The identity-shaping/forming role of the border/peripheral region – "kraj" – in the formation of Cossacks in Ukraine

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Introduction

In the 14th and 16th centuries, in historical sources, East Slavic people living in the south-western territories of the Kievan Rus were called 'Ruthenians' or 'Rus' people, while their lands were referred to as 'Ukrainian territory'. During this time period, the term 'Ukraine' (originating from the word 'kraj') referred to the borderlands lying at the southern border of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The population of Ukraine is called a "*society set for self-defence*"[1] in historiography, moreover, Cossacks are evaluated as a phenomenon connected and conditioned to, and intertwined with the economic and social development of the Ukrainian border area.

Appearance of the term 'Ukraine'

The term 'Ukraine' appeared in different contexts that vary in time and space, as over the centuries it was used to refer to geographic, political and ethnic areas as well. Regarding its meaning, *the term can designate a borderlands or an entire country*.[2]

The appearance of the term 'Ukraine' is associated with the age of the *Kievan Rus*: as early as the 10th century in Latin written sources the Kievan Rus was referred to as *Ruscia* (originating from the word 'Rus') or as *Ruthenia*. The inhabitants of this East Slavic State (late-9th century–1240) were called Ruthenians or Rus' people (Rutheni-Russi).[3] Here, it is important to highlight the fact that the demonym 'Ukrainian' appeared quite late. For a long time, it was the term 'Little Russia' that was in use, which originated from the expression *'Russia Minor'*[4] making reference to the Principality of Halych and the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, territories occupied by the Polish in the 14th century. According to historical

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[1] KUMKE, Carsten (1993), *Führer und Geführte bei den Zaporoger Kosaken Wiesbaden. Struktur und Geschichte kosakischer Verbände im polnisch-litauischen Grenzland (1550–1648)*, Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte, Band 49, Berlin – Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 61–63.

[2] Thanks to the Ukrainian People's Republic, Ukraine was first considered a country or state from 1917 to 1921. After that, the term 'Ukraine' would recover this meaning in 1991 when the sovereign Ukrainian state was founded.

[3] FONT, Márta (2001), "Az Árpádok országa és az „orosz kapun" túli szomszédjai," *Tiszatáj* (55) 11. 71. (71–78.)

[4] Русина, О. В. (1998), *Україна під татарами і Литвою*. Київ, Видавничий дім «Альтернативи», 274.

sources, from the 12th century, the term '*Ukrainian' was used to refer to the border areas along the middle course of the Dnieper River*, lying between the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia and the steppes.

After the partition and the dissolution of the Kievan Rus, new administrative and political successor states, called principalities emerged. Their names often included the term 'Rus' to indicate their common origin.[5] In the south-western territories of the former Kievan Rus, the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia became the most significant successor state. After the breakup of the Golden Horde from the 1340s onwards the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania started to compete with each other to obtain the territories that once belonged to the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia. By 1349, the Polish had seized Galicia and Western Volhynia, while the eastern territories of today's Ukraine (except for Western Volhynia) had become part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Claiming that he had the right to inherit the Kievan Rus, Gediminas, the Grand Duke of Lithuania (1316–1341), took control of all Volhynia gradually. His successor, Algirdas (1341–1377), incorporated the Principalities of Chernigov, Pereyaslavl and Kiev into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The idea of reuniting the territories of the former Kievan Rus was proposed as early as the reign of Algirdas who had the intention to annex the 'entire Rus to Lithuania'.[6]

During the age of the *'Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Rus'* (1340–1385), the East Slavic population living in the south-western territories of the former Kievan Rus – present-day Ukraine – was still called 'Ruthenians' *or 'border people'* (*ukrainnije ljudi*).[7] The area where they lived, comprising the borderlands near the steppe, was referred to as 'Ukrainian' land.[8]

As a result of *the Union of Krewo of 1385*, a personal union was established including the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This union meant the end of the 'Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Rus', which ensured favourable conditions for the Ukrainian territories and the people living there. As early as the 16th century, in Lithuanian written sources, *'Ukraina' was used as a proper noun: the borderlands of Kiev, Volhynia and Podolia was designated with this term.*

At the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, the term 'Ukraine' acquired a narrower meaning: it did not mean borderlands in general anymore; but it stood for a specific geographic unit, lying along the middle course of the Dnieper River, that is, the central regions of present-day Ukraine. By this time, in Polish written sources, the word 'Ukraine' had been used as a proper noun: e. g. "villages and towns in Ukraine", "Kievan Ukraine", etc. The population living in this area was referred to as 'Ukrainians'; however, this did not make reference to an ethnic group, but it was a geographic and administrative designation.

According to the *Union of Lublin*[9], signed on 1 July 1569, the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became united in a single state, called the Polish–Lithuanian

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[5] E. g. Principality of Halychian Rus', Vladimir-Suzdalian Rus'.

[6] Supposedly, by the expression 'entire Rus', Algirdas referred to those territories of the Kievan Rus that were found between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the southern steppes.

[7] Довнар-Запольский, М. В. (1899), *Акты Литовско-русского государства*, Вып. 1, Москва, Универеситетская типография, 229.

[8] The Ukrainian territories were often called 'South-Western Rus' as well.

[9] Kutrzeba, Stanisław – Semkowicz, Władysław (eds.) (1932), *Akta uniji Polski z Litwą, 1385–1791*, Kraków, Polska Akademia Umiejętności – Towarzystwo naukowe warszawskie, 414.

Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita). As a consequence, Lithuania lost its rights of possession over nearly every 'Ukrainian' territory.[10] This meant that almost every territory[11] inhabited by Rus' people/Ruthenians became part of the Polish state. The relatively tolerant political methods of Lithuanian rulers regarding religions and ethnic groups were replaced by strict measures taken by the Polish leaders which aimed to foster the expansion of Catholicism as well as Polish culture and language.

According to the official documents of the era, besides the titles of 'King of Poland' and the *'Grand Duke of Lithuania', the monarchs also held the title of 'Grand Prince of Rus'.*[12] Stephen Báthory was the first Polish king to use the term *'Ukraine' as a synonym of 'Rus' territories*.

On 14 June 1596, Sigismund III declared the *Union of Brest* to preserve the unity of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.[13] At this time, the country had two official Churches, the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches. According to this union, a third Church, the Ruthenian Uniate or Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, was established.[14] The religious conflict was further deepened by the fact that after 1596 the Orthodox Church was outlawed in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, which meant that its believers lost their political rights. Sigismund III with this decree ultimately contributed to the perpetuation of Cossack uprisings under the slogan of protecting the Orthodox religion, which resulted in the Rzeczpospolita losing Ukraine in the middle of the 17th century.

The term 'Ukraine' had been widely used by the beginning of the 17th century to refer to the south-western borderlands of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, that is, this term had acquired a more specific meaning: it did not comprise all the borderlands, but a concrete geographical unit that lay along the middle course of the Dnieper River, in other words, the central regions of present-day Ukraine.[15]

One of the most important travelogues written about Ukraine in the 17th century is associated with *Guillaume Levasseur De Beauplan*, a French military engineer, architect, cartographer and writer.[16] *He was the first person to write about Ukraine as an independent*

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[10] After taking control of Halych and Western Volhynia in 1387 and Western Podolia in 1430, the Kingdom of Poland, after 1569, extended its authority over entire Podolia, Volhynia and Kiev.

[11] The Zakarpattia Oblast belonged to Hungary for a long time. After the Treaty of Trianon (1920), it became part of Czechoslovakia.

[12] *Архив Юго-западной России, издаваемый временной комиссией для разбора древних актов*, (Архив ЮЗР) Т. 1, Киев, Универеситетская типография, 1859, 359.

[13] Pelesz, Julian (1881), *Geschichte der Union der rutenischen Kirche mit Rom*, Band II, Wien, Mechitharisten-Buchdruckerei, 23.

[14] The Greek Catholic Church could still hold its masses in Old Slavonic, but they had to accept Roman Catholic dogmas and the Pope as the head of their Church, meaning that they would depend directly on the Vatican.

[15] The Polish sources of this period used the word 'Ukraine' as a proper noun. The population living in this area was referred to as 'Ukrainians'; however, this still did not stand for an ethnic group, but a geographic and administrative unit. That is to say, a Ukrainian ethnic group did not exist; the East Slavic people living within the borders of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth were still called 'Rus' people' or 'Ruthenians'.

[16] Levasseur de Beauplan, Guillaume (1650), *Description d'Ukranie qui sont plusieurs provinces du royaume de Pologne contenues depuis les confins de la Moscouie, jusques aux limites de la Tran-*

geographic and political unit that had different environmental, economic and cultural characteristics than the Polish and Lithuanian territories.[17] In the French and English versions published in 1648, he called the region 'Wild Fields'; however, in the versions published in 1650, he used the word 'Ukraine' instead.[18] Interestingly, the borderlines of Ukraine on Beauplan's maps almost perfectly corresponded to those of present-day Ukraine. Moreover, on later maps, the term 'Ukraine' did not appear. The Ukrainian territories under Russian control from the mid-17th century were referred to as 'Russia Minor'. The French traveller did not only 'discover' and put Ukraine on the map of Europe, but he believed that *Ukraine – the border region – was the country of the Cossacks.*[19]

From 1648, territories under the control of the Zaporizhian Host[20] *were called 'Ukraine', that is, the term was not used to refer to the borderlands anymore.* However, this was not an official name. From 1654, the administration of the Hetmanate – under Russian protectorate – occasionally used the term 'Ukraine' as the synonym of Hetmanate or Zaporizhian Host.[21] In 1667, as a result of the Treaty of Andrusovo,[22] Ukrainian regions along the Dnieper River were divided between Russia and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Following the truce, the term 'Transdnieper' (beyond the Dnieper River) was used in official documents to refer to the Ukrainian territories. Within the Hetmanate, the terms Right-bank and Left-bank Ukraine appeared only in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the expanding Russian state gradually conquered the Eastern European territories under Polish control. This process was ended in 1795 by the partition of Poland. *This means that Right-bank and Left-bank Ukraine existed for no more than 200 years; however, their marks have been preserved until these days.*

The Ukrainian territories annexed to Russia in 1654 were officially called Hetmanate or Army of Zaporizhia, whereas, from the 18th century, they were referred to as Little Russia. The term 'Ukraine' never appeared in this context. In 1764, Catherine II abolished the Hetmanate, replacing it with provinces. From this moment, the terms 'Ukraine' and 'Little Russia' were barely used.

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silvanie, ensemble leurs mœurs, façons de vivre et de faire la guerre, Rouen, chez Jacques Cailloue, dans la cour du palais.

[17] The French scientist was also a pioneer regarding the fact that he included detailed maps about Ukraine in his travelogue entitled literally putting the 'Terra Incognita' or the 'Wild Fields', that is, the southern borderlands of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth on the map of Europe.

[18] In the Russian translation of Beauplan's book, the expression 'South Russia' is used instead of Ukraine.

[19] Ляскоронский, В. Г. (1901), *Гийом Левассер де Боплан и его историко-географические труды относительно Южной России*, Киев, Типография И. И. Чоколова, 21–23.

[20] According to the Treaty of Zboriv of 1649, the 'Cossack Ukraine', including the Voivodeships of Kiev, Braclaw and Chernihiv, was led by a Hetman, elected by the Zaporizhian Host.

[21] *Воссоединение Украины с Россией. Документы и материалы в 3 томах*, Т. III, Москва, Издательство Академии Наук СССР, 1953, 564–565.

[22] *Полное собранiе законовъ Россiйской Имперiи, повеленiемъ государя императора Николая Павловича составленное – Собранiе Первое. с 1649 по 12 декабря 1825*, Т. 1 с 1649 по 1675, Санктпетербург, 1830, 656-669.

Disputed issues regarding the genesis of Cossacks in historiography

Already back in the 16th and 17th century in Ukrainian chronicles and noble historiography, the genesis of Cossacks proved to be a core issue. G. Grabjanka (1666–1738) *etymologized Cossacks from the Khazars*, who fled the Khazar Empire, dissolved as a consequence of the Mongolian offensive to the region of the Don and Dnieper Rivers, and established their peculiar 'order of chivalry'.[23] Cossacks, similarly to Western-European orders of chivalry, devoted their lives to the combat against infidels, that is the Tatars and Turks. While examining the genealogy of the Cossacks, G. Konyssky (1717–1795) argued in favour of the fact that *Cossacks had been Slavic soldiers* and adapted simply one thing, that is the name of Cossacks.[24] Furthermore, his entire work is pervaded by the notion of *"the independence of Ukrainian chivalry"*, who had served Polish, Lithuanian or Russian monarchs alike, all of their own free will. Despite some minor differences, it is common in the works depicted above that *they consider Cossacks to be an elite category, a peculiar order of chivalry*, which later may have provided a sound basis for being granted nobility. This is why one can call this period the age of noble historiography.

Certain books regard Ukrainian Cossacks as a local phenomenon even if they had taken shape due to partly Tatar, that is a foreign impact. Yet their appearance can be definitely interpreted with local economic, social and political factors. B. Antonovich (1834–1908) *studied the history of Cossacks in close relation to the free communities of the Kievian Rus', namely the obshchinas.*[25] Thus, he followed through the process of the centre of power being shifted to Halach and Volhynia after the Tatar attack, while the regions along the Dnieper had gradually become more and more scarcely populated. Here only obshchinas remained, who paid taxes to the khans and maintained their specific way of life. Owing to the geographical position of these areas, the local population was constantly exposed to Tatar attacks. As a result, the only way to protect themselves was to set up armed self-defence. Ultimately, this obshchina-establishment had taken its foreign designation, that is, the Cossacks.

Ukrainian historian N. I. Kostomarov (1817–1885) regarded the Cossacks and the term representing them to be undoubtedly of *Tatar origin*.[26] As a matter of fact, based on his theory, the expression of Cossacks may carry more meanings. On the one hand, it might have referred to wandering individuals not bound to the soil, that is who separated from their dependence as peasants. On the other hand, he used this category for free armed forces who at the time dealt with industry and trade as well in order to make a living.

M. S. Hrushevsky (1866–1934), generally known as the *"father of Ukrainian historiography"*, radically reassessed and shed new light on the formation and significance of Cossacks. Investigating the genesis of Cossacks, he assumed that at the turn of the 15th and 16th

[23] *Летопись гадячскаго полковника Григорія Грабянки*, Киев, Университетская типография, 1853, 16.

[24] *Исторія русовъ или Малой Россіи-Сочиеніе Георгія Кониского, Архіепископа Белорускаго*, Москва, 1846, 2.

[25] *Архив ЮЗР. Ч. 3, Т. 1, Акты о козаках (1500-1648)*, Киев, Университетская типография, 1863, XXIII–XXV.

[26] *Богдан Хмельницкий. Историческая монография Николая Костомарова*, Санкт-Петербург, Типография М. М. Стасюлевича, 1884, Издание 4-е, Т. I, 303.

centuries Cossacks did not represent an organized social class, however, as a way of life it had already been known for long. *Clearly, this way of life had been a result of a permanent struggle conducted by an already settled, farmer population against raider and looter nomad peoples of the steppe, lasting for centuries*.[27] Consequently, the local population was forced to establish itself in self-defence, moreover, at times they carried out counter-attacks and facilitated raids on Turkish-Tatar regions. According to Hrushevsky's theory, the term Cossack was first used to assign this lifestyle from the 15th century onwards, but as a distinct social group Cossacks had crystallised only during the 1600s, while their *definite organisational and legal form, and respectively, recognition emerged only by the turn of the 16–17th centuries*.[28]

Starting from the 1920s and 1930s, the "Ukrainian issue" proved to be a delicate one, carrying a political charge within the history of the Soviet Union, therefore books dealing with Ukrainian and Cossack themes were being significantly sidelined. Following the 300th anniversary of the *"reunification"* of Russia and Ukraine in 1954, the interest in Ukrainian-related books increased, many of which were related to V. A. Golobutsky.[29] In the historian's book written on the Zaporizhzhia Cossacks, he discusses how smaller settlements, that is, slobodas, emerged on the left bank of the Dnieper at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, with the population, predominantly runaway peasants, considering themselves as Cossacks, meaning free men.

Moreover, within *contemporary Ukrainian historiography*, one can in fact see the revival and further evolvement of M. S. Hrushevsky's theory regarding the genesis of Cossacks.[30] Research of national history played a crucial role in the elevation of Ukrainian identity, what is more, it was imperative that *the past should be glorious and carry continuity. The formation of Cossacks and their determining historical role as well as being capable of establishing a state had become a central element in the glorious Ukrainian history*.

Based on the historiographical overview of the Cossacks' genesis, the majority of historians agree that the term Cossack can be of Turkish-Tatar origin,[31] this category having been generally widespread from the end of the 13th century to connote military personnel fulfilling border patrol duties, who occasionally involved in steppe raids to the enemy's territories.

As a result of the study regarding the genesis of Ukrainian Cossacks, we can conclude that they began to take shape *from the end of the 15th century, yet, up until the mid-1600s, thus representing only a disorganised military force*. These military classes located in be-

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[27] ГРУШЕВСКИЙ, М. С. (1913), *История украинского казачества до соединения с Московским государством. Т. 1: До начала XVII века*, Киев, 98.

[28] Ibid. 96.

[29] ГОЛОБУЦКИЙ, В. А. (1957), *Запорожское кзэачество*, Киев, Госполитиздат УССР, 44–47.

[30] ЩЕРБАК, В. О. (2000), *Українське козацтво: формування соціального стану-Друга половина XV - середина XVII ст.*, Київ, КМ Academia, 36.; Наливайко, Д. (1992), *Козацька християнська республіка*, Київ, Дніпро, 34–38.; ЧУХЛІБ, Т. (2009), *Козаки і монархи. Міжнародні відносини ранньомодерної Української держави 1648-1721 рр*, Київ, Вид-во ім Олени Теліги, 34.; SUB-TELNY, Orest (2000), *Ukraine. A History*, Toronto – Buffalo – London, University of Toronto Press, 108–110.; MAGOCSI, Robert Paul (2010), *A History of Ukraine. The Land and its Peoples*, Toronto – Buffalo – London, University of Toronto Press, 188–195.

[31] STÖKL, Günther (1953), *Die Entstehung des Kosakentums*, München, Isar Verlag, 202–203.

tween noblemen and serfs, forming a differentiated and heterogeneous *intermediate social category*, moreover, at the same time, consequently emerging as a blow off valve for social tensions. Much as they were capable of affecting the course of domestic and international politics of their country, during their making and shaping history they still, on several occasions, clashed with the producer society.

The Cossacks of Ukraine

It may not be possible to accurately determine the exact starting date and time when Slavic Cossack in Ukrainian territories emerged as the term Cossack. It was initially used for the denotation for a peculiar craft or lifestyle rather than a specific ethnic group. Therefore, it was the Slavicisation of Tatar Cossacks as an institute, not Tatar Cossacks in the service of the Polish–Lithuanian monarch that actually bore decisive significance.

As a matter of fact, the steppe was wide open to Ukrainian peasants from the very onset, however, they were unable to consider the dangerous lifestyle characteristic of Cossacks as their own. Were they to remain within this way of life, even though it may have meant having to gradually abandon their economic independence, in most cases they opted for this change. This might explain the sluggish formation of Cossacks as a group and their only becoming a social mass phenomenon by the end of the 16th century. It was only when colonisation of peasants gradually advanced to the southern border area of the steppe and the thus far alternating dependence of peasants had become a level of being bound to the soil with the 3rd Lithuanian Statutes in 1558 that the Cossacks' lifestyle turned out to be acceptable and desired by serfs.

As a result of the violent actions of the state and the nobility against them, the Cossacks could choose from the following options: 1) they join the official border guard service of the Polish–Lithuanian state; 2) they enter the noble private armies; 3) they retreat to the mostly uninhabited or depopulated border areas, preserving their freedom. Based on these three alternatives, three types of Cossacks emerged: *free or Zaporozhian, state or registered, and private landowner Cossacks*.

Zaporozhian Cossacks

The Polish monarchs in the 16th century attempted to hold the restless Cossacks off by issuing a series of threatening decrees,[32] yet with little success, since they mostly did not possess the necessary power to have the decrees enforced. The denomination of Cossack at the time was used for groups difficult to control and living on the southern border of the Polish–Lithuanian state, who resettled to the waterfalls of the Dnieper ("za porogi"), which area, due to its excellent geographical features, with its thick forests, swamps and islands, offered sound protection as a natural boundary against intrusions by Turks or Tartars. Also, their "combat state", the Zaporozhian Sich was[33] "established" here in the 1540s. Further-

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[32] *Архив ЮЗР. Ч. 3, Т. 1, Акты о козаках*, 4, 12, 28, 33, 44. 84, 130, 190, 200, 253.

[33] Антонович, В. В. (1991), *Про козацькі часи на Україні*, Київ, Дніпро, 51–52.; Гурбик, А. О. (1999), "Виникнення Запорозької Січі (хронологічний та територіальний аспекти проблеми)", *Український Історичний Журнал*, n° 6, 5–7.; GEBEI, Sándor (2013), "Bethlen Gábor viszonya a

more, these people had built a social and political organisation of military nature in the Zaporozhian Sich independent from the Polish–Lithuanian administration, and eventually effectively integrated into the protection of the southern borders.

Compared to the Tatars, the Zaporozhian Cossacks can be considered as the "by-product" of the steppe life, who were transformed into soldiers by necessity due to the Tatar and Turk attacks from the 15th century onwards. Living in groups they created a "brother-hood" which was called Cossacks in the ranks of Tatars.

However, formally the Polish–Lithuanian government acknowledged privileges of only registered Cossacks in state service,[34] and officially Sich Cossacks were regarded to be outlaws. Still, the *Zaporozhian Sich* actually functioned as a *"state within the state"* in the framework of the Rzeczpospolita. The central power reluctantly tolerated its existence due to its determining role in defending the borders, however, no official recognition came along. *It was this being pushed to the background* in the first place *that resulted in the fact that they had begun to serve outlandish monarchs as mercenaries*.[35] Therefore, the major problem posed to the Polish administration in handling the Cossack-issue was that it had been unable to hire for state service all Cossacks desiring to get registered, for this endeav-our had been hindered by either the lack of financial resources or the hostile attitude of the Polish nobility towards Cossacks. The Polish Szlachta had a good reason to hamper the growth of registered Cossacks. On the one hand, they were afraid to lose their labour supply if too many of the villeins attempted to make it to the ranks of the privileged registered Cossacks, and, on the other hand, they recognised that a ready and sizeable army built on Cossacks in the hands of the "elected" Polish monarchs may very well be dangerous to their own privileges, too.

Registered Cossacks

In 1572, Sigismund II Augustus of the Polish–Lithuanian state succeeded in passing the introduction of Cossacks as an institution registered in the Sejm.[36]

As the King of Poland between 1576 and 1586 Stephen Báthory experimented with sev-eral methods to regulate unregistered *"free"* Cossacks, using intimidation[37] and executions to restrain Cossacks. Also, he hired some of them for serving the state. Although 300 "free"

Rzeczpospolitához", in Papp, Klára (ed.), *Bethlen Gábor képmása*, Speculum Historiae Debre-ceniense, Debrecen, Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézete, 94.

[34] *Жерела до історії України-Руси. Матеріалів до історії української козаччини*, Т. 8, Львів, Видано під редакцією Михайла Грушевського, Накладом Наукового Товариства імени Шевченка, 1908, 57–64.

[35] The Fifteen Years' War was the first occasion when the Habsburgs employed the Cossacks as merce-naries, later several times they were hired for military services, e.g. during the Thirty Years' War.

[36] Грушевский, М. С. (1913–1914), *История украинского казачества до соединения с Московским государством*. Том I–III, Киев, Типография 1-й Кіевской Артели Печ, Дела, Трехсвятительская 5. Том I, 185.

[37] Veress, Endre (ed.) (1944), *Báthory István erdélyi fejedelem és lengyel király levelezése,* II. 1576–1586, Kolozsvár, Gróf Teleki Pál Tudományos Intézet, 69.; Polkowski, Ignacy (1887), *Acta histori-ca res gestas Poloniae illustrantia ab anno 1507 usque ad annum 1795* – Sprawy wojenne króla Stefana Batorego, T. 11, Krakow, 32.

Cossacks had already sworn to be loyal to the last Jagiellonian monarch previously, *in fact it was Stephen Báthory who,* in accordance with his statute of September 1578 titled *"Agreement with Sich Cossacks"*[38] *created the institute of registered Cossacks.* This act of Báthory basically meant providing to initially 500, then in 1583 600 state-registered Cossacks[39] *tax exemption, exemption from church and landlord taxes. In addition, they gained independence from the scope of authority of local Polish authorities, that is they acquired the right to act as a local government.*[40] Eventually, *registered Cossacks* fulfilled the hopes placed in them by the Polish monarch, moreover, they actively participated in the Livonian war against Russia, serving along Stephen Báthory.[41] The concept of registered Cossacks as such practically legalized the opportunity to escape from the dependence on landlords, and endowed *registered Cossacks* significant privileges,[42] nevertheless, they were in fact merely treated as supporting troops in the military system of the Polish–Lithuanian state.[43]

A significant change in the position of Cossacks took place as a result of the *Kurukovo Agreement of 1625,*[44] signed between the Polish government and the state Cossacks. As its consequence, *Cossacks emerged as an organised military formation, and thus registered Cossacks became a public institute that provided them with a livelihood including a combination of legally obtained takings and military pay.* The officially registered six regiments of Cossacks were allowed to apply privileges separately supported to them by the monarchs of Poland.

By the 1630s, the registered Cossacks had become a regular army with an ever-increasing involvement in politics, all this in spite of the fact that apart from the "noble uprising", only supporting troops were trained within the military of the Polish state. This marginalization also explains that more and more of them began to sympathise with the revolts of free Cossacks, which ultimately meant that part of the registered Cossacks' joining the 1637 Cossack uprising in fact served as a pretext for the Sejm, controlled by Polish nobility, to issue a decree of 1638 named *"Ordination of the Zaporozhian Cossack Army".*[45] According to this, *Cossacks as a whole had lost all their previously obtained rights and privileges,* and henceforward became equal with villeins. Even though the number of registered ones still remained 6.000, *they were not allowed to have their own, elected leaders,* but instead they were put under the direct authority of a supervisor (commissar) of Polish origin, appointed by the monarch. *Under the Ordination, from then on Cossacks differed from villeins in that they owed not agricultural, but military service to the Polish–*

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[38] POLKOWSKI, *Acta historica res gestas Poloniae*, 337.

[39] *Сборник летописей, относящиеся к истории Южной и западной России*, Киев, Тип. Г. Т. Корчак-Новицкого, 1888, 92–93.

[40] ЩЕРБАК, В. О. (2010), *Запровадження козацьких резестрів*, Магістеріум. Бип. 41, Історичні студії, Київ, Національний університет Києво-Могилянська академія, 9.

[41] SZABÓ, Béla (2009), *Báthory István erdélyi fejedelem és lengyel király katonai és katonapolitikai jelentősége*, Doktori (PhD) értekezés, Budapest, 73–74.; BESALA, Jerzy (1992), *Stefan Batory*, Warszawa, PIW, 102–103.

[42] ЯКОВЕНКО, Н. (2009), *Нарис історії України*, Київ, Критика, 263.

[43] MAGOCSI, *A History of the Ukraine*, 196.

[44] *Архив ЮЗР. Ч. 3, Т. 1, Акты о козаках*, 284–292.

[45] *Воссоединение Украины с Россией. Документы и материалы в трёх томах*, I, Москва, АН СССР, 1954, 255–256.

Lithuanian state. Thus, owing to the reforms of 1638, registered Cossacks lost their personal alliance character based on extensive self-government, and were transformed into state-controlled and organised complex military unit furnished with an insitutionalised leadership.

  Up until the middle of the 17th century, Cossacks could not be regarded as a sovereign social class, but only an "intermediate" category, as the population of Ukraine was characterized by a relatively amorph social system at the time. The *"great revolution"*[46] of 1648–1654, led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky brought significant changes and transformation in the composition of social stratification in Ukraine. The crucial change was apparent in the act of the Cossack elite (starshina) seizing governance, and in the Hetmanate[47] society within the Russian bond a relatively free opportunity of moving up in society emerged. As a consequence, villeins were allowed to become common Cossacks by undertaking military service, while the latter could rise to cement themselves in "Cossack aristocracy". Following the outbreak of the Khmelnytsky movement, the Polish and pro-Polish Ukrainian szlachta fled the so-called *"Cossack Ukraine"*[48] leaving their lands behind. Then, in the age of the Hetmanate (1654–1764), after the union with Russia, the Cossack elite and common Cossacks started to become distinct from each other. While the starshina assumed control of Ukraine, accumulating offices and lands, at the same time common Cossacks became gradually impoverished and tried to avoid the more and more costly military conscription.

Conclusion

The Cossacks of Ukraine, as a new social and political factor, evolved in the second half of the 15th century. The social identification of the Cossacks can be considered as a heterogeneous composition, as in addition to runaway villeins[49] settled at the southern border of the Polish–Lithuanian state, the so-called "no-man's-land", impoverished city-dwellers and outcast gentry were present in their ranks, who recognised the king of Poland as their only lord. Indeed, free tenant communities fulfilling military services in several Eastern European countries had developed and formed to be almost separate social groups which *in practice were waging a war against both the internal feudal oppression and external enemies, particularly the Ottoman conquerors*.

  Ukrainian Cossacks ultimately developed in a forced "coexistence" with the Tatars and Turks of the Southern border region as well as in their struggle for existence on the steppe.

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[46] Contemporary Ukrainian historiography applies the terms "national-independence war, and revolution" for the denomination of the 1648–1657 movement in Ukraine. СМОЛИЙ, В. С. – СТЕПАНКОВ, В. А. (1997), *Українська дерыавна ідея XVII-XVIII. століть: проблеми формування, еволюції, реалізації*, Київ, „Альтернативи", 81.

[47] The Hetmanate consisting of Ukrainian territories joining Russia voluntarily in 1654 gained full autonomy, and Cossack privileges were reconfirmed.

[48] The chief achievement of the movement was the 1649 Treaty of Zboriv, which stated that the Polish government declared "Cossack Ukraine" containing the voivodes of Kiev, Bratslav and Chernihiv to be an autonomy. A Tsichirin-based Hetmanate administrative organisation vested with self-government was built up as a result, headed by Bohdan Khmelnytsky. *Воссоединение Украины с Россией. Документы и материалы в трёх томах*, Т. II, Москва, АН СССР, 1954, 299–306.

[49] Free lifestyle of the Cossacks became "popular" with the villeins only when, after the 3rd Lithuanian Charter of 1558, the thus far alternating dependence of peasants was converted to a soil-bound status.

The Polish influence on pre-1648 Ukrainian nobility had born its stamp on it, as by the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries only few Ukrainian noblemen remained who had been unaffected by the Polonisation process.[50] This caused Ukrainians to "lose" the majority of their political and social elite, therefore Cossacks took over to "lead" and represent the interests of the Ukrainian society. Ukrainian Cossacks were actually groups created by wars, since border protection combats perpetuated on the borders of the Ottoman Empire and neighbouring countries. Constant military preparedness in the region of "border fortresses", partly provided livelihood to these *"voluntary border protectors"*, what is more, this latter role justified a social separation from their perspective. Since the emergence of Cossacks dates back to the Ottoman conquest, their primary significance was demonstrated in the *protection of borders*, therefore their military tactics formed accordingly. Prospects of the Cossacks was caused by a power vacuum that formed at the border region of the Ukrainian territories: it existed between the Polish–Lithuanian state, and the outposts of Russia and the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century.

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[50] Щербак, *Українське козацтво: формування соціального стану*, 167.