



Review

Reviewed Work(s): BRODY: EINE GALIZISCHE GRENZSTADT IM LANGEN 19.

JAHRHUNDERT by Börries Kuzmany

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183). After the First Partition in 1772, Frank was freed and received passports from all three partitioning powers. He chose to seek his first asylum in Moravia. Part of the story ends with Frank ensconced in his German castle as Baron of Offenbach, receiving rich tribute from his followers in Poland and Moravia. Anti-Sabbatian literature continued to portray him as a charlatan, “incapable of speaking and of any language; he only stuttered and whistled and cried like a rooster, and so anybody who was not well accustomed to him could not understand anything” (p. 199).

Although the idea remains prevalent that there is a large undercurrent of Frankists, or at least Frankist descendants, in Polish culture, Maciejko seems rather more circumspect about the notion of the longevity of Frankist and crypto-Frankist communities, with the only real center of “hard-core Frankist believers” in Warsaw, “well into the nineteenth, and possibly until the early twentieth, century” (p.166). One would love to hear more, but this book is a marvelous achievement as it stands. It deserves the highest accolades.

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BRODY: EINE GALIZISCHE GRENZSTADT IM LANGEN 19. JAHRHUNDERT. By Börries Kuzmany. Vienna: Böhlau, 2011. 406 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, graphs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN (cloth) 978-3-205-78763-1.

Brody is a relatively small, unremarkable town in Western Ukraine, some hours away from Lviv.¹ Today’s Brody is something of a ghost town, emblematic of the troubled Soviet past and the difficulties of post-1991 Ukrainian independence, with shabby roads or a lack thereof and an impoverished population that is today predominantly Ukrainian. Hidden behind the exterior of this Ukrainian town are

1. An English translation of this volume has appeared as *Brody: A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth Century*, trans. Nadežda Kinsky Müngersdorff, *Studia Judaeslavica* 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

remnants of its former grandeur, architectural facades that resemble the architecture across Central Europe, namely of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, now destroyed here almost beyond recognition.

In his book, Börries Kuzmany sets out to recover parts of Brody's rich history prior to 1918: the town had once been a model of heterogeneity, multiethnicity, and at the same time a major center of international trade and commerce in Europe. This is the Brody of Bruno Schulz, a town at the intersection of different cultures and civilizations. "The end-station in Russia and the entry point on the way to America," as described by Sholem Aleichem; half-Europe, half-Asia, according to Karl Emil Franzos (p. 13); the town that brought to life masterpieces of European literature and some of the most brilliant minds that represented it. Kuzmany traces the history of Brody in what he describes as a history of decline, "*Miserfolgegeschichte*," a history of unrealized potential of a town that could, and almost did, become a European center, but has gradually slipped into oblivion instead. The author moves beyond the traditional histories of towns as written from the perspective of urban history with a focus on town rights, privileges, and administration. Instead, he offers what he defines as cultural history, *Kulturgeschichte*, of a multicultural town in the *longue durée* covering the 150 years of its history as part of Poland and then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, until the latter's collapse in 1918.

In the West, the town of Brody is known primarily as a Jewish center, Kuzmany writes, and this is no accident. In the nineteenth century it became one of the largest Jewish centers in Europe, with approximately seventy percent of the population identifying as Jewish, larger than almost in any other place in Europe. Brody was much more than that, as for nearly 150 years it was an archetypical borderland on the frontier between the Austrian and the Russian Empires, connecting the East and the West. For all those years, Brody was a place of international espionage (Austrian, Russian, Polish, and French [during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars]) and international contraband, with products and goods reaching different corners between the Adriatic and India. Those stories have been lost in history and historiography partly because Brody, as most other regions in Eastern Europe, fell victim to nationalized historical narratives, writes Kuzmany. This monograph is designed to overcome those national

divides, to move towards a comprehensive history of a town that does not fit in into any of those national frameworks.

The book is divided into two parts, one dealing with the town's economy, and the other focusing on its ethnic and cultural heterogeneity. Sections on the town's history are included, beginning from the first mention of the town in a historical source in 1084. For much of its history Brody belonged to the Kingdom of Poland. It was one of Poland's many private towns, owned by the prominent and wealthy Potocki family. Under the Potocki family, Brody evolved into a major economic center and a multinational town: Armenians started settling in as early as the sixteen century. In the eighteenth century there was a steady increase of the Jewish population. As Poland disappeared from the map, Brody became a frontier zone between the Austrian and the Russian empires.

In the first part of the book, Kuzmany discusses the causes for Brody's gradual economic decline, examining domestic developments and international geopolitics. Kuzmany argues that the status of Brody as a separate tariff zone, a status secured from the Austrian Empire, became detrimental to the town in the long run. The low tariffs stifled economic development, providing no stimulus for industrial production. Kuzmany goes on to argue that the major cause of Brody's economic decline was due to Russian rather than Austrian policies. By imposing prohibitionist tariffs against the Austrian Empire, the Russian government killed cross-border trade, to the detriment of Brody. Additionally, railway networks were designed in a way that benefited other towns, such as the neighboring Złoczów (Zolochiv), and not Brody. Brody never recovered its former status, with the nineteenth century and Austrian rule marking a period of continuous decline.

Despite economic decline, the town of Brody maintained its rich culture. Brody became a transit point not only for goods but also for ideas. Ideas of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, were transmitted from Germanophone Central Europe to the Russian Empire through the town of Brody. The Christians, Poles and Ukrainians, were a minority in the town, with a far smaller population than the Jews. But each of these groups, and the Jews specifically, lived in the multilingual, multicultural setting of Brody, which was unlike anything that existed in the twentieth century. Many were bi- or trilingual. Jewish schools taught German as the mandatory language of instruction. Over eighty

percent of the population functioned in two or more languages. This tradition of multilingualism continued uninterrupted until the collapse of the Austrian Empire. The history of Brody in the long nineteenth century thus revealed several paradoxes: it was a town in economic decline, a town with flourishing multilingual culture, and a unique example of heterogeneity that would not endure in the twentieth century.

Kuzmany has written a very important book that addresses several major issues in the historiography of Eastern Europe. Most notably, it illustrates the shortcomings of national narratives: Brody defies all the existing national paradigms. This history also questions the paradigm of benevolent Austrian policies that is embedded in particular in Ukrainian national narratives. This is a history of national coexistence and cultural richness that no longer exists in that part of the world. Books like this force us to rethink the way we approach our past as well as our present, treasuring the history as it was and not as some of us wish it had been.

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MAPPING EUROPE'S BORDERLANDS: RUSSIAN CARTOGRAPHY IN THE AGE OF EMPIRE. By Steven Seegel. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. xi, 368 pp., 17 color plates, 60 halftones, 2 line drawings, maps, 4 tables, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN (cloth) 978-0-226-74425-4.

Steven Seegel's new book is a groundbreaking achievement in East-Central European historiography, painstaking research into the maps of Europe's "borderlands"; that is to say, the area of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and present-day Ukraine. It shows how modern political imagination in East-Central Eastern Europe influenced seemingly "objective" and "scientific" cartography, and how these maps in turn shaped both the mindsets and actions of statesmen, scholars, and national activists. The title is a bit misleading, however, in its emphasis on Russian cartography, whereas in reality the author