

Maria Grazia Bartilini

Abstract

“Kol’ dobro i kol’ krasno Khrista radi umirati”. The Discourse of Martyrdom in Seventeenth-century Ukraine and its Patristic Sources.

This paper investigates the rhetoric of martyrdom that developed in seventeenth-century Ukraine. My focus is limited to the discourse of the Orthodox martyrdom as it is developed by Ukrainian Baroque preachers recounting the life and death of the martyred princes Boris and Gleb. In particular, I focus on one exemplary case, Antonij Radyvylovs’kyj’s *Slovo pervoe na sviatyx strastoterpec kniazej Borisa i Gleba* (Kiev, 1676). In tracing the contours of ideologies of martyrdom that arose in the specific cultural setting of seventeenth-century Kiev, I shall also tackle the problem of inter-confessional encounters, in particular of those taking place along the Orthodox-Catholic divide, by evaluating the impact of the “martyrological revival” experienced by post-Reformation Europe. However, the image of the Eastern Slavic Orthodox martyr as it emerges from the homiletic sources will be seen not only within the context of the international (Counter-Reformation) influences, but also within the context of the refiguring of the Ukrainian religious landscape after Petro Mohyla’s reforms.

Keywords: Martyrdom, Boris and Gleb, Ukrainian Literature of the 17th century, Antonij Radyvylovs’kyj.