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Euphrosyne vs. Josaphat: Colonizers and 'Confessionalizers' in Poland-Lithuania and Later, in Russian Belarus and Ukraine

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Summary. The analysis of Josaphat Kuntsevych as a living and remembered person, or *lieu de mémoire*, should take place not least within a discussion of the concepts of confessionalization and colonization, as this contribution argues. If, for the Catholic Confession, Piotr Skarga was a typical confessionalizer, seeking to foster confessional homogeneity or aspects of confessional discipline in multiconfessional everyday life, then Josaphat illustrates what a confessionalizer could achieve for the Union of 1596. Indeed, his veneration became established within the Polish-Lithuanian state's framework, being based on both Ruthenian and Roman Catholic denominational foundations. Thus, this contribution will interpret Russian imperial politics through the example of the use of St. Euphrosyne, a 12th-century Polatsk princess, as a substitute for the veneration of St. Josaphat up until 1914, as seen from a postcolonial perspective on denominational politics. The imagined Russian imperial history concerning Ruthenia was pivotal concerning the policy of Russification, which had already been partially applied after the first uprising in 1831, but especially after the second uprising in 1863.
Keywords: Confessionalization; Colonization; Russification; Urban history; Polatsk; religious *lieux de mémoire*.

1. Post-de-Colonial Views on Ruthenia/Ukraine/Belarus, Russia, and Religion[1]

Anti-imperial historiography has been developing since the mid-19th century, and has found an important culmination in Hrushevsky's multi-volume, powerful deconstruction of the Russian imperial narrative by setting regional and national history, i.e., Ukraine-Rus', centre stage.[2] Moreover, by 1900 – i.e., very early on –

1 These introductory remarks were developed from S. Rohdewald, 2022.
2 S. Plokhy, 2005.

initially *anti-colonialist* and then also *postcolonialist* perspectives had been adopted to describe Ukraine's relationship with Russia, and later, with the Soviet Union. From the beginning, and with renewed intensity since 1991, these perspectives have and continue to have *decolonial* significance, meaning here, not least, cultural emancipation from a colonial situation.[3] Russia's current war against Ukraine has, on several occasions, also been classified as a colonial war, and not without justification.[4] The intention of actors to impose their own way of life on another state and its population while using everyday violence, which is essential for the definition of modern colonialism, in conjunction with economic exploitation,[5] is obvious from Russia's official statements on the war to date and from its broadly documented actions.

Keeping this in mind, in the following pages, I would like to briefly discuss the merits and limits of postcolonial perspectives on Late Medieval and Early Modern Ruthenian history within the Polish-Lithuanian union and later Commonwealth, and Ukrainian/Belarusian history within the Russian Empire, with a focus on religion and its roles in 'colonialisms'.[6] For the 17th century, I will refer very briefly to the entangled confessional disputes in the context of the critique of the still rather German (which is, as I will repeat here, rightly criticized for its macrohistorical assumptions) historiographical concept of 'confessionalization'[7] – within which Josaphat Kuntsevych is centre stage. I will make an appeal here, again, for an adapted and pragmatic usage beyond the paradigmatic assumptions of the concept.[8] Subsequently, this contribution will interpret Russian imperial politics through the example of the use of St. Euphrosyne against St. Josaphat up until 1914, again seen from a postcolonial perspective on denominational politics. The choice of these foci comes from the idea elaborated here that the generally rather intense discussion about religion and its functions in 'colonial' contexts[9] and, especially, in cases of imagined 'internal colonialization' (as explained below)[10] should be combined

3 S. Velychenko, 2015; S. Velychenko, 2002; M. Ryabchuk, 2010; M. Shkandrij, 2001.
4 Th. Snyder, 2022; M. Foucher, 2022.
5 *The Shadow of Colonialism*, 2014.
6 Cf. on Ukraine: S. Rohdewald, 2022.
7 One of the few examples of the affirmative use of the term for Ruthenia by a non-German historian: R. Butterwick, 2008.
8 As I have extensively done earlier by using the same examples of Polatsk, Josaphat, and Euphrosyne in the Early Modern period as well as the 19th century: S. Rohdewald, 2005; S. Rohdewald, 2010a; S. Rohdewald, 2010b; S. Rohdewald et al., 2007.
9 *Religion and Colonization*, 2023.
10 Ш. Родевальд, 2012.

with the debate on adapted understandings of entangled confession-building and, for example, 'second confessionalization', as far as the 19th century is concerned.[11] Moreover, the interlinkage between the developments occurring during the 17th and 18th centuries and those occurring during the 19th century, has to be stressed – as the chosen cases may demonstrate.

2. Anti- and Post-de-Colonial History within Poland-Lithuania: Magnates as Colonizers[12]

Since the 19th century, the German historiographic interpretation of the late medieval *melioratio terrae* in Poland, including in initially Orthodox Red Ruthenia and/or Halych (lat. Galicia) in today's Western Ukraine, has been framed as 'eastern colonization' (*Ostkolonisation*),[13] reflecting the globalized imperial and colonial discourses of the 19th and 20th centuries.[14] To some degree, this view has been adopted in Polish historiography, *mutatis mutandis*. Similarly, since the 19th century, modern Ukrainian historians have interpreted the rule of Casimir III over Halych (Galicia) as 'colonizing', Polish 'foreign rule'.[15] These contexts have reappeared only partly in recent historiography on the violent colonizing 'Europeanization of Europe' during the Middle Ages, and they try to explain aspects of 'colonialism with medieval means'.[16]

All in all, the Polish-Lithuanian polity of the Early Modern period, as a decentralized and heterogeneous, multi-ethnic commonwealth without a strong political centre, should not necessarily be regarded as an *empire* or as a *colonial empire*. However, the colonization of Ukraine by magnates, especially after its incorporation into the Crown in 1569, has been debated within research for a long time. The large latifundia belonging to the magnates who dominated the Polish-Lithuanian composite polity were located in Ruthenia, i.e., the Ukrainian and Belarusian eastern parts of Poland-Lithuania.[17] Although some of these latifundium-owning

11 Using the term 'reconfessionalization' for the 19th century, but without engaging in the broader discussion on concepts of confessionalization or colonialism: М. Долбилов, 2010, e.g., с. 478, though referring to O. Blaschke, 2000, S. 765 (S. 48).

12 These remarks have been developed from S. Rohdewald, 2022.

13 Th. Wünsch, 1999, S. 22, 66.

14 Cf., e.g., R. Nelson, 2009, 2010; K. Kopp, 2012.

15 B. Wöller, 2012; S. Rohdewald, 2010c.

16 R. Bartlett, 1993.

17 H.-J. Bömelburg, 2007; H.-J. Bömelburg, 2015; O. Subtelny, 1986.

local nobles were originally of Ruthenian origin, by the 17th century at the latest, these too had become Catholic and Polish-speaking, and, like many spokesmen of the Polish nobility, shared a supposedly ancient Sarmatian origin narrative – which had the effect of distinguishing them from the peasants.[18] As landholders having domination over their serfs, these magnates had, in principle, the power to impose a change in confessional adherence.[19] Thus – keeping in mind the debates on *internal* colonization allegedly taking place within France, and the British and Russian empires[20] – with regard to Poland-Lithuania, too, with the growing gap between nobles and serfs, and the intensifying discursive and social practices of creating a cultural difference between them, one could speak of an internal colonization (that is, of the Ukrainian or Ruthenian regions, which were seen by more and more of the Polish-speaking elite as *internal*). On the other hand, at least on the (former) territories of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, spokesmen for the Orthodox believers as well as Armenians, Jews, and Muslims, always had sufficient cultural self-confidence to meet initially unbaptized Lithuanians, German and Polish Catholics etc., on an equal footing. For these and other reasons, the Ruthenian territories of Poland-Lithuania have been studied rather as a *transcultural* region than as a classical *colonial* contact zone; yet, considerations about transcultural history in general have developed in the context of postcolonial approaches. The cultural practices of the negotiation of political domination or confessional hegemony and exclusion and attempts at oppression, as well as the counter-strategies arising from these, have always been central to such perspectives on Ruthenia, i.e., Ukraine and Belarus.[21]

3. Clerical 'Confessionalizers' in Ruthenian Poland-Lithuania

But let us now come back to religion and denomination, i.e., Josaphat. With the advent of the Church Union of 1596, a new level of integration of the Orthodox populace into Roman Catholic communication contexts came into being. This Union was welcomed by the person of the king and grand duke, but it was not initiated by him. Six of the eight Orthodox bishops of Poland-Lithuania put them-

18 H.-J. Bömelburg, 2006, S. 71, etc.
19 W. Kuligowski, 2018.
20 A. Etkind, 2011.
21 S. Rohdewald et al., 2007.

selves under the pope. However, they did not renounce the Greek Rite, and their dogmatic concessions were marginal. As they had before, they described themselves as members of the 'Greek faith'. Thus, this specific Uniate confessional level does not easily fit into any concept of cultural colonialism, either, especially as in 1620 the Orthodox hierarchy was restituted, albeit, not least, with the help of the patriarch of Ottoman Constantinople.[22] Rather, the expansion of the Jesuit influence, and notably the *translatio* of the Orthodox Church's large land possessions to the Jesuit Order by Stephen Báthory – as happened in Polatsk in 1582 – and not to the Uniate Church, which disputed this donation over the following decades, could be partially seen from such a perspective.[23]

The concept of 'confessionalization' in its classical form as a macro-theoretical *trias*, together with 'modernization' and 'social disciplining', and, in general, a stress on politically directed state churches (*Landeskirchen*), proved to be based on too many macrohistorical assumptions, including that of long-term success, to really fit into complex multiconfessional situations or to suit the multiple places where attempts at confessionalization were 'not very successful', beginning with the example of Rome itself.[24] Without undisputed regional or state churches in the Grand Duchy, as a 'mixed confessional landscape',[25] it is not only for the process of confessional formation of the Orthodox faithful that no, or no successful and consequential 'interlocking with political power' can be observed.[26] Yet it may make sense to single out actors who definitely *tried* to act as 'confessionalizers', as proposed by David Frick.[27] If, for the Catholic Confession, Piotr Skarga was a typical confessionalizer, seeking to foster confessional homogeneity or aspects of confessional discipline in multiconfessional everyday life, then, among the Orthodox population, Petro Mohyla, in particular, was the first of the Orthodox denomination to begin outlining a confessional identity based on the Western model with his *Confessio Orthodoxa*. The example of Josaphat, then, illustrates what a confessionalizer could achieve for the Union: whereas his predecessor Archbishop Herman of Polatsk had remained ambivalent, Josaphat, the author

22 Cf. J. Dzięgielewski, 1986.

23 S. Rohdewald, 2005, S. 221 f., 228 f.

24 Cf. the already (since the 1990s) extensive debate about the application of the concept in general and in relation to Eastern Europe, too: S. Rohdewald et al., 2007, S. 22–26; cf. instead, and without much reference to large parts of this older debate, e.g., *Orthodoxa Confessio*, 2018.

25 J. Oswalt, 2001, S. 358.

26 A. Brüning, 2001, S. 221.

27 D. Frick, 2007, S. 136.

of the first Uniate catechism, reformed his eparchy with zeal. Nevertheless, his status for the city's population remained unclear until after 1620, when he outed himself publicly, leading to his death in Vitsyebsk by outraged parts of the Orthodox urban population. After his violent death in 1623, his veneration gained, initially, the individual, and then corporate, support of the decentralized, noble and clerical state-supporting estates, and also the support of the king and Rome, which led to what was indeed a rapid beatification. Ultimately, however, efforts to institutionalize him as a saint and a medium for political and confessional unity were not immediately a resounding success, not in Rome nor in the provinces.[28]

Instead, seen from a transconfessional or transcultural perspective, it becomes clear how the cult of Josaphat significantly changed not only Ruthenian cultural and confessional practices, but also Polish and Roman Catholic state-political and confessional identity concepts. The framework of communication for the veneration of Josaphat transcended both confessional and ritual, and class and ethnic boundaries in the first few years after his death and was able to consolidate itself in various places throughout Ruthenia. Until the middle of the 17th century, Uniate clergymen submitted petitions in favour of Josaphat's canonization; they, like the Jesuits, venerated him in the name of an overarching Catholicity. Several Roman Catholic magnates, who were acting as prominent confessionalizers and were essential pillars of the *Rzeczpospolita* (Republic), often with Ruthenian family backgrounds, also supported his cult by observing miracles ascribed to him. Their numerous acts of communication in support of the cult of Josaphat can be seen as advocacy for a better integration of their *own culture* into the Roman Catholic-dominated context of the noblemen's republic: for them Josaphat apparently became a medium for the communicative consolidation of their own collective transcultural identity. His veneration became established within the Polish-Lithuanian state's framework and was based on both Ruthenian and Roman Catholic foundations. The differences between the Uniate or Greek-Catholic Church, and the Roman Catholic Church were ignored, while the Orthodox Church served as the ultimate 'other'. At the public celebrations for Josaphat's beatification in Vilnius, the practice of remembering Josaphat was initially only used in a subordinate dimension to consolidate a united confessional 'sub-identity' based on the rite; more important was its role as a medium for the Catholic, overarching union.[29]

28 S. Rohdewald, 2005; S. Rohdewald, 2010b; S. Rohdewald, 2010c; cf. A. Gil, 2005, s. 72.
29 Extensively discussed in: S. Rohdewald, 2010c.

This changed only in the 18th century, when the Uniate structures and confessional identity consolidated after the Council of Zamość in 1720. Parish and visitation reports show how the Uniate 'liturgical identity'[30] became based on a broad mixture of Latin and Eastern Church elements in the Uniate service, whereas the influence of Latin moral theology on the Basilian order's textbooks was more extensive and more dominant.[31] In this context, we can also see Uniate identity-building in hagiography, including by referring to Euphrosyne, the daughter of a 12th century prince of Polatsk (and one of the few Rus'ian female saints), in local denominational history, being blended with the monasterial and the first drafts of regional, Belarusian historiography.[32] Indeed, the overwhelming dominance of the Union had a decisive influence on the 'emerging Ukrainian and Belarusian identities'.[33] Russian intervention on behalf of the Orthodox Church intensified during the 18th century but ended the 'secure dominance' of the Uniate Church only around 1760.[34]

All in all, during the course of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, numerous confessional identities not only consolidated themselves in Ruthenian cities but were also moulded through exactly this mutual competition during the Early Modern period. From this inter-confessional disputation and exchange, numerous lay brotherhoods, including Orthodox ones, clearly emerged, following and adopting the *Latin* post-Tridentine Counter-Reformation pattern, which campaigned for the improvement of education and for book printing. Earlier, and outside the Latin context, there were no lay fraternities or brotherhoods in the Orthodox domain.

30 B. Skinner, 2009, p. 58.

31 Ibid., p. 87.

32 Ignacy Kulczyński, *Specimen Ecclesiæ ruthenicæ: ab origine susceptæ fidei ad nostra usquè tempora in suis captibus seu primatibus Russiæ cum S. Sede apostolica romana semper unitæ*, Romae, 1733 [second edition: Parisiis, 1859], p. 22. Extensive information on Euphrosyne can be found in t. 1: Ignacy Stebelski, *Dwa wielkie swiatła na horyzoncie Połockim z cieniów zakonnych powstające czyli zywoty ss. Panien i Matek Ewfrozyny i Parascewii, zakonnic i hegumenij*, t. 1, w Wilnie: w Drukarni Bazylianskiey, 1781; t. 2: *Chronologia albo porzadne [sic, S. R.] według [100] lat zebranie znaczniejszych w Koronie Polskiej i w Wielkiem Xiestwie Litewskiem a mianowicie na Białej Rusi w Połocku dziejów i rewolucyi, zwłaszcza tych, które się tyczą tak starodawnego monastyru S. Spasa za Połockiem, niegdyś przez ŚŚ Panny i Matki Eufrozynei Parascewie Hegumenie rzadzono, jako tez terazniejszego klasztoru na zamku Połockim założonego*, w Wilnie: w Drukarni Bazylianskiey, 1782; t. 3: *Dodatek do chronologii*, w Wilnie: w Drukarni Bazylianskiey, 1785.

33 B. Skinner, 2009, p. 227.

34 Ibid., p. 143; cf. L. Wolff, 2019, for the following decade.

This has to be kept in mind, vis-à-vis, for example, concerning Russian perspectives which emerged only in the 19th century, attributing these brotherhoods entirely to Orthodox contexts.[35]

4. 'Internal' Colonization of the External within the Russian Empire

With the integration of Polish-Lithuanian Ruthenia, i.e., Belarus and Ukraine, into the Russian Empire, the main factors of the setting discussed above changed, and new narratives came into existence. First, we have to remember that the territories occupied by Russia during 1772, 1793, and 1795 had never previously been part of the Moscow Grand Duchy nor, apart from brief periods of occupation, part of the Russian Empire. Thus, the terms 'Western Russia', 'Northwest Russia', and 'South West Russia' were only established from that time as central concepts in the new imperial-national narratives: these new names, and the provinces of the empire they were designed for – the largest part of today's Ukraine, all of Belarus, and all of Lithuania – were only *imagined* as being, allegedly, regained and 'internal' territories of the empire, which were wrongly supposed to have been lost centuries ago.[36] Likewise, the provinces of 'South Prussia' and 'New East Prussia', which were improvised after the partitions of Poland-Lithuania, had not previously been ancestral parts of 'Germany' or Prussia, but historical, core territories of Poland-Lithuania.[37]

The intensified policy of the Russian, imperial, and increasingly national, colonization of these territories after 1860 was legitimized by the imperial Russian-nationalist historical image that Poland-Lithuania had, in the late Middle Ages, only temporarily advanced into actual Russian territories – i.e., into Rus'. The medieval commonwealth, with its centres in Kyiv, Polatsk, and Novgorod, was wrongly supposed to have, in fact, been 'Russia'. This shortcut was equivalent to a classic *invented tradition*. Instead, from the very beginning, the populace of this commonwealth had developed their own consciousness and continued to call themselves 'Rus'ian' or 'Ruthenian people', and think of themselves as inhabitants of 'Rus" or 'Ruthenia' within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania during the 13th and 14th centuries, and later, from 1569, as part of the political nation of Poland-

35 C. von Werdt, 1994; cf. I. Isaevych, 1990.
36 Ш. Родевальд, 2012.
37 R. Healy, 2014; cf. R. Nelson, 2009; cf. D. Stamatopoulos, 2021.

Lithuania – and they clearly distinguished themselves from the 'Muscovites' and, later, the 'Russians'.[38]

Whereas parts of the nationalist and metropolitan Russian elite of the 19th century imagined an external, foreign/European colonization of the Russian Empire, from which, in their view, it was necessary to emancipate themselves; on the other hand, concerning the former Polish-Lithuanian territories (i.e., Ukraine and Belarus, which were now referred to as '(South) West Russia'), I have discerned an 'imagined internal colonization of the outside' by loyalist, local, and central agents of the empire.[39] The emphasis on the imaginative and fictional level of only an alleged 'inwardness' of what were, in reality, external territories, which was propagandistically invented within the framework of imperial and national *invented traditions* – in respect to the High Middle Ages (Medievalism) and in relation to dominions which had for centuries been absorbed into other states and, of course, had never been dominated by Moscow, such as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including, for example, Volhynia and Podolia, i.e., Ukraine and Polatsk – is crucial in this context. Otherwise, if, in today's research, when applying the concept of *internal colonization*, the actual belonging of the named regions to the *interior* of the Russian Empire is presumed, this interpretation is, of course, sharply rejected today, for example, by Ukrainian research, as being a renewed 'second colonization'.[40]

This concept of an imagined imperial history concerning Ruthenia was pivotal concerning the policy which had already been partially applied after the first uprising in 1831, but especially after the second uprising in 1863. Just as the new province of Poznań had been subjected to strong Germanization policies within the German Empire after 1866, the new territories of the Russian Empire, the so-called Western Region (*Zapadny kraj*), was to be *explicitly* subject to Russification (*obrusenie*) by the government. Though there is already sophisticated research about this topic, more regionally focused studies are still important to understand how and by whom this concept was applied, and especially what roles religion played in these contexts compared to earlier settings.[41] An exemplary analysis

38 D. Frick,1984.

39 Ш. Родевальд, 2012. The following passages in the main text draw, not least, on this article.

40 Cf. Т. Гундорова, 2011.

41 W. Rodkiewicz, 1998, p. 20, 29; about this: there is an ongoing debate, for example, with contributions by R. Vulpius, 2005; D. Staliūnas, 2007; A. Kappeler, 2004; E. K. Rohr, 2003; Th. R. Weeks, 1996; М. Долбилов et al., 2006.

of the contemporary discourses about Josaphat and Euphrosyne, the previously mentioned 12th-century Polatsk princess, promises to be useful for this purpose.

5. Confession as a Tool for National, Imperial 'Internal' Colonialism

The forced conversions of 1794 had already made it clear that only one confessional identity would be permitted in the new territories of the empire: the Orthodox faith. Catherine II adopted the arguments of some Orthodox Ruthenian clergymen, that is, that the Polish state and the Catholic faith were incompatible with an extended Russian Orthodox identity. The interpretation that the 'Western Russians' belonged to the 'perceived ethnic core of the Russian Empire' was decisive in the general development of the new imperial identity, 50 years before an Orthodox-Russian 'official nationality' was decreed under Nicholas II.[42] After the dissolution of the Uniate Church within the territory of the Russian Empire in 1839, that is, its 'unification' with the Russian Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church in the *western territories*, which had been gained through the partition of Poland-Lithuania after 1772, remained – beyond the Jewish population – the last problem for Russian Church circles, and awaited a *solution*, and to be treated also with the means of colonialism.[43] Whereas the dissolution of the Catholic Church in the western territories, not to mention the Polish heartlands of the former *Rzeczpospolita*, remained without the support of the Interior Ministry, the fostering of an Orthodox identity among the former Uniate believers was very much intensified.[44]

This all happened within the conscious entanglement and re-imagination of remembrances of earlier centuries. This is illustrated, too, when, after the suppression of the second uprising, Polish Catholic dignitaries and magnates, some with Ruthenian ancestry (such as the Princes Sapieha and Czartoryski), supported efforts to declare Josaphat Kuntsevych a saint – which, during the 17th century, had been attempted without success. Their petition, drawn up in exile in 1864, was based on the "*extrema Ecclesiae utriusque ritus in Polonia necessitas*" (out of extreme necessity of the Church of both Rites) and referred to the Sejm's resolution of 1677, which had declared the Blessed Josaphat to be the "*Regni Poloniae Union-*

42 B. Skinner, 2009, p. 231 f.
43 I. Bartal, 2017.
44 М. Долбилов et al., 2010.

isque Patronus" in gratitude for overcoming the turmoil of the mid-17th century. A Josaphat brotherhood had already been established in Poznań in February 1862. And, by 1864 and 1865, Polish efforts to canonize Josaphat had been noted with concern in the flourishing Russian periodical press, especially by the church historian Mikhail Koyalovich and the nationalist Mikhail Katkov. Koyalovich, who had written specifically against the Union of Brest, even quoted from the 17th-century beatification documents in a letter to the French newspaper *Le Monde* in order to obstruct Josaphat's canonization and started fostering a transimperial argument about Early Modern confessional disputes.[45] It was exactly in this context that the Vatican granted the wish of sainthood and canonized Josaphat on 29 June 1867, as a form of Catholic retaliation for the Russian harassment of Poland. The Early Modern confessional context had thus been revitalized, but under new, national and imperial auspices.

These events played a decisive role in the emerging Russian national historiography and its regional variant, 'Western Russism' (*Zapadno-Russizm*).[46] From the perspective of the historians who fostered this historiography in the wake of the Polish uprisings, especially Koyalovich, the roles of the already mentioned Early Modern Orthodox brotherhoods were now conceived of as being central to regional history and as being part of a wrongly assumed institutional tradition in Orthodox mobilization which allegedly stretched back as far as the times of Kyivan Rus'.[47] Koyalovich explained the *power* of this early modern *movement* of brotherhoods, which had been (re-)constructed by him in his own days, in the journal *Den'*, founded by the Moscow Slavophile Konstantin S. Aksakov. He claimed that the imperial government was able to guarantee the external well-being of the Orthodox faith in the region, also stating: "but it cannot build up the inner power of Western Russian Orthodoxy. For that is a social matter (*dyelo obshchestvennoye*), i.e., that sphere from which the brotherhoods had emerged".[48] Thus, as Koyalovich explained, the means by which society should be able to help reach this aim were, as it was during the Early Modern period and also now, in the 19th century, the brotherhoods. By May 1864, a model order for new *church brotherhoods*, approved by the highest authorities in the empire, had already been published for this very purpose. And as early as 26 May 1867, just a month before the canonization of Josa-

45 Cf. М. Д. Долбилов, 2010, с. 853.
46 А. Цьвікевіч, 1929.
47 Cf. S. Rohdewald, 2005.
48 *День*, 1862, No. 42, с. 9.

phat in Rome, the Nikolai and Evfrosinia Brotherhood was established in Polatsk at the Nikolai Church of the Cadet Corps, thus at the former Jesuit church, as the nineteenth representative of the newly founded brotherhoods. According to the Nikolai Church's statutes, its aim, and that of its *Orthodox Russian* founders, was to "help the government in the difficult task of [the] Russification (*obrusenie*)" of "the Belorussian region, which, from the beginnings, belonged to Russia because of its populace, and which then was an Orthodox region by religion".[49]

"But, adjoining Western Europe, this region has long since also experienced many unfavourable influences from its neighbours – the Poles and from Latin propaganda – influences especially ruinous for the Belorussian faith. Although the Uniates, who were torn away from the unity of the Orthodox Church, were reunited with it as early as 1839, although, after the end of the last Polish rebellion, our supreme government is taking all measures to restore and establish in the Belarusian region the Russian nationality, and, at the same time, the Orthodox faith, as the basic foundation of this nationality. ... However, it is necessary to be on the spot and see the present state of things in order to realize how many traces of propaganda still remain, and what efforts are needed not only on the part of the government, but also on the part of society, in order that the cause of nationality and especially of Orthodoxy in Belarus be realized by the people, [that it may] stand firm and be free from any danger from alien influences.

Taking into account such circumstances of the Belarusian region and wishing to assist the views of the government in the difficult task of the Russification of this region, we, Orthodox Russians, decided to establish a Church brotherhood, following the example of other places in western Russia, in order to take care of the protection and establishment of our Orthodox faith in this region and to act for this purpose unanimously by all the moral and material means at our disposal."[50]

Beyond 'administrative Russification', 'cultural Russification' (Thaden) was also planned to take place here, and was executed accordingly by the means which were available, over the coming decades, in an affirmative way and also *explicitly* using the term 'Russification', which was used by the government[51] *as well as* by key, local actors and institutions, as has been demonstrated here. According to the founders of the brotherhood, the interests of the imagined 'Russian people'

49 *Об учреждении церковного братства во имя святителя Николая и преподобной Ефросини Полотской – в городе Полотске*, Полотск, 1867, с. 1–2.

50 Ibid.

51 W. Rodkiewicz, 1998, p. 20, 29; Cf. on Thaden: R. Vulpius, 2005, p. 26–29; Th. Weeks, 2004.

were defined by the example set by other ethno-confessional groups in everyday local life: Orthodox Russian teachers of the military Cadet Corps (substituting the former Jesuit Academy and located in its buildings), other military personnel, and administrative provincial and urban officials, as well as clergy, who had mostly moved to Polatsk and constituted the empire's core personnel in the city and the region until 1917,[52] considered the collective actions of their local co-religionists to be poorly organized in comparison to other Christian denominations (*inoslavnye*) and the ethno-confessional communities of other faiths (*inovernye*). In 1886, an honorary member of the Nikolai and Evfrosinia Brotherhood elaborated on this mission again at the general assembly of the association: "Not only Polatsk, but the whole land of Polatsk, are the oldest, [most] indispensable property of Rus' and Orthodoxy. But the land of Polatsk suffered many and cruel complex upheavals, which led to economic disorder and turmoil. Therefore, the local conditions at the present time are in many ways not in favour of the long-established population. They have been deprived of their rightful inheritance by a people who have moved in and are acting as masters. In the ongoing struggle – which can be called a cultural one – a source is needed which can uplift and encourage the spirit of the local population, both urban and rural, and from which it can draw new strength.... In the midst of the inertia and indifference that prevail in society, we feel our relative powerlessness in the face of the closed and active mass of dissenters (*inoslavnykh*) and other faiths (*inoviercev*). The only pleasant phenomenon in the life of the local population is the Saviour Evfrosinia Monastery, when, on May 23, the memorial day of the blessed Evfrosinia, the Polatsk princess, crowds of determined and devout worshippers flock to it to venerate a part of her relics, which rest in glory in the distant Kyiv caves".[53]

The author considered it necessary to mobilize their *own* group in competition with the national, Polish-influenced, Catholic association movement and the brotherhoods of the city's Jewish population, which, in total, made up the absolute majority from the middle of the 19th century up to the Shoah.[54] This goal was en-

52 For more about the social standing of the members of the Jewish brotherhoods: S. Rohdewald, 2005, S. 427–433.

53 *Отчет совета церковнаго братства во имя святителя Николая и преподобной Евфросинии, княжны Полоцкой, в г. Полоцке, за тринадцатый год существования братства, с 26 мая 1885 г. по 25 мая 1886 г.*, Витебск, 1886, с. 8 f.

54 From the 1850s, Jews already made up the absolute majority of the town's population. In 1852, 65 percent of the almost 10,000 Polatsk residents were Jews (6,216 people); 11 percent were Catholics, 3.2 percent Old Believers, 1.3 percent Lutherans, and only 19.5 percent Orthodox believers. For more data, see S. Rohdewald, 2005, S. 364 f.

tirely in line with Slavophile ideas, as evidenced by the membership of one of the group's important Moscow spokesmen, Ivan S. Aksakov, who was a member from the founding of the brotherhood until his death in 1886.

As early as in 1832, the provincial Orthodox clergy had requested that the remains of St. Euphrosyne be returned to Polatsk from Kyiv, pointing out to the governorate authorities the importance and poor condition of the Church of the Saviour, which had been built by the Polatsk princess in the 12th century. An imperial decree prohibited the desired transfer; however, the Church of the Saviour was to be renovated and saved from imminent collapse. In 1860, an imperial edict (*ukaz*) renewed the refusal. One of the reasons for this was an argument put forward by the Orthodox Metropolitan of Kyiv, who said, "the majority of the population of the Polatsk region consists of people of other faiths: Latin Catholics, Lutherans, Jews who do not recognize any Orthodox sanctuary", and which prohibited the transfer of the remains from Kyiv, a city which was presented as being of primary importance to the imperial Russian Orthodox Church.[55]

Yet local Russification was not only aimed against the former Uniate and remaining Catholic structures, but also at the Jewish majority population of Polatsk, which, in an anonymous letter first published by *Den'* and, afterwards, in 1865, in the *Vestnik Zapadnoj Rossii*, was denounced as Jewish domination ('*Zhidovshchina*'), "making a very unpleasant impression on any Russian human being", but which, of course, also had the intention of rooting "out all traces of Polonism among commoners".[56]

Only repeated petitions from the inhabitants of Polatsk and their archbishop, and the explicit policy of the *Russification* of this so-called Western Region (*Zapadny kraj*) since 1863, led to the Moscow Patriarch, in 1866, pledging his support for the return of St. Euphrosyne. Although the Kyiv Metropolitan continued to put the brakes on the venture, a partial success was achieved in 1870, when the saint's right-hand middle finger was transferred from Kyiv to the Saviour Monastery. Until the collapse of the empire, the intensified local Russification policies[57] – manifested in Polatsk by the confessionalizing use of the veneration of Euphrosyne and performed through the actions of the brotherhood – remained in place. The *translatio* of this relic – which would be celebrated annually in the city with processions of

55 Нацыянальны гістарычны архіў Беларусі (National Historical Archives of Belarus), ф. 1416, воп. 2, спр. 11752, арк. 8.

56 *Вестник Западной России за 1864/65 г.*, кн. 3, Вильна, 1865, с. 402–403.

57 *The Tsar*, 2021.

the relic and brotherhood, to which belonged the ruling local Orthodox city elite of civil servants, teachers at the Cadet Corps, and clergy – as well the demand for the transfer of all parts of the relic, remained important measures in consolidating the rule of the approximately 30 percent Orthodox population over the rest of the city. The exclusion of Jewish representatives from the city's self-government in 1892 and the repatriation of the remains of Euphrosyne from Kyiv in 1910 were important stages in the efforts to restore a supposedly original national, Russian and Orthodox imperial society.

The continuous fear of violence was a key experience for at least the majority of the Jewish population of the city, as documented by the memoirs of the émigrée Mary Antin: "I remember a time when I thought a pogrom had broken out in our street, and I wonder that I did not die of fear. It was some Christian holiday, and we had been warned by the police to keep indoors. Gates were locked; shutters were barred. If a child cried, the nurse threatened to give it to the priest, who would soon be passing by. Fearful and yet curious, we looked through the cracks in the shutters. We saw a procession of peasants and townspeople, led by a number of priests, carrying crosses and banners and images. In the place of honour was carried a casket, containing a relic from the monastery on the outskirts of Polatsk. Once a year the Gentiles paraded with this relic, and on that occasion the streets were considered too holy for Jews to be about; and we lived in fear till the end of the day, knowing that the least disturbance might start a riot, and a riot lead to a pogrom. On the day when I saw the procession through a crack in the shutter, there were soldiers and police in the street."[58]

6. Conclusions

If we now return to the questions we started with, we can confirm that both the Orthodox Ruthenians and the Uniate Ruthenians participated in East-Central European, decentralized and interdependent or *entangled* confession-building processes. But we can also stress that these complicated denominational processes, or the relevant confessionalizers involved in them, were not thoroughly or consequently directed by the decentralized political elite of the *Rzeczpospolita*; although, magnates acting as colonizers had been increasingly pushing a Catholic agenda

58 M. Antin, 1912, p. 8 f.

since at least the 17th century, while in turn consolidating the Uniate confession with an increasing success during the 18th century, not least by using the veneration of Josaphat for this means.

The Orthodox Patriarch residing in Ottoman Istanbul, and his role in fostering the Orthodox cause, has already been mentioned. Indeed, we have to see transregional actors involved in Ruthenia, including the Orthodox Church beyond political borders, as involving the Ottoman Empire and, to some degree, Muscovy, which is reflected in the focus on *entangled* confessional consolidations in competition with, and observation of, each other.[59] Transottoman (i.e., transconfessional) transreligious aspects of the fostering of consciously competing orthodoxies in both the Near East with Constantinople and in Eastern Europe, including Poland-Lithuania, have been in focus recently. The consolidation of Sunni and Shia orthodoxies has been analysed with great success in the overarching context of the change in Christian orthodoxies, i.e., the complex entanglements of the Orthodox Churches with the Catholic Church and the (Counter) Reformation.[60] Also, concerning the 19th century, we should be aware of imperial policies which foster denominational orthodoxies through 'confessionalization'[61] in the Ottoman Empire, too, when we look to entangled phenomena in the Russian or German empires (*Kulturkampf*).

After the partitions of Poland-Lithuania, and explicitly with the aim of eradicating the Early Modern tradition of the city of Polatsk and the whole region as Uniate or Catholic, substituting Josaphat with Euphrosyne and Poland-Lithuania with Russia became both the imperial *and* the local master narrative of official confessionalization politics, involving both central and local societal actors on the spot. Now, the linkage between confession and politics was obvious. Within the process of an imagined *internality* of what was until then actually external, the nationalized denominational veneration of Euphrosyne played an extremely important role in legitimizing and imagining imperial 'Western Russia' on the ground. This imagination was at the core of the broader aim of the imperial Russification policies within the even larger attempts at the alleged *internal* colonization of the whole region, prominently by means of nationalized confession building. In transregionally entangled competition, this whole policy was not least directed against the remnants of the Uniate Church in Austro-Hungarian Galicia, which, there, turned into one of the most important actors for new national Ruthenian/

59 Cf. *Entangled Confessionalizations*, 2022.
60 T. Krstić, 2011.
61 M. Reinkowski, 2005.

Ukrainian identities. Altogether, these phenomena should be discussed explicitly within the general debates on the *second confessionalization* (Blaschke) and with an integrative viewpoint on competitive, entangled phenomena, informed by the transimperial perspective.

Thus, we discern Early Modern *magnates acting as colonizers* and *clerical confessionalizers* in Polish-Lithuanian Ruthenia, substituted, after 1772, with the imagined *internal* colonization of hitherto external regions by means of confession building and modern nationalism within the Russian Empire – always embedded in larger, transimperial, transdenominational, and transreligious entanglements.

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