

DISKUSSION

Galicia: Idea and Fantasy

LARRY WOLFF: *The Idea of Galicia. History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010. XI, 486 S., Abb., Ktn. ISBN: 978-0-804-76267-0.

Rekonstruktion eines Konstrukts

Das habsburgische Kronland Galizien ist eine seit bald einhundert Jahren verschwundene territoriale Einheit, deren Phantomgrenzen gleichwohl bis heute überaus präsent sind. In „Galizien“ überlagern sich vielerlei raumbezogene Konzepte: Kontinent der polyphonen literarischen Imagination zwischen „Ost“ und „West“-Europa, Referenzraum der transnationalen Geschichte und transkulturellen Analyse, Parade-Peripherie für europäische Imperial-, Kolonial- und Postkolonialstudien. Vor diesem Hintergrund mag fast in Vergessenheit geraten, dass es sich historisch um eine Neoregion mit relativ kurzer Lebensspanne handelt. Die im Zuge der Teilungen Polens durch Grenzverschiebungen, Annexion und Militäraktion stufenweise synthetisierte österreichische Provinz Galizien ist somit späteren Neoregionen vergleichbar, beispielsweise den ihrerseits in sprachlich-kulturellen Interferenzräumen gelegenen, von den Alliierten nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg geschaffenen westdeutschen Bindestrich-Bundesländern. Wie diese war Galizien ein Kunstprodukt und musste als zusammenhängender Raum erst erfunden und in kommunikativem Handeln abgesteckt werden.

Diese diskursive, historiografische und politische Operation, an der österreichische, polnische, jüdische, ukrainisch-ruthenische Akteure beteiligt waren und sind, hat der Historiker Larry Wolf in seinem neuen Buch als „Idee“ und „Phantasie“ der politischen Kultur des Habsburgerreiches konzeptualisiert – nicht ohne das Nachleben der Phantasie über das Ende des Kaiserstaates hinaus gebührend zu berücksichtigen. Damit führt er einen weiteren quellengesättigten Beweis für den Konstruktcharakter von Territorien und Geschichtsregionen. Vor allem führt er diesen Beweis auch unter Berücksichtigung des weniger gut erforschten frühen Galizien, also der Provinz in der Zeit der Aufklärung und der Napoleonischen Kriege. Hier ist Wolffs Gedankengang als Fortsetzung seiner Überlegungen zur „Invention of Eastern Europe“ im Zeitalter der Aufklärung zu lesen.

Der Charakter und die Binnenstruktur dieses Konstrukts jedoch – so gesehen, Wolffs Galizien – ergibt sich aus jener Teilmenge von galizischen historischen Akteuren, die der Autor in den Mittelpunkt seiner Betrachtungen gestellt hat. Das sind nämlich ebenjene berufs- und berufungsmäßigen Produzenten von (Staats-)Idee, historischem Sinn und räumlich gebundener Phantasie zwischen 1772 und 1918 und darüber hinaus, deren Denken, Handeln und Erleiden wir aus den publizierten Quellen nachvollziehen können: Herrscherpersönlichkeiten und Politiker, Kleriker, Provinzbürokraten, Wissenschaftler, Historiker, Theaterleute, Dichter. Diese ‚Rekonstruktion des Konstrukts‘ unternimmt Wolff überzeugend, aber um den Preis der Nichtbeachtung all jener, die durch das Raster fallen, weil ihre Artikulationsformen marginalisiert oder gar nicht erst verschriftlicht waren, oder nur über den Weg langwieriger Lokalstudien und durch das Studium nichtpublizierter Akten

zu erschließen gewesen wären. So ist das von Wolff vorgestellte Galizienkonzept letztlich ein Konzept ohne den Erfahrungshorizont der Subalternen – sowohl der galizischen Bauern, insbesondere der ruthenischen, als auch der marginalisierten oder aus den nationalen Narrativen abgespaltenen und totgeschwiegenen politischen Bewegungen. Gerade die auf diesem Feld erbrachten Erkenntnisse der letzten 10 bis 15 Jahre sind in dem Werk trotz gelegentlicher Referenzen unterbelichtet.

Lässt man dieses Monitum aber einmal beiseite und liest man das Buch als das, was es ist – die Geschichte *eines* intellektuell-politischen Konzepts von Galizien – dann kann man Wolffs Gedankengang mit Gewinn folgen. Anregend ist es, die frühe, meist deutschsprachige Galizienliteratur der Aufklärungs- und Umbruchszeit zwischen 1780 und 1815 in einen Kontext eingebettet zu sehen, der zwischen josephinischer „Revolution“ und adlig-konservativer Beharrungskraft, zwischen zivilisatorischer Offensive auf das „barbarische“ Grenzland und galizischen Rechtfertigungsversuchen, zwischen metternichscher Reaktion und polnisch-republikanischer Tradition aufgespannt wird. Diese Texte werden mit der kulturellen Produktion der Zeit – Oper, Theater, Literatur, Stifteraktivitäten – und der frühen galizischen Publizistik in Verbindung gebracht, deren Urheber häufig Grenzgänger waren.

Wir verfolgen zwischen 1800 und 1848 das Ringen um ein Konzept des „Vaterlands“ Galizien zwischen galizischen Polen, Ruthenen und zugewanderten Deutschösterreichern und Böhmen, zwischen ererbten Rzeczpospolita-Bezügen, aus Frankreich und Russisch-Polen kommenden (und enttäuschten) politischen Hoffnungen und vom neuen Staat eingeforderten Loyalitäten. Im Resultat beobachten wir eine Neuausrichtung von Kommunikations- und Bezugssystemen, deren Koordinaten von den neuen Staatsgrenzen und regionalen Schwerpunktbildungen (Lemberg als Kronlandhauptstadt und – ab 1846 – Krakau als kulturell-politischer Konterpart) gebildet wurden. So wird erklärbar, warum den frühen, zunächst sporadischen Selbstbezeichnungen als „Gallicyane“ relativ rasch die Raumaufarbeitung und -auffüllung auf dem Fuße folgte. Dies geschah in Form von Datensammlungen und anderweitiger Wissensaggregation in galizien- (nicht mehr polen-)bezogenen Geografien, gelehrten Zeitschriftenartikeln, Natur- und Kulturaufnahmen. Dazu gehörten auch die in der Forschung gut dokumentierten Entdeckungsversuche der polnisch- wie ruthenischsprachig artikulierten galizischen „Volks“-Kulturen, das Ausschwärmen von Dichtern und Klerikern in die Provinz auf der Suche nach ethnografischer Authentizität. Teil dieses Prozesses ist aber auch die Überführung der so angesammelten Erkenntnisse in Anciennitätsdiskurse, wie sie für die sich zunehmend in Verteilungskämpfe verwickelnden polnischen und ruthenischen Eliten bezeichnend waren. Denn die zunehmend positive Bezugnahme auf den neuen Raum Galizien schloss keinesfalls das Bekenntnis zur polnischen oder ruthenischen, später ukrainischen Nationalidee aus, und sie resultierte auch nicht in der Verschmelzung der galizischen ethnokulturellen bzw. ethnokonfessionellen Gruppen zu einer galizischen Nation. Leider bleibt ein wesentlicher Aspekt der Landeserschließung und -erfassung als Voraussetzung einer Raumkonzeptualisierung Galiziens nicht berücksichtigt, nämlich alle staatlichen Aktivitäten unterhalb des Levels der Kaiser, Statthalter und Minister. Die Idee Galiziens in seinen neuen Grenzen wurde von (Armee-)Kartografen, Steuer- und Katasterbeamten und Statistikern mindestens genauso erschaffen wie von Josef II., Kaunitz, Metternich oder Ossoliński. Die österreichische Gali-

zienkartografie kommt im Buch zwar sporadisch vor, aber mit rein illustrativem Charakter, nicht als reich sprudelnde Quelle für einen neuartigen Territorialisierungsprozess.

Bestechend angelegt und mit Gewinn zu lesen ist das Buch überall dort, wo sich Wolff auf seinem Lieblingsterrain bewegt: der akribischen Dokumentation und wechselseitigen Kontextualisierung aller Produkte, die man mit dem Autor als *fantasy* bezeichnen könnte. Gemeint ist der literarisch-fiktionale Aspekt der galizischen „Idee“. Wie Wolff den polnischen Komödiendichter Alexander Fredro und den Lemberger Polizeipräsidentensohn Leopold von Sacher-Masoch als Erfinder einer spezifisch galizischen resignativen Ironie, Ambivalenz, sexuellen Grenzaustestung vorführt und Galizien so zum Heimatland peripherer mentaler und politischer Dispositionen ausruft, kann alle Anhänger einer trans- und nichtnationalen Konzeptualisierung von menschlichen Handlungs- und Bezugsräumen nur erfreuen. Wolffs Helden sind solche Figuren, denen von ihren Zeitgenossen mangelnde patriotische Eindeutigkeit vorgeworfen wurde. Diese Verweigerung der eindeutigen Zuordnung bei gleichzeitigem Ausmessen der Grenzen legt Wolff als Wurzel der Galizischkeit frei.

In Sacher-Masochs sexualisierten Sklavenphantasien sieht der Verfasser einen Widerhall der sozialen Verhältnisse rund um das Jahr 1846, als kaisertreue westgalizische Bauern – die damaligen „Sklaven“ der galizischen Gesellschaftsordnung – auf einen Aufstandsversuch polnischer Adliger mit blutiger Rache antworteten. Die Analyse des Schock-Moments von 1846 im vierten Kapitel bildet die Zentralachse des Buchs, wichtiger fast als der historische Moment der 1848er Revolution. Sie ist denn auch eine der seltenen Gelegenheiten, die Wolff ergreift, um den identitären Horizont der überwiegenden Bevölkerungsmehrheit zu erkunden und gleichzeitig auch eine Grundkonstellation des späteren ruthenisch-polnischen Konflikts und späterer Gewalterfahrungen vorwegzunehmen: hier die bäuerlich-klerikale Loyalität zum fernen Kaiserstaat gegen den nahen sozialen Antagonisten, dort der untaugliche Versuch, mit einem polnischen Republikanismus ohne echte soziale und ökonomische Zugeständnisse an die Subalternen galizische Demokratie zu machen. An dieser Grundkonstellation vermochte auch der Autonomisierungs- und Konstitutionalisierungsprozess seit Mitte der 1860er Jahre nichts zu ändern, er gab im Gegenteil den Anstoß zu einer weiteren Runde im Ressourcenverteilungskonflikt.

Große Sorgfalt verwendet Wolff sodann im Kapitel 5 auf die Analyse eines polnischen Lösungsversuchs für das galizische Dilemma zwischen Imperium, Polyethnizität und aufstrebenden Nationalideen: der Aufstieg eines konservativ-loyalen polnischen Milieus in Westgalizien, das eine Politik der kleinen Schritte im galizischen Rahmen unter Aufgabe der gesamt-polnischen Programmatik („*w kraju przez kraj*“, S. 195) sowie eine Denktradition geschliffener historisch-kritischer Selbstreflexion (die Krakauer Historische Schule) hervorbrachte. In der Anlage dieses zweiten Zentralkapitels passt diese Programmatik, artikuliert vor allem in den Beiträgen der Krakauer Zeitschrift „Czas“, logisch zum „Advent of Franz Joseph“, zur Etablierung jener Herrschergestalt, die wie kein anderer Habsburger die Provinzloyalitäten schließlich auf sich zu vereinigte. Die Ära des postrevolutionären „im Lande durch das Land“ ging einher mit einer zweiten Welle von Publikationen über das Land und seine ethnografischen Gegebenheiten, die Wolff in den Kapiteln 6 und 7 würdigt. Auch die späteren statistikgesättigten Polemiken sind in dieser Tradition zu sehen, so die berühmte Studie „*Nędza Galicyi w Cyfrach*“, die der Ökonom Stanisław Szczepanowski vorlegte, oder die Ende des Jahrhunderts immer besser dokumen-

tierten Zustände der galizisch-jüdischen Gemeinschaft (Kapitel 8), oder auch Ivan Franko, der seine hervorragend dokumentierte Kritik der galizischen Sozialverhältnisse als journalistischer Autor formulierte und dann in das formal ungleich ambitionösere Medium urbaner ukrainischer Literatur überführte.

In den beiden Schlusskapiteln über das Ende und Nachleben Galiziens im 20. Jahrhundert beschäftigt sich Wolff eingehend mit den Versuchen von Polen und Ukrainern im Umfeld und im Nachgang des Ersten Weltkriegs, die „Idee“ Galiziens mit der jeweiligen Nationalstaatsvision in eins zu bringen – eine Form der Reterritorialisierung, welche Galizien als administrative Einheit schließlich nicht überlebte. Die Ukrainer sprachen Galizien zwar historische Legitimität und positive Identität zu, aber die habsburgische Provinz sollte letztlich im Konzept Westukraine aufgehen. In der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts scheiterte dieser Ansatz, in der sowjetischen Ära nach 1944 wurde er schließlich vollendet. Das polnische Projekt war auf ungeteilte Integration des Kronlandes in einen neu zu schaffenden Staat ausgerichtet und resultierte folgerichtig in einer systematischen Liquidierung Galiziens und aller in seinem Kontext überlieferten Verwaltungseinheiten. Die gleichzeitig aufkommende Bezeichnung der ostgalizischen Gebiete in ihrer Gesamtheit als „Ostkleinpolen“ illustriert dies augenfällig.

Im Schlusskapitel kehrt Wolff zur galizischen Idee als *fantasy* zurück – als dem Kernbereich dessen, was von Galizien tatsächlich blieb in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Der Verfasser schlägt den Bogen von den Pionieren Fredro und Sacher-Masoch zu den späten Vollendern Bruno Schulz, Joseph Roth, Soma Morgenstern oder auch Billy Wilder – letzterer ein Galizier in Hollywood. Aber auch hier bleiben gewisse Fragen in diesem ansonsten sehr aufzählungs-, anekdoten- und episodenfremden Band offen. Denn taucht man nochmals ein in das Südostpolen der Zwischenkriegszeit, das einmal Galizien war, und folgt man der bereits in galizischen Zeiten gelegten Spur in die Moderne – statt bei der nostalgischen Phantasie zu verharren – dann trifft man auf einen ganzen Denk- und Schreibkontinent, der womöglich unerwähnt bleibt, weil er nicht zu *dieser Idee* – Wolffs Idee – Galiziens passt. Ich meine die Lemberger Wissenschaftsmoderne der 1920er und 1930er Jahre, deren Erträge in globaler Perspektive vermutlich eine um vieles nachhaltigere Wirkung hatten als die galizischen Literaten. Ohne die damals in den Lemberger Kaffeehäusern, den Hörsälen der Lemberger Universität und den verqualmten Dozentenbüros der Politechnika Lwowska diskutierenden Mediziner, Physiker, Mathematiker, Logiker, Philosophen, Wissenschaftstheoretiker wie Ludwig Fleck, Hugo Steinhaus, Stefan Banach, Stanisław Ulam oder Leon Chwistek sähen heute die Wissenssoziologie, die Lebenswissenschaften, die Kernphysik, die *science and technology studies*, die Kulturwissenschaften anders aus. Niemand muss also Wolffs Band beiseite legen in der Annahme, nun sei über Galizien alles gesagt. Ganz im Gegenteil: Dieses Land am Rand, dem Wolff hier sein spezifisches Denkmal gesetzt hat, verlangt und belohnt nach wie vor ein forschendes Hinschauen.

Anna Veronika Wendland, Marburg / Lahn

Backwardness: Economic – Social?

The book of Larry Wolff, very well written, witty, interesting, original and thought-provoking, cannot be measured by the standard of a typical historical monograph. It goes through the history of the Habsburg Galicia between 1772 and 1918 (with a short chapter on Galicia's posthumous life). Contrary to the title, the book is not a classical history of an idea: such history would have to incorporate the place of Galicia in the political thought, both of the Poles, the Ukrainians (the ideas of Polish or of Ukrainian Piedmont are barely mentioned in the book), of the Jews (Zionists and various types of assimilationists) and of the Habsburg or Romanov Empires. Political thought is almost completely beyond the scope of this book. "History and fantasy", mentioned in the subtitle, seems a better approximation of the real content. The way Wolff had chosen is a more ambitious one than a standard history of ideas: he investigates the concept of Galicia, looking for what is subconscious, unclear and unwritten (at least not in clear text). This approach is both more rewarding and more risky than more traditional genres of history: it gives the reader a great amount of material for reflection, numerous insights and interpretative propositions. It also invites discussion and urges the reader to ponder on possibilities of alternative solutions to the problems presented in the book. Were we to try to reconstruct, what actually are the elements the idea of Galicia consists of, we could well name the following: Galicia is barbarous; lying somewhere "in den Carpathischen Gebürgen", as Maria Theresa wrote to Joseph (p. 15), it is an object to be civilized. It is new: the enlightened Habsburg state creates it "ex nihilo", as if bringing order into the chaos. Anarchy is the main enemy of the civilizing task; this topic repeats itself through the whole period of the Habsburg rule. The civilizing task, however, is never complete. Galicia cannot grow completely civilized; otherwise the rationale of the Habsburg rule would have vanished. Somehow following this line of reasoning, a conflict seems to be essential of Galician public life. This conflict permeates various levels of reality. On the political level, this is a multi-sided conflict between Poles, Ruthenians, Jews, and Germans. It can be also expressed in social terms as conflict between landowners, peasants and state bureaucrats (with Jews taking part occasionally in this social conflict as inn-keepers, money-lenders or small merchants). On the deeper level, the conflict is one between reality and appearance: the authorities, be it in times of Joseph, of Metternich, of neo-absolutism after 1849 or of the Galician autonomy after 1868, continuously attempt to present the province as progressing happily towards civilization, while playing down the tensions and difficulties. The reality, however, could not be totally disregarded and it made itself felt in a series of violent crises, (as *rabacja* of 1846 or a pogrom wave in 1898, or the murder of *Statthalter* Andrzej Potocki in 1908) as well as through cultural activities (satirical poetry of Fredro and Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński).

The book analyses these problems through the suggestive characteristics of various authors: Polish (as the two poets mentioned above), German, Ukrainian and Jewish. The picture is an impressive and ambitious interpretative proposal and all what I can say is that I like it: it resonates well with what I know and what I think I understand from the Galician history. Two general features of the book seem to me especially interesting and worth stressing. First, the book belongs to a still very small list of works that treat Galicia supra-nationally. This is a study of a multinational and multicultural province, a study that attempts to present the interrelation of cultures in a long chronological perspective. It is

only to be hoped that other historians will follow. Second, the interpretive proposal that seems very promising is the metaphor of combating the chaos and anarchy. The author has traced the history of this metaphor from the Josephinist bureaucrats of the 1770s and 1780s to the Polish nationalists of the early 20th century. It really catches something important in the history of thinking about Galicia and should be a useful analytical tool. It explains why the Viennese travellers often did not notice the real changes in Galician life and why their descriptions from late 18th to early 20th century are at times striking by their similarity. They were, in a sense, 'programmed' to see only backwardness: backwardness that was undoubtedly real but that was not the whole story.

Among the most interesting fragments of the book I would mention the fascinating material connected with the usage of the term "*Kraj*" (Land) in the Polish political journalism. The author demonstrates the ambiguity of the concept in different contexts: it could mean "Poland", "Austria", "Galicia" and other entities. One could perhaps introduce to the analysis the role of "*Kraj*", or "Land", as a political concept of its own right, representing the idea of territorial patriotism, as opposed both to ethnic-national or universal-imperial allegiance. This idea, known as "*Landespatritismus*" and strong especially in the Bohemian milieu, but present also in other regions of the Monarchy and beyond, was at certain moments quite strong; it would be interesting to check whether the use of the term by Polish Galician authors at certain places is not an echo of this idea.

Of course, in the book of Larry Wolff, as in every interesting book, there are certain detailed interpretations which may be subject of discussion. I have to confess, like probably most of historians not trained in psychoanalysis, I had certain problems in following the interpretation of Sacher-Masoch's erotic fantasies. While the general interest of Sacher-Masoch in the social and interethnic conflicts in Galicia is admirably presented, I am not completely convinced (in spite of the author's persuasion) that the story of a sadomasochist contract can be understood as symbolizing the social and political situation in Galicia. Another example are the anthropometric statistics conducted by the Cracow academy in 1872. Are these statistics really a forerunner of Nazi racism (p. 237)? Only as far as the 19th century in general is a forerunner of the 20th century – but this would bring us too far away from Galician problems.

A more general point to discuss is connected with the overall picture of the province on the pages of the book. The author on the one hand critically analyses the concept of a civilizing mission, of barbarity, etc. On the other hand, he accepts certain elements of this picture. With this I can only agree; while rejecting over-simplified schemes, I believe that economic backwardness is a category indispensable for sensible description of the situation in Galicia. This interplay of criticism and cautious partial acceptance of the idea of backwardness makes the book all the more persuasive and interesting. At the same time I would put some accents differently, especially as regards the evaluation of the position of the Poles. As a Polish historian, I feel rather awkward here, as I do not want to be seen as 'defending' the role of the Polish element: nevertheless, I would dare to suggest the possibility of a more nuanced view on the Poles in Galicia. What seems to me especially problematic is a certain continuation in presenting the Cracow conservatives and radical nationalists. They were essentially different types of politicians and thinkers and it is difficult to see conservative historians like Józef Szujski or Michał Bobrzyński as preparing the ground for Roman Dmowski's National Democrats. Of course, the author knows it;

nevertheless the reader may gain the impression that the Polish right was equally nationalist throughout the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. In a sense, the author sympathizes with the perspective of the “*Neue Freie Presse*”, as well as of some Ukrainian authors from the period and to a degree endorses the picture of Poles as aristocratic oppressors of the Ruthenians, Jews and peasants. This picture is not totally wrong, but distorted. It is understandable that this perspective was taken by the Ukrainian intellectuals who fought for equal rights of their nation, or by Viennese liberal journalists for whom the conservatives were among the main foes. A historian writing more than a century after the events can already allow himself a more nuanced picture and show a Polish-Galician society that cannot be reduced to nobility oppressing peasants: the Polish society had various conflicting political agendas, it had liberal and democratic streams (as a historian working on the history of Polish liberalism I may be pardoned for stressing that!), it presented a whole spectrum of political opinions.

These remarks are not intended to question the merits of this deep, original and very interesting book; if it invites debate at times, then it is what all serious and thought-provoking books should do. The book is a pleasure to read and a mine of original interpretative ideas that merit deeper thought and can help us to understand better various aspects of life of Galicia, perhaps also of every European periphery. It will also fulfil another important task: although it is not a synthetic “*History of Galicia for beginners*”, the book will certainly serve as an introduction to many readers, and it can be an excellent one, opening the roads to all possible sorts of Galician fascinations.

Maciej Janowski, Warszawa/Budapest

A Polycentric Piedmont of the East

The Austrian province of Galicia and its capital city of L'viv were mentioned only once or twice in the already classic monograph by Larry Wolff, “*Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*.” Not giving Galicia more space was a rather conspicuous omission, for if Eastern Europe has been seen since the eighteenth century as located “essentially in between” Europe and Asia, civilization and barbarism, what other region could better illustrate this than the proverbial Austrian “half-Asia”? Recently Wolff has fully compensated for that omission by writing this inspiring monograph on the intellectual history and cultural construction of the province of Galicia as a coherent separate space within the Habsburg monarchy. The province was secured by Vienna during the first partition of Poland-Lithuania and disappeared from the administrative map of Europe in 1918. Wolff traces Galicia's history throughout the nineteenth century and reflects on its relevance for the political mythology of the early twenty-first century.

While Wolff has studied the eighteenth-century invention of Eastern Europe predominantly through the imaginative views of Western Europeans, he sees the idea of Galicia not only projected from the imperial center but also elaborated by all national actors in the province. The story is divided chronologically into two parts, before 1846 and after 1866, with a crucial interlude between them. Originally the political meaning of Galicia was defined by the Josephine reformist concepts and the conservative responses of Polish noble

elites. The discourse on Galicia helped to form the Habsburg sense of imperial mission. Much as Eastern Europe was important for the self-identification of Western Europe, Galicia served as an important element of Austrian imperial experience and identity, as an example of the cultural clash between imperial civilization and provincial backwardness. Although Galicia was artificially created as an administrative unit, already by the early nineteenth century local elites had come to see it as the fatherland. After 1866 the province, which by then had gained an autonomous status, was re-conceptualized, by both Polish and Ruthenian Ukrainophile national activists, as the imperial terrain where their respective national cultures and identities could be preserved and fostered. Notwithstanding the new tendencies, the traditional notion of Galician backwardness figured prominently in the public discourse. Still it was an imperial province that could not be easily integrated into one or another national space. The acceleration of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict at the turn of the twentieth century and the growing social pessimism of intellectual elites on this “land of impossibilities” crucially dismantled the initial strength of the imperial idea of Galicia.

Wolff has produced a transnational history of the region, which traditionally has been presented within separate national narratives. In fact, it is the first intellectual and cultural history of Galicia of this kind. The author avoids generalizing categories that would imply coherent collective identities, memories, or stereotypes; instead, his work pays due attention to personal impressions, attitudes, fantasies, and projections, the changing interconnectedness of personal, imperial and national strategies. The reader encounters several dozen outstanding cultural and political figures, some of whom spent almost their entire lives in Galicia, while some only occasionally passed through it. Their individual life stories, views and encounters are integrated into a fascinating kaleidoscope of the Galician microcosm. Depending on their previous experiences, expectations and fantasies, they perceived Galicia differently: as an aesthetic horror or as a pleasure, as intrinsically Oriental or as European. Wolff indicates that the creation of the idea of Galicia was accompanied by the framing of a whole range of modern concepts, although he does not study this process in detail. Yet he points out how, for example, the notion of a Galician peasantry was discursively constructed in relation to the massacre of 1846, or how the notion of a Ruthenian nationality was shaped within the provincial political framework of 1848.

Wolff presents Galicia as a diverse and contested space, but he could perhaps have further elaborated the polycentric character of the cultural and political loyalties of its inhabitants since such polycentrism defines the borderland. He brilliantly describes how Galicia was seen from the “civilized urban Viennese” perspective, and he mostly concentrates on the movement of people, ideas and meanings along the route Vienna-Cracow-L’viv. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, L’viv was more “intimately connected to Vienna” than to Kyiv, Warsaw, Moscow or St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, the multipolar character of cultural and intellectual life in the province was also manifest. For example, for Ruthenian activists of both Russophile and Ukrainophile orientations, the traffic of people, ideas, and meanings via the St. Petersburg-Kyiv-L’viv route was not less important. The imaginative work of Russian Slavophiles had already influenced Galician Ruthenians in the 1830s and became even more relevant when the eastern part of Galicia came under Russian rule in 1914–1915. After the 1860s, several Ukrainophile activists in Kyiv elaborated an alternative discourse on the character and role of Galicia that had a strong impact on the genera-

tion of Ivan Franko. The references to the texts of Mykhailo Drahomanov or to the Russian publications on Galicia that appeared on the eve of and during the First World War could provide additional perspective on how the idea of Galicia was shaped.

Wolff masterfully deciphers hidden ideas and meanings in all possible textual sources: literary works, journalistic reports, travel accounts, personal correspondence, polemical pamphlets, botanic descriptions, geological and ethnographic studies, and folklore collections, although some of his conclusions (or allusions) may seem to be only assumptions, convincing yet still just assumptions. He does not systematically analyze the public reception of literary texts, theatrical performances or public rituals. Did the family infidelity described in Alexander Fredro's "Husband and Wife" indeed represent uncertain political loyalties and ambivalent identities of the Galician Polish nobility in the post-Napoleonic age? And did the erotic play of dominance and obedience between Wanda and Seweryn in the popular novel by Leopold Sacher-Masoch indeed "echo the social context of feudal oppression and class conflict in Galicia"?

There are also some missing topics that one might have expected to be discussed in this monograph. For example, Wolff surprisingly does not mention the emerging image of Galicia as the national Piedmont(s) for both Poles and Ukrainians. The polyphonic character of the rapidly growing public sphere in the second half of the nineteenth century is not fully represented in the text, since the author constantly focuses on only a few selected newspapers, mostly "Czas" and "Neue Freie Presse." When Wolff comments that "Franko began to formulate the course that would lead the Galician Ruthenians to Ukrainian identity" (p. 257), he ignores the preceding institutionalization of Ukrainian identity in the province that had arguably begun already in the 1860s.

Wolff describes the failed attempt of the Polish scholar Antoni Schneider to compile an encyclopedia of Galicia as "an impossible project to bring together all the aspects of the province" (p. 236). Producing a coherent intellectual and cultural history of such a diverse province as Austrian Galicia for a long time seemed to be also "an impossible project," but Wolff has successfully proven the opposite. Brilliantly written, rich in factual details and insightful interpretations, this monograph establishes a new model for a history of the Eastern European imperial borderland.

Ostap Sereda, L'viv

Russian mestnichestvo reassessed

JURIJ MOISEVIČ ÈSKIN: Očerki istorii mestničestva v Rossii XVI–XVII vv. [Aspekte der Geschichte des *mestničestvo* im Russland des 16.–17. Jahrhunderts]. Moskva: Kvadruga, 2009. 510 S. ISBN: 978-5-904162-06-1.

Iurii Eskin's most recent book is devoted to a somewhat peculiar institution, the *mestnichestvo* (the verb *mestnichatisia* is attested in 1583).¹ In theory, at least, any servitor of the grand prince, later tsar, could decline an appointment in the army, at a court ceremony, in the administration, if it implied taking orders from an inferior. This privilege, impli-

1 Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv. Vol. 9. Moskva 1982, p. 111.

city² granted to the nobility, was gradually extended to the (mostly plebeian) upper strata of Muscovite administration, the *d'iaki* and *pod'iachie*. One's proper "place" (*mesto*, hence *mestnichestvo*) was determined by heredity: if A's ancestors had been "above" B's forebears, then A had precedence over B. If no member of the A clan had ever had a colleague belonging to the B people, a *sui generis* algebra came into play, using third or fourth parties: if A was above D, and D above B, then A was of course superior to B. Another kind of calculations ascertained A's and B's situation within their respective families: since 1609, or even 1579 at least, possibly earlier, an elder son was decreed equal to his fourth uncle (Eskin, p. 155). Thus, as Markevich and many others have remarked, any precedence conflict involved the whole clan on both sides. For instance, in answer to a complaint by prince Ivan Andreevich Khilkov *minor* against Vasilii Borisovich Sheremetev (case n° 1473, August 1648)³, the *Razriad* (Military service chancellery)⁴ compiled a table comparing the lineage and past appointments of the Sheremetevs versus the Khilkovs (Eskin, p. 292). When the complaint was obviously justified, the plaintiff might get immediate satisfaction. When not, which was usually the case, since the officials of the *Razriad* were shrewd connoisseurs of precedence, a suit was initiated, judged (very seldom) by the tsar himself or (nearly always) by his boyars. The phenomenon of *mestnichestvo* seems to have started in the late XV century, when numerous non-Muscovite princes joined the court of Ivan III, and was abolished in 1682.

After Aleksei Markevich's fundamental works,⁵ Eskin's is by far the most serious, thorough and comprehensive research on the subject. It is not meant as an introduction to *mestnichestvo*: the reader is supposed to be acquainted with Markevich's works, and, besides, it helps to have Eskin's index of cases handy.⁶ Eskin begins where Markevich left off, and the merits of his book can be listed on three counts: the new lights thrown on the *mestnichestvo* itself; its contribution to the understanding of Muscovite hierarchy; the information provided on a variety of topics, from the tsar's court to provincial gentry, from central to local government.

Thanks to his extensive knowledge of Muscovite archives, Eskin considerably widens the range of sources available for the study of *mestnichestvo* (chapter 2, pp. 25–94), particularly stressing the importance of the documents privately kept by noblemen. He provides (pp. 405–424) an up-to-date list of the 195 precedence conflicts the full text of which has survived, thus superseding the data given by Markevich.⁷ To illustrate his argument as he goes along, Eskin describes some 50 precedence suits (sing. *mestnicheskoe*, or *schetnoe delo*), with considerable insight into the strategies of the players: the litigants

2 Since no founding text has survived, and probably none existed.

3 The case numbers are from: IU. M. ESKIN *Mestnichestvo v Rossii XVI–XVII vv. Khronologicheskii reestr*. Moskva 1994.

4 The English translations in this paper have been harmonized with *The Cambridge history of Russia*, vol. 1. From Early Rus' to 1689. Maureen Perrie (ed.) Cambridge 2006.

5 A. I. MARKEVICH (1847–1903) *O mestnichestve: Issledovanie*. Vol. 1. *Russkaia istoriografiia v otnoshenii k mestnichestvu*. Kiev 1879; A. I. MARKEVICH *Istoriia mestnichestva v Moskovskom gosudarstve v XV–XVII vv.* Odessa 1888.

6 ESKIN *Khronologicheskii reestr*, which records 1717 cases between individuals and families, but no collective suits.

7 MARKEVICH *O mestnichestve*, pp. 372–392. Markevich knew only of 38 precedence suits in the archives, not counting one or two related to the Belgorod *razriad* (pp. 389, 392).

(p. 227), but also the *Razriad*, which provided official reference as to the ancestry (the “Gosudareva rodoslovnaia kniga”, or “the Sovereign’s genealogical register”) and the past services (the “Gosudarevy razriady”, i. e. “the Sovereign’s [register] of ranks”) of the nobility. The Military chancellery, wishing to avoid conflicts as much as possible, took great care not to appoint courtiers at random. Usually their choice was unimpeachable (Eskin, p. 95, 257). Sometimes, for further security, they sent on the same mission the son with the father, or brothers and cousins together, because in that case the service hierarchy duplicated the seniority within the family (p. 306).

Two chapters deal with the government’s policy: chapter 5 endeavours to reconstruct the legislation regulating *mestnichestvo*, more often than not from references made by the litigants themselves (p. 138–190),⁸ chapter 6 shows how the tsar’s officials consistently enlarged the fields in which *bezrest’e* (i. e. “absence of places”) was declared, thereby precluding any conflict about precedence, with some qualified exceptions nevertheless (p. 191–280). These tactics proved successful: in the end, the number of complaints dwindled so much that the solemn abolition of *mestnichestvo* hardly made a difference.

I confess some scepticism about the conclusions of chapter 3, “Career and *mestnichestvo*” (pp. 95–122). Did the victor of a precedence dispute acquire better chances for his further career? Some examples are induced by Eskin to answer that he did. But victory and successful career could both proceed from the same source, viz. the greater dignity and prestige of the winner’s clan. The author himself says as much: “... although here we cannot with full certainty separate cause from effect” (p. 110), but at the end of the chapter he considers his point proved (p. 387).

Specially interesting are the pages where Eskin describes the many ways of discrediting (*utianut’/utiagivat’*) an opponent (pp. 75–76, 82–92). It was considered dishonourable, or at least humiliating, to have relatives belonging to the Great Novgorod gentry (although this kind of argument was expressly forbidden, possibly during the reign of Ivan IV, cf. p. 155), partly because you could be a descendant of those slaves (*khology*) who were granted estates in Novgorod by Ivan III. A counterfeited cadastre giving their names, called “Poganaia kniga” (“Infamous register”, not unlike the Polish “Liber chamorum”) was copied, probably for the market, and widely circulated. So were also several variants of a “Mestnicheskii spravochnik” (“Mestnichestvo index”), listing, for each family of middle or low status, the cases when their members had served without protest under even lower gentry (pp. 75–76, 91, 362). So were the lists of *guba* elders (*gubnye starosty*), bailiffs, orderlies and the like (p. 75). In the same vein, manuscript pamphlets were composed against a whole lineage, for instance the Volkonskiis who were falsely supposed to be descended from a blacksmith (pp. 86–88).

These were more or less standard, formalized arguments, although of course vehemently rejected as slander by the target families. But there was no limit to the derogatory eloquence of the individuals. The opponent’s forefathers had been servitors to a prelate of

8 Thus fulfilling a wish expressed by SIGURD O. SHMIDT in his important article, which brought the subject of *mestnichestvo* back in Soviet historiography (*Mestnichestvo i absolutizm* (postanovka voprosa), in S. O. Shmidt: *Stanovlenie Rossiiskogo samoderzhavstva*. Moskva 1973, pp. 262–307, here p. 267, footnote ***).

9 Published by Iu. V. TATISHCHEV *Mestnicheskii spravochnik XVII v.*, in: *Letopis’ Istoriko-rodoslovnogo obshchestva v Moskve*, 1910, n° 2–3 (22–23), pp. I–VIII, 1–105.

the Church, members of the domestic staff of the imperial Palace, or, even worse, slaves to a nobleman. Parish priests (“white clergy”) in one’s ancestry were, curiously for a Christian country, a blemish, one of the worst, on the prestige of a clan – not to mention servants in public baths, boatmen, or a mother who sold milk in Moscow streets.

True or false (they were seldom verified, and sometimes could not be checked anyway), these allegations are evidence of what were honour (*chest’*) and dishonour (*bezchest’e*) in Muscovite eyes. Markevich was disappointed, after years of strenuous work, to find that *mestnichestvo* was, after all, nothing more than an elaborate system of seniority (*starshinstvo*). But, as Eskin rightly observes (p. 9), our conceptions of what is important have considerably altered since 1888. If we go by the feelings of XVII century Russians, there is no doubt that precedence loomed large in their lives. Even friends in hell, when banqueting, were said to be “sitting each of them in his proper place, each by each much honoured and respected”.¹⁰

In that respect, Eskin’s book is most helpful to outline Muscovite representations of hierarchy in XVI and XVII centuries. In 1534, prince Alexander Ivanovich Strigin-Obolenskii was sent as an ambassador to Crimea, but protested that he couldn’t go, because khan Islam Giray, being an impostor, was inferior to an Obolenskii (Eskin, p. 265, footnote 421). Not only persons – places also had intrinsic value, and captains, governors, officers of the watch (*ob’ezhnie golovy*) vied for the more honourable parts of the town (p. 264). There was a scale for government bureaus as well: the *Razriad* came first, the Ambassadorial chancellery (*Posol’skii prikaz*) second, the Treasury (*Bol’shaia Kazna*) third, and so forth. This could serve as an argument when a dispute arose between high-ranking clerks (*d’iaki*) and also between boyars presiding at government offices (pp. 281–286). Provincial gentry from any given town, when quoted in official documents *after* less ancient or less prestigious neighbouring cities, immediately filed a protest, which was usually satisfied (pp. 351–356). Muscovy, therefore, was not so far away in that respect from Western Europe. A work by XVI century French juriconsult Barthélemy de Chasseneux gives us an idea of the extremes to which hierarchical imagination could go. It considers any possible subject of contention: countries, nations, rivers, stars, animals, birds, fish and reptiles, trees, weeds and roots, colours, flowers, metals and stones are all arranged according to their respective dignities.¹¹

As Eskin puts it, “Hierarchy is one of the key categories which determined the structure of State and society at that time” (p. 281). No wonder, then, if everybody, at least among the elite, was constantly worrying about his or her “place” (ladies of the court also fought for precedence, just as fiercely as their consorts). Precedence disputes, in spite of the bad feelings they aroused, probably relieved the tension: *mestnichestvo* appeared as a “social regulator” (p. 347).

10 ESKIN *Ocherki istorii mestnichestva*, p. 239. A very similar sentence occurs in the Tale of possessed Lady Solomonija (A. V. PIGIN *Aus der Geschichte des russischen Dämonologie des 17. Jahrhunderts. Erzählung von der besessenen Frau Solomonija. Köln [etc.] 1998, p. 182, f. 211 v°*).

11 *Catalogus gloriæ mundi, laudes, honores, excellentias ac præeminentias omnium fere statuum [...]*. Paris 1529. Numerous reprints followed, which proves the popularity of these conceptions.

While exploring the context of the precedence suits, Eskin supplies numerous data on a variety of subjects, thus covering much of Muscovite officialdom. There are, for instance, career summaries of not very well known characters (easy to find, thanks to the index – but I noticed a few dead-ends, when the name one seeks cannot be found at the indicated page). About the abundantly discussed problem of the Boyar council (did the *Boiarskaia дума* really exist?), Eskin remarks on the paradoxical absence of precedence conflicts connected with such an important body. This is due, he believes, to the supposedly private quality of these meetings (p. 258–261). Since the order in which names appeared in official records was a sensitive issue, some space is devoted to the court rolls (*boiarskie spiski*): before 1619, the names of boyars are listed by order of precedence; after Filaret's return in the chronological order of promotion (p. 261). Of the Vladimir and the Moscow judicial chancelleries (*Vladimirskii, Moskovskii sudnyi prikaz*), which one was the most honourable? Eskin takes sides with S. K. Bogoiavlenskii and against Andrei Pavlov, and awards the first place to the Vladimir chancellery (p. 291–292). He gives a remarkably clear account of the successful complaint about precedence filed by the *gosti* (privileged merchants) against the *d'iaki*, and the subsequent printing of a modified version of *Sobornoe Ulozhenie*, the law code of 1649 (p. 313–321). And so forth: the book is an almost inexhaustible spring of particulars of individual noblemen and bureaucrats, their clans, and of institutions of early modern Muscovy.

My reservations, putting aside minor shortcomings as the lack of a list of abbreviations and some slight errors,¹² are about the theoretical side of Eskin's work. *Mestnichestvo* is indeed a difficult subject. There is no middle way to describe it: either its historians stick to the abstract side of the question, trying to connect it with historical context, wondering whether it favoured nobility versus monarchy or vice versa, estimating the damage it caused to Muscovite warfare – and are in danger of losing contact with facts; or they plunge into a maze of details, since nearly every case was different, and are at a loss to systematize their findings. Markevich belonged rather to the latter school, Eskin tries to combine both approaches. His book, much better organized, by the way, than the enormous volumes by Markevich, ends with a chapter on “*Mestnichestvo* as a social institution of early modern Russia“ (p. 378–401).

Although he never gives a precise definition of “*mestnichestvo*”, taking the object of his investigation for granted, he obviously means by it the highly formalized and domesticated fight for places known to us through official records, which, he says, has no equivalents elsewhere. This he links with feudalism, since *mestnichestvo* verifies the two features singled out by Aron Iakovlevich Gurevich: “... feudal society in Europe is characterized by two mutually contradictory traits, which nevertheless are functionally connected together: relations of dominance and subordination, and corporate (*korporativny[e]*) relations.”¹³ The whole point of a suit for precedence is, of course, about the first relation (who is above? who is under?). But at the same time there are a number of disputes started

12 E. g. on p. 99 are tabulated the precedence disputes from 1613 to 1623 the outcome of which is known to us: 12 + 10 + 12 + 7 + 12 + 14 + 5 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 = 98. Yet on p. 104 the number has inexplicably shrunk to 97. On p. 34, the first dispute appearing in the table is n° 33 in the *Mestnicheskii spravochnik*. But in this index, on p. 43, the dispute is labelled *iskliuchen* (omitted).

13 A. IA. GUREVICH *Kategorii srednevekovoi kul'tury*. Moskva 1984, p. 202, quoted by Eskin, p. 378.

by entire groups: gentry of one or several towns, *gosti* against *d'iaki* (see *supra*), etc. These groups, and even families (*rody*), Eskin considers as some kind of corporations.

(That, if I may digress from the main subject of this paper, is the trouble with ambiguous terms like *korporatsiia*. Since their meaning is unclear, they are used at random to indicate various social groups. But the word is anything but neutral: it conveys the idea of a medieval body, with rules, elected officers, councils, feasts, etc. – an image which is no more applicable to the gentry of a provincial Russian town than to a boyar clan.)

Eskin then proposes a complicated and altogether unconvincing dialectic between Russia and Western Europe, between the individual and the corporation. In Western Europe, corporations protected in the first place the individual, and then his clan. In Russia, it was the reverse: priority was given to the clan, and to the clan's place in social hierarchy; the individual came last, and only as a member of his clan and of his corporation (p. 378).

While I agree most of the time with the conclusions that Eskin draws, every now and then, from the material he has expounded, I must raise serious objections against this last essay, and more generally against the whole theoretical framework of Eskin's research. Since he has first isolated the *mestnichestvo* phenomenon as a body of officialized rules and practices, with only incidental connection with what went on in Muscovite society outside the elite, and then denied any resemblance of *mestnichestvo* to precedence procedure in other countries, he is faced by a problem. Why did Muscovy evolve such a complex and ponderous structure?

To solve it, he goes into elaborate comparison between Western and Russian "feudalism" (another term which would amply justify a second digression, but better not, perhaps), touching on oriental despotism (p. 386), venality of office in England and France (p. 392) and birthright (*maiorat*) as a parallel to *mestnichestvo* (p. 390 *sq.*) Although interesting in themselves, these considerations seem to me to be a little far-fetched: duelling, for example, would be a more apposite equivalent to *mestnichestvo* than birthright. Above all, Eskin resorts to means disproportionate to their object, something like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Things become much simpler if we admit that *mestnichestvo* is but a variant of the nearly universal phenomenon of precedence and precedence disputes.

Let us revert to the background and definition of *mestnichestvo*. Markevich clearly distinguishes between "seniority" (*starshinstvo*), which covered every kind of established, traditional order of precedence, e. g. between father and son, master and servant, etc., and "*mestnichestvo*", which he applies not only to the court disputes, but to any *fight* for precedence, irrespective of its social context. He quotes as an instance the servants (quite a number of them were slaves) of *stol'nik* Andrey Ilich Bezobrazov († 1690), known to us through the letters written by the butler to his master.¹⁴ Another famous case, also described in Bezobrazov's domestic correspondence, is reported in 1681 by steward Avdei [Obadiah]: "Now about what you wrote in your memorandum, my lord, to assign to each woman a house, none of the women listens to me, they are brawling among themselves, they insult me, and there is no way to assign them a house without your lordship's order,

14 MARKEVICH *Istoriia mestnichestva*, p. 219; no precedence disputes are recorded among Bezobrazov's stewards, but they repeatedly turned down tasks they judged *infra dignitatem*, such as selling apples or handing out monthly rations (*mesiachina*) to the servants (ALEKSANDR A. NOVOSSEL'SKII *Votchinnik i ego khoziaistvo v XVII veke*. Moskva 1929, repr. Den Haag [etc.] 1968, p. 55).

they are all important and old-aged.¹⁵ Many a time I tried to talk to them, asking them to give a *place* to [*chtob izmestili*] Maria Chegloková [...]; but they won't do it, no one wants to *sit lower* [*nizhe sidet*']¹⁶ ». These women (*baby*) are serfs, peasants or more probably servants; nevertheless, the quarrel, even including the specific terms used by Avdei, is not different from the precedence suits between Moscow courtiers.

Markevich postulates – and I find the hypothesis attractive – that court *mestnichestvo* grew out of this everyday (*bytovoe*), common *mestnichestvo*, incorporating naturally the accepted conceptions of seniority, but adding to them an official, bureaucratic element, characteristic of the “staatsbedingte Gesellschaft” (Hans-Joachim Torke) that was the Muscovite Empire.

If we adopt this view, it obviously follows that the uniqueness of *mestnichestvo* is questionable. I do not know if the same sophisticated rules existed elsewhere, and *mestnichestvo* did have other original features, for instance the dispute was usually about the chess-men, not the chess-board: French or German litigants tried to demonstrate that a given function or dignity was intrinsically superior to another, and therefore gave precedence to its bearer, while Russian courtiers endeavoured to prove that they, and not their opponents, were entitled to occupy square A5.

The basic motives, nevertheless, are always the same: the aim of precedence is to reconcile individual honour with the necessities of public life and order. A vast field is therefore open to investigation, comparison and typology. I have found numerous examples in France or in the Roman Empire, not only of individuals, but of entire “corporations” fighting for precedence.¹⁷ Crusius (Jakob Andreas Crause or Krause, 1636–1680) devoted a whole section of his book to precedence disputes between States represented at the *Reichstag*.¹⁸ The funeral of Henri IV of France was interrupted, and resumed only in the evening, because the magistrates of the Paris *Parlement* insisted on marching in the procession before the Church (June 1610).¹⁹ French literature on precedence is indeed overabundant, including court rulings on concrete cases, and proves beyond doubt that disputes very similar to *mestnichestvo* took place everywhere, e. g. in church for the places of

15 *Bol'shie i starshie*, important because they are old-aged, meaning that they cannot be ordered about as the steward would wishes.

16 IVAN ZABELIN *Domashnii byt russkogo naroda v XVI i XVII st.* Vol. 1. *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarei v XVI i XVII stoletiiakh.* Part 2. Moskva 2000, p. 358, footnote 2; Vol. 2. *Domashnii byt russkikh tsarits v XVI i XVII stoletiiakh.* Moskva, 2001, p. 396. Cf. MARKEVICH *O mestnichestve*, p. 701; E. A. VASILEVSKAIA *Terminologija mestnichestva i rodstva*, in: *Trudy Istoriko-arkhivnogo Instituta.* Moskva 2 (1946), pp. 153–179, here p. 164. One may wonder why all precedence conflicts known to us among lower classes seem to arise among Bezobrazov's people. The reason is that Andrei Bezobrazov was arrested under a charge of conspiracy against Peter I; all his papers were seized and therefore remained in the archives to this day – a very rare occurrence of a Muscovite nobleman's private archive.

17 ANDRÉ BERELOWITCH *La hiérarchie des égaux. La noblesse russe d'Ancien Régime (XVIe – XVIIe siècles).* Paris 2001, chapter IX, pp. 271–302.

18 J. A. CRUSIUS *Tractatus politico-juridico-historicus de præminentia, præcedentia et universo προεδρίαζ magnatum in Europa ...* Bremæ 1666.

19 JACQUES-AUGUSTE DE THOU *Histoire universelle depuis 1543 jusqu'en 1607*, continuation by Rigault, vol. 15, London 1734, pp. 112–118.

honour near the altar, and not always without bloodshed.²⁰ Unfortunately, Eskin did not inquire into this side of the question. As a result, when Jakob de la Gardie, being sent by Karl IX of Sweden to negotiate with Great Novgorod representatives, refuses to sign second after Henrik von Horn (1611),²¹ Eskin suspects a case of “Russian influence” (Eskin, p. 10, footnote 10, and pp. 389–390). But this is absolutely commonplace behaviour of any European nobleman, magistrate and probably commoner, in similar circumstances! Without unduly stretching our inquest, we could include Japan,²² and probably China as well, on the one hand, and jackdaws as observed by Konrad Lorenz, on the other.

Cautiously leaving out the jackdaws, we could also question the connection between *mestnichestvo* and feudalism. It is true that the *acmé* of precedence disputes in Muscovy, of duels in the West, was reached precisely in early modern Europe, dubbed “feudal” by Soviet standards. But why not during the Middle Ages, the feudal period *par excellence*? Why did Plutarch write a whole treaty on precedence in banquets? Not to mention the elaborate lists of precedence used for protocol by contemporary states of XXI century. If, as I believe, Iurii Eskin has achieved a remarkably intuitive, accurate and exhaustive study of *mestnichestvo* from the domestic Russian point of view, further progress in the field of interpretation will be wrought only through extensive comparison.

André Berelowitch, Paris

20 E. g. JEAN FILLEAU Recueil général des edicts, arrests et réglemens notables, concernans les ecclésiastiques, universitez, baillifs, senechaux ... et généralement tous les officiers de France, tant royaux que subalternes, pour les droicts, exercice et fonction de leurs charges, rangs et séances. 2 vols. in folio. Paris 1630–1631.

21 JOHANN WIDEKIND Thet Swenska i Ryßland Tiio Åhrs Krijgz-Historie. Stockholm 1672, quoted here and by Eskin from Russian transl. by A. M. Aleksandrov (with help of A. F. Kostina): Is-toriia desiatiletnei shvedsko-moskovitskoi voiny. Moskva 2000, pp. 278 and 607, footnote 476.

22 At dinner “I sit down above Yukitsune, for he has left the place vacant.” And later: “There is a light meal. Yukitsune, who has come, sits one place below me.” (FUJIWARA NO SUKEFUSA Notes de l’hiver 1039. Transl. from the Japanese by Francine Hérial. Paris 1994, p. 74, 109).