Chapter Nine

What Language Did the Monuments Speak?

While the relationship between language and city is crucial for our understanding of urban space, here the focus will be on just one aspect of it – the "language" of monuments. We know that Kyivites spoke various languages, but what we know much less about is how those languages were reflected in public space as *signs*. Henri Lefebvre once noted that space indeed "speaks" to us through signs but that it conceals more than it reveals. Hence, monumentality always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message, but it also hides a lot: its own political nature. Monumental buildings "mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought."[1] Nothing better illustrates this thesis than monuments and representational spaces in late imperial Kyiv.

Residents of multiethnic cities in Eastern and Central Europe may have shared residential (private) space, such as housing and neighbourhoods, but in public they tended to be divided along distinct social, national, and religious lines.[2] Kyiv, however, seemed to be different. There is evidence that Kyivites with different political views frequented the same places, at least before the upheavals of the early twentieth century. For example, in one of the best-known downtown restaurants during the 1870s and 1880s, run by the wealthy merchant Afanasii Diakov, a former serf from Kyiv province, there gathered famous artists, professionals, and businessmen of all ethnic backgrounds, among them renowned Ukrainian intellectuals (such as the philologist Pavlo Zhytets'kyi).[3] It is also known that Jewish and Christian civic leaders participated in the same charitable institutions – such as the Kyiv Literacy Society – which served as "neutral territory" where residents of all faiths and nationalities "could and did mingle in the pursuit

of knowledge and leisure."[4] But what about the built environment –
buildings and monuments? Did they too express this purported unity
of Kyiv's public life?

If architecture represents the relations of production in a given soci-
ety as it produces its own space,[5] then the architecture in Kyiv in the age
of classical capitalism did not differ much from that in Europe, where
the dominant architectural style was historical eclecticism. Carl Schor-
ske once noted that the capitalist age had failed to develop its own
original style. This failure, according to him, "reflected the strength of
the archaistic current even among the urban bourgeoisie. Why, if rail-
way bridges and factories could be built in a new utilitarian style, were
both domestic and representational buildings conceived exclusively in
architectural idioms antedating the eighteenth century?" Schorske's
answer was that historicism "expressed the incapacity of city dwellers
either to accept the present or to conceive the future except as a resur-
rection of the past. The new city builders, fearing to face the reality of
their own creation, found no aesthetic forms to state it […]. Mammon
sought to redeem himself by donning the mask of a preindustrial past
that was not his own."[6] This was as true about Kyiv as it was about
Napoleon III's Paris, Wilhelmian Berlin, and Victorian London.

The past that Kyiv's architects, developers, officials, and historians
made references to was in itself a problem. In some ways, the city's
historical space was invented.[7] Many architects working in late imperial
Kyiv were outsiders either from the ethnic Russian provinces or from
elsewhere, and for them local Ukrainian traditions in arts and archi-
tecture were at the very least unknown or outright alien. Public build-
ings, especially from the 1830s through the 1850s – among them the
university, the First Gymnasium, and the Institute for Noble Maidens –
were built predominantly in the style of Russian Classicism, sometimes
influenced by Neo-Renaissance (the Government Offices), the favour-
ite aesthetics of Nicholas I. Another prominent public edifice (although
much maligned for its form and price) – the house of the Kyiv City
Duma (built in 1876) – was designed in the style of Petrine Baroque.[8]
After that, during the last decades of the century, Neo-Renaissance (also
known as Viennese Renaissance) dominated both in public architecture
(banks, the stock exchange, the municipal theatre) and in the construc-
tion of multistorey apartment houses. This style became so popular
among local developers that it was even called Kyiv Renaissance.
Architectural styles often followed ideological fashions, so a number
of residential and public buildings in the late nineteenth century were

designed in the "Russian" style, imported from Moscow and Yaroslavl by Russian-born architects.[9] One of them was Vladimir Nikolaev, a very prolific builder employed by the city as its chief architect between 1873 and 1887.[10] The prominent feature of Kyiv's built environment was the pervasive use of locally produced yellowish bricks in open decorative brickwork – the so-called "brick style," which was often mixed with various "historical" styles. Curiously, it was only on the eve of the First World War that Ukrainian national aesthetics was revived within the Art Nouveau movement (known in Russia as *stil' Modern*).[11]

The stylistics and meanings of the monuments were different from those of residential buildings.[12] Henri Lefebvre noted that monuments convey symbols that have an "objective content, emotional effectiveness, archaic origins," through which the space of death can be negated and thereby transfigured into a living space.[13] He also argued that monuments and symbols "introduce a depth to everyday life: presence of the past, individual or collective acts and dramas, poorly specified possibilities, and the more striking, beauty and grandeur."[14] This makes them perfect media for the appropriation of space. According to another French urban thinker, Pierre Nora, monuments are the "most symbolic objects of our memory."[15] Monuments, space, society, and politics are intrinsically linked, which also means that history and memory are constantly changing in tandem with the ruling elites and the power they hold. Therefore, says Nora, by creating monuments the elites promote one dominant memory for a specific event.

More than buildings, monuments have been perceived as both physical and *aesthetic* objects that can be used to construct an explicit national or imperial narrative. "Statuomania" in Paris and the German "Nationaldenkmäler" (a series of monuments to German political figures) of the late nineteenth century established an example for all Europeans who sought to visualize their own national and/or imperial "master narratives." In his classic book about Paris, Patrice Higonnet bluntly calls monuments "texts" and adds that "various monuments form a coherent whole, a monumental grammar."[16] In Eastern Europe in the 1880s, Poles from Austrian-ruled Galicia were among the first to begin purposefully creating national "places of memory"; they did so in order to underscore the Polish character of their cities (most notably Lviv).[17] By contrast, the dominant language of Kyiv's monuments was pretty much an imperial classicist idiom that reflected the prevailing power relations as well as the tastes of governmental elites. In the early twentieth century, however, an imperial idiom that emphasized "Russian"

monarchs from Saint Vladimir to Alexander III was challenged by competing national narratives – ethnic Russian and Ukrainian – as both groups strove to "nationalize" Kyiv's public space and define its "monumental grammar." But despite some incursions of these national "sites of memory" in the city's public space, the signs of empire prevailed until the end of the Old Regime.

By then, the development of modern monuments in Kyiv had taken root in local tradition. That tradition started in 1802 with the "Column of the Magdeburg Law," dedicated to the city's saintly patron, Prince Vladimir the Great, who gave the monument its alternative name, the Saint Vladimir Monument. The column commemorated the restoration by Tsar Alexander I of Kyiv's self-government based on the Magdeburg Law. This Tuscan column, which referred to the urban tradition of Renaissance Italian cities, was a powerful symbol of civic pride. It was erected at the city's expense by the still powerful municipal oligarchs.[18] According to Mykhailo Kal'nyts'kyi, the modern-day expert on Kyiv history, the monument was saturated with various meanings.[19] First, it celebrated the Magdeburg Law. Second, it marked the Baptism of Rus', for it was widely believed that at this very spot twelve sons of Prince Vladimir had been baptized in the late tenth century. Hence, the spring flowing nearby began to be called Khreshchatyts'ke (from *baptism*, or *baptize*). Above the spring the locals had built a well, in the belief that the water from it was holy. For generations, pilgrims visited the "holy site" of the spring as if to observe the baptism of Rus'. Thus the monument also celebrated the figure of Saint Vladimir, to whom the monument was dedicated: "To Saint Vladimir – the enlightener of Rus'." The monument also forged the continuity of secular power: grateful Kyivites were expressing their gratitude to Vladimir's successor, Alexander I, who had confirmed the city's rights. Symbolically, then, the monument visualized the links between the city and the imperial government, in the process erasing from public memory the history of troubled relations between the two.[20]

Another monument also celebrated Saint Vladimir, although it took the authorities almost fifty years to provide the city's saintly patron with his material incarnation. In contrast to the Tuscan column, whose message was quite ambiguous, this second "site of memory" (inaugurated in 1853) showcased Vladimir as a saint and as a prince in all his awe-inspiring monumentality. This monument to Saint Vladimir was funded by the no less monumental Russian state, which had begun to promote the myth of the Saintly Prince with the opening of Kyiv

9.1 Timm, *A Monument to the Magdeburg Law* (also known as the Lower Monument to St Vladimir) (image courtesy of Mystetstvo)

St Vladimir University in 1834. The idea for this monument was first broached in 1832, but nothing came of it immediately. Ten years later, Saint Petersburg's Academy of Arts announced a public competition for the design of a monument to Saint Vladimir.[21] The Tsar himself selected the three best entries out of twenty-two submitted – an indication that the statue was to become the prime symbol of imperial power in the borderlands. The gigantic bronze statue of Vladimir[22] was a near perfect visible embodiment of the Russian Empire, reflecting classical imperialism in politics and imperial classicism in the arts. Oddly, the bronze ruler holds in his left hand the "Monomakh cap," a headdress attributed to his grandson (Vladimir Monomakh), as if handing it over to his successors, the tsars of Muscovy and the Russian emperors. The entire monument can be said to serve as a visual representation of the dominant narrative of Russian history created by Nikolai Karamzin and Sergei Soloviev.[23] In contrast to the "lower" Saint Vladimir monument, this new one was called the "upper" Saint Vladimir monument. Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko responded with sarcasm to the monument's imperial symbolism: he called it a fire-lookout tower (*pozhezhna kalancha*), from which Vladimir watched over Podil as if making sure another fire did not break out there.[24]

The next monument was rather an exception in the monotonous monumental space of late imperial Kyiv. It was a product not of the autocratic state but of a modernizing society that was celebrating Kyiv's recent economic successes. Those successes were especially indebted to the lucrative sugar refining industry. The statue of Count Aleksei Bobrinskii, the builder of the first imperial railway (linking Saint Petersburg with the suburb of Tsarskoe Selo) and a prominent promoter of sugar refineries in Right-Bank Ukraine, was opened in 1872. The bronze count was placed in the middle of Bibikovs'kyi Boulevard near the corner of Bezakivs'ka Street, which led straight to the railway station. Quite appropriately, the count was facing the station, as if reminding the visitors of his career as a railway entrepreneur and as a major investor in Russian Ukraine's first railway line (Kyiv–Balta).

At the opening of the monument on 6 February 1872, the choice of keynote speaker seemed a bit strange – Pavlo Chubyns'kyi, a prominent Ukrainian nationalist and a recent political exile. He was present here, however, not because of his dubious political credentials but because he was an expert in sugar beet production and representative of the business community. In the early 1870s he had begun to study the sugar beet industry and become a secretary of the Kyiv branch

9.2 Sazhin, *A Monument to St Vladimir* (image courtesy of Mystetstvo)

9.3 Monument to Bobrinskii (contemporary photograph)

of the prestigious Imperial Russian Technical Society. In his speech, Chubyns'kyi expressed the commercial spirit of the time: "Today, by this social monument we immortalize the memory of a man who promoted, as a private actor [*deiatel'*], the economic prosperity of our fatherland. This is our first monument to an industrial entrepreneur."[25] His speech undoubtedly resonated well with his audience – the sponsors of the monument and his own employers. Clearly, Kyiv's nascent bourgeois class had decided to erect a monument celebrating one of their own (even though Bobrinskii was an aristocrat whose father was an illegitimate son of Empress Catherine II and her minion Grigorii Orlov). In other words, with the monument to Bobrinskii, Kyiv's bourgeois were celebrating themselves – their own economic successes and prospects. Because of the nondescript Roman attire (a sort of Roman toga) that Bobrinskii was draped in, contemporaries compared Kyiv's count with Odessa's more famous duke (de Richelieu), the latter topping the equally famous stairs that today bear the name Potemkin – the battleship, not another lover of Catherine's. But unlike the modest state servitor Richelieu, Bobrinskii was an audacious capitalist who lobbied in Saint Petersburg for the interests of Kyiv's sugar barons. They in turn financed the monument. Indeed, Bobrinskii himself partly funded his own monument: he left substantial capital in a local bank so that the interest could be used for the maintenance of his bronze double. Ironically, some "entrepreneurs" repeatedly stole bronze reliefs, ornaments, and even single letters from the dedicatory inscription that adorned the monument.[26]

The optimism of the Kyiv bourgeoisie proved as short-lived as the monument's bronze reliefs. The local middle classes never developed into a triumphant liberal bastion as did their peers elsewhere in Europe. No major monument (aside from a few busts) to a prominent figure in business, liberal politics, or culture was erected in Kyiv until the very end of the Old Regime. What did change, however, was the distribution of monuments over time: bronze and stone figures began to appear more frequently on Kyiv's squares. The first and the second monuments in Kyiv were separated by almost fifty years; it took only another twenty before the third monument was erected.

The next monument was to become one of the most controversial "sites of memory" in the history of imperial Kyiv. It glorified Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, founder of the Ukrainian Cossack state in the mid-seventeenth century and the man who unified Ukraine and Russia under the sceptre of the tsars of Muscovy. In the latter capacity, he was

an appropriate historical figure in the imperial pantheon, a generic symbol of the loyal Little Russian. For modern Ukrainians, his image was tarnished by his submission to Moscow – a fact that accounted for their general indifference towards the projected monument. Ironically, though, the statue of this most famous hetman in history would remain for a long time the single most visible sign of Ukrainian presence in late imperial Kyiv.

The man behind this monument was Mykhailo Maksymovych, a professor of Russian literature at Kyiv St Vladimir University, who first suggested it in the 1840s.[27] At the time, nothing came of his idea. In the mid-1850s a Kyiv historian, Mykola Zakrevs'kyi, was perplexed by the absence of a monument to a "hero" equal to Russian commanders like Suvorov and Kutuzov. Ukraine's hetman also deserved a monument, he insisted, but "he is forgotten, perhaps because we are separated from him by more than 200 years."[28] Only after the suppression of the Polish January uprising of 1863 did the proposal for the monument gain momentum. That year, several Kyivites (among them Mikhail Iuzefovich, a conservative public servant from Ukraine) turned to the Russian painter and sculptor Mikhail Mikeshin, a famous liberal, widely known for his magnificent work of imperial political art – the monument of the Millennium of Rus' in Novgorod (in 1862). Mikeshin designed the project, which was approved by Tsar Alexander II in 1869.[29] That original design was never built; even so, it is worth presenting here the sculptor's vision of the monument, which is filled with striking ideological images, including several that Mikeshin's contemporaries justly viewed as utterly offensive:

> [The] Hetman's equestrian statue is depicted as if flying up to the top of the unlined granite cliff. In his right hand, raised high above, there is a mace [*bulava*] pointing towards northeast, that is, to Moscow. With his left hand he powerfully reins in his wild horse. Under the hoofs of his horse there lies the body of a Jesuit covered in a torn Polish gonfalon; nearby there are the pieces of the broken chains. On Khmel'nitskii's way, behind his horse, there is the figure of a Polish landlord falling off the cliff [as he is] thrown down by the horse's hoof. Still below there is a corpse of the Jewish leaseholder, whose hands [are] brokenly ossified on the communion bread, the Easter bread, and the church utensils that he had stolen … This granite cliff, together with all these sculptures, is to stand on the four-sided conic pedestal from Kyiv Labradorite … On three sides of the pedestal there are three bronze reliefs: 1) the battle at Zbarazh [of 1649]; 2) the council at

Pereiaslav [of 1654], and 3) the solemn welcome of the hetman-liberator in Kyiv, near St. Sophia, by the clergy and the people [in 1649].

In the foreground of the monument, below Khmel'nitskii, there is supposed to be a group of five figures: in the center, under the overhang, sits a Little Russian singer [*kobzar'*] singing glory to the people's hero. Others listen to him thoughtfully, from the one side a Great Russian and Belarusian, from the other – a Little Russian and a Red Ruthenian [Western Ukrainian]. Just above them, on the cliff, below the equestrian statue, there is an inscription: "One and indivisible Russia to hetman Bogdan Khmel'nitskii."[30]

Here we see how Russian imperial symbolism hijacked traditional Ukrainian representations of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, together with his political role. This symbolic blend was no longer strictly either "Ukrainian" or "Great Russian"; rather it was simultaneously "Little Russian" and "all-Russian." It was Little Russian in the sense of the provincial community of the hetman's loyal descendants. These descendants were to be reminded of their historical and contemporary enemies – the same treacherous Polish "landlords" and villainous Jewish "leaseholders" – who were now the enemies of Orthodox Russians as well. The "all-Russian" significance of the monument was underscored by its caption: "One and Indivisible Russia to Hetman Bogdan Khmel'nitskii," the words symbolizing the imperial appropriation of the hetman's figure for contemporary political purposes.

In this way the historical imagery was transferred to the post-1863 Russian imperial mix of borderland politics and historical mythology, wherein Poles and Jews were consistently represented as the dangerous others. Mikeshin clearly overdid it by inserting highly provocative images into the projected monument, which quickly generated controversy. The figures of the Pole and the Jew angered Kyiv's governor general, Prince Dondukov-Korsakov.[31] In addition, the state was not prepared to fund the monument, and the public did not rush to step in.[32] Mikeshin, however, rejected "any changes whatsoever in the design of this monument … without the supreme will of the monarch [to do so]," as he wrote in 1873.[33] This unwillingness of the local public to donate prompted a journalist from the conservative paper *Kievlianin* to remark sarcastically that local Ukrainian "patriotic nobles" showed no zeal to contribute funds for the Khmel'nyts'kyi monument (supposedly in contrast to peasants from ethnic Russian provinces, who were more generous).[34] For the lack of funds, the sculptor cut his initial budget by almost one-third, to 95,700 roubles.
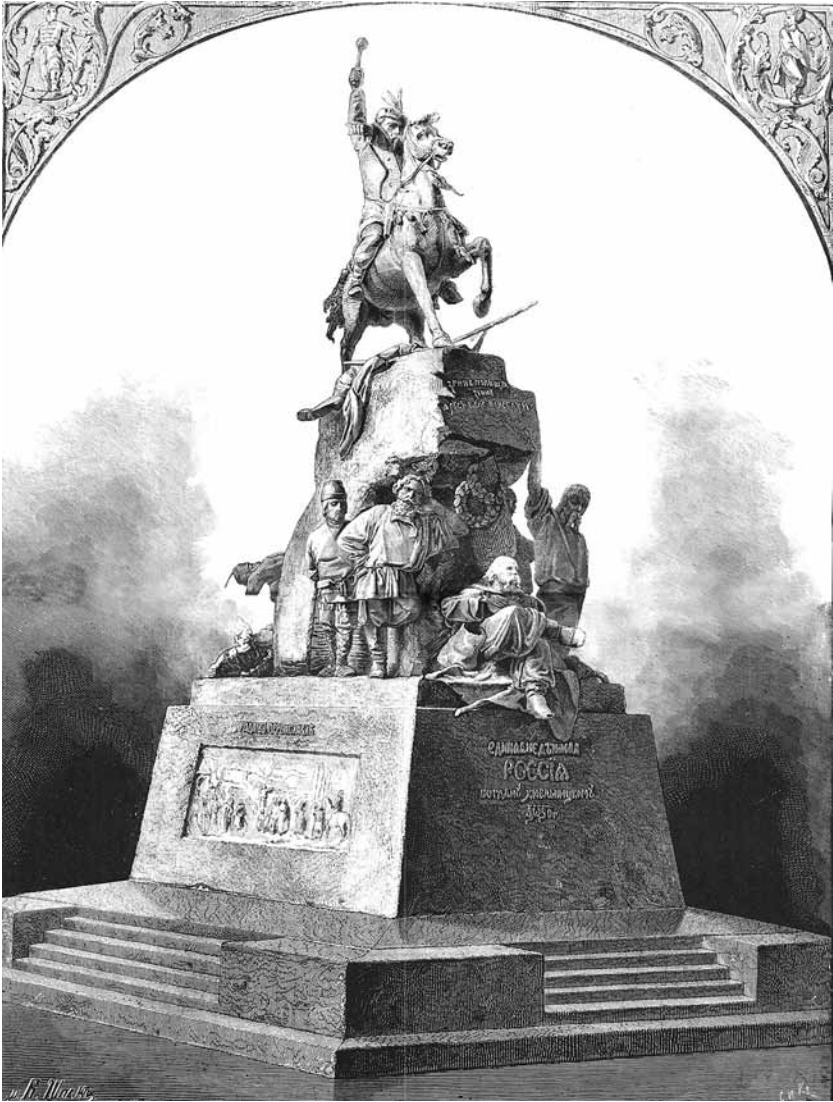
9.4 Shpak and Seriakov, *A project of Khmel'nyts'kyi statue*

9.5 Kul'zhenko, Statue of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, *Vidy Kieva*

In the end, this Russian enthusiast of the Ukrainian hetman came to an agreement with a contractor from Saint Petersburg, who would cast Khmel'nyts'kyi's figure for 23,000 roubles. But now the tsar himself found the figures of the Pole, the Jesuit, and the Jew inappropriate and urged that they be destroyed.[35] Mikeshin had to comply with the tsar's wishes, so after 1878 the monument consisted of just the horse and Khmel'nyts'kyi himself. Initially the monument was to be placed on the margins of the urban core, in the seedy Besarabka ravine, near a notoriously dirty market. For this purpose, an unassuming square was renamed Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi Square (and would be known as such for the next few decades).[36] However, local enthusiasts of the monument (including Iuzefovich) opted for another location, in much more prestigious Old Kyiv, in front of St Sophia. There, however, they met with opposition from the Orthodox dignitaries, who reasoned that the figure of a horse would be inappropriate if placed on such a

holy site – especially if it turned its rear to either St Sophia Cathedral or St Michael's Monastery and obstructed the view of one temple from the other.[37]

In the end, the city duma decided to shift the monument slightly so that it would not obstruct the iconic vista.[38] The question was finally settled, and in 1881 the equestrian statue of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi was placed on a temporary brick base on St Sophia Square. The organizing committee had run out of money (mostly private donations) before the planned granite pedestal could be constructed. At this critical moment the Russian state decided to support the bronze hetman by contributing the needed 12,000 roubles for the pedestal. Only in 1888 was the completed monument unveiled to the public, just in time for the celebration of the nine hundredth anniversary of Christianity in Rus'. By combining these two events, the municipal masters of ceremonies had created a continuous imperial master narrative.

The next monument was erected to commemorate one of the most notorious Russian tsars: Nicholas I, who for better or for worse loved Kyiv more than any other Russian ruler before or after him. But it took Nicholas's three successors – Alexander II, Alexander III, and Nicholas II – to complete the monument to the city's informal chief planner. As early as 1869, local loyalists had suggested erecting a monument to Nicholas in front of his most notable creation, St Vladimir University, on a huge square that had been used as a military parade ground. But with the reinstatement of municipal autonomy, the cash-strapped city duma decided to parcel the lands in the area and to sell the plots to private owners. This reflected the market-oriented land policy that dominated those years. It meant that expensive downtown land could not be allocated to open spaces such as parks and gardens. Indeed, everywhere in Europe economic considerations practically dictated that such land be put to productive *building* use – in most cases for commercial real estate.[39] Kyiv's municipal authorities more than once tried to put these plots up for public sale but were dissatisfied with the prices they were offered. One city councillor (future mayor Gustav Eisman) argued against selling plots in front of the university, pointing out that the potential buyers were "almost exclusively Jews." The city, he insisted, should prevent Jews from acquiring "the best part of the [university] square."[40]

But it was not anti-Semitism that saved the university square from redevelopment; it was the unexpected visit of an exotic guest. In 1876,

while visiting Kyiv, Emperor Pedro II of Brazil addressed the city's newly elected mayor in the presence of the governor general:

> What a beautiful city you have and what a good city mayor it has! While regulating the city's redevelopment, you have retained a vacant space in front of the university in order to set up here a large park. You are completely right. Although you already enjoy in Kyiv a great many gardens, so magnificent and beautiful a building such as your university should have in front of it an appropriate park. Together they will form a gorgeous panorama, one which only rarely can be seen in a large city.

Reportedly, after these encouraging words from the Brazilian emperor, the Kyiv governor general stared pointedly at the rattled mayor, who hastened to remark that Don Pedro had more or less guessed the intent of the city duma.[41] The monument to Tsar Nicholas was to become the most important marker of the Russian imperial presence in the city, especially given that it was to be placed in front of the imperial university; but the government was not ready to pay for this piece of political art. As before, those who launched the idea were relying heavily on private donations. The mayor himself (the millionaire Pavel Demidov, aka Prince San Donato) donated the largest single amount – 15,000 roubles. Only years later, in 1885, did the city duma announce a competition to design the royal monument. Still later, in 1889, the city allocated an additional 30,000 roubles from its own budget to carry out the winning design. In June 1894 the monument was at last placed on its high pedestal, consisting of nine layers of granite. But the public opening took place only in the summer of 1896, in the presence of the new Tsar Nicholas II (in the meantime, Alexander III had passed away).[42] The large figure of Nicholas I embodied the empire. It was "a magnificent figure of the Emperor standing up straight, dressed in a military frock-coat, with an uncovered head," a popular guidebook reported. "The monarch rests his hand on the … plan of Kyiv that he had once approved for the first time and that has remained in force until today."[43]

Besides a city plan that reinforced the image of Nicholas the City Planner (a classicist reincarnation of Peter I the Builder), the pedestal included the bronze reliefs of buildings constructed in Kyiv under his tenure. Among them were St Vladimir University, the First Gymnasium, the Chain Bridge, and the elite military school (*kadetskii korpus*). The monument also explicitly evoked an imagined community of loyal Kyivites, reflected in the inscription on the pedestal: "Grateful Kiev to

9.6 Kul'zhenko, Statue of Nicholas I, *Vidy Kieva*

Emperor Nicholas I." As a later irony, in 1939 a monument to Taras Shevchenko, the Ukrainian national poet persecuted by Tsar Nicholas, replaced the statue of his persecutor in front of the university. This was a powerful victory for Ukrainians in a prolonged war of monuments that would continue well into the twenty-first century.

Until 1905 no other major monument rose in Kyiv. Even after the 1905 revolution, statues of Russian tsars and statesmen continued to dominate Kyiv's squares. For example, on 30 August 1911 a monument to Alexander II[44] was unveiled on Kyiv's prestigious Tsar's Square (today's European Square), funded by the city (45,000 roubles) and by private donors (among whom were numerous peasants, although the most generous was the wealthy entrepreneur Nikola Tereshchenko, who contributed 25,000 roubles). The same year, another monument arose in Kyiv, this one commemorating the city's early Christian history, albeit with a Russian imperial and nationalist twist. It was part of a monument agenda known as the "Historical Path," which had been proposed by Kyiv's Russian monarchist circles as a way to commemorate imperial history with some local peculiarities.[45] Eventually, the "Historical Path" was to include a few dozen monuments, among them those to old Kyivan princes (Oleh, Sviatoslav, Saint Vladimir, and Iaroslav the Wise), the Ruthenian early modern Prince Kostiantyn Ostroz'kyi, Kyiv Metropolitan Petro Mohyla, theologian Teofan Prokopovych, Muscovite Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, Russian Emperor Peter the Great, and so on. Most of these monuments were to be erected in the heart of Old Kyiv, between St Sophia Cathedral and St Michael's Monastery.

It is in connection with this pompous agenda that the Kyiv municipal duma made its hugely controversial decision concerning the fate of the Taras Shevchenko monument. According to the duma's previous decision in 1909, the monument was to be erected near St Michael's Monastery, in front of a state-run technical school. In response to this decision, a curator of Kyiv's educational district sent a confidential letter to the Kyiv governor general in which he pointed out that "in front of a government-run school," instead of a monument to the dissident poet, "it would be more appropriate to erect a monument to some important figure in Russian history."[46] As an alternative, Princess Olga was suggested, and the Kyiv duma agreed. As the city head wryly put it, "a gentleman should give up his place to a lady."[47] So on 4 September 1911 a monument to the medieval Rus' princess, flanked by Saint Andrew on one side and by Saints Cyril and Methodius on the other, was unveiled on the spot previously assigned to Ukraine's national

poet. The indifference of the Kyiv public towards this new work of imperial political art was evident in the meagre public donations, most of which (10,000 roubles) came from the tsar's own office. Hence the monument was made not of the usual bronze but of much cheaper concrete. Its inscription – "A Gift of His Majesty Emperor to the City of Kyiv" – only reinforced the bureaucratic idea behind the monument.

No monument better reflected Russian nationalists' efforts to hijack Kyiv's public space than the statue of the controversial Russian prime minister Petr Stolypin. His only local connection was that he had been assassinated in the Kyiv opera house by an anarchist turned police informant on 1 September 1911. This time, public donations from Kyiv alone reportedly sufficed to erect the monument.[48] The competition for this project was a true celebration of Russian nationalism. One of the kitschy designs featured a beautiful woman riding a horse – the woman (or perhaps the horse) symbolizing autocratic Russia, with Stolypin himself steering the animal. A slithering snake, a symbol of revolution, was biting the prime minister right in his heart. But on 6 September 1913, in the presence of Stolypin's widow and members of the imperial cabinet, another project was selected. This monument turned out to be no less pompous. On the pedestal, made of pale granite, stood a bronze statue of Stolypin, holding in his right hand one of his speeches. The pedestal's inscriptions flamboyantly celebrated extreme Russian nationalism. On the front of the pedestal: "To Petr Arkadievich Stolypin from the Russian People." On the right side of the statue, on the pedestal, a few words from a telegram Stolypin had sent in March 1911 to Kyiv's society of Russian nationalists: "I strongly believe that the light of the Russian national idea, which began to glow in the west of Russia, will not go out and soon will light up the whole of Russia." Another quote: "You need great upheavals, we need great Russia" – a slightly changed wording from a famous speech that Stolypin delivered in 1907 in which he attacked radicals and liberals. This hideous display of imperial kitsch was reinforced by two additional figures flanking the main one: a mourning woman on one side was dressed in Russian folk costume and symbolized Sorrow; another figure, supposedly depicting an old-Rus' warrior sporting a helmet and chain mail, embodied Strength.[49] The placement of Stolypin's monument in front of the Kyiv duma further underscored the triumph of Russian nationalism in late imperial Kyiv.

Yet there were a few other "sites of memory" in Kyiv at that time. Besides large monuments reserved for Russian statesmen, there were

Kíевъ.   Памятникъ Столыпину.
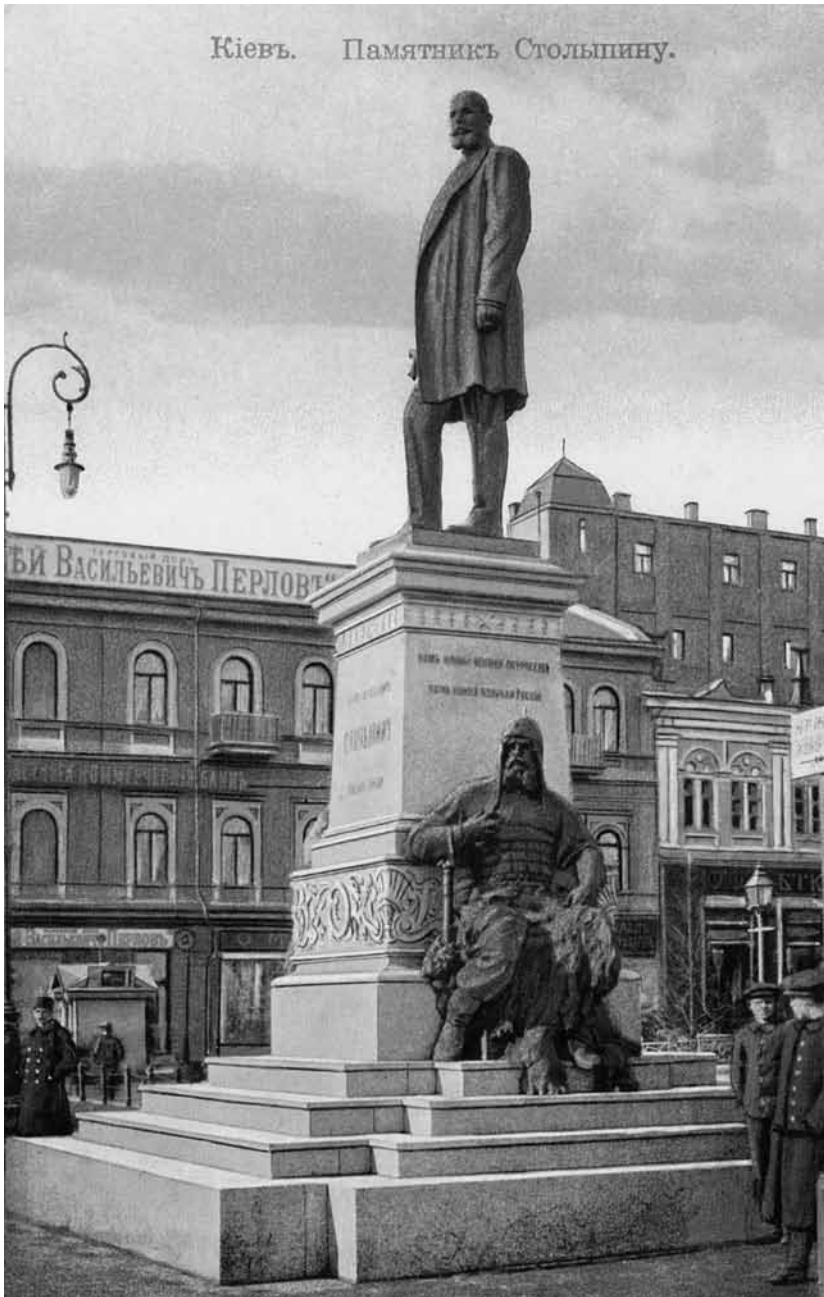
9.7 Statue of Stolypin (postcard)

several modest busts dedicated to prominent cultural figures. Size here mattered insomuch as it showed who really dominated the city's public space. Culture was clearly subordinate to politics in Kyiv's urban spectacle. The first cultural figure to be honoured with a bust was Aleksandr Pushkin, a symbol of modern Russian culture. This happened in 1899 for the centennial of the birth of this most famous of Russia's famous poets. The modest but elegant monument was funded by the students of the Fifth (Pechers'k) Gymnasium and placed in front of its building. The bust's location was far from prestigious as the gymnasium itself was on the outskirts of the city, at the intersection of two exit roads, near the wasteland of the esplanade.[50] The Russian composer Mikhail Glinka was somewhat luckier: not one but two busts of him were eventually placed in front of the city's two leading music institutions. The first was placed in 1910 by the Kyiv chapter of the Imperial Russian Music Society, in front of Kyiv Music College. The second was initially planned as a full-fledged monument, to be placed on the façade of the new home of the Kyiv Municipal Theatre. Sent from Saint Petersburg as a gift to Kyiv at the very end of the nineteenth century, the statue was reportedly damaged during transportation – or, according to another version, it was simply poorly constructed (with a disproportionately short lower body and oversized feet and hands). As a solution, Glinka's torso and limbs were cut off and his bust, along with that of his fellow composer Alexander Serov, was placed on the second tier of the Municipal Theatre.[51]

More impressively, despite the growing visual presence of Russian nationalists in Kyiv, Taras Shevchenko did eventually enjoy a monumental incarnation. This became possible with the building of Troïts'kyi People's House, a project initiated by the Kyiv Literacy Society in the late nineteenth century. A public organization concerned with the expansion of popular education, the Kyiv Literacy Society since 1882 had arranged in the city and the surrounding towns public libraries, Sunday schools, lectures for the masses, and so on. In 1899 the city duma granted a plot on municipal land for the society's own house, which would include a thousand-seat auditorium, a free public library, a reading room for 150 people, a Sunday school, and a cafeteria, among other things.[52] Remarkably, the people's house became a unique example of cooperation between Christians and Jews, especially between the society's Ukrainophile leadership and Kyiv's Jewish oligarchs.[53] When the People's House was finally opened in 1902, its façade was adorned with the busts of two prominent literati – Ukraine's national bard Taras

Shevchenko, and a renowned Russian writer of Ukrainian descent, Nikolai Gogol. A second bust of Gogol was also high above street level, atop the cornice of a privately owned apartment house on the street that after 1902 would bear his name (on the fiftieth anniversary of his death).[54]

By the end of the Old Regime, Kyiv's public space was dominated largely by visual signs of empire and of an emerging Russian nationalism. In this respect, Kyiv did not look much different from a great many other Russian cities. Visitors to Kyiv in the early twentieth century could barely see anything "Ukrainian" in the cityscape. While Poles had their Roman Catholic cathedral (and another impressive church after 1909), and Jews had a few synagogues, Ukrainians could only point to a small bust of Shevchenko (after 1902), if they could notice it beneath the roof of the People's House. Of course, there was Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi's monument, but that had been initiated by the "Little Russian" establishment, designed by a Russian sculptor, and funded largely by the Russian imperial public, and it was perceived as the embodiment of Russo-Ukrainian unity. Later, however, Ukrainians managed to reappropriate the monument and could take great pride in the equestrian hetman. In the early twentieth century, the Ukrainian writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko depicted a humorous yet politically charged scene set around the monument. It featured a "zealous" Ukrainian engaged in a heated argument with a Russian cabbie about the merits of the monument and the signs of Ukrainianness in the city:

We took a cab and were approaching the monument of the hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi. Daniel poked the cabbie in the back, asking him what kind of monument it was.

"That one?"

"Yes."

"That's some Ukrainian general."

"Why do you say he's Ukrainian?"

"Because if he were Russian like us, he would be sitting up straight on the horse. This one is leaning to one side. A miserable general!"

Panasenko suddenly jumped up, grabbed the cabbie's belt and shook him, shouting:

"What? Miserable? Ah, you blasted Russian! Don't you know that all your Russian generals aren't worth the soles of his boots? Ha? This is the hetman of Ukraine! Do you hear?"[55]

Conclusion

In the short story quoted above, "A Zealous Friend" (1907), by the Ukrainian left-leaning writer Volodymyr Vynnychenko, one of the characters was a representative of the 1905 generation of Ukrainians for whom the monument to hetman Khmel'nyts'kyi was the single most visible sign of the Ukrainian presence in the otherwise Russified city. In that city even cabbies spoke Russian and indeed *were* ethnic Russians. The events of 1905 changed much of the political and cultural scene in the city, but even they could not markedly refashion the cityscape, dominated as it was by buildings and monuments that largely "spoke" the Russian imperial or national idiom. In fact, Warsaw had more prominent signs of Ukrainian (Little Russian) presence than did Kyiv, among them a monument to the "Little Russian cuirassiers" fallen "heroically" in a battle against Polish insurgents on 13 February 1831; another was a monument to Prince Ivan Paskevich, a Ukrainian-born tsarist viceroy of Congress Poland, ironically a symbol of Russian oppression.[56]

A major paradox of late imperial Kyiv was that despite the city's increasingly diverse demographics, its monumental spaces largely reflected the imperial master narrative and Russian nationalism. This was one of the most effective ways to symbolically claim the city for the empire and for the nation (in this case, the "all-Russian nation"). This had direct repercussions for the city's Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians. There was, however, nothing surprising about this, since until the very end of the Old Regime it was the Russian imperial authorities and Russian (increasingly nationalist) intellectuals who controlled much of the public space in the multiethnic city.[57] Thus space in late imperial Kyiv concealed much more than it pretended to reveal.

107 The centrality of streets was also reflected in certain street improvement measures. For example, in 1902, the city duma decided to pave with fashionable asphalt several *central* streets: Khreshchatyk, Velyka Vasyl'kivs'ka (its central part), Volodymyrs'ka, Fundukleïvs'ka, and Oleksandrivs'ka (from Podil to European Square). These streets delineated Kyiv's new centre. See *Kievlianin* 166 (1902), 2.

108 *Kievlianin* 183 (1892), 2.

109 *Kievlianin* 60 (1895), 3.

110 A pioneering work on sanitary conditions in Kyiv was compiled by the famous medical doctor and hygienist Ivan Pantiukhov, *Statisticheskie i sanitarnye ocherki Kieva.*

111 *Kievlianin* 77 (1869), 304.

112 *Kievlianin* 103 (1886), 2.

113 Pantiukhov, *Statisticheskie i sanitarnye ocherki Kieva*, 42.

114 Ibid., 43.

115 *Kievlianin* 103 (1888), 2.

116 *Kievlianin* 132 (1872), 2.

117 *Kievlianin* 93 (1869), 368.

118 On the geography of prostitution see Kovalyns'kyi, *Kyïvs'ki miniatiury*, vol 4, 80–2, 95–8, 128–31, 154–5. In the early twentieth century the most expensive brothels were located downtown, where monthly rents reached 50 to 55 roubles (Mykhailivs'ka and Sofiïv'ska Streets); the rent for brothels farther from downtown – for example, on Mariïns'ko-Blahovishchens'ka street in Lybid' – was about 25 roubles. See ibid., 155.

119 Sylvester, "City of Thieves: Moldavanka," 150.

120 See Pataleev, *Staryi Kyiv*, 153.

121 Pantiukhov, *Statisticheskie i sanitarnye ocherki Kieva*, 58–9.

122 Sennett, *The Fall of the Public Man*, 135.

9 What Language Did the Monuments Speak?

1 See Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 142–4.

2 Gary Cohen has famously shown this, using the example of pre–First World War Prague. See Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival.*

3 Pataleev, *Staryi Kyïv*, 93.

4 Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 195.

5 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 33.

6 Schorske, "The Idea of the City in European Thought," 104–5.

7 Also in the 1860s, government officials and local experts took part in an ambitious plan to name and rename city streets; many of these were given

"historical" names. Kyiv's space was thus historicized in the second half of the century. See Mashkevich, *Ulitsy Kieva*, 24–32. Also, in 1899 the Kyiv governor-general proposed renaming streets by giving them "historical names." He even suggested renaming Il'ïns'ka street as Sahaidachnyi (after Hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachnyi); a unnamed passage alongside the Government Offices as Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi Square (after the famous Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi); and Naberezhno-Nykil's'ka as Petro Mohyla street (after Metropolitan Petro Mohyla). This time, however, the duma voted down the proposal. See *Kievlianin* 314 (1898), 3.

8 Kalnyt'skyi and Kondel-Perminova, "Eksperymental'nyi maidanchyk," in Kalnyt'skyi and Kondel-Perminova, *Zabudova Kyieva*, 325.

9 Needless to say, the "Russian style" affected ecclesiastical architecture across the western borderlands. See Wojciech Boberski, „Architektura ziem I zaboru rosyjskiego," in Konstantynow and Paszkiewicz, *Kultura i polityka*, 50–1.

10 Erofalov-Pilipchak, *Arkhitektura imperskogo Kieva*, 101–14.

11 On architectural style in late imperial Kyiv see T. Skibits'ka, "Stylistyka zabudovy," in Kal'nyts'kyi and Kondel'-Perminova, *Zabudova Kyieva*, 389–94; compare Malakov, *Prybutkovi budynky Kyieva*, 95–151.

12 Henri Lefebvre aptly called buildings "the prose of the world" that "effects a brutal condensation of social relationships," in contrast to the "poetry of monuments." Buildings stand for everyday life, products, and lived experience; monuments point to festivals, works, and perceived experience. See Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 223, 227.

13 Ibid., 221. It must be said that Lefebvre was referring to monumental or representational spaces, such as temples or governmental complexes, rather than to statues to great men. But much of what he wrote about the former can also be applied to the latter.

14 These quotes from Lefebvre's other works come from Stanek, *Henri Lefebvre on Space*, 118.

15 Nora, "Between Memory and History."

16 Higonnet, *Paris, Capital of the World*, 157. He also compared monumental spaces in Paris with those of other cities, pointing out that while in Munich, Barcelona, Hamburg, and Venice monuments were largely municipal and regional, in Paris they have proposed a broader message – simultaneously civic and universal. Ibid., 158.

17 On the national competition for Lviv's public space see the excellent monograph by Markian Prokopovych, *Habsburg Lemberg*.

18 While it is certain that the monument was funded by the "Kyiv citizens," it is still unknown who was its architect. It was long believed that it

had been Andrii Melens'kyi, but recently it has been suggested that the monument's author was Aleksei Eldezin, a Russian military engineer employed as Kyiv province's chief architect between 1798 and 1804. See Kadoms'ka, "Pam'iatnyk Magdeburz'komu pravu," 42–3.

19 See the interview with Mykhailo Kal'nyts'kyi, "Orthodoxy," http://2010. orthodoxy.org.ua/node/78219. Compare Kadoms'ka, "Pam'iatnyk Magdeburz'komu pravu," 43.

20 Ironically, Tsar Alexander I was angry at the Kyiv military governor who had allowed the erection of the monument without first asking permission from the tsar himself. Alexander then fired the governor and issued a decree banning the building of any monument without a prior consent from the tsar. See ibid., 43–4.

21 The most comprehensive study of the monument – its origins and completion – is a short monograph by Tolochko and Hrybovs'ka, *Pam'iatnyk Sviatomu Kniaziu Volodymyru v Kyievi*.

22 Only its pedestal was 16 metres high.

23 Hyrych, *Kyïv v ukraïns'kii istoriï*, 92.

24 Ibid.

25 *Kievlianin* 12 February (1872), 2.

26 Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty iak skladova chastyna mis'koho seredovyshcha," in Kalnyt'skyi and Kondel-Perminova, *Zabudova Kyiva*, 226.

27 Articles on the history of the monument include: Levitskii, "Pamiatnik Bogdanu Khmel'nitskomu"; idem, "Istoriia budovy pam'iatnyka"; Vatulia and Poznanskii, "K istorii sooruzheniia"; Demchenko, "Dokumenty pro istoriiu sporudzhennia."

28 Zakrevskii, *Opisanie Kieva*, vol. 1, 58.

29 The original materials can be found in "Istoricheskii ocherk sooruzheniia pamiatnika Bogdanu Khmel'nitskomu, " in Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Kyiv (TsDIAUK), f. 442, op. 48, spr. 232, part II, 150–61.

30 Ibid., 152–3.

31 Ibid., 155–155 reverse; compare Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 227.

32 The initial estimate calculated by Mikeshin himself amounted to 145,200 roubles, with public donations not exceeding 25,000. According to some reports, local Ukrainians did whatever they could – mostly engaging in behind-the-scenes sabotage – to block the erection of the monument. See Hyrych, *Kyïv v ukraïns'kii istoriï*, 94.

33 DAK, f. 301, op. 1, spr. 8, 51.

34 "All in all, the indifference towards the monument on part of Little Russia appeared complete." So complained a zealous Russian patriot from the newspaper. See *Kievlianin* 85 (1872), 2.

35 DAK, f. 301, op, 1, spr. 8, 197–8.

36 As late as 1909 this name – Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi Square – could still be found on building plans in the Besarabka area approved by city authorities. SeeKal'nyts'kyi, "Dzherela i formy investuvanniau zabudovu Kyieva," in Kalnyt'skyi and Kondel-Perminova, *Zabudova Kyieva*, 184.

37 DAK, f. 163, op. 38, spr. 102, 14 (on the choice of a site on St Sophia's Square for the monument to Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi).

38 Ibid., 17.

39 This was in sharp contrast to the first half of the nineteenth century, when urban land had not yet become a prime commodity, and therefore in a number of cities (among them Bremen and Frankfurt), spacious parks and green belts were laid out on land previously occupied by earthworks or glacis. See Breitling, "The Role of the Competition in the Genesis of Urban Planning: Germany and Austria in the Nineteenth Century," in Sutcliffe, *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning*, 41.

40 *Kievlianin* 42 (1871), 2; 60 (1872), 2. For justice's sake, it should be mentioned that other prominent councillors (among them Eisman's German Protestant peers Nikolai Bunge and Nikolai Rennenkampf) rejected anti-Jewish arguments outright, arguing that no law prevented Jews from acquiring plots downtown.

41 This apocryphal story appeared in the memoirs of Kyiv Ukrainian intellectual Maksym Slavyns'kyi; see his *Zakhovaiu v sertsi Ukraïnu*, 218–19. On the raising of the monument to Nicholas I see Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 230–2.

42 "Otkrytie pamiatnika Imperatoru Nikolaiu I," *Kievlianin*, 22 August (1896), 2.

43 Bublik, *Putevoditel' po Kievu*, 139.

44 Alexander II, popularly known as the Tsar-Liberator, boasted the greatest number of monuments dedicated to him all over Russia. Between 1911 and 1916 several thousand monuments to him appeared across the empire. See Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 235.

45 On this imperial historical showcase see I. Shchitkivs'kyi, "'Istoricheskii put' u Kyievi." Another comprehensive account is in Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 232–5.

46 As quoted in Shchitkivs'kyi, "'Istoricheskii put' u Kyievi," 386.

47 As quoted in Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 234.

48 Ibid., 236.

49 The description of the monument is in ibid., 237.

50 Ibid., 243.

51 On the assessment of the statue's poor quality see DAK, f. 93, op. 4, spr. 2, 4. On the story in general see Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 245.

52 *Narodnyi dom Kievskogo Obshchestva Gramotnosti v g. Kieve*, 20. See also
     Kal'nyts'kyi, "Dzherela i formy investuvannia," 200–2.

53 For example, the Jewish entrepreneur Lazar' Brodsky donated 12,000
     roubles for the society's library, while the contractor L.B. Ginzburg
     completed some interior works on a charitable basis. The society was led
     by the prominent Ukrainian intellectual Volodymyr Naumenko. Regarding
     the broader context of Ukrainian–Jewish cooperation in the Kyiv Literacy
     Society see Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, 102, 194–5, 198, 204, 304.

54 Kal'nyts'kyi, "Monumenty," 244.

55 Vynnychenko, "A Zealous Friend," 86–94.

56 Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów*, 169. On how the image of Paskevich
     was celebrated by some Ukrainian authors see my "The Clash of Mental
     Geographies," 90. Another major city in Russia's western borderlands,
     Vilnius, had its share of Russian imperial monuments. These included a
     statue of the notorious "hangman" of Polish patriots Governor General
     Mikhail Muraviev (1898); a small bust of Russian poet Aleksandr Pushkin
     (1899); and a bombastic memorial to Catherine the Great (1904). See
     Weeks, *Vilnius Between Nations*, 69–72.

57 Faith Hillis has brilliantly shown how Russian right-wing populists and
     nationalists and the successive coalitions of anti-liberal forces became
     increasingly dominant in Kyiv in the early twentieth century. See her
     Children of Rus', esp. chs. 4, 6, 7, and 8.

Conclusions: Towards a Theory of Imperial Urbanism in the Borderlands

1 Vilnius, the capital of the northwestern borderlands, was also strategically
    important because of its position on the rail line from Saint Petersburg
    to Warsaw. Vilnius, however, never experienced large-scale "imperial"
    redevelopment, save for a few arteries constructed in the late nineteenth
    and early twentieth centuries. These new streets bore the names of
    Russian cities and housed Russian officials and professionals as well as
    acculturated Jews. See Weeks, *Vilnius Between Nations*, 59, 61–3.

2 Paszkiewicz, *Pod berłem Romanowów*, 14–39.

3 Driver and Gilbert, *Imperial Cities*, 4.

4 Brower, *The Russian City*. Two other types of Russian city, according to
    Brower – "intermediate cities" and "stagnant cities" – remained outside
    his analysis.

5 By the end of the century merchants were a minority among city duma
    members in Kyiv but accounted for most city duma members (53.7%) in
    Russia's forty major cities. Merchants were a small minority among city

IMPERIAL URBANISM IN THE BORDERLANDS
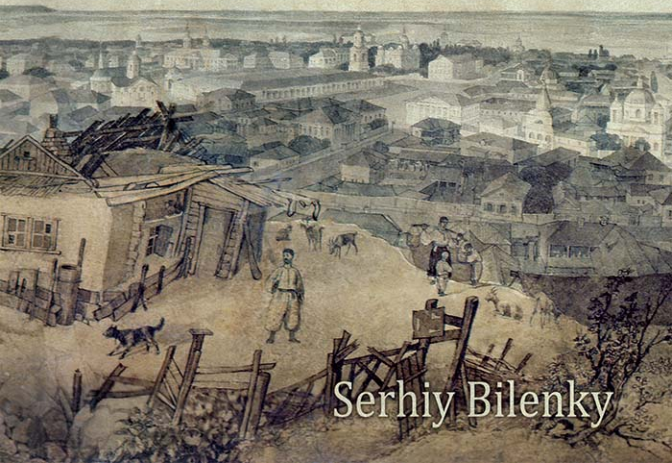
KYIV, 1800–1905

Serhiy Bilenky

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