

## Case Report

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# THE PROBLEM OF INFLUENCES ON THE MONUMENTAL ART OF THE UKRAINIAN-AMERICAN ARTIST S. HORDYNSKYI

*O problema das influências na arte monumental do artista ucraniano-americano S. Hordynskyi*



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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of Ukrainian-American artist S. Hordynskyi in the evolution of monumental art, with an emphasis on the cultural and historical origins of the Ukrainian nation in world art history. Employing methods such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, deduction, historical, and generalisation, the research delves into Hordynskyi's contributions and the broader context of Ukrainian art history. Results indicate that Hordynskyi uniquely blended Byzantine and Renaissance traditions in his monumental art, developing a style that emphasized a distinct perception of the sacred. Additionally, "Boichukism" emerged as a central conceptual idea shaping his work. Conclusively, the ascent of Ukrainian art and culture in the global arena is influenced by socio-economic and political dynamics, with Hordynskyi's singular artistic contributions playing a pivotal role in this renaissance, offering valuable insights for contemporary artists globally.

## KEYWORDS

creativity; painting; traditions; neo-Byzantine; iconography.

## RESUMO

Este estudo explora o papel do artista ucraniano-americano S. Hordynskyi na evolução da arte monumental, com ênfase nas origens culturais e históricas da nação ucraniana na história da arte mundial. Empregando métodos como análise, síntese, comparação, dedução, histórico e generalização, a pesquisa investiga as contribuições de Hordynskyi e o contexto mais amplo da história da arte ucraniana. Os resultados indicam que Hordynskyi combinou de forma única as tradições bizantinas e renascentistas em sua arte monumental, desenvolvendo um estilo que enfatizava uma percepção distinta do sagrado. Além disso, o "Boichukismo" surgiu como uma ideia conceitual central que moldou seu trabalho. Concluindo, a ascensão da arte e da cultura ucranianas na arena global é influenciada pela dinâmica socioeconômica e política, com as contribuições artísticas singulares de Hordynskyi desempenhando um papel fundamental nesse renascimento, oferecendo percepções valiosas para artistas contemporâneos em todo o mundo.

## PALAVRAS-CHAVE

criatividade; pintura; tradições; neo-bizantino; iconografia

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sviatoslav Hordynskyi (1906-1993) – a prominent Ukrainian painter and graphic artist, poet, translator, and art critic who performed an important role in the development of Ukrainian art of the 20th century. Due to his comprehensive talent, the stability of his worldview and artistic and creative positions, he managed to discover his talent despite certain historical circumstances in different socio-cultural environments. S. Hordynskyi began to work actively as an artist and writer in Lviv in the 20s and 30s of the 20th century, where he survived the German occupation during the Second World War. Equally important was his contribution to the development of the artistic process as an active member of the Association of Independent Ukrainian Artists (ANUM), and organiser of several art exhibitions and art publications (Dutchak, 2020; Kozinchuk, 2020) [1, 2]. S. Hordynskyi repeatedly travelled to Western Europe, studied with leading artists in Berlin and Paris, enthusiastically studied the methods of modern art and worked hard to synthesise it with the traditional principles of Ukrainian national art. As a result, the artist's graphic and pictorial works in the late 20s of 20th century attracted the attention of art lovers and, most importantly, critics (Ivashko et al., 2021; Mamatov, 2021) [3, 4]. In the early 1930s, S. Hordynskyi's art criticism began, which eventually began to be distinguished both by the depth of professional judgements and the sharpness of critical assessments and by an organic connection with his creative and ideological positions. The artist's art historical heritage (13 monographs, more than 200 articles, essays, and reviews published over sixty years) is such a significant and understudied one that it may well become the subject of particular research. S. Hordynskyi made a noteworthy impact on the advancement of Ukrainian avant-garde literature through his remarkable poetry collections and unique translations of a diverse range of works spanning from the Old Russian Tale of Igor's Campaign to the poetry of F. Villon, as well as numerous classical and contemporary poets who wrote in languages such as Italian, French, German, and Russian. It is essential to highlight the significance of the artist's life and creative output during the latter half of the 20th century, which was predominantly spent in exile in the United States.

Fascinated by the artistic culture of Byzantium, ancient Rus-Ukraine, and the Italian Renaissance, and interested in the research of sacred monuments, S. Hordynskyi painted an impressive series of mosaics, murals, stained-glass windows, and iconostases for 49 churches in the United States, Canada, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Australia. It can be argued that S. Hordynskyi took one of the leading places among the masters of monumental painting of the Ukrainian diaspora, and, given the virtually complete suspension of sacred artistic creativity in the former USSR, among Ukrainian artists in the all-Ukrainian context. S. Hordynskyi's active painting was supported by theoretical studies devoted to the problems of art history and art criticism. Among the 150 publications of the second half of the 20th century, about four dozen works are devoted to the problems of the sacred art of individual epochs and styles (Choma-Suwała, 2022; Snizhynska, 2022) [5, 6].

The subject's relevance is underscored by the fact that S. Hordynskyi's works from his American period offer valuable insights into the intricate processes of cultural and artistic development within the Ukrainian diaspora in Western Europe and the United States. Regrettably, these aspects have not received adequate attention in the field of art history, as noted by Lototska in 2021 [7]. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that a substantial body of previously unreleased archival materials is being introduced for the first time, which can significantly contribute to the advancement of contemporary Ukrainian art history (Zavyalova & Stakhevych, 2022) [8].

Moreover, it is essential to highlight that S. Hordynskyi's multifaceted "Renaissance" persona has been misrepresented by a certain group of researchers due to the Soviet ideological perspective that categorized his creative ideas solely as "nationalist and formalist aesthetic," as pointed out by Dundyak in 2020 [9]. Despite such exceptional intensity and productivity, S. Hordynskyi's work has not yet been the subject of in-depth scholarly attention. The objective of this study is to examine the cultural and historical influences on the monumental art style

of Ukrainian-American artist S. Hordynskyi. Specifically, it will analyze how Byzantine and Renaissance traditions, as well as the "Boichukism" art movement, shaped Hordynskyi's distinctive techniques and aesthetic in his mosaics, murals, stained glass, and iconostases. The goal is to elucidate his role in developing a national Ukrainian style in sacred art.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This qualitative study utilizes multiple methods to examine the cultural and historical influences on S. Hordynskyi's monumental art style, including analysis, synthesis, comparison, deduction, historical analysis, and generalization.

Primary sources analyzed consist of the artist's writings, documents and archival materials such as sketches, drafts, letters, articles and notes accessed from museum archives and private collections. Secondary sources include art history books, academic journal articles, exhibition catalogs, and critical reviews of Hordynskyi's work published between 1920-2022. Sources were identified through database searches in JSTOR, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and library catalog searches.

Visual analysis was conducted by making in-person observations of key monumental works by Hordynskyi including mosaics, murals, stained glass windows and iconostases located in churches in the United States, Canada, Italy, Germany and Australia. Detailed examination of formal elements such as line, color, composition, and iconography was undertaken to discern influences of Byzantine, Renaissance and folk art traditions.

Comparative analysis involved identifying similarities and differences between Hordynskyi's monumental aesthetic and other related styles such as works by Boichuk, Picasso, and della Francesca. Conceptual underpinnings of the "Boichukism" movement were analyzed through close reading of primary texts.

Visual analysis of Hordynskyi's key monumental works including mosaics, murals, stained glass, and iconostases forms a significant part of the methodology. Formal elements such as line, color, composition as well as iconography are examined to identify influences of Byzantine, Renaissance and folk art traditions.

Cultural analysis was performed by contextualizing Hordynskyi's contributions within the broader evolution of Ukrainian art. The socio-political dynamics shaping the Ukrainian diaspora were considered.

Interpretive, qualitative coding was used to identify key themes related to influences on Hordynskyi's style. Data were organized categorically to elucidate relationships between concepts. The methodology provides a framework grounded in robust evidence to map the confluence of cultural influences that shaped Hordynskyi's monumental aesthetic.

## 3. UKRAINIAN ICON: TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN THE WORK OF S. HORDYNSKYI

In the artistic life of Sviatoslav Hordynskyi, there were always outstanding personalities who had a significant impact on his "charismatic" creative development. Some of them mentioned him occasionally, others left a noticeable imprint in his work, and still, others guided him on the path of further development. In the field of monumental art in the Ukrainian American community, Khrystyna Dokhvat, Ivan Denysenko, Petro Kholodnyi (junior), Mykhailo Osinchuk, Vira Lazarovych-Senchuk, Mykhailo Dmytrenko, Yuvenalii Mokrytskyi, and other Ukrainian artists worked. Borys Makarenko and representatives of his school worked in an original style (Salmond et al., 2020) [10]. In both the architecture and temple art of the Ukrainian diaspora

in the 20th century, there was a tendency to explore the ancient sacred and artistic heritage of Ukraine in depth. Attempts to design something innovative without relying on traditions usually failed (Olianina, 2023) [11]. These were just loud slogans, floundering in the currents of mass culture. When working on monumental compositions, S. Hordynskyi primarily turned to the history of Ukrainian sacred art, in particular, to the work of V. Svetsitska and H. Logvyn "Medieval Painting", which he considered a thorough theoretical study. And after a long analytical search and work with archival materials, which began in the Lviv period, he prepared his study "Ukrainian Icon of the 12th-18th Centuries". This work chronologically highlights the long process of development of Ukrainian iconography, revealing its most striking examples. S. Hordynskyi was constantly looking for a personal creative approach to the establishment of a modern icon, which should be based on the traditions of ancient iconography. The artist constantly nurtured the idea of revival and modern interpretation of the Ukrainian-Byzantine iconographic tradition.

In the context of this search, S. Hordynskyi constantly collaborated with the architects of a particular church, which he later had to decorate. S. Hordynskyi's intervention in the architecture of the church can be interpreted as an attempt to solve the principle of harmony in the environment in a comprehensive, ensemble manner. Architecture and fine arts can be united under one common denominator of artistic and figurative principles. There were times when fine art played a more important role than architecture. Focusing on examples of world-class art, S. Hordynskyi intended to discover his concept of synthesis of figurative-spatial painting and architectural solutions for the church. It is evidenced by the Church of the Intercession in Munich (Germany), where the modern architecture designed by R. Zhuk is combined with the Ukrainian painting style of S. Hordynskyi. In fact, S. Hordynskyi uniquely designed the interior, synthesising elements of wooden cladding with mosaics and mural paintings. S. Hordynskyi's creative thought was devoted to solving the problem of a style that would materialise an artistic idea. The synthesis of Byzantine and Renaissance traditions can be traced in almost every monumental work of the author – from the solution of the church environment to the interpretation of each element of the composition. S. Hordynskyi was convinced that the Renaissance developed the best principles of perfect beauty and harmony of early Christian times. Exploring the creative methods and styles of early icon painting, he focused on ancient, so-called Fayum portraits, as Greco-Roman art was one of the main sources of the development of church architecture and art in Byzantium.

After a long study of ancient iconography in Greece, S. Hordynskyi became convinced that the Greek icon has distinctive features of ancient and Renaissance art. In addition, he understood that a skilful combination of Christian cultural heritage with ancient and Renaissance traditions could establish a temple environment of extraordinary spiritual and aesthetic impact. In many cases, S. Hordynskyi managed to achieve perfect proportions of the image, nobility of posture and majesty of figurative compositions and individual images. Convincing in the depiction of details (mosaic details, bunches of fabric and ornamental ribbons), S. Hordynskyi preserved a laconic drawing, highly professional technique and fine artistic taste in the main points.

Sviatoslav Hordynskyi's work reflects Ukrainian cultural and historical influences through his use of the neo-Byzantine and modernist styles in his wall paintings and iconostases. Hordynskyi's works are a synthesis of these two styles. The neo-Byzantine style is a modern variant of art that is influenced by Byzantine art, which was characterized by a fundamental artistic attitude that endowed forms with life by associating them with meaningful content. Hordynskyi's use of this style in his works reflects the influence of Byzantine art on Ukrainian culture. The modernist style, on the other hand, is characterized by a break from traditional forms and a focus on innovation and experimentation. Hordynskyi's use of this style in his works reflects the influence of modernism on Ukrainian culture (Dundyak, 2020) [9].

However, he did not escape criticism and accusations of repetitive images. The artist's icons are indeed full of similar compositional solutions, scales, movements, rhythms and colour. S. Hordynskyi often depicted and repeated iconographic types of the Virgin Oranta (Rome, Italy), the Wisdom of God (Rome and Munich), the Virgin of the Intercession (Munich, Germany), the Virgin of Perpetual Help (Lackawanna, USA), the Virgin from the iconographic

composition “Deesis” (Minneapolis, USA), Monnesen (Pennsylvania, USA). The Deesis altarpiece (Melbourne, Australia); for iconostases – the Virgin of Odigitria and Eleusis-Peace (West Easton, USA), and the Virgin from the Annunciation scene in Saskatoon (Canada) (1972) and Embry (USA) (1959). In addition, it happened that the artist painted two or three churches at once, continuously drawing the same figures. Undoubtedly, certain features of the depicted person (face, clothes, decorative elements) were repeated. Thus, S. Hordynskyi’s style is easy to recognise. He subtly modelled the oriental features of the saints known from ancient icons, bringing them closer to the modern ideal of beauty. However, where he tries to modernise the image too much, bringing it closer to realism, these innovations contrast with the rest of the work: for example, the mountains in the Nativity fresco from the church in Munich (Germany) are represented in relief, in three dimensions, rather than flat, as seen in old icons, and this establishes a stylistic dissonance.

S. Hordynskyi was particularly concerned with the rhythm of lines and shapes, and he further enhanced this rhythm by using triple tones of each colour: red, blue, and green. In his figures of saints and angels, one can feel rather a blissful, happy mood than asceticism and mysticism, as if the artist wanted to represent the “triumph” of the Church. S. Hordynskyi approached each project very carefully. For example, the author worked on the ornaments of the paintings in the Cathedral of St Andrew the First-Called in Munich (Germany) for over a year. The main attention was paid to the location of the images in the church. Thus, the coverage of religious and historical images had to be balanced. There are religious images in the sanctuary and images related to Ukrainian church history on the back and side walls. Scenes from the Gospels on the side walls of the central nave have gained considerable artistic significance: The Nativity of Christ, Baptism in the Jordan, and the Descent into Hell. The artist painted the walls of the Church of the Intercession in Munich (Germany) with the images of Ukrainian saints Borys and Hlib, Volodymyr and Olha, and, in the altar’s concealment, he designed a mosaic composition of the Virgin Mary surrounded by saints.

S. Hordynskyi’s monumental mosaics resembled the best examples of Ukrainian folk art in their colouring, and their design was influenced by modern Western art schools. The author develops the mosaic space from a system of characteristic micro-spaces united by the wall plane into a single unit. This combination of different images necessitates the division of the mosaic space into conditional registers, developing them from a combination of different scenes, what can be seen in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1**  
“Resurrection” mosaic project  
drawing



The drawing (paper, pencil, gouache, watercolor, bronze paint; 45.5 × 56 cm) depicts a multi-figure composition. Jesus Christ holds a large patriarchal cross in his right hand and raises Adam from the grave with his left. The characters on either side of the mandorla are Kings David and Solomon and John the Baptist (on the one hand) and martyrs and forefathers (on the other).

When designing the mosaic, the artist set himself an important purpose – to deepen the figurative and semantic character of the space. Thus, in a certain sequence, many portrait images of historical heroes and Church Fathers were introduced into the composition in a single ensemble of the temple's spatial environment. The pictorial structure does not have a rigid design, in particular, there are no large sizes, specific rhythms and masses.

S. Hordynskyi did not accept poster straightforwardness but instead designed stylised images of various subjects in the context of abstract ideals. He developed his principles of conveying an artistic message, which was based on the decorative organisation of mosaics. In his works, there are signs of metaphoricality, which can be expressed in a plastic form, large scale, and conventional language of images.

The artist uses the method of generalisation and symbolisation to convert a complex theological worldview into the language of plastic painting. The mosaic “The Wisdom of God” in St Sophia Cathedral in Rome (Italy) seems to emerge from the wall by increasing circles, ovals and geometric lines, defining its clear linear-spatial structure, and the technique (or manner) of rounding the forms, bringing them to the correct geometry, allows the artist to achieve a certain sculptural character of the images (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2**  
“The Wisdom of God” in St  
Sophia Cathedral in Rome

In addition, the structure of increasing circles was needed to enhance the architectonic properties of the mosaic. The geometricity and almost correctness of the sculptural plasticity of the forms evoke distant associations with the figures of Piero della Francesca. Here, the scale of the idea corresponds to the scale of the form, and the strength and power of the plastic language correspond to the monumentality of eternal materials (smalt) (Cento Bull and Clarke, 2021) [12].

In his mosaics, S. Hordynskyi was based on the creative experience and stylistics of the monumental art of Byzantium, the Balkans, and Kyivan Rus, while always remaining on the borderline of the Byzantine-Renaissance style. As already mentioned, travelling extensively, S. Hordynskyi explored the iconographic traditions of various schools of sacred painting.

Inspecting the churches of Greece, Italy, and the Mediterranean countries, the artist realised that each era and each culture designed its vision of space and developed a method of plastic expression appropriate to its ideas. Thus, the Byzantine medieval culture established its specific understanding of pictorial space and form. In Byzantine space, everything depicted is both a specific object and a space for another object. The mosaics of Saint Volodymyr and Saint Olha in St. Sophia Cathedral in Rome exemplify this concept (Figure 3).



**Fig. 3**  
Mosaics of Saint Volodymyr and  
Saint Olha from the St. Sophia  
Cathedral in Rome

S. Hordynskyi's mosaics and paintings were driven by dual goals. First, he aimed for the icon's figure to engage and communicate with the viewer, appearing in the space of those who pray. This interaction was achieved by employing techniques that pushed the image out of its plane, making it a part of the observer's world. Second, he wanted the viewer to be drawn towards the depicted image, leading them to the divine. Hordynskyi's icons emphasized the "flatness" essential to their existence, reflecting the Byzantine artist's approach of using imagery as a bridge between the seen and unseen. The iconic plane was vital in understanding the icon's purpose, with gold backgrounds often serving as the ideal backdrop due to their dual attributes: materiality and divine luminance.

The icon's presence was highlighted by placing elements like halos or gestures beyond its traditional boundaries. Yet, the core relationship of the image to the viewer was rooted in the icon's planar principle. Hordynskyi's aimed to create images that took the viewer into another dimension. He approached the design with a unified view of external and internal forms, using vibrant colors and high-grade gold leaf for halos and backgrounds. To him, color had a hidden significance and was tied closely to rhythm.

(Yazykova, 2021) [13].

To enhance the impression of the holiness of the depicted images, S. Hordynskyi actively uses decor – both in the design of the background, halos, saints' clothes and replenishing the monumental plane. He developed his own “peculiar” patterns, ornamental elements, motifs and decorative compositions, believing that decor should serve as a means of emphasising and enriching iconographic dominants and defining national identity and belonging. As with the Old Russian masters, the line becomes the main means of expression here. The author pays great attention to bhankas, which become a symbol of the character's spiritual and emotional state. The bhankas materialise and dematerialise bodily masses, dissolving them in the space of the golden background. The depiction of saints' clothes is associated with rhythms that carry an important semantic load. The ornament on the golden background is developed from modules – the beginning and the end – just like the spiritual life of a person. Like M. Boichuk, S. Hordynskyi subtly perceived the symbolic role of ornament in the miniature and monumental art of Byzantium, Kyivan Rus, and the Renaissance (Sandu et al., 2021) [14].

S. Hordynskyi's acquaintance with the folk art of the Hutsul region had a great influence on the development of the decorative system and the overall plot models. He began to understand the basics of folk imagery during plein airs organised by O. Novakivskyi in Kosmach. He was impressed by the drawings of Hutsuls on tiles and plates, embroidered ornaments, and wood carvings.

S. Hordynskyi perceived symbols in everything and believed that visual folklore unified communities and was crucial for a nation's survival. He emphasized the importance of preserving folk traditions, as they expressed the spiritual essence through minimal artistic means. S. Hordynskyi evolved his artistic style, moving away from classical compositions to a stylized system inspired by folk ornaments. His time in Kosmach expanded his interest beyond landscape painting to include various folk arts such as ceramics, embroidery, and woodcarving. He also sketched ornaments from different ethnic groups, particularly geometric ones.

In Paris, during his time at the Académie de l'École de l'Église, he encountered Western European Art Nouveau. There, he incorporated Ukrainian embroidery ornamentation into his avant-garde graphics, interpreting them through a cubist and futuristic lens. The unique blend of folk traditions in Ukrainian art was evident in Paris. His interest was particularly piqued by the Hutsulshchyna – Kolomyia region's ethnic heart.

While earlier discussions were theoretical, it wasn't until the 1950s in America that S. Hordynskyi applied his knowledge of ornamentation in monumental painting. His extensive travels, especially exploring Byzantine decor, aimed to understand the interplay between pagan and early Christian influences.

Art historians (e.g., B. Pevnyi and D. Stepovyk) believe that S. Hordynskyi was well acquainted with Byzantine-Kyivan approaches, as he synthesised them with modern methods and therefore managed to demonstrate the mentality of the Ukrainian nation. And here is what S. Hordynskyi wrote himself: “I have always been an enthusiast of everything new in art, but when Picasso looked for patterns and inspiration in black and Polynesian art for his modernism, I believed that we have enough richness of forms in our folk art and long-nationalised icon to look for patterns as far away as Africa or Polynesia” (Chun, 2020; Mastrotheodoros et al., 2020) [15, 16]. S. Hordynskyi's church paintings, mosaics, and icons describe the approaches of the Byzantine-Kyiv iconographic tradition and developed a distinctive national style of depicting Ukrainian churches abroad (Bevz, 2019) [17].

S. Hordynskyi undertook a dedicated journey to the East to delve deeper into the intricacies of Byzantine ornamentation and its roots. The art of the region captivated him, particularly the Iranian-Egyptian metalwork with its distinctive grotesque features and animal-inspired motifs. His explorations also led him to Greece, the epicenter of antiquity, where he was drawn to architectural ornamentation like pediments, cornices, and metopes. Faced with a multitude of inspirations, S. Hordynskyi grappled with his direction in monumental art. He contemplated various paths: emulating “pure” Byzantine art infused with Ukrainian cultural elements, refining Byzantine patterns by incorporating aspects of other styles like



the Renaissance and Art Nouveau within a Ukrainian context, building upon the visions of past artists, or forging a new path by creating a unique model of Ukrainian temple art that could resonate both nationally and internationally.

#### 4. DEVELOPMENT OF S. HORDYNSKYI'S CREATIVE IDENTITY

The question of S. Hordynskyi's artistic and creative worldview and intellectual orientations was and remains relevant, especially the identification of the main sources of influence on the process of his establishment as an artist. Such influential sources undoubtedly included W. Zalozetskyi, an art historian, professor of Byzantine studies at the University of Berlin, a prominent cultural figure, and an active organiser of the artistic life of Ukrainians in Lviv and Berlin.

The first meetings of the young master with V. Zalozetskyi occurred in the autumn of 1927 when S. Hordynskyi went to Berlin, where he mastered drawing at the Academy of Arts and attended lectures of a professor on the history of Byzantine art and culture at the Ukrainian Scientific Institute. In his lectures, Zalozetskyi emphasised that Ukrainian artists should find themselves by exploring the origins of ancient art. After all, contemporary art has no tradition – it is nothing more than a combination of shapes and colours. And the most important thing in art is expression. Art without it – is a craft.

S. Hordynskyi, communicating with V. Zalozetskyi, demonstrated a deep interest in the art of book miniature. He positively assessed the historical ethnography of H. Narbut's works, inspired by baroque ornaments and examples of Ukrainian ancient art. Hence, S. Hordynskyi was able to establish his concept of book art of modern forms. Having satisfied his passion for book illustration, S. Hordynskyi designed his approach to developing a book model synthesised based on Byzantine, Narbutist and modernist elements. Working on the study of book design, researching the art of old prints, in particular, ancient gospels, exploring Old Russian book miniatures, S. Hordynskyi, under the influence of V. Zalozetskyi, develops his version of the most recognisable ornaments and applies them in formalistic graphic compositions, achieving significant results as a book illustrator (Lamas et al., 2021) [18].

The second important source of influence on S. Hordynskyi's work was M. Boichuk – it was from him that a kind of synthesised approach to the development of the concept of monumental art was adopted. S. Hordynskyi borrowed from M. Boichuk's work not so much the method of imitating ancient paintings as the very conceptual idea of the establishment of "Ukrainian monumental images". S. Hordynskyi noted that one of the factors of M. Boichuk's success was a clear understanding of the purpose that he pursued and passed on to his students.

This purpose was thoroughly elaborated to the smallest detail: to explore the technique of real frescoes as the foundation of monumental painting, to explore Byzantine art that was once relevant in Ukraine, and then to develop Ukrainian ideas of monumental art; to integrate it into all spheres of activity, including cultural (Reich, 2020) [19]. S. Hordynskyi was fascinated by the way M. Boichuk understood works of ancient art and their significance for future generations of artists. It is known that M. Boichuk learned from ancient Ukrainian icons, portraits of the 17th-18th centuries, mosaics and frescoes of the princely era, and works of Italian classics, but he liked to use Byzantine models harmonised in terms of rhythm, movement and colour, ancient Christian symbolism, and using decorative elements of the East (Znak et al., 2022) [20]. S. Hordynskyi largely mastered M. Boichuk's creative method. After all, M. Boichuk managed to combine Byzantine sources of art, and Ukrainian culture with early Renaissance approaches and ideas widespread in Europe.

S. Hordynskyi believed that M. Boichuk's style, known as "Boichukism", was anti-academic and had links to the European avant-garde movement. It was a universal style, but it was most evident in religious art as the Church was the main patron. Art historians such as Boichuk,

Krychevskiy, and Narbut understood art as a continuation of the same organic lines as those found in the styles of the past, which established the concept of Ukrainian art or national style (Oretskaia, 2020) [21]. The formal approach to the solution of M. Boichuk's images was reduced to simplified, somewhat stylised volumetric masses that acquired the features of leading European styles. The ratio of forms on the plane in M. Boichuk's works was the same as in the iconographic space, and the difference was in the semantic interpretation. The author understood the form as an actual expressive element of the national tradition, where the leading thing was not the means but the strength and professionalism of the expression of the semantic text. "Look" M. Boichuk wrote, citing the image of Christ the Saviour as an example, "everything is clear here. Everything is placed where it should be, from external forms to inscriptions... Each of their works has something in common, they have the spirit of true art" (Baltes, 2020) [22].

Influential for S. Hordynskiy were the words of Yuriy Lypa, who said at an exhibition of young Ukrainian artists in Lviv in 1943: "There are no images that define Ukraine. There are St. Petersburg and Moscow schools, there is an echo of Paris, but there is no Ukrainian art that has historical origins." The biographical note about S. Hordynskiy in the *Book of Works by Ukrainian Artists Outside the Homeland*, published in Philadelphia in 1981, states: "In his art, he continued the development of Boichuk's ideas, as he synthesised centuries-old Ukrainian culture with the challenges of the "pure form" of contemporary art." Therefore, for S. Hordynskiy, national traditions were of great importance in his work, and the main idea of his sacred art was to preserve the national identity of the Ukrainian people. Thus, the conceptual idea of "Boichukism" as a national character became one of the main sources of inspiration for S. Hordynskiy's works. Focusing on M. Boichuk, he tried to analyse various European artistic phenomena specially, combining them with the Ukrainian tradition, thus fixing his attitude to the Byzantine heritage and neo-Byzantine trends.

The early 20th-century art saw P. Kholodnyi senior merging Byzantine art with Ukrainian folk motifs, an approach that resonated with S. Hordynskiy. Kholodnyi's sacred painting incorporated the Ukrainian iconographic tradition and infused it with modern art elements, particularly constructivism. Hordynskiy, defending his own work, emphasized that while his art might draw from traditional icons, it still integrated modern features, aligning cubism, constructivism, and Byzantine art as expressive of specific life dynamisms.

In the U.S., Ukrainian icon painters like M. Osinchuk, Hieromonk Yuvenalii (Mokrytskyi), M. Dmytrenko, P. Kholodnyi (son), among others, embraced the Byzantine style. With Ukrainian art facing the challenge of rejuvenating ancient spiritual values, the diaspora churches needed to echo modern sentiments. S. Hordynskiy was at the forefront of this, developing a monumental design scheme for churches that met contemporary stylistic requirements.

According to Hordynskiy's system, biblical scenes occupy the vaulted and altar parts of the temple, while historical and ecclesiastical events and various ornaments should cover the walls of the side naves. On the side walls of the front part of the church, S. Hordynskiy depicts the scenes of "Descent into Hell" and "Transfiguration on Mount Tabor"; on the back wall of the front part of the church, he paints the iconographic composition "Crucifixion". Below are portraits of the Patriarchs of the Greek Catholic Church: Andrey Sheptytsky and Josyf Slipyi, and models of St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv and St George's Cathedral in Lviv. These subjects are presented against a background of dark blue, which contrasts and symbolically correlates with the golden glow. Traditional compositions are used in the works, as they have a special meaning for the Eastern Church. Traditionality is important because the stability and immutability of iconography motifs testify to the immutability of church dogmas (Kornilova et al., 2023) [23]. The designed mosaics are based on Byzantine-Balkan and Italian-Greek models, although their figurative interpretation develops the specific features of Ukrainian iconography of the 14th-16th centuries, especially in their restraint and sophisticated, cold academicis (Stasyuk, 2020) [24]; (Almaganbetovna et al., 2023) [25]. However, the main model was the Kyivan mosaics from St Sophia's Cathedral, which met all the requirements of modern art: they had a simple, clean form, harmonious

colour scheme, and perfect compositional arrangement (Bokotey, 2017) [26].

From the standpoint of the present day, there are different opinions about the work of S. Hordynskyi. There were many critical remarks about his artistic works during his lifetime. However, he always said: "Criticism disciplines me. It draws attention to flaws and shortcomings." What is important is that S. Hordynskyi had a separate vision of the creative process and its results in the future. He managed to combine different skills and his own experience to reflect the "idea of identity" of Ukrainians in the world. Initially, the objective was to emphasise the Ukrainian nation in the world through art, whether secular or sacred, to demonstrate its culture and spiritual origins. S. Hordynskyi proposed that Ukrainian icon painters establish a commission to nurture Ukrainian church art, with the prospect of establishing a school of iconography, which would allow for the education of a new generation of artists who would preserve the traditions of the past and the "Ukrainian style", and become an important part of the global cultural process.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to examine the cultural and historical influences on the monumental art style of Ukrainian-American artist S. Hordynskyi, specifically analyzing how Byzantine and Renaissance traditions, as well as the "Boichukism" art movement, shaped his distinctive techniques and aesthetic. The findings demonstrate that Hordynskyi uniquely blended Byzantine and Renaissance approaches in his mosaics, murals, stained glass, and iconostases to develop a style emphasizing a distinct perception of the sacred. His works reflect a synthesis of neo-Byzantine and modernist influences, informed by Ukrainian cultural identity.

Additionally, "Boichukism" emerged as the central conceptual idea guiding Hordynskyi's monumental compositions, as he built upon Boichuk's vision of establishing a national Ukrainian style rooted in Byzantine sources yet responsive to avant-garde innovations. Hordynskyi's creative evolution reveals an artist attuned to diverse inspirations from Eastern and Western spheres, while steadfast regarding the preservation of Ukrainian spiritual and artistic heritage.

The findings highlight Hordynskyi's vital contributions in advancing a Ukrainian monumental aesthetic amidst the socio-political pressures of the diaspora. His artistic rediscovery of ancestral cultural motifs offers valuable perspectives for contemporary artists seeking to forge a modern national identity. However, limitations arise from focusing solely on Hordynskyi's influences and techniques without examining reception or impact. Further research could explore how his unique style resonated with diaspora church communities and inspired other artists. Broader questions remain regarding the role of monumental art and sacred expression in constructing cross-generational identities. Nevertheless, this study enhances the understanding of Hordynskyi's multifaceted artistry and his efforts to revitalize Ukrainian artistic and spiritual traditions through a singular neo-Byzantine vision. It points to the importance of his work in the cultural renaissance of the Ukrainian diaspora and his lasting imprint on conceptions of the monumental.

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