

This caveat, however, is one of organization and presentation rather than content, and the author's approach to the topic is well chosen. Overall, Parker's study is a successful and wide-ranging investigation of an important and often neglected dimension of the history of British migration and Canadian settlement.

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PLOKHY, Serhii — *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the Past*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Pp. 391.

This is a readable, stimulating collection of articles on issues relating to the intersection of Ukrainian and Russian historiography. Of the 16 chapters, 13 had been previously published, but they have been modified for the present volume, and they fit together well. Themes on which Serhii Plokhy has previously published monographs figure prominently in this collection, especially Cossacks (chapters 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15), but also the Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevsky (chapters 5 and 6) and iconography (chapter 4). The chapters are insightful essays based on published sources rather than monographic articles based on archival research.

The last essay in the book, written especially for this volume, is entitled "Beyond Nationality." It analyses the pluses and minuses of writing in the national paradigm, particularly with reference to Ukrainian history. Not only does it sort out what national history captures and misses, but it explains how it positions practitioners in contemporary Ukraine. "Writing traditional national history today means contributing to the isolationism and provincialism of East European historiography," while "younger historians want to be part of the larger European and world community of historians" (p. 284). Plokhy also feels that the multi-ethnic, territorial approach is little better, since it too "is liable to lapse into primordialism, a teleological approach, and the marginalization of non-ethnic groups and institutions" (p. 293). He himself leans towards "transnational history," which operates with larger zones and larger polities. Most importantly, he sees Ukraine as a borderland "not only between Eastern and Central Europe but also between Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the Mediterranean world, and the Eurasian steppelands" (p. 301). I understand this last essay to be a reckoning with or conceptualization of directions his work had been taking earlier, but perhaps more intuitively.

Indeed, there is much in the previous 15 essays that is transnational. The penultimate chapter is in fact entitled "Crossing National Boundaries." This essay argues the utility of studying Ukrainian and Russian Cossacks also within the framework of Cossackdom and not just within the frameworks of Russian or Ukrainian history. Chapter 12 on "Remembering Yalta" is also particularly transnational. It concentrates on the commemoration and lack of commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Yalta Conference in 1945, but it examines the

local contexts that produce the varying attitudes toward the anniversary on the part of Russia, Latvia, Poland, Ukraine, and the United States. Russia, which has “refused to separate its heroes from its tyrants and condemn the atrocities committed in the name of communism,” was the most enthusiastic about Yalta, the Big Three including Stalin, and VE Day, which, after all, “initiated the era of Soviet domination of Eastern Europe” (pp. 219, 214). This was a perspective none of the other countries could share. The Latvian president considered the Soviet period to be one of occupation and did not want to attend celebrations in Moscow at all. Only under pressure from George Bush did she attend. The stances of Poland and Ukraine were more ambivalent: Poland because, although Yalta brought Soviet domination, it also confirmed the borders of Poland’s Western expansion; Ukraine because it is a divided country where some think like Russians and others like Balts and also because of complications with Tatars and the Crimea. The stance of the United States was bedeviled by the conflict between Republicans and Democrats over the legacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As for President Bush, he had a clear agenda. He used the occasion “to support the countries of the new Europe that showed loyalty to the United States and embarrass President Putin” as well as “to legitimize his war in Iraq and his policy in the Middle East” (p. 237). Plokhy demonstrates that, at least sometimes, “historical debates are parochial or determined by local (national) agendas, traditions, fears, and complexes” (p. 234). The debates themselves, however, are transnational.

Also, throughout this book are strewn little landmines for historians of the unreconstructed national persuasion. Chapter 14, for example, celebrates the brilliant Kyivan early modernist Natalia Yakovenko for her “slaughter of quite a few sacred cows” of the national paradigm (p. 256). Plokhy endorses her rejection of one of the cornerstone doctrines of early modern Ukrainian national history, namely “the image of the Poles and Polish culture as the ultimate ‘other’ of early modern Ukrainian culture and identity” (p. 256). In chapter 4, he takes to task a leading proponent of the national school in Ukrainian art history, Dmytro Stepovyk. In the national version of Ukrainian history, one of the many misdeeds of Catherine II is considered to be her enserfment of the peasantry. Chapter 2 points out, however, that the Cossacks themselves in 1763 petitioned the empress for precisely that. The most prominent individuals in the Cossack Hetmanate were making their careers in the imperial capitals by the end of the eighteenth century and in other ways were co-opted into the imperial system. In chapter 13, in a section entitled “History as National Myth,” Plokhy notes that, just before Ukraine became independent, the official discourse was inclusivist. In particular, “the highly developed Cossack mythology . . . allowed not only Ukrainians but also millions of Russians, many of whom have mixed ancestry, to associate themselves with the mythologized Cossack past” (p. 245). Such myths “exhausted themselves in the face of the crumbling of the economic-greatness myth and deteriorating standard of living” and were replaced by “nationalistic, exclusive myths like that of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army”

(p. 246). The national paradigm in Russian history is taken apart in chapter 10, which uses the Sevastopol myth to do so. This chapter is also interesting because it shows the transformations of the myth in different periods, from the empire to the present.

The volume contains five maps and a thorough index. The high production standards of the University of Toronto are also evident in this excellent book.

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RAVEL, Jeffrey S. — *The Would-Be Commoner: A Tale of Deception, Murder, and Justice in 17th-Century France*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008. Pp. 288.

This stylishly presented book is an intelligent addition to the growing opus of what might be labelled “CSI history.” Historians of the early modern period are increasingly turning to a hybrid format — serious scholarship and empirical research mixed with a more “gentle” academic writing style and narrative-driven structure — whether to attract a wider readership or to complement the ever-increasing number of “history quest” programmes and docu-dramas on television. Jeffrey Ravel tells a good story, and embeds within it scholarly research and insight about the judicial process and the role of public opinion under the *Ancien Régime*.

In brief, this book recounts one of the great *causes célèbres* of the period, in which a nobleman from Berry is presumed murdered by his adulterous wife and her clerical lover, until a man turns up in Paris claiming to be the murdered man. But there is a catch: if the man is telling the truth, he exonerates his wife, but then accepts the identity (and crimes) of a man accused of imposture as a non-nobleman and a bigamist. The case became a spectacle of society, an event gossiped about in the streets and in the salons, analysed and satirized in the press and on the stage. One of the overarching questions asked by this case concerns the natural order of society: why would a man willingly give up noble status? Ravel’s book takes its title from this question and relates it to the Molière play of a similar title. However, the author points to deeper questions alluded to in the courtroom, in society gossip, and in the theatres that are more theoretical. What is “nobility” and can it be abandoned? What is “justice,” and what is “identity,” and can these things be faked? How do any of these elements affect authority? At the heart of this debate is a sense that the ideological climate was changing and that, during the last two decades of Louis XIV’s reign, older established values of a fixed world were giving way to notions of individual freedoms, notably to make choices and to cut a path in the world based on merit, not birth.

The first four chapters of *The Would-Be Commoner* describe in detail the case of Louis de la Pivardière and Marguerite Chauvelin. Along the way, Ravel