A Window to the South: The Russian Empire, the Black Sea, and Beyond

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The Russian Empire, the Black Sea, and Beyond

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Brian L. Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768–1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire*. 344 pp., illus. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. ISBN-13 978-1472512932. £81.00.

Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa Recollected: The Port and the People.* 268 pp., illus. Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2018. ISBN-13 978-161811736. $42.00.

Ulrich Hofmeister and Kerstin Jobst, eds., "Krimtataren," Special issue of *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften/Austrian Journal of Historical Studies* 28, 1 (2017).

For decades, Western historiography has critically addressed Vasilii Kliuchevskii's famous idea of Russia's expansion toward the Black Sea as the natural end of Russian colonial expansion. While the inclusion of southern Russian and Ukrainian territories into the empire undoubtedly marked a watershed in its history, the motifs and aims, as well as the process itself and its short- and long-term consequences, continue to offer ground for debate. The southern parts of the Russian Empire acquired between the late 17th and the early 19th centuries have stimulated research directly related to the character of the empire itself. Among them are issues of foreign policy, migration, various aspects of state building, and the increasing entanglement with the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Ottoman world. This window to the south deeply affected the empire's economic, cultural, and religious fortunes and, unlike Peter I's access to the Baltic, opened up the empire to Europe and Asia. The complex social and ethnic fabric established east of the Danube, west of

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the Don, south of Kiev, and north of Sevastopol´ contributed to the diversity of the Russian Empire and provided it with opportunities and challenges during the last century of its existence. Several scholars have expanded the scope of Russian imperial analysis by including its maritime dimensions as transnational spaces.[1] Since Charles King published *The Black Sea: A History*, the sea has attracted increasing attention as a region with overlapping imperial, economic, and cultural developments.[2] Both the Black Sea Research Project and the Black Sea Networks at Columbia University testify to rising interest among scholars engaging in the economic, political, social, and cultural histories of the Black Sea.[3] The newly founded *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* demonstrates that this topic not only bridges the history of different regions such as the Balkan, Caucasus, Ottoman, and Russian realms and their respective methods but various national scientific cultures as well.[4]

Increasingly, the Black Sea stimulates scholarly interest not only as a barrier separating the Balkans from the Caucasus or the Russian Empire from the Ottoman but also as a region in itself.[5] This shift in perspective opens up new questions and problems. A recent workshop on the Black Sea at the University of Basel discussed possible paradigms. First, the sea, which lost its Asiatic character between 1750 and 1850, can be considered an arena of military and symbolic conflict between the Russian and Ottoman Empires and increasingly the Western powers of Britain, France, and Austria. The conflict between the Porte and St. Petersburg was based on entirely different strategic premises regarding the sea and its surrounding lands. Whereas Ottoman power could be secured for a long period by keeping the sea calm while its

[1] Michael Pye, *The Edge of the World: A Cultural History of the North Sea and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2014); Lars Elenius et al., eds., *The Barents Region: A Transnational History of Subarctic Northern Europe* (Oslo: PAX, 2015); and Michael North, *The Baltic: A History*, trans. Kenneth Kronenberg (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[2] Dominik Gutmeyer and Karl Kaser, ed., *Europe and the Black Sea Region: A History of Early Knowledge Exchange (1750–1850)* (Zürich: LIT, 2018).

[3] Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); the Black Sea Research Project (https://blacksea.gr/); the Black Sea Networks (http://blackseanetworks.org/index.html).

[4] *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies*, no. 1 (2018).

[5] The most instructive approaches toward the Black Sea as a region are Eyüp Özveren, "The Black Sea World as a Unit of Analysis," in *Politics of the Black Sea: Regional Dynamics of Cooperation and Conflict*, ed. Tunç Aybak (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 61–84; and Stefan Troebst, "The Black Sea as [a] Historical Meso-Region: Concepts in Cultural Studies and the Social Sciences," *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 2, 2 (2019): 11–29. More recent perspectives were discussed at "The Black Sea in Trans-Imperial and Trans-National History: An International Works-in-Progress Workshop," University of Basel, 13–14 December 2018, conference report at https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-8128.

vassals and allies kept the "Wild Field" restless, Russian expansion aimed at stability on land and regarded the Black Sea as an Ottoman weakness for military incursions by Cossack pirates. Not only the sea's importance for military campaigns changed drastically over time; so did the different projection of imperial power onto the sea itself. Some of the inhabitants of its shores experienced premodern, imperial, and national forms of rule within a century. How did these people navigate these changes? Are there specific common patterns that cross political territory, social strata, or religion?

Second, regarding cultural, economic, and migrational questions, the Black Sea constitutes a hub. The forced opening to non-Ottoman seafaring from the late 18th century onward not only increased the number of goods and persons that crossed the sea but established new spatial connections and migration patterns while redirecting old ones. These linked the Black Sea with different water systems such as the Danube, the Dnieper, the Caspian, or the Mediterranean Sea.

Third, the idea of the Black Sea as a highway or transit route moves into focus the economic transition that was set in motion by the Russian conquest of the northern shore and the rapid building of new port cities. The history of cities provides us with one promising way to approach the long-term conversion of the Black Sea region's economic cultures from nomadism and violent entrepreneurship such as raids and slave trading to agriculture and the long-distance export trade of the 19th and 20th centuries. As Black Sea trade always constituted a fragile equilibrium, the foundation or decay of one port city could affect the economic, social, and political fabric of its competitors or partners along the shores.

Recent events such as the second annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the disintegration of Ukraine along the lines of imagined nationality have shown that the integration and transformation of the Black Sea's northern shores by the Russian Empire remains important for understanding the roots of conflicts over contested nationality and territory. Furthermore, history provides strong narratives for contemporary discourse, and historical terms have been revived. Since 2014, the term "Novorossiia" has experienced a certain renaissance among the Russian elite and its president in justifying the legitimacy of claims over Crimea and Eastern Ukrainian territories.[6] A recent voluminous, multiauthored study on the history of New Russia, undertaken by the Russian Historical Society and the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of History, introduces the reader to the topic by citing the Russian people's "unusual energy … in aquiring vast spaces," referring again to Kliuchevskii

[6] David M. Herszenhorn, "What Is Putin's 'New Russia'?," *New York Times*, 18 April 2014 (https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/19/world/europe/what-is-putins-new-russia.html).

and his dictum of colonization as the main feature of Russian history.[7] Although exploring histories of the conquest, rule, resistance, and conversion of the northern Black Sea areas is key to understanding the region's past, these histories are never innocent with respect to the present.

All three books under review address this transformation and its consequences for the Russian Empire—its economy, social composition, and ethnic structure—as well as the multitude of peoples inhabiting the area. The authors engage with their topics from different perspectives using a variety of methodologies. Brian Davies's *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768–1774* provides a military history of the region's conquest between 1768 and 1774. The special issue of the *Austrian Journal of Historical Studies* edited by Ulrich Hofmeister and Kerstin Jobst (both in Vienna) directs our attention to the history of the Crimean Tatars, who experienced this transformation as a decline from a semiautonomous early modern state prior to annexation in 1783 to an endangered ethnic minority in the present. *Odessa Recollected* assembles key essays by Patricia Herlihy, who dedicated most of her remarkable career to the study of Odessa, the most vibrant and prominent example of imperial posturing and modernization on this southern coast.

Military studies of the last few decades have primarily focused on the 19th and early 20th centuries, the various reforms of the army, its staff, and its organization in relation to the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars and the Great Reforms.[8] Most of the authors worked under the premise that the army was intrinsically linked to Russian society, its ethnic and social composition writ large, thereby making the history of the imperial army indicative of the history of the empire itself.[9] Brian Davies's book concludes his impressive three-part study of the history of the 18th century Pontic steppe with the most decisive of the four main Russian-Ottoman contestations: the Russo-

[7] V. Kh. Sakharov, ed., *Istoriia Novorossii* (Moscow: Tsentr gumanitarnykh initsiativ, 2018), 3.

[8] Frederick W. Kagan, *The Military Reforms of Nicholas I: The Origins of the Modern Russian Army* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 1999); Bruce W. Menning, *Bayonets before Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army; 1861–1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Menning, eds., *Reforming the Tsar's Army: Military Innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004).

[9] John W. Steinberg, *All the Tsar's Men: Russia's General Staff and the Fate of the Empire, 1898–1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Brian D. Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Menning, *Reforming the Tsar's Army*.

Ottoman War of 1768–74.[10] The conflict's importance for Eurasian history can hardly be questioned, because it irretrievably shifted the power balance between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, secured permanent and extensive access to the Black Sea, paved the way for the end of the Crimean Khanate and the partition of Poland, and foreshadowed the "Eastern Question." Yet depending on the angle, this war either marked a clear break with dramatic geopolitical and domestic implications or can be regarded as one significant event in a longer process. Davies, an advocate of military history, is interested in military organization and technical and tactical innovations as part of the "European military revolution." By considering the army a product of the state's capacity to muster resources, and war as one possible outcome of the complicated diplomatic interactions of the 18th century, Davies aims at embedding his military history in the broader context of court politics, diplomacy, economic development, and state building in the contested space between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, the Crimean Khanate, and Poland-Lithuania. The reader should not, however, expect radical reinterpretations of this broader context of empire building. References to contesting historiographical interpretations appear rather sporadically throughout the book. Davies's concern is military innovation, and he draws his information and arguments mostly from published sources and the impressive amount of existing literature on both empires. The book starts with a rather short introduction that barely sets out his set of questions and approaches and positions himself vis-à-vis existing (military) historiography as discussed above. In that respect, grasping the book's greater context depends on reading the previous volumes.

Nonetheless, Davies's study manages to condense a tremendous number of events and actors into a conclusive narrative with a balanced structure. The book considers three perspectives—the preconditions for the empire's success against the Porte, a well-crafted juxtaposition of Russian and Ottoman reforms prior to the conflict, and an assessment of the war's importance for the rule of Catherine the Great, for whom the war's outcome remained crucial with respect to her uncontested position as a ruler and promoter of fundamental reform. The first chapter positions Russia at the dawn of Catherine's reign. It describes how her "Polish project," Count Nikita Panin's reorientation of Russian foreign politics toward the Northern Accords and the increasing crisis in Poland paved the way for the conflict. The two main chapters that

[10] Brian L. Davies, *State Power and Community in Early Modern Russia: The Case of Kozlov, 1635–1648* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Davies, *Warfare, State, and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 2007); Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe* (New York: Continuum, 2011).

follow provide a comparative overview of state structure, finances, military reforms, and relations between the centers of St. Petersburg and Istanbul and their respective peripheries, especially in the future theaters of war in southern Ukraine, Crimea, the Danubian principalities, the Caucasus, and the Mediterranean Sea. Arguing against contemporary perceptions of the long period of peace after 1739 as a sign of Ottoman decline and similar assessments in older historiography of a linear decline of the Ottoman Empire from the late 17th century onward, Davies provides a balanced account of the decentralizing reforms leading from a "patrimonial political economy to an increase of market relations" (23). The rise of Ayans as new regional elites and the persistent traditionalism surely provided obstacles for an improvement in recruitment practices and military efficiency but would nonetheless prove partially successful in the two last years of the conflict.

The Russian Empire, in contrast, proceeded along the path of further administrative centralization to increase both recruit levies and taxes. Davies understands the 18th century as a transitional period in which the empire united features of a composite state flexibly granting temporary privileges to certain groups and areas according to actual needs with those of a unifying state aiming for institutional, political, and legal uniformity and increasingly subjecting borderland populations such as the different Cossack hosts to its strict control. None of the involved empires (and Poland-Lithuania in this respect) found it easy to establish control over the Cossacks, Danubian vassals, Tatar and Nogai hordes, or Cherkassians: fluid allegiances, local economies dependent on nomadic livestock breeding and raids, and conflicting religious loyalties all contributed to insecurity throughout the 18th century. Davies convincingly describes how different administrative reforms aimed at increasing the state's income, enabling a quick mobilization of troops for the front, and securing the huge hinterland with reserves were realized. He also shows how Catherine's state war council not only constituted an effective centerpiece of imperial warfare but also served an important domestic purpose, binding different noble factions in a consensual institution that appeared less autocratic than during previous conflicts. The thorough description of the empire's southern border zones during the 18th century allows the reader to consult this book without being dependent on the three previous studies. The chapter "Military Reform on the Eve of Catherine II's Turkish War" provides a well-informed discussion of the Russian leaders' answers to lessons learned during the Seven Years' War and the geographical demands of steppe warfare.

The center of Davies's monograph is the three chronological chapters on the course of the conflict. He provides a dense history of events, commanders,

troop movements, and tactics that were constantly adjusted during the conflict and would characterize Russian strategy on the battlefield until the Napoleonic Wars. At times, the density of information overwhelms the reader, who would benefit from further classification of some of Davies's statistical information: for example, the meaning behind the continuous discrepancy between Ottoman and Russian losses. Do they represent a difference in equipment, discipline, morale, or courage?

His thick description of campaigns and sieges in the Danubian theater of war compels one to rethink the contingencies of historical development in general. Contrary to our understanding of the war as the 18th-century empire's greatest triumph, in several instances victory was far from certain, especially during the later years when Russian logistics, recruitment, and training capacities were at the brink of exhaustion. In the final chapter, "Peace, Reforms, and Provocations," Davies demonstrates how the war's end sealed in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca really served as the catalyst for realizing administrative reforms, the expansion and integration of further territories into Catherine's empire, and the lasting restructuring of the balance of power in Eastern Europe. For Davies, however, the conflict between the empires was fueled by aspirations to expand imperial power through a range of diplomatic and military means. Readers interested in the role of cultural influences, presumed Orthodox superiority, or negative images of the Ottoman opponent and mentality will find these aspects of the conflict covered elsewhere.[11] Furthermore, Davies' war is not the war of soldiers and officers—neither social composition nor individual experience of the war play a prominent role here.[12] The question of specific experience and the exercise of violence and its cultural framing in these 18th-century imperial wars remains to be analyzed in future studies. Davies's look into the arena of the Black Sea region unveils a complex and at times uncertain conflict whose preparation and execution stretched both empires' administration and resources and Catherine's enlightened ideals to the limit, while only the Russian victory led to far-reaching reforms.

[11] Viktor Taki, *Tsar and Sultan: Russian Encounters with the Ottoman Empire* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016).

[12] John L. H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462–1874* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

The history of the Crimean Tatars and that of Odessa appear as two sides of the same coin when considered in the context of the northern Black Sea region's transformation into a part of the Russian realm that was set into motion by the war analyzed by Davies. Crimean Tatars in many ways exemplify features of the Black Sea coastal inhabitants—because they never lived in a polity that was considered a modern (nation) state, yet they economically connected the sea with its hinterland by their violent entrepreneurship of slave raiding and trade with Istanbul. Some historians consider this loss of labor and the financial strain imposed on the tsars for ransom payments as one long-term reason for the underdeveloped urban structures of the Russian Empire. In return, both the gradual curtailment of Tatar attacks from the south as well as the incorporation of the khanate's territories mark the prehistory of the boom of founding new cities in New Russia. What does their story tell us about the Black Sea as a political arena or a hub of migrational, economic, and cultural connections? Can we expand our image of Crimean Tatars beyond slave raiders, Ottoman vassals, and victims of Russian and Soviet politics?

The volume compiled by Jobst and Hofmeister offers interesting new perspectives on these questions. In the introduction, the editors argue that the history of Crimean Tatars still is a lacuna in the scholarship, having been accorded insufficient public attention despite recent events. The exploration of the Russian Empire's long-ignored history of its various Muslim communities and the vivid interaction with the Islamic world has led to fascinating studies.[13] The Crimean Tatars as a distinct community have received increasing attention during the last two decades.[14] Among them are Brian Williams's book on the Crimean Tatar diaspora and Paul Magosci's study from 2014.[15] Greta Uehling dedicated a monograph to the deportation and return of the Crimean Tatars in the 20th century, while Norman Naimark included their tragic history in a comparative approach to ethnic cleansing in Eastern

[13] On Muslim communities, see Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims: Islam, Empire, and European Modernity, 1788–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For Russian-Ottoman relations, see Eileen Kane, *Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[14] Denise Klein, ed., *The Crimean Khanate between East and West (15th–18th Century)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2012); Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[15] Brian G. Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: The Diaspora Experience and the Forging of a Nation* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Paul R. Magocsi, *This Blessed Land: Crimea and the Crimean Tatars* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

Europe.[16] A recent Russian two-volume edition on the history of Crimea tackles the deportation in a five-page contribution.[17]

The Crimean Khanate ceased to exist as an autonomous polity in 1783. The ambivalent and tragic history of its inhabitants was either ignored due to the national paradigm of 19th-century historiography or reduced to another ethnic struggle threatening the Soviet Union's stability during the Cold War.[18] After reading these contributions, derived from a 2015 workshop at the University of Vienna, most readers will agree with the editors' argument for the potential of bringing together researchers from history, philology, and political science to engage with the polyglot variety of sources on Crimean Tatar history. Although Jobst and Hofmeister deny the need for a coherent question to unify the contributions, two main themes seem to prevail—a fresh interpretation of particular periods of Crimean Tatar history (Jobst, Gasimov, Malek) and historical perceptions of the polity, its inhabitants and individuals, and its interaction with different cultures (Pausz, Hillebrandt, Hotopp-Riecke, Hofmeister). To encourage future research based on a variety of seldom-used sources in various European archives, the volume is rounded off with two contributions that discuss early modern political reports at the court in Vienna and late Soviet literature as potential sources for new approaches to Crimean Tatar history.

Clemens Pausz discusses the Crimean Khanate as a central factor in the rise of the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the 15th and 16th centuries. By analyzing the diary of a Habsburgian emissary to the Cossacks and reports from Vatican delegates in Poland, the author shows how the transition from a nomadic and raiding life to a political community was influenced by the Ottoman Habsburg antagonism that valorized Cossacks as a potential ally in keeping the Crimean Khanate at bay. His fascinating sources convincingly reflect on the ambivalent perception of the Cossacks as important players in the borderlands and his arguments about the khanate's direct and indirect influence on the host are substantial. Contrary to the dominant idea of the Crimean Khanate being mostly influenced by and dependent on the Ottoman Porte, contributions like this broaden our perspective on processes of exchange and cultural reciprocity in the northern part of the Black Sea region prior to the Russian conquest. In his contribution—regrettably, only six pages

[16] Greta L. Uehling, *Beyond Memory: The Crimean Tatars' Deportation and Return* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[17] O. V. Volobuev, "Deportatsiia krymskikh tatar, bolgar, grekov, armian," in *Istoriia Kryma*, ed. Andrei Viktorovich Iurasov, 2 vols. (Moscow: Kuchkovo pole, 2018), 2: 584–88.

[18] Alan W. Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), 166.

long—Caspar Hillebrandt skillfully analyzes the depiction of the Crimean Tatars' 17th-century court in *Seyahatname*, the travel account of Eliya Celebi, one of the most important sources for Ottoman history in that period. Although the period witnessed an obvious shift in the balance of power between the khanate and the Porte, Celebi's description of the Giray khan's court and the peninsula are fueled with appreciation for the dynasty rather than the arrogances one would expect from a representative of the Ottoman imperial center. Hillebrandt unveils an interesting mixture of admiring, ironic, and entertaining elements in the traveler's description. It would be interesting to know more about the reasons for this discrepancy—can we attribute it to the author's life history and individual agenda, or do we have to rethink mechanisms between shifts of power and prestige in the Ottoman Empire?

Mieste Hotopp-Riekes offers an interesting perspective on Prussian–Tatar connections in the 17th and 18th centuries and the way these contributed to a yet-to-be investigated history of European stereotypes of the Tatars. The text is challenging because it extends its scope to the 20th century and speaks of various types of Tatars, rather than focusing exclusively on Crimean inhabitants. The author presents a variety of examples, mostly drawn from elite projects to recruit Tatars as soldiers and settlers in Prussia. The diplomatic behavior of these groups vis-à-vis the Tatars of Crimea or within the Polish realm was quiet flexible at times. Hotopp-Riecke's aim to question geographical, cultural, and religious polarities of East and West in European history deserves appreciation. However, there is further room for strengthening the empirical foundation of his insightful arguments: most of the fascinating Prussian Tatar-related policies and projects never got past the planning stage.

Kerstin Jobst, a renowned expert on Crimean history, provides a balanced reading of the Tatars' history that convincingly shows the limits of a bifurcation of history into a dark tsarist period and a "golden age" before the deportations in 1941.[19] Her approach makes possible a more nuanced view of winners and losers within the community after 1783 without denying emigration and disfranchisement. With a similar purpose of complicating the Crimean Tatars' history, Ulrich Hofmeister integrates the Tatar reformer Ismail Gasprinskii within Said's conception of orientalism and analyzes his ambivalent role as a mediator between the Russian and Muslim worlds. Russian nationalists perceived Gasprinskii as oriental and alien, although he criticized Muslim backwardness in the Central Asian parts of the empire, thereby coming close to expressing an occidental view on the East.

[19] Kerstin S. Jobst, *Die Perle des Imperiums: Der russische Krim-Diskurs im Zarenreich* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2007).

Zaur Gasimov provides one of the most fascinating papers of the volume, once more making clear how important geography and spatial links across the Black Sea are for extending our histories of the various peoples, even those with a state of their own. The author uncovers the political networks of the 20th-century Crimean Tatar diaspora in Istanbul as the center of a net ranging as far as Romania and Poland. Gasimov, drawing on rich materials of immigrant archives, convincingly shows how the fate and activities of the Crimean Tatar exile family of the Otars was linked to informal ethnic networks and the greater forces of the Cold War.

Martin Malek's long and at times very dense contribution should indeed become compulsory reading for various political analysts of current Crimean matters because it creates the necessary bridge between the recent worsening of the Crimean Tatars' situation after the second Russian annexation and late and post-Soviet history. The author chops a clear path through the underbrush of demographics, socioeconomic development, and strategies deployed to overcome the political situation and discrimination against the returnees. His perspective compels us to deidealize the Ukrainian period of post-Soviet Tatar history, as throughout the 1990s and 2000s the material, social, and political situation of the returning native inhabitants was contested by local Russian politics, with the government in Kiev proving a rather weak protector on the spot. Ukrainian statehood in Crimea has been fragile since 1991.

Cities are crucial for understanding maritime trade and migration. Their administration and logistic capabilities not only (re)direct trade flows and frequencies and determine the variety of goods involved but also connect the sea to the hinterland. One peculiarity of the Black Sea region in the first half of the 18th century was that major trade ports in Crimea, such as Caffa, or on the Anatolian coast in the south were hubs for Ottoman sea trade but poorly connected to their respective hinterlands. Neither the Crimean mountainside beyond the coastline nor the Anatolian hills provided equivalent infrastructure or political stability for inland trade. In this respect, the foundation of Russian cities along the northern shores marks a clear caesura, paving the way for increased exports from the Russian heartland at the expense of Ottoman trading ports on the Caucasian and Anatolian coast. New cities like Odessa not only gained economic, political, and symbolical importance for the Russian Empire but reshuffled the balance of the Black Sea hub affecting non-Russian port cities as well. *Odessa Recollected* is a collection of republished

articles that represent the oeuvre of Patricia Herlihy, who sadly passed away a few weeks after the publication. Herlihy dedicated a considerable amount of her academic life to Odessa's history and was the first Western historian to get access to the city's local archive in the early 1980s. Her *Odessa: A History 1794–1914* was the first extensive study on one of the most non-Russian urban centers of the Romanov empire and has inspired several studies since that drew on the city's potential to discuss key elements and processes of Russian imperial history.[20] Paul Ashin summarized the author's uncontested expertise on the subject in a 1988 review of that book: "If a tree fell in pre-revolutionary Odessa and Professor Herlihy did not learn about it, did it make a sound?"[21] Her pioneering analysis discussed how economic incentives shaped the success and failure of a city on the southern periphery. Odessa serves as a blueprint for the opportunities and failures to integrate into the empire the Jewish population and its strategies for coping with promises of prosperity, autocratic discrimination, and popular antisemitism.[22] Other approaches have redirected our understanding of urban history toward the contiguous nature of daily life and identity politics, broadening our perspective by fruitfully comparing social stratification and the experience of cosmopolitanism beyond the elite in Odessa with the experience of other late imperial cities.[23] The collection of articles under review offers a condensed overview of her multiple approaches to Odessa's culture, social fabric, and economy. It provides a good starting point on the subject, especially for readers unfamiliar with the city and those interested in comparative approaches. The articles focus on a particular set of separate questions, although not every article lists them. Some texts lack a cohesive substructure that, combined with the density and variety of information, can at times leave the reader bewildered. To

[20] Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[21] Paul Ashin, review of *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914* by Patricia Herlihy, *Journal of Social History* 21, 4 (1988): 838–40.

[22] Alexis Hofmeister, *Selbstorganisation und Bürgerlichkeit: Jüdisches Vereinswesen in Odessa um 1900* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007); Tanja Penter, *Odessa 1917: Revolution an der Peripherie* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2000); Guido Hausmann, *Universität und städtische Gesellschaft in Odessa, 1865–1917: Soziale und nationale Selbstorganisation an der Peripherie des Zarenreiches* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998); Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794–1881* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985); Charles King, *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

[23] Ilya Gerasimov, *Plebeian Modernity: Social Practices, Illegality, and the Urban Poor in Russia, 1906–1916* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2018), 275; Roshanna P. Sylvester, *Tales of Old Odessa: Crime and Civility in a City of Thieves* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005).

an extent, this observation mirrors marginal complaints about the analytical structure some earlier reviewers saw as missing in her history of Odessa.

The book is organized thematically into three sections—culture, community, and commerce. It furthermore provides a selection of historical postcards at the end of the first section on culture. The book's thematic structure reflects Herlihy's fascination with Odessa's eccentric characteristics and the diversity of peoples drawn to it. The first essay, "The Persuasive Power of the Odessa Myth," traces the establishment, circulation, and evolution of certain mythological characteristics of Odessa as a "golden city" developed by foreigners and in part willingly adapted by its residents from its foundation to recent days.[24] Herlihy critically engages with the contradictory architectural development of the city, and questions whether the Odessa myth has played a crucial role in the remaking of Odessa today with its unique density of historical landmarks. At times, Herlihy's deeply rooted connection to the city allows her to cross the line between analysis and advice, for example, when she demands that "Odessa must cease to engage in self-delusion" (24). However, her critical discussion of the Odessa myth within the framework of contemporary Ukrainian domestic and foreign politics from 2009 gains prophesying qualities seen from today's perspective of a country subjected to centrifugal forces from very heterogeneous regions. The second chapter, "Odessa Memories," provides the reader with a colorful history of the city through the lens of narratives and biographies of non-Russian key figures such as the governor of the Odessa District Armand, duc de Richelieu, or Governor-General Mikhail Vorontsov.[25] Her main concern here is the question of how the multinational elite population of Odessa left imprints on the city's complex architecture and its vivid musical and literary culture. As impressive as the sheer volume of examples is, the lack of a central analytical question and any subchapters makes the text rather demanding.

Her short essay "How Ukrainian Is Odesa? From Odessa to Odesa" takes the conflicts around the re-erection of the statue of Catherine the Great in 2007 as its starting point for a discussion of the contestation of memory and language of post-Soviet Odessa, suspended between Ukraine and Russia.[26] In

[24] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy and Oleg Gubar′, "The Persuasive Power of the Odessa Myth," in *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity*, ed. John Czaplicka, Nida Gelazis, and Blair A. Ruble (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 137–65.

[25] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Odessa Memoirs," in *Odessa Memoirs*, ed. V. Iljine (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 3–27.

[26] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "How Ukrainian Is Odesa? From Odessa to Odesa," in *Place, Identity, and Urban Culture: Odessa and New Orleans*, Kennan Institute Occasional Papers (2008), 19–27.

the wake of recent events, such as the tragic fire at the Trade Union House in Odessa on 2 May 2014 caused by clashes between pro- and anti-Maidan forces and leaving more than 200 injured and 48 dead, it is instructive to read her observations on how the language question played out in the national Ukrainian and the local context of Odessa. Herlihy argues that only a free choice of language rather than legislative pressure would resonate with the citizens' daily reality and the historical heritage of a hybrid and tolerant city. Chapter 4, "Jewish Writers of Odessa, 1800–1940," provides a condensed picture of Odessa as the hotspot for a Jewish trilingual writing culture in journalism and literature, concluded with a useful bibliography on the topic.[27]

Part 2 of the book (Community) assembles four essays published in the late 1970s and the 1980s that offer condensed perspectives on the social and ethnic fabric of Odessa. "Death in Odessa: A Study of Population Movements in a Nineteenth-Century City" traces cornerstones of the city's 19th-century demographic transition toward the capacity to sustain or increase population without migration by reducing the death rate.[28] Chapter 6 addresses multiethnicity as one of Odessa's key characteristics among the empire's metropoles through a close reading of the 1897 All-Russian census data.[29] The Greeks, as the most active commercial elite in Odessa's turbulent transformation into the empire's southern economic hub, are addressed in chapters 7 and 8. While "Greek Merchants in Odessa in the Nineteenth Century" offers an account of the community through the lens of the two leading Greek families, Ralli and Rodocannachi, "The Greek Community in Odessa, 1861–1917" allows for a more general insight into the history, composition, and organization of the community and changes over time caused by the gradual economic decline of Odessa.[30] It remains uncertain, however, why this part of the book on communities contains two articles on the Greeks but none on the Jewish community that Herlihy otherwise made central to her research.

Part 3 on commerce explores the conditions for Odessa's exceptional economic history, its importance for the Russian Empire's economy in general

[27] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Jewish Writers in Odessa," in *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Dan Diner et al., vol. 4 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2014), 391–97.

[28] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Death in Odessa: A Study in Population Movements in a Nineteenth-Century City," *Journal of Urban History* 4, 4 (1978): 417–42.

[29] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "The Ethnic Composition of Odessa in the Nineteenth Century," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1, 1 (1977): 53–78.

[30] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Greek Merchants in Odessa in the Nineteenth Century," in *Eucharisterion: Essays Presented to Omeljan Pritsak on His Sixtieth Birthday by His Colleagues and Students*, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3–4, part 1 (1979–80): 399–420; and "The Greek Community in Odessa, 1861–1917," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 7, 2 (1989): 235–52.

and its entanglement with the rest of the world. "Staple Trade and Urbanization in New Russia" tackles the question of why the unmatchable economic growth of Odessa did not cause the corresponding economic development and integration of its hinterland and the advance of a substantial industrial sector.[31] Here favorable geographic, climatic, social, and political conditions collided with scarce resources, high labor costs, and a reluctance by the rich agricultural landowners and the merchants of Odessa to invest. The assets of the wealthy and their building activity made Odessa an architectural exception from the rest of the empire, as Herlihy explores in chapter 10, "Commerce and Architecture in Odessa in Late Imperial Russia."[32] Odessa's independence from imperial architectural patronage spared the city from a conventional neoclassical imprint. Chapter 11, "Port Jews of Odessa and Trieste—A Tale of Two Cities," offers a fruitful comparison between the development of two different Jewish communities under a similar set of circumstances: namely, economic change, the absolutist state, and enlightenment in the Habsburgian and Russian Empires.[33]

Such comparative approaches, although still not sufficiently pursued in studies on the Russian Empire, promise interesting results because they raise questions about the empire's exceptionalism, especially when focused on important diaspora groups such as Jews and Armenians. Herlihy's study of "Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno, 1794–1865" embeds Odessa's history in the macroeconomic changes of 19th-century Western Europe and unveils how contemporary tariff systems, limited cargo sizes, and slow communication favored the deposit trade of Russian grain through Mediterranean ports such as Livorno.[34] The last essay of the collection is concerned with the broader economic picture of southern Russia as an economic region. Using available data on grain prices, Herlihy analyzes effects of grain exports and changes in infrastructure through ports such as Odessa and Nikolaev on price levels in several regions.[35]

[31] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Odessa: Staple Trade and Urbanization in New Russia," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 21 (1973): 184–96.

[32] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Commerce and Architecture in Odessa in Late Imperial Russia," in *Commerce in Russian Urban Culture, 1861–1914*, ed. William Craft Brumfield, Boris V. Anan´ich, and Yuri A. Petrov (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 243–63.

[33] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Port Jews of Odessa and Trieste: A Tale of Two Cities," *Yearbook* (Leipzig: Simon Dubnov Institute, University of Leipzig, 2003): 183–99.

[34] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "Russian Wheat and the Port of Livorno, 1794–1865," *Journal of European Economic History* 5, 1 (1976): 45–68.

[35] Originally published as Patricia Herlihy, "South Ukraine as an Economic Region in the Nineteenth Century," in *Ukrainian Economic History: Interpretative Essays*, ed. I. S. Koropecky (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 310–38.

The three books under review offer approaches and questions that could be applied to each other. If new research on Black Sea ethnic groups such as the Crimean Tatars relies more heavily on analyzing transnational networks and cross-cultural contacts, then after reading Herlihy's texts it seems reasonable to accord economic questions a more prevalent role. Addressing problems of transport, trade, and prosperity on the pre-Russian peninsula would bring the "agency" of its inhabitants back into focus, since trade with the Ottoman Empire and the personal networks that exercised it did not suddenly cease to exist but were rather redirected. In this respect, the Ottoman and later the Russian Empires depended not only on Jews, Greeks, and Armenians but also on Crimean Tatars in a centuries-long process of entangling the khanate with the Ottoman economic realm and later disentangling it from that realm. After all, the first half of the 19th century witnessed the reemergence of Caffa as a trading port where old links and networks to Istanbul could be revived.

Davies's compelling history of the war reveals the complex economic and logistical planning and administration behind the Russian advance to the south and during the conflict. The legacy of countless supply routes, storage facilities, and magazines installed during the campaign awaits further exploration as one piece of the puzzle of the Black Sea region's economic transformation. Though a reissue of articles mostly published in the 1980s and 1990s can hardly be measured against the current state of research, it is nonetheless instructive to expand questions raised by Herlihy with regards to Odessa to other parts of the new domains of the 18th- and 19th-century empire north of the Black Sea. It is Odessa's uniqueness that still awaits a balancing out via a comparison to other port cities. Many of the ambiguities of its ethnic, social, and economic development could be expanded by further research on other Black Sea urban centers. Odessa's progressive role in the economic development of the region vs. the challenge of adapting its infrastructures, its multiethnic and cosmopolitan character, and the ethnic tensions and violence at the turn of the century, as well as the rationality of city planning vs. uncontrolled urban growth, are fascinating contradictions that deserve to be explored and explained in Sevastopol′, Rostov-on-Don, Mariupol′, Berdiaev, Taganrog, Nikolaev, Eisk, or Batumi as well.

Comparison also promises insights into how a new equilibrium of trade and transfer emerged once the Ottoman shipping monopoly was broken. The Black Sea hub of the 19th century did not emerge suddenly, and it incorporated old port cities such as Trabzon and Sinop. Odessa's history exemplifies

that none of these port cities experienced a linear progressive economic development, infrastructure provided various challenges for growth and profit, and ethnicity and belief affected economic practices and development variously. Especially the period between the acquisition of territories as analyzed by Davies and the abolition of serfdom deserves more attention, because the area served as a migration magnet. Contemporary Russian writers such as Grigorii Danilevskii spoke of Novorossiia as the new Kentucky—honoring its exceptional state of social mobility, which stood in stark contrast to the rest of the empire where serfdom was at its peak, with narratives of the American frontier and of progress.[36] It was in this period that a specific ethnic mélange of Tatars, Greeks, Germans, Armenians, and Russian and Ukrainian peasants developed that to a certain extent endured even through Soviet nationality politics. It characterizes southern Russia and Eastern Ukraine until today. One of many ways to expand our scope on the sea is to give a more prominent role to (voluntary and forced) migration as a key development and individual experience and its consequences in future research. For example, a comparison of displaced native communities such as the Crimean Tatars and the Cherkassian tribes violently exiled in the 1860s and the importance and heritage of their diasporas on the southern shores of the Black Sea on Ottoman soil would further stimulate the necessary exchange between experts of Russian, Caucasian, and Ottoman history.[37] These excursions beyond the Russian realm offer new chances to understand the Black Sea as a truly transnational locus of identity.

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[36] Grigorii Danilevskii, *Beglye v Novorossii* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1956).
[37] Zeynel Abidin Besleney, *The Circassian Diaspora in Turkey: A Political History* (London: Routledge, 2014).