



# The former St. Nicholas Church in Zamość as a Russian *lieu de mémoire*

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The former Orthodox and now Roman Catholic Church of St. Nicholas is one of the most important historical buildings located in the Old Town area of Zamość [Fig. 1]. The complicated fate of the church, whose author was a duo of outstanding stonemasons and architects of the mid-17th c., working in the area of the Red Ruthenia (Jan Jaroszewicz and Jan Wolff), presents as if through a lens the turbulent fate of the Chełm Land (*Chełmszczyzna*, *Kholm-schyna*) with its multitude of ethnic, religious and political disputes, which intensified in the period of the Partitions. The object I am describing here may be analysed within the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, “sites of memory”, for which there is no single interpretation and, most importantly, no single memory. The aim of this article is to describe the architectural and cultural history of the former Basilian church in Zamość and to set it in the discourse of research on sites of memory.

According to Pierre Nora, memory spaces can function in groups/communities in which there is a conviction that certain objects, buildings, places, customs etc. tell us something about the past<sup>1</sup>. Assigning the status of memory space places causes that in the area of a given culture a rule starts to function, which states that the past is handed down to us not only in the accounts of direct witnesses of events, but also indirectly – through signs and symbols<sup>2</sup>. These, in turn, create a sense of connection between generations, being a link between history and the present, and the practice of their reverence becomes an expression of respect for the past and the preservation

1. St. Nicholas Church in Zamość, contemporary view. Photo: P. Korneluk



<sup>1</sup> P. Nora, *Mémoire collective*, [in:] *Faire de l'histoire*, Ed. J. Le Goff, P. Nora, Paris 1974, pp. 401-403.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Szpociński, *Miejsca pamięci (lieux de mémoire)*, “Teksty Drugie” 2008, No. 4, pp. 12-13.



<sup>3</sup> See A. Szabaciuk, “Rosyjski Ulster”. *Kwestia chełmska w polityce imperialnej Rosji w latach 1863–1915*, Lublin 2013, pp. 13–25.

<sup>4</sup> The territories of the Chełm Land were called “restored lands”, as still in the 13th c. they were part of the state ruled by the Ruthenian princes, in this case Danylo Romanowych, his sons and grandson.

for posterity of a model of attitudes, values or ideas. In addition to the idea of *lieux de mémoire*, the creation of a *milieu de mémoire*, “environment of memory”, which has a sense of connection with the past and the symbolism of the object, is also important in the context of the temple in question. It is the construction of various milieus of memory, gathered around a building to legitimise their right to it, to the town, or even to an entire historical area, in this case the Chełm land.

### History of the Zamość church until 1720

The story of the Orthodox (i.e. Ruthenian) settlement in Zamość is not lost in the darkness of history. It is as evident as the Jewish and Armenian settlements, as the founding of the town itself. The issue is different, however, with regard to the land on which the town was founded. The centuries-long coexistence of the Latin and the Orthodox, and later the Ruthenian Uniate, constituted a difficulty in the creation of specific narratives whether Polish, Ruthenian/Ukrainian or Russian. The issue of the functioning of Orthodox churches in Zamość forms part of this general political trend of the 19th and early 20th c. on the eastern fringes of the Polish Kingdom. Here, Russian policy fuelled conflict between officials, elites and peasants over the ethno-national and religious consciousness of the Uniates living in the area<sup>3</sup>. In the Russian consciousness, the Union of Brest in 1596 was a memorable date for the tearing away of the Ruthenians living in these lands from the Orthodox faith and Ruthenian consciousness. It was a date of shame that had to be washed away, which was to be achieved through cultural and religious Russification, particularly intensified in the Chełm eparchy, the last remaining Uniate diocese in the Kingdom of Poland and the Russian Partition until 1878. Already in the 1850s, it was regarded as an indigenously Ruthenian land and therefore, in the minds of the St. Petersburg elite, a Russian one, which had been detached from its coherence with ancient Rus’ through the centuries-long operations of the Polish nobility, the Latin clergy, the Union of Brest and the Synod of Zamość, which eventually Latinised the Uniate Church<sup>4</sup>. Arriving here after 1815, the Russians looked for symbolic places in the Chełm region, especially after 1863, to which they could refer, legitimising their right to restore the area to the Rus’ motherland and rectify historical irregularities. Such places seem to have included the castle and cathedral hill in Chełm, the icon of Our Lady of Chełm, whose cult was alive among the Orthodox, Uniates and Latin alike, the medieval towers of Ruthenian prominence in Stołp and Bieławin, the medieval brick church in Szczepreszyn, the court church in Kodień founded by Paweł Sapieha, or the St. Nicholas Church in Zamość.

The founding of Zamość in 1580 and the establishment there 14 years later of an academy providing education in the Western European spirit was one of the measures to spread Latin culture in the lands of the Red Ruthenia. In the founder's original intention, the town was to be inhabited only by Catholics, but the first years of Zamość's construction verified his plans. Jan Zamoyski soon realised that the economic development of the town, situated on trade routes between important cities of the Commonwealth, depended on its multicultural character. Thus, as early as 1585 Zamość became home to Armenians arriving from Turkey and Lviv, in 1588 to Sephardic Jews brought here from Italy and Turkey, and a year later also to Greeks<sup>5</sup>. It was also home to Scots, Italians, English, Germans and Ruthenians, who were the largest ethnic minority yet did not have the privilege of settlement.

The first Orthodox church was built in Zamość by the Greeks with Zamoyski's permission. The privilege dated 10 January 1589, was confirmed by his son Tomasz in 1618<sup>6</sup>. For the construction of the church, the Orthodox received land in the eastern part of the town. Initially they erected a wooden temple, but around 1615 they started construction of a brick building. However, Orthodoxy did not appear due to the acts and privileges of Hetman Zamoyski. We know that an Orthodox church of the Ascension of the Lord had already been established before in the Lviv suburb. According to accounts, it was supposed to have been founded on the spot where Cyril and Methodius returning from Constantinople stopped and began to teach the Christian faith. On this spot, the local people built a wooden temple<sup>7</sup>. It was said to be located at the intersection of today's Krysiński, Żdanowska and Sienkiewicza Streets, by the road to Skokówka (the Zamoyski family's castellum was located here). The story of Cyril and Methodius' visit here was brought to the town by Russians, who tried to legitimise Orthodoxy as the older and original religion for the area. According to Russian sources, Orthodox Christians had lived on the land of the village of Skokówka even before Zamość was founded. Most probably this information was true, as the Orthodox parish network in this area is older than the Latin one<sup>8</sup>. Yet the history of the Orthodox is lost in the mists of history, and the network of their parishes itself was not well documented. Thus, we do not know when exactly the Church of the Ascension was founded, but we can assume that it hosted the Patriarch of Constantinople twice, in 1588 and 1589, along with other Greek hierarchs<sup>9</sup>. Jeremiah II stopped twice at Zamoyski's estate when he was heading to and returning from Moscow. It was also here where the patriarch ordered the Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev, Michael Rohoza, to convene a council of the Orthodox Church in the Commonwealth. A meeting between the patriarch and the three sovereigns, of Lviv, Luts'k and Volodymyr, took place in the town, which marked the beginning of preparations for the creation of a union between the Latin Church and the Orthodox Church. Jeremi-



<sup>5</sup> See A. A. Witusik, *Z przeszłości handlowej Zamościa*, "Rocznik Lubelski" Vol. 31/32 (1989/1990), pp. 243–245.

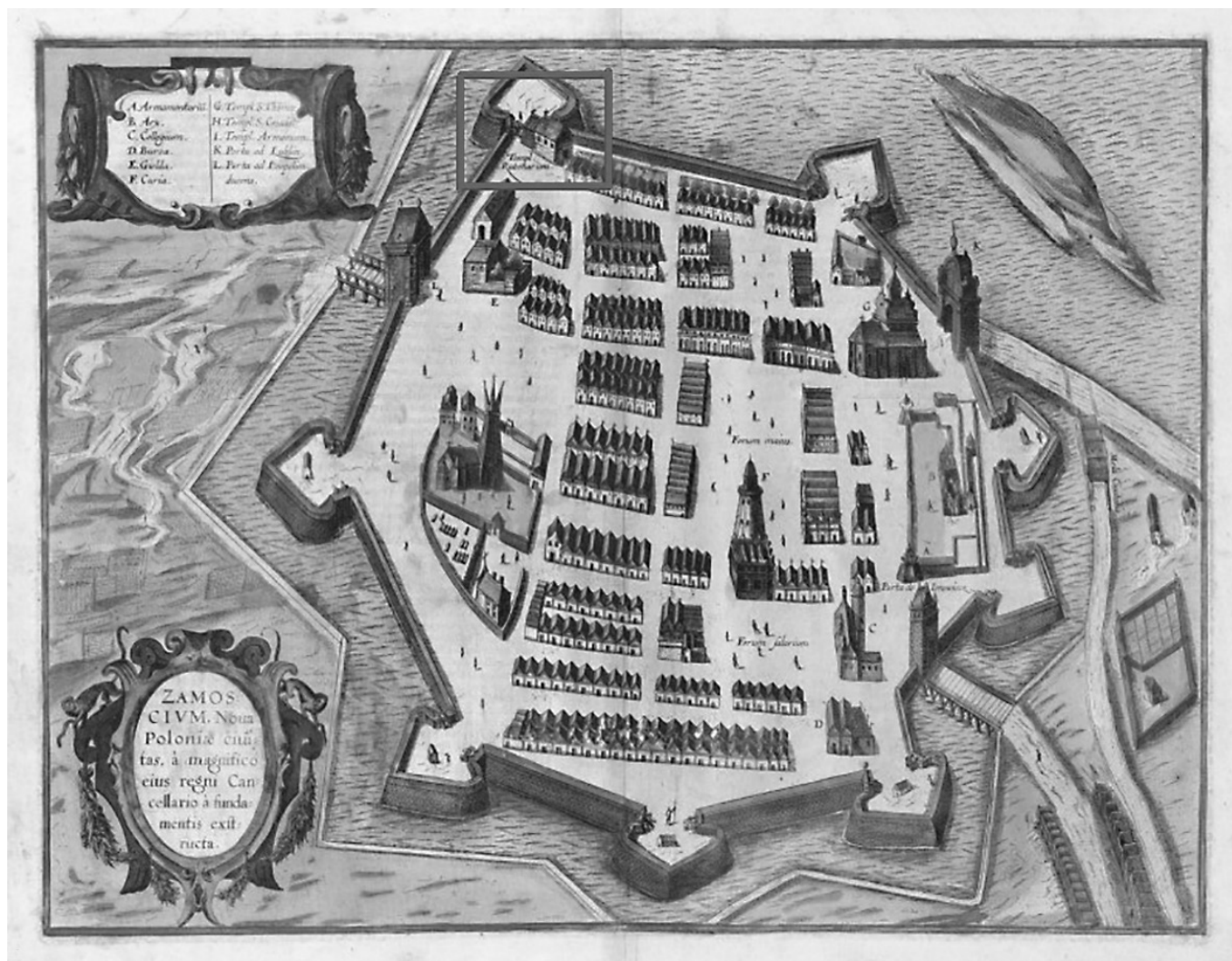
<sup>6</sup> See A. Gil, *Jan Zamoyski wobec zagadnień wyznaniowych na przykładzie Zamościa przełomu XVI i XVII wieku*, "Zamojsko-Wołyńskie Zeszyty Muzealne" Vol. 3 (2005), p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> See A. S. Budiłowicz, *Russkaja prawosławna starina w Zamostje*, Warszawa 1885, p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> See A. Gil, *Prawosławna eparchia chełmska do 1596 roku*, Lublin-Chełm 1999, pp. 167–170.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Feduszka, *Zamość gospodarzem Synodu Zamojskiego z 1720 roku*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo Synodu Zamojskiego 1720–2020. Wyzwania i perspektywy*, Sc. Ed. P. Nowakowski, Kraków 2021, pp. 86–87.





2. The church depicted on a 1617 town plan by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg. Photo from: <https://sanderusmaps.com/our-catalogue/antique-maps/europe/eastern-europe/old-antique-map-bird-s-eye-view-of-zamosc-in-poland-by-braun-and-hogenberg-16505> (access date: 12.04.2022)



<sup>10</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 87.

ah II was said to have left a valuable wooden cross in the Church of the Ascension, which was later moved to the Church of St. Nicholas, and which was lost during the First World War.

A privilege granted by Zamoyski in 1589 allowed the Orthodox inhabitants of the town to build an Orthodox church within the town walls. It was located next to Bastion I. Initially, in 1602–1604, a wooden temple was built, founded by Greek and Ruthenian merchants who settled here, which is why the first temple was called the Greek-Ruthenian Orthodox Church<sup>10</sup>. In Braun's plan of 1605, the oldest and most popular depiction of 17th c. Zamość, this church, built on a rectangular plan and without a tower, is signed as "*Templum Ruth-*

*ernarum* [Rus's Temple]" [Fig. 2]. It took as its patron saint, St. Nicholas, who was particularly venerated in Orthodoxy and Rus'. His cult was complicated and, since medieval times, firmly embedded in folk tradition<sup>11</sup>. Sometimes, in Orthodoxy, St. Nicholas was depicted as one of the figures of the Deesis motif (he replaced St. John the Baptist and even, although very rarely, stood at the centre of this motif)<sup>12</sup>. The saint's help was called upon in almost every situation, and he was the patron saint of merchants, coopers, bakers, brewers and fishermen, among others. The temple was built and maintained mainly by merchants, which is probably why that original patron saint was chosen for it.

The second *Ordynat* of Zamość granted a privilege and founded a brick church, which was built under the supervision of the architect Jan Jaroszewicz in 1618 (1616)–1631. It represents a typical layout of a tripartite church consisting of a nave built on a square plan, a small closed pentagonal apse and a *babinec* with a tower added later (1690–1699). The mason of the building and the author of its decoration was Jan Wolff<sup>13</sup>. He decorated the interior of the church building with a network of slats connecting symmetrically arranged square fields with chamfered corners, which, according to Michał Kurzej, may have originally housed paintings<sup>14</sup>. Apart from this decoration, there are also motifs of winged heads, which occur, among others, in the side conchs. The Zamość church has preserved its original form quite well, and its decoration links the building to the Lublin type of Polish Renaissance architecture; only its octagonal tower topped with a characteristic helmet displays Baroque features.

In the local Orthodox community, an apparent split occurred at the beginning of the 18th century. The congregation of the suburban Church of the Assumption was among the first in the Chełm region to join the Union of Brest, while the Church of St. Nicholas was the mainstay of Orthodoxy in the region<sup>15</sup>. Two confraternities and a church school operated there. The existence of two churches in such close proximity, which chose either to remain Orthodox or to unite with the Latin Church, became the cause of local conflicts and disputes that lasted until the beginning of the 18th century. It is worth noting that already around the mid-17th c. the ethnic structure of the Orthodox believers changed. Zamość, founded on Red Ruthenia, a cultural and political junction, was experiencing turbulent times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The wars slowed down the town's economic growth, and one of the first groups to be affected most severely were the Greeks. They started to leave Zamość and their parish. It is worth noting that the Greeks did not seek significant cultural assimilation with the Ruthenian community, with whom they shared a single temple<sup>16</sup>. Soon it was the latter that dominated the community of Orthodox believers in the city.

The time of prosperity of the Orthodox in the town lasted until the death of the 3rd *Ordynat*. The *Ordynat*'s support resulted in the



<sup>11</sup> See B. A. Uspieński, *Kult św. Mikołaja na Rusi*, Transl. E. Janus, M. R. Mayenowa, Z. Kozłowska, Lublin 1985, pp. 19–33.

<sup>12</sup> See *ibidem*, pp. 44–47.

<sup>13</sup> Jaroszewicz was an architect at the court of the Zamość Ordynats, he supervised work on the town fortifications, later he built for the Zamoyskis a suburban residence called Krasnybrzeg (destroyed during the Khmelnytsky uprising), he worked on the construction of the town hall, the academy and the collegiate church, and is presumed to have designed the Franciscan church. Besides Zamość, he designed the churches of St. Dominic in Turobin, St. Nicholas in Szczepieszyń, the Bernardine monastery in Sokal, and is attributed with work on, for example, the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Uchanie. Wolff was a mason and executor of Jaroszewicz's designs as well as a decorator. Researchers regard him as having quite a lot of freedom in the implementation of Jaroszewicz's plan; one can see in the church's construction elements characteristic of Wolff, which he also used in other temples, such as the form of the lantern of the dome, or the use of the monastery vault. Wolff also worked on temples in Uchanie, Turobin and Kodeń. See A. Kurzątkowska, *Głos w dyskusji nad referatem Jerzego Kowalczyka, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki" 1962, No. 1, pp. 128–129; M. Kurzej, Jan Wolff. Monografia architekta w świetle analizy prefabrykowanych dekoracji sztukatorskich*, Kraków 2009, pp. 35–36.

<sup>14</sup> M. Kurzej, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> The Orthodox Diocese of Chełm was established in 1240 and belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Metropolis of Kiev. It was also one of the first dioceses to accept union in 1596, and Bishop Dionysius Zbyruysky, who headed it, was one of the main promoters of unification. See J. Giba, *Dzieje prawosławia na terenie diecezji lubelsko-chełmskiej do 1918 roku*, Białystok 2016, pp. 57–60.

<sup>16</sup> See I. Lylo, *Grecka diaspora w Zamościu na przełomie XVI i XVII wieku*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne" 2019, No. 4, p. 744.



<sup>17</sup> See **A. Kossowski**, *Z dziejów zakonu bazylianów w Zamościu*, "Teki Zamoj-ska" 1938, No. 4, p. 212.

<sup>18</sup> **J. Feduszka** (*op. cit.*, p. 89) gives the date 1690 as the year the temple was handed over to the Uniates. **A. S. Budiłowicz** (*op. cit.*, pp. 16–18) and **A. Mironowicz** (*Bractwa Cerkiewne na terenie Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XVI–XVIII wieku*, "Elpis" 2012, No. 25/26, p. 345) regard 1697 as the date when the Orthodox were expelled from the town. **A. Kossowski** (*op. cit.*, p. 213) believes that the Orthodox were expelled from Zamość in 1699. The Orthodox clergyman, pastor of the church in question, **A. Rieszetiłowicz** (*Zamostskajaswiato–Ninofajewskajacerkow*, "Chołmsko–Warszawskij eparchialnyj wiestnik" 1879, No. 18, p. 310), on the basis of documents found in parish records, establishes that this took place in 1706.

<sup>19</sup> The Basilians were founded in the 4th c., in the 10th c. they appeared in Kievan Rus', and under the influence of Orthodoxy they formed independent congregations. Monks who accepted the union began to create monastic rules anew. Bishop Josyf Rutsky and Bishop Josaphat Kuntsevych began the process of centralising the community, which was finally sealed during the Synod of Zamość. See **B. Łoziński**, *Leksykon zakonów w Polsce. Informator o życiu konsekrowanym*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 28–29; **M. Grychowski**, **J. Marecki**, *Zakony w Polsce*, Warszawa 2009, p. 142.

<sup>20</sup> See **M. Andrusiak**, *Józef Szumlański, pierwszy biskup unicki lwowski, 1667–1708. Zarys biograficzny*, Lwów 1934, pp. 113–114.

<sup>21</sup> **Cyril–Kyrylo Tranquillion Stavrovetsky** (?–1646) – Ruthenian writer, theologian, philosopher, printer. He came from the vicinity of Lviv. He was a teacher at a fraternity school in Lviv, then worked in Vilnius and Zamość. He was the owner of a mobile and portable printing press which published his own artistic and theological works. In 1626, he officially accepted the Union and became Archimandrite of the Yeltskoye Uniate monastery in Chernihiv, where he also died. See **R. Łużny**, *Pisarze baroku wschodniosłowiańskiego oraz ich biblijne lektury*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" 1996, No. 7, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> See *Synod Prowincjalny Ruski w Mieście Zamościu Roku 1720 Odprawiony, a w R. 1724 za rozkazem S. K. de Propag: F. łacińskim językiem w Rzymie w druku wydany, potym wkrótce z zalecenia J. W. J. X. Leona Kiszki, metropolity całej Rusi, na polski przez J. X. Polikarpa Filipowicza [...]*, Wilno 1785.

local Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Nicholas being the longest-established Orthodox society in the whole of the Chełm area. Difficult years came with the heirless death of Jan Sobiepan Zamoyski, when the town, after many judicial perturbations, became the property of the younger line of the family. In 1676, Marcin Zamoyski, together with his wife Anna Franciszka née Gnińska, wanted to prevent a conflict between the churches in the suburb and the fortress. To this end, the *Ordynat*'s wife, famous for her piety, asked the Uniate bishop of Chełm to remove schismatics, as Orthodox believers were called in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, from the town's church<sup>17</sup>. There are divergent dates as to this event, with years between 1690 and 1700 appearing. In some publications, especially Russian ones, under the date of 1706, we can find the last mention of the functioning of an Orthodox parish and an Orthodox confraternity in Zamość, which puts the town among the most resistant to the union of urban communities on the territory of the whole Ruthenian Voivodeship, to which the town formally belonged<sup>18</sup>.

### The Uniate church and the venue of the Synod of Zamość

In 1706, the building was handed over to the Basilian Order<sup>19</sup>. This congregation, which has been compared to the activities of the Jesuits, contributed greatly to the flourishing of the idea of ecclesiastical union in the whole region. They were brought to Zamość from Chełm, where their monastery was located next to the Uniate cathedral, on the so-called Górka. Initially, only three friars arrived to the town. However, the monks had already been present in Zamość, in the 1740s in the suburban church<sup>20</sup>. A prominent Uniate writer and philosopher, Cyril Stavrovetsky, was also associated with the town. He stayed in the city in the early 17th c., where he probably worked at the Zamoyski Academy<sup>21</sup>. However, the monastic building was not erected until the mid-18th c. from the foundation of the 9th *Ordynat*, Jan Jakub Zamoyski. Although they originated from the Chełm congregation, which was active at the synod, the hegumen of the Zamość monastery had the authority of a diocesan bishop (the Zamość monastery was directly subordinate to the Patriarch of Kiev). The Diocese of Chełm stood in stark contrast to the other bishoprics of the Metropolis of Lviv, having accepted the union already at the end of the 16th c., unlike the Diocese of Przemyśl, which did not do so until 1691, or the Dioceses of Lviv and Lutsk, which in 1700 and 1702 respectively officially joined the Catholic Church. In order to resolve conflicts between Latin Catholics and Uniates, a synod was convened in 1720, which was initially to be held in Lviv, but was eventually hosted in Zamość at the invitation of the Zamoyski family<sup>22</sup>.



The Synod of Zamość, which took place from 26 August to 17 September 1720, was one of the most important events in the town's history. Its importance is sometimes compared to that of the Council of Trent. The Synod was to be, in the understanding of Kiev Metropolitan Leon Kiszka, an emanation of the Catholic faith, its doctrinal unity in every rite. The event was attended and presided over by Apostolic Nuncio Jerome Grimaldi, 7 bishops representing all 10 dioceses of the Metropolis of Kiev, the Superior General of the Basilian Order, abbots, clergy, in total about 200 people. At that time, the famous *Statutes of the Synod of Zamość* were discussed and signed. The Statutes consisted of nineteen chapters and covered the most important spheres of church life of the Uniate Church, such as liturgy, preaching the word of God, teaching catechism, administration and education of the clergy<sup>23</sup>. The monastic sphere of the Basilians, who had not formed organised provinces but autonomous monasteries before 1720, was also reformed on the western model<sup>24</sup>. Almost all the sessions took place in the Basilian church, where services were also held, and plenary sessions took place in the Zamość Collegiate Church. The church was an arena for groundbreaking events in the religious history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and a place of remembrance that was nurtured in the town for years to come. This event was commemorated by a painting on the wall above the main entrance to the Zamość collegiate church, depicting the last session of the Synod<sup>25</sup>. It is not known who painted this work and when; it was destroyed in 1824 or 1825 at the behest of Grand Duke Constantine Romanov, along with other decorations adorning the Zamość Collegiate Church<sup>26</sup>.

### The times of the Partitions and the Russian memory

In the 18th c., the Uniate church of Zamość was at its most flourishing. A major contribution to this was made by the Superior of the Zamość Basilians, Herakliusz Kostecki, who looked after the building and the community from 1758 to 1764<sup>27</sup>. Basically, the temple did not undergo any major architectural changes. Only the roof was changed and extensions were built to house the sacristy. A boarding school and an extensive library also operated at the church. The Basilians also went from Zamość on their missions. They travelled in the surroundings, the area of the *Ordynacja*, but also went to Podolia, Polesia and Volhynia.

The sale of the town by Stanisław Kostka Zamoyski to the Government of the Kingdom of Poland in 1821 ended the period of development of the Basilian community in the town. The Order, which was subsidised annually by the Ordinaries, was deprived of its means of subsistence<sup>28</sup>. In 1831, after the fall of the November Uprising, the provisional commander of the Zamość fortress, General Vasily Pas-



<sup>23</sup> See S. Nabywaniec, *Spojrzenie na Synod Zamojski 1720 roku po trzystu latach*, [in:] *Statuty Synodu Zamojskiego 1720 roku. Nowe tłumaczenie z komentarzami*, Sc. Ed. P. Nowakowski, Transl. M. Grzełak, P. Nowakowski, Hist. Comment. S. Nabywaniec, Leg. Comment. Ł. Marzec, Litur. Comment. P. Nowakowski, Kraków 2020, pp. 287–293.

<sup>24</sup> See *ibidem*, pp. 293–295.

<sup>25</sup> See J. Kowalczyk, *Kolegiata w Zamościu*, Warszawa 1968, p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> See J. Feduszka, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>27</sup> See A. Kossowski, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

<sup>28</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 218.





<sup>29</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 220.

<sup>30</sup> See **M. Radwan**, *Carat wobec Kościoła greckokatolickiego w zaborze rosyjskim 1796–1839*, 2nd Ed., Lublin 2004, pp. 32–33.

kiy Kaisarov, asked to take over the temple and give it to the Orthodox Church. He was refused by the *Ordynacja* of the Uniate Diocese of Chełm, Philip Szumborski. In his justification, he wrote that the temple was the only one in the diocese with the status of a stauropegion, and that a momentous synodal ceremony took place within its walls in 1720<sup>29</sup>. The memory of the Synod was alive among the Uniates, Latin Catholics and Orthodox alike. For the first of them, the church was an act of final unification of the Eastern Church with the Western Church; the second saw in it a hope for the preservation of the political identity of the Commonwealth in the difficult times of the Partitions; for the third, it was Polonisation and the destruction of the Ruthenian religious tradition in the western borderlands of the ancient Rurik state. The Zamość church, along with St. Nicholas' church in Brest, was a symbol of the destruction of the Orthodox faith and iconoclasm, which is why there had been thoughts of taking it over since the defeat of the November Uprising and the fall of the Polish Kingdom. The Russians remembered the Union of Brest as an act of injustice and shame, so they sought to erase all traces of the 1596 act and its sealing in 1720. In its essence, the Union of Brest was an attempt to rectify what the Union of Florence had failed to achieve. Although it concerned a smaller area, it attempted to unite adherents of orthodoxy under the papal sceptre, without abandoning their traditional rite. The Duchy of Moscow did not allow the full implementation of the 1439 Florence decisions, and the creation of the union more than 150 years later was seen as a declaration of war against the entire Orthodox East and placed Russia in the role of defender of the faith. Therefore, Catherine the Great began the process of dismantling the structures of the Roman Catholic Church of the Uniate rite from the very beginning of her rule in the partitioned territories. She left only the Diocese of Polotsk for a short time, and the Orthodox Eparchy of Podolia and Bratslav was established from the pastoral institutions taken over. There was also a wide-ranging campaign to convert the Uniates to Orthodoxy. Her son, Peter I, changed his mother's policy and agreed to reactivate two Uniate dioceses – Lutsk and Brest. The believers were subordinated to the Spiritual College headed by the head of the Latin Catholic Church in Russia<sup>30</sup>. During the reign of Nicholas I, Orthodox believers in the territory of the Kingdom of Poland were incorporated under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary of the Volhynia eparchy with its capital in Lutsk. That tsar also embarked on a campaign to convert the Uniates to Orthodoxy by making their rite and temple decor similar to that of the Orthodox Church, which was to result in a natural fusion of the two faiths. At that time, the structures of the Uniate Church were also reformed, eventually being brought under the control of the Holy Ruling Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Synod of Polotsk of 1839 finally determined the liquidation of the Uniate Church in the Empire, annulling the provisions of the Union of Brest and in-

corporating all parishes into the structures of the Russian Orthodox Church<sup>31</sup>. The only Uniate diocese originating from the tradition of the Union of Brest, which was not affected by the synod, was the Diocese of Chełm, located in the Kingdom of Poland and under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See, which became the last bastion of the religious tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth<sup>32</sup>.

This idea is well reflected in a 1907 text by Aleksandr Budilovich published in the journal “Okraïn Rossii” (“Russian Borderlands”):

The fact that Chełm Land was geographically somewhat closer to Krakow and Warsaw than to Volhynia or White Ruthenia, and that as a result Chełm Land became dependent on Poland earlier and more strongly than the latter, does not change the fact that Chełm Land originally belonged to the cultural system of the Lithuanian-Russian region. Nor, indeed, does it change the fact that, after the unification of all West Ruthenian Uniates with the Orthodox Church, first under Catherine II and then under Nicholas I, Chełm Land alone with Podlachia was still chained for several decades to those intermediate forms of ecclesiastical life which were invented by Rome in Lyon, Florence and Brest to destroy the Orthodox movement in the bosom of the Latin Church<sup>33</sup>.

The temple, where the memorable synod was held, was finally taken over by the Orthodox in 1864, and a parish was established here in 1871. For the Russians, who attempted to create new citizens of the Empire out of the inhabitants of Chełm Land this temple was a special place. It confirmed the Ruthenian character of the area, and therefore the inalienable right to rule it and treat it quite differently from other lands of the Polish Kingdom. It was taken over the year the January Uprising ended, but also 11 years before the final liquidation of the last Uniate diocese. It thus became the first place to fight for the religious adherents and Russification of the area. Chełm Land continued to be a rather enigmatic and “dangerous” place in the Polish and Russian consciousness, where the majority of the area’s inhabitants did not define themselves by nationality categories, but by religious affiliation. This easily manipulated category meant that the Uniates were not treated as enemies at all, but as members of the Rus’ family, and there were efforts to Polonise them by force. The Russians also readily resorted to arguments of oppression by the Polish nobility and moral corruption of the Uniate and Latin clergy. In 1878, the parson of the Orthodox parish in Zamość writes:

The Latin-Polish propaganda is already waning in the present time, there is a deep-rooted conviction among the people that the local land [Chełm Land] will never return under Polish rule<sup>34</sup>.

Now Chełm Land was to become a bridgehead of Russification, an area where cultural expansion into the bizarre, from the Russians’ point of view, creation that was the Kingdom of Poland was to begin.



<sup>31</sup> I. Ch. Strielbickij, *Uniatskije cerkownyje sobory s konca CHVI wieku do wossojedinienija uniatow s prawosławnoju cerkownoju*, Wilnius 1888.

<sup>32</sup> W. Osadczy, *Święta Ruś. Rozwój i oddziaływanie idei prawosławia w Galicji*, Lublin 2007, pp. 351–356.

<sup>33</sup> A. S. Budiłowicz, *Chołmskaja Rus' i Polaki*, “Okraïn Rossii” 1907, No. 2, p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> A. Rieszetiłowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 313.



<sup>35</sup> See Ł. Adamski, *Nacjonalista postępowy. Mychajło Hruszewski i jego poglądy na Polskę i Polaków*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 147–170.

<sup>36</sup> See A. Rieszetiłowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>37</sup> See A. Kossowski, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

<sup>38</sup> A. Rieszetiłowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

<sup>39</sup> J. Sroka, *Brześć nad Bugiem. Dzieje miasta i twierdzy*, Biała Podlaska 1997, pp. 34–35.

<sup>40</sup> See A. M. Kułagin, *Prawasłaŭnyja chramy Biełarusi. Encykłapedyczny dawiednik*, Minsk 2007, p. 55.

The Chełm region, which had not yet taken its rightful place in the public consciousness, became an arena for a cultural struggle that grew into a war of civilisations. It was written about by both Poles and Russians, and in the last years of the 19th c. also by Ukrainians, who treated the area as ethnically Ruthenian, but not Russian. The seal of Russian domination in Zamość was the reconstruction of the temple<sup>35</sup>. St. Nicholas Church underwent a metamorphosis: its main dome was changed, the dome over the presbytery was raised, the windows were slightly enlarged, the tower was rebuilt, and a ten-storey iconostasis and paintings appeared in the interior<sup>36</sup>. From the not-so-good photographic documentation, it can be deduced that in the three *Blendes* in the presbytery section there were depictions of saints. These may have been the temple's patron saint, St. Nicholas, the Orthodox martyr and opponent of the union, St. Athanasius of Brest-Litovsk, and one of the typically Russian saints and patron saint of the emperors who ruled between 1855 and 1894, St. Alexander Nevsky. All the Zamoyskis' coats of arms were removed both inside and outside the temple. A full renovation was also carried out, as the temple was already in a poor state of repair in the times when the Basilians were in charge of it<sup>37</sup>. In 1868, the building of the Basilian Order, which "spoiled the view and obscured the temple", was demolished<sup>38</sup>. The church was, in Russian eyes, the apotheosis of the Orthodox faith, disgraced by the union with the schismatic West, which was destroying the Ruthenianness, and therefore the Russianness, of the inhabitants of Zabuzhany Rus', as the area began to be called in St. Petersburg terminology. Russian cultural politics also did not spare Brest and the main arena of the Union proceedings. The St. Nicholas Church in Brest, where the act of the Union of Brest was signed, was demolished by the Russians in the 1830s, along with the entire historic centre of the town. On the site of old Brest, in the fork of the Bug and Mukhavets rivers, on the boundary with the Kingdom of Poland, a powerful fortress was erected<sup>39</sup>. The town itself was moved one kilometre to the east, and the Orthodox Church of St. Simon the Apostle was built here in the 1860s (a monastery of the same name was also located in old Brest). In 1865, the remains of St. Athanasius of Brest-Litovsk – a monk, opponent of the Union and martyr for Orthodoxy – were solemnly transferred to it. In Brest, during the tsarist era, two more Orthodox churches were built bearing the name of St. Nicholas and following the tradition of the oldest church in the town, which witnessed the merging of the two denominations. Between 1860 and 1879, the St. Nicholas Garrison Cathedral was built on the site of the former Augustinian church and monastery within the fortress, which was to directly relate to the 14th-c. church. In 1904–1906, on the initiative of the St. Nicholas Orthodox Confraternity and with funds from, among others, the Holy Synod, soldiers and the Tsarist family, the St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Orthodox Church was erected, next to which there was a Russian gymnasium<sup>40</sup>.



3. Illustration from a book by Nikolai Petrov, depicting the church in Zamość. Photofrom: N. Pietrow, *Chołmskaja Rus'. Istoriczeskije sud'by russkogo Zabużja*, Pietierburg 1887, p. 191

The issue of the existence of three Orthodox churches relating to the traditions of the demolished temple, where the history of ecclesiastical union began, has not been more widely addressed so far.

The Zamość church was often reproduced on postcards and in Russian books telling the history of “Western Rus’”. Among others, it was included in the first such comprehensive publication on this area, namely the book by Nikolai Petrov, published in 1887, under the title *Kholmshchynian Rus'. The Historical Fate of Zabuzhan Rus'* [Fig. 3]. This is one of the most important books on Chełm Land and its fate in Russian perspective. The publication presents the history of the entire territory of Chełm Land through a national-religious and political prism, showing the area as a place of constant struggle for Ruthenian, i.e. Orthodox, identity against Polish cultural nationalism. Petrov writes about Polish expansion destroying the ancient





<sup>41</sup> The choice of quotations seems not coincidental. The passage from the *Gospel* that speaks of the Truth was meant to be a justification for Russian actions in the area. It is a quotation from Christ's conversation with Nicodemus, a Pharisee whose name, which seems not incidental, means in Greek "the one who has gained victory over the people". The victor here is to be Russia, which leads the people towards the light, that is, the Truth and Christ. The second quotation is from a narrative poem written by Pushkin. The story of the work is set in Kievan Rus' and concerns the daughter of Vladimir the Great – the baptiser of Rus' and common father to all Rus' peoples. The author of the poem was also an acrimonious Polishophobe who regarded contacts with Poland as a string of eternal conflicts destroying the very core of Russian statehood. See N. I. Pietrow, *Chołmskaja Rus'. Istoriceskije sud'by Russkogo zabużja*, Pietierburg 1887, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibidem*, p. 193.

<sup>43</sup> The Russians were keen to exploit to the episode of the siege of Zamość by Khmelnytsky's army. They promoted the story about the local peasants waiting for the Cossacks to liberate them from the *szlachta* rule and religious oppression. There is a well-known tale, especially in Ukrainian and Russian historiography, of a pogrom against the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages as retaliation for helping the Cossacks during the siege of Zamość. According to these accounts, all suburbs were burnt down by order of the Zamoyskis, the local population was murdered, and the so-called Masurians were brought in from Masovia in their place. The high percentage of Latin Catholics living in the Ordinance in the 19th c. was explained by this fact. This story is not confirmed by any historical sources. See A. Rieszetiłowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 309; P. N. Batuszkow, *Pamiętniki ruskiej stariny w zachodnich guberniach. Chołmskaja Rus'. Albom*, Pietierburg 1885, p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> *Pamiętniki ruskiej stariny w zachodnich guberniach. Chołmskaja Rus'. Prodożenije*, Pietierburg 1885, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> The last visitation to the church took place on 12 February 1771, and the only description of the church has survived. It was a wooden, tripartite building (porch, nave, chancel) without a dome, covered by a gable roof with a single-axis façade. There were three altars in the interior and a bell tower stood next to the temple. Its appearance was quite modest, but it possessed valuable furnishings. See State Archive in Lublin, Chełm Greco-Catholic Consistory, ref. 112, pp. 57–58.

<sup>46</sup> See *Chudożestwienno-fotograficeskij albom drevnostej i pamiatnikow prawosławia Chołmsko-Podlażskoj Rusi*, Pietierburg 1891.

Ruthenian lands, which have also been forgotten in the Russian consciousness. The book is prefaced with eloquent quotations from the Gospel according to St. John (Christ's conversation with Nicodemus): "But he who follows the truth pursues the light", and a passage from Alexander Pushkin's poem *Ruslan and Lyudmila*: "There the Russian spirit... there Russia smells!"<sup>41</sup>. The book is generously illustrated, with pictures depicting monuments from the entire area described, as well as the Zamość church and a description of the Synod of Zamość, which took place within its interiors<sup>42</sup>. In addition, the Russian reader is also shown, as a curiosity, the general appearance of the interior of the Uniate church, whose specific decoration was treated as a religious profanation and a peculiarity.

An illustration depicting St. Nicholas Church was also included in the popular eight-volume series of albums *Memorabilia of the Russian Lands in the Western Gubernias*. The eighth volume, titled: *Kholmshchynian Rus'*, depicts the Zamość temple and the figure of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who, according to the Russian narrative, was greeted with joy by the local population during his march on Zamość<sup>43</sup>. It also features the hetman's axe with St. Michael the Archangel and the words:

At Zamość, I Bogdan Chmielnicki at [the head of] eighty thousand Cossacks will play to the Lachs, Jews and priest-supestates, with this bardic axe on their thick Cossack necks. Year 1648 of the month of November, day 11<sup>44</sup> [Fig. 4].

The same album also shows a new iconostasis with a fragment of the Tsar's gate depicting a two-headed eagle from the coat of arms of the Russian Empire [Fig. 5].

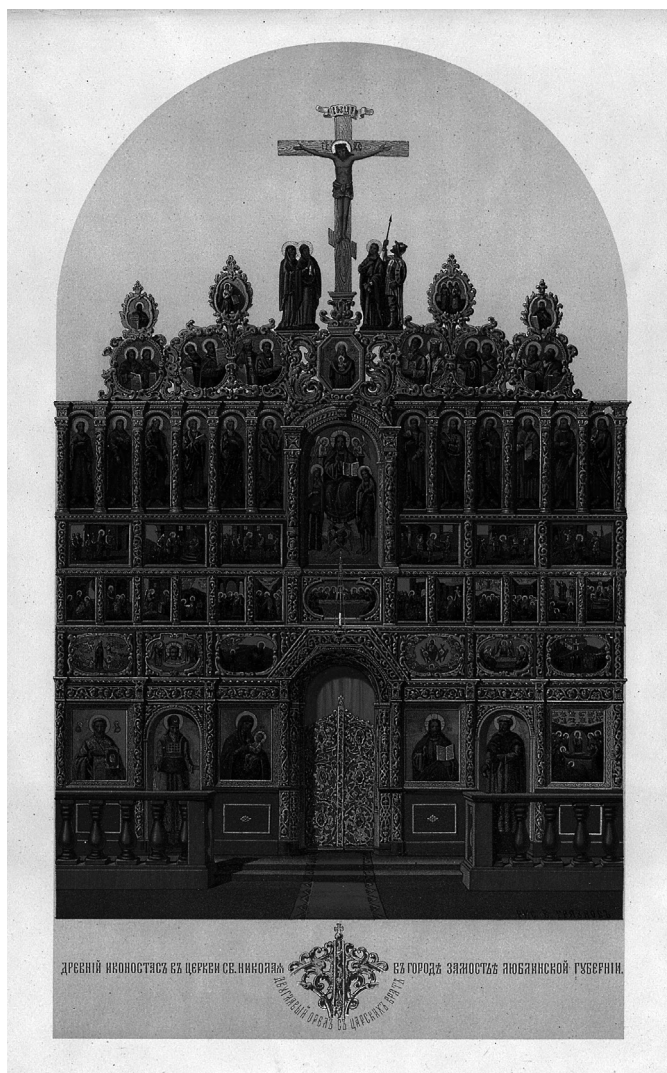
In 1891, it was also included in the *Artistic and Photographic Album of Monuments and Memorabilia of the Orthodox Chełm-Podlachian Rus'*, where its appearance from the south is depicted [Fig. 6], as well as photographs of its furnishings: pictures of the iconostasis, the Tsarist Gate and the only surviving representation of what is most likely the cross donated by Jeremiah II [Fig. 7] and an icon signed as: "Temple icon from the Church of the Ascension in Zamość, now no longer existing" [Fig. 8]. Both mementos were brought to the St. Nicholas Church from a temple in the suburbs, which was eventually demolished in 1771<sup>45</sup>. Also in the same album are photographs of a page from the *Gospel* manuscript and a photograph of *Bishop Gedeon Balaban's blessed gramota*, both documents from the suburban church<sup>46</sup>. This is significant from the point of view of Russian propaganda: the Church of the Ascension was a tangible reminder of the city's oldest Orthodox history, and its incorporation into the Union was still regarded as a continuity of Ruthenian tradition in the area and a confirmation of Orthodox influence. Greek Catholics were not regarded as enemies, but as lost believers in orthodoxy who



4. Illustration from the book *Memorabilia of the Russian Land in the Western Gubernias*, depicting the church in Zamość, Bohdan Khmelnytsky and his legendary axe. Photo from: [https://fotopolska.eu/Zamosc/b24287,Kosciol\\_sw\\_Mikolaja.html?f=858829-foto](https://fotopolska.eu/Zamosc/b24287,Kosciol_sw_Mikolaja.html?f=858829-foto) (access date: 4.05.2022)



5. Illustration from the book *Memo-  
rabilia of the Russian Land in West-  
ern Gubernias*, depicting the new ico-  
nostasis from the church in Zamość.  
Photo from: [https://fotopolska.eu/  
Zamosc/b24287,Kosciol\\_sw\\_Mikola-  
ja.html?f=858831-foto](https://fotopolska.eu/Zamosc/b24287,Kosciol_sw_Mikola-<br/>ja.html?f=858831-foto) (access date:  
4.05.2022)



<sup>47</sup> A. W. Łonginow, *Czerwienskije goroda: Istoriceskijoczerk w swiazi s etnografiej i topografiej Czerwonnoj Rusi*, Warszawa 1885, pp. 206–207.

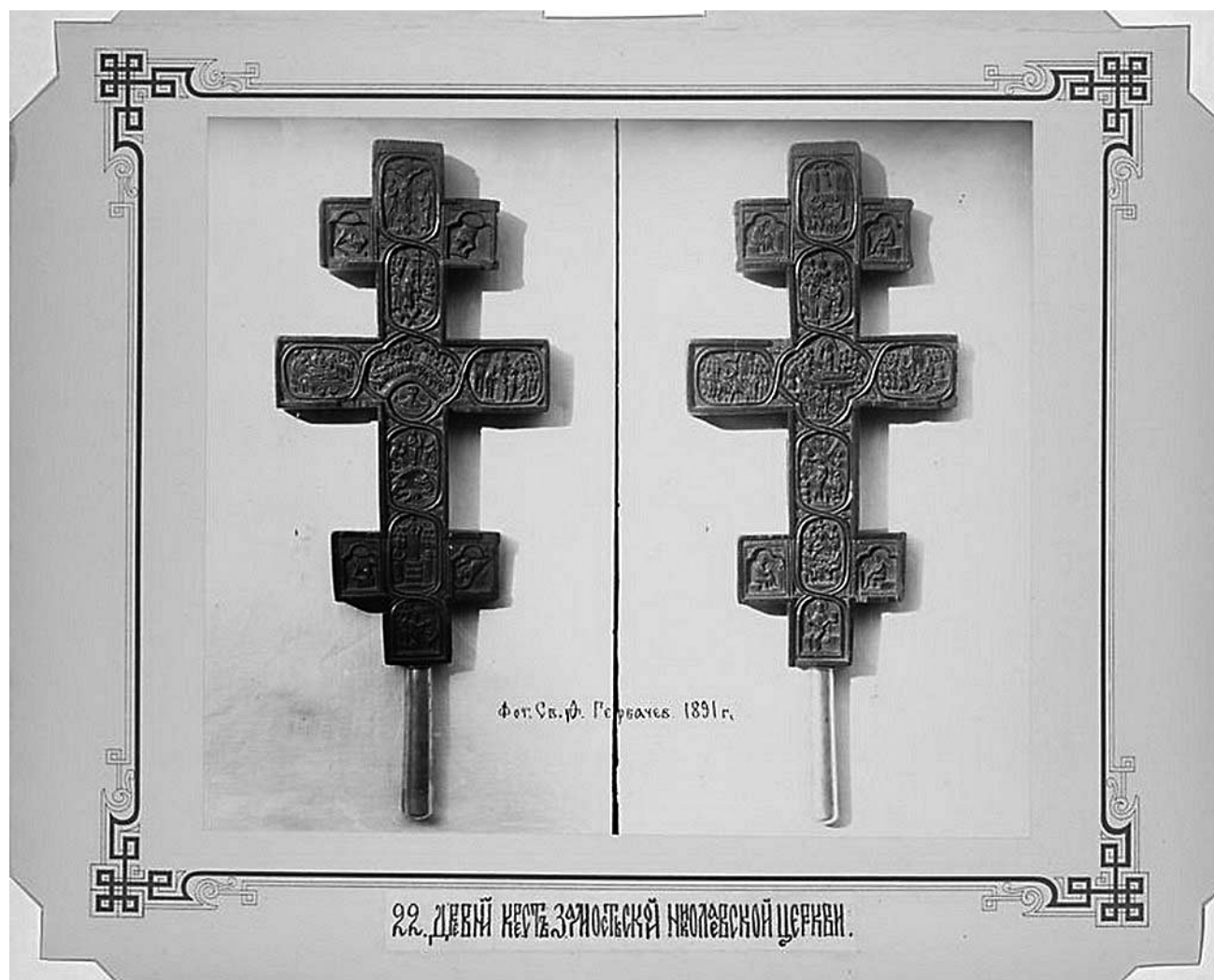
had been forced to latinise and renounce their ancestral faith. The Union was a continuation of Orthodoxy, but in different political realities and in a heretical, according to the Russians, garb.

The Russians needed to legitimise their right to the town, which had been founded by a Polish magnate, so they thoroughly researched the history of the Orthodox Church in the town, and the author of this monograph was the aforementioned Budiłowicz, who in 1885 published a book called *The History of the Russian Orthodox Church in Zamość*, where he presented the history of the town, the region and the Orthodox Church from a Russian perspective. He also devoted a great deal of space to the history of the Zamość temple. In the same year Arkady Longinov published a book titled *The Cherven Gords: a historical sketch related to the ethnography and topography of Red Ruthenia*, in which he describes the history of towns, including Zamość<sup>47</sup>. He dedicates quite a lot of space to this town, showing its history also through the prism of its founder. He sees the found-



6. Photo of St. Nicholas Church from *Artistic and Photographic Album of Monuments and Memorabilia of the Orthodox Chełm-Podlasiian Rus*. Photo from: <http://andcvet.narod.ru/XD/asd20.html> (access date: 4.05.2022)





7. Photo of the cross most likely donated to the Church of the Ascension by Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople. Photo from: <http://andcvet.narod.ru/XD/asd24.html> (access date: 4.05.2022)

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, pp. 210–212.

ing of the town as an important turning point in the history of the area, ultimately determining the end of the Rus' primacy. The author shows Zamoyski as a man zealously promoting the Latin faith, especially in the areas of his *ordinacja*. He accuses him of not sufficiently noticing the Ruthenians, whom he is said to have overlooked, e.g. in the statutes he issued, while the siege of the town by Cossacks showed that Zamość was a Polish stronghold, but one which stood in the midst of the Ruthenian community which welcomed the Cossack hetman as a liberator<sup>48</sup>. He devotes much attention to the Zamość temple and the surviving registers, which, according to him, confirm the predominance of the Orthodox population around the town.



8. Photo of an icon from the Church of the Ascension. Photo from: <http://and-cvet.narod.ru/XD/asd25.html> (access date: 4.05.2022)

## Epilogue

The Zamość church survived the time of the First World War, the occupation forces taking it over from the fleeing Russians in 1915. The building was not used and stood abandoned until the autumn of 1918, when the shrine, with the support of the Magistrate, was handed over to the prefect of Zamość secondary schools, Rev. Stefan Jerin<sup>49</sup>. On 20 October 1918, the building was reconsecrated. It was the first building in the town to undergo renovation work, as early as 1918, with the aim of making the temple similar to its pre-1864 appearance. The work was led by Zamość-based architect Edward Kranz. It was not decided to replace the helmet on the tower, but only to paint it. Relatively little is known about the alterations carried out at that time. Remnants of the Orthodox church were removed from the interior and the church was adapted for Roman Catholic worship.



<sup>49</sup> See P. J. Zieliński, *Zamość w latach 1914–1918. Renesans miasta*, Krasnystaw 2009, pp. 50–51.



<sup>50</sup> A. Makowski, *80 lat redemptorystów w Zamościu (1934–2014)*, "Studia Redemptorystowskie" Vol. 12 (2014), pp. 372–375.

<sup>51</sup> See R. Torzecki, *Polacy i Ukraińcy. Sprawa ukraińska w czasie II wojny światowej na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 49–50.

<sup>52</sup> See A. Sławek, *25 lat pobytu Redemptorystów w Zamościu*, "Nasze Wiadomości" 1959, No. 3, pp. 23–24.

The building was repainted and the portal added by the Russians was removed. The church became a place of rivalry. The legacy of the church was claimed by Orthodox Ukrainians. In the face of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict over the Chełm Land in February 1918, the most important change seems to have been the new Polish name for the temple. St. Stanislaus Kostka, a Jesuit and patron saint of youth, was chosen as the patron saint. Ostensibly, he was not such a controversial figure for Catholic-Orthodox relations as, for example, St. Andrew Bobola, but in the Polish consciousness he was not just a nobleman and monk living in the 16th century. The cult of St. Stanislaus Kostka combined several important aspects. For centuries, he had been regarded as the patron of the Polish cause in the eastern borderlands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He was said to have been an intercessor during the Battle of Chocim in 1621, and to have helped in the victory of John II Casimir's army over the Cossacks at Berestechko in 1651. In the 1670s, Pope Clement X declared him the patron saint of Poland and Lithuania. The patronage of this saint was an important issue. He was supposed to take care of young people, and the Zamość temple became a school church after its reconsecration. The young generation of Zamość residents, the first in 150 years to grow up in an independent and sovereign Poland, was entrusted to his care. In 1934, the Bishop of Lublin established the Redemptorist Order in the church, which was entrusted with evangelisation missions among the rapidly growing Polish National Catholic Church movement<sup>50</sup>. In 1941, the occupation authorities handed over the temple to the Autocephalous Orthodox Church in the General Government, established in 1940, and Zamość became part of the Orthodox Diocese of Chełm and Podlachia<sup>51</sup>. Until 1944, it was a temple of a national-Ukrainian character. In August 1944, the church was returned to the Redemptorists by a verdict of the Zamość Municipal Court, confirmed the following month by the Lublin Voivodeship Governor. The execution of the verdicts dragged on due to strong resistance from the Ukrainians. When the displacement action carried out on the territory of the Lublin Voivodeship significantly reduced the number of parishioners, the Orthodox clergyman resigned and on 12 December 1944 the starost made an official transfer of the church to the Redemptorist Order<sup>52</sup>. The church was again reconsecrated and restored to its original denomination.

## Conclusion

The Russians turned the church into a kind of site of memory, which was to shape the new milieu of memory they were creating – by introducing Orthodoxy, the Russian language, The Russian press, books and even traditions, they wanted to form a new Russian citizen





of these lands. The church in Zamość was a kind of symbol, a new tradition of a place with a double meaning. On the one hand, it was meant to accentuate the victory of the Orthodox faith over Catholicism and the Union, to build the bond of the new Ruthenian citizen of Chełm Land with the Orthodox past. On the other hand, it was exposed in publications for the Russian-speaking, educated reader, who was also supposed to be bound by a sense of cultural unity with the “ancient Ruthenian land” polonised by the Church and the *szlachta*, which had to be restored to the heir of the Rus’ tradition, the great Russia [Fig. 9]. Publications also showed the town’s links with Russian history – the Chmielnicki Uprising, which targeted the Polish *szlachta* and forged an alliance between the Cossacks and the Russian Empire, or the oldest surviving traces of Orthodoxy in the town’s environs, i.e. memoarabilia of the temple in the suburbs. The St. Nicholas Church in Zamość was a site of memory, centred around the remembrance of the building and the events that took place in it. They were meant to tell the locals and the Russians about a past that needed to be put right.

9. Postcard from 1900 depicting a view of St. Nicholas Church and the pop’s house from the north-east. Photo from: <https://sobory.ru/photo/289659> (access date: 4.05.2022)



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#### Słowa kluczowe

Zamość, Kościół prawosławny, Rosja, ziemia chełmska, miejsce pamięci

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#### Keywords

Zamość, Orthodox church, Russia, Chełm Land, site of memory

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## Summary

### **PAULINA KORNELUK (University of Wrocław) / The former St. Nicholas Church in Zamosc as a Russian *lieu de memoire***

This article aims to show the history of the Orthodox church in Zamosc based on the concept of sites of memory developed by Pierre Nora. Zamosc's church is one of the most important yet enigmatic buildings in the town. It was built for the town's Greek and Ruthenian communities and for a good number of years was the mainstay of Orthodoxy in the region. At the beginning of the 18th c., it was taken over by the Basilian Order, and in its interiors the statutes of the Synod of Zamosc were signed, which significantly led to the unification of the Latin Church and the Uniate Orthodox Church and the widespread Latinisation of the Eastern Rite. During the Partition period, this church was subjected to ideologisation by the Russians. For them, it was a symbol of disgrace and heresy, just like St. Nicholas' Church in Brest, where the act of the Union of Brest was signed. The Russians did everything to reverse the memory of the synod and to make the church a new place of consolidation for the local population, as well as for the elites in Russia, who were shown Zamosc and the Chelm Land, of which it was a part, as the eternal part of the Ruthenian lands. The Zamosc Orthodox Church appeared in books, albums and postcards. It was intended both to build communion with Russia and to create a "new Rus" citizen of the Chelm Land.