REVIEWS

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Monarchie und Diplomatie. Handlungsoptionen und Netzwerke am Hof Sigismunds III. Wasa, ed. Oliver Hegedüs and Kolja Lichy, Paderborn, 2023, Brill-Schöningh, Series: FOKUS, vol. 13, 375 pp.

The work under review constitutes the thirteenth volume in the series 'Fokus. Neue Studien zur Geschichte Polens und Ostteuropas/New Studies in Polish and Eastern European history', published under the auspices of the Berlin Centre for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The product of a joint effort by Polish and German scholars, it is comprised of an introduction, 'Einleitung: Der König hat den Hut auf. Monarchie, Hof und Außenbeziehungen in der Zeit Sigismunds III.' [The king has his hat on. Monarchy, court, and foreign relations in the time of Zygmunt III], authored by both editors, and twelve chapters, divided into four parts: 'Familienbande' [Family ties], 'Höfische Akteure' [Actors at the court], 'Diplomatie im höfischen Zeremoniell' [Diplomacy in courtly ceremonies], and 'Konfessionelle Allianzen, konfessionelle Grenzen' [Confessional alliances, confessional boundaries].

As stated in the introduction, the editors sought to provide an account of the royal court during the reign of Sigismund III Vasa as an institution that served as the fulcrum of Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy. Therefore, more room was devoted to activities and networks within the court in the area of foreign relations than to normative and legal aspects of those relations. In this, the book aligns with the new diplomatic history [*neue Diplomatiegeschichte*], as well as the contributions of historians whose research centres on modern-era royal courts. The temporal restriction to the reign of Sigismund III – which is not observed with particular consistency – stems from the fact that the volume is the product of a scholarly conference that took place in Vienna in 2019 as part of an editorial effort geared toward the publication of the correspondence that Ursula Meyer, a crucial figure in the king's circle, maintained with the courts in Graz, Munich, and Vienna. Furthermore, the editors found that research into Sigismund III and his court would enable them to combine a dynastic approach with one focused on foreign policy. The monarch consciously exploited his Jagiellonian family background while also developing ties between the Polish line of the Vasas and the ruling houses of Europe. The focus on the reign of Sigismund III helped create a coherent, though not nearly complete, portrayal of his court's role in international relations.

In addition, the book also reminds readers that, as an institution, a court served not only to fulfil the needs of monarchs and their families but also to exercise rule over the country. Thus, it is difficult to clearly demarcate the public from the private within it, as illustrated by the arduous task of distinguishing between the monarch's private income and funds collected by the state, given that the king used profits from his properties to finance diplomatic activities. From an administrative standpoint, the editors highlight the peculiar position of Sigismund III's Swedish chancellery within the system of government. The relative independence of this organ from other structures of power helped the Swedish associates of the king meet his requirements concerning foreign policy, even when it conflicted with the will of the noble estate. The king's secretaries acted not only as members of his court but also as functionaries of the chancellery, often taking on diplomatic duties at the behest of the monarch as much as of the Commonwealth itself.

Interesting observations are offered on the impact of dynastic politics on internal relations. Their aim was not only to improve the international standing of the Polish branch of the Vasas – particularly given the conflict with their Swedish kinsfolk – but also to further the establishment of a strong royalist party within the Commonwealth. Attention is also devoted to the role of diplomatic ceremonies in the relations between the Vasa court and the neighbouring powers, in which context it is highlighted that the absence of clearly specified rules of conduct in that regard necessitates an analysis of discrete cases in search of repeated patterns of action.

The authors of the introduction identified a key field of research in the relations between the king and the Sejm in the context of the conduct of diplomacy. The conclusion they reach is that, despite the legal restrictions that bound the monarch within this field, his actual position was far stronger than might appear based solely on a reading of legal acts. At the same time, they recognise the necessity of analysing the phenomenon on various levels, including that of doctrine (the question of sovereignty), law (the question of *ius legationis*), practice (the attempt to define the goals and means of the king's policy within the Sejm and without), and personnel and organisation (typology and hierarchy of diplomatic tools available to Sigismund III and the Sejm and the manner of establishing membership of legacies and the content of their briefs).

Part one opens with an article by Katrin Keller entitled 'Manische Neugier? Erzherzogin Maria von Innerösterreich in der Kommunikation zwischen Graz und Krakau' [Manic Curiosity? Archduchess Maria of Inner Austria in communication between Graz and Kraków]. The author presents the figure of Sigismund III's mother-in-law, Archduchess Maria of Bavaria, from the standpoint of her contacts – mainly in the shape of letters – with the court of Sigismund III, and especially her daughter, Queen Anna, and the queen's confessor, Sigmund Ernhofer. However, the list of Maria's correspondents was

far more extensive, including even Chancellor of the Crown Jan Zamoyski. The scholar convincingly argues that, despite the opinion of Walter Leitsch, the archduchess' passion for letter-writing was not due to possessiveness or a desire to control her family members but rather constituted a paradigmatic example of a politically active female member of a ruling dynasty. Maria of Bavaria not only solicited information but also established political support at the court in Warsaw, attempting – not unsuccessfully – to use her allies to influence the views and actions of the king and his circle. She also endeavoured to act as a mediator between Rudolph II and his brothers on the one hand and Sigismund III on the other. Especially for scholars of the early years of the reign of the Polish king, it is useful to know that the archduchess burned the correspondence between Sigismund III and Archduke Ernst of Habsburg (with whom she had exchanged letters) concerning the supposed plans on the part of the Vasa to renounce the Polish throne. Maria did so at the behest of Queen Anna, who feared the letters would negatively impact her husband's position.

Oliver Hegedüs, the author of the next article, entitled '"Wie es finster bey uns stedt, schreibt die Urschl". Die Kontakte zwischen den Höfen in München und Warschau im ersten Drittel des 17. Jahrhunderts' ['How dark it is in our city, writes our Urschl': Contacts between the courts in Munich and Warsaw in the first third of the seventeenth century], focuses on the relations between the courts in Munich and Warsaw, as seen from the perspective of letters traded by Constance of Habsburg and her courtly confidante Ursula Meyer and the members of the Bavarian court, including Dukes Wilhelm V and Maximilian I. Judging from their contents, the two courts shared interests in war and diplomacy. Through this channel, news filtered through to Munich and Warsaw about the progress of the conflict between the Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire in 1621, the conclusion of the ceasefire with the Swedes at Altmark, or the events of the Thirty Years' War. However, the correspondence was not limited to such matters; Ursula Meyer played a substantial role in the propagation of the cult of Saint Benno in Poland while also aiding in the recruitment of servants for the Warsaw court in Bavaria and in the maintenance of familial relations between the Vasas and the Wittelsbachs.

Analysing the correspondence, Hegedüs felt compelled to reflect more intently on the problem of defining the features of a diplomat at European courts in the modern era. In his view (as expressed on pp. 57–9), contemporary diplomacy consisted primarily in personal contacts and connections among various kinds of actors at the courts – not only, and not even mainly, professional diplomats. An important role was played by informal participants in international relations: many different agents, informants, merchants, scholars, soldiers, clergymen, musicians, artists, and naturally, women, all of whom became involved in the process of exchange of information and communication between rulers. According to Hegedüs, it is vital to conceptualise

diplomacy in a manner that is not too narrow – that is, limited to its formal aspect defined solely by the activities of official representatives of particular rulers – nor too broad – tending to apply the name to any form of courtly social relations that involved an international exchange. In his own practice, the author tends to define the phenomenon through any attempts to affect the decision-making processes of other state entities, such as efforts to effect the conclusion or severing of treaties and alliances. Owing to his interests, this reviewer feels somewhat unsatisfied with the fact that military matters are absent from the article. After all, if the Bavarian court sent musicians or servants to Warsaw, the question arises whether or not they were followed by professional soldiers, so vital for Sigismund III and Ladislaus IV during the war over the Vistula delta or the relief of Smolensk.

Tomasz Poznański and Ryszard Skowron devoted their article, entitled 'Dynastische epistolare Interaktion. Der Briefwechsel von Sigismund III. Wasa und seiner Familie mit dem Haus Österreich' [Dynastic epistolary interaction: Correspondence between Sigismund III and his family and the house of Austria], to the letters exchanged by Sigismund III, his wife, and his children with the members of the Habsburg dynasty. In a wide-ranging study conducted by an international research team, the participants discovered 561 letters dispatched by the Vasas and 292 addressed from the Habsburgs; it remains unclear to what degree the disproportion reflected the unequal standing of the two houses. It is beyond any doubt, however, that the royal court in Warsaw, for various reasons, pursued a lively relationship with the Habsburgs. One should note here the highly engaging discussion of the question of whether the form of the letters – especially their opening and closing sections – spoke to the mutual attitudes of the members of the House of Austria and those of the court in Warsaw.

The article by Aleksandra Barwicka-Makula, entitled 'Die Habsburger Fraktion am Hofe Sigismunds III. – Personen und Interessen' [The Habsburg faction at the court of Sigismund III: Persons and interests], initiates Part II of the monograph. Its author analyses the pro-Habsburg party at Sigismund III's court during the first decade of his reign. Of note is the diversity within this group: aside from the Catholic branch of the Radziwiłłs, headed by Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł and Grand Marshal of Lithuania Albrycht Radziwiłł, it included former allies of the Habsburgs, such as Zygmunt Wolski, opponents of Chancellor of the Crown Jan Zamoyski (led by Grand Marshal of the Crown Andrzej Opaliński), Swedish aristocrats (Count Gustav Brahe), and trusted confidants of Queen Anna, Georg Schiechel and Ursula Meyer. What bound these people together was certainly loyalty to the monarch, who used their support to free himself from Zamoyski's control and went on to weather the numerous storms of his enduring 45-year-long reign. The author also points to matters that require further research, such as the question of the maintenance of the faction at a time when the court in Vienna had no regular

representative in Kraków or Warsaw, as well as the possible conflicts within the group, whose traces persist in source materials known to the author.

In her article 'The Role of the Courtiers in the Polish-Lithuanian Diplomatic Service at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century', Magdalena Jakubowska advances an analysis of the role the members of the royal court played in Polish-Lithuanian diplomacy between 1587 and 1606. According to her findings, the belief that the king's secretaries were the only courtiers tasked with performing diplomatic services is not supported in source materials, which indicate the involvement in these affairs of chamberlains or butlers, for instance. The article includes an interesting classification of courtier-diplomats; aside from those who performed such services only occasionally, some would be dispatched to specific courts – Turkish, Crimean – as well as others, who performed their diplomatic duties in different locations. The temporary nature of these services, the author contends, is not particularly uncommon for Eurasia in that period: courtly service facilitated the gaining of the abilities that allowed the envoys to find their way around a foreign court, and the period spent abroad contributed greatly to a courtier's education and career advancement.

This article is followed by 'Außenbeziehungen schreiben. Jean La Blanque zwischen polnischem Hof und französischer Diplomatie' [Writing foreign relations: Jean La Blanque between the Polish court and French diplomacy], by Kolja Lichy, which introduces the reader to the character of the French vagabond Jean de la Blanque, who joined the entourage of Pontus de la Gardie in the second half of the sixteenth century, having travelled from Languedoc to Sweden, where he served as soldier and officer. During the Vasa family quarrel, he presumably sided with Sigismund III – which would account for his presence at the royal court – following which, in 1610, he was made the first French consul in Danzig (Gdańsk). De la Blanque wrote eagerly and often with French officials and diplomats; Lichy analyses only a minor proportion of his epistolary output in the shape of letters to the French ambassador in Venice, Philippe Canaye de Fresnes, and Louis XIII's envoy to the court of Count Palatine of the Rhine in 1612–1620, Étienne de Sainte-Catherine. Several questions addressed in the article undoubtedly deserve attention; first of all, the case of de la Blanque illustrates how, despite attempts to centralise the French diplomatic apparatus in the seventeenth century, the French continued to rely – both organisationally and in terms of communication – for their knowledge on the situation in the country over the Vistula and plans of action in that regard on information gained from, and activities performed by, informal diplomatic agents loosely connected with Paris. One is also struck by the evident distaste of the French diplomats for deepening their knowledge of the particularities of the political system peculiar to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was far easier to see the situation in Warsaw through a Parisian lens, which led to consequences such as the

neglect of the role of the Sejm as an organ of power, which held very little interest for French politicians. This approach to politics over Vistula and Neman – which negatively impacted French interests – proved quite durable, persisting even in analyses by French diplomats produced during the 1660s.[1]

Part III opens with the article by Christoph Augustynowicz, entitled 'Die Eheanbahnung zwischen König Sigismund III. und Erzherzogin Anna. Praktiken und Symbole zwischen Protokoll und Abrechnung' [The marriage settlement between King Sigismund III and Archduchess Anna: Practices and symbols between protocol and accounting], which offers an interesting view of court ceremonies and the material side of receiving envoys based on the negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the marriage between Sigismund III and Anna of Habsburg, as well as the festivities that accompanied it, which took place in Vienna in 1592. Of particular note is the diplomatic function of wine, which represents not only a part of the diet of an envoy but also a valuable gift. Interestingly, one of the ways the court in Vienna gained supporters during the first interregnums was through promises of licences for the transportation of wine from Hungary and exemptions from customs restrictions.

In his 'Der zeremonielle Empfang des englischen Gesandten Sir Thomas Roe am polnischen Königshof 1629 in Warschau' [The ceremonial entry of English envoy Sir Thomas Roe to the Polish court in Warsaw in 1629], Patrick Schumann sheds light on the diplomatic protocol in place at the court of Sigismund III, using the example of the reception of envoy from England Sir Thomas Roe in November 1629. Schumann does not limit himself only to a reconstruction of the sojourn of the English diplomat in the lands of the Crown, but also attempts – with some success – to compare the treatment of Roe with that of other diplomats at the court in Warsaw during the reign of Sigismund III.

Royal audiences of papal nuncios in the days of the Vasas are the subject of Dorota Gregorowicz's article, entitled 'The Audiences of Apostolic Nuncios at the Court of Polish Vasas (1587–1668)'. The author takes into consideration not only the ceremonial side of the events, but also that of themes under discussion and of structure. The sources she analyses, namely reports to the pope, offer a means for the reconstruction of public welcome receptions, but also, to a lesser degree, for a typology of other forms of receptions (private, secret, farewell). She also pinpoints differences in the ceremonial during audiences with nuncios and during audiences for secular diplomats.

The final part of the work under review opens with the study by Henryk Litwin and Paweł Duda, entitled 'Antonio Santa Croce und Giovanni Battista

[1] See I. Kraszewski, 'Antykrólewskie działania Jerzego Lubomirskiego w oczach Francji (1660–1664)', in Mariusz Markiewicz, Edward Opaliński, and Ryszard Skowron (eds), *Król a prawo stanów do oporu* (Kraków, 2010), 259–70.

Pallotta. Zur Zusammenarbeit der Warschauer und Wiener Nuntiatur im Jahr 1629' [Antonio Santa Croce and Giovanni Battista Pallotta: On the cooperation between the Nunciature in Warsaw and in Vienna in 1629]. As it transpires, thanks to material found at the Archivio di Stato di Roma – namely, part of the Archivio Santa Croce containing originals of letters received by Nuncio Antonio Santa Croce in 1629 – it has become possible to attempt at least a partial reconstruction of the cooperation between the papal diplomat attached to the court in Warsaw and his counterpart at the court of Emperor Ferdinand II in Vienna, Giovanni Battista Pallotta. Contacts between the two men were regular and intense. They exchanged information especially about contemporary military conflicts – the Danish part of the Thirty Years' War, the war over the Vistula delta, or the conflict over succession in Mantua – but the nuncios also consulted one another on matters of the Church, and even those of a personal nature, as when Pallotta asked Santa Croce to convince a merchant from Kraków by the name of Moriconi to settle a debt for another Italian, a certain Bottini. One invaluable addition to the text is found in the annexe, which includes a list of letters sent by both nuncios, including those that have been lost but are mentioned in the existing correspondence.

The various relations between Sigismund III and the Electors of Brandenburg are the subject of Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg's article, entitled 'Der polnische Wasahof und Brandenburg-Preußen (1587–1648). Katholisch-protestantische Kontakte und Beziehungen im konfessionellen Zeitalter' [The Polish court of the Vasas and Brandenburg-Prussia (1587–1648): Catholic-Protestant contacts and relations in an age of religion]. Among those he discusses are official diplomatic contacts, as well as the far less official activities of persons in the king's circle who supported the policies of Brandenburg-Prussia at the court in Warsaw for one reason or another, deriving various benefits from their actions. Rather than immediately pass judgment, though, one should rather reflect on the diverse motivations for these actions. The author stresses that, for instance, the Denhoffs – who had lost their property in Livonia – foresaw a Polish-Lithuanian-Brandenburg alliance aimed against the Swedish, while the Jesuits of Braniewo hoped to gain greater ease in missionary activity in Ducal Prussia. The reviewer can only express regret that there was not enough room in the article to address matters of war, which had consumed a great deal of attention at the court in Berlin, especially during the conflict over the Vistula delta – as proven by Sławomir Augusiewicz's discovery in a Berlin archive of the detailed diary of Sigismund III's expedition into Prussia, including the Battle of Gniew (1626).[2] Similarly, the article discusses

[2] Sławomir Augusiewicz, 'Diariusz kampanii w Prusach Królewskich w 1626 roku Wolfa von der Ölsnitza', *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy*, xxiv, 1 (2023), 201–34.

the question of the monetary recompense issued by the Duke of Prussia for the benefit of the king's private treasury, but omits to mention the quite substantial amounts paid by the Duchy of Prussia to the public coffers of the Commonwealth or the toleration by the Prussians of the excesses perpetrated by Polish-Lithuanian troops during the numerous campaigns the Commonwealth conducted in the period.[3]

The monograph concludes with Anna Kalinowska's reflections on the subject of 'Failed Diplomacy: Andrzej Rey's Mission to London and the Collapse of Vasa-Stuart Diplomatic Relations', which focus on the origins, progress, and consequences of Andrzej Rey's failed mission to Charles I in 1637. The author illustrates how matters of ceremony could be effectively deployed in the service of grand-scale politics – in this case, for the purpose of communicating to Ladislaus IV the displeasure over the manner in which he resolved the question of his marriage to Elisabeth of the Palatinate. One can also observe the boundaries of effective use of private contacts and ties between diplomats sent as envoys to foreign royal courts. Rey's English friends faced an uphill battle in convincing Charles I to hear the Polish envoy, or else they refrained from contact with Rey, fearing the wrath of the English king.

It is the duty of the reviewer to mention the few errors noted in the text. The Battle of Kircholm took place in 1605, rather than 1604, although judging by the context, the author must have been thinking of the Battle of Weissenstein (today's Paide, Estonia), which occurred on 25 September 1604 (note 52 on p. 148). The only men by the name of Butler with the rank of colonel that Roe could have crossed paths with in Poland in November 1629 were James (or Jacob, Jakub) Butler, commander of a dragoon regiment, and Lieutenant Colonel Walter Butler called the Younger, from the same regiment (p. 211).[4] In June 1666, John II Casimir Vasa could not have been

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[3] See Anna Filipczak-Kocur, *Skarbowość Rzeczypospolitej 1587–1648. Projekty – ustawy – realizacja* (Warszawa, 2023[2]), 84; and Dariusz Milewski, 'Military Contacts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Duchy of Prussia in the First Years of the Livonian War (1600–1602)', *Codrul Cosminului*, xxiv, 2 (2018), 323–40; *id.*, '"Necessitas frangit legem". Finansowanie wojsk polskich i litewskich przez Prusy Książęce w okresie wojny moskiewskiej 1609–1618', *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, lxxxiii (special) (2022), 223–41; *id.*, 'W cieniu wojny tureckiej – pogranicze polsko-pruskie w 1621 r.', in Wojceich Zawadzki (ed.), *Dysydenci czy decydenci? Protestanci w obu częściach Prus i Koronie w XVI–XVIII wieku* (Elbląg, 2018), 207–17.

[4] *Comput woyska JKM*, Sztokholm, Riksarkivet, Extranea IX Polen, vol. 80 (np.); Michał Paradowski, *Despite destruction, misery and privations… The Polish army in Prussia during the war against Sweden 1626–1629* (Warwick, 2020), 96–7; Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu [State Archives in Poznań], Księgi sądu i urzędu grodzkiego w Inowrocławiu [Books of the court and magistrate of Inowrocław], Gr. 44,

readying for an expedition against the Muscovites, as his main concern at the time was the rebellion instigated by Jerzy Sebastian Lubomirski along with his confederates in the Polish military. The question of whether the nuncio was wrongly informed – on purpose or by accident – or rather misunderstood what he was told cannot but remain unanswered (p. 230). The sentence "Polnische Gesandte kamen vor den 1650er Jahren nicht nach Brandenburg" [Polish envoys did not come to Brandenburg before the 1650s, p. 293] poses a challenge for interpretation since it is beside the point that Sigismund III's envoys did travel to Brandenburg.[5]

These errors, however, do not affect the overall assessment of the monograph under review, which is unambiguously positive. Even if not all of the texts mentioned here add anything new to our knowledge about the role of the court of Sigismund III in European diplomacy of the seventeenth century, they surely present historians with new, fascinating questions and unknown or unused sources that could well contribute to the broadening of that knowledge.

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Andrii Portnov, *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City*, Boston 2022, Academic Studies Press, 376 pp., 63 ills

Professor Andrii Portnov, Chair of Entangled History of Ukraine at Viadrina University in Frankfurt am Main, an untiring and renowned Ukrainian historian, has recently presented his new book concerned with the history of the city of Dnipro. This Ukrainian (and, as the title of the book indicates, European) city lies in the middle-to-lower valley of the Dnipro, the river that gives it its name. Dnipro, the city, is a major industrial, educational, and cultural hub in Ukraine, as well as a fairly large and important place in the region, if only for the fact that its population numbers almost a million. In these terms, it is roughly on par with cities like Naples or Stockholm. At the same time, it remains largely unknown for most Europeans, present

pp. 299–300, entry for 20 Dec. 1629, complaint by Wilhelm Targowski, in the name of himself and his father Jan Targowski against First Lieutenant of J. Butler, W. Butler.

[5] E.g. in spring 1601, Sigismund III dispatched to Brandenburg Samuel Łaski; four years later, courtier Krzysztof Korczyński delivered in person to the elector an invitation to the wedding between Sigismund III and Constance of Austria, see Barbara Janiszewska-Mincer, Franciszek Mincer, *Rzeczpospolita Polska a Prusy Książęce w latach 1598–1621. Sprawa sukcesji brandenburskiej* (Warszawa, 1988), 64–65, 113.

on the geographical maps they see, but absent or obscured on their mental maps. Thus, one has to state at the outset that the publication of a 'biography of Dnipro' in English is in itself a major event. Its author will now join the ranks of biographers of cities, whether or not his study earns the approval of any particular reader.

The introduction to the volume divulges that the study has been quite long in coming. The author professes that the initial impulse for the writing dates back as far as 2012. The publication of the book, when it neared completion, was delayed for a variety of reasons, but fortunately, the impulse persisted. Portnov returned repeatedly to the subject of Dnipro in a number of public appearances and articles. The book thus represents a classic case of intellectual production, where the core principles of a study are subjected to critique piecemeal and discussed in academic contexts before the final product reaches the author's peers and the broader audience.

In 2012, in Kyiv, during the first public presentation of his concept for the book, Portnov posed the question that seems key to his study on the history of Dnipro: "How does one tell the story of a city without history?" Of course, the claim was not that the city had no history at all. Throughout the 200 years of its existence, events have happened within it, and before then, the place had its own past. However, for a historian, it is a challenging task to establish a focal point for a story about such a city. For instance, Dnipro has nothing in the way of historical tradition – the city demolishes old cemeteries and old tenement houses; it positions itself as a space for the new and the current. Over the span of two or three generations, names of streets and public squares have changed with not a hint of opposition from the inhabitants. Statues are erected and then toppled, presenting figures and events that can be so much at odds with one another that an outside observer requires copious amounts of historical imagination to discern their meaning: how could the inhabitants tolerate the existence in the same square of a monument to the victims of the Great Famine and a statue of Hryhorii Petrovsky – its perpetrator? Neither literature nor cinema has formulated anything akin to a historical myth of Dnipro. Neither is there a unified image of its history. This massive industrial city in the middle of the steppe has a chronology, but not a historical narrative imbued with meanings and values. Furthermore, it appears that this future-oriented city had no particular use for a biography. What could be claimed with some effort as a historical (or historiographic) image of the city exists in the shape of parallel histories. The – for lack of a better term – Russian/Soviet version of this history ignores the multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-denominational legacy of the nineteenth-century town and grossly underplays the significance of its Cossack prehistory. The 'Ukrainian version' treats everything that happened between the establishment of the provincial town on the banks of the Dnipro (1787) and Ukrainian independence (1991) as colonial history and perceives

it as 'lost time', perhaps with the sole exception of the Ukrainian national movement in Ekaterinoslav/Dnipropetrovsk.[6] Both historiographic traditions commonly ignore the Jewish aspect of the city's past. Jewish tradition, as Portnov himself astutely observes, is only available through publications that "tend to narratively reproduce the stereotypical notion of an almost complete separation of Jewish and non-Jewish groups in Katerynoslav" (p. 13).

Conscious of all these historiographic pitfalls, Portnov took on a fairly ambitious challenge: to formulate a biography of a city whose inhabitants care little for its history and to compose a unified narrative about a city whose various communities have tended to ignore one another. Has the author succeeded in this venture?

In the introduction, Portnov states his intention to follow two general approaches to the study and description of the history of the city. The first is geared towards "locating Katerynoslav-Dnipropetrovsk-Dnipro in a wider regional, national, and transnational context and exploring the interaction between global processes and everyday routines of urban life" (p. 10); the second attaches a "special attention […] to the narratives of certain individuals" (p. 10). Each chapter in the monograph is devoted to a period in the history of the city that was especially affected by a particular global process. This approach helped give shape to the periodisation of Dnipro's past and defined the structure of the book, within which one chapter accounts for the events from the founding of the first Cossack settlements in the area until industrialisation in the 1870s, while another (quite substantial) covers a mere four-year period (1917–1921), one of revolutions and wars that accompanied the collapse of the Romanov empire. Each part of the book also has its main protagonist, through whose eyes – or instead, through whose biography – the reader looks at the city's history in the given historical time.

The opening chapter, entitled 'The Potemkin City', reflects on the period between the earliest historical mentions of persistent settlements in the area now covered by the city and the mid-nineteenth century. Here, the author highlights the context in which Dnipro took shape, namely the Enlightenment. From this vantage, the city emerges as a space whose origin and development do not follow natural processes but rather human intention as a product of rational thought. In other words, Dnipro is a pre-planned city. The main

[6] In the introduction, Portnov provides the reader with a fairly original explanation of the complex history of the city's name. Here, one might note that, in simple terms, historical names of Dnipro include Yekaterinoslav (1776–1796, 1802–1926), Novorossiysk (1796–1802), Dnepropetrovsk (1926–2016), and – according to some scholars – Novy Kodak and Sicheslav. It is also noteworthy that Portnov consistently employs the Ukrainian names of the city. For instance, he writes Katerynoslav (in contrast to the more prevalent in the English-speaking world version Yekaterinoslav, derived from the Russian language) and Dnipropetrovsk.

thread that runs through the entire chapter is the juxtaposition of human agency and the power of nature. Portnov stresses that Dnipro, a city twice founded (in 1776 at the mouth of the river Kilchen, and then, once the site was deemed unfavourable, in 1787 in its current location), found itself both times in exceptionally adverse natural circumstances. The choice of a 'wrong place' on the part of imperial administrators was devised as a means to better reflect the triumph of the human mind over nature, illustrating the power of culture and man's determination over natural circumstance. In a way, Dnipro serves to symbolise the conquest of geography by history. In this chapter, Portnov provides an answer to the question why the city (history) had not appeared in that location (geography) before; he concludes that "the most essential factor was the steppe and the Great Frontier around the Lower Dnipro, between nomadic and settled cultures. For centuries, this frontier had thwarted all attempts at urbanization. Russia's annexation of the southern steppes and Crimea signalled the death of the Great Frontier and the rapid development of an imperial urbanistic tradition" (p. 56). The role of the main protagonist of this chapter is assigned to eighteenth-century Russian statesman, Prince Grigory Potemkin, whose many designs for the use of lands taken from the Ottoman Empire informed the early development of Dnipro. Of note is the fortuitousness of the chapter's title, 'The Potemkin City', referencing not only Potemkin the historical figure, but also the phenomenon of 'Potemkin villages'. The unrealised and the pre-arranged are for Portnov (as much as for Ukrainian writer Viktor Domontovich, whom he cites frequently) a primary feature typifying Dnipro both in its historical and in its current guise. Furthermore, it may well be assumed that the title also gestures at the first historian of the city over the Dnipr river, Dmytro Yavornytsky, who opened his treatise on the history of Dnipro with the statement: "The city of Katerynoslav is in entirety the work of Prince G.A. Potemkin".

The following part, entitled 'Manchester on the Dnipro', treats about the period from the second half of the nineteenth century until the onset of the First World War. Two main threads converge here, each adding nuance to the other: on the one hand, the chapter discusses the modernisation of the city, the advent of the industrial revolution, and the demographic and social changes that came with it; on the other, it attempts to portray a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multi-denominational city, one whose historical contours provide the author with sufficient justification to discuss its "imperial multiculturalism" (p. 121). Portnov compares the rise of Dnipro to the expansion of the city of Łódź in the Polish lands of the Romanov empire. In both cases, the city experienced a feverish modernisation mandated by the role it played in the territorial organisation of the imperial economy – but significantly, neither of the cities arrived at the anticipated homogenisation of the civic community. Portnov names three major players in the mid-nineteenth-century history of Dnipro: the proletarians, the Jews, and the

Ukrainian intelligentsia. Each group is portrayed somewhat statically at first, gaining momentum toward the end of the chapter, where the author gives an account of the contests and disputes of the period of the revolution of 1905. Notably, the particular focus on the events of 1905 is a greatly welcome aspect of Portnov's book, since most historians of the city after 1991 have ascribed to them a marginal significance. Two other groups that played a major role in the life of the city around the mid-nineteenth century, the gentry and the burghers, are not afforded additional attention in the chapter. However, it is one of their number, Oleksandr Pol', who becomes the protagonist and the primary voice in this part of the book. This, as some of his contemporaries would have it, "somewhat mentally unbalanced" (p. 64) landowner (the embodiment of all that is old), compelled by dreams of substantial profits from mining (the embodiment of all that is new), awakened the region from its agrarian slumber, setting the city on a path of rapid modernisation, only to eventually die submerged in debt – a perfect metaphor of the paradoxical nature of Dnipro's modernisation as Ukraine's Manchester on the banks of the Dnipro.

Chapter three, 'The Symphony of Revolutions', somewhat shorter than its predecessors, covers only the years between 1914 and 1921. One peculiarity of its structure that is immediately apparent is the vastly increased focus on external, grand history – all-European and all-Russian matters – since the First World War, the revolutions, and subsequent conflicts take pride of place here. At points, it seems that the author is no longer describing global trends through the prism of the history of one city, as had been the case earlier, but rather simply illustrating global events with local examples. However, should one choose not to focus as much attention on the progress of the 'history of events' while reading Portnov's text, it has to be said that the general notion of the fragility of the seemingly stable life of a city, the motif of the social impact of violence in history, is presented very convincingly in this chapter. The motif is particularly resonant in the polyphony of historical accounts that Portnov foregrounds here. Formally, the main protagonist is Princess Vera Urusova (who is the author's most quoted source, and whose portrait features among the illustrative material; see p. 138), but one also notes other testimony, not only from the bygone aristocracy but also from communists, monarchists, Jews, or members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia. Relating their experiences of the period of revolution and civil war, all of them appear to confirm the claim that the instability of 1914–1921 brought an existential threat to Dnipro as a civic organism.

The main subject of chapter four, 'The Soviet Dnipropetrovsk', are the major social engineering experiments of the twentieth century. Universal though they may have been, it was in the Soviet Union that they took the most drastic shapes. Portnov observes that the "regulation and centralisation of distribution of goods, forced labour; social engineering; the idea that

common welfare requires the displacement or elimination of 'undesirable elements'; the classification of people according to their ethnic origin often purposefully ascribed to them – all these political-economic features became typical for the postwar social architecture" (p. 171). The author uncovers these tendencies primarily by means of a description of the policies of indigenisation/Ukrainisation within the city and in the region, as well as architectural and urbanisation experiments in the inter-war Katerynoslav-Dnipropetrovsk. In both cases, a top-down and purposeful effort was at stake to root out undesirable remnants of the previous social order. The proletariat was Russian in its language and culture but low in numbers; therefore, to sustain the revolutionary gains, it became necessary to impose its class values on the most numerous group within the population – the peasantry. The task was assigned to the new, Ukrainian-speaking intelligentsia, which required support from the state, because only then (so the contemporary leaflet cited by Portnov states) "there will be a full guarantee that the army of Ukrainian cultural workers would educate millions of people in the proletarian ideology" (p. 186). Just as Ukrainisation was supposed to hasten the proletarianisation of the Ukrainian peasantry, so the urbanisation experiments would cleanse the population of Katerynoslav of the burgher spirit. The city's proletarian nature was to emanate not only from its new toponymy (both the city and its streets being named after new heroes), but also from the changed urban tissue (elimination of distinction between rich and poor neighbourhoods, active implementation of the concept of a proletarian garden city). The other two tragic events addressed in this chapter, the Great Famine and the Great Terror, also represented extreme cases of social engineering devised for the purpose of eliminating undesirable elements. While the main through-line is readily apparent, it is somewhat harder to identify the main protagonist of the chapter, through whose eyes Portnov intends to show the reader the face of the period. A substantial role is assigned to three figures at the same time: Hryhorii Petrovsky (for whom the city was named), long-time director of the local history museum Dmytro Yavornytsky, and Ukrainian writer Viktor Petrov (Domontovych), author of the first attempt at creating a literary mythos of the city. Portnov incorporates the former into the body of his account, handing to the other two 'side stories' within the frame narrative. In spite of massive differences in the biographies of all three figures, they are bound together by one feature: their capacity to survive in any political circumstances and under any government.

If chapter four concerns itself with local examples of global tendencies, the fifth, entitled 'A City at War', is thoroughly oriented on the city and the region. It discusses a fairly non-standard period in the history of the city, from 1941 until the end of the 1940s – not only war and occupation but also the quite prolonged period of return to normalcy after the war. Here, one does not find the characteristic feature of Portnov's narrative, so forcefully

present in the preceding chapters: the insistent, broad digressions intended to inscribe the city into some common European context or merely to explain the nature of the events being described to a European reader. Only when reflecting on the activities of the so-called expeditionary groups [*pokhidni hrupy*] of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) does Portnov offer a brief introduction to explain to the reader the nature of the organisation and its somewhat unobvious influence on the history of Dnipro. In turn, the Holocaust, an event that no Central European city could avoid, is discussed without any theoretical framework. On the one hand, it seems unlikely that any potential reader of this book might require that the event be contextualised within European history; on the other, without such a contextualisation, it presents itself even more persuasively as a catastrophe. The voice of the historian seems more muffled in this chapter, while the speech of the everyday people resonates quite clearly, expressing the biography of the city through their experiences. There are not all that many protagonists in the chapter, but they are fairly tightly woven into the narrative. The entire history of the occupation, destruction, and rebuilding of the city is shown through the accounts of a twelve-year-old girl (later a famous archaeology professor at the local university), a museum worker who survived the occupation, and a Red Army soldier who left the city before the Germans seized it and returned after the war to witness its reconstruction. It is perhaps the most anthropocentric chapter in the book.

Chapter six, 'Brezhnev's Capital', also differs from the others; of all the chapters making up the book, it hews the closest to the concept of a 'biography of a city'. Where the first four chapters depicted the standard/normal side of Dnipro as a European city, and the fifth focussed on the human dimension of the tragedy of war, the sole and unquestionable hero of the last chapter is the city itself: the city as a phenomenon irreducible to geography (as a part of the country in which it lies) nor to the entirety of the experience of its inhabitants. The main thread here is the history of Dnipro as a closed city. This is reflected even in the original chronology of the chapter – from 1951, when the decision was taken to convert the local machine factory into a plant producing ballistic missiles, which fed the tendency to isolate the city from the region and from the rest of Soviet Ukraine, until 1987, when Dnipro ceased to be a closed city and began to reintegrate with the mental space of Ukraine. In this period, therefore, Dnipro was not a typical city either in European or in Ukrainian terms. Portnov illustrates the peculiarities of its development with various examples: the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the city (in the shape of a theatrical play devised for one viewer – Leonid Brezhnev – for which reason, fearing that he might not survive until 1987, the magistrates changed the official date of founding from 1787 to 1776); the unusual reorientation of historical research at the local university (which became a hub for research into historical and modern

sources on the history of Ukraine, a range of themes considered inadvisable anywhere else in the republic); and the repression of dissidents (episodic within the city itself, which did, however, house the largest centre of repressive psychiatry in the entire Soviet Union). The main result of the closing of the city was what might be called its disorientation in the mental space of Ukraine. Portnov describes it this way: "It gave a 'non-provincial feeling' and even a kind of 'sense of being a capital'. Dnipropetrovsk was received as a particularly significant city, located in the informal hierarchy immediately after Moscow and Leningrad" (p. 310). The overcoming of this tendency is the essence of the entire recent history of the city, described in detail in the rather expansive epilogue, which bridges the gap between the past and the present of the city and is a highly compelling addition to the formal structure of the book.

As is apparent, the author dealt quite successfully with the ambitious task he set for himself. I believe that if experts in the history of Dnipro should want to, they could indeed find in Portnov's book certain factual inaccuracies or minor errors. I shall assess the faults of the work as an informed reader rather than a professional scholar of the history of the city. What seems immediately striking is the frequent lack of clarity in the choice of illustrations. For instance, the book contains neither plans of modern-day Dnipro, nor diagrams presenting the Cossack settlements that preceded its creation, nor even schematics of the city's historical development. It has to be said that Portnov only rarely mentions modern or historical names of townships, but when he does, readers might appreciate some insight into their geographic location and profile. Indeed, the book does contain an image of a German city plan from 1928 (p. 179) from the author's own collection, but an uninformed reader will gain little from it. The book generally contains quite an amount of illustrative material from the author's collections; perhaps this is due to a desire to simplify the technical side of producing the publication, and maybe also – consciously or not – to demonstrate one's treasured findings to the world. While reading, I was extremely pleased to see rare, unfamiliar, and even simply original images and photographs from Portnov's collection. Therein, however, lies the greatest issue that subsequent volume editions must resolve. As enchanted as I was with so many unknown depictions of my home town, I find it entirely plausible that a reader less familiar with the city's history would profit more not from original images but rather from ones that are more representative. The same applies to the text itself. Having read the book, I myself – formerly an inhabitant of Dnipro – noted both the originality of the author's approach and the invitation to a discussion, to the abandonment of a narcissistic attitude toward the unique historical experience of my home town for the benefit of its European commonality. Reading the book gave me much pleasure, but that was only available to me because I already had an established idea in my head of the city's history,

which the author deftly engaged in a debate. An English-speaking, European reader will not possess the same framework in their head, nor a particular familiarity with the geography of the region, the toponymy of the city, or the major milestones in its history, and thus there is a certain risk that the image of the history of Dnipro drawn from the book will be somewhat disjointed and haphazard, and thus rather at odds with the author's intentions. However, a Ukrainian translation (if one is being planned) will undoubtedly become a major step toward expanding historical knowledge on the city over the Dnipro River.

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Fabian Baumann, *Dynasty Divided: A Family History of Russian and Ukrainian Nationalism*, Ithaca, NY, 2023, Cornell University Press, 348 pp.

Our generation will remember the years 2022 and 2023 as a devastating nightmare for Ukrainians and a disturbingly sinister time for all Eastern Europeans. Yet, it was also an exceptionally fertile period for scholars of nineteenth-century Ukrainian history. It is too early to judge whether we are observing an actual new opening or just the conclusion of previous lines of argument, but it is undeniable that those two years gave us several stimulating works, setting a pretty high bar for future scholars.[1] Fabian Baumann's monograph occupies a special place in this picture: not only is it the most readable among the important publications of 2022 and 2023, but it is also one of the most innovative. Baumann selects a set of interesting and relevant actors, thus offering the reader a thrilling family saga that traces the vacillations of Kyivan intelligentsia between the Ukrainian and Russian national allegiances. He succeeds in balancing a scholar's critical perspective with the empathy necessary to grasp the lived experiences and dilemmas of his protagonists. *Dynasty Divided* belongs to a very rare species of sophisticated scholarly monographs that can be recommended to a broad audience as pleasure reads.

[1] Andriy Zayarnyuk and Ostap Sereda, *The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Ukraine: The Nineteenth Century* (London, 2023); Serhiy Bilenky, *Laboratory of Modernity: Ukraine between Empire and Nation, 1772–1914* (Montreal, 2023); Andrii Portnov, *Dnipro: An Entangled History of a European City* (Boston, 2023); Martin Rohde, *Nationale Wissenschaft zwischen zwei Imperien: die Ševcenko-Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, 1892–1918* (Götingen, 2022).

Fabian Baumann is a Swiss historian who completed his PhD in Basel in 2020. He also studied or conducted research in Chicago, Geneva, Kyiv, Oxford, Saint Petersburg, and Vienna. The monograph under review is based on his doctoral dissertation, written under the supervision of Benjamin Schenk and Aleksei Miller. In other words, this enviable *tour de force* is Baumann's first book. We should bear this in mind when considering its limitations: it is clear that the author was trained within a scholarly tradition which had always construed Ukrainian history as a branch of the broader history of the Russian Empire and USSR. After 2014, Switzerland is perhaps the most positive counterexample in this regard in the whole German-speaking space. Indeed, Swiss academics have gone out of their way to overcome the shortcomings of the narrow Russo-centric perspective, and Benjamin Schenk is one of the most dedicated leaders in this effort. Nevertheless, the actual change of interpretive framework is a process that requires time. *Dynasty Divided* is, among other things, a valuable document of an important stage in this intellectual transition.[2]

Baumann's book is so readable because it is a colourful, and occasionally spicy, family saga of the Shul′hyn/Shul′gin clan of Kyiv intelligentsia. The author's primary focus is the rationale behind the political split that separated the two branches of the family: whereas Vitalii Shul′gin (†1878) remained a staunch supporter of the indivisible Russian nation and passed this allegiance to his inheritors, his nephew Iakiv Shul′hyn (†1911) chose to identify as Ukrainian and, together with his wife Liubov née Ustymovych (†1945), succeeded in inculcating this persuasion in their children.

Since the family's legacy remains scattered, Baumann had to hunt down his primary sources throughout Europe and North America. *Dynasty Divided* draws, among others, on documents and manuscripts from archives and collections in France, Russia, Slovenia, Ukraine, and the US; books, brochures, and press articles by the protagonists (most notably from Shul′gins' own *Kievlianin*); as well as letters, memoirs, and testimonies collected and published in the heyday of Ukrainian intellectual life before Stalin's crackdown (including such priceless academic journals as *Ukraina*, *Ukrainskaia Zhizn'*, *Zapysky NTSh*, and *Za sto lit*).

The monograph includes five chapters with an introduction and a conclusion. After briefly describing the social ascent of Iakov Shul′gin (†1860, surname at birth Shul′ha, Ukrainian for a left-handed person), the family's earliest known progenitor, Baumann devotes his first chapter to two topics: the career of Iakov's son Vitalii, a university professor who founded the influential newspaper *Kievlianin*; and the rise of the Ukrainophiles, as the Ukrainian

[2] Cf. Uilleam Blacker, 'Review of Karl Schlögel, Ukraine: A Nation on the Borderland', *Society*, published 10 April 2024, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-024-00986-6 [Accessed: 15 May 2024].

national movement was called in nineteenth-century Russia. The book's second chapter follows the family of Vitalii's nephew, Iakiv Shul'hyn, who joined the Ukrainophiles and donated the bulk of his inheritance to support Mykhailo Drahomanov's publishing activities in Geneva. This is a tale of survival and deception in a hostile environment: Iakiv Shul'hyn continued to protest his loyalty to the Russian state while cultivating a Ukrainian *narodnyk* allegiance in the domestic and scholarly spheres.

Chapter three deals with the Russian Shul'gins: how they established their unique political position as owners of the *Kievlianin* and champions of a militant and chauvinistic, but also quite inclusive and sometimes even progressive, Kyivan version of Russian nationalism. Here, the main protagonist is Dmitrii Pikhno (†1913), son of a miller from Chyhyryn who became Vitalii Shul'gin's protégé, and then the lover of his wife Mariia née Popova (†1883). Pikhno married Mariia in 1880, thus becoming stepfather of Shul'gin's children (the youngest of whom, Vasilii, was his biological son). Eventually, after the death of his first wife, Pikhno fathered three more boys with his eldest stepdaughter, Lina Shul'gina (†1945), whom he had married off to another man for the sake of appearances (conveniently, the groom died within a year). The next generation seems to have inherited their stepfather's unusual understanding of family love: for example, Vasilii Shul'gin (†1976) went on to have affairs with the wives of his two brothers. More important than the unexpected family configurations was Dmitrii Pikhno's career as a professor of economics, a newspaper editor, a Russian nationalist politician, and an accomplished collector of landed estates.

In chapter four, we see the next generation of both families in the vortex of war and revolution. Iakiv's children became involved in the Ukrainian struggle for independence: among others, Volodymyr (†1918) was killed in the legendary battle of Kruty, whereas Oleksander (†1960) became head of the Ukrainian foreign service. In turn, Vasilii Shul'gin and his wife Ekaterina née Gradovskaia (†1934) used their newspaper to rally the Russian nationalist public. In an ironic twist of fate, in March 1917 in Pskov, Vasilii Shul'gin received the instrument of abdication from the sorrowful Nicholas II. Despite many undeniable achievements, both branches of the family saw their respective causes defeated and their dearest killed by hunger, disease, or Bolshevik bullets.

Baumann closes his book with a chapter that analyses how political exiles Oleksander, Ekaterina, and Vasilii reinterpreted their traumatic experiences while roaming interwar Europe. Their desperate efforts to endow their tribulations with meaning transformed their life stories into nationalised narratives. Here, the most colourful figure is doubtless Vasilii: always disdainful of 'street mobs' and gradually descending into more and more primitive antisemitism, he was duped by the GPU to visit the USSR in 1925, then arrested by SMERSh in 1945, eventually released from prison in 1956, only

to die in the late Brezhnev era as a sort of living fossil cherished by nostalgic Soviet intellectuals. No less interesting, and perhaps even more original, is the section devoted to Ekaterina's self-critical attempts to make sense of their political and personal catastrophe, eventually leading her to commit suicide in Belgrade.

Although *Dynasty Divided* reaches decades after the Second World War, it is clear that its author cares most about the late imperial and revolutionary periods. A look at the most significant contributions of his book is in order now. Baumann depicts nation-building as a series of choices made by individual human beings motivated by such political ideals as democratic egalitarianism, conservative monarchism, populist socialism, or the liberal cult of property rights. By presenting a family-focused history of competing nationalisms in Kyiv, he allows us to closely watch this process unfold in one milieu of the intelligentsia, thus moving beyond the simplistic opposition of public vs private (*qua* political vs non-political). Instead, he shows us how the domestic sphere became politicised as a privileged locus for reproducing national allegiances. Here, women – banished by modern political culture from the realm of institutionalised politics – became "mothers of the nation" and thus carved out for themselves a new sphere for political activity (pp. 70–7). It is one of the most laudable aspects of Baumann's work that he is seriously concerned about restoring the visibility of female actors in Ukrainian and Russian nation-building. As he writes, "Kiev's fin-de-siècle Ukrainophile milieu constituted itself in private households, with women playing leading roles as organisers, educators, and domestic ideologues. Iakov and his wife Liubov tried to educate their children in a Ukrainian patriotic spirit, following a model of nationally framed domesticity" (p. 49). This is an especially relevant dimension for the Ukrainian national movement, whose public activities in the Russian Empire were severely curtailed following the 1876 Ems Ukaz, but Baumann shows that this perspective is equally indispensable for understanding the Russian Shul'gins, who built their unique political position as an extension of their family business (pp. 99, 137–49). None of this is a complete novelty for historians of nineteenth-century Ukraine, but Baumann's is probably the first such explicit and meticulous reconstruction of this dynamic on a micro-level, which is perhaps the most significant contribution of his work, although not the only one.

The Shul'hyn/Shul'gin case complicates the predominant understanding of nation-building in the Russian-ruled Ukraine, which portrays Ukrainians as plebeian and egalitarian, and the Russians as entrenched and elitist. Baumann rightly insists that in the nineteenth century the choice of Ukrainian national allegiance was underpinned by democratic, even socialist sympathies, whereas loyalty to the indivisible all-Russian nation was based on conservative leanings; but he also shows that it was the Ukrainian side of the family that were the rightful inheritors of the old world, somewhat resembling

the post-1863 Polish *wysadzeni z siodła* (literally "the unsaddled", disowned nobility morphing into intelligentsia). In turn, the Russian Shul′gins, led by energetic social climber Dmitrii Pikhno, were much closer to the ideal of the nineteenth-century self-made bourgeois, eventually amassing a substantial fortune. In the next generation, Vasilii Shul′gin and his wife Ekaterina proved their mettle as innovative political entrepreneurs, devising right-wing politics in a new key, focused on Darwinistic chauvinism and the mobilisation of urban dwellers with the help of mass media. Here, it is the Russians whose lifestyle and professional trajectories seem much more modern, although the modernity they represent is not the fluffy progressive one known from the reassuring tales of old-hat theorists of modernisation. To what extent can we treat this dynamic between Shul′gins and Shul′hyns as representative of broader trends remains one of the major questions that should be explored in the aftermath of this seminal book.

Baumann makes one more intriguing observation that needs to be mentioned here. Obviously, he duly notes that the two branches of the family broke off relations with each other in the late 1870s: even though they continued to live in the same area of downtown Kyiv, there is no significant evidence of closer contact after the fateful split. Nevertheless, Baumann argues that the eventual crystallisation of completely separate national identifications, Ukrainian and Russian, took place only in the interwar period when members of the family enclosed themselves in their respective émigré bubbles and codified canonical versions of nationalised family memory by writing memoirs. The validity of this assertion beyond the Shul′hyn/Shul′gin circle will have to be tested, but it is a promising avenue to pursue.

It is striking that the Russian part of Baumann's story is so much more colourful and engaging than the Ukrainian one. Perhaps the Russian Shul′gins, with their unconventional love lives and unrestrained political expression, left behind a legacy that is simply more appealing to a contemporary Western European historian and his Anglophone readership than did the somewhat listless Ukrainian Shul′hyns, who were forced to endure several decades of inner emigration and had a rather bland family life. Perhaps this is the case, but there are roads not taken in Baumann's book that could have changed the contours and enriched the overall picture. One striking example is his neglect of Oleksander Shul′hyn's 1937 study of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's impact on the development of the modern concept of nationality.[3] There is no attempt on the author's part to actually analyse the contents of that work, located at the intersection of scholarly and political interests of an important protagonist of his story. At the same time, Baumann discusses

[3] Alexandre Choulguine, *Les origines de l'esprit national moderne et Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Annales de la société Jean-Jacques Rousseau Series, vol. 26 (Genève, 1938), 7–283.

Vasilii Shul′gin's writings from the same period in a fairly detailed fashion. Perhaps a French-language study of Rousseau's political ideas did not seem Eastern European enough to merit the author's attention.

Or perhaps he simply does not perceive intellectual history as such to be very useful for his argument. Although he pays lip service to the concept of 'national indifference' developed by historians of the Habsburg Monarchy and its successor states, Baumann's overall framework forces him to depict nationalism as a seemingly unstoppable modern force, embedded in all-pervasive social and cultural mechanisms of the nineteenth century. The historian's task is to reconstruct the trajectories of individual protagonists as embodiments of impersonal historical structures that form the "big picture". There is room for individual agency here, but its scope is rather limited: one can choose to become Russian or Ukrainian, a democratic socialist or a liberal monarchist; to emigrate to Switzerland or to snuggle in the safe haven of one's family circle; but that would largely be all. These decisions affected individuals and their families, but they could not change the course of history as such. From this perspective, intellectual history is much less relevant than social and cultural history, which is rather problematic in light of one of Baumann's basic assumptions: that national choices were conditioned by the political worldviews of historical actors. In any case, his study is notably weaker when it comes to analysing ideologies.

His neglect of Oleksander Shul′hyn's work on Rousseau is one example. Another is the disappointing oversimplification of Mykhailo Drahomanov's stance on nationalism. Baumann does a great job of piecing together the complex emotional triangle between Drahomanov, Vitalii Shul′gin, and his nephew Iakiv Shul′hyn in the 1860s and 1870s, but when he tries to explain Drahomanov's key political ideas, he presents him as a cosmopolitan socialist who championed the cause of Ukrainian language because he believed that elementary education in a native language was necessary for the spread of enlightenment among the peasant masses. All of this is basically true, but it is not the whole truth. If we were to limit ourselves to this perspective, it would be difficult to understand why Drahomanov should be considered a Ukrainian nationalist at all; what actually distinguished him (and his supporters) from the mainstream Russian *narodniki* of the time. Was his insistence on the rather limited and tactical use of Ukrainian vernacular really so important? Was he not just a sort of Aleksandra Efimenko in trousers, arguing for a more inclusive, egalitarian, diverse, and open-ended version of the indivisible Russian nation? These are no trivial questions, because they allow us to identify the major shortcoming of Baumann's otherwise excellent work: ultimately, he fails to clarify how the Ukrainian nation-builders explained to themselves and to the people around them what exactly set them apart from the Russian *narodniki* and liberals. It is clear why these Ukrainophiles quarrelled with conservative Little Russians, such as their cousins Shul′gins

or Mikhail Iuzefovich, but what was the difference between Iakiv Shul'hyn and, say, Andrei Zheliabov? Were Ukrainian nation-builders merely a moderate regional faction of Russian progressive intelligentsia? For example, Baumann mentions the importance of Ukraine's Cossack heritage on several occasions (e.g. pp. 17, 33, 51, 53, 73), but always in passing and in very general terms, so the reader is left wondering about its overall significance for his understanding of the nation-building process in Ukraine. Does the author mean to present Cossack myths as the decisive factor that set Ukrainian nationalism apart from the much weaker Belarusian and Siberian movements? Or should we treat the Cossack paraphernalia as a mere regional colour that could be used to embellish nationalist arguments but was ultimately devoid of consequence for modern politics? Similarly, Baumann summarises the main thrust of Kostomarov's seminal 1861 article on two Rus′ nationalities, duly identifies it as "a foundational text of Ukrainian nationalism that defined many of its *topoi*", and even mentions its influence on the writings of Oleksander Shul'hyn (pp. 25, 199), but he does it in a manner that fails to convey the political and ideational fertility of such arguments. We clearly see that Ukrainophiles eventually chose to make life much harder for themselves and followed a separate path from Russian conservatives and progressives alike, but it is difficult to understand how and why. If one were to judge from Baumann's account, it was either a protracted comedy of errors or the inevitable result of deep-seated differences in ethnic essence (doubtless, Baumann does not believe in the latter possibility).

An answer (or at least an important part of it) can be found in Drahomanov's key publications from the early 1880s, where he explicitly asserts that the Ukrainian nation was much more than just an aggregate of peasants who spoke related dialects.[4] Going against the zeitgeist, Drahomanov unequivocally rejected racial explanations (let us only remember that Volodymyr Antonovych was susceptible to them, parroting Fedir Vovk and Pompeu Gener).[5] Instead,

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[4] Mikhail Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha i velikorusskaia demokratiia* (Geneva, 1881), 362–6, 422–5, 452–4, 458, 468–73, 478; Mykhailo Drahomanov, *Novi ukrains'ki pisni pro hromads'ki spravy, 1764–1880* (Geneva, 1881), 141–6. The extent to which we can project Drahomanov's views expressed in the 1880s upon his activities in the 1860s and 1870s remains to be determined. Unsurprisingly, Johannes Remy, *Brothers or Enemies: the Ukrainian National Movement and Russia, from the 1840s to the 1870s* (Toronto, 2016) registers serious differences between the views expressed by Drahomanov before and after his definitive departure from the Russian Empire (see 192–6, 217–20). Cf. Tetiana Portnova, *Liubyty i navchaty: selianstvo v uiavlenniakh ukrains'koi intelihentsii druhoi polovyny XIX stolittia* (Dnipro, 2016), 92–140.

[5] For Antonovych's racialised worldview, see his widely reprinted article 'Try natsional′ni typy narodni', originally published in Galician *Pravda* in 1888. For a succinct summary of his ideas, see Osyp Hermaize, 'V. B. Antonovych v ukrains′kii

he argued that Ukrainian peasants were shaped by a peculiar historical process, and because of this, they had formed a political culture fundamentally different from that of their Russian counterparts. Following the Cyrillo-Methodians of the 1840s, Drahomanov believed that the Zaporozhian mythology was not only alive, but remained a productive political resource among Ukrainian commoners. Consequently, they were said to be endowed with a much more republican understanding of liberty than any of their counterparts in Russia proper. Any revolutionary or progressive propaganda had to be calibrated with this in mind: rather than trying to erase the differences between Ukrainians and Russians for the sake of a crudely defined international solidarity of the oppressed, socialists should build upon the truly democratic and rational spirit allegedly found among the Ukrainian masses. This was to be the true road to cosmopolitanism that would not perpetuate the privilege of the so-called historical nations (Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and Russians). Whether Drahomanov's reading of history and social realities was accurate or not is not very relevant.[6] What matters here is that: (i) he had a fully-fledged nationalist vision, even if one embedded in a broader framework of cosmopolitan progress; and (ii) this powerful dream about a unique nation of democratically-minded peasants was much better suited to fascinate and mobilise scores of individuals of various backgrounds than were some languid arguments on the practical necessity of employing local dialects in elementary education. In the final analysis, the toolkit of intellectual history proves indispensable for reconstructing how members of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia chose sides in the emerging national conflict.

A more nuanced account of Drahomanov's thought would have critically enriched Baumann's understanding of the Ukrainian national movement as a whole, as well as his specific analysis of Iakiv Shul'hyn's studies on *kolivshchyna* and the Pereiaslav agreement (pp. 65–70). We must not, however, lose the sense of proportion and forget about the broader historiographical context in which this Swiss historian wrote his monograph. Despite being the most important Ukrainian political thinker of the nineteenth century (if not of all time), Drahomanov remains badly neglected and it would be deeply unfair to demand from Baumann an exhaustive analysis of his thought.[7] In order to do justice to the complexity of this character, he would

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istoriohrafii', *Ukraina*, 5 (1928), 22; and Myron Korduba, 'Zviazky V. Antonovycha z Halychynoiu', *Ukraina*, 5 (1928), 64.

[6] The evidence provided by Serhii Shamrai in his 'Kyivs'ka kozachchyna 1855 r.', *Zapysky istorychno-filolohichnoho viddilu*, 20 (1928), 199–323; and by Serhii Plokhii in his *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Age of Empires* (Cambridge, 2012) suggests that we should not dismiss Drahomanov's interpretation out of hand.

[7] For an introduction to Drahomanov's thought, see Ivan L. Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Edmonton, 1987), 203–7; and Zayarnyuk and Sereda,

have had to write a completely different book. He chose to move away from the political and scholarly debates and trace instead lived experiences of his protagonists. The high quality of the work he gave us fully justifies his decision, but precisely because his contribution is so rich and powerful, it may lead some less experienced readers to believe that the book has given the last word on the matter. *Dynasty Divided* is a valuable volume that pushes us to rethink some important aspects of Ukrainian nation-building in the nineteenth century, but we need to be alert to the fact that it has its limits. It is not an all-encompassing survey covering all the major themes present in the historiography of that period. Most obviously, it is a book on intelligentsia that has very little to say about the appeal of competing national allegiances outside of this social group and thus cannot account for the surprising expansion of Ukrainian national initiatives in the first two decades of the twentieth century.[8]

All the above-mentioned reservations must not obscure the fact that we are extremely lucky to have Baumann's exciting monograph on the process of Russo-Ukrainian disentanglement among the fin-de-siècle Kyivan intelligentsia. *Dynasty Divided* has a clear and compelling argument, a colourful set of protagonists, and original insights of broader significance. Devouring this family saga is a real bliss, as it is both perceptive and enjoyable to read. Rather than providing fixed, unassailable answers, this study leaves us new questions to explore, which is what makes it a truly relevant piece of scholarship. It is not history's last word, but who would like to read the last word?

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Adam Walaszek, *Polish American History before 1939: Polish--American History from 1854 to 2004*, vol. 1, translated by Urszula Tempska, New York, 2024, Routledge, 449 pp., bibliography, index

The history of the largest Polish diaspora, the one in the United States, has attracted significant interest and attention from scholars as well as the broader public. The latter, quite probably affected in a more or less direct way by migration to 'Ameryka', as the country was habitually referred to, sought out stories

Intellectual Foundations, 86–94. For an extensive but accessible account of his life, see Leonid Ushkalov, *Charivnist' enerhii: Mykhailo Drahomanov* (Kyiv, 2019).

[8] See for example a fascinating section on the expansion of readership in Bilenky, *Laboratory of Modernity*, 411–30, based on the research of Tetiana Karoieva.

of their ancestors who embarked on a journey to a better life on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Historians and other scholars interested in the past of Polish immigrants and ethnics in the US examined Polish Americans to discover patterns of migration, acculturation, and adaptation to the American way of life, or tensions caused by the clash between expectations and reality. The first attempts to grasp the history of the group in a coherent synthetic study were made in the early decades of the twentieth century.[1] The revival of ethnic studies in the US in the 1960s and 70s, as well as the interest in the history of Polonia (Polish diaspora in the US) in Poland during the same period, led to the production of new syntheses, most notably those by Andrzej Brożek and Joseph A. Wytrwał.[2] In the following decades, two American historians of Polish descent – John Bukowczyk and James Pula – published books that presented their interpretations of Polish American history.[3] These two volumes served for a long time as accessible narratives of the Polish American past, read not only by academics but also by general audiences.

Nevertheless, the story of the Polish American past continued to await a historian who would interweave old narratives regarding work, religion, and organisational life of Polonia – which were examined by all aforementioned authors – with the study of Polish American history from more novel and recent perspectives such as women's history, cultural history, childhood studies, or the history of private and everyday life. In *Polish American History before 1939*, Adam Walaszek succeeds in combining these two approaches, bringing together both the history of trade unionism or food studies, detailed descriptions of fraternal organisations, and stories about emotions and health. Walaszek's synthesis of the history of American Polonia is based on older contributions to the field in the form of monographs and articles, as well as more recent findings that older publications did not take into consideration. The book benefits from insights from other disciplines, mainly sociology, discussed mostly in the introduction and the first chapter, which present the methodological assumptions and foundations of the analysis.

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[1] Witold Kruszka, *Historya polska w Ameryce* (Milwaukee, 1905–1908); Mieczysław Haiman, *Polacy w Ameryce: Historja wychodźtwa polskiego w Stanach Zjednoczonych* (Chicago, 1930); *id.*, *Polish Past in America* (Chicago, 1939).

[2] Andrzej Brożek, *Polonia amerykańska, 1854–1939* (Warszawa, 1977), translated into English as: *id.*, *Polish Americans, 1854–1939*, trans. Wojciech Worsztynowicz (Warszawa, 1985); Joseph A. Wytrwał, *America's Polish Heritage: A Social History of the Poles in America* (Detroit, 1976); *id.*, *Poles in American History and Tradition* (Detroit, 1969); Andrzej Ławrowski, *Polacy w dziejach Stanów Zjednoczonych* (Warszawa, 1977).

[3] James Pula, *Polish Americans: An Ethnic Community* (Boston–New York, 1995); John J. Bukowczyk, *And My Children Did Not Know Me: A history of Polish-Americans* (Bloomington–Indianapolis, 1987), reprinted as: *id.*, *A History of the Polish Americans, with a New Introduction by the Author* (New Brunswick–London, 2009).

As stressed in the opening pages, one of the objectives of *Polish American History before 1939* is to narrate "the history of the private lives of the first and second generations of Polish immigrants in the United States" (p. i). To tell the story of the Polish American experience from the perspective of the migrants themselves, Walaszek relies on a wide range of primary sources, both published and archival. Among the sources are several archival collections comprising various types of documents produced in large centres of Polonia life during the late nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth century. Apart from parish records, records of fraternal organisations, or papers of leaders of Polonia from such Polish American enclaves as Cleveland or Chicago, the book incorporates material produced by American federal, state, and local institutions, voluntary associations, and social activists. These rich collections are supplemented by archival sources held in Polish archives and libraries, as well as from the Vatican, and by published materials, such as the press.

The primary source base contains numerous collections of oral histories and published and unpublished ego documents, such as diaries, letters, or memoirs, which Walaszek uses effectively to depict Polish American immigrant life. One of the ways in which the book integrates personal stories with the main narrative is through references to the life of a female immigrant named Józefa C., whose life narrative is included in the Oral History Archives of Chicago Polonia. Born in Galicia in 1894, Józefa C. departed for the US in 1910, coming through Ellis Island and heading to Wisconsin before settling in Chicago. Walaszek not only recounts her journey to 'Ameryka' and the difficult early days of an immigrant in the first chapter of his book but also returns to her life story in the ensuing parts, discussing her labour, political, and organisational engagements and presenting the everyday life of the Polish female immigrant. *Polish American History before 1939* is peppered by several such personal stories, taken not only from Polish or Polonian sources but also from American ones, as in the case of the Raparek family, which underwent a transformation during the Great Depression (pp. 345–6). Personal accounts and references to them are an integral part of the scholarly narrative, skilfully interwoven with a wide array of data presented in the book.

Polish American History before 1939 consists of an introduction, ten chronologically arranged chapters, a bibliography, and an index. The main body of the book can be divided into two parts. The bulk of the synthesis (first seven chapters) is devoted to the experiences of the first generation of Polish immigrants in the US. It focuses roughly on the period from the 1880s to the 1910s, although at times discusses earlier phenomena and processes or references to events of the interwar period. Presenting a detailed examination of several aspects of the life of first-generation immigrants, such as work, private life, religion, school, or self-organisation, Walaszek provides

a vivid portrait of a group whose migration from the Polish lands accelerated swiftly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, peaking at the turn of the twentieth century. The chapter that follows this main part of the book is devoted to the Great War and its aftermath, whereas the two closing chapters study the experiences of the second generation during the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, while also discussing the role of culture in (re)shaping Polish-American identity in the interwar years.

The opening chapter delineates the reasons for and patterns of migration from the Polish lands to the United States, concentrating mostly on the last decades of the nineteenth century. Filled with personal stories of immigrants heading to 'Ameryka', this part of the book discusses both the conditions in Europe that prompted inhabitants of the Polish lands to migrate to the US, as well as the situation in the immigrants' destinations. Walaszek provides multiple theoretical perspectives, outlining the characteristics of turn-of-the-country migration, discussing American immigration legislation in the early twentieth century as well as in the interwar period, and briefly examining the exchange between burgeoning US Polonia and the Old Country. His analysis in this chapter is informed by a gender perspective, employed to examine the impact of migration on the family, and best exemplified in the story of Józefa C. that begins to be told in the opening chapter.

The part that follows is devoted to the establishment of Polish neighbourhoods in the United States, both in large, mainly industrial cities, such as Chicago, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, or Cleveland, and in smaller towns in several American states. The chapter both describes distinct areas, like Back of the Yards in Chicago and provides information on the prevalent conditions in these ethnic enclaves, including housing and public spaces. It contains a vivid description of one of the most common housing-related phenomena among first-generation Polish immigrants: the admission of boarders into one's dwellings, which occurred mostly for economic reasons but also had salient social consequences. In this part of the book, as in several other places, Walaszek compares the experiences of Polish immigrants with those of newcomers from other ethnic groups, examining the relations between Poles and their ethnic neighbours, such as Germans, Lithuanians, Czechs, or Jews.

The next chapter is devoted to work and serves as a basis for a discussion of "Americanization from the bottom up". Walaszek borrows the phrase from historian James A. Barrett to show how the workplace became the place where "immigrant men and women typically first interfaced with the new American reality and with 'others'" (p. 89). Such an approach benefits greatly from incorporating the personal life stories of immigrants into the discussion. The chapter focuses on two main issues: the realities of Polish immigrant work in the United States and the impact of work on the evolution of immigrant identity. With industrial labour being the main type of employment of Polish immigrants, newcomers from Polish lands were engaged mostly

in menial work that changed frequently, provided broadly insufficient wages, and was performed in difficult conditions in places such as mines, steel mills, or stockyards. A sizeable part of the chapter concentrates on the reaction of the immigrants to these work realities, expressed in the form of rebellion and resistance, participation in strikes, and engagement in trade unions. These activities, Walaszek argues, played a significant role in the formation of immigrant identity, in which the "ethnic identity [of the Polish workers] was merging into another, broader identity unique to their new country of residence" (p. 104).

The realities of work, Walaszek aptly notes, were greatly influenced by and intertwined with personal life, examined in the fourth chapter. It discusses material aspects of Polish American life, such as foodways, clothes, or health-related phenomena, also devoting a lot of attention to emotions and the formation and functioning of the family. As the author emphasises, Polish immigrants in the US tended to form endogamous marriages, choosing partners at large by themselves, in contrast to patterns prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century in the Polish lands. Married Polish female immigrants worked outside the home more frequently than women from other ethnicities. Family life, as stressed in the chapter, was not free from strife and difficulties, amplified by migration and the Americanisation of the second generation.

As the author of *Polish American History before 1939* stresses, the daily private lives of the immigrants were regulated by "certain structured organizational frameworks" (p. 142). In the case of Polish immigrants in the United States, these frameworks were surely provided by the Catholic Church and the ethnic parishes, which are the subject of the next chapter of the book. As the historiography of Polonia illustrates, the parish played a much larger role in the life of immigrants than just as the purveyor of religious services, being the social centre of the community. Like other historians of Polish Americans, Walaszek outlines these other functions, but his main focus in the chapter are the disputes and frictions that stemmed, on the one hand, from the position of Polish immigrant parishes in the larger structure of the American Catholic Church, and on the other from internal tensions. This perspective prompts comparisons with other ethnic groups, such as the Irish, and highlights the grass-roots efforts of parish formation. The analysis of religious institutions in the life of Polonia does not end with the first wave of immigration, but continues up until the Second World War, bringing in a multi-generational perspective and allowing for the examination of continuity and change.

The section devoted to another traditional subject of Polish American history – Polonia's organisations and societies – offers an opportunity to analyse in detail the construction of Polish American identity and the charting of ethnic boundaries. Discussing the major organisations of this kind, particularly the fraternal groups that exerted the biggest influence on communities within

Polonia, the author makes wide-ranging comparisons to other ethnic groups, situating the Polish case in a much broader perspective. The chapter also brings to light smaller and lesser-known associations and groups that exemplified the extensive organisational efforts of Polish Americans in the period prior to the Second World War.

One of the important contributions of *Polish American History before 1939* is the adoption of age as a category of analysis and examination of the life of the youth of Polonia "at school and in the streets" (p. 242). The chapter stresses that "the children's and youth's lives were territories on which realities clashed: the distinct school realities with the realities of the streets and the realities of the homes" (p. 243). Walaszek juxtaposes the conditions and objectives of public American schools, which Polish immigrants avoided, with parish-based educational institutions, created and maintained by the ethnic community. In a fascinating passage, the author outlines the possible choices and opportunities provided to children and the youth in the process of their adjustment to the American environment. As the chapter emphasises, in the early twentieth century, immigrant children, their free time, and their future, were becoming a concern for the American middle class that feared young immigrants' rebellion and pursued their acculturation.

The period of the Great War and its aftermath are discussed in the eighth chapter, which examines Polonia's humanitarian and political contribution to the war effort in the Polish lands, as well as the impact of the war on Polish immigrants and ethnics in the US. As Poland regained independence, many Polish Americans were faced with the question of whether to return to their homeland. Those who remained in 'Ameryka' were frequently targeted in the post-war years by Americanisation initiatives in the US that inspired the introduction of quotas designed to significantly limit immigration from such countries as Poland in 1921 and 1924. After 1924, the Polish diaspora in the United States redefined its goals since the rebirth of Poland nullified the need for American Polonia to be the 'fourth partition', actively engaged in the struggle for Polish independence.

"After 1924, American Polonia became in many ways different from Polonia of the turn of the centuries" (p. 307), argues the author of *Polish American History before 1939*, devoting the two last chapters to several aspects of interwar Polish American life. This part of the book juxtaposes the years of the so-called Roaring Twenties, characterised by mass consumption, new morality, and the increasing popularity of mass culture, with the decade of the 1930s, marked by the economic crisis. Polish American immersion in mass culture and mass consumption is discussed alongside the organisational developments within the community and then contrasted with the austerity of the Great Depression. Its impact is best exemplified by the personal stories of Józefa C. and other immigrants and ethnicities cited in this part of the book. Its last section discusses the reshaping of the Polish American identity after

the war, examined for the most part in relation to the evolution of the ethnic culture, involving an engaging analysis of its aspects, such as literature (low-brow and high-brow), movie theatres, music, or sports.

All ten chapters of *Polish American History before 1939* present a nuanced and thorough analysis of manifold aspects of Polish American life during the period of the biggest immigration from the Polish lands to the United States and its aftermath. Adam Walaszek's highly anticipated book offers a compelling narrative rich with personal stories of immigrants and ethnicities that are combined with detailed data and factual information. The chapters devoted to the issues habitually discussed in syntheses of Polish American history, such as work, religion, or self-organisation, are frequently written from a novel perspective. One of the biggest contributions of *Polish American History before 1939* are the parts on the subjects and matters that so far have rarely been included in scholarly publications on the history of Polonia, such as private life or the experiences of the youth. One would only wish that the ten chapters culminated with a conclusion that would provide final and ultimate interpretations by such an expert in the field of history of Polish Americans before the Second World War. Walaszek's synthesis will be of great interest to scholars and students specialising in Polish, Polish American, and American history, as well as broadly defined migration studies. The book is part of a broader scholarly endeavour orchestrated by another expert in Polish American history, Joanna Wojdon. The team under her lead has already published a collection of primary sources, edited by Anna Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann and James Pula,[4] whereas Wojdon herself has authored a synthesis of the post-Second World War Polish American history that will be available in mid-2024.[5]

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[4] Anna D. Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann and James S. Pula (eds), *Polish American Voices: A Documentary History, 1608–2020* (New York, 2024).

[5] Joanna Wojdon, *Polish American History after 1939. Polish-American History from 1854 to 2004*, ii (New York, 2024).

Joanna Degler, Agnieszka Jagodzińska, Marcin Wodziński, *Literatura autobiograficzna Żydów polskich: tradycja, nowoczesność, płeć* [Autobiographies of Polish Jews: Tradition, Modernity, Gender], Wrocław, 2024, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 206 pp. (Bibliotheca Judaica, 12)

The monograph by Joanna Degler, Agnieszka Jagodzińska, and Marcin Wodziński, members of the Tadeusz Taube Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław, offers an overview of the long-term project of a critical edition of memoirs by Polish Jews – an interdisciplinary effort involving historians as well as scholars in Jewish studies and literary studies.[1] Owing to the exceptionally meticulous editing of the selected autobiographical narratives, which were provided with scholarly introductions and annotations, even readers with limited knowledge of the world of Jewish culture will understand the context within which the memoirs are located.

In the introduction, the authors stress that autobiographies are not only a valuable historical source but also captivating literature. One would be hard-pressed to negate the claim that such personal documents shed light on entire swathes of human experience inaccessible through more conventional source materials. Autobiographies offer a window into the history and mentality of marginalised groups, of which the Jews certainly are one, and Jewish women even more so. Classical history relies on accounts of major events in whose production most of the society – workers, artisans, peasants, women – does not partake. Their histories and thoughts can be accessed through the memoirs that they left behind. Autobiographies are thus "a formidable means of accessing the culture of the minorities because they give room to the subjective voice, the view from the inside, while themselves taking place in a more general, supra-subjective context of history and society" (p. 9). For this reason, autobiographies are an invaluable resource for the study of Jewish history and culture. Written by people who did not always partake in much learning nor access to spheres of high culture, they offer a window onto the norms and values which existed but were not mentioned by professional writers – or rather, were mentioned disapprovingly in the

[1] The project has taken the shape of the series 'Żydzi. Polska. Autobiografia' [Jews. Poland. Autobiography], published under the auspices of the Department of Jewish Studies at the University of Wrocław as part of a grant from the National Program for the Development of the Humanities [Narodowy Program Rozwoju Humanistyki]. At the time of publication of the monograph, 21 volumes had seen print, with another 6 scheduled for publication. For more on the project, see 'Kanon literatury wspomnieniowej Żydów polskich', Katedra Judaistyki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, https://zydzi.autobiografia.uni.wroc.pl/ [Accessed: 29 Apr. 2024].

context of socially accepted mores. On the other hand, these texts also contribute to the knowledge of the history of local communities by providing the much-needed slice-of-life perspective on the relatively self-contained Jewish community.

The work is comprised of four chapters. The first, entitled *Literatura autobiograficzna Żydów polskich* [Autobiographical writings by Polish Jews], discusses the history and methodology of the study of Jewish autobiographies. The authors analyse the possible motivations of the creators of such texts, whether Jewish or not. This is an essential aspect of the methodology of research based on memoirs since analyses of autobiographies as sources are largely governed by the intentions of their creators; one writes differently 'for the drawer' than for posterity. However, one key motivator has been omitted here: autobiographies produced for a variety of competitions (even though the authors repeatedly reference the pre-war activities in that regard of the Yiddish Scientific Institute in Vilnius [YIVO]). It is quite clear that competition autobiographies are a highly significant resource, but one feels the absence of at least another paragraph on the peculiarities of this set of texts. Though the authors cite the monograph by Kamil Kijek, which provides an in-depth analysis of these autobiographies,[2] the reader may not be familiar with it, and thus, it would be useful to mention that they were produced to a set of requirements defined by the organisers, and thus the topics they addressed were, at least to a degree, enforced, and the demands of the competitions and the authors' desire to succeed in them also limit their reliability.

One somewhat provocative question that the authors of the volume under review pose is whether there is such a thing as a Jewish autobiography. At first glance, the question seems nonsensical since such autobiographies not only exist but are also foundational for the monograph. However, things are not as simple as that. Here, the authors dispute the Eurocentric belief that autobiographies are peculiar to the European, Christian cultures that have given them their canonical shape. Thus, Jewish ego documents would, of necessity, rely on foreign cultural patterns. On the other hand, traditional Jewish culture has no room for writing about oneself since its focus is not on the analysis of one's 'I' but rather on religion and communion with God.

The authors outline a peculiar understanding of autobiographical writing (as a literary genre, wedged between historiography and memoirs), including historical songs, songs-stories, and verbal accounts of events that constitute the history of a family or community. In the Jewish community, these texts usually share a martyrological profile. To a degree, they can be seen as precursors to the characteristically Jewish autobiography.

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[2] Kamil Kijek, *Dzieci modernizmu: Świadomość, kultura i socjalizacja polityczna młodzieży żydowskiej w II Rzeczpospolitej* (Wrocław, 2017).

One problem that every scholar who uses ego documents as a source must face is the degree to which they are representative of the community within which they were produced. Here, there is an added wrinkle in the shape of the fact that within a diaspora that is frequently subjected to violence and forced removal, the survival of personal writings is even less certain than in stable communities. Thus, the question arises of which autobiographies were deemed worthy of preservation, and by whom. The authors stress that the task of preserving these memoirs was taken up to a large degree by families, especially those of means and stature within the community, for whom maintaining traditions was a point of honour.

The earliest writings of a partially autobiographical character, namely family scrolls and merchant diaries, came exclusively from men from the elite stratum of rabbis and merchants. This only changed with the advent of the Haskalah. The autobiography of Solomon Maimon, published in the latter half of the eighteenth century, established a pattern followed by later memoirists. Most of all, though, it enriched Jewish autobiographies with privacy, discussion of uncomfortable facts and events, and eschewal of idealisation – either of oneself or of one's environment. Another shift came after Haskalah; at stake was not only a change in language, but also in the style of narration, since knowledge of the language of the communities among which the memoirists lived also entailed a deeper familiarity with the culture and literature of the majority, thus fostering a comparative tendency, the drawing of patterns from non-Jewish environments. However, the authors of the monograph stress that one should not forget that the extant autobiographies are not representative of the entirety or even of the majority of the Jewish community since Orthodox Jews have left very few such ego documents.

The end of the nineteenth century marked an opening to the 'broader world', politics beyond the Jewish community, and an ever-increasing modernisation. A breakthrough came with the First World War, which led these texts to shed their Jewish particularity, as their authors came to pursue literary ambitions. In this period, a growing number of women began to contribute to the genre.

Though neither the monograph under review nor the editorial project engages the period after 1939, and thus the Holocaust and the post-war, the authors rightly concluded that such a significant period cannot be entirely omitted from a historical account of this genre of autobiographical writing. It was then that the majority of memoirs and diaries – an even more valuable historical resource – were produced. After the war, many Jewish institutions in Poland collected these documents, even as they strove to amass the greatest possible number of testimonies about the Holocaust, brought together and recorded by employees of the Central Jewish Historical Commission [Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, CŻKH]. The authors express regret that the current popularity of this type of autobiography has fuelled a disturbing

phenomenon of editions altered deliberately for the purpose of increasing sales, the result of which are publications that have little to do with the original sources or, worse, with historical veracity (p. 58).

The first, methodological chapter is followed by three others of a markedly different character. They reflect on three aspects of Jewish life: 'Religia i tradycja' [Religion and tradition], 'Nowoczesność i zmiana' [Modernity and change"], and 'Płeć. Auto-gender-grafia' [Sex: Auto-gender-graphy], all viewed from the vantage of autobiographical sources.

Here, I would like to focus particular attention on the chapter 'Religion and tradition', because it seems that, while religion numbered among the most powerful forces binding Jews together, and most of them saw adherence to mores and religious practices as a cornerstone of their identity, these facts are occasionally overlooked in narratives about Jews, especially in the twentieth century. At stake here are not ceremonies or religious practices as features of the everyday in a changing world, though even this topic is relatively under-researched, as the authors themselves stress. In this part of the monograph, attention is devoted primarily to something that has been eluding historians concerned with the life of Jews: the relationship of secular persons (not theologians or rabbis) to religion as such; in other words, how religion was described and how it was treated. The chapter fills a certain gap in the historiography of the Jews, and it deserves particular attention due to the broad historical perspective – from the sixteenth century until the Holocaust – which serves to highlight the evolution of attitudes.

The authors offer a highly interesting observation that the earliest extant autobiographies, up until the eighteenth century, describe Judaism and the Jewish world as one and the same, to the extent that religion as such is virtually unmentioned. It is not a separate subject because it is the very core of life, its foundation, its rules being self-evident and unquestionable within the confines of the world inhabited by the memoirists. Everyday and personal life is tied so tightly to religion that it does not require any special attention or remark; its stipulations are internalised so deeply that the autobiographers do not see it as external to themselves. Meanwhile, Christianity – an external, foreign religion – is worthy of remark and explanation, unappealing though it may be.

Attitudes toward religion change during the Haskalah, though for the most part there can be no talk of laicisation, nor anti-religious or anti-rabbinic attitudes. Critiques are levelled against only some traditions and superstitions, while religion itself continues to enjoy prominence – though it is also the case that certain memoirists describe Judaism (like all other religions) as an anachronism.

Turn-of-the-century memoirs of three women – Adele von Mises, Pauline Wengeroff, and their later counterpart, Rachel Faygnberg – already contain an element of nostalgia, a longing for the religiosity of the period of childhood

and youth. Though these authors opted to abandon certain mores, they nevertheless revere tradition. In this case, however, I doubt whether these longings refer to any particular degree to religious traditions, many of which were exhausting and bothersome, rather than reflecting a fairly typical tendency to elevate the 'good old days' above the here and now; in other words, a longing for the days of youth rationalised and explained through a degradation of mores – something that Rachel Faygnberg was aware of. I am also not sure why the authors of the monograph chose to cite Israel Yehoshua Singer as an antithesis of this womanly nostalgia, since they themselves stress that his attitude toward religion and the world of tradition evolved, and his memoirs remained unfinished at the time of his death. The entire sub-chapter on 'Wiara utracona' [Faith lost] in my opinion, would be a better suit for the subsequent chapter, since it does not discuss faith so much as the land of childhood. Only in subsequent sub-chapters – 'Od mistycyzmu do ortodoksji' [From mysticism to Orthodoxy] and 'Studium przypadku: chasydyzm' [Case study: Hasidism] – does the question of relationship to faith recur. Here, the authors analyse memoirs of Hasidic Jews, very few in number and thus of special significance, as this community is known more intimately from the outside than from the inside. Of note in this context are memoirs by women, including Sarah Schenirer, the founder of a network of schools for girls from Orthodox Jewish families; men's religious experiences tend to be seen as representative for the entire community, while a female outlook on Judaism is not taken into account. Women's attitudes toward Judaism are also discussed in the subsequent chapter.

The chapter on 'Modernity and change' focusses on an extremely limited period, mostly the nineteenth and twentieth century before the Holocaust. Clearly, changes had advanced very rapidly during the nineteenth century, transforming Jewish communities; however, were there no such changes in the previous centuries, or perhaps they were not recorded in autobiographies? Of note here is the discussion of the evolution of family life, the rules governing marriages, the role of women in Jewish families. Interestingly, changes in this aspect of the life of Jewish communities are apparent not only in comparative analyses of texts from different periods – in fact, they occurred so rapidly that they were even noted by the memoirists themselves. One especially fascinating section – especially compared to that devoted to the rules for concluding marriages, whose alterations met with evident acceptance – concerns the modernisation of clothing styles, primarily among men. Here, the change went beyond the surface level: the abandonment of traditional Jewish garb signified a deeper transformation, the beginning of assimilation. The chapter concludes with a section on the most far-reaching alteration that the Jewish community had endured: the onset of the First World War. The entire chapter illustrates not only the evolution of the Jewish community but also the gradual, occasionally undesirable and unwelcome

acculturation, which often happened outside of the consciousness and will of its subjects.

The final chapter, 'Sex: Auto-gender-graphy', stands out for its distinctive style, somewhere between historical and literary analysis, which may prove slightly more opaque for readers than are the previous chapters of the monograph. As the authors stress, scholars of Jewish biographies have thus far adhered to a 'male-centric' perspective. Autobiographies of Jewish women have been overlooked because their authors were not only members of minorities, but also women in a world of men, where women's testimony was insignificant. They do not fit the mould promoted by scholars who prefer texts written by outstanding characters, exceptional individualities, and men convinced of their own uniqueness – in other words, men from majority groups. However – and this is clearly a good call on the part of the authors of the monograph under review – this chapter focuses on gender issues rather than just women's autobiographies. This is best illustrated by the subchapter 'Edukacja – przymus czy przywilej' [Education – compulsion or privilege], which juxtaposes the experiences of boys and girls from the period of their education. Thanks to this, it is apparent how one's sex affected not only how long one was educated or where it happened, but also which of the two entirely distinct forms of socialisation one was subjected to. As a consequence, members of each of the two sexes internalised a slightly different idea of the surrounding world, of matters of sexuality (interestingly, here, the injured party were primarily boys and young husbands). A girl had to struggle against not only the established gender expectations but also her own parents if she wanted to study. Yet, I am unconvinced as to the claim that "without a doubt, the generation of Jewish women born in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century 'desired the world', perceiving education as their means of access to it, and fought for it, as autobiographical accounts convincingly prove" (p. 172). One should not forget that memoirs are typically written by people who are more ambitious and well-spoken, and thus the longing for education, the regret for not having finished school, or the determination to continue learning may not have been a part of the experience of an average Jewish woman. Women of high ambition are certainly overrepresented among memoirists.

Particular attention should be devoted to the analysis of the motives that led those women to write autobiographies, the oft-expressed need on their part to explain why they write, what their goals are, and the also quite common (especially earlier) use of pseudonyms, less frequent among male memoirists. It is also vital to consider the language of the memoirs. Yiddish was commonly used by women; therefore, for a woman to write in Hebrew signified the crossing of a boundary between the worlds of the two sexes – whatever the contents of the autobiography, language itself could mark a kind of rebellion, signifying emancipation.

As always with studies of a synthetic character that rely on a large number of relatively disparate sources, the question arises of how to systematise the topics and arrange the text into sections. Without a doubt, every decision the authors could have made would be up for debate, and every reviewer may have their own idea for ordering the material. Thus, all remarks on these matters are only a contribution to a discussion, not an assessment. Having said this, the division of the material between the subchapters 'From mysticism to Orthodoxy' and 'Case study: Hasidism' is far from clear. The subchapter 'Autobiografia jako nowoczesna forma egodokumentu' [Autobiography as a modern form of ego-document] in the chapter 'Modernity and change' disrupts the narrative and seems a much better suit for the first chapter. Chapter four deals with the questions of the nature of autobiography and the conditions of its creation. A similar problem persists in the subchapter 'Religia i zmiana' [Religion and change] in chapter three. On the one hand, the repetition is justifiable because at stake are the place of religion in the family and the presentation of the women's perspective, but on the other, at least the opening section, concerned with purely religious questions such as attitudes toward the Talmud or oral tradition – religion as such – would be better placed in the preceding chapter, given that it is primarily about religious attitudes.

The language of the monograph is not uniform; there are other disparities, such as the presence of mottos in only some chapters of the book. While not particularly vital, a greater uniformity in such details would have been beneficial for the book. One laudable aspect of it is the presence of illustrations.

Overall, the monograph in question, based not merely on memoirs published within the series 'Żydzi – Polska – Autobiografia' [Jews – Poland – Autobiography], but on a much broader selection of documentary sources, combines two interesting perspectives. One of them is the presentation of the evolution of attitudes, mores, and forms of life of the Jews across several centuries – roughly from the mid-eighteenth century until the Holocaust. These are only accessible through autobiographies because such matters are too private and personal to find reflection in other kinds of sources. This will be of interest for readers interested in the everyday life of the Jews, their social history, and even more broadly, the life of others with their various lived experiences. The other perspective is the history of Jewish autobiographical writing, its peculiar features compared to the style of memoirs in different European societies, the role of the language used, the unique character of women's autobiographies, and the methodology of research into autobiographical sources. I believe that this is ample justification for treating the monograph *Literatura autobiograficzna Żydów polskich* as mandatory reading for all scholars who use Jewish memoirs in their work.

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