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## EDUCATIONAL-INTELLECTUAL CENTRES IN THE UKRAINIAN BAROQUE ERA AND THEIR ROLE IN CULTURAL INTERACTIONS WITH THE SOUTH SLAVIC WORLD

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**Abstract.** The article discusses cultural interactions during Ukrainian Baroque (the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), focusing on Europe's broader spiritual and intellectual context. It aims to explore the role of educational-intellectual centres as essential components of Ukrainian Baroque culture and their involvement in communication with the Orthodox communities in the Balkan region. The theoretical-methodological foundation of the research is a comprehensive philosophical and historical analysis of the Ukrainian Baroque's universal nature, including the use of cultural history to clarify the activities of Ukraine's spiritual and intellectual elite. The article reveals that cultural exchanges during this era occurred through spiritual, educational and literary ties among intellectuals, philosophers, Kyiv Academy professors and Orthodox Church leaders, connecting them with like-minded figures from the Balkans, especially Bulgaria and Serbia. The "Kyiv scholarly" centres, as powerful hubs of knowledge and learning in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, significantly contributed (under the support of the Orthodox Church) to shaping a cultural environment receptive to European education and culture and facilitating their transmission to the South Slavic regions. The article concludes that the Ukrainian Baroque era created a transcultural communication space, enabling cultural interaction between Western Europe, Rus and the southern Balkan countries.

**Keywords:** Ukrainian Baroque; educational-intellectual centres; the South Slavic world; cultural exchange; cultural environment; the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

### Introduction

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries marked a period of profound spiritual growth and remarkable achievements in the philosophical, intellectual, artistic and aesthetic spheres of Ukrainian culture. This era, often called Old Ukrainian or Baroque, reflects the creation of culturally significant values on a European scale while maintaining the spiritual (Orthodox) traditions unique to Ukraine. Ukrainian Baroque holds a pivotal role in the cultural and historical development of Slavic cultures.

The leading figures of this time, namely, prominent theologians, intellectuals and philosophers with European education, established a spiritual elite that introduced a fresh perspective on worldview, thinking and creativity. An essential element of Ukraine's Baroque cultural development involved the establishment of a dynamic socio-cultural atmosphere, where intellectual groups, educational institutions and literary circles prospered. These groups formed part of a dynamic communicative space, facilitating active interaction between Ukrainian and European cultures. A significant channel for these cultural exchanges was the communication between the Ukrainian community and the South Slavic regions of the Balkans.

In evaluating the European prospects for today's Ukraine and its aspiration to align with European civilized norms, it is both relevant and timely to analyze the experiences of communicative interactions between the Ukrainian cultural community and Europe, as well as to study the mechanisms of transmitting various cultural models and values. An important aspect of Ukraine's cultural history within a unified Europe is also the tradition of preserving the spiritual (Orthodox) foundations of Ukrainian culture and national identity. Understanding the South Slavic context of intercultural interactions during the Ukrainian Baroque is invaluable and prompts one to examine various issues related to Ukraine and Europe.

*The article aims* to explore the role of educational-intellectual centres during Ukrainian Baroque, analyze their influence on cultural exchanges with the Orthodox South Slavic world and their contribution to developing a pan-European communicative space. A crucial research objective is to define the position of Ukrainian Baroque within the system of spiritual and literary connections in Southern Europe of that era. This article exemplifies an interdisciplinary approach, integrating methodological approaches from philosophy, history, Ukrainian and Slavic studies. It provides insights into the evolution of Ukrainian and European cultures through their diverse interactions (social, intellectual, confessional, linguistic and ethnic). The research also employs essential methods for the humanities, including cultural anthropology, comparative analysis and historical reconstruction.

Numerous Ukrainian and foreign scholars have explored various aspects of Ukrainian Baroque culture, including its worldview and religious, historical and personal foundations. The cultural diversity of the Ukrainian world, the forms of spiritual and cultural life in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the evolution of Baroque thought through the fusion of Eastern and Western cultural models, as well as the transnational cultural context of Ukrainian Baroque, have been studied by G. Brogi, S. Graciotti, N. Pylypiuk, D. Siedina and N. Yakovenko. At the same time, F. Dvornik and I. Shevchenko have analyzed the history and culture of Slavic peoples, their place in European civilization and the cultural-historical connections between Eastern Slavs, Byzantium and South Slavs. Besides, R. Picchio has developed the concept of *Slavia Orthodoxa* as a spiritual and linguistic (literary) community of Orthodox Slavs. The studies by notable European Slavists, includ-

ing I. Duichev, M. Garzaniti, D. Likhachov, K. Stanchev and V. Zhyvov, focus on Balkan and pan-European religious and literary processes, the impact of Church Slavonic on Eastern and Southern Slavic cultures, and Bulgarian-Eastern Slavic cultural connections. Significant contributions to the problem in question were provided by Ukrainian literary scholars (V. Krekoten, O. Myshanych, D. Nalyvaiko, Ye. Pashchenko Ye. Peleshenko) who examine the connections between Ukrainian Baroque and South Slavic literature. Additionally, V. Askochenskyi, Z. Khyzhniak, V. Mankivskyi and M. Petrov studied the history of cultural, educational and religious movements in Ukraine during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy's role as a centre of education and culture.

Despite the extensive body of work on Ukrainian Baroque and the cultural processes of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Ukraine, further research is needed to explore the impact of the cultural environment, intellectual centres and scholars from the Baroque era on the nature and direction of communication, not only with Western Europe but also with the South Slavic world.

### **Ukrainian Baroque in the System of Cultural Interactions and Communications with Europe**

Ukrainian Baroque (the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) represents a significant era in the evolution of Ukrainian culture, even though it did not reach the same level of universality as Western European Baroque. In Ukraine, Baroque emerged as a spiritual epoch, bringing together diverse, even contradictory, elements of life and encompassing the full spectrum of Ukrainian cultural expression. This worldview was marked by a paradoxical approach to perceiving and depicting the world, combining sensual and intellectual intensity with a blend of asceticism and hedonism. At its core, however, Ukrainian Baroque was deeply rooted in religiosity. Human life was interpreted through the lens of a universal connection to God, with Christian moral principles serving as essential guidelines for behaviour. It is not surprising that the leading figures of Baroque culture in Ukraine were mainly renowned religious and ecclesiastical leaders, such as Petro Mohyla, Lazar Baranovych, Stefan Yavorskyi, Varlaam Yasynskyi, Danylo Tuptalo, Anthony Radyvylovskyi and Ioannikiy Haliatovskyi.

The culture of Ukrainian Baroque is a multifaceted and nuanced phenomenon. It emerged through close interaction with other cultural epochs, including the medieval and Renaissance periods. While Ukrainian Baroque, in some respects, rejected the Renaissance, it also built upon and expanded the spiritual foundations of Renaissance culture, frequently drawing from classical antiquity (Graciotti 1993). This cultural movement was shaped by a synthesis of Western European Baroque ideas and Ukraine's national and religious traditions, with European influences being adapted to meet the needs of the Orthodox-Slavic community. The introduction of ideas from Western Europe significantly influenced the development of European

cultural norms in Ukraine. Simultaneously, there was a blending of European influences, particularly Polish, with the strength of Ruthenian Orthodoxy, which significantly influenced various Slavic cultures (Krekoten 1993, Nalyvaiko 1987, Myshanych 1993).

During the Baroque period, Ukraine was part of the cultural and historical entity known as Rus (Southwestern Rus or Little Russia). Ukrainian culture at this time was characterized by its complexity and multi-layered nature, with elements drawn from different contexts and epochs (Brogi 2022, p. 35). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, as a member of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Rus maintained strong connections with Polish and Western European cultures. However, attributing Ukrainian Baroque entirely to Polish influence would be too simplistic. The significance of Old Rus' roots in the development of Ukrainian Baroque should not be underestimated. Cultural exchanges within the Orthodox-Slavic community were also significant during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, particularly in the spiritual, educational and literary connections between Ukrainian Baroque and Southern European countries. Baroque culture flourished most prominently in Ukraine (and Belarus) within the Orthodox Slavic world, with Kyiv recognized as a cultural centre. The influence of Baroque culture and literature from Kyiv reached Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Wallachia. The spiritual unity between Rus and the South Slavic world was largely shaped by the fact that Byzantine culture and Orthodoxy reached Rus through Bulgaria (Lykhachov 1973, pp. 381 – 390).

In the Baroque era, a distinctly European intellectual, literary and artistic culture took shape, brought to life by leading thinkers, educators, writers, theologians and artists. They fostered a dynamic environment receptive to European cultural ideas and engaged in active intercultural dialogue and exchange. This openness to European culture played a crucial role in defining both the uniqueness and intrinsic value of the Ukrainian, especially Kyiv, cultural system, while also facilitating cross-cultural communication between Ukrainian, Polish, Russian (Muscovite) and South Slavic cultural contexts. For a long time, cultural life in the Rus lands was marked by merging Greek and Latin spiritual traditions. The linguistic landscape was equally distinctive, involving the use of Church Slavonic, Latin and Polish. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Rus demonstrated a unique transcultural space, where cultural interactions flourished between the Rus intellectual and educational community (strongly influenced by the church), the Western European (particularly Polish) cultural environment and the Slavic Orthodox world of the southern Balkans.

Without question, Ukrainian culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries primarily functioned within the framework of the Slavic Orthodox world and was shaped by Greco-Slavic influences. Stemming from the era of Kyivan Rus, Old Rus literature evolved in harmony with South Slavic literature, with a notable Bulgarian influence during the early development stages. Although there is limited evidence for comparing liturgical poetry in East Slavic regions with Old Bulgarian works

(Stanchev 2012), the connections between Rus and Bulgarian cultures within the Byzantine-Slavic spiritual context are indisputable. The contributions of Gregory Tsamblak in the Rus lands during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as a pupil of the Tarnovo Literary School and a distinguished figure of Byzantine rhetorical culture, further underscore this connection. Tsamblak was intimately linked with the Rus society, while his works are situated within the larger framework of Slavic-Orthodox (Church Slavonic) culture, encompassing Rus, Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania (Peleshenko 1984, p. 24). His use of the Slavic language is evident in the Didactic Gospels and the sermons of Anthony Radyvylovskyi (Brogi 2022, p. 76).

The prevalence of religiosity, Orthodox thought and a preference for spiritual over secular elements, combined with the assimilation of ancient traditions through a Christian lens, led to the integration of European Baroque cultural influences in Ukraine with the traditions of the Orthodox Rus community. This alignment was significantly supported by a unified literary and linguistic community known as *Slavia Orthodoxa*, which encompassed the Orthodox populations of the Southern and Eastern Slavs from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This community was rooted in the spiritual traditions of Orthodoxy and shaped the cultural identity of both Rus and the South Slavs, in contrast to the Latin world (*Slavia Latina*) (Pikkio 2003). From this shared foundation of *Slavia Orthodoxa* emerged a distinct phenomenon in Slavic cultures (including Rus), termed “Orthodox-Slavic”. The literary and liturgical language of *Slavia Orthodoxa* became Church Slavonic, serving as the language of the church and culture and as the standard for communication among Orthodox clergy. A notable aspect of this phenomenon is that the discourse surrounding Church Slavonic is closely related to issues of religious and cultural identity, becoming more pronounced than in the Latin world (Garzaniti 2007, p. 33). This common Orthodox-Slavic heritage and affiliation with a unified linguistic and cultural community played an important role in shaping the Rus identity from the era of Kyiv through the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Importantly, from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Western European (Polish) influences were notably significant in the Rus territories that were part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This blending of national and religious foundations with elements of Western European tradition led to linguistic pluralism and cultural syncretism within the Rus cultural landscape (Brogi Bercoff 2017). Intercultural interaction traditions flourished during the Ukrainian Baroque era when Kyiv emerged as the centre of cultural and intellectual life in the Slavic Orthodox world. The orientation towards Polish culture throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century was prominently reflected in key centres of Orthodox Ukrainian education and culture, such as the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and the intellectual community surrounding Petro Mohyla (Romanovski 2016, p. 8). Concurrently, in these scholarly centres in Kyiv, the contributions of notable Rus scholars, preachers, philosophers and Mohyla’s professors and students fostered new methods of conveying Christian

experiences, knowledge and cultural exemplars within the Slavic Orthodox realm. To illustrate, grammars and lexicons published by Rus scholars during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries gained recognition in the Balkans, serving as educational resources for both Eastern and Southern Slavs for an extended period. This includes P. Berynda's "Slavic-Russian Lexicon", L. Zyzanii's "Slavonic Grammar" and M. Smotrytskyi's "Grammar of the Slavs". Additionally, M. Smotrytskyi's "Grammar" and P. Berynda's "Lexicon" played a crucial role in the Serbian and Bulgarian national revival movements. The Rus book became a vital medium for communication and knowledge dissemination among educated circles in the South Slavic world.

Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra served as a major centre for the dissemination of culture and knowledge in the Slavic world, standing out as the most significant and influential hub of Orthodoxy that preserved the spiritual traditions of Kyivan Rus. At the Lavra, a literary circle was established, led by Archimandrite Y. Pletenetskyi, which included a school and the publication of literature. The Lavra Printing House became one of the most esteemed printing establishments in Eastern and Southern Europe, supplying not only Rus but also Bulgarians and Serbs with printed works of Orthodox significance during critical periods in their histories. Among the most renowned and widely circulated publications in the Balkan countries were "The Book of Hours" and "The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom" by Z. Kopystenskyi, both printed at the Lavra. Numerous works by Rus authors prominently featured the theme of Slavic unity. To illustrate, P. Berynda highlighted the togetherness of Great Russians, Bulgarians, Serbs and others who followed Orthodoxy (Titov 1918, p. 158).

### **Kyiv Educational-Intellectual Centres of the Baroque Era in European Cultural Space**

The cultural environment that thrived during the Baroque era significantly influenced the evolution of communication in the Slavic world, ultimately becoming a vital aspect of Ukrainian culture. This environment was largely shaped by Mohyla intellectuals in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with strong support and influence from the Orthodox Church. The atmosphere of Kyiv scholarly centres was largely defined by the activities of cultural and educational centres, circles and like-minded societies. Their efforts focused on promoting education and knowledge while strengthening connections with the Orthodox community across various regions of Europe. This laid the groundwork for a pan-European communicative cultural space that included Eastern, Western and Southern European countries. These educational and cultural centres, along with communities of intellectuals, absorbed, transmitted and mediated the complex cultural influences between European culture and the Orthodox world while preserving and sharing the spiritual experiences of the Rus community within the broader European cultural landscape. Their influence has left a lasting mark on Eastern and Southern European history over the centuries, with the effects of Baroque cultural interactions still resonating today.



The cultural environment, with its systems of interpersonal interactions and communication, was a fundamental aspect of Ukrainian Baroque. Kyiv, the leading centre of Baroque culture in East Slavic lands in the 17th and 18th centuries and a focal point of educational life, experienced a flourishing poetic and literary creativity. Books were printed, philosophical and theological treatises were authored, and printed literature spread widely, fuelling the growth of the educational movement. Kyiv's cultural and intellectual life peaked under the leadership of Metropolitans P. Mohyla, V. Yasynskyi, Y. Krokovskyi and R. Zaborovskyi. To contemporaries, Kyiv was symbolically compared to Athens, where science and the arts flourished.

A distinct feature of the Baroque era was the Kyiv Collegium, later known as the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, which offered a European-level education to students from South Slavic countries. The professors and graduates of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (prominent figures in the Orthodox Church, religious preachers, philosophers, poets and artists) played a key role in disseminating cultural values that spread across Eastern and Southern Europe. They fostered a setting characterized by openness, intellectual vitality and a strong emphasis on education while deeply involved in European culture. This circle of scholars, often referred to as the Kyiv-Mohyla Athenaeum, included influential thinkers, such as S. Kosiv, Y. Kononovych-Horbatskyi, and poets, including A. Kalnofoiskyi, S. Pochaskyi, Y. Kalymon, T. Baievskyi and K. Yevlevych. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Kyiv Collegium and the intellectual and literary network surrounding P. Mohyla became the most significant centre of Orthodox education and culture. The influence of Polish culture was quite strong, with Latin-Polish literacy held in high regard and Latin and Polish poetry flourishing (Romanovski 2016, p. 8). Despite the widespread use of Latin wisdom and the Polish language in these academic and cultural spheres, Orthodox thought remained the cornerstone of this environment. The strong tradition of Orthodox theology and the authority of the Church played a crucial role in preserving the Rus identity amid the growing influence of Polish linguistic and religious culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The efforts of like-minded individuals and supporters of P. Mohyla fostered a sociocultural environment that encouraged communicative interactions between West and East representatives. Following P. Mohyla's death, the "cultural programme" of the second generation of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy students was integrated into Kyiv's educational-intellectual life by his followers and supporters, including Kyiv theologians, professors and lecturers from the Academy (Yakovenko 2019, p. 10). During the 1650s, within the Kyiv Collegium established by the metropolitan, a group of professors and church intellectuals remained active. This group included L. Baranovych, I. Hizel, I. Haliatovskyi, F. Sofonovych, Y. Slovenytskyi, I. Trokhymovych-Kozlovskyi, Y. Kononovych-Horbatskyi, I. Oksentovych-Starushych, V. Yasynskyi, A. Radyvylovskyi and T. Prokopovych (Askochenskyi 1856, P.1, pp. 137, 157 – 166).

A spiritual-intellectual community of like-minded individuals also emerged around Metropolitan V. Yasynskyi, who was the rector of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy from 1667 to 1673. This period is one of the most significant in the Academy's development. The spiritual companions of the Kyiv metropolitan included S. Yavorskyi, D. Tuptalo, K. Fylymonovych, Y. Krokovskyi, H. Odorskyi, H. Buzhynskyi and the artist I. Mytura (Askochenskyi 1856, P.1, pp. 190 – 193). Each displayed a strong commitment and profound devotion to the Orthodox faith. While the sermons and panegyrics composed by Kyiv thinkers and poets were intended for the royal court and supported imperial policies, they maintained a connection to Ukraine and were grounded in a distinct cultural context. G. Brogi highlights that the first significant East Slavic “theological treatise”, S. Yavorskyi's “The Stone of Faith”, originated from the intellectual and religious movement linked to Polish-Ruthenian cultural syncretism, especially associated with the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Following its publication, this work gained widespread circulation in East Slavic church culture (Brogi 2022, p. 55).

The intellectual-educational atmosphere at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy thrived under the rectorship of Y. Krokovskyi, a key figure in Ukrainian cultural life and the Orthodox Church during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Pylypiuk 2017, Siedina 2020). The 1730s witnessed a significant rise in intellectual and spiritual activity at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, particularly during the leadership of Metropolitan R. Zaborovskyi. At that time, the Academy had students from Balkan countries, and Zaborovskyi personally assisted the most promising students in pursuing studies overseas. His patronage led to the formation of a distinctive cultural centre at the Academy, namely, a scientific and literary association featuring notable members such as M. Dovhalevskyi, S. Lianskoronskyi, P. Koniuskevych, S. Dobryna, T. Aleksandrovyeh, H. Slonymskyi and H. Konyskyi (Askochenskyi 1856, p. 2, pp. 113 – 142, 155). Among the prominent figures in this cultural environment were the philosopher S. Kuliabko, the grandson of Hetman D. Apostol, and the erudite S. Todorskyi, who was proficient in multiple languages, including Hebrew.

To conclude, the ideas developed by Kyiv theologians and intellectuals were integral to Rus culture and contributed to the wider Slavic Orthodox tradition. Their work extended beyond mere ecclesiastical thought, engaging with the foundational principles of existence in Europe and the values that underpin European society.

### **The Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and Cultural Connections with the South Slavic Countries**

The cultural environment's openness, fostered by a spirit of literacy and tolerance for diverse languages and faiths, facilitated the development of communicative connections with the Orthodox Slavic communities in the southern Balkans. Supported by the Church during the leadership of Metropolitans V. Yasynskyi and R. Zaborovskyi, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy emerged as a key centre from which high



cultural and educational standards radiated into Southern European nations under Austro-Hungarian and Turkish rule (Khyzhniak, Mankivskyi 2003, p. 148). This particularly affected Bulgaria and Serbia. Kyiv intellectuals served as bearers of Baroque cultural values and achievements in the Orthodox world, effectively transmitting and mediating intricate cultural influences between the West and the East.

With the direct participation of scholars from Kyiv, European-level education was introduced to the Balkans, and the founding of schools ushered in a new era in Bulgarian and Serbian culture. R. Zaborovskyi recognized the need for educated individuals among the Serbs who could establish schools and deliver education “in the Kyiv manner”. The first Serbian school was established by M. Kozachynskyi, an envoy from the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and P. Padunovskyi, I. Lastovytskyi and D. Novakovych continued his work. The influence of the educated Kyiv elite within the Serbian community was profoundly impactful. In the 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Serbian culture faced pressures from the Turks and Austrians, graduates of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, along with representatives from Kyiv centres of education, literature and art, travelled to Serbia to establish schools. These institutions offered curricula that mirrored those of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, standing in stark contrast to the conservative Serbian clergy. As noted by Ye. Pashchenko, the support from Kyiv played a crucial role in the Serbian people’s nearly century-long struggle for education (Pashchenko 2017, p. 51).

The Mohyla scholars left a significant legacy in the Balkans, being recognized as “skilled teachers of amiable character, diligent and eager in instructing their students”, as remarked by the Serbian Metropolitan to R. Zaborovskyi (Askochenskyi 1856, P. 1, p. 88). The most widely used textbooks in Serbia included M. Smotrytskyi’s “Grammar” and T. Prokopovych’s “Alphabet Book”. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the Orthodox Serbian clergy was oriented toward East Slavic literature, drawing inspiration from Kyiv and Moscow (the Russian government sought to strengthen its influence in the Balkans).

The commitment of the Kyiv scholarly elite to multilingualism resonated with the prevailing trends in spiritual and educational life during the Baroque era, shaping the character of instruction. Serbian schools specifically taught two languages, namely, Church Slavonic (Rus-Slavic) and Latin, which enabled direct communication with the broader Slavic community and Western European culture. The vibrant interactions with like-minded individuals from Europe were further enhanced by the social dynamics in the Balkans, marked by resistance to Ottoman rule and opposition to Catholicization.

In the Balkans, the arrival of teachers, writers, artists and representatives of the Orthodox Church was accompanied by a significant movement of Serbs and Bulgarians who travelled to Kyiv to pursue higher education, drawn by the opportunity to receive a European-level education. This phenomenon was facilitated mainly by the sociocultural climate shaped by the educational-intellectual environment of

the Baroque era. The atmosphere of cultural interaction was further enriched by the alignment of the perspectives of the Academy's professors and clergy with the ideals of the liberation struggles of the Balkan peoples against foreign oppression. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Kyiv became a prominent centre of Orthodoxy and education in the Balkans. At this time, numerous talented individuals from South Slavic countries, including Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, came to Kyiv to pursue their studies. The Kyiv-Mohyla Academy gained particular renown within the Balkan cultural environment during the 1730s. While studying at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, students from the Balkans were immersed in a cultural atmosphere that was integral to the educational ethos of this institution. Upon returning to their homelands after completing their studies, they emerged as influential figures in the Baroque processes within the South Slavic context (Pashchenko 2017). The contributions of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy graduates significantly facilitated the dissemination of high intellectual and spiritual culture standards throughout Southern Europe.

The dynamics of cultural interactions and communications between representatives of Rus and South Slavic cultures illustrate that the Baroque era was not an isolated phenomenon but rather an open communicative system, cultivated through the exchange of ideas among like-minded individuals, cultural influences and strong personal connections. The cultural environment established during the Ukrainian Baroque facilitated intricate cultural exchanges between the European West and the Slavic Orthodox world. Through its educated elite and members of the Orthodox Church, Rus (Ukraine) became integrated into a new network of contacts and communications with the Slavic world. The activities of Kyiv scholarly centres, which effectively transmitted Christian experiences and educational models to the Balkan countries, played a significant role in shaping a shared communicative space across Europe. Nevertheless, from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, the era of intellectual and literary-artistic associations and communities began to wane. This decline may have been influenced by the pressures exerted by the repressive machinery of the Russian state during this period or by the diminishing significance of Baroque thought. As a result, the vibrant atmosphere of intellectual, philosophical and literary life, characterized by creative freedom and aesthetic flourishing, gave way to a philosophy of isolation and ethnic insularity, ultimately undermining the activities of Baroque figures to establish European culture in Ukraine.

### **Conclusions**

Research into the phenomenon of educational-intellectual centres during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as a detailed analysis of their roles in shaping the cultural landscape of Ukrainian Baroque, highlights a crucial aspect, i.e., a fresh perspective on Ukrainian culture through the lens of communicative processes occurring within the European cultural context. In this regard, Ukrainian culture is not merely

viewed as a recipient of Western European Baroque influences but as a distinctive transcultural communicative space where cultural interactions among the Orthodox Rus, South Slavic and Latin worlds were initiated and cultivated. Key figures in this transformation included distinguished Rus scholars, theologians, members of the Orthodox Church, philosophers and the educational and cultural institutions of the Ukrainian intellectual elite, particularly at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. These individuals embodied a new Ukrainian cultural identity and played a vital role in promoting high standards of education and culture across the southern Balkans. Their contributions serve as compelling evidence of the sustained cultural exchanges and influences between the European West, Ukraine and the South Slavic world.

The sociocultural climate of the Baroque era facilitated the transmission of European ideas and values while upholding the spiritual (Orthodox) foundations of human existence, fostering the development of an environment known as “Kyiv scholarly centres”. This intellectual environment was receptive to various cultural influences and was marked by the integration of both “Greek” and “Latin” church traditions. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ukrainian intellectuals became organically intertwined with the broader spiritual and intellectual landscape of Europe. The activities of educational-cultural centres in this period played a crucial role in establishing a pan-European communicative space while diverse cultural models and spiritual traditions were exchanged. Through their extensive experience in communication and interaction with European and South Slavic cultures, the Ukrainian community cultivated resilience and vitality. This dynamic has undeniably shaped and continues to influence the trajectory of Ukrainian history. Furthermore, the civilizational communicative context that emerges during times of war necessitates a focused exploration of the issues presented in this article.

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