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**Валентина Лось.**  
***Уніатська Церква на Правобережній Україні***  
***наприкінці XVIII — першій половині XIX ст.:***  
***організаційна структура***  
***та культурно-релігійний аспект***  
(Київ: Друкарня Національної бібліотеки України  
імені В. І. Вернадського, 2013. 300 с.)

The Uniate Church — long ignored during the Soviet period — has become a crucial topic in Ukrainian confessional history over the past twenty-five years. Moreover, scholars have recognized that the Uniate Church, in its assimilation of Eastern and Western influences, constitutes a vital aspect in the development of a unique Ukrainian identity and national consciousness. Valentyna Los' has been at the forefront of the efforts over the past decade to understand the religious and cultural role of the Uniate Church in Ukraine's history. *Уніатська Церква на Правобережній Україні*, which is the first major monograph published on the history of the Uniate Church in Right Bank Ukraine through its abolition in 1839, comprises a valuable study of the religious culture and mentality of the Ukrainian Uniates in the region that came under Russian rule during the second and third Polish partitions. Valentyna Los' completed research on this topic in six state archives in Ukraine, three in Poland, and two in St. Petersburg, Russia. She also worked with documents in manuscript archives at national and regional libraries in Ukraine, Poland, and Russia. Having already published at least 20 articles since 2002 on aspects of the history she presents in this monograph, Los' synthesis of her research in this book is a welcome and noteworthy addition to the historiography on the subject.

Covering the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the abolition of the Uniate Church inside Russia in 1839, Los' book bridges the conceptual divide between Ukraine inside the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Ukraine inside the Russian Empire. In so doing, she confronted an arc of history covering a strengthening Uniate Church in the Right Bank before the second partition of Poland, the near-death blow to the church by Catherine II in 1794–96, and its survival in limited numbers and with some limited successes until the policies carried out in the 1830s that led to the annihilation of the church in 1839. Moreover, she covers this span of history in each of the four lengthy chapters of the book. In considering such a scope of history, she had to bear in mind the general context of the political, cultural, and intellectual shifts that occurred over this period and their bearing on religious life. She had to select which details to include, and from which period, and which to exclude. In her introduction, Los' makes it clear that she does not envision this book as the final word on the subject, but that she hopes to provide the basis for further research on confessional life, religious mentality, and identity of Ukrainian society during this time period. Overall, *Уніатська Церква на Правобережній Україні* succeeds in its balance of general and specific information within a thematic presentation, pointing when applicable to aspects of the history that merit more study. Not weighing the text down with tables of data, Los' supports some of her points with informative appendices of tables of specific systematic findings. The four chapters of the book (each with several thematic subsections) cover: 1) the historiography and sources, 2) the general history of the Uniate church in the Right Bank over the researched period, 3) the main foundations of Uniate pastoral activity, including education and intellectual life of the church, and 4) the religious life and popular practices in the Lutsk eparchy. Given the thematic organization and the presentation of the full time period from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century within each chapter, there is some repetition of events and history throughout. Yet this structure works, as it lays down observations on the confessional history and lived experience of the faith layer by layer, until in the final section, the measure of the loss of this confession to Ukrainian culture is deeply felt and understood.

First, the historiographical and source description in Розділ 1 provides an outstanding summary of the research to date on the Uniate Church, with a particular focus on the Right Bank, which, Los' accurately attests, has been far less well studied than the Uniate Church in Galicia that survived under Austrian rule. She brings this historiographical over-

view up to date with the latest studies by Ukrainian scholars as well as foreign scholars, drawing a picture of a research field that has been much enriched within the past decade. Her summary of the primary source documents engendered by government and church institutions at the imperial and local level will be helpful to any current and future scholars on the subject. She rightly notes the importance of church visitation documents for understanding the internal life of the church, which in recent scholarship Ihor Skochylias has promoted most effectively. While Los' notes the repositories of parish church visitations documents within the archives of Ukraine, she misses those available in the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) in *fond* 824, *opis*' 2 of Uniate parish churches in Right Bank Ukraine in the early 1790s before Catherine's conversion policies, as well as in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those documents still await systematic research. (That collection also contains numerous visitations and descriptions of Basilian monasteries in Lutsk eparchy.)

After familiarizing the reader with the sources, Los' presents the history of the church from the late 18<sup>th</sup> through the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in Розділ 2. Admirably, this already well-known narrative is punctuated with revealing statistics that underscore the dire situation of the Uniate Church from the time of Catherine's mass conversion of Uniates, which targeted Ukraine. The parish numbers tell the story: whereas before the partitions of Poland, there were some 4000 parishes in Right Bank Ukraine, by 1803 there were only 176. Indeed, given the enormous loss of physical churches, their property, and parishioners to Orthodoxy, as well as the abolition of the Ukrainian hierarchy, and the grave reduction in Uniate clergy by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Uniate Church in Right Bank Ukraine "знаходилася на межі повного знищення" (p. 53). Most remarkable, is that even in these hostile conditions, the church survived and even strengthened under Paul I, who reestablished the Lutsk eparchy in 1798, and under Alexander I, when the number of Uniates in the Right Bank began to increase and some property was regained. Los' studied the dates of ordinations of all Ukrainian Uniate parish priests in 1826 (which she presents in Appendix A4), and found that 60 percent were ordained since 1799, indicating the church's resilience even within dire circumstances. She points to the Uniate fight for survival after the 1790s as an indication of the strength of its position in Ukrainian culture and identity, "яка протягом XVIII ст. трансформувалася в національну традиційну" (p. 61).

As the experience of the church itself is her focus, Los' does not provide in this chapter insight into the Russian regime's policies or institu-

tions behind its veritable *pogrom* on the Uniate Church in its empire, and she strays away from analyzing the political motives that were part of the decision to wipe out the Uniate faith as a confession within the Russian Empire under Nicholas I. And yet, in holding to the narrative from the Uniate perspective, she presents a solid comparison of the experience of “приєднання” or “восєднання” of the Uniate parishes to Russian Orthodoxy in the 1790s with the experience in the 1830s. Compared to the swift missions of Orthodox clergy to take control of Uniate parishes in the 1790s, the 1830s saw a much more slow and careful process conducted not by Orthodox clergy, but by Uniate clergy with the support of government officials. The final восєднання was a secretive process, plotted within Secret Committees, implemented via a careful reorientation of the church rites within the Uniate churches to Orthodox practices, and only then joining the Uniate eparchies and parishes to the Russian Orthodox establishment with no fanfare. Los’ is careful not to offer a simple explanation for the collapse of the Uniate Church within Russia, instead noting that the question still stands whether external (Russian) interference or internal problems of the church (material dependence on secular patrons and insufficient levels of pastoral practices) were more responsible for this dramatic sequence of events (p. 52). She pertinently assesses Right Bank Ukraine district by district, noting the differing local social and demographic situations that led to firmer Uniate traditions in some districts; given the regional differences, she suggests, each micro-region should be studied separately to determine the level of internal or external causes at that level before drawing any general conclusions (p. 88).

The third chapter of the book on Uniate pastoral activity does at the end discuss the pastoral work of the church in terms of teaching the catechism, the moral example of priests, parish schools, and hospitals. But in an interesting conglomeration of topics, the majority of this Розділ is less on the actual pastoral work of the church than on the complexities of the Uniate church’s situation in the Right Bank after the mass conversions of the 1790s, as it struggled to function in the shadow of the officially supported Orthodox Church and a more wealthy and influential Roman Catholic Church. Based on solid documentary evidence, Los’ discusses the material and economic hardships of the Uniate parishes churches, with their poor landholdings and dependence on mainly Roman Catholic landowners, and she argues that most interconfessional conflicts had to do with economic and property issues, rather than religious issues. Remarkably, despite the difficulties, the Uniate hierarchy in Lutsk had its

victories in returning churches to its jurisdiction, as well as building chapels where laws prohibited Uniates from building churches until the next wave of *воссоединение*. Her subsequent discussion of clerical social and educational background continues to focus on issues of economic hardships and the negative impact of Russian pressure on the Uniates. Most Uniate priests were sons of priests, but within this stratum various levels of material prosperity or poverty often dictated the level of educational achievement. While much of her description of the educational situation of the Uniate Church has been discussed by other scholars, Los' brings the discussion up to the 1839 and lays out the impossible situation in which the Uniates found themselves in the preceding decade. Already in the 1820s, the Orthodox seminary curriculum was imposed on Uniate schools, so that they lost much of what had been gained in their educational system as a result of Enlightenment policies. Moreover, the general low level of Russian Orthodox education (especially compared to Roman Catholic schools) now imposed on Uniate clergy was, Los' argues, detrimental to the moral and intellectual level of Uniate priests (p. 121). Los' correctly concludes that in the 1830s, Uniate clerical education "стала державною справою" and became a key aspect of russification and unification of religious culture in this region (p. 126).

The most detailed research in the third chapter describes the book collections in Basilian libraries, for which Los' analyzed 33 inventories of 20 Basilian monasteries in Right Bank Ukraine from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Basilians, who were extremely well educated and whose public schools were highly regarded, provided the intellectual foundation of the Uniate identity that drew on both Western and Eastern influences. Los' analyzes the numbers of books, in which language (Polish and Latin dominated) they were written, their date and place of publication, their provenance, and general topics. But a few numbers go a long way, and more discussion of the actual content of the books (if only by listing more titles) would have more effectively presented the intellectual scope of the monastic caretakers of Basilian learning. Los' generally informs her readers that most of these library collections were of a practical nature, for preparing sermons and understanding the rites, but she fails to open up a few of these books and read them for insight into the Uniate moral and religious mental world (many of these books reside in Kyiv at the Інститут Рукопису Національної бібліотеки України). My own research has led me to some of these books, especially those written by Basilians themselves, and reading them has helped me to appreciate the

unique blend of Eastern and Western concepts that comprise the Uniate mentality<sup>1</sup>. On this point, Los' carried out very careful research, but the conclusions felt superficial.

Other points in this subsection, however, are well made. Los' emphasizes the importance of the printing press at the Pochaiv monastery, which produced most of the service books used in Uniate churches in Ukraine. She also demonstrates through careful documentary research that many Orthodox churches continued to use the Uniate service books produced at Pochaiv until the Orthodox hierarchy finally confiscated them in the 1850s — 11,211 from the Volynskaia eparkhiia alone, and 5808 from the Podilskaia eparkhiia (p. 145). With *воссоединение*, however, came the annihilation of the Basilians as a monastic order and of their libraries, which were removed or destroyed — indeed, a serious blow to Ukrainian intellectual culture.

At this point in the chapter, Los' turns the discussion to the pastoral work of the clergy. By this time, the reader is so impressed by the hardships experienced by the Uniates, it seems remarkable that regular and sufficient pastoral work was carried out. Los' has little to say about the priests' most important job of conducting liturgical services, but she does stress the more regularized teaching of the catechism by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. She argues that the teaching of the catechism was the most important factor for the identity development of the church (p. 156), and yet again I must quibble that she does not read the catechisms themselves to present the major concepts within this identity. Her careful research on the number of hospitals at Uniate parishes in the Right Bank presents notable data, but the level of charity — given the general economic poverty of Uniate parishes — was low. Overall, this third *Rozdil* felt a little disconnected, as if Los' was throwing in all of her research without too much thought of an overarching theme or argument.

It is in *Розділ 4* that Los' strengths as a scholar shine and her most important arguments are made. Here, she draws primarily on visitation documents and sources from Ukrainian archives to describe characteristics or popular religiosity among the Uniate population in the Lutsk eparchy. She argues that tolerance to other religions, and even a certain

“polyconfessionalism,” in which the general population accepted and participated to some extent in the practices and rites of the three local

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<sup>1</sup> Some of this research was presented in “Uniate Moral Theology in the Eighteenth Century” (Київська Академія. 2009. Вип. 7. С. 146–161).

Christian confessions of Orthodoxy, Unia, and Roman Catholicism, was prevalent in Right Bank Ukraine — a cultural-geographic crossroads — before it came under Russian control. When this region fell to the Russians, however, the opposing Russian imperial model of imposing clear confessional dividing lines began to break down this traditional openness to other faiths.

Los' presents three main avenues of research to support this argument: 1) the multiconfessional veneration of the local miracle-working saints, be they Orthodox, Uniate, or Roman Catholic (for example, the Uniate miracle-working icon in Gorbuliv, Radomyshl district, was venerated by all 3 confessions — 184); 2) the propensity for the local population, especially Uniates, to turn to priests of the other confessions for rites in times of emergency (particularly baptism, marriage, and funerals — but also, at times, confession — leading to murky metric records and an impossibility to attach some individuals to a confession); and 3) the incidence of mixed marriage and changes in confession of family members based on mixed marriage. Russian church and state officials tried to put a stop to all of these interconfessional practices. They investigated miracle-working icons for their authenticity; they placed strict limitations on mixed marriage and prohibited apostacy from Orthodoxy; and after 1839 a special commission conducted lengthy investigations of metric books to ensure that anyone who had been a former Uniate was now in the Orthodox Church and not listed in Roman Catholic rosters. In other words, the Russian regime struggled to impose confessional divisions where previously the lines had been blurred. Los' impresses through her attention to detail, even keeping track of the number of votive stands (вотивні привіски) in front of the icons, as noted in visitation records, in order to gauge the level of popularity of each image. She notes the Baroque-era Roman Catholic influence on icons in this region, for example the crowning of icons of the Bogoroditsa, and the particular Uniate interest in the passion of Christ and the realistic elements of his suffering, such as the crown of thorns. She has also found solid case studies for interconfessional rites and services and for the confessional fate of spouses and children in mixed marriages.

Importantly, she charts by the second third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and the liquidation of the Uniates) a noticeable decline in the cult of miracle-working icons as Russian policies aimed at destroying local religious traditions in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In her most well-developed argument, Los' claims that the promotion of Synodal Russian Orthodoxy

damaged both Uniate and Orthodox local traditions, relegating their local non-official practices to the category of “superstition.” Religious life in Ukraine, Los’ argues, was impoverished as a result, with clear distinctions now drawn between official and popular religiosity (p. 183–184).

This chapter ends with a description of the resistance offered by clergy and parishioners to the forced introduction of Orthodox rite in Uniate churches and, subsequently, to the final elimination of the Uniate Church at the official level. Often priests and/or parishioners refused to comply to the new rites and the Moscow service books, or only complied when guards told them that Russian officials were nearby (p. 210). The Basilians offered the most active opposition, and many refused to convert to Orthodoxy. The punishment for such resistance was much more severe in the 1830s than in the 1790s, and the most obstinate of the priests and monks in the 1830s were exiled to Russian provinces of Orel, Riazan, Tambov, Kaluga, and Pskov (p. 214). Despite the threat of arrest and possible imprisonment, Uniate peasants continued to carry out small-scale rebellions (волнения) when forced to change the rite that they identified with, especially in 1834–38. Los’ uses this evidence to argue against historians, such as М. Яременко, who have advocated that the confessional stance of the general population was one of indifference. “Утім той факт,” argues Los’, “що уніати завзято стали на захист обряду, коли він опинився під загрозою, є зайвим свідченням глибокої закоріненості унії в життя народу” (p. 215). She traces episodes of opposition to the 1839 воссоединение through to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Many more threads of research — from the confessional composition of the szlachta, to the naming of churches consecrated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, to the numbers of безмісні священники — deserve attention in this book. Certainly, Los’ has proven her ability to work with the sources and to find meaning in their contents. I have been working on the topic of the Uniate Church inside the Russian Empire for many years, and I was gratified to see that my own findings corroborate the most important arguments that Los’ presents. Overall, one could wish that the entire book were organized more clearly around the strong arguments of the final chapter, or that at least every subsection was presented more as a piece of this greater argument. However, the sum of this research is impressive, and the arguments are, in the end, important.

As a non-Ukrainian reading this work by a Ukrainian scholar, however, the book seems to be lacking in significant contextual explanation, and particularly in any comparative mention of the situation in Belarus.



Anyone reading this book will likely know Russian history, but perhaps if Los' had provided more explanation of the age of Nicholas I and his religious policies throughout the empire, it would have been useful not just for context of the arguments, but also for emphasis on the importance of the policies discussed here to the greater Russian imperial project. And why ignore any discussion of the similar fate of the more than a million Belarusian Uniates? I do not imply that archival documents on Belarus should have been consulted, but even some comparative discussion of the material in Svetlana Marozava's book on the Uniates in Belarus through 1839 (in which she also focuses on identity issues and resistance to tsarist policies)<sup>22</sup> would have, I believe, only strengthened Los' argument. (Los' cites Marozava's book in her bibliography, but never mentions it in her text.) After all, once the Lutsk eparchy was abolished in 1828, for the final agonizing decade of Uniate existence, the Belarusian and Ukrainian Uniates shared eparchies (there were only two: Litovskaia and Belarускаia). Indeed, limiting the discussion to Ukraine, when in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the vast majority of Uniates inside Russia were Belarusian, seems to take away from the book's general import. Los' does note that there were far more Ukrainian than Belarusian bezmisni priests after the 1790s conversions, but she does not follow this comparison through to the 1830s, when the situation was reversed. She also notes that Josaphat Kunstevich was not venerated in Ukraine, and she makes reference to one Polish scholar's work on miracle-working icons in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (P. Chomik), but these were the only incidences of comparison to the neighboring Uniate communities in Belarusian provinces made in this book. While I am sensitive to the need for the development of the national history of Ukraine, I believe that transnational trends should be recognized when they are significant. And perhaps after closer scrutiny of the Belarusian response to tsarist policies, or how the Belarusian Uniate practices differed from that of the Ukrainian Uniate practices, then a better argument on Ukrainian Uniate identity could be made.

That criticism notwithstanding, *Уніатська Церква на Правобережній Україні* is an important work that should be read by all scholars of the confessional history and culture of Ukraine and Eastern Europe. It more than fulfills Los' stipulated task of providing a foundation for future research, and it sets a high bar for future archival-based studies on the lived experience of confessional culture and practice.

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<sup>22</sup> *Уніяцкая царква в этнакультурным развіцці Беларусі* (Гродна, 2001).