

New Perspectives on Ukraine's Eighteenth Century

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Review of: Zenon E. Kohut, Volodymyr Sklokin, and Frank E. Sysyn, with Larysa Bilous, eds., *Eighteenth-Century Ukraine: New Perspectives on Social, Cultural and Intellectual History*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press and Edmonton & Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2023. xxii + 648 p. ISBN: 978-0-2280-1699-1.

This volume celebrates Ukraine's entrance into the Eighteenth-Century Studies family and the achievements in this field by historians of Ukraine over the past two decades. As editors Zenon Kohut, Volodymyr Sklokin and Frank Sysyn attest, "eighteenth-century students have demonstrated a steady quantitative and qualitative growth over the last fifteen years that have turned the period into one of the most dynamic and innovative fields in Ukrainian history writing." (3) Corresponding to general trends in the field of eighteenth-century studies, this volume particularly reflects influences from the new cultural history, incorporating new sources and topics that more tightly bind the long eighteenth century into the post-1991 Ukrainian historical exploration of the origins of a separate Ukrainian identity, culture, and values.

The twenty-three articles in this anthology derive from the 2017 inaugural conference of the Ukrainian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Critically, fifteen of the articles published here have been translated from Ukrainian, thus acquainting readers with scholarship that has been locked behind linguistic boundaries to many outside Ukraine. Translator Marta Skorupsky (who also translated two originally Russian-language articles in this volume) did a masterful job to produce a final product that impresses with its fluidity and terminological consistency. This is a rare gift to the English-reading scholarly world. In these days of constricted page limits in publications and sparse editorial corrections for consistency, this book is a breath of fresh air. The authors have also been given ample space for substantial and informative endnotes.

The editors have organized the volume into four thematic parts: "Cossack Autonomies and their Demise" (7 articles); "Society, Economy, and Demographics" (6 articles); "Church Culture, and Education" (4 articles); and "Political and Historical Thought" (6 articles). Chronologically the articles represent the "long" eighteenth century that spans roughly from the 1680s to the 1830s. In terms of geographic focus, the articles center on Left-Bank Ukraine, particularly the territory and evolution of the Cossack Hetmanate with the city and district of Kyiv, consistent with the traditional focus of Ukrainian history. Only one article offers a focused study on Right-Bank Ukraine, a region that has rarely received substantial historical scrutiny regarding its majority Ukrainian population. Although almost all of these articles have been published elsewhere, bringing

them together into one volume and all in English for a wider audience gives them additional impact as a corpus of studies in conversation with each other.

Also consistent throughout the scholarship represented here is a careful dissection of both published and unpublished primary sources – the latter predominantly from Ukrainian archival collections, but also from Russian archives that are currently no longer accessible to Ukrainians. For scholars of Russian imperial history on other frontiers, these sources open new vistas on the center/periphery relationship, as well as on local means of social and political organization inside the strictures of the Russian state, regional representations of the intellectual trends of the period, and shifting waves of internal and external identity creation.

For a collection of twenty-three articles, I cannot do justice to them all. Instead, I will comment more extensively on a few articles from each part of the book in order to present the innovative approaches to the history represented here, particularly emphasizing the work of younger scholars and those who generally publish only in Ukrainian. The title of Part One – “Cossack Autonomies and Their Demise” – is broadly applied, as this section includes not only a study of the abolition of Sloboda Ukraine autonomy, but also fascinating studies of cartography, toponymic and ethnonymic terminology for Ukraine, the discovery of ancient Kyiv through archeological digs, border and disease control, the new social class of imperial administrators in Steppe Ukraine, and Ukrainian loyalties during the Napoleonic wars. The article on cartography by Kyrylo Halushko initiates this volume with an overview of how various representations of “Ukraine” appeared on European maps in the early modern period. The creation of the Cossack polity in the late seventeenth century resonated with European cartographers, and by the eighteenth century, West European maps clearly identified the region of Ukraine with the Cossacks. At the same time the Russians were beginning to remove Ukraine from their maps of the region, a trend that Halushko calls “cartographic propaganda.” (47) The seventeenth-century division of Ukraine along the Dnipro River was not firmly established in Western maps until the 1750s, and after the partitions of Poland-Lithuania, with Poland now a “former state,” Ukraine began to disappear from maps across the continent (49). Turning to the impact of border policy and infrastructure on the Ukrainian periphery, Oksana Mykhed traces imperial reactions when the 1770-1771 bubonic plague entered the porous border from Polish Ukraine to the Left Bank and to Kyiv. Imperial efforts to provide border security and to create quarantine stations led to further reforms in Left-Bank Ukraine to integrate the region more closely to the imperial center in terms of administration and public health. Construction of large quarantine and customs stations on the border during the threat of this wave of plague also raised significant revenue for the Russian state.

The six articles in Part Two, “Society, Economy, and Demographics” – all translated from Ukrainian – are more focused on characteristics and developments within Cossack military, administrative, and social structures as the regions of the Hetmanate, Zaporizhia, and Sloboda Ukraine were further integrated into the Russian Empire. Archival documents form the basis for this research that includes the contradiction between the hetman’s authority and the rights to elect Cossack colonels, the military reforms that integrated the

Cossack regiments into the Russian forces during the Seven-Years' War, the Reiter detachment installed in Kyiv to serve as couriers linking this corner of the empire to Istanbul and other neighboring states, the use of family and ancestry for social status within the Cossack regiments, the function and demographics of regimental cities, and a detailed demographic study of the city of Poltava in the 1760s and 1770s. Vadym Nazarenko's article on the Reiter detachments stationed in Kyiv (a phenomenon in all the largest cities of the Hetmanate) notes the caste-like detachment of these Russian troops that "constituted a separate world, with distinct ethnocultural and social characteristics" in the city (277). After a thorough analysis of the social background, literacy, ranks, and salaries of these troops, who were escorted by Cossacks to the Ottoman border or to other destinations, Nazarenko concludes, "The existence of the Reiter detachment in Kyiv is evidence of the fact that the Russian government's unificatory measures were not always systematic in nature, even in the case of the army. The need to adapt to local conditions necessitated creating separate service corporations for specific tasks," which, overall "contradicted the very logic of unification." (291)

In another consideration of imperial integration, Volodymyr Masliychuk discusses the tradition of family ties in determining the status of Cossack officers in Sloboda Ukraine, claiming that "the main basis for reaching the top rungs of the social ladder in the Sloboda regiments [in the early eighteenth century] was the service of the ancestor and father..." as featured in "petitions, reports, requests and appeals." (306-7) However, in eighteenth-century Russia patronage became more important than family in determining noble status, so that in Ukraine clan ties weakened as the Cossack elites adapted to the Russian imperial system. Thus, Cossack officers' own actions to benefit themselves in the new Russian reality undermined their traditional system of social cohesion. Masliychuk concludes that "the ambiguousness of the evolution of social microstructures on the frontier" represent "the challenges in the treatments of Ukrainian history" overall (316).

Part Three on "Church, Culture, and Education" contains four articles, two of which study changes in the curriculum at the Kyiv Academy and the Orthodox Colleges in Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Periaslav as they moved from Jesuit curricular models to the eighteenth-century standards of philosophy based on Wolffian philosophical content and the classical university curriculum on the model of German universities. The other two articles highlight regional specificity in religious practice. Maksym Iaremenko traces the lack of homogeneity between liturgical books used in the Kyiv Metropolitanate that were produced at the Kyiv Caves Monastery press and those printed in the Russian Holy Synod presses. These discrepancies lasted until the 1780s, a full century after Kyiv became subordinate to the Synod. There was no Synodal oversight until the 1760s, and even then the Caves Monastery – with assistance from its lobbyists in St. Petersburg and Moscow – continued to publish texts that the local Ukrainian population wanted. Featuring commemoration of local saints and insertion of Ukrainian words and orthography, "the discrepancies in the Cave Monastery publications precisely involved those elements that form a distinctive religious culture, its unique memories that are different from those of its neighbors, and, consequently, its local identity." (401) Finally, Ihor Skochylias, whom we have sadly lost due to COVID-19, takes us to the the Kyiv and Bratslav palatinates in Right-Bank Ukraine to explain how the Uniate Church became dominant there by the 1750s.

Rejecting the coercion elaborated in published Russian sources, Skochylas argues that regional identity and "territoriality" led to loyalties to the local priest and hierarchy regardless of whether Orthodox or Uniate (426). He argues that in this region, the confessionalization of the Uniate faith – the codification of religious instruction and rite and "disciplining" via episcopal visitations and clerical councils – was incomplete due to contested subordination here between the Uniate bishop of Lviv and the metropolitan in Kyiv. Instead, the formation of a regional model of *Slavia-Unita*, "a new cultural and religious identity of Ruthenian Uniates in Right-Bank Ukraine" sought "an elastic balance between the Catholic 'face' of the Kyiv archeparchy and its Slavic-Byzantine heritage." (433) This territorial identity could explain the rapid conversion in this region to Orthodoxy in the 1790s.

Part Four, "Political and Historical Thought," features known names in Western scholarship of the early modern period– Frank Sysyn, Zenon Kohut, Gary Marker, and Serhii Plokhyy (albeit in his case, translated from a Ukrainian publication) – in a contrapuntal discussion of concepts of "fatherland," Ukrainian nation and identity, and constitutional political language. Added to this discussion is a name we should also know more widely, Natalia Iakovenko, whose virtuoso analysis of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century texts uncovers the particularly Ukrainian meaning of "just" rule, sovereign authority, and Cossack "democracy" within contemporary chronicles, panegyrics, sermons, verses and other texts to parse out distinctions from both Russian and Polish-Lithuanian meanings of these concepts. She concludes that they "use the same rhetorical clichés, but when the contexts are compared more carefully, it becomes obvious that different meanings are hidden behind the customary vocabulary." (520) Finally, Andrii Bovgyria delves into Hetmanate chronicles and texts to assess major markers of Ukrainian identity: the creation of the myth of Khazar origins for Cossacks similar to Polish Sarmatianism; three perceptions of the Cossacks' "own" land– "the ancestral home, the ideal territory, and the real-life space" (602); heroes and antiheroes; and perceptions of "others," namely Russians, Poles, Jews, and Muslims. Bovgyria finds nuances behind the stereotypes. Cossacks distinguished between Poles (especially their perceived enemy of the nobility and magnates) and Poland, the legitimate state and source of guarantees of Cossack rights and liberties. Likewise, the Russian monarch was also held in a positive light as an Orthodox monarch who became the guarantor of their rights and liberties, in contrast to a negative view of Russian state officials.

These articles and this collected volume were in production well ahead of the massive Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022, the ensuing war, and Vladimir Putin's stunning refutation of Ukraine's right to exist as an independent state. However, this horrific current situation provides all the more immediacy and importance to the work of Ukrainian scholars who have painstakingly analyzed the documents and sources to produce new insights into the fundamentally distinctive culture in eighteenth-century Ukraine that did not easily adapt to the unification policies of the Russian Empire. Those of us who study Ukraine have long known this, but hopefully this volume will help shed more light on the unique Ukrainian historical experience to those less familiar with it. And for those who have long studied Ukraine, there is much new here to pore over. The field of

eighteenth-century studies is very fortunate to have this compilation of scholarship on the Ukrainian experience of the long eighteenth century, particularly given the quality translation of Ukrainian-language articles. Overall, this volume provides valuable insights on the tenacity of independent identity under imperial conditions, as well as the region's ease with Western intellectual norms, showing Ukraine as a critical case study in the Russian Empire and a unique component of Eastern Europe and of Europe as a whole.