Curtis G. Murphy, *From Citizens to Subjects: City, State and the Enlightenment in Poland, Ukraine and Belarus*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2018, 320 pp. ISBN 978-082296429

Curtis G. Murphy's monograph invites us to look at the development of Central-East European cities from a broad perspective, both chronologically and geographically. Because the dissolution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was a traumatic event in the historiographies of the Poles, Lithuanians, and some Belarusians as well, 1795 is like an insurmountable threshold, which not only separated two historic epochs ('freedom' and 'occupation'), but also researchers' objectives (the 'Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth' or 'Grand Duchy of Lithuania' and 'foreign rule'). That is why the events that followed the state's dissolution are begun on a blank page, erasing everything that occurred up to that point. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the transformations that took place after the dissolution of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were forced through by foreign states, ending the consistent development of society. In any case, this situation makes research into the development of societies and cities in the Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian spaces difficult, where broader developmental contexts and ideas are often overlooked. The author concentrates on the ideas of the Enlightenment, and tries to define the order of events spanning this period of a hundred years. A major advantage here is that Murphy looks at the problem in the European context, from which local city historiographies appear to have been hidden. Moreover, his research is based on a wealth of material found in Poland's archives, raising no doubts as to the relevance and innovativeness of his study.

I would like to stress that the broad chronology and contexts the author has chosen automatically raise questions that are otherwise avoided by local historians. One of the most relevant ones, at least in the view of this author, is where the reforms of the Four-Year Diet led cities and their societies? Looking at the question from alternative historical perspectives, did the initiators of these reforms, who chose to develop burghers' rights and freedoms, intend to abide by this provision in the future as well (of course, in the event that these reforms were

continued)? Since the relationship between state centralisation policies and the modernisation of cities lies at the heart of this monograph, the question that is raised in the introduction is whether the shifts dictated by the Age of Enlightenment, which led towards centralisation, directed the cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth towards progress, or in a backward direction? Besides this, the author also raises the question of the freedom of local communities in relation to centralisation processes. He points out that because they were lagging behind, they learned from the neighbouring centralised aggressor states, Austria, Prussia and Russia; and yet the influence of other European states is forgotten, namely, France and the states that make up present-day Italy.

The question might sound somewhat predictable to those who have encountered the issue of the development of city and police institutions in the 18th century in Europe, as in all such states, whether it be France, or Austria or Sweden, anywhere where centralised tendencies were stronger, local self-government bodies had to face certain tests from the central government, until they finally had to concede to the unified order. In time, self-government was incorporated into the state administrative apparatus, freedoms dissolved in the light of the implementation of orders sent from above. Could the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth have grown stronger by taking a path other than that of centralisation, the stratification of a hierarchy, and the specialisation of government introduced by the Enlightenment? It is perhaps worth clarifying the fact that shifts in this direction began in France and Sweden in the 17th century, while the ideas of state organisation were perfected during the Age of Enlightenment in the rest of Europe. We can also recall that it was Voltaire who was the first to suggest to the Bar Confederation to implement even greater centralisation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, despite never having been there himself. I would think that these suggestions were not the right recipe for a seriously ill state. But I should also admit that my point of view on this matter is traditional.

Without denying the innovativeness of Murphy's monograph, several points worthy of discussion stand out. The title alone raises some questions over where historical spaces are defined using the contemporary state borders of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. I would agree that during the period of these major transitions, where the historic states and their spaces were undergoing rapid change, it is not so easy today to find the right words. Nonetheless, it could be assumed that the historic definition of the *Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, or even more

precisely, the *Kingdom of Poland*, would have been more appropriate. The development of 22 cities found their way into the author's range: ten in present-day Poland, ten in present-day Ukraine (i.e., 20 in the former Kingdom of Poland), and two in present-day Belarus (i.e., two in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania). The cities of the Kingdom of Poland are concentrated in Galicia, Volhynia and Podole. Unfortunately, the cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Nesvyzh and Slutsk, were chosen only as private cities of the Radziwiłłs. The choice of the latter probably also determined the author's proportions when choosing cities based on categories, as ten of the cities he chose were royal, and 12 were private (pp. 237–238). That is why two cities appear to fall out of context altogether. This demonstrates that the author did not even intend to look deeper into the particularities of the development of cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Yet, regardless of what the author's motives might have been, the territory of present-day Belarus without the territory of present-day Lithuania would have been unimaginable in the 18th and the first half of the 19th centuries.

I would like to draw attention to the specifics of these regions, as the city reforms of the second half of the 18th century were not implemented evenly throughout the whole Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. These differences are even clearer between 19th-century cities regarding the established order in the different states that partitioned the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For example, the introduction of Good Order Commissions was delayed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and as a result, all the related transitions lagged far behind those taking place in cities in the Kingdom of Poland. In Vilnius, contrary to what the author claims (p. 60), a Good Order Commission was not even introduced. The Kingdom of Poland was not equal throughout either as a space, as reforms came late to the cities of Volhynia. That is why it is unlikely that Lublin's examples can legitimately speak for all the cities of both the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Kingdom of Poland in the second half of the 18th century. The fates of cities in the early 19th century stand out even more, where the author tries to summarise transitions in the spaces of the Duchy of Warsaw and Congress Poland, which was established later, as well as in the cities of present-day Poland and Ukraine, which were incorporated into Austria and Russia. I often thought to myself when reading this book: has the author set out to accomplish too much?

The monograph is divided into six chapters. In the first, he reviews the development of cities since the spread of Madgeburg Law until the

First Partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the second, he concentrates on transitions in city policy in 1773–1787. In the third, the attention is on the period between the Four-Year Diet and the establishment of the Duchy of Warsaw. In the fourth, there is a review of the development of private cities in the 18th century. The fifth chapter looks at the development of cities in the centralised Duchy of Warsaw and Congress Poland, founded in 1815. In the sixth chapter, the author analyses the fates of cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth once they became part of the Russian Empire. This structure proves to be rather complicated, as the chronological layout of the content overlaps the thematic layout. As a result, there are some chronological leaps in the text. In order to avoid this, the author should perhaps have used the chronological principle to distinguish between the particularities of the development of royal and private cities.

I would like to note that a lot of attention in the monograph is devoted to the establishment and activities of the Good Order Commissions, but very little to the reforms of the Four-Year Diet that affected all cities. The Good Order Commissions ended their work once the reforms of the Four-Year Diet commenced. Meanwhile, the latter did not end with the conclusion of the Diet's work in 1792, but continued until 1795, with certain variations. More attention to the activities and results of the police commissions of the Polish-Lithuanian state and the Civil-Military Commissions would have been advantageous. Of course, we cannot deny the fact that the activities of the Good Order Commissions receive an innovative generalisation, while the work of the institutions of the Four-Year Diet has already been analysed by numerous historians. The claim that the legal unification of the urban space in cities drew different privileged social groups into never-ending conflicts, and actually halted transformation, is arguable. It is hard to believe that privileged communities did not argue over changes in the centralised states of Austria, Prussia and France. Also, were community rights always acknowledged in non-centralised states during the 19th century? And it is a shame that Church cities were also not, at least briefly, discussed alongside royal and private cities.

The author summarises his results in essay form, which is why the issues raised in the title of the book are given a rather laconic response (p. 235). In any case, Curtis G. Murphy's questions raise discussions and prompt a reconsideration of the complicated development of cities in Central-Eastern Europe. The examples of cities in the Kingdom of Poland are very relevant in the context of the development of Lithuania's

cities. It is likely that this broader perspective (both chronologically and geographically) will not bypass researchers of the development of cities in Lithuania, and will inspire them to look beyond 1795 in their studies.

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