Paul Werth, *Pravoslavie, inoslavie, inoverie: ocherki po istorii religioznogo raznoobraziia Rossiiskoi imperii* [Paul Werth, *Православие, инославие, иноверие: очерки по истории религиозного разнообразия Российской империи*], Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012, 280 p. ISBN 978-5-86793-956-4

A publishing house well-known to those interested in the history of the Russian Empire has issued another study in the series *Historia Rossica* by a well-known author of historical essays that fits well among the other published investigations of 19th-century history published in this series. The book is devoted to an analysis of confessional management in the Russian Empire (p. 5), one of the most essential problems in the functioning of the empire. The books from this publishing house both show as well as shape trends in historiography. In the context of the attitude towards the Russian Empire as a phenomenon, constantly being reformed, Werth's investigations interest me also because of their wide geography, the author's discussional position, and his observation of details, and features in processes. Showing the content of the reforms and their potential, sometimes only the declarative nature of the reforms, there is an inconsistency in the legal situation and the actual functioning of the juridical acts.

Paul W. Werth, summarises nearly 20 years of research to present some of his articles (mostly published in English in 1997, 2006, 2007 and 2008; one article was published in the Russian language (p. 205, footnote 3; in their detailed bibliographical references, p. 262). All the articles are connected with problems of relations between the Orthodox Church, the Imperial government, and other Christian and non-Christian religious communities in the multi-confessional Russian Empire in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the Introduction (pp. 5–13), the author shows convincingly how and why individual articles 'become' essays, i.e. how several studies are grouped into broader problems. They reflect the titles of parts of the book (in order to avoid inaccuracies, I will provide them from now in the original language). By the way, the author does not comment on why he left his later studies on the sidelines¹, which, I think, would have

¹ P.W. Werth, 'Inorodsy on Obrusenije: Religious Conversion, Indigenous Clergy, and the Politics of Assimilation in Late-Imperial Russia', *Ab Imperio* 2000, t. 2, pp. 105–134; P.W. Werth, 'The Institutionalization of Confessional Difference. Foreign Confession in Imperial Russia, 1810–1857', *Defining Self. Essays on Emergent Identities in Russia Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. by Michael Branch,

successfully supplemented and consistently fitted in with the structure of these essays. He points out some such studies (p. 205, footnote 6).

In the Introduction (as well as the beginning of the book's chapters), the author presents the historiography and comments on it (including information in the footnotes, which are as interesting to read as the text), which allows one to see that the studies are arranged in the broad global historiographical context. I think that, in addition to those already mentioned, the publication by Mikhail Dolbilov and Darius Staliūnas would also fit perfectly², all the more so as they also show later investigations, and not only those that functioned during the preparation of the articles.

Nevertheless, the author admits that much more research is needed to obtain a full understanding of the importance of religion in the functioning of the empire (p. 6). According to the author, in addition to studies analysing significant aspects of the history of the empire, attention is directed less often to *religious* diversity, spiritual institutes and the propensity of the tsarist government to manage the lives of Russia's subjects on the basis of their religious affiliation (p. 5). In three parts and their seven sections, these problems are specified.

The *first part* 'The Walls between the Faiths and their Intersections' has two sections: 'Baptism, Authority and the Problem of Zakonnost'. Baptism of Eight Hundred Pagans' (pp. 17–42); and 'Arbitrators of Freedom of Conscience: Confessional Identity and the Change of Belief in Russia (1905–1917)' (pp. 43–64).

The *second part* 'Ethnic Diversity of Orthodoxy' also has two sections: 'Georgian Autocephaly and the Ethnic Fragmentation of Orthodoxy' (pp. 67–92); and 'From 'Pagan' Muslims to 'Baptized' Communists: Religious Conversion and Ethnic Particularity in Russia's Eastern Provinces' (pp. 93–116).

The *third part* 'The Confessional Dimension of the Empire's Management' accommodates chapters 5–7. Chapter 5: 'In the State's Embrace? Civil Acts in an Imperial Order' (pp. 119–142). Chapter 6: 'Sacrament, Law and Imperial policies: the Legal Regulation of 'Mixed' Marriages in Russia' (pp. 143–175). Chapter 7: 'Head of the Church, the Subject of the Emperor: the Catholics of the Armenians at the Intersection of the Empire's Interior and Foreign Policy in 1828–1914' (pp. 176–204).

The mere mention of the titles of the chapters indicates the extensive geography and chronology of the research, while the articles themselves indicate the long-term and consistent work of the author, and the synthesis of material collected in the archives of more than one state.

Studia Fennica, Ethnologia 10, Helsinki, 2009, pp. 152–172; P.W. Werth, 'Soslovie and the „Foreign“ Clergies of Imperial Russia. Estate Rights or Service Rights?' *Cahiers du monde russe*, 2010/2 vol. 51, pp. 419–440.

² M. Dolbilov, D. Staliūnas, *Obratnaia uniia: iz istorii otnoshenii mezhdru katolitsizmom i pravoslaviem v Rossiiskoi imperii 1840–1873* (Vilnius, 2010).

In the first part, while analysing the story of the baptism of the Mari, Finno-Ugric people that lived in the Kazan and Vyatka provinces, or more exactly the baptism of some of them, attention is directed to how a confession (namely Orthodoxy) becomes, or is used as, a means for the state to tame individuals, to show authority, to make them *more* subjects (more information on p. 37. I think that this topic partially extends also the subsequently examined stories of the baptised Tartars [Chapter four]).

Confessional identification problems which the Empire encountered after the proclaimed manifesto in 1905 on freedom of conscience are analysed in the second chapter. It is shown that, even when proclaiming the reforms, manifesto after manifesto, the state still wanted to remain the final arbiter of questions of confessional status, and was deeply involved in the religious affairs of its subjects (pp. 45, 62), evaluating religion as a guarantor of social stability in society (p. 62). This position caused tension with the newly emerging identification of the subjects with an ethnic rather than a confessional parameter (p. 63). By the way, in this part at times the unauthorised delivery or evaluation was a hindrance.

In the second part (Chapter 3, p. 69), the author aims to analyse how nationalist statements were manifested in the specific context of the Church where, in the framework of Holy Scripture and tradition, national policies were being carried out, even if the latter discourse was obeyed. But in the context of the 19th and early 20th century, the more than once used concept of ecumenism could be explained in more detail.

The fourth chapter deals not only with the destructive, but also, from the point of view of culture, the productive role of Imperial government in creating new identities (pp. 93–94). How, for the specific process being analysed by the author, the maintenance of religious discipline with the help of laws and the missionary activity of Nicholas Ilminsky in the Volga region, are significant conditions. Ilminsky saw the patronage of local languages, the use of Cyrillic in local languages, and the training of clergy from the local inhabitants as measures maintaining Tartars who accepted Orthodoxy, protecting them from Islamisation.

For the missionary Ilminsky, Christian values, or what is acquired by baptising the Tartars, seemed more important than the medium, the language, and he did not seek the dominance of the Russian language in this process (p. 101). The use of local languages with Cyrillic characters ensured the better transmission of the Gospel.

Werth shows that missionary activities and confessional policies are not the same thing, that such a non-repressive posture was not characteristic of other government representatives, not becoming too deeply interested in the characteristics of missionary activities and holding Russification as the goal of the policies in the region (p. 107).

In the third part, the author implements his aim to show that the secular order of the Russian Empire was based on confessional grounds,

how deeply the Church as an institution, and the clergy as officials, participated in ensuring the functioning of the state.

In Chapter Six, in analysing the approach of the authorities to 'mixed' marriages in the Baltic and Western Region provinces, the author highlights the problem of divergence in the positions of central and local government, the approach to the functioning of juridical acts, and the power of administrative instructions, sometimes priority over the law (by the way, in Chapter 1, p. 35, a situation is fixed where police penalties are more acceptable than juridical prosecution).

These are only a few episodes for which it is worth reading the essays carefully. The poly-confessional view of the Empire presented in them comments directly on problems not addressed in this book. This is a big advantage.

One can state that, in research in general, the historiographical position of Robert Crews (2003)³ about the Russian Empire as a confessional state is not forgotten, and with the research of P. Werth gained a clearer picture, despite the author's insight that there is a need for many investigations to obtain a full understanding of the value of religion for the functioning of the Empire (p. 6).

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³ Robert Crews, 'Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia', *American Historical Review*, 2003, vol. 108, no. 1, pp. 50–83.