

In a relatively short time, Serhii Plokhy has written several important and well-received books, including *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (OUP, 2001), *The Unmaking of Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (University of Toronto Press, 2005) and *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus* (CUP, 2006). *Ukraine and Russia* is a collection of sixteen essays, the earliest of which appeared in 2000. Most inquire into the historiographies of the often fraught relationship between the two countries named in the title.

The assumption that underlies the inquiries in the book is that modern nations come into being and acquire agency as a consequence of the ways in which their (potential) members are persuaded to imagine themselves. Histories – stories about shared pasts – are central to most nation-generative strategies, and Plokhy's book is about the emergence and evolution of narratives corresponding to various visions of Russia and Ukraine as nations. The first two parts of the book encompass studies inquiring into the interaction and competition between two historiographic orientations, one professing the commonality of the Russian and Ukrainian narratives, the other asserting the separateness of the latter. A third part, titled 'Post-Soviet Debates', examines the historical arguments adduced by Russian nationalists in support of territorial claims upon Ukraine, and Ukrainian responses, which are also informed by historical argumentation. The fourth and final section adds advocacy to analysis and interpretation, proposing directions for contemporary Ukrainian history writing that the author regards as productive for a democratic polity and an ethno-culturally diverse country.

Plokhy agrees with Rogger and Greenfield that the Russian elite's national identity formation began in the eighteenth century in response to the models and challenges of the West, but identifies in this process the emergence of two distinct conceptions of Russian national identity. The 'nativist' conception regarded the Russian nation as including 'the Slavic imperial elites consisting of Great Russians and Ukrainians from the Hetmanate' (20). From the competing 'civic' or 'imperial' perspective the Russian nation also incorporated imperial elites of non-Slavic background. According to Plokhy, tension between the two models characterized the debate over the role of the Varangians in the early history of the Rus' state – but on both sides of the dispute the Ukrainians and their history figured as fully subsumed by an overall Russian narrative. Plokhy observes in the writings of Divovych and Bezborodko, Ruban and Tumansky the emergence of

an eighteenth-century discourse combining empire loyalty (and Enlightenment ideology) with emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Ukrainian lands and the historical heritage of the Cossack elite.

One of the book's most engaging chapters reveals Plokhy in the role of historical detective, a part he plays with finesse. Revisiting the unsolved riddle of the authorship and dating of the *Istoriia Rusov*, Plokhy identifies the unnamed text against which the author of the *Istoriia* polemicises as Maksym Berlynsky's *Kratkaia rossiiskaia istoriia dlia upotrebleniia iunoshestvu* (1800), thus narrowing the period during which the *Istoriia* might have been written. He reflects, too, on the irony inherent in the fact that the *Istoriia*, a text today widely considered to be a plea for the retention of a distinctive Ukrainian identity, is more plausibly to be interpreted as making a case for the integration of the Cossack elite into the Russian Empire. No less finely reasoned is Plokhy's teasing out of the interests and rhetorical strategies behind the inclusion or exclusion of Ivan Mazepa and Peter I from eighteenth-century icons.

A substantial part of the book is dedicated to aspects of the historiographical heritage of Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the historian who crystallized the narrative of Ukrainian history as a national history distinct from that of Russia. Plokhy shows how, during the 1905 revolution, Hrushevsky positioned the Ukrainian cause within the framework of the overall struggle of the empire's democratic forces for a 'liberation of Russia'. He studies Hrushevsky's reading of the Pereiaslav Pact, the agreement of 1654 between the Cossacks and the tsar, as a document which from the outset was understood in contradictory ways by the two parties. He analyses the evolution of Soviet historians' readings of Pereiaslav (and their critiques of Hrushevsky) as responses to shifts in the Soviet political climate. A fascinating chapter, distinctive in focusing, not on historiography, but on primary sources, reflects on the complex identities attested by soldiers' memoirs composed between 1917 and the mid-1970s. Some of these reveal, among other surprises, that 'the ideas of Ukrainian statist historiography ... were known in Southern Ukraine in the 1960s and considered perfectly legitimate by certain people' (159).

Examining the invocations of history in political debates after Ukraine's achievement of independence, Plokhy analyses the role that narratives of Cossackdom have played in incorporating the southern steppes and Odessa into the overarching narrative of a territorial Ukrainian nation-state, as well as

the revision of the view of the Tatar as the enemy of the Cossack in line with efforts to afford Crimean Tatars returning to their historical homeland a place in the new Ukrainian multiethnic polity. A chapter is dedicated to tracing the transformation of the myth of Sevastopol as the 'City of Russian Glory' from an anti-elitist myth of the virtue of 'Russians' as the ordinary people of the empire at large to a myth celebrating the military prowess of ethnic Russians to the exclusion of non-Russian others. Capping off these Tauridian reflections, Plokyh offers a discussion of the commemoration in 2005 of the 60th anniversary of the Yalta agreement, noting the disjunction between the condemnation of the accord by the United States (in solidarity with Poland and the Baltic States), and the increasing reluctance on the part of the Russian Federation to condemn this dimension of the Stalinist past.

The final part of the book looks to the future of the historiography of Ukraine. The section begins with Plokyh's contribution to the well-known 1995 debate on the pages of *Slavic Review* initiated by Mark von Hagen's query, 'Does Ukraine have a History?' In an uncharacteristically strong formulation, Plokyh labels as 'an outrageously "orientalist" approach to the problem' von Hagen's contention that, if history is 'a written record ... that commands some widespread acceptance and authority in the international scholarly and political communities', then Ukraine does not have a history (244). He reflects that the kind of history that needs to be written in independent Ukraine would take cognizance of the country's status as a 'non-ethnic state surrounded by "normal" ethnic states' (251). Continuing in this prospective mode, Plokyh expresses solidarity with Natalia Yakovenko's approach to the early modern history of Ukraine, which attends more to the cultural and ideological levers affecting the actions of individuals, especially members of elites, than to the traditional preoccupations of populist and statist historiography; he argues in favour of comparative approaches to the histories of the Cossack hosts in order to avoid the biases and blind spots that arise when this subject matter is studied from the perspective of unitary national historiographies, whether Russian or Ukrainian; and he joins Andreas Kappeler in pleading that the natural paradigm of Ukrainian history be augmented with approaches that attend to minorities 'not just as "others", but as part of the collective "we"' (289).

In August 2008 the Russian Federation asserted control over Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, thus (briefly) refocussing the attention of the international com-

munity on the relationship between Russia and those of its neighbours that had been part of the USSR and, before that, the Russian Empire. In this context *Ukraine and Russia* presents itself not only as a rich and meticulously argued work of scholarship, but also as an excitingly topical book likely to fascinate not only historians intent upon refining their models of the past, but general readers seeking to understand one of Europe's most complex, and most uncertain, international relationships.

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Stella Rock, *Popular Religion in Russia: 'Double belief' and the making of an academic myth* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) 234 pp.

I was recently in Russia after a long absence. I took many diverse impressions away with me from that trip, but was particularly struck by the blossoming of witchcraft as a social institution. Wizards and witches are numerous and operate openly. Newspapers and the Internet are overflowing with their advertisements, where they even call themselves wizards and witches, and proudly emphasise that permission for their activities has been granted by the Moscow city government. It was the first time I had encountered an instance of a government of the capital city of a large country openly encouraging witchcraft. This same government resurrected the magnificent Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, and I don't doubt that the wizards and their clients consider themselves to be practising Christians. And further: in Russia, photographs of its president, naked to the waist with excellently developed muscle tone, like a pagan god but for the cross on his chest, are very popular. The people do not comprehend that the cult of the body is at odds with Christianity. 'My strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor. 12:9). Ancient paganism is concealed under the cloak of Christianity in Russia, as it was throughout the preceding millennium.

Such a phenomenon is often called double belief. Stella Rock's book is devoted to the history and analysis of this concept and its interpretation by numerous authors, from medieval preachers to modern historians. The bibliography includes the all major sources on the theme, right to the most recent. From the first chapters, we learn that authors from the eleventh to seventeenth centuries