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Frank Sysyn, Volodymyr Sklokin, Zenon E. Kohut, and Larysa Bilous (Eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Ukraine: New Perspectives on Social, Cultural, and Intellectual History* (Montreal, Edmonton: McGill-Queen's University Press and the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2023). 648 pp., ill. Index. ISBN: 978-0-2280-1699-1.

This timely volume features recent trends in the historiography of eighteenth-century Ukraine. The distinguished editors bring together twenty specialists (mostly in English translation) in a state-of-the-subject compendium on military and political history, society and identity, religion and culture, demographics and disease. The collection stirs debate about the periodization (deemed

“always provisional”) of this pivotal moment in Eurasian history and provides new perspectives for the comparative study of empire generally. Sharply argued and often innovative, these studies suggest that the time is right for a comprehensive synthesis of early modern Ukrainian history.<sup>1</sup>

In the introduction, the editors review the topics and sources engaging researchers of eighteenth-century Ukraine, especially since the end of the Soviet Union. Highlighting recent advances in scholarship, they divide the book into four parts: “Cossack Autonomies and Their Demise,” “Society, Economy, and Demographics,” “Church, Culture, and Education,” and “Political and Historical Thought,” each containing several concise, well-documented chapters.

Geographic knowledge of the Eurasian steppe expanded with the clash of empires and resulted

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of recent historical writing, see Iryna Vushko. *Historians at War: History, Politics and Memory in Ukraine // Contemporary European History*. 2018. Vol. 27. No. 1. Pp. 112–124. For an earlier, companion volume to the one under review, see Peter J. Potichnyi et al. (Eds.). *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*. Edmonton, 1991.

in the production of maps. Kyrylo Halushko begins the volume with an expert summary of the cartographic work done by travelers who helped situate “the country of the Cossacks” as a politonym on maps of Europe. Maps served as tools of administrative integration, propaganda and legitimacy, and the next chapter, by Volodymyr Kravchenko, explores the “peculiar East-Slavic terminological labyrinth” (P. 58) that constitutes the symbolic geography of the Russian empire. Kravchenko demonstrates the fluidity and instability that characterize both Ukrainian self-identity and the place of Ukraine on the mental maps of educated Russians. As the Russian state advanced, the elite sought symbols to adorn its edifice. Oleksii Tolochko reports on the discovery of Kyiv as a center of archaeological pilgrimage (dubbed both the “Russian Jerusalem” and the “Slavic Pompeii”) and historical consciousness among the people of “Rus’,” “Great Russia,” “New Russia,” “Little Russia,” and “Ukraine.”

Empire-building required Empress Catherine II to innovate when dealing with the Sloboda and those in charge of it. Volodymyr Sklokin charts the activity of Evdokim Shcherbinin, the leader of an “enlightened” commission that portrayed the abolition of Ukraine’s autonomy as a civilizing act. Shcherbinin employed rhetoric that appealed to the “people” and

sought their approval for protection from corrupt Cossack *starshyna* and clergy. The fluid movement of armies and populations during the era facilitated the spread of disease. The outbreak of bubonic plague in 1770–1771 in Kyiv provides the setting for Oksana Mykhed’s chapter on border security and medical reforms: the problems unleashed by the plague actually helped catalyze the centralization and integration of new territories and people. Although the history of bureaucracy may seem colorless, Oleksandr Pankiev draws on archival material to show how the stationing of hundreds of local officials in steppe Ukraine led to the creation of a permanent, loyal class of individuals willing to support and strengthen the Russian Empire on the ground. Vadym Adadurov concludes the first section with a contribution on Napoleon’s Russian campaign, which reveals the remarkable loyalty toward tsarist Russia (and animosity toward pro-French Poland) of the nobility and commoners of the Little Russian gubernia.

Romanticized portraits of chivalrous heroes on horseback notwithstanding, the freewheeling lifestyle of the Cossacks became legendary at this time. Hetmanate politics provides the focus of Viktor Horobets’s archival-rich chapter on the efforts of St. Petersburg to regulate the democratic traditions of the Cossack military and the complex

interplay between ordinary soldiers, townspeople, and *starshyna* during the free elections of military fellows (*tovarystvo*). Next, Oleksii Sokyрко investigates the controversial Hetmancy of Kyrylo Rozumovs'kyi, whose sweeping military reforms promoted fighting efficiency while localizing identity and incorporating officers into a Malorossian Table of Ranks. A companion piece by Vadym Nazarenko uncovers an understudied element of the process of imperial unification: the use of couriers (Reiter regiments) in the Russian military. The following chapter, by Volodymyr Maslychuk, sheds light on social status and family networks among the Cossack *starshyna*. Maslychuk argues that the emergence of a Cossack officers' stratum (or officer family-clans) facilitated the extension of Russian imperial rule. The demographics of regimental towns provides the basis for Ihor Serdiuk's descriptive chapter on the functioning of urban settlements in Left-Bank Ukraine. Drawing on the General (Rumiantsev) Census of Malorossia (1765–1769) and confessional lists of parishes (1775), Iurii Voloshyn concludes the second section with a critical report on the population distribution (ca. 7,500 people) of Poltava by age, sex, and marital status.

The third part of the volume explores the complicated confessional factor that continues to gen-

erate some of the most interesting work on early modern Ukraine. An excellent study by Maksym Iarenko reviews the book publishing industry and the Kyiv Orthodox Metropolitanate's efforts to evade the Holy Synod's regulations. Iarenko finds that the Cave Monastery Press published more or less independently into the 1780s. Ihor Skochylias follows with a careful study of the Uniate Church in Right-Bank Ukraine and the intricacies of institutional confessionalization. The subsequent chapter, by Mykola Symchych, reviews the influence of Jesuit methods on the teaching of philosophy at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Liudmyla Posokhova rounds out the section with a chapter on the syncretic nature of Orthodox colleges on Ukrainian soil.

The final section of the book begins with a stimulating essay by Natalia Iakovenko on the concepts of legitimacy and sovereignty within Cossack political culture. The subsequent piece by Frank Sysyn illustrates "how the Cossack Hetmanate had come to substitute for the [Polish-Lithuanian] Commonwealth as the fatherland [*otchyzna*] for early eighteenth-century Ukrainians" (P. 535). In the following two chapters, Zenon Kohut depicts the development of proto-national Malorussian identity, and Gary Marker discusses the political language of the 1710 constitution of Hetman Pylyp Orlyk.

Next, Serhei Plokhly reviews interpretations of Ivan Mazepa, with a focus on the writings of Teofan Prokopovych. The collection concludes with a survey by Andrii Bovgyria of Cossack historiography and some myths behind national formation.

*Eighteenth-Century Ukraine* is a launching point for many critical discussions. For starters, the military and diplomatic advantages Russia secured from the Great Northern War and the tangled mess known as the Seven Years' War had profound repercussions on Ukrainian territories. The wars devastated the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth while suppling tsarist armies with crucial experience in military equipment, leadership, and tactics. In terms of new territory, the ability of the Russian empresses to promote talent on the frontier is amazing. Time and again, magnates close to the throne assumed monumental responsibilities, delegated authority effectively to newly appointed local officials (often in extreme natural environments), and thereby succeeded in dominating the region to the shores of the Black Sea. Debates about colonization aside, the Winter Palace's state-building efforts matched and sometimes exceeded in stature those of its contemporary opponents. Fortunately for the em-

pire, Catherine II had no misgivings about inviting people from foreign lands to participate in her vision, and the significance of travelogues as historical sources in this collection deserves mention. The collection also reveals a persistent religious campaign that served tsarist forces well. Broadly, the essays display the problems of governing a frontier region without clear natural barriers during both peace and war. Although the unique "rights and liberties" of the Cossack *politeia* provided for a long period of autonomy, steppe democracy failed to resist the sheer force of the autocracy.

This collection helps us integrate Ukraine into global eighteenth-century studies.<sup>2</sup> The coalescence of Cossack traditions, religious pluralism, ethnic diversity, and international rivalry constitutes an exquisite laboratory for examining state- and nation-building as well as a wonderful vehicle to challenge the nation-state paradigm. The confusion and intricacy that makes up Ukrainian identity continues to spark debate. That is why caution is advised: dedicated to a moving frontier zone at a major historical crossroads, these essays suggest that similar problems have reemerged three centuries later. Like it or not, another cartographic redraw is upon us.

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<sup>2</sup> On global eighteenth-century studies, see the special issue: *The Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 2011. Vol. 34. No. 4: *The State of the Discipline*.