

Paulus Adelsgruber, Laurie R. Cohen, Börries Kuzmany. *Getrennt und doch verbunden: Grenzstädte zwischen Österreich und Russland 1772-1918*. Wien: Böhlau, 2011. 316 pp. EUR 35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-205-78625-2.

Reviewed by Liliya Berezhnaya (Exzellenzcluster "Religion und Politik", Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster)

Published on H-HistGeog (July, 2014)

Commissioned by Eva M. Stolberg

The Ambiguity of Imperial borders; or, How to Write the History of a Borderland City

This book constitutes the outcome of two research projects, "Multicultural Border Cities in the West Ukraine, 1772-1914" and "Imperial Peripheries: Religion, War, and the *Szlachta*," initiated by Andreas Kappeler at the Vienna Institute of East European History. Three scholars, Paulus Adelsgruber, Laurie Cohen, and Börries Kuzmany, have researched the history and everyday life of three pairs of cities on both sides of the former Austrian-Russian border: Brody-Radziwilo, Podwołoczyska-Volochisk, and Husiatyn-Gusiatin (all located in present-day Ukraine). The collective monograph covering the period between the first partition of Poland in 1772 and the end of the WW I follows macro processes in the history of the Romanov and Habsburg empires through the prism of micro-historical borderlands. This, according to the authors, allows them to overcome the limits of national historiography and its notion of a border. The title of the book implies the indistinctness of the concept of an imperial border. *Getrennt und doch verbunden*, which might be translated as "divided and still bounded," refers more to the notion of a borderland as a transitional zone, characteristic of imperial rule, than a national lineal border, which presumes sharp division and separation.[1]

In the foreword to the book, Andreas Kappeler presents the history of these six cities as a vivid example of the double function of such a border: to divide and to unite, as line of separation and a zone of contact in space. After the partitions, these cities gained new functions within the respective empires and were still connected through mutual cross-border contacts. Kappeler, whose earlier publications on the Russian empire and Ukraine were mostly devoted to Russian and Ukrainian multiethnic and multiconfessional history, affirms that the stories of nineteenth-century everyday life in the six borderland cities left noticeable traces in the cultural mem-

ory of modern Ukraine. Because of the transfer and comparative foci, this monograph, according to Kappeler, fits well into the paradigm of a transnational Ukrainian history (as opposed to ethnonational or multiethnic ones), recently debated in Ukrainian historiography.[2]

In fact, *Getrennt und doch verbunden* is one of the first in East European studies which provides a subtle and persuasive tool to analyze the function of an imperial border through the detailed reconstruction of the history of pairs of cities on both sides of it. There are similar attempts in Ukrainian borderland studies,[3] as well as in the larger scholarship dealing with European urban borderland history[4] and borderland anthropology.[5] Yet, *Getrennt und doch verbunden* is rather *novum* in the field since it combines not only different methodological approaches (the above-mentioned borderland studies, imperiology, comparative analysis, religious history), but also the different styles and research experiences of its authors. This results in the bright spectrum of foci suggested in the book. The richness of language competence is also very impressive (unfortunately, not all the quotations were translated into German). Dealing with the contact zones of the two empires meant also working in numerous central and local archives and libraries. Three authors gathered an enormous amount of material in Kyiv, Lviv, Ternopil, Vienna, Moscow, Petersburg, Cracow, Paris, New York, Berlin, and London. The book is richly illustrated, mostly with postcard photos coming from the regional repositories. Despite methodological diversity, all chapters fit the same structural framework, so that the authors' writing styles do not differ much from each other.

The authors' main purpose is to show the dividing and the uniting functions of the border in the history of six provincial cities. The book demonstrates the consistency of mutual boundaries and transfers between these

cities, despite the continual attempts of the imperial centers to “close” and “nationalize” the border. The study also shows how the Great War brought an end to the borderland way of life and thus the collapse of empires with it. This is achieved through the comparative analysis of the relations between the nobles, tradesmen, and religious communities in each pair of cities. Apparently, such communication across the border was the continuation of previous experience within the multiconfessional and multiethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The partitions at the end of the eighteenth century did not make much difference in this sense, bringing, however, new possibilities and new functions to the cities. This concerned such novelties as border and custom controls, but also smuggling, emigration, refugees, deserters, pilgrims from the other side of the border, as well as the construction of railway stations, and the repair of bridges. The authors of *Getrennt und doch verbunden* have organized their materials according to this thematic order. The second chapter, “A View on the Border Cities,” retells in short the history of each of the city during the “long nineteenth century.” Unfortunately, the material presented here is somewhat disproportionate. Brody’s part, in contrast to that of Podwołoczyska-Volochisk and Husiatyn-Gusiatin, is much more elaborated. This perhaps is due to the richness of documentation and already existing historiography of Brody itself.[6] In this respect also the description of conflicts and collaboration between the different ethno-confessional communities in Husiatyn-Gusiatin seems to be rather abridged.

The third chapter, “A View on the Border,” analyzes the demarcation politics of Petersburg and Vienna and the development of border control and custom services. Interesting in this respect is the continuity between the old and new border control traditions. At the end of the eighteenth century the western Russian state border collided with the custom border. As a result, new principles in the organization of custom offices were needed. These were elaborated according to the model of the former Polish-Ottoman border control system. At the same time, parallels between the organizational reforms of the Russian and Austrian custom services at the beginning of the nineteenth century were also evident. *Getrennt und doch verbunden* demonstrates that the commonalities of the imperial border services, as well as the history of transfer within these reform processes, remain areas for further research.

The authors of *Getrennt und doch verbunden* demonstrate how despite the demarcation efforts of imperial authorities, borders remained permeable. Smugglers were the major agents confronting the established system of

control. With the help of corrupt officials in regional governments, they managed to arrange a sort of a free-trade zone in the Eastern Galician-Wolhynian region. The ill fame of the “Smugglers’ Paradise” followed these lands until World War 1. The authors of *Getrennt und doch verbunden* quote several archival documents to prove that since the second half of the nineteenth century the problem with smuggling was a moral issue for imperial centers (mostly for St. Petersburg). Generally, this was due to the reorientation of smuggling from textile and colonial goods to human trafficking, counterfeit money, illegal political press, and alcohol. Another problem seen by central powers as a threat to imperial integrity, was the perceived role of the Jewish population in smuggling goods. An extreme example of official opinion about Jewish dominance in this field was the idea of Tsar Nicolas I in 1843 to resettle the whole Jewish population in a fifty-kilometer-wide zone away from the border. This plan, however, was not realized. The authors of *Getrennt und doch verbunden* show that the notion that only Jews were involved in smuggling was nothing more than legend. Numerous archival documents testify to the participation of Christian agents. In fact, only 17 percent of discovered smugglers were Jews. It would be interesting, however, to compare this regional smuggling to the whole illegal trade in both empires. For the Romanovs, it was definitely a second-ranking problem (most smuggling occurred along the border with Prussia) (p. 116). The situation in the Habsburg Empire is unfortunately not analyzed by the authors of *Getrennt und doch verbunden*.

The fourth chapter deals with the role of six cities in cross-border trade. Most attention is devoted to the era of the Napoleonic wars, which was characterized by a flourishing European land trade. Later on, with the gradual growth of sea trade, the commerce across the Russian-Austrian border lost its significance. The chapter also discusses the considerable influence of railway and bridge construction on the trade relations between the cities. This part of the book impresses, with statistical data organized in graphs to show the proportion of the border trade in the overall exchange among the empires. The authors pay particular attention to the role of railway construction in the diversification and development of the city trade. At the turn of the century, it not only brought new jobs and industrial factories, but also contributed to the rapid popularization of socialist and nationalist ideas in border communities. It would, however, be interesting to see how these observations fit into the recent historiography of railway communication in modern Eastern Europe.[7]

The fifth chapter, "Border and Religion," is probably one of the most interesting and insightful in the book. It explores contacts and competition between different religious communities across the border. This border was both a state and a confessional one, dividing the predominantly Orthodox population on the Russian side from the largely Greek Catholic population on the other side. The authors demonstrate how the processes of nationalization of religion and sacralization of nation implemented in the official imperial religious politics on both sides of the border related to local religious practices in the six above-mentioned cities.

Particular attention is devoted to the pilgrim streams across the border to two famous monasteries: the Orthodox in Pochaiv and the Dominican in Podkamień. These monasteries form in a way the fourth pair of historical sites. Indeed, the two monasteries have much in common: both were founded in the late Middle Ages, both were the sites of miraculous icons of the Mother of God. The icons were crowned by the pope in the eighteenth century. Both monasteries in course of history became pilgrimage destinations, and both became in the late nineteenth century the objects of political instrumentalization. This was manifested in pompous celebrations that took place on monastic grounds with the participation of monarchical families and rich nobility. Often the monasteries' jurisdiction was the topic of political debates on both sides of the border. The differences in the position of Pochaiv and Podkamień in regional history and memory are aptly described in *Getrennt und doch verbunden*. Pochaiv was founded as an Orthodox monastery, becoming Greek Catholic at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Only after the defeat of the Polish Uprising of 1830-31 (which was supported by some Pochaiv monks) was it returned to the Russian Orthodox Church. This history made Pochaiv a peculiar contested place on a border between empires and church jurisdictions. Contacts and competition between Podkamień, which remained Catholic, and Pochaiv are a focus of *Getrennt und doch verbunden*. Unfortunately, the book misses some recent contributions to the field of interconfessional conflict in the region, particularly those dealing with the problems of late confessionalization and borderland religious identities. Engaging this scholarship (which often investigates the Polish-Lithuanian heritage) would have enriched its methodological basis.[8]

Other sites of transfer and cross-border communication among religious communities in the region were the synagogues. Brody was the established center of Haskala movement, whereas Husiatyn was considered to be the major site of Chassidism at that time. The

book raises also the question of anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian empire at the end of the nineteenth century as a stimulus for mass Jewish overseas emigration. The first waystation after crossing the border was the city of Brody, where refugees often received support from the local Jewish community.

The last chapter, "War and Occupation," describes the final fiasco of imperial rule on the border and the destruction of all interdependencies which constituted the mode of life there. The authors affirm that the gradual "nationalization" of both empires and the war forced local populations to give their blurred identities up in favor of the new nationally oriented Austrian, Hungarian, Jewish, Russian, or Polish ones. Besides, the war brought mobilization and mass expulsion with it; deportation, executions, and epidemics in these times signified the end of traditional survival strategies. Importantly, the end of the war marked the practical and psychological "closing of the border" for local people. In the following decades the former border along the Zbrucz River became a dividing line between West and East, between capitalism and bolshevism.

This book is definitely an achievement in terms of tracing a "borderland way of life" on a micro level. What is somewhat lacking is a general methodological framework to unite the varied approaches. This is generally an Achilles' heel of modern border studies, which do not offer a single or paradigmatic theory.[9] I suppose, from the abundant set of approaches recently discussed in the field, several could be considered applicable when dealing with modern urban Ukrainian history. There is, for instance, the concept of a transcultural communication zone, largely used in modern cultural studies. This definition describes a region in which "the inner interactions are more clearly defined as those directed to outside." [10] It is also defined through multiple cultural practices and experiences. These are often presented in ethnic and confessionally mixed regions as polyphonic and hybrid.

Closely connected to the notion of communication zones is the concept of cultural ambiguity. The characteristic feature of all contact zones, cultural hybridity, has long been a research subject for medievalists, early modern historians, Islamic scholars, as well as anthropologists of borderlands. Many of them underline the "higher level" of ambiguity in relation to powers and institutions in borderlands in comparison to central regions. One of the experts on Islamic cultures, Thomas Bauer, mentions in this context the different phases of ambiguity tolerance, which assumes unclearness and pluralism. Bauer operates with the term "ambiguity training" in this con-

text. He also defines the periods of attempts to bound, or to accommodate on the political level the ambiguous relationships in history.[11]

Besides Islamic cultures, a prominent example of cultural ambiguity is the Balkans. Anthropologists speak about “ambiguous marginality,” typical for all borderlands. To quote Sarah Green: “The Balkans always seems to generate ambiguous and tense connections that ought, in modernist terms, to be clearly resolved separations. The Balkans is fractal: it is about fragmentation and fault lines; but in another sense, fractals are about relational fragmentation: every fragment is a fraction, a part of something else, and it is the relationship between the parts, their fundamental interrelationality as it were, that renders something fractal.”[12] Ukraine is not the Balkans, but adequate comparisons are often appealing. Perhaps it is time to apply theoretical concepts such as contact zones and ambiguity to the materials brilliantly presented in Adelsgruber, Cohen, and Kuzmany’s book. It can unquestionably provide an inspiring impetus for further discussion.

Notes

[1]. Jürgen Osterhammel has developed a differentiated perspective on types of cultural borders: see Jürgen Osterhammel, “Kulturelle Grenzen in der Expansion Europas,” *Saeculum - Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte* 46 (1995): 101-138.

[2]. Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther, eds., *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009). See Jenny Marietta Alwart’s review on H-Net: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=25774>. For an transnational approach to Ukrainian history, see also Serhii Plokhyy, “Nova Skhidna Jevropa”: geopolitychna prymkha chy istoriohrafichna znakhidka?, <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/doslidzhennya/550-serhii-plokhyy-nova-skhidna-yevropa-heopolitychna-prymkha-chy-istoriohrafichna-znakhidka>.

[3]. Tatiana Zhurzhenko, *Borderlands into Bordered Lands. Geopolitics of Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2010).

[4]. Christoph Waack, *Stadträume und Staatsgrenzen. Geteilte Grenzstädte des mittleren und östlichen Europas im Kontext lokaler Alltagswelten, nationaler Politik und supranationaler Anforderungen* (Leipzig: Institut für Länderkunde, 2000); Dagmara Jajeński-Quast, Katarzyna Stokłosa, *Geteilte Städte an Oder und Neiße: Frankfurt*

(Oder), *Ślubięc, Guben, Gubin und Görlitz, Zgorzelec 1945-1995* (Berlin: Berlin-Verlag Spitz, 2000).

[5]. Daphne Berdahl, *Where the World Ended: Reunification and Identity in the German Borderland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[6]. Börries Kuzmany has recently released a monograph on Brody’s history: *Brody. Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2011). See review by Kai Struve on H-Net: <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2012-3-162>.

[7]. See, in particular, Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, “Im Zug. Gesellschaftlicher Raum im Russland des Eisenbahnzeitalters,” *Transversale Erkundungen in Kunst und Wissenschaft. Ein europäisches Jahrbuch* 2 (2006): 258-264.

[8]. Barbara Skinner, *The Western Front of the Eastern Church: Uniate and Orthodox Conflict in Eighteenth-Century Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009); Mikhail Dolbilov and Darius Staliunas, *Obratnaia uniia: iz istorii ot-noshenii mezhdru katolizmom i pravoslaviiem v Rossiiskoi imperii 1840-1873* (Vilnius: LII, 2010), and *Russkii kraï, chuzhaia vera: Etnokonfessionalnaia politika imperii v Litve i Belorusi pri Aleksandre II* (Moscow: Novoie literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010).

[9]. Gabriel Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-First Century: Understanding Borders* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 16.

[10]. Wolfgang E. J. Weber, “Die Bildung von Regionen durch Kommunikation. Aspekte einer neuen historischen Perspektive,” in *Kommunikation und Region*, ed. Carl A. Hoffmann and Rolf Kießling (Forum Suevicum. Beiträge zur Geschichte Ostschwabens und der benachbarten Regionen, Bd.4) (Konstanz: UVK, 2001), 58-59. For Eastern Europe, see Stefan Rohdewald, Stefan Wiederkehr, and David Frick, “Transkulturelle Kommunikation im Großfürstentum Litauen und in den östlichen Gebieten der Polnischen Krone: Zur Einführung,” in *Litauen und Ruthenien. Studien zu einer transkulturellen Kommunikationsregion (15.-18. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Stefan Rohdewald, Stefan Wiederkehr, and David Frick (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 7-33.

[11]. Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen im Insel Verlag, 2011). For early modern history, see most recently Andreas Pietsch and Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, eds., *Konfessionelle Ambiguität. Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit*,

Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte, Bd. 214 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013). For anthropological interpretations, see Mathijs Pelkmans, ed., *Ethnographies of doubt: faith and uncertainty in contemporary societies* (London: I. B.Tauris, 2013); Berdahl, *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland*; and Mathijs Pelksman, *Defending the*

Border: Identity, Religion, and Modernity in the Republic of Georgia (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[12]. Sarah F. Green, *Notes from the Balkans: Locating Marginality and Ambiguity on the Greek-Albanian Border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), ch. 4., here p. 129 passim.

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Citation: Liliya Berezhnaya. Review of Adelsgruber, Paulus; Cohen, Laurie R.; Kuzmany, Börries, *Getrennt und doch verbunden: Grenzstädte zwischen Österreich und Russland 1772-1918*. H-HistGeog, H-Net Reviews. July, 2014.

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