

City Anniversaries: Lviv, Kyiv, and Lviv Again*

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Contemporary Ukraine stands out in Europe for its large number of anniversaries officially sanctioned by the national government. Earlier, under Soviet rule, the commemoration of anniversaries was a component of the systematic “education of toilers in the Communist spirit,” and an aspect of this in which Party functionaries were particularly active was the counterposing of basically atheistic commemorations to religious feast days. The latter have been revived in contemporary Ukraine, although some Soviet holidays (most notably 8 March) survive; moreover, new secular holidays have been added, mainly patriotic solemnities, often observed with ecclesiastical participation.¹

Recently comparative studies have begun appearing about the function of public commemorations, including anniversaries, and their social significance as a means of integrating communities at various levels and affirming the particular self-identification of members of such communities. Notably the American scholar Patrice Dabrowski has undertaken an analysis of the role of anniversaries of historical figures and events as an element of Polish nation-building—the bicentennial of the victory of King Jan III Sobieski over the Turks at Vienna (1683), the centennial of the Constitution of 3 May (1791), the centennial of the uprising of Tadeusz Kościuszko (1794), the centennial of Adam Mickiewicz (1798), the five-hundredth anniversary of the victory at Grünwald

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¹ Characteristically, it is in Ukraine that the theory of heortology—a special historical discipline dealing with religious feasts and commemorations—is being developed. See M. F. Dmytriienko and Ya. A. Solonska, “Heortolohiia v systemi spetsialnykh istorychnykh dystsyplin: Teoriia, dzherela ta metody doslidzhen,” *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 2002, no. 3: 34–46.

(1910), and the fiftieth anniversary of the January Uprising (1913–14). Festive commemorations became steadily more popular among Ukrainians as well: the reburial of the remains of Taras Shevchenko in Kaniv (1861) and of Markiiian Shashkevych in Lviv (1893), the fiftieth anniversary of the abolition of serfdom in Galicia and Bukovyna and the centennial of the publication of Ivan Kotliarevsky's *Eneida* (both 1898). As Dabrowski notes, anniversaries have served to communicate historical information (at times, in more than one version) to a large and diverse public. In a certain sense the ideological significance of past events has been invented or recovered in the process of commemoration.²

It is noteworthy that among the national commemorations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as among the imperial commemorations of those days (for example, the three-hundredth anniversary of the house of the Romanovs), there were no public commemorations of city anniversaries. In our time such commemorations are quite infrequent beyond the borders of the post-Soviet lands. Internet searches, at least, yield only a few references of this kind, such as information about the Canadian government's subsidy of \$110 million for a commemoration of the founding of Quebec City, as well as anniversaries of the city of Ottawa and of a few American cities of no great size. The marking of anniversaries of small towns is fairly typical for Western Europe, where such commemorations bring residents together and enjoy the support of the local authorities. But the use of anniversaries to politicize the masses or promote national integration, so typical in post-Soviet states and some other countries, is no longer significant for large cities in the West. Here we might mention that President Vladimir Putin of Russia considered the three-hundredth anniversary of St. Petersburg "an event of global significance" and the millennium of Kazan "an event of international scope."³

It would appear that the pompous national commemoration of round anniversaries of cities originated in the USSR in 1947: 8 September of that year saw the commemoration of the eight-hundredth anniversary of Moscow, and the choice of year (but not day) was based on the date of the first medieval chronicle record of a place bearing that name. The city was awarded the Order of Lenin, a medal "In memory of the eight-hundredth anniversary of Moscow" was struck for its inhabitants, and an artillery salute and fireworks took place. It is perfectly obvious that the decision to mark the anniversary of Moscow could have been taken by

² Patrice Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). On this, see Ihor Chornovol, "Natsionalizm ta iu-vilei," *Krytyka*, 2005, no. 9.

³ See <www/300spb.ru; www/kazan1000.ru>.

no one but Stalin, who aspired to give the all-Slavic ideology a Russian/pan-Slavic orientation.

In the 1950s the Soviet authorities found it quite natural to commemorate the seven-hundredth anniversary of Lviv on the basis of the first chronicle record, as the anniversary of Moscow, which was a century older, had been celebrated on the very same basis. Nevertheless, preparations for the commemoration of the Lviv anniversary did not begin in Lviv but in the Ukrainian diaspora in the West. The most notable evidence of this is the book *Nash Lviv: Yuvileinyi zbirnyk, 1252–1952* (Our Lviv: An Anniversary Collection, 1252–1952), published in New York in 1953. It was also the diaspora that gave rise to the idea of marking the anniversary of Lviv in conjunction with the anniversary of the coronation of Danylo Romanovych in 1953.⁴ This relatively modest commemoration of that anniversary by Ukrainians throughout the world was probably what prompted Soviet functionaries to seize the initiative and, accepting the proposal of Lviv historians, to take the first chronicle record of Lviv, dating from 1256, as the basis for marking the city's seven-hundredth anniversary.⁵ Given the way in which official mechanisms functioned at the time, there need be no doubt that the Lviv Oblast Committee of the Communist Party could issue a decision on the matter only with the permission of the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), which in turn could only act with the approval of the Propaganda Department of the CC of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The final decision on the matter was probably taken late in 1955, when statistical materials on the development of industry and the growth of the network of cultural institutions in Lviv were compiled, probably to substantiate the benefit of marking the anniversary.⁶

The commemoration was postponed until the end of October. In later years, whenever the day and month of a historical event could not be established, October was also frequently chosen as the month in which to

⁴ Stepan Shakh, *Lviv: Misto moiei molodosti. Spomyn prysviachenyi tiniam zabutykh Ilovian*, 2 pts. (Munich: Khrystyianskyi holos, 1955), 1: 7.

⁵ The mention in the chronicle is quite accidental, stating that a fire in Chelm (Kholm) was supposedly seen from Lviv. In Mykhailo Hrushevsky's *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy* this event is dated 1255; in Leonid Makhnovets's commentary to his Ukrainian-language translation of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, it is dated 1257. Ivan Krypiakievych's arguments for 1256 as the most probable date of the chronicle record are presented in a pseudonymous article by Stepan Biletsky, "Persha istorychna zhadka pro misto," in *Narysy istorii Lvova*, ed. I. P. Krypiakievych (Lviv: Knyzhkovo-zhurnalne vydavnytstvo, 1956), 18–20. According to Krypiakievych, the city was founded several years before the first chronicle record of it.

⁶ *Istoriia Lvova v dokumentakh i materialakh*, ed. M. V. Bryk (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1986), 268–74.

hold the commemoration: this gave time for preparation (especially as definitive permission was often granted late) and ensured that the event would take place before the onset of winter. On 27 October, at a session of the oblast and city councils, greetings to the “toilers of Lviv” from the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR and from the CC CPU were read out. They began with the statement that “Lviv has played a prominent historical role in the heroic struggle of the Ukrainian people against numerous foreign usurpers and for social and national liberation.” The place of honor, however, was reserved for the assertion of “firm confidence that the workers, intelligentsia, and all toilers of the city of Lviv, like the Ukrainian people as a whole, will rally even more closely around the Leninist Central Committee of the CPSU and the Soviet government in the struggle for the further development of industry, agriculture, science, and culture, [and] for the successful fulfillment of the grand designs of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and will make a fitting contribution to the cause of building communism in our country.”⁷ Although nothing was written about this at the time, one of the motives behind the commemoration was the desire to stress that Lviv, which most Poles considered theirs, had been founded not by a Pole, but by a prince of Rus’.⁸

As things turned out, the anniversary publications were put together at the last minute: a survey history of Lviv, prepared by the Institute of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, was submitted for printing on 10 August 1956 and cleared by the censors on 15 October. The commemorations were held only on the city and oblast level. The only lasting reminder to residents and guests of the city about the venerable age of the Galician capital was the Street of the Seven-Hundredth Anniversary of Lviv, which bore that name from 1956 to 1999, when it was renamed Viacheslav Chornovil Avenue.

In requesting their superiors’ approval for the commemoration, the local authorities were counting on the opportunity to draw attention to their own merits and probably hoping for official rewards for themselves, or at least for the city. But it was not until 1971 that the city of Lviv was awarded the Order of Lenin “for the great achievements of the city’s toilers in economic and cultural construction, [and] in fulfilling the tasks of the five-year plan for the development of industrial production.”⁹ This

⁷ *Ibid.*, 276–77.

⁸ Characteristically, anniversaries of the founding of the city were not marked before 1939, but plans were made for a celebration in 1940 of the six-hundredth anniversary of King Casimir II’s Polish conquest of Lviv and all of Galicia.

⁹ *Istoriia Lvova v dokumentakh i materialakh*, 318.

was the second order “for the city”: on 22 November 1920 Marshal Józef Piłsudski “had honored Lwów” with the *Virtuti militari* cross “for efforts made on behalf of the Polish character of this city and its adherence to Poland.” This was in fact an award to the Polish soldiers who had fought against the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic in 1918 and its aspiration to establish its rule over all lands inhabited predominantly by Ukrainians.

In contrast to the Lviv commemorations, the motive for the 1,500th anniversary of Kyiv was something of a puzzle not only for Western observers but also for Ukrainians themselves, especially as the rather unconvincing arguments for Kyiv’s antiquity made it twice as old as the capital of the Soviet Union. The intention to commemorate the anniversary of the Ukrainian capital officially in 1982 was made public in 1979. The announcement cited a resolution of the Second Plenum of the Kyiv City Committee of the CPU, which emphasized that the preparation and commemoration of the anniversary “would become a celebration of the immutable and eternal friendship of the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian peoples,¹⁰ of all the peoples of our Fatherland, [and] yet one more demonstration of the triumph of the Leninist nationality policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet state.”¹¹ The Kyiv newspaper *Prapor komunizmu*, which printed the sensational news, was little known outside the capital; the Moscow press carried nothing about plans for the anniversary and their realization, neither then nor later; and in the Ukrainian press the theme was developed—and only gradually at that—almost exclusively by *Literaturna Ukraina* and *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*. Although the resolution on the anniversary was adopted at the lowest possible level, approval in principle must have been granted by authorities much more highly placed than the CPU’s Kyiv City Committee. The almost complete silence in the press on this subject throughout 1980 and 1981 lends credence to the assumption that assent to the commemorations was obtained only after lengthy closed-door discussions and consultations.

The first attempt to deduce the probable motives of those who initiated the commemorations was made by the late Prof. Omeljan Pritsak of Harvard University, in an article titled “Behind the Scenes of the Proclamation of Kyiv’s 1,500th Anniversary.” He maintained that there were very serious reasons for the planned commemorations “because the Party

¹⁰ At that time the censorship was at pains to ensure that Russians take first place in all such lists.

¹¹ *Prapor komunizmu* (Kyiv), 1 July 1979, as cited in anon., “Kyiv — misto-heroi, misto-trudivnyk,” *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1979, no. 11: 36.

of Lenin does nothing without careful consideration.”¹² In Pritsak’s opinion the exaltation of Kyiv was thought up “in order to prevent the concentration of Ukrainian forces in connection with the commemoration of the millennium of Christianity in Ukraine,” and the year 1982 was chosen in preference to another one, closer to the millennial date, so as to divert the attention of Ukrainians from the fiftieth anniversary of the great Soviet Ukrainian famine of 1932–33. The article concluded with the speculation that the Moscow authorities had deliberately decided to ascribe the initiative to the CPU, “for if the civilized world shows up the baselessness of the Kyiv commemorations, all the blame can easily be pinned on ‘backward Ukrainian nationalists.’”¹³ Characteristically, no one in the Ukrainian diaspora doubted that the decision had been dictated by the Kremlin and that there was unanimity on the matter in the Kremlin. Some were even convinced that “Moscow” was trying to diminish Kyiv’s age by many years.¹⁴

Although documents and memoirs on the subject are lacking (at least, they have not been published), present-day students of the question have no reason to doubt that it was all the other way around. It was the Party and state leaders of Soviet Ukraine who promoted the commemorations, largely in opposition to the mood prevailing in Moscow. The leading role was played by Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, first secretary of the CC CPU, who reckoned in such questions with the opinion of Petro Tronko, then deputy head of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR and head of the Ukrainian Society for the Preservation of Monuments of History and Culture.¹⁵ At that time the hypotheses of Viktor Petrov, Mykhailo Braichevsky, and several other authors on the origins of Kyiv near the beginning of the first millennium C.E. had become popular in Ukraine.¹⁶

¹² Omelian Pritsak, “Za kulisamy proholoshennia 1500–littia Kyieva,” *Suchasnist*, 1981, no. 9 (September): 47.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁴ Publications on this subject in the émigré journal *Vyzvolnyi shliakh* and certain Ukrainian newspapers in the West were based on articles by amateur historians in the Ukrainian SSR who maintained that until the official proclamation of the 1,500th anniversary, Kyiv was two thousand years old or even older.

¹⁵ Most societies in Soviet Ukraine were known as “Society... of the Ukrainian SSR” and not “Ukrainian Society....” Permission to establish a society for the preservation of monuments in Ukraine was granted only after such a society had emerged in Russia, where it was called *Rossiiskoe* (not *Russkoe*); hence the analogous name of the society in Kyiv.

¹⁶ See V. P. Petrov, “Pro pershopochatky Kyieva (Do 1110–richchia pershoi litopysnoi zhadky pro Kyiv,” *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1962, no. 3: 14–21; and M. Yu. Braichevsky, *Koly i iak vynyk Kyiv* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Akademii nauk Ukrainskoi RSR, 1963).

Quite naturally, the organizers of the commemorations wanted the backing of historians and archaeologists for marking two thousand years of the existence of Ukraine's capital. At the time, however, the most recent available works of a number of authors—most notably Petro Tolochko, the leading specialist on medieval Kyiv and director of the ongoing archaeological expedition in Kyiv—established continuity of ethnocultural development in the central Dnipro region, of which Kyiv became the center, not from the beginning of the first millennium C.E., but only from about the sixth or seventh century C.E.¹⁷ Those favoring the commemoration of the 1,500th anniversary of Kyiv were greatly assisted by the fact that such a view had long been maintained by the most influential archaeologist and medievalist in the USSR, Academician Boris Rybakov, who had served for many years as director of the Institutes of Archaeology and History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Like other leading Russian medievalists (Boris Grekov, Mikhail Tikhomirov, Vladimir Mavrodin, and others), Rybakov had achieved prominence because of his intellectual struggle against the proponents of the Normanist theory of the origin of Rus'. According to Soviet Russian ideologues, the theory that Normans had founded Rus' had been the basis of the notion that the "people of Rus' lacked historical independence" and allegedly "served as an argument to substantiate aggressive plans against the USSR and the spread of hostile suppositions about the past and present of the Russian people."¹⁸

Indeed it was Kyiv's role as the center of East Slavic statehood and culture—not that of the Norman Staraja Ladoga or of Novgorod, which had been close to the zone of greatest Norman influence—that Rybakov subordinated to his polemic with the Normanists. In a series of books, articles, and addresses, including a paper he read at a meeting of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, the popular scholar maintained that the origins of Kyiv were associated with the rule of Prince Kyi, which he dated to the late fifth or the first half of the sixth century C.E.¹⁹ From this he concluded that any year falling within those chronological limits could be chosen for commemoration. According to some informed contemporaries, the year 482 was chosen because the leaders involved in the decision wanted to hold the commemoration while they were still in office and thus in a position to defend a date

¹⁷ P. P. Tolochko, *Istorychna topohrafiia starodavnoho Kyieva* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972), 42–53; idem, *Drevnii Kiev* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1976), 18–23.

¹⁸ A. M. Sakharov, "Normanskaia teoriia," *Sovetskaia istoricheskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 10 (Moscow, 1967), 349.

¹⁹ B. A. Rybakov, "Gorod Kiia," *Voprosy istorii* (Moscow), 1980, no. 5: 31–47.

whose legitimacy aroused doubts among scholars and leading CPSU ideologues alike. None of the leading Leningrad and Moscow historians accepted Rybakov's argumentation, although some of them corroborated the archaeological sources most thoroughly analyzed in Tolochko's works. But many, if not most, scholars held to the traditional view then most consistently developed by Mikhail K. Karger and Ivan P. Shaskolsky, that Kyiv became a city in the second half of the tenth century.²⁰

Previously, scholarly discussions had ended as soon as the CC CPSU in Moscow issued a concrete directive. But this time there was apparently a lack of unanimity in that CC, for nothing was published concerning preparations or specific plans for the anniversary of Kyiv in such Moscow scholarly journals as *Voprosy istorii* and *Istoriia SSSR* or in the Party journal *Kommunist*. Consequently there is reason to believe that Shcherbytsky did not have the unanimous support of the Politburo of the CC CPSU on the question of the anniversary. Evidently it was only because the most influential of the Soviet rulers at the time, Leonid Brezhnev (from 1977 not only the general secretary of the CPSU but also the prime minister of the Soviet state), expressed himself in less than categorical fashion on the matter that an ironic comment on "anniversary megalomania" could appear in *Pravda*, the official organ of the CPSU. Its correspondent N. Odiets, whose accreditation extended to Ukraine as a whole, printed a rather stinging satirical article in which, without mentioning Kyiv directly, he criticized the desire of "particular cities" to extend their antiquity by relying on naive and incredible legends. Such criticism could have appeared in the party newspaper only with the sanction of the party's chief ideologue, Mikhail Suslov. Even so, Brezhnev did not think it possible to forbid his faithful supporter, Shcherbytsky, to commemorate the Kyiv anniversary in the Ukrainian republic. Moscow even allowed Ukrainian diplomats to raise the question of commemorating the anniversary at the international level. This was facilitated by the fact that the Ukrainian SSR had a formally independent representation at the United Nations and consequently in UNESCO. Thus, on 10 October 1980, on the motion of the Ukrainian SSR, the UNESCO General Conference adopted a resolution proposing that UNESCO member states and international organizations take part in commemorating Kyiv's 1,500th anniversary and popularize it in the media. The resolution "ascribed great importance to the role of Kyiv, which laid the foundations of East Slavic civilization and culture." Charac-

²⁰ M. K. Karger, "K voprosu o Kieve v VIII–IX vv.," *Drevnii Kiev*, vol. 1 (Moscow and Leningrad, 1958), 521–22; I. P. Shaskolsky, "Kogda zhe vznik gorod Kiev?" in *Kultura srednevekovoi Rusi*, ed. A. N. Kirpichnikov and P. A. Rappoport (Leningrad: Nauka, 1974), 70–72.

teristically, however, it was only a year and a half after UNESCO had adopted the resolution that the Ukrainian authorities ventured to make it public in an article by the head of the CPU's Kyiv City Committee, Valentyn Zhursky, in *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*. The text of the resolution itself was never published in Ukraine.²¹

The substantiation of the anniversary that was provided for domestic consumption differed considerably from that given at the UN. The May 1982 issue of *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* shows what the organizers of the commemoration considered their highest priority. This was the anniversary issue, and its cover showed the city's coat of arms as it then was (a shield with a chestnut leaf, a hammer and sickle, and the star of Hero of the Soviet Union), surrounded by inscriptions in a circle—*Kueб* at the top, *Kuiб* and *Kiev* on the sides, and *1,500* at the bottom. The issue began with an article by the first secretary of the CPU's Kyiv City Committee, Yurii Yelchenko, on "The Kyiv Party Organization at the Head of the Struggle of the City's Toilers to Fulfill the Resolutions of the Twenty-Sixth Congress of the CPSU."²² It proclaimed: "An important stage on the road to the sixtieth anniversary of the formation of the USSR consists of work on preparations for the 1,500th anniversary of Kyiv under the direction of the CPSU, its Leninist Central Committee, and the Politburo of the CC headed by Comrade L. I. Brezhnev. Preparations for the 1,500th anniversary of Kyiv, which began several years ago, are now in their concluding phase; they are proceeding under the banner of the struggle of all Kyivans for early completion of the plans and socialist obligations for 1982 and of the five-year plan as a whole."²³ Only after this article, which sounded like a parody by that time (the same may be said of other examples of Party publicism), did the journal feature Academician Rybakov's sketch "The Capital of Soviet Ukraine Is Fifteen Hundred Years Old." Subsequent articles of the issue devoted to the anniversary had nothing to do with the dating of the city's origins: "The Participation of Kyivans in Socialist Industrialization," "The Toilers of the Capital of the Ukrainian SSR in the Movement for Improving the Efficiency of Production," and the like. Similar themes predominated among articles published under the rubric "Kyiv Is Fifteen Hundred Years Old" in the course of the anniversary year.²⁴

²¹ Since we are unable to cite the resolution itself, its contents are cited according to the account presented in V. A. Zhursky, "Kyiv — stolytsia Ukrainskoi RSR," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1982, no. 4: 68.

²² *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1982, no. 5: 5–15.

²³ *Ibid.*, 157–58.

²⁴ For example, "The Participation of Women Workers of Kyiv in the Revolutionary

Scholarly conferences whose titles indicated their dedication to the 1,500th anniversary offered no papers concerned with scholarly substantiation of that date of Kyiv's origins. The only paper touching on such concerns was Petro Tolochko's, presented at an archaeological conference in March 1982, in which he dealt with Kyiv of the sixth and seventh centuries as the administrative and political center of the Polianians.²⁵

Articles and papers on the significance of Kyiv's legacy for communist construction and "the education of toilers in the communist spirit" were unavoidable given the influence of Party ideologues, who were alarmed by the "excessive popularization of antiquity and church affairs," to use their jargon. Something of a compromise emerged. *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, edited by the former high-ranking Party functionary Yurii Kondufor, printed mainly boring and absurdly superficial propagandistic texts on the struggle for Soviet power and the achievements of the party; while the past was propagated in the newspaper of the Writers' Union of Ukraine, *Literaturna Ukraina*. Most importantly, medieval subjects were addressed in scholarly monographs and collections. Among the books approved for publication in connection with the anniversary, Petro Tolochko's fundamental study of ancient Kyiv stands out.²⁶ An issue of the miscellany *Suziria* was also dedicated to the anniversary. Even earlier, the Institute of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR managed to push through a collection of scholarly articles on the culture and traditions of Kyivan Rus' for publication by the academy's publishing house.²⁷ Because anniversary publications were published in better-quality editions and there were no particular limitations on their press runs, they satisfied the interest of broad circles of the Ukrainian intelligentsia in historical subjects.

There was a similar situation in the sector to which Lenin referred in his time as "monument propaganda." On the occasion of the anniversary, a Park of Glory was established in Kyiv, featuring a gigantic obelisk to commemorate the role of the hero city in the "Great Patriotic War" against Nazi Germany. Without the erection of this monument and other

Struggle (March 1917–January 1918)," "The Improvement of Kyivans' Standard of Living and Municipal Services in the Period of Developed Socialism," and "V. I. Lenin and the Kyiv Party Organization."

²⁵ Petr Tolochko, "Novye arkheologicheskie otkrytiia v Kieve," in *Drevnerusskii gorod: Materialy Vsesoiuznoi arkheologicheskoi konferentsii posviashchennoi 1500-letiiu goroda Kieva* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1984), 131.

²⁶ Petr Tolochko, *Drevnii Kiev* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1983).

²⁷ Ya. D. Isaievych, ed., *Kyivska Rus': Kul'tura, tradytsii. Zbirnyk naukovykh prats* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1982).

purely Soviet places of remembrance,²⁸ it would undoubtedly have been difficult to obtain permission for the restoration of monuments that annoyed fanatical supporters of atheist propaganda. But cultural activists, like most Kyivans, approved of the reconstruction of the Golden Gate, which was crowned with a church. Officially the building was designated “a pavilion recreating the outlines of the Golden Gate.” Liudmyla Ponomariova writes on this subject with great restraint but accurate knowledge: “In the 1970s the restoration of the church was almost impossible, and its construction encountered great difficulties. There were objections to the erection of a cross; not everyone agreed to the restoration of the floor mosaics; and there were many other problems that were not easy for the artisans’ collective to overcome. The working group received great assistance from P. T. Tronko and M. Kravets.” Until the very end of the project, people wondered whether officialdom would venture to erect a cross above the church or not. And here, one must think, the decision depended mainly on Shcherbytsky himself, who probably had to lay his authority on the line. Unfortunately, a resolution adopted on the occasion of the anniversary to create a large national park of Ancient Kyiv remained in the planning stage.

After the commemoration of Kyiv’s 1,500th anniversary in 1982, many encyclopedias and reference works adopted the notion that the city had arisen in the late fifth or first half of the sixth century.²⁹ In scholarly works, however, beginning with the first year after the anniversary, no one spoke of “fifteen centuries” of Kyiv. Mentions of the city’s origins in the time of Kyi and its hypothetical dating to the late sixth or early seventh century were generally made with the reservation that this was Boris Rybakov’s opinion.

Quite naturally, the recent anniversary of Lviv was entirely different from the city anniversaries formerly observed under the control of the totalitarian regime and in some instances—Moscow being a classic example—at its initiative and entirely according to its scenario. From the first years of independence there was active discussion of various proposals for the commemoration in 2006 of the 750th anniversary of the first chronicle record of Lviv. Finally, on 22 June 2004, the Parliament of

²⁸ Plans made in 1979 to erect monuments to commemorate the reunification of Ukraine with Russia, the reunification of the western Ukrainian lands in a single Soviet state, and the founding of Kyiv, as well as heroes of the Communist Youth League and soldiers of the Dnipro Fleet, were all associated with the anniversary. Most of these projects were never carried out or were completed only after long delays.

²⁹ See, e.g., *USE: Universalnyi slovnyk-entsyklopediia*, 4th ed. (Lviv: TEKA, 2006), 599; and *Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition*, vol. 15 (Danbury, Conn., 1997), 436.

Ukraine adopted the resolution “On Measures to Support the Socioeconomic Development of Lviv in Connection with the 750th Anniversary of Its Founding.”³⁰ It proposed “that the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Lviv Oblast State Administration, and the Lviv City Council take *prompt* [my emphasis] measures to prepare for and commemorate the 750th anniversary of the founding of the city of Lviv.”³¹ Not until the final months before the planned commemoration was the most essential restoration work undertaken, thanks to the efforts of the city authorities, certain community organizations, and private firms co-operating with the mayor’s office. Some guests at the commemorations noted that in their eyes Lviv’s European character was attested not only by the city’s architectural ensembles but also by the relaxed atmosphere of the festivities. Contributing notably to this were open-air concerts with the participation of star performers, the Golden Lion theater festival, two hundred master blacksmiths demonstrating their craft in public, and a jousting tournament. The “Lviv—Capital of Crafts” festival on Valova Street featured displays of craftsmanship not only by blacksmiths, but also by weavers, glassblowers, armorers, glaziers, stonecutters, decorators of Easter eggs, and embroiderers; the public saw articles of wood and leather being made.

The official program of the commemoration was opened in the Lviv Opera Theater by the head of the city administration, Andrii Sadovy; his remarks were followed by those of President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine, President Jan Kaczyński of Poland, President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania, Mayor Valentina Matvienko of St. Petersburg, other guests of the city, and eminent residents of Lviv. Much more than in earlier commemorations, the anniversary became a celebration not so much of the state and its rulers as of the civic community. Emphasis was given to the prominent role of Lviv’s inhabitants in the national-liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people and in international co-operation and cultural exchange. A number of speakers stressed the city’s multicultural character and its role in bringing Ukraine closer to Europe, of which medieval and early modern Lviv had been a full-fledged member. Viktor Yushchenko noted in particular that as president of Ukraine he was paying respect to the Polish and Lithuanian presence, “creative, inseparable from our life, and unifying in mutual esteem, equality, and regard for past lives.” He also addressed words of sincere respect to the Jewish community, which, “according to ancient verity, is reviving its soul on the terri-

³⁰ Texts written by historians refer to the 750th anniversary of Lviv, not the 750th anniversary of its founding.

³¹ *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady*, 2004, no. 45: 509.

tory of Lviv”; and in closing he expressed thanks to “all the peoples for whom Lviv has become a native land for their joint instruction on how to form one nation.” The president of Poland, too, spoke not only about the meaning of Lviv for the Polish nation (which was, beyond doubt, very great) but also about the city’s founding by a Ukrainian prince and about Ukraine’s European prospects. The accents were, of course, somewhat different in the speeches of representatives of various countries, but everything described here resonated with the perception of the festivities as a commemoration of a city unique in its polyphonic character, which is vital to the successful integration of Ukrainians into Europe. Since Ukraine is seeking its place on the map of Europe, these European accents of Lviv’s anniversary festivities were a conscious, if at times naive, effort to consider the city’s past from a non-Soviet viewpoint.

Unlike in 1956, this time scholarly and popular publications were prepared in advance. They included monographs, publications of historical sources, illustrated volumes, and a special issue of the local ethnographic journal *Halytska brama* (no. 142 [2006]). A survey of many, though by no means all, important books and articles on Lviv themes appears in the introduction to the three-volume history of Lviv prepared by the Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. This book, written shortly before the anniversary, is the largest work on the city’s past and its cultural legacy to appear to date. The first volume encompasses the period up to 1772, the second illuminates the history of the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria—the largest province of the Habsburg Empire—and the third covers the period from the liberation uprising of 1 November 1918 to the city’s anniversary. It comprises 1,450 large-format pages, close to 2,000 documentary illustrations, and many city maps, diagrams, and charts.³²

The anniversary of the first chronicle record of Lviv is only one of the many present-day Ukrainian commemorations, including those of city anniversaries. Scholarly forums were planned for 2007 in connection with the 1,100th anniversaries of the first chronicle records of the cities Chernihiv and Pereiaslav (which the Soviet authorities renamed—not very aptly, in my view—Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi). An example of a scholarly and political discussion on the “correctness” of a city anniversary is the clash that took place in Dnipropetrovsk. Its anniversary was first celebrated in 1976—a bicentennial calculated from the report Governor V. O. Chertkov submitted to Prince Grigorii Potemkin on the

³² Ya. Isaievych et al, eds., *Istoriia Lvova*, 3 vols. (Lviv: Tsentr Yevropy, 2006–7). The first volume of the miniature book series Chas Lvova, Yaroslav Knysh’s *Lviv: Taiemnytsi kniazhoi doby* (Lviv: Piramida, 2005), is claimed to be the smallest history of the city.

choice of the site for building the city of Katerynoslav. (As it turned out, the choice was a poor one, and in 1784 Empress Catherine II ordered that that new gubernial capital be transferred to the Right Bank of the Dnipro.) In Soviet times it was widely considered that a more substantial factor determining the date of the anniversary would be Leonid Brezhnev's seventieth birthday, which also fell in 1976: there were expectations that the CPSU general secretary, the beginnings of whose Party career were associated with Dnipropetrovsk, would visit the "jubilee city." Although Brezhnev did not come, he awarded "the city" with the Order of Lenin. Dnipropetrovsk officially celebrated its 225th anniversary in 2001 in spite of rather clamorous public appeals from those who preferred an alternative dating of the city's origins—from 1635, when the fortress of Kodak was established (the best-known publications and public statements were those of Yurii Mytsyk, Hanna Shvydko, and Oleh Repan). In his New Year's Eve greetings for 2007, President Yushchenko put the 750th anniversary of Lviv on a par with the "Catherinian" anniversary of Dnipropetrovsk. At the same time, the recently adopted coat of arms of Dnipropetrovsk, whose central section features the emblem of a small Kodak fortification, remains a manifestation of post-totalitarian pluralism.

The large number of anniversaries is less than optimal for the impression they make on society as a whole. On the other hand, the number of local commemorations is increasing at the level of oblasts, raions, and towns, given their importance as a factor promoting the activation of civil society. Unfortunately, along with authentic grounds for anniversaries, fictional ones are becoming ever more common, given the insufficient probity of experts ("If an anniversary is needed, we'll find a reason"). One is also constrained to acknowledge the fact, not especially gratifying to professional historians, that the fantastic constructions of amateurs are often more effective than purely scholarly arguments in stimulating interest in national history and culture.

The question may arise of why anniversaries sanctioned by resolutions of supreme ruling institutions—parliaments, governments, presidents—have become so widespread in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states. The answer to this question seems relatively simple. Frequent appeals to the historical past are conditioned, for the time being at least, primarily by the need to find legitimacy for current political actions, that is, to make use of history for political self-assertion. The defining participation of government bodies also testifies to the underdevelopment of civil society. After all, initiatives from above are not essential when the preservation of monuments and the popularization of history are undertaken by the community, private sponsors, and municipal and state insti-

tutions that systematically receive funds for these purposes without the sanction of the supreme authorities in every particular instance. Even so, given that under current conditions in Ukraine official decisions on marking anniversaries, even insufficiently substantiated ones, contribute to preserving the legacy of history and stimulate interest in culture, it must be acknowledged that such decisions are among the positive aspects of the administrative and legislative activity of governing institutions.

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