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CHURCH LANDOWNERSHIP IN THE VOLYN PROVINCE AT THE END OF THE 18TH - FIRST THIRD OF THE 19TH CENTURY: STATE POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFESSIONAL DIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research paper is to analyze the peculiarities of the Russian Empire's state policy regarding land use and land ownership by the Catholic, Orthodox, and Uniate clergy in the Volyn province during the late 18th and first third of the 19th centuries.

The scientific novelty is analyzes the peculiarities of the state policy on church land tenure in the Volyn province in the context of imperial integration processes. It examines the influence of the region's socio-confessional structure on the formation of state policy toward the clergy, as well as the regulation of ownership and usage rights of church lands. The authors investigate the activities of the state land surveying service in the process of land demarcation and the implementation of orders from the imperial administration.

Conclusions. After the annexation of Right-Bank Ukraine, the Russian authorities faced a confessionally diverse social structure and pursued a relatively moderate integration policy. To avoid resistance from local elites, the clergy retained their landholdings after swearing allegiance to the empire, while the Orthodox Church received state support as an instrument of imperial integration. The return of some Greek Catholic estates under Paul I and Alexander I reflected this pragmatic approach.

A key task for the authorities was the demarcation of church and private landownership. State surveyors allocated church lands, prepared detailed plans of ecclesiastical estates, and documented their natural resources. In disputes between clergy and landowners, the authorities generally favored the Church, while also regulating obligations attached to church lands and procedures for acquiring new property.

The imperial government also controlled Jesuit estates. Although the order remained legal until 1820, its confiscated lands were not restored. After the expulsion of the Jesuits by Alexander I, all their estates became state property. This policy changed fundamentally after the Polish November Uprising of 1830-1831. Because part of the Greek Catholic clergy supported the uprising, the government abolished the Greek Catholic Church and began the secularization of its landholdings.

Keywords: Volyn province, confessional policy, church landownership, secularization, integration policy, church estates

**ЦЕРКОВНЕ ЗЕМЛЕВОЛОДІННЯ ВОЛИНСЬКОЇ ГУБЕРНІЇ
КІНЦЯ 18 – ПЕРШОЇ ТРЕТИНИ 19 СТ.:
ДЕРЖАВНА ПОЛІТИКА В УМОВАХ КОНФЕСІЙНОГО РОЗМАЇТТЯ**

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Мета статті – проаналізувати особливості державної політики Російської імперії стосовно землекористування та землеволодіння католицького, православного й уніатського духовенства у Волинській губернії наприкінці 18 – першій третині 19 ст.

Наукова новизна – висвітлено особливості державної політики щодо церковного землеволодіння у Волинській губернії в контексті імперських інтеграційних процесів. Розглянуто вплив соціально-конфесійної структури регіону на формування державної політики щодо духовенства, а також регулювання прав володіння та користування церковними землями. Досліджено діяльність державної землемірної служби у процесі розмежування земель і виконання розпоряджень імперської адміністрації.

Висновки. Після приєднання Правобережної України російська влада зіткнулася з конфесійно різномірною соціальною структурою регіону й обрала відносно помірковану інтеграційну політику. Щоб уникнути опору місцевої еліти, духовенству дозволили зберегти земельні володіння за умови складення присяги на вірність імперії, тоді як Православна церква отримала державну підтримку як важливий інструмент імперської інтеграції. Повернення частини маєтків Греко-католицькій церкві за правління Павла I та Олександра I стало проявом такого прагматичного підходу.

Одним із ключових завдань влади було розмежування церковного та приватного землеволодіння. Державні землеміри відводили церковні наділи, складали докладні плани церковних маєтків і фіксували їхні природні ресурси. У суперечках між духовенством і землевласниками влада зазвичай ставала на бік Церкви, водночас регулюючи виконання повинностей на церковних землях і порядок набуття нових земельних володінь.

Окремим напрямом державної політики було врегулювання статусу єзуїтських маєтків. Хоча діяльність ордену офіційно дозволялася до 1820 р., конфісковані раніше землі йому не повернули. Після вигнання єзуїтів з Російської імперії за наказом Олександра I усі їхні маєтки перейшли у державну власність. Після Польського листопадового повстання 1830-1831 рр. ця політика зазнала докорінних змін. Через підтримку повстання частиною греко-католицького духовенства уряд ліквідував Греко-католицьку церкву та розпочав секуляризацію її земельних володінь.

Ключові слова: Волинська губернія, конфесійна політика, церковне землеволодіння, секуляризація, інтеграційна політика, церковні маєтки

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 18th century, the three partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1772, 1793, 1795) resulted in significant geopolitical changes in Central and Eastern Europe. Large territories, including the Ukrainian Right Bank, were incorporated into the Russian Empire. These lands had more developed socio-economic, political, and judicial institutions compared to the internal provinces of the empire, which necessitated a flexible integration policy. This policy was based on a compromise with regional elites and took into account the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional composition of the population.

The socio-confessional structure of the urban and rural population of the Ukrainian Right Bank was characterized by considerable heterogeneity. The Jewish community, which practiced Judaism, dominated towns and small towns (shtetls). Among landowners, the Polish Catholic nobility (szlachta) prevailed, owning significant land resources and patronizing religious and educational institutions. The Ukrainian peasantry, mostly serfs, belonged to the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church. Newly arrived imperial officials, who held important administrative positions, were Orthodox. They implemented the integration policy into the imperial power structure and were the first to notice the difference in the status of the clergy in the Russian Empire and the incorporated territories.

In the Right Bank, the clergy enjoyed significant social influence and high social status. In contrast, in the Russian Empire, the authorities viewed them more as officials who fulfilled state requirements and were financially supported by public funds. This difference in status was also due to the fact that in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the clergy – both Roman Catholic and Uniate – were large landowners who managed estates, engaged in trade, and accumulated capital.

In the Russian Empire, however, efforts to bring the church under state control and subordinate it to state interests led to the secularization of church wealth. This process began in the interior provinces in 1764 and in the Left Bank of Ukraine in 1786. However, on the Right Bank, given the need to maintain the loyalty of regional elites, secularization measures were postponed until the 1840s. Additionally, the imperial authorities took steps to support the Orthodox Church, particularly in the area of land use.

The purpose of the research paper is to analyze the peculiarities of the Russian Empire's state policy regarding land use and land ownership by the Catholic, Orthodox, and Uniate clergy in the Volyn Province during the late 18th century and the first third of the 19th century.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of church landownership and the institutional development of church structures in the provinces of Right-Bank Ukraine remains insufficiently studied. The historiography of this problem can be divided into three main periods: pre-Soviet (19th century – early 20th century), Soviet (1920s – 1991), and modern (since 1991).

Pre-Soviet historiography is represented by the works of Russian historians, theologians, and church leaders who developed their conceptual approaches within the framework of the official imperial paradigm. Researchers of this period,

particularly P. Bobrovskiy¹ and M. Moroshkin², focused on issues related to the relationship between the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Greek Catholic Churches in the context of the imperial policy of the Russian autocracy. Their works were dominated by the tendency to portray the Orthodox Church as the bearer of the 'imperial order', while Uniate institutions were seen as sources of political instability. Such concepts largely aligned with the official state policy of the Russian Empire, which aimed to eliminate Uniatism and transfer Uniate land ownership to the state.

The Soviet historiographical tradition is characterized by the dominance of Marxist-Leninist methodology and a class-based approach to the analysis of church history. Researchers of this period largely focused on criticizing church land tenure as an element of the feudal-exploitative system. V. Favorskyi emphasized the economic aspects of church structures, particularly their participation in trade operations, which was portrayed as a manifestation of the economic exploitation of the peasantry³. V. Smolii conducted a thorough analysis of the role of the church in political relations between the Russian Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth but paid less attention to the economic aspects of church activities. Nevertheless, the scholar highlighted the importance of the church issue in interstate relations of that time and its impact on the political course of both states⁴. In Soviet historiography, religious institutions were predominantly viewed as reactionary entities that acted against the 'interests of the working people'⁵. Thus, during the 19th and 20th centuries, the historiography of church landownership in Right-Bank Ukraine developed under the significant influence of ideological factors, which shaped its thematic priorities.

Modern Ukrainian historiography, which has been developing since 1991, seeks to overcome the methodological limitations of previous periods and employs an interdisciplinary approach to the study of church landownership. Domestic researchers utilize a wide range of sources, including archival documents, statistical materials, and legal acts contained in the 'Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire'. For instance, S. Borysevych analyzes imperial legislation that regulated land relations in Right-Bank Ukraine following the annexation of the region. The author emphasizes that Orthodox monasteries in the Russian Empire were legally prohibited from purchasing estates inhabited by serfs, but the authorities later retreated from this decision, justifying it by the need to provide material support to the Orthodox Church. The state established control over all processes related to church landownership⁶.

¹ *Бобровский П.О.* Русская греко-униатская церковь в царствование императора Александра I. Санкт-Петербург: Типография В.С. Балашева, 1890. XVI+396 с.

² *Морошкин М.Я.* Иезуиты в России в царствование Екатерины II и до нашего времени. Ч. 1: Обнимающая историю иезуитов в царствование Екатерины Великой и Павла I. Санкт-Петербург: Типография Второго отделения Собственной Его Императорского Величества канцелярии, 1867. XV, 501, XII, II с.

³ *Фаворський В.Л.* Церква та національний рух на Україні в XVI-XVII ст. Харків-Київ: Держвидав України, 1929. 124 с.

⁴ *Смолій В.А.* Возз'єднання Правобережної України з Росією. Київ: Наукова думка, 1978. 191 с.

⁵ *Шевелєв А.Г.* (ред.). Україна в період розкладу і кризи феодально-кріпосницької системи. Скасування кріпосного права і розвиток капіталізму (XIX ст.). Т. 3. *Історія Української РСР: У 8 т., 10 кн.* Київ: Наукова думка, 1978. 607 с.

⁶ *Борисевич С.О.* Законодавче регулювання поземельних відносин у Правобережній Україні (1793-1886 роки). Київ: Видавництво НАДУ, 2007. С. 108-111.

The legislative acts are supplemented by archival sources examined by V. Levytskyi, who traces the evolution of church landownership from the second half of the 18th century. He characterizes the role of church estates in the region's economic system, as well as the church's trade and monetary operations. According to V. Levytskyi, the participation of Greek Catholics in the Polish November Uprising accelerated the liquidation of the Uniate Church and the transfer of its land property to the Orthodox clergy. The author pays considerable attention to the secularization reform on the Right Bank but does not examine its implementation in the Volyn Province⁷.

V. Los, on the other hand, explores the organizational structure of the Uniate Church in the Volyn Province in greater detail, comparing it with the Podillia and Kyiv Provinces. In particular, the author describes the stages of the abolition of the Uniate Church. V. Los attributes the strong position of the Uniates in the Volyn Province to their significant land ownership and the authority of Bishop Stefan Levynskyi. The researcher argues that in the early 19th century, religious affiliation played a key role in shaping the national identity of the inhabitants of Right-Bank Ukraine. Among the peasantry, the Greek Catholic (Uniate) faith was the most widespread, not only defining their religious beliefs but also serving as an important factor in the cohesion of the Ukrainian community and contributing to the formation of its national identity⁸. This view is shared by the American researcher Barbara Skinner, who argues that this was the central dilemma of the borderland peoples, whose identity was shaped by two cultural influences⁹.

The issues of economic activity among representatives of different denominations were addressed in the works of A. Filiniuk, O. Buravskyi, and I. Fytsyk. A. Filiniuk characterized the secularization policy of the Russian autocracy toward Greek Catholics, highlighting the process of transferring Uniate estates to state ownership and their subsequent lease by the state at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries¹⁰. O. Buravskyi provided a detailed account of the economic activities of Roman Catholic monasteries and parishes in Right-Bank Ukraine, which were characterized by a high level of organization and significant economic efficiency¹¹. I. Fytsyk clarified the role and importance of the Catholic clergy and the Right-Bank szlachta in the socio-economic relations of the region. Nearly two hundred Right-Bank monasteries belonging to the Dominicans, Capuchins, Bernardines, Carmelites, Augustinians, and other Catholic orders were built with the financial support of Polish magnates¹².

⁷ Левицький В.О. Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні кінця XVIII – першій половині XIX століття: дис... к. іст. н.: 07.00.01 – історія України. Тернопіль, 2006. 228 с.

⁸ Лось В.Е. Уніатська Церква на Правобережній Україні наприкінці XVIII – першій половині XIX ст.: організаційна структура та культурно-релігійний аспект. Київ: Національна бібліотека України імені В.І. Вернадського, 2013. 300 с.

⁹ Skinner B. The Western Front of the Eastern Church: Uniate and Orthodox Conflict in Eighteenth-Century Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009. 295 p.

¹⁰ Філінюк А.Г. Політика російського самодержавства щодо греко-католицької церкви в Правобережній Україні на межі XVIII-XIX ст. *Науковий часопис НПУ імені М.П. Драгоманова. Серія 6: Історичні науки*. 2006. Вип 6. С. 405-413.

¹¹ Буравський О.А. Соціально-економічне становище римо-католицької церкви на Правобережній Україні (друга половина XIX – початок XX ст.). *Наукові записки Вінницького державного педагогічного університету імені Михайла Коцюбинського. Серія: Історія*. 2009. Вип. 15. С. 46-51.

¹² Фицук І. Правобережна шляхта в релігійно-конфесійному просторі регіону (кінець XVIII – перша третина XIX ст.). *Наукові праці Чорноморського державного університету імені Петра Могили комплексу "Києво-Могилянська академія". Серія: Історія*. 2015. Т. 264, Вип. 251. С. 18-24.

Thus, the historiographical heritage on church landownership in the Right-Bank provinces is characterized by fragmentation and a lack of a comprehensive approach to the study of regional specifics. Researchers have mostly focused on general imperial trends in church policy, often overlooking the peculiarities of its implementation at the regional level, particularly in the Volyn Province. The mechanisms for implementing state policy on church landownership at the local level, including the specifics of interaction between local administrations and various confessional communities and their landholdings, as well as the role of local surveyors in the demarcation of church estates from private and state property, remain understudied.

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF CATHOLIC AND UNIATE CHURCH LANDOWNERSHIP IN RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE

Throughout its existence, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a state dominated by Roman Catholicism. The material and social status of the clergy was high, owing to the intertwined interests of the state, the szlachta, and the Church. The proximity of the social origins and property status of the szlachta and the clergy led to a convergence of their economic interests and political orientations. The situation in Right-Bank Ukraine was unique. Here, the Catholic clergy and the szlachta, linked by common origins and property status, formed a strong alliance within a predominantly non-Catholic population. Initially, religious policy was relatively moderate, but later the processes of Catholicization intensified, culminating in the formation of the Greek Catholic Church, which was proclaimed at the Union of Brest (1596) with state support. Under conditions of weak royal authority, the Church acted as an intermediary between peasants and landowners, maintained stability, and, most importantly, preserved the traditional economic system based on serfdom, thereby ensuring the stability of the entire social order.

Polish landowners granted land to monasteries and churches in densely populated areas. Another form of support was the provision of 'fundusz' – special donations and grants to religious institutions¹³. These included various forms of material support: land, funds for the construction and repair of churches, monetary donations for the maintenance of the clergy, tax exemptions, and rights to use forests, fishing ponds, and other lands. Posthumous 'fundusz' specified the conditions for allocating a share of the inheritance to the Church. For example, the Spaso-Preobrazhenskyi and Khrestovozdvizhenskyi monasteries in Dubno County received charters for the construction of monasteries from the Ostroh princes. In total, with an annual income of 10 million Polish zlotys, Vasyl-Kostiantyn Ostrozky funded the construction of more than 600 churches and monasteries. In 1736, the landowner Margarita Ledochowska issued a charter granting land on which residential and commercial premises for the priest and his clergy were built¹⁴. Overall, 5.3% of the settlements in Right-Bank Ukraine belonged to the clergy, with the highest percentage in Volyn¹⁵.

The Catholic and Greek Catholic clergy demonstrated examples of effective economic activity. The organizational form of church estates was a 'filvarok' (manorial farm) with fields and land. Commodity production was developing in

¹³ Савчук П. Церква і фондуші на Волині. *Наукові записки Національного університету "Острозька академія". Серія: Історичне релігієзнавство*. 2009. Вип. 1. С. 198-200.

¹⁴ Ibid. С. 102.

¹⁵ Левицький В. Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні... С. 19.

Volyn, driven by the region's high level of economic development, advanced agricultural practices, and proximity to trade routes¹⁶.

In a church estate, a filvarok was a complex of outbuildings equipped with working animals and agricultural implements. For example, the Radomyshl filvarok, established in the 1770s, consisted of a large house for serfs, a refectory ('residence') with an attached kitchen, six barns for different types of livestock, a combined wax and oil mill, a malt house, three stone cellars for storing dairy products and wine, four warehouses (one of which stored barrels of vodka), a tavern, and even a prison where disobedient subjects were punished¹⁷.

The greatest demand was for marketable grain production. The Lutsk-Ostroh bishopric managed large farms in the villages of Budorazh and Tochyvky. Among the grain intended for sale at the Budorazh estate were 1,300 kopas (1 kopa is about 200 kg) of winter rye, 300 kopas of wheat, 150 kopas of barley, 740 kopas of oats, 110 kopas of buckwheat, and 80 kopas of millet. The production of the Kupechevskiy filvarok amounted to 6,000 kopas of unmilled grain and 800 kopas of milled grain. The profitability of such estates encouraged the bishopric to further develop its filvaroks. Winter rye, which had a high yield, was particularly important as it served as the basis for vodka production¹⁸.

Church farms raised many cows, goats, pigs, sheep, and poultry. For example, the Medvediv Monastery had 8 horses, 82 head of cattle, 110 sheep, 23 goats, and 21 pigs. The Holovchyn Monastery, in 1795, had 4 horses, 18 head of cattle, 14 sheep, 10 pigs, 33 chickens, 6 geese, and 6 ducks. Meanwhile, the monks of the Zhydychn Monastery owned 117 sheep, 30 rams, and 30 lambs in 1765¹⁹. In addition, the church owned a large number of lakes and ponds, which facilitated fish farming. Monasteries often leased these water bodies to local communities or entrepreneurs. Beekeeping also flourished, and its products – honey and wax – were either sold on the market or used to produce drinks and candles²⁰.

On the farms of church estates, crafts related to the processing of agricultural products became highly important. These included milling, brewing, distilling, honey production, wax processing, candle making, tree beekeeping, and more. Church estates were skillfully managed and actively engaged in trade, a characteristic feature of most towns and small settlements on the Right Bank of Ukraine. Following their incorporation into the Russian Empire, they began reorienting their export trade toward the Black Sea market.

The church's accumulation of significant wealth enabled it to engage in economic activities such as usury. The fact that the right-bank clergy entered into usury agreements with Jewish kahals (community councils) and individual citizens further contributed to their prosperity. Since the laws of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth did not regulate interest rates on loans, monasteries and priests set them at their own discretion, depending on the situation. For example, the Meletskiy Monastery charged its clients 3.5% annually, while the Puginskyi Monastery charged 6-7%, and the Trigorskiy Monastery charged 5-7%. This successful economic activity made the clergy

¹⁶ Ibid. C. 23

¹⁷ Ibid. C. 24.

¹⁸ Ibid. C. 27.

¹⁹ Ibid. C. 28.

²⁰ *Фицук І. Правобережна шляхта в релігійно-конфесійному просторі регіону... С. 19.*

a key player in economic relations, with significant land management capabilities. According to V. Levytskyi, the clergy were not only economically independent but also wealthy. He describes the land holdings of the Uniate Metropolitan J. Kozlovskyi as 'latifundia' (large estates), encompassing nearly 15,000 serfs²¹.

RUSSIAN IMPERIAL REGULATION OF CHURCH LANDOWNERSHIP AFTER THE ANNEXATION OF RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE

The landed possessions of the Catholic and Uniate churches formed the economic basis of their ecclesiastical and political power. It is no coincidence that after the incorporation of Right-Bank Ukraine into the Russian Empire, the emperors had to consider this feature during the processes of integration and secularization. The first decrees of Catherine II, issued to Major General M. Krechetnikov on May 28, 1772²², and later confirmed by the decree of December 8, 1792²³, concerned not only urgent military and political issues but also determined the policy regarding church and monastery landholdings. According to these documents, the clergy retained all their landed property on condition that they swore an oath of allegiance to the autocracy and renounced the supremacy of the Vatican, refusing to follow its orders. In addition, the authorities sought to inventory Uniate monastic schools and educational establishments and establish supervision over them. For this purpose, it was planned to send loyal officials to the occupied territories. The authorities accused the Uniate monastery schools of teaching based on 'rebellious principles of modern French doctrine'. Thus, through its initial decrees, the government aimed to control and eventually eliminate Uniate institutions in the territories under its jurisdiction.

The refusal of the Lutsk Uniate Bishop Stefan Levynskyi (1736-1806) to swear allegiance to the Empress accelerated her desire to confiscate the Church landholdings. From 1793 to 1796, the process of liquidating the Uniate Church within the Russian Empire continued²⁴. It was so large-scale that S. Borysevych noted the complete elimination of Greek Catholicism in the territories annexed by Russia²⁵. However, V. Los argued that we can speak only of the first stage of the liquidation, as only 176 parishes out of four thousand remained. Perhaps Catherine II's efforts would have been successful had it not been for her sudden death, but her successors took a more moderate stance, returning some properties from state administration, including those of Bishop S. Levynskyi. In 1798, the Lutsk Uniate diocese was restored, with all Uniate parishes of the Kyiv, Volyn, and Podillia Provinces under its jurisdiction²⁶. As for the Orthodox eparchies, for the convenience of administrative

²¹ Левицький В. Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні... С. 20.

²² Генерал-майорам Каховскому и Кречетникову с приложением наказа, по коему они должны поступать при исправлении должностей губернаторов в присоединенных от Польши губерниях. 28 мая 1772 г. № 13808. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 19. С. 509.

²³ О распоряжениях в Польских областях, занятых российскими войсками. 8 декабря 1792 г. № 17090. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 23. С. 389.

²⁴ Лось В. Уніатська церква на Правобережній Україні... С. 63.

²⁵ Борисевич С. Законодавче регулювання поземельних відносин у Правобережній Україні... С. 108.

²⁶ Лось В. Уніатська церква на Правобережній Україні... С. 53.

control, the territorial boundaries of the Orthodox eparchies and Provinces were aligned by a Synodal decree of August 4, 1799. The territory of the Volyn-Zhytomyr eparchy coincided with the boundaries of the Volyn Province²⁷.

The confiscation of Uniate property raised an equally challenging problem: the demarcation of land between landlords' estates and those owned by churches. In the 16th and 17th centuries, landlords granted land to churches and monasteries through oral deeds of gift. However, it was only in the 18th century that the practice of issuing supporting documents for both newly granted and previously donated land became established²⁸. The absence of such documents in the new political environment allowed descendants to initiate the process of reclaiming their parents' and grandparents' estates, which had come into the possession of the Church. Representatives of the new generation of szlachta, who no longer relied on the clergy's support, viewed generous land donations to the church as an unacceptable waste. Maintaining stability in these lands became the responsibility of the new administration, which, like the serfs, adhered to the Orthodox faith²⁹. The supreme authority initiated a lengthy and complex process of demarcating church landownership from landlord estates, in which the state-organized corps of land surveyors played a central role.

We emphasize that the system of land ownership regulation underwent significant changes after the transfer of territories from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Russian Empire. While in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the szlachta independently regulated land ownership issues through the Pidkomorskyi (land boundary) courts, in the Russian Empire the state exercised much greater control over these processes through land surveyors. In the occupied territories, Russian surveyors actively participated in the redistribution of land ownership, acting primarily in the interests of the Russian state. This marked a fundamental shift in the principles of land relations regulation – from traditional noble self-government to centralized state control³⁰.

The supreme authorities regulated the issue of land allocation to church institutions. By order of the Senate, land surveyors, following the Instruction of February 15, 1766³¹, which was further confirmed by Senate decrees of December 18,

²⁷ Shevchuk A., Markevych O. The Religious Policy of the Russian Empire in the Captured Territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (On the Example of the Volyn Province at the End of the 18th – the First Half of the 19th Century). *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*. 2025. Vol. 45, Iss. 1. P. 24-38. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2693-2229.2596>. For more information on the imperial religious policy toward non-Orthodox communities, see: Shevchuk A., Markevych O. The Religious Factor in the Imperial Judicial Policy of the Right-Bank Ukraine (1797-1830). *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*. 2025. Vol. 45, Iss. 4. Article 9. P. 168-188. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2693-2229.2609>

²⁸ Савчук П. Церква і фондуші на Волині... С. 201.

²⁹ Левицький В. Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні... С. 30.

³⁰ For more information on the organization and functioning of provincial and county surveyors from the late 18th century until the 1830s, including their staff, powers, and the specifics of their activities in the Volyn province, see: Шевчук А., Маркевич О. Служба землеміра у Волинській губернії наприкінці XVIII – в першій третині XIX ст.: улаштування, кадровий склад, діяльність. *Український історичний журнал*. 2024. Вип. 2. С. 77-97. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15407/uhj2024.02.077>

³¹ Инструкция землемерам, к генеральному всей империи земель размежеванию. 13 февраля 1766 г., № 12570. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 17 (1765-1766). С. 561-580.

1797, February 11, 1804³², and November 18, 1809³³, demarcated 33 desyatins (1 desyatina = 2.7 acres) of land in favor of the church from privately owned lands. If the land was state-owned, the amount of land allotted could be increased by a decree of the Synod of December 6, 1829. In estates where peasants used 15 desyatins of land, churches were allotted a triple proportion, i.e., 99 desyatins; if peasants used 12 to 15 desyatins, 66 desyatins were allotted; and if they used 8 to 12 desyatins, 49.5 desyatins were allotted. If peasants received less than 8 desyatins, an increase was possible with the approval of the Minister of Finance. The aforementioned allotments could not include fishing ponds, mills, forests, industrial facilities, trading places, large pastures, salt mines, etc.³⁴ These assets were considered especially valuable to the state treasury due to the high income they generated. They were excluded from general distribution and remained under direct state control or were leased on special terms.

Surveyors were tasked with accelerating the allocation of church lands from both private and state ownership. As evidenced by the documents we have studied, provincial surveyors were ordered to prepare detailed land plans and submit them to the provincial governments³⁵. Uniate monasteries were prioritized for the preparation of these plans. For example, provincial surveyor V. Kudriavtsev received an order from Governor-General O. Bekleshov to draw up plans for monasteries in the villages of Hrechuhy and Rodtsi in Zhytomyr County; in Novohrad-Volynskiy County – the village of Kolodka and the town of Liubar; in Zaslavskiy County – the town of Polonne; in Ostroh County – the town of Hushcha and the village of Dorohusk; in Dubno County – Derman; and in Kremenets County – Pochayiv, among others. Due to the volume of work, the surveyors' involvement in other tasks, and the remoteness of the lands, the Provincial Surveyor stated that it was categorically impossible to prepare the plans "as soon as possible"³⁶.

To work more effectively, surveyors needed documents confirming the ownership of land by landowners and the Church. The absence of such documents often delayed cases, as was the situation with the lands of the Zhytomyr Holy Cross Church in Zhytomyr County. The clergy argued that Colonel Berezovsky had illegally occupied

³² О непременно назначении к церквям следующей пропорции земли при всяком решении Межевой канцелярией спорного дела, где состоят в виду церкви, земель не имеющие. 11 февраля 1804 г., № 21149. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 28 (1804-1805). С. 70-72.

³³ Об отводе церквям положенного количества десятин земли. 18 ноября 1809 г., № 23994. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 30 (1808-1809). С. 1276.

³⁴ Об усилении способов к образованию духовного юношества и к обеспечению церковных причтов в безбедном содержании. 6 декабря 1829 г., № 3323. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Второе. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 4 (1829). С. 833.

³⁵ The provincial government was a collegial body within the system of provincial administration, which was effectively under the control of the local governor. It resolved most issues of local importance, and all other provincial institutions, including land surveyors, were subordinate to it. Read more: *Маркевич О.* Губернське правління як місцева державна установа кінця XVIII – першої половини XIX ст. (на прикладі Волинської губернії). *Український історичний журнал*. 2012. № 2. С. 89-105.

³⁶ О снятии на план униатских монастырей, состоящих в Волынской губернии. *State Archives of Zhytomyr Region* (SAZR). Fund 263. List 1. File 6. P. 1a.

church land, although there were no documents defining the boundaries or extent of the church's property. As evidenced by the archival materials, the church had received the land on September 24, 1603, which was initially administered by Andrii Peresetskyi. By 1664, two other rectors of the church, Jan and Józef Sokolowski, divided the land in half, with one part remaining under the church's control (administered by Jan Sokolowski) and the other sold in two transactions in 1727 and 1742. In 1745, Jan Sokolowski further divided the remaining land into two parts, leasing one and later selling it to Colonel Berezovskyi. Despite only a portion of the land being sold, Colonel Berezovskyi claimed control over the entire territory. There were no documents proving the Church's ownership of the land, and the only witnesses were peasants who could verbally attest to which lands had long been associated with the Church. The case was highly complex and ultimately required the intervention of the Senate³⁷.

To expedite the resolution of such cases, a Senate decree issued on February 4, 1815, required the Volyn Spiritual Consistory to provide detailed information about church land ownership. In cases of disputed lands, district surveyors were to be sent to resolve such disputes³⁸. On November 27, 1817, the Senate approved rules for demarcating church lands, deviating from the standard boundary instructions. For the demarcation of church lands in the Volyn Province, special commissions were established, consisting of commissioners from the local residents and deputies from the clergy. These commissions, working alongside surveyors, were tasked with demarcating arable land, hayfields, and other types of land. In cases of disputes, the Volyn bishop Stefan, the governor, and the provincial marshal³⁹ were involved in the proceedings⁴⁰. Based on this framework, boundary commissions included representatives of the church.

The process of demarcating church lands was lengthy and accompanied by numerous lawsuits. To resolve these disputes, county courts required plans of the contested church lands, which were provided by county surveyors⁴¹. Even in the absence of conflicts, as was the case in the Ostroh manorial complex, where the boundaries of five churches were amicably settled, the process of compiling a register of church lands, creating plans thereof, and preparing descriptions by surveyors took considerable time. This information was then sent to the Volyn Spiritual Consistory and the provincial government⁴².

³⁷ О церковных землях Волынской губернии. 1823 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 527. P. 13-16.

³⁸ Указы и рапорты губернскому землемеру. 1817 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 398. P. 1-4.

³⁹ The institution of the county and provincial marshal of the nobility was an important administrative and representative body in the Volyn province, which, on the one hand, ensured the interests of the noble corporation, and on the other hand, executed orders from the imperial authorities, which created a double burden for the local elite in the form of unpaid bureaucratic work while maintaining a certain influence in the region. See: Лебедь А., Шевчук А. Поветовые маршалы Волынской губернии (1797-1831): организация, кадровый состав, деятельность. *Bylye Gody*. 2023. Vol. 18, Iss. 1. С. 100-114. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13187/bg.2023.1.100>

⁴⁰ Об отмежевании в Волынской губернии церковных земель через особые комиссии. 27 ноября 1817 г., № 27166а. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 34 (1817). С. 894-895.

⁴¹ SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 398. P. 5-8back.

⁴² Ibid. P. 19-19back. For more information about the work of a surveyors during the demarcation of church estates, see: Шевчук А., Маркевич О. Служба землепра у Волинській губернії... С. 77-97.

In resolving disputes between landowners and the church over land distribution, the state most often sided with the latter⁴³. An example is the case of the division of hayfields between the Hiliev Church and the landowner Bukar, in which the Zhytomyr Lower Zemstvo Court (a police institution) ordered the latter to return the seized land⁴⁴. The case of allocating land to the St. Nicholas and Assumption churches in the town of Berdychiv, which was owned by Prince Radziwill, was much more complicated⁴⁵. Land there was extremely valuable, as the city was a center of fair trade and contracting not only in Right-Bank Ukraine but also in the entire Russian Empire⁴⁶. The annual turnover of the Berdychiv fairs exceeded 20 million rubles, making the city the empire's most important banking center after 1800. As in previous cases, the dispute was complicated by the fact that the churches lacked any documents confirming their ownership or usage rights. This case lasted from 1806 to 1815 and finally concluded with the demarcation of the allotted lands in favor of the churches. The decision was certified by members of a specially created commission, which included representatives of the Berdychiv police⁴⁷, the Zhytomyr Lower Zemstvo Court, and the clergy⁴⁸.

There were instances of delays in the process of granting rural parishes the established land norms, as well as unauthorized seizures of church lands by descendants of former estate owners. Polish landowners, taking advantage of their right to elect members of the court through noble elections, could deliberately prolong trials. An illustrative example is the case in which the Starokostiantyniv Theological School appealed ten times to the local lower zemstvo court for the return of the land belonging to the church in the village of Troianivka that had been illegally seized by the landowner Katynskyi⁴⁹. However, it remains unclear how this case was ultimately resolved. We can only note that, according to the decree of July 12, 1804, cases involving Catholic ecclesiastical estates were required to be transferred to the Senate⁵⁰.

Additionally, the issue of performing duties on lands allocated to churches was regulated. By a decree of April 3, 1801, parishioners were exempted from the obligation to cultivate church lands. To financially support the clergy, it was permitted to double the fees for performing church rites for the laity⁵¹. The authorities did not prohibit parishioners from offering more than the established minimum, but priests were not

⁴³ Левицький В. Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні... С. 36.

⁴⁴ О церковных землях Волынской губернии. 1816 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 349. P. 22-23.

⁴⁵ One of the peculiarities of the annexed lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the presence of a large number of privately owned towns, where all the land belonged to a single owner. These included the majority of towns and small towns with a high level of trade and craft development, as well as a significant population. Even county seats, such as Rivne, Dubno, Ostroh, Starokostiantyniv, and Zaslav, fell into this category.

⁴⁶ Ibid. C. 38-39.

⁴⁷ The local administration, representing the imperial authorities in the newly annexed territories, actively involved the police in the most important tasks, viewing them as the only reliable support.

⁴⁸ О церковных землях Волынской губернии. 1816 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 349. P. 10, 11back, 45.

⁴⁹ Ibid. P. 131.

⁵⁰ О производстве спорных дел о духовных католических имениях. 12 июля 1804 г., № 21394. Полное собрание законов Российской империи. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 28 (1804-1805). С. 451.

⁵¹ For example, the fee for baptism was 6 kopecks, for a wedding – 20 kopecks, for an adult funeral – 20 kopecks, and for an infant's burial – 6 kopecks.

allowed to demand or insist on larger amounts⁵². However, according to S. Borysevych, the salaries of the clergy, as well as material compensation for performing church rites, were meager compared to the income generated from land ownership in the Right Bank region⁵³. To support the Orthodox clergy, the state transferred confiscated Greek Catholic lands to them. The distribution of responsibilities for repairing roads, bridges, and crossings was also determined. On lands acquired by clergymen after January 11, 1798, which were considered to be held only in usufruct, such duties were imposed on parishioners. In contrast, on lands owned by the clergy, these duties were their responsibility⁵⁴. Thus, Roman Catholics and Uniates, who had long owned land, fulfilled their duties independently, while on lands granted to the Orthodox, these duties fell upon the parishioners.

The state authorities sought to control not only the boundaries between landlords and churches/monasteries but also the growth of land ownership by the latter. A series of decrees were adopted (May 29, 1810; January 4, 1819; May 31, 1822) that detailed the conditions for acquiring land⁵⁵. This process was highly bureaucratized, requiring clarification of the monasteries' financial situation, the sources of funds intended for purchasing estates, and ultimately requiring the emperor's personal approval. S. Borysevych points out that, in fact, several decrees shared the same purpose and reflected the authorities' desire to control all societal processes as much as possible⁵⁶.

In our opinion, their adoption could have been prompted by the challenging political situation in the newly conquered territories and the authorities' intention to pay closer attention to local peculiarities. For example, the donation of a house with land worth 6,180 rubles to the Church of the Nativity in Arkhangelsk by the merchant Cherepanov did not raise any objections from the authorities⁵⁷. However, in the case of Roman Catholic or Greek Uniate church estates, Alexander I was even stricter regarding the granting of loans for construction. The supreme authorities were

⁵² Об освобождении прихожан от обязанности обрабатывать церковные земли и об удвоении положенной в 1765 г. платы священнослужителям за исправление мирских треб. 3 апреля 1801 г., № 19816. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 26 (1800-1801). С. 605-606.

⁵³ *Борисевич С.* Законодавче регулювання поземельних відносин у Правобережній Україні... С. 111.

⁵⁴ О исправлении мостов и гатей по дорогам, пролегающим через церковные земли. 17 февраля 1825 г., № 30234. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 40 (1825). С. 75.

⁵⁵ О дозволении монастырям приобретать недвижимые имущества с Высочайшего соизволения. 29 мая 1810 г., № 24246. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 31 (1810-1811). С. 200; О несовершении крепостных актов на приобретаемые монастырями и церквями недвижимые имущества без Высочайшего соизволения. 4 января 1819 г., № 27622. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 36 (1819). С. 7; О запрещении римо-католическому и греко-униатскому духовенству производить займы на счет церковных имуществ, без Высочайшего на то соизволения. 31 мая 1822 г., № 29060. *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*. Собрание Первое. Санкт-Петербург: Печатано в типографии II Отделения собственной Его Императорского величества Канцелярии, 1830. Т. 38 (1822-1823). С. 219.

⁵⁶ *Борисевич С.* Законодавче регулювання поземельних відносин у Правобережній Україні... С. 110.

⁵⁷ О несовершении крепостных актов на приобретаемые монастырями и церквями недвижимые имущества... С. 7.

alarmed by the fact that in the Vitebsk Province, the Uzhwald monastery received a loan of 58,866 rubles from the 'fundusz' property in 1817-1818⁵⁸.

At first glance, by comparing these figures, one might conclude that the clergy of the annexed territories possessed considerable capital and financial capabilities. Exceptions were made for Catholic bishops and other high-ranking clergy for personal purchases, as they were allowed to acquire inhabited estates in the same manner as the nobility. Personal acquisitions were permitted on the condition that they would not pass into the possession of church communities after the owner's death but would remain with the legal heirs. Such concessions served as another example of the Russian state's compromise with the nobility and clergy⁵⁹.

THE JESUIT ESTATES AND THEIR INTEGRATION INTO THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL LAND SYSTEM

The situation of the Catholic Jesuit monastic order, particularly the changes concerning land ownership, should be highlighted separately. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the order's activities were banned in 1773, and its estates and lands were inventoried and transferred to the needs of the 'Commission of National Education' (KEN – Komisja Edukacji Narodowej), which was reforming the education system at the national level. The former Jesuit properties were transferred to private individuals on the condition that they paid 4.5% of their income to the commission. These properties were called the first Jesuit estates⁶⁰.

The members of the order found refuge in the Russian Empire and swore allegiance to Catherine II, who hoped to use them for the political adaptation of the population of the newly annexed lands. Paul I expanded the Order's capabilities by allowing it to open additional educational institutions, including in the capital. During the reign of Alexander I, Jesuit missions were founded in many cities, including those on the Right Bank of Ukraine⁶¹.

The authorities sought to gather as much information as possible about Jesuit estates that were leased or sold at auction to private individuals. The funds of the Volyn Provincial Surveyor (Fund No. 263 of the State Archives of the Zhytomyr Region) contain a significant amount of administrative documentation on the demarcation of estates and the drawing up of plans for former Jesuit estates. An analysis of archival materials shows an annual increase in the number of such orders and the strengthening of state control over these lands⁶².

A detailed analysis of the documents delimiting the Jesuit estate of the village of Bazar and its two subordinate settlements demonstrates the thoroughness of the surveyors' work in compiling descriptions of these land holdings. Officials compiled

⁵⁸ О запрещении римо-католическому и греко-униатскому духовенству производить займы... С. 219-220.

⁵⁹ Левицький В. Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні... С. 41.

⁶⁰ Later, after the annexation of Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian lands to the Russian Empire, the rate of payment to the treasury increased to 6% per annum.

⁶¹ Кіку В. Єзуїти. *Енциклопедія історії України*: Т. 3: Е-Й / Редкол.: В.А. Смотрич (голова) та ін. НАН України. Інститут історії України. Київ: Наукова думка, 2005. С. 113-114.

⁶² Дело и полевая записка Луцкого повета по иезуитскому имению с. Лища, состоящего во владении маршала Загурского. 1802 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 67. 39 p.; О командировании уездного землемера для составления планов по иезуитском имению. 1802 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 77. P. 2-4; О снятии на план иезуитских имений Волынской губернии. 1804 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 102. 111 p.

detailed tables that contained comprehensive information about the structure of the estate's land holdings. Such descriptive tables recorded the location and area of arable land, hayfields (mowing areas), areas of construction forest, forest areas intended for firewood, land under church buildings and cemeteries, and land allocated for roads. According to the surveyor's information, the total area of this Jesuit estate was 93 desyatins of land. It is important to note that the surveyors separately documented the presence of disputed territories, some of which, according to their conclusions, should also have belonged to this estate⁶³.

The Volyn Treasury Chamber (a regional financial and administrative institution of the Russian Empire) initiated the creation of lustration commissions in the province's counties to determine the income from forest resources on Jesuit estates (sale of timber, harvesting firewood for sale, production of potash, income from woodworking industries, collection of forest products, etc.). As can be seen from the example of the Kovel district, such commissions included a county marshal, a podkomorzy, a khorunzh, and members of the lower zemstvo court⁶⁴.

The state authorities of the Russian Empire implemented a comprehensive policy of managing and controlling Jesuit estates. The main goal was to ensure maximum economic efficiency of these estates and stable revenues to the state treasury. To achieve this goal, the systematic collection and analysis of economic data on the condition and profitability of the estates provided by local authorities were undertaken.

It is worth noting that the Order itself was becoming economically stronger, rapidly recovering as an international organization, and began to pose a threat to the stable development of the Russian state. An additional factor was the creation of the Holy Alliance in 1815, after which the Order lost its importance in the struggle of European monarchies against revolutionary and liberation movements. As a result, in 1820, the authorities suspended the activities of the Jesuit Order in Russia. In 1822, the Order's possessions, which had remained in its possession since the incorporation of Right-Bank Ukraine into the Russian Empire, were included in the state estates. In the system of accounting for state estates, they were called the second Jesuit estates. The state leased them out under the same system as the state-owned starostas⁶⁵.

CONCLUSIONS

After the annexation of Right-Bank Ukraine, the Russian authorities encountered the region's multi-layered and confessionally heterogeneous social structure. Realizing that harsh secularization measures could provoke discontent among local elites, the imperial administration adopted a more moderate policy. The clergy were allowed to retain their land holdings, provided they swore an oath of allegiance to the empire. At the same time, the authorities actively supported the Orthodox Church, using it as a tool for integrating the region. An example of the flexibility of imperial

⁶³ Межевые дела со всем производством по иезуитскому имению с. Базар и приселками после умершего старосты Нововинского, принадлежащего его детям. 1802-1805 годы. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 71. P. 50.

⁶⁴ О снятии на план иезуитских имений Волынской губернии. 1803 год. SAZR. Fund 263. List 1. File 87. P. 25-25back.

⁶⁵ In other Jesuit estates, there were 13529 men. Read more: *Левицький В.* Церковне землеволодіння на Правобережній Україні... С. 62.

integration policy was the return of Greek Catholic estates during the reigns of Paul I and Alexander I.

A significant challenge for the state authorities was the process of demarcating church landownership from that of private landowners. A decisive role in this process was played by the state-organized service of surveyors. In the absence of conflicts, they allocated 33 desyatins of land from privately owned estates, and if the land was state-owned, the area of church allotments could be increased. Surveyors created detailed plans of monasteries and churches, noting the quality of the soil, the presence of forests, water bodies, and other resources. These descriptions provided the most comprehensive information about church landholdings, as no general land survey had been conducted in the annexed territories. In cases of disputes between the clergy and landowners, the authorities typically sided with the Church. Additionally, the state regulated issues related to the fulfillment of duties on church lands, as well as the procedures for acquiring new lands through purchase or donation.

A separate aspect of state policy was the regulation of the status of Jesuit estates. Although the order's activities were officially permitted until 1820, the imperial authorities did not return the previously confiscated lands to the Jesuits. Instead, they initiated the collection of information about lease obligations and the profitability of properties sold at auction. After the final expulsion of the Jesuit Order from the Russian Empire by Alexander I, all its estates were transferred to state ownership.

The rules established by the state authorities regarding land ownership and land use underwent radical changes following the Polish November Uprising of 1830-1831, in which a portion of the Greek Catholic clergy actively participated. The authorities initiated the liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church and began the process of secularizing its landholdings.

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