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Larry Wolff. *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010. Illustrations, maps. xi + 486 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-6267-0.

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Galician Fantasies

Here I am among the Sarmatians. It is incredible everything that has to be done here.–Joseph II, Lemberg, 1773 (p. 30)

The Idea of Galicia is a magnificent addition to recent works on Galicia, the Habsburg slice of the eighteenth-century Partitions of Poland now divided between Poland and Ukraine.[1] The book engages with and contributes to many of the major trends in Habsburg historiography. Yet the audience for this book should not be limited to students and scholars of central and eastern European history. *The Idea of Galicia* succeeds in integrating Galician and Habsburg history into the broader intellectual and cultural history of Europe.

Larry Wolff, professor of history and director of the Center for European and Mediterranean Studies at New York University, is perhaps most well known for his extraordinary *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (1994), in which he argued that the notion of a divide between western and eastern Europe–and the understanding of that divide as one between civilization and backwardness–was an invention of the Enlightenment. In that book, Wolff drew on a staggering variety of sources, culling quotations, anecdotes, information, and insights from maps, letters, travel accounts, plays, novels, pamphlets, and so on. Wolff succeeded in bringing the period, its actors, and their perspectives to vivid life even as he relentlessly pursued his powerful and persuasive central argument.[2] The central argument of this earlier book is evoked and a similar scholarly style is utilized in *The Idea of Galicia* to great effect.

Galicia has long been seen as marginal to the history of the Habsburg Monarchy. Emperor Joseph II and Klemens von Metternich more than once considered trading the province for more attractive properties. Yet, as Wolff demonstrates here, its very existence and cohesion was a literal invention of the Habsburgs. It acquired its various and changing geographical configurations as well as less concrete but equally morphing cultural and political meanings from the 1772 first Partition of Poland to the demise of the Habsburg state in 1918 to its strange afterlife in political, cultural, and commercial fantasies of the twenty-first century. The book is not a survey of Galician history, although Wolff does provide enough of that history along the way for his readers to follow his "study of a place as an idea" (p. 4).

A short review can only offer glimpses of the scores of fascinating historical actors, stories, celebrations, and national and imperial imaginings that fill the pages of this elegantly written work. Wolff begins by exploring the invention of Galicia as a Josephine project. From the first moments of Galicia's existence, its meaning was contested. As is clear from the above quotation from Joseph II, written during a visit to the newly invented Galicia, the Habsburgs justified control of the province with the mission of empire: the Habsburg state would raise this backward slice of eastern Europe to the light and progress of the West. "Sarmatian" was the self-designation of Polish nobles eager to claim a descent higher than their lowly serfs; it was used by Joseph as shorthand for the supposed barbarous nature of the elite of the new province. Joseph's mission was embraced by many, including poets, playwrights, and bureaucrats, as well as promoters of the Jewish Enlightenment looking to Vienna for allies against Hasidism. Nobles and others who lamented the demise of the old Polish state, however, called on Vienna to allow the traditional elites to continue their stewardship with little change, even if now under Habsburg rule. Wolff then looks at the legacy of the Josephine project during and after the Napoleonic era through the eyes and words of, among others, the Polish writer Aleksander Fredro and Wolfgang Mozart's younger son (Franz Xaver Mozart, also known as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Jr.), who lived and worked as a

composer and music teacher in Galicia in the early nineteenth century. In this period, Galicia gained concrete meaning from scientific studies of its flora and fauna as well as bureaucratic efforts to capture its essence in statistics. Metternich himself traveled to Galicia in the 1820s, finding it both beautiful and barbarous, justifying the continued efforts to reform and tame this backward home of semi-wild Poles, Ruthenians, and Jews, an effort to make "true Galicians" out of the uncivilized inhabitants. Throughout, Wolff finds expressions of Habsburg loyalty that suggest this project did achieve some results.

Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, the literary inventor of masochism, is at the center of the third chapter. According to Wolff, Sacher-Masoch's fascination with violence and furs stemmed from his twelve childhood years in Galicia. This son of a German-speaking bureaucrat often identified himself as Ruthenian and was believed by others to be a Galician Jew. Sacher-Masoch's father served as the Habsburg police chief in the decades before the 1848 revolution, and the family lived in the provincial capital of Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv (in German, Polish, and Ukrainian) during the 1846 "*rabacja*," when noble-nationalists who had hoped to lead a mass uprising in the name of Poland instead inspired peasants to massacre nobles and burn estates in the name of imperial loyalty. Sacher-Masoch's Ruthenian wet nurse introduced him to the songs and folktales to which he would remain attached throughout his life. The whip of the Polish noble wielded against the Ruthenian serf of eastern Galicia remained a touchstone for Sacher-Masoch. Wolff treats the meaning and memory of the 1846 massacres in chapter 4. These events, as he demonstrates throughout the rest of the book, remained very relevant for culture and politics in Galicia until 1918.

Chapters 5 through 9 focus on the period of "Galician Autonomy," from the 1867 Compromise recasting the Habsburg Monarchy as Austria-Hungary until 1918. Wolff explores the rise of loyalism in Galicia, as conservative Polish nobles based in Cracow and Polish bureaucrats in Lemberg reconciled with the monarchy embodied in the figure of Emperor Franz Joseph and began their program of organic work, giving birth to the notion of Galicia as a "national sanctuary for the preservation of Polish national culture" (p. 215). Chapter 6 analyzes efforts at describing and understanding the nature of Galicia through the production of encyclopedias, statistical depictions of Galicia's economic misery, ethnographic explorations, the Galician Jewish writer Karl Emil Franzos's work designating Galicia as "Half-Asia," Ruthenian bibliographies and histories, and the 1880 imperial visit of Franz Joseph. The vision of a Galicia peopled by a mosaic of overlapping folk groups (highlanders; townspeople; Jews; Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, etc.) united behind the Polish conservative elites was challenged by Jewish and Ruthenian voices: "the delicate correspondence of Polish, Galician, and Habsburg interest and identities would be a matter of ongoing negotiation and renegotiation during the last decades of the nineteenth century." (p. 234).

Chapters 7 and 8 consider the contradictions and crises of Galicia at the fin de siècle through the great literary modernist Stanisław Wyspiański's *The Wedding* (1901), the aesthetic cultural movements and institutions centered in Cracow, and the assassination of Governor Andrzej Potocki by a Ukrainian nationalist in 1908. In Galicia's final decade, "Pole," "Ruthenian/Ukrainian," and "Jew" could still be defined/interpreted/understood/imagined within a specifically Galician context; however, many associated those identities with geographic, cultural, and communal interests that could not be encompassed within Habsburg Galicia. Chapter 9 looks at the demise of the province in the context of World War I and the fall of the monarchy itself.

The final chapter traces the cultural echoes of dissolved Galicia, from Joseph Roth's works written and published in German in the Weimar Republic to the Hollywood films of Billy Wilder. In the interwar period, Galicia was merged into the new Polish state, while in World War II it was the site of horrific violence and mass murder. After the war, the lands that had been Galicia were divided between Communist Poland and Soviet Ukraine. Most recently, Galicia has been revived in politics (Orange Revolution, West Ukrainian nationalism, and revival of Greek Catholicism); commerce (pubs, souvenirs, and tourist destinations); culture (literature, museums, and nostalgia); and, to take this marvelous book as one example, scholarship.

It is possible, of course, to criticize aspects of the book. Wolff centers his attention on Cracow, Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv, and Vienna because, he asserts, the history of the idea of Galicia was largely an urban production. However, the intellectual divide between East and West, between civilization and barbarism, was also a divide between town and countryside in Galicia. Nobles and non-noble urbanites (and this latter category is relevant also for those who viewed themselves as leaders of emerging Polish and Ukrainian movements in the last decades before World War I) often viewed the peasants as potential murderers, little removed from the com-

bination of ignorance and brutality ascribed to those who committed the 1846 atrocities. They believed such half-human creatures needed to be disciplined to the ways of the modern world if a better future for the nation/province/country was to be forged. Opposed to this version of the civilizing mission were those who considered the countryside as in fact the reservoir of the true values of the nation/religious community that must be saved, cultivated, and purified, to ensure the future. Those on all sides of these debates could be found in smaller towns and even in villages far removed from the two large cities at the center of Wolff's concerns. Wolff might also have explored more systematically the many uses and definitions of terms like "nation," "province," and "country" that float in and out of his narrative. Finally, although the book includes many useful images, a few more maps documenting the changing borders of Galicia would have helped guide the reader less familiar with this region and its history through the first sections. Such criticisms are minor and in no way detract from the significance of this book.

Wolff's erudition is breathtaking. He uses material from both well-known political actors and artists–Joseph II, Metternich, Adam Mickiewicz, Fredro, Bertha Pappenheim, Ivan Franko, Hugo von Hoffmansthal, Roth, and Bruno Schulz–as well as lesser- and unknown figures. He analyzes with equal authority plays, travelogues, letters, reports by Habsburg bureaucrats, and novels by Nobel Prize winners. He brings the work of historians, anthropologists, and cultural critics to bear, always giving credit where it is due and applying arguments gleaned from others in new and original ways. The resulting unexpected juxtapositions and insights are stunning, thought provoking, and inspiring. The reader will no doubt get lost on occasion in the whir of names, cultural works, places, and arguments. Yet this intellectual wandering is in fact one of the great pleasures of reading *The Idea of Galicia*.

This remarkable book is an impressive achievement.

Notes

[1]. Here are just a few of the works on Galicia published in English in recent years: Markian Prokopovych, *Habsburg Lemberg: Architecture, Public Space, and Politics in the Galician Capital, 1772-1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009); Alison Fleig Frank, *Oil Empire: Visions of Prosperity in Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Daniel Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press,2005); Christopher Hann and Paul Robert Magosci, eds., *Galicia: A Multicultured Land* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848-1918* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); John-Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia, 1867-1900* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); and Nathaniel D. Wood, *Becoming Metropolitan: Urban Selfhood and the Making of Modern Cracow* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010).

[2]. For a review of *Inventing Eastern Europe* on HABSBURG, see, Thomas J. Hegarty, review of *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, by Larry Wolff, HABSBURG, H-Net Reviews (July 1995), http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=119.

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