ner, Vogeley argues for the need to appreciate the similarities between the United States and Mexico as postcolonial nations “at similar times in their histories” (2). Equally, if not more striking, however, are the differences. The presence of active censors from whom books had to be hidden, a government that allowed freedom of the press and just as quickly took it away, and the very culture of the book itself marked important differences between Mexico and the United States. Philadelphia had near-universal literacy and saw texts circulate among all ranks and classes of people by the early nineteenth century. Mexico City, on the other hand, faced the power of the Inquisition that controlled the spread of books and limited literacy to a far smaller segment of society. Demand for Robeson’s books came from those stuck in between. Neither pureblooded Spanish elite nor indigenous masses, the middle-class criollos drove the revolution, a situation significantly different from what had happened in the United States fifty years earlier. Vogeley’s great contribution is to demonstrate the similarities as well as the differences between these postcolonial nations, which had a direct impact on why each turned out the way it did.

ROBERT I. FROST, University of Aberdeen


Professor Zenon Kohut is a distinguished historian of early modern Ukraine best known for his definitive account of the destruction of the Cossack Hetmanate in the late eighteenth century, and its incorporation into the unitary Russian state being constructed by Catherine II. Her Enlightened instincts did not extend to tolerating the traditional liberties and autonomy of local elites, be they Baltic German nobles or a Cossack Hetmanate that had—apart from the Mazepa debacle during the Great Northern War—largely served the empire loyally. This collection of essays, written between 1977 and 2006, is most welcome, and gives readers an opportunity to assess Kohut’s contribution to Ukrainian historiography in the years before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990. Although the essays range widely across the early modern period, the center of gravity of most of them lies in the eighteenth century, and several are devoted to exclusively eighteenth-century topics.

At the heart of all the essays lies the author’s concern with demonstrating the legitimacy of the Ukrainian claim to the status of a historical nation and a historical state, so important in the Soviet period and still of relevance today, when Russian cultural and political influence in Ukraine remains powerful. Kohut offers close critical arguments in favor of Ukraine’s historical nationhood and statehood, in the tradition of the great Mikhailo Hrushevsky. He demonstrates through close critical reading of a range of sources the development of Ukrainian national consciousness beginning in the sixteenth century, and is at his best when offering powerful critiques of works by Russian and Soviet scholars who sought to prove otherwise. As is inevitable in such a collection, several of the essays overlap, and readers become very familiar with such works as the early nineteenth-century
Istoriia Rusov, one of the key texts he analyzes. Overall, however, this adds to the coherence of the vision that emerges.

Kohut outlines the emergence of a vision of Ukrainian nationhood that challenged the dominant Great Russian narrative of the supposed common past. He shows how writers and intellectuals from ecclesiastical and lay circles effectively confronted the claims of Great Russians that the inhabitants of “Little Russia” (Malorossiia) merely formed a junior branch—despite the origins of the Russian state in Kyiv/Kiev—of one Russian nation. He endeavors to prove that both the tradition of Kyivan Rus’ and the establishment of the Cossack Hetmanate as a form of state in the wake of the great Cossack rising against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1648–54 meant that the Ukrainians are not a new nation, but one with a long tradition of statehood.

All of this is well done, and Kohut marshals his evidence effectively. Yet there is one major problem: Modern Ukrainian identity is complex precisely because it was formed against two Others, not one. Most of the territories that make up modern Ukraine were for over two hundred years part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, then, for two hundred more, of the Kingdom of Poland. Thus they were ruled from Vilnius, Cracow, or Warsaw for longer than they have been ruled from Moscow. Kohut is well aware of this fact, yet shows little interest in Polish-Lithuanian influences on Ukrainian identity. With the exception of his essay on the eighteenth-century haidamaka movement and the 1768 Koliïvshchyna rising, which was centered on Right Bank Ukraine (then in the Kingdom of Poland), he cites virtually no Polish literature, and the literature he does cite is outdated: to present the account of the xenophobic Rawita-Gawroski (1846–1930) as the standard Polish work (274) is a travesty. Since 1945, many Polish scholars—including Zbigniew Wójcik, Władysław Serczyk, Henryk Litwin, and Teresa Chynczewska-Hennel, to name but a few—have written with great sensitivity on the thorny problems of identity and political culture in the Ruthenian and Ukrainian lands. The quality and importance of their work certainly are recognized by scholars working in contemporary Ukraine, particularly by Natalia Iakovenko, whose wonderfully subtle and nuanced work on the Ruthenian szlachta [nobility] departs substantially from the simple Manichean visions promulgated from the late nineteenth century, when—overtly and covertly encouraged by the Russians—Poles and Ukrainians fought literally as well as metaphorically for control of the Ukrainian lands and the Ukrainian historical legacy.

In this context, and in contrast to the subtlety of his work on the Ukrainian–Russian historical encounter, Kohut is happy to present simplistic, stereotypical accounts of the long relationship between Polish and Ruthenian culture. Following the pioneering work of Iakovenko, Litwin—and, indeed, Frank Sysyn, another historian of Ukraine now based in Canada—it is no longer possible simply to suggest that if a Ruthenian, Orthodox nobleman converted to Catholicism and used Polish as his first language, he automatically became a Pole. Yet, in an otherwise interesting piece on the political ideas of Hryhorii Poletyka—who, beginning in the 1760s, rejected the Cossack tradition and argued for a noble-led vision of Little Russian autonomy within the Russian empire—Kohut fails even to consider the extent to which Poletyka’s ideas might be derived from a political culture of local noble autonomy forged by the Polish-Lithuanian union. He does not even mention that at the time Poletyka was politically active, and in the very same year as the Koliïvshchyna in Right Bank Ukraine (1768), discontent on the part of the middling and lesser szlachta was to produce the volcanic and anarchic explosion of the Confederation of Bar, which mounted a direct challenge to the Russian domination of
Polish politics and helped produce the crisis that led to the First Partition in 1772. Kohut shows no interest in the Partitions, mentioning them only in passing, and failing to reflect at all on the impact on Ukrainian identity and political culture of the Russian seizure of the Right Bank between 1772 and 1795. This is a great pity, for it means that his picture of eighteenth-century Ukrainian culture and identity remains narrower than it should be.

J. DONALD HUGHES, University of Denver


That the island city of Venice depended on the sea for trade, and asserted thalassocracy through the well-built ships in her navy, is a commonplace of late medieval and early modern Mediterranean history. Karl Appuhn’s fine environmental history is a reminder that the shipbuilding Arsenal of Venice depended on the timber resources of the Italian mainland across the water. Beyond that, the city itself rested on a forest of tree-trunk pilings [tolpi] driven into the mud of the lagoon bottom. Charcoal burners in the mainland forests provided fuel for heating and for such urban industries as glassmaking and dye production. Venice had a ravenous appetite for wood, and rather than importing it, the Serene Republic depended on the lands she had conquered between the Adriatic Sea and the Alps, and on the peninsula of Istria.

Appuhn’s study is unique among forest history studies of this period in its careful reading of the sources and its insight into the attitudes and purposes of the Venetian leaders. He shows the evolution of a state apparatus with direct central control of key forest resources, bolstered by meticulous record keeping that included mapping and inventory of the forest resource, often down to individual oak trees. Annual reports aided in perpetuating a valuable institutional memory, useful in planning use of the resource and in detecting thefts and corrupt activities.

From early times until the eighteenth century, Venetian officials in their written comments and speeches emphasized a perpetually short supply of timber and other wood products, and pointed out the threat this constituted to the security of the community. They repeatedly blamed deforestation on peasants who cleared land for their fields and grazed their herds within the forest, as well as local landlords who sought to expand their holdings. As an official on the mainland complained, these landlords “in a very brief time consumed such a substantial number of trees that nature had long struggled to produce for the public advantage” (282). The rhetoric of scarcity, Appuhn believes, was used by bureaucrats to gain support in the city’s Council of Ten for such measures as the conversion of local community forests into public forest reserves, and forestry laws that successfully intruded state regulation even into private forests and required peasant labor for state forestry projects. Many other historians cite the reports of scarcity in maintaining that Venice was seriously exhausting her forests, and that this contributed to the fall of the republic in the late eighteenth century. Appuhn counters that Venetian forest policy enabled sustained use of the local wood supply, and that the rhetoric was just