th century. *Actual problems of the state and world history*], 2013, vol.24, pp.7-12.

¹⁷ Державний архів Полтавської області [State Archive of Poltava Region]. Ф.801. Оп. 1. Спр. 1116. Арк. 1-17.

¹⁸ Ibid., Спр.7. Арк.1.

¹⁹ Ibid., Спр.202. Арк.1.

²⁰ Ibid., Спр.989. Арк.28.

²¹ Ibid., Спр.575. Арк.1.

a significant family stressor, because, as Ihor Serdiuk showed in his study, the society of that time did not tolerate childless couples and usually declared a woman the culprit of infertility.²²

Since Fedorov was a pastor, there could be no question of divorce, which was theoretically possible only in the case of childlessness of one of the spouses. Judgement from the other villagers during their years off childlessness could have significantly worsened the stress. When the daughters were born in the family, Fedorov may not have been happy with their gender; according to researchers, in the early modern society, boys were more desirable than girls. In particular, Mykola Sumtsov notices such stereotypes in folk culture,²³ and Iryna Voronchuk traces the same trend in the example of noble families in Volyn.²⁴ It is clear that our arguments are only assumptions, however, given the role played by the “child” factor in determining the status of the person in early modern society, we consider them quite plausible.

At the same time, the motives of the behavior of persons indirectly involved in this conflict are of no less interest. The official position of the spiritual board judging that case was ambiguous. The church court clearly saw the presence of numerous bruises on the body of the deceased wife, Anastasiya Fedorova, as evidence of the priest’s assault leading to her death. However, the spiritual board, knowing this, still did not subject the cleric to severe or even moderate punishment, but rather only required the priest to take a “cleansing” oath. Thus, a priori, the priest, as a man, is right and this justifies his actions. The phrase “excessive beating” suggests that the usual beating of his wife without aggravating consequences was not perceived by Father Lukyan’s colleagues as inappropriate. This once again confirms the opinion that early modern society allowed physical violence by the husband against his wife and children. The enlightenment initiatives of the official authorities as well as the instruction of church bishops were supposed to limit paternal physical abuse, but this regulation was obviously poorly governed and therefore poorly observed in everyday family life.

It is noteworthy that, according to the materials of the case and further interrogations of neighbors and other family members, none of the priest’s children tried to prevent the father’s violence against the mother, which testifies to the dominance of the patriarchal principle of the father’s supremacy in the family. At the time of the murder, Petro, the eldest of the children was fourteen years old, and Feodosiya and Ahafiya were a little younger than him. Therefore,

²² Ігор Сердюк, pp.113-33.

²³ Никита Сумцов, Культурные переживания. *Киевская Старина* [Nikita Sumtsov, Cultural experiences. *Kyiv Antiquity*], 1889, vol.10, pp. 29-30.

²⁴ Ірина Ворончук, *Населення Волині в XVI – першій половині XVII ст.: родина, домогосподарство, демографічні чинники*. [Iryna Voronchuk, *Population of Volyn in the 16th – the first half of the 17th centuries: family, household, demographic factors*]. (Kyiv, B.v., 2012), pp.121-2.

the children could have been reliable witnesses to the attack and murder. However, judging by the case materials, they were not even questioned. At that time, Petro held the position of a *diak*,²⁵ although, as noted in the case: “due to illiteracy [Petro] is completely incapable of occupying *diak*’s position.”²⁶ It was stated that board members worried about Petro’s future, so it was decided to keep him in this position, taking measures to ensure that he “would be skilled in singing and reading and other matters related to the position.”²⁷ The fate of his younger sisters was not at all interesting to the members of the board.

A general review of the content of the remainder of the cases allows us to state that in seven of them the reason for the confrontation was material factors (two cases concerned the distribution of inheritance, and the other five cases concerned the distribution of income from pastoral activity) and the remaining fourteen cases did not report a cause for the conflict beyond hostility towards each other.

Inheritance Conflict

An example of a conflict in which family members did not share their inheritance is the confrontation between the Cossack’s widow Feodosiya Petrakovska from the village of Chornukhy and her daughter Anastasiya. Feodosiya complained that her daughter went to her yard and took away some of the things that she had acquired together with her late husband. Priest Kyrylo, Anastasiya’s husband, took an active part in this “violent raid.” He not only accompanied his wife, but also prevented his mother-in-law Feodosiya from defending her property and helped to take the widow’s belongings out of her apartment.²⁸ The considerable distance between the settlements where Feodosiya and her son-in-law lived did not dissuade the priest and his wife from committing the crime. Kyrylo worked as a priest in the village of Pisky which was about 24 km from Chornukhy and also came to assist in the quarrel. Therefore, even great distance did not prevent conflict between relatives.

There were also similar cases of rivalries because of inheritance across the archdiocese. For example, in 1794, a priest’s widow, Mariya Boychevska, quarreled with her son, the priest Semen Boychevsky, over an inheritance in Pyriatyn.²⁹ Here, the conflict was longer, culminating in the expulsion of the widow from the house and the sale of her property.

²⁵ A clergyman of the lowest rank in the Orthodox Church, who does not have a degree of priesthood (in the lore culture often called a ‘diachok’).

²⁶ Державний архів Полтавської області. Ф.801. Оп. 1. Спр. 1116. Арк. 16.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., Спр. 266. Арк. 1-7.

²⁹ Ibid., Спр. 1200. Арк. 1-6.

Despite the fact that the court's decision was not preserved in both conflict situations, we assume that the priests' widows did not regain their property. An analysis of the legislation of the time suggests this opinion. In particular, in the "Laws by which the people of Little Russia are judged" it was clearly stated that after the death of the husband, the wife was entitled only to her dowry, as well as '*vino*' (a gift from the husband), if it was properly executed (Chapter 10, Article 6). At the same time, the value of the '*vino*' could not exceed a third of the family's real estate. It is notable that children or heirs could buy the '*vino*' from the mother, but she could not sell it to someone else (Chapter 10, Article 21). In those "Laws..." the predominance of hereditary rights in the male line can be clearly traced. Thus, parental land and real estate passed exclusively to sons, and all the mother's property was divided equally between male and female children (Chapter 10, Article 27). At the same time, it was noted that a widow who lived with her children after her husband's death inherited an equal part of the property. This was spelled out in chapter 10, article 7. Apparently, the priest's widow Mariya Boychevska was stripped of her property due to these laws. However, in the case of the death of a priest, the consistory usually obliged his successor to support the widow and her children. Semyon Boychevsky, her son, was a priest who should have fulfilled these duties. Perhaps that is why Mariya appealed to the consistory with a complaint.

Profit Sharing Conflicts

Summarizing the situations related to the distribution of church income among relatives we get the following picture: there were two disputes between mother-in-law and son-in-law, and one dispute between father and son, one between mother and son, and one between father-in-law and son-in-law. In the conflict between the priest Illya Olshansky and his son Pylyp, Pylyp was unwilling to give part of his income for the care of his 85-year-old father.³⁰

In the confrontation between son-in-law and father-in-law, the situation is reversed; 68-year-old Fedir Danylovych does not want to share income with 33-year-old Yakym Lukyanovych.³¹ Of interest, just two years before, Father Fedir engaged in conflict with the owner of the village, Anastasiya Kohno, because of her unwillingness to acknowledge Yakym as a priest in her village, which still got Yakym ordained.³² However, although priest Fedir worked for Yakym to become ordained, his assistance did not extend to payment for these duties. Perhaps he felt that Yakym still owed him his career or wanted to demonstrate that he

³⁰ Ibid., Спр. 1204. Арк. 1-4.

³¹ Ibid., Спр. 336. Арк. 1-5.

³² Ibid., Спр. 271. Арк. 1-4.

was still in charge of the parish, or perhaps wanted to “recoup” the money spent on supplies for his son-in-law.

A separate confrontation between a son-in-law and mother-in-law, as well as the son and the mother, flared up after the death of the latter's husbands. The widow of the priest, Hanna Kodyakova, accused her son Trohym Kodyakov of being unwilling to give her sixteen rubles. Prior to that, the priest undertook to allocate this amount annually to support the priest's mother and two younger brothers from his income. The complaint was made by Hanna's son-in-law, which indicates the involvement of other family members in the confrontation.³³ In another conflict between Yevdokiya Dobrohorska and her son-in-law Ivan Slavyansky, which took place in the village of Melekhy, the priest was accused of non-fulfilment of perceived obligations. The complaint, filed by Ivan, stated that Yevdokiya had personally persuaded her husband to relinquish the right to ordain Ivan. For this, he gave a receipt in which he undertook to transfer a quarter of his income to the widow of the priest. The confrontation was accompanied by mutual insults and the use of physical force. The case file states that priest Ivan broke into Yevdokiya's house, beat her and tried to take away the receipt. Instead, the priest accused the mother-in-law of cursing, and her son of unauthorized ringing of bells and beating of his wife.³⁴ It is unknown how the confrontation ended, but it was noted that Ivan continued to work in the parish, and Yevdokiya and her son also lived in Ivan's yard.

The analysis of conflicts provoked by hostility between relatives revealed the following picture: one dispute between mother and son, two disputes between father and son, two disputes between father-in-law and son-in-law, three disputes between brother and brother, and five disputes between mother-in-law and son-in-law. In such confrontations, it is extremely difficult to identify the causes of hostility. In the case file, the injured party usually emphasizes that the beatings or insults took place “without the slightest fault on my part.”

Morality versus Profitability

It is obvious that, in a number of cases, the cause is material claims of family members against each other. For example, in 1780, the priest of the village of Mytchenky, Leontiy Mykhaylov, complained about his brother Mykyta because he traded “hot wine.” The priest claimed that this prevented him from conducting worship because some parishioners “after getting drunk, wander[ed] around the church and made various insults and swore.” In addition,

³³ Ibid., Спр. 392. Арк. 1-5.

³⁴ Ibid., Спр. 325. Арк. 1-4.

the priest reported the theft of some church items. However, he did not directly blame his brother for this, but blamed the theft on one of the drunken parishioners.³⁵ It is clear that in such circumstances the priest could well lose income because it is unlikely that drunken believers were in a hurry to bring alms to the church.

However, it is impossible to state unequivocally that the conflict was caused only by concern for the morality of the flock or a decrease in the priest's income due to the drunkenness of the parishioners. In his address, Leontiy emphasizes that Mykyta does not belong to the clergy. However, this is untrue, because, in the church records of 1779, he is listed as a '*diak*' in the fraternal church.³⁶ It is noteworthy that two years earlier, Mykyta himself filed a complaint against Leontiy, accusing him of beating his wife.³⁷ And although the case ended in a settlement agreement between the parties, the brothers did not reconcile.

Therefore, at least in this case, the basis of hostility was probably not only material but also deeper personal motives. We assume that the brothers may have had conflicts on the basis of joint pastoral activity, because it is no coincidence that Leontiy seeks to expel his brother out of the church clergy. Perhaps Mykyta, who was only a year younger than Leontiy, considered himself more worthy of the priesthood, or perhaps the priest was dissatisfied with the *diak*'s performance of his duties. The absence of children in Mykyta's family, despite the fact that he married much earlier than his brother, also likely caused quarrels, increasing hostility, because the priest had children.³⁸ As a result of the conflict, Mykyta lost his position as *diak*. In the register of 1782, his occupation was listed in the category of military.³⁹ Only three years after the death of his brother-priest, however, he again took the *diak*'s position.⁴⁰

The same range of causes of conflict in the family, from personal to "professional" hostility, can be seen in other examples. One such example is the conflict between Hryhoriy Ilnytsky, the priest of the village of Bilousivka, and his son-in-law Kyrylo Tymofiyiv. The deacon complained that the priest was forcing his daughter Mariya to leave him. According to Kyrylo, the priest promised the daughter 100 rubles so that she could go to the monastery or run away from her husband, reproaching her for marrying without her father's blessing.⁴¹ It is difficult to say why the deacon blamed the priest, as the couple had just gotten married. We assume that the father-in-law and son-in-law did not get along, or perhaps the father-in-law

³⁵ Ibid., Спр. 700. Арк. 1.

³⁶ Ibid., Спр. 634. Арк. 1-11.

³⁷ Ibid., Спр. 610. Арк. 1.

³⁸ Ibid., Спр. 857. Арк. 1.

³⁹ Ibid., Спр. 740. Арк. 43-4.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Спр. 996. Арк. 55.

⁴¹ Ibid., Спр. 558. Арк. 1-3.

was clearing the way to the deacon's position for his eldest son, Yakiv, because there were already three priests and four deacons in the parish, so all the lucrative places were occupied.⁴²

The situation was even more tense due to the fact that the initiator of the quarrel, Hryhoriy Ilnytsky, himself was a son-in-law of a priest and had to share a parish with his father-in-law Hryhoriy Semenov and another son-in-law. He was very conflicted, sharing the parish long before his rivalry with his son-in-law Kyrylo Tymofiyiv started. Thus, when his family enlarged with the birth of a son and a marriage of a daughter, the future profits could have plummeted. That likely provoked the tension between relatives. Having survived both his father-in-law and the husband of his sister, and having expelled his son-in-law Kyrylo Tymofiyiv, Hryhoriy Ilnytsky lived long enough to see the ordination of his son Yakiv as a priest in the parish six years after the above events.⁴³

A review of cases suggests that children may have adopted a forceful model of conflict resolution from their parents. Such situations are prompted by the situation related to the above-mentioned priest Kyrylo Vereshchaka from the village of Pisky. As described above, he did not neglect his power by sharing the inheritance with his mother-in-law. However, 23 years later, the priest himself was subjected to violence by his son Ivan. Working as a *diak* in his father's church, he loved to consume "hot wine," got drunk, and didn't control his hands.⁴⁴ Thus, domestic violence may not have any specific causes, but may be a common practice that children perceive subconsciously as normal behavior and a perfectly acceptable way to behave toward women.

It is clear that we have not outlined all the probable causes of family problems. However, we can state that drunkenness was a significant cause of violence. Thus, in 12 out of 21 cases, the record shows that one of the parties was intoxicated while committing illegal acts. This means that 57%, or over half of the total cases of conflict involved drunkenness. The prevalence of alcohol abuse in early modern society and drunkenness as a significant cause of family problems, has been acknowledged by many scientists.⁴⁵

Drunkenness might also destroy a family without direct violence. For example, in 1778, the priest Demyan Yakovliv from the village of Korovayi was removed from the priesthood and sent to monastic work to "correct himself from drunkenness." We do not know whether it was possible to re-educate him in this way, but we do know that, after that, only his father

⁴² Ibid., Спр. 538. Арк. 1.

⁴³ Ibid., Спр. 821. Арк. 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., Спр. 538. Арк. 1.

⁴⁵ Володимир Маслійчук, pp. 243-64.

remained in the parish to pastor, even though it was noted that he “in old age improperly carries out his duties.”⁴⁶ In this case, the expulsion of a drunkard to the monastery led to the loss of a breadwinner and made life difficult for the old father, depriving him of his assistant and severely limiting income, because the parish priests of nearby parishes now took turns carrying out the priestly duties.

Conclusions

The issue of family relationships is widely discussed in Christian canonical books and in the writings of Kyiv church intellectuals. The leitmotif of their vision of family life is a call for peaceful coexistence in love and care for each other. The “book tradition” clearly prescribes the supremacy of the man in the family, assigning to him the responsibility for treating his wife and raising children on the basis of Christian virtues that condemned violence, but emphasized the importance of their submission and patience. Along with it, society had its own vision of the norms of family life. In many points, it agreed with the official one by highlighting the supreme role of the husband and father in the family and allowing the use of physical methods of influence while only condemning extremal actions that led to mutilation or death.

Under such realities, the main dilemma of parish priests was that they were the product and bearers of both these traditions. As spiritual leaders, they were supposed to instruct the faithful in Christian virtues and demonstrate their steadfast fulfillment themselves. As members of society, living in the midst of the parish and materially dependent on it, clergymen often had to turn a blind eye to differences between official prescriptions and the folk norm. As evidenced by the results of the study, this led to the fact that priests themselves often acted according to custom rather than legal norms. In relations with their wives, children and other relatives, they chose the model of behavior customary in society, partly ignoring it, and partly, probably, interpreting both the instructions of the Lord and the canonical prescriptions in their own way.

A review of conflict situations in the families of priests shows that they took place on the basis of disputes over material values, personal hostility, and in the context of “professional” activities because family members often held all positions in the parish. Cases of confrontations between all types of relatives, regardless of the degree of kinship, have been recorded. Most of all, sons-in-law quarreled with mothers-in-law. Drunkenness was an important cause of conflict in priests’ families. Noting the influence on the family life of priests of the norms of both Orthodox “booklore” and folk cultures, we believe that the latter clearly dominated. In his

⁴⁶ Державний архів Полтавської області. Ф.801. Оп. 1. Спр. 662. Арк. 1.

relationship with his wife, children, or other relatives, the priest chose the model of behavior common in society, partly ignoring and partly reinterpreting both the bishops' instructions and the canonical precepts in the way that seemed to best suit them.