



The Early History of Kiev

THE ORGANIZING center of Kievan Rus, the first great Slavic state, Kiev arose in the ninth century as a commercial hub on the trade routes connecting Europe, the Eastern Christian empire known as Byzantium with its capital at Constantinople, the glorious Abbasid Moslem empire ruled from Baghdad, and the Khazar state of the lower Volga and northern Caucasus. At its zenith in the eleventh century, Kiev was the ruling center of the largest political entity in medieval Europe and one of the world's most splendid cities. Its population for the year 1200 has been estimated at fifty thousand or more. By comparison, Paris had about fifty thousand inhabitants at that time, while London had an estimated population of thirty thousand.¹

Situated at the meeting point of the pine forests common to the north and the oak and hardwood forests common to the south, Kiev grew on the steeply sloped west bank of the Dnipro River (Dnepr in Russian), along the hills, ravines, and floodplains shaped by that river and the smaller Lybid (Lybed) and Pochaina rivers. Called "the mother of the towns of ancient Rus," Kiev's origins are obscure and enshrouded in myth. According to the chronicler Nestor, three brothers from an ancient Slavic tribe settled on separate hills and built a city in honor of the eldest brother, Kyi.² The name Kiev followed. Archaeological excavations headed by Petro Tolochko indicate the probability of commercial activity in Kiev's Podil (Podol) District in the seventh or eighth century. However, dendrochronological analysis of the remnants of Podil's log dwellings provides evidence of settlement only as far back as 887, and, according to Omeljan Pritsak, archaeologists have proven "beyond any doubt that Kiev as a town did not exist before the last quarter of the ninth to the first half of the tenth century."³ Iron metallurgy, blacksmithing, jewelry making, and stone and bone carving existed in Podil in the ninth and tenth centuries, and fragments of imported goods, including tenth-century Byzantine coins, indicate the probability of international commercial contact.⁴

KIEVAN RUS

By the time Kiev's burghers signed an advantageous trade pact with Constantinople in 911, the city had become the capital of the great state called Kievan Rus, the origins of which are also controversial. Relying on a passage from an ancient chronicle, several eighteenth-century German scholars concluded that this state was organized by Varangians, a Germanic-Scandinavian people known in the West as the Vikings or Normans. Slavic historians have rejected this so-called Norman theory because it implies that their ancestors needed outside help to organize their state, but they have not produced a definitive alternative explanation. In his encyclopedic *Ukraine: A History*, Orest Subtelny argues that the warrior-merchant Varangians "rapidly assimilated the East Slavic language and culture and were probably too few in number to bring about important changes in native ways." He notes, however, that "either by politically organizing the Slavs over whom they gained control or by posing a threat and forcing the Slavs to organize themselves more effectively, the Varangians acted as catalysts for political development." Thus, Kiev's rise was not "the exclusive achievement of one ethnic group or another," but resulted from "a complex Slavic/Scandinavian relationship."⁵

In examining the history of early Kiev, one should note the accomplishments of Sviatoslav, who ruled Kievan Rus from 962 until 972 and seized control of the Volga River, bringing all the East Slavic tribes under his authority. Writes Subtelny: "His Slavic name, Varangian values, and nomadic life-style reflected a Eurasian synthesis. His reign marked the culmination of the early, heroic period of Kievan Rus'."⁶ The Kievan state ultimately took in territory that would now include St. Petersburg and Lake Ladoga, Moscow, Vladimir, and Riazan.

Vladimir the Great (Volodymyr in Ukrainian), who ruled Kievan Rus from 980 until 1015, was more intent on addressing the needs of his subjects and establishing a cohesive state. Having married into the royal family of the Christian Byzantine Empire, Vladimir converted to Christianity and converted his subjects as well, baptizing en masse a large number of Kiev's inhabitants in a Dnipro tributary in 988. Kievan Rus thus became Christian Europe's eastern flank, and not the northern flank of the Islamic caliphate. In the words of Subtelny, "The importance of Christianity coming from Byzantium and not from Rome cannot be overestimated. Later, when the religious split between these two centers occurred, Kiev would side with Constantinople and reject Roman Catholicism, thereby laying the groundwork for the bitter conflicts that Ukrainians would have with their closest Catholic neighbors, the Poles."⁷

The reign of Iaroslav the Wise, who ruled from 1036 until 1054, represents a high point for Kievan Rus, for during these years peace prevailed and hundreds of churches were built, among them St. Sophia Cathedral, modeled after Constantinople's Hagia Sophia. From his death, however, Kievan Rus began a process of decline, aided by the demise of its trading partners, the Abassid Caliphate, which fell prey to the Mongols, and Byzantium, sacked by the crusaders in 1204. During the twelfth century, at least a dozen hereditary principalities emerged, among them Novgorod and Vladimir-Suzdal (which included the settlement of Moscow). As these principalities, related by language, religion, and dynastic ties, became independent of one another, the territorial base of Kievan Rus shrank and its power declined accordingly. Kiev itself was sacked in 1169 and 1203.⁸

In 1240 the city of Kiev was destroyed by the Mongols, whose leader, Batu Khan, is reported to have boasted: "I will tie Kiev to the tail of my horse."⁹ In the ensuing centuries, Kiev and the surrounding territory continued to be the target of Tatar raids. From 1450 to 1586, for example, eighty-six raids were recorded, and from 1600 to 1647, there were seventy more.¹⁰ Crimean Tatars sacked Kiev in 1416 and again in 1482. Kiev was not ravaged again until the mid-seventeenth century, but even during this long period of comparative peace, it did not recover the size or importance it had enjoyed as the capital of Kievan Rus. According to one set of figures, Kiev had about three thousand residents early in the fifteenth century. Lviv (Lvov), Ukraine's largest town at this time, had about ten thousand.¹¹ In 1474 one Venetian visitor described Kiev as "plain and poor."¹² Statistician Ivan Pantiukhov estimates that its population averaged no more than ten thousand inhabitants from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries.¹³

"THE HISTORIC KIEV"

If the actual city of Kiev remained "plain and poor," various leaders competed for the right to claim themselves successors to "the historic Kiev." Charles Halperin notes that "Kievan literature, art, folklore, law and politics received new life in Suzdalian Russia long after Kievan Rus' had ceased to exist."¹⁴ Suzdalian princes claimed to be the rightful heirs of Kievan Rus and called their principality "The Russian Land." After defeating the Mongols at Kulikovo in 1380, Muscovite Russia made the same claim as it absorbed rival principalities. Muscovite princes were directly descended from Kiev's princes. They assumed the "pose of Kievan mythic models," Halperin notes. Kievan saints protected Moscow, and Kievan culture did in fact serve as the basis for Muscovite culture.

Contrasting “the historic Kiev” with the actual city of Kiev, which passed into Lithuanian hands, Halperin concludes: “The city of Kiev that now existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had no claim upon the Kievan inheritance, which no longer resided in Kiev, but in Moscow.”¹⁵

KIEV UNDER LITHUANIAN AND POLISH RULE

As Mongol rule receded, the Grand Principality of Lithuania, a loose congeries of independent tribes ruled from Vilnius (Vilna), absorbed Kiev. Although the Lithuanians initially failed to protect Kiev from Tatar raids, they built a fortified settlement called Vladimir’s Town on the hill overlooking Podil. Eventually, this fortification was named for a Polish governor (*voevoda*), Adam Kisel, and came to be known as Kyselivka. Within its walls—which were defended by fifteen six-cornered, three-story towers, seventeen cannons, and one hundred long muskets—stood thirty barracks for soldiers, the homes of the city’s administrative elite, three Orthodox churches (the most important of which was the Castle Church of St. Nicholas), and a Catholic chapel for those occasions when a Catholic governor was put in charge of the city. The Lithuanian princes fostered the economic recovery of Kiev by allowing its burghers unrestricted trade anywhere in their state. Armenian and Genoese merchants established settlements in Podil, as caravans of silks, tapestries, oriental rugs, saffron, pepper, and other spices came to the city from the Crimea and the Muslim world. Kievans came to control much of the region’s trade in German and Russian silk, paper, wool, iron, furs, linen, taffeta, dyes, beef fat, beeswax, and salted fish.¹⁶ Kiev’s goldsmiths and furriers became particularly famous, and local craftsmen also established reputations for manufacturing high-quality rifles, saddles, bows, and metal, eagle-feathered arrows, which were often sold to Tatars in return for salt.

The most important legacy of Lithuanian rule, however, was the granting of the Magdeburg Rights to Kiev between 1494 and 1514, which enabled Podil’s burghers to govern themselves as a semiautonomous jurisdiction. Common throughout medieval Europe, these rights, modeled on the principles of free self-government established in the thirteenth century by the German city of Magdeburg, had also been extended to several other towns in the region, including Lviv. They provided Kiev’s burghers with tax exemptions and allowed for the creation of a burgher magistracy, which took on full administrative and judicial authority. A mayor (*voit*) was elected, usually for life. Initially, the magistracy was elected by all of Podil’s residents “in accordance with their reason, capability, and virtue,” and city business was transacted informally, by word of mouth. Justice was swift, if not always fair, and the accused did enjoy the right to

defend himself.¹⁷ Over time, however, the magistracy became a hereditary aristocracy of powerful burgher families.

Efforts by Lithuanian and Polish authorities to interfere in Kiev's affairs did not altogether cease, but Kiev's burghers succeeded in maintaining their privileges, and the Magdeburg Rights were affirmed many times.¹⁸ From 1654 Russia's tsars also honored these rights, although officials appointed in St. Petersburg took on more and more authority, especially during the reign of Catherine the Great (1762–1796).¹⁹ In 1835 Tsar Nicholas I (1825–1855) finally abrogated the Magdeburg Rights.

Supported by land-hungry nobles, rich Cracow burghers who hoped to secure control of the Dnipro trade routes, and the proselytizing Catholic church, the Polish kings, beginning with Casimir the Great (1333–1370), tried to conquer Ukraine. The Lithuanians were able to thwart the early Polish campaigns, forcing the Poles initially to settle for control of Galicia, but in 1385 Lithuania and Poland established a dynastic union, and the Lithuanian monarch adopted Catholicism. Although Lithuania reasserted itself under Vytautas in the 1390s, in 1452 Volyn, just to the west of Kiev, was occupied and transformed into a joint Lithuanian-Polish province, and in 1471 Kiev and its environs met the same fate.

At the Union of Lublin in 1569, Poland and Lithuania merged into a common state, but as the stronger of the partners Poland took control of Lithuania's Ukrainian territories. As demand in Western Europe for grain increased, huge estates, "unknown in Poland proper or in the western Ukrainian lands," came to dominate Poland's frontier in the Dnipro basin.²⁰ One rich magnate, Jeremi Wiśniowiecki, owned an estimated 230,000 peasants on 7,500 estates in the Kiev and Poltava regions. The size of these landholdings was unmatched "anywhere else in Europe. Because these magnates controlled more territory and population than many West European princes at the time, they were often referred to as 'kinglets.'" ²¹

Polish penetration of Ukraine resulted in a fierce struggle for souls between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, a struggle that Kiev could not escape. A Catholic bishopric was established in the city early in the fifteenth century, and a Catholic church was built in 1433. In 1455 the Polish king Casimir IV commanded that no new Orthodox churches be built in Kiev and that existing churches not be repaired.²² Jesuits established collegia in Lviv and elsewhere. Piotr Skarga and other polemicists "castigated the alleged doctrinal fallacies and the cultural backwardness of the Orthodox in sermons and open debates. In his famous work 'The Unity of God's Church,' Skarga argued that the state of Orthodoxy was so hopeless that its adherents' only alternative was union with Rome."²³

In response to the pressure from Catholic proselytism, the Uniate church, which retained the Orthodox ritual and the Slavonic liturgical language while recognizing papal authority, was created in 1596 and backed by the Polish government. Sensitive to allegations of backwardness, Subtelny argues, Ukrainian noblemen quickly converted, leaving the Ukrainians “without the class that normally provided political leadership and purpose, patronized culture and education, supported the church, and endowed a society with a sense of ethnopolitical identity.” To be Ukrainian was henceforth to be lower class, an object of scorn. “Henceforth, ambitious, talented Ukrainian youths would constantly be forced to choose between loyalty to their own people and traditions and assimilation into the dominant culture and society. Usually they opted for the latter. Consequently, the problem of a Ukrainian elite, or rather, the lack of one, now emerged as yet another of the central and recurrent themes in Ukrainian history.”²⁴

Uniates captured many of Kiev’s monasteries, but the Cave Monastery (Pecherska lavra), which escaped capture in 1596 and 1598, and the Epiphany (Bohoiavlennia) Brotherhood fought back, and Kiev again became “the undisputed cultural and religious center of Ukraine.”²⁵ In 1632 the Kiev Epiphany Brotherhood and the Metropolitan See organized the Kiev Collegium (later Kiev Academy). Petro Mohyla (d. 1647) became its leading intellectual force, introducing Latin scholasticism on the Jesuit model. The Kiev Academy attracted students from Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and even the Christian communities in the Arab lands. For more than a century, it served as a major conduit of Western ideas into the Russian Empire. At the peak of its influence early in the eighteenth century, it had more than eleven hundred students. By 1780 its library had accumulated twelve thousand volumes.²⁶ By this time, however, St. Petersburg’s Academy of Sciences, founded in 1725, and Moscow University, founded in 1755, had surpassed it in stature. The Kiev Academy began to lose students and in 1817 became a theological seminary. In summarizing its significance, Alexander Sydorenko contends that until the mid-eighteenth century, the Kiev Academy ranked as “the foremost intellectual center of the Eastern Slavic world” and was comparable in influence, perhaps, to the universities at Prague and Cracow.²⁷

Under Polish rule Kiev became a battleground for competing religious faiths. One notable victim was the Kobyzevich family, Christianized Tatars who had been resettled as boyars in Mozyr Region by a Lithuanian prince. Ivan Kobyzevich came to Kiev in the sixteenth century and grew rich. Joined by his relatives, the family became the wealthiest landowners in the Kiev region, changed its name to Khodyk, and gradually transformed the burgher magistracy into a kind of family empire. After pur-

chasing the nearby village of Krynychy, the Khodyks took the name of Khodyk-Krynytsky. The Khodyk-Krynytskys embraced the Uniate movement as a means of showing support for the Poles (they wrote all documents in Polish, including official acts). During a bitter fight, Fedor Khodyk-Krynytsky was apparently quartered and dumped into the Dni-pro, but his sons carried on until mid-seventeenth century, representing Uniate interests in Kiev.²⁸

Polish kings did affirm the city's Magdeburg Rights, however, and local burghers still had forty-seven specific privileges when Fedor Kurakin was appointed Kiev's *voevoda* by Moscow in 1654, signaling the demise of Polish influence in the city. Poles would again become influential in Kiev in the 1790s. In 1793, during the second partition of Poland, Russia seized the Right-Bank Ukrainian lands, and in 1796 Kiev was made the capital of the newly created Kiev Province. Poles owned most of the rich farmland on the Right Bank and assumed many of the local offices. In 1797 the Contract Fair (so named because of its numerous land and agricultural product transactions) was moved to Kiev from Dubno, bringing thousands of free-spending Polish landowners to the city each winter. Symbolic of these changes, a small wooden Catholic church was built in Kiev's Pechersk District in 1797 to accommodate the sudden influx of Poles.²⁹ Nicholas I greatly reduced Polish influence in the city and the region, but the Contract Fair and Kiev's St. Vladimir University, founded in 1834, continued to serve as centers for Polish political intrigue until Polish national aspirations were suppressed in the insurrection of 1863.

PODIL: KIEV'S COMMERCIAL HUB

Medieval Slavic cities were often characterized by a central aristocratic and administrative district (*ditynets*, *detinets*, and later *kreml* in Russian), where princes and high ecclesiastical officials exercised their authority, and surrounding trade and craft sections called *posady*.³⁰ Kiev's *ditynets* was called Vladimir's Town, and later High City or Old Kiev. Podil, the floodplain that lay beneath Kiev's great hills along the Dni-pro and Pochaina rivers, was its principal *posad*, its commercial hub. Near the center of medieval Podil was Merchant Square, flanked by two great Byzantine-style single-cupola churches. According to the Nestor Chronicle, a wooden bridge was built across the Dni-pro from Podil, possibly around 1115.³¹ For the most part, Podil's inhabitants did not involve themselves in the politics of Kievan Rus, which were centered in Vladimir's Town.

Fishermen, food growers, and craftsmen lived in Podil's narrow, one-

story, thatch-roofed wooden homes, which were surrounded by gardens and said to be constructed in the “Moscow style.” Trade brought Greeks, Armenians, Italians, and Jews, as well as Slavs from Great Russia and surrounding Ukraine, to Podil. In the fifteenth century, Armenians were said to be Podil’s wealthiest merchants, and an Armenian church was built there in 1433. Early in the 1600s Podil had thirteen Orthodox churches and three Catholic churches, but in 1604 part of it was taken over by the Catholic bishop and called Bishop’s City.³² Beginning in the 1690s, Magistracy Hall was constructed in the late-rococo style. Like the great halls in Prague, Moscow, and Novgorod, it had a famous clock with a golden inscription, “God watches over the city of Kiev, 1697.” On a high balcony trumpeters and drummers performed daily at daybreak, noon, and nightfall, and in summer musicians played late into the evening. A large city coat of arms was displayed on the clock, and when the Archangel Michael (since ancient times the city’s protector) struck the snake, sparks cascaded downward. Magistracy Hall remained the symbol of Kiev’s burgher rights until it was destroyed in the great fire of 1811. Its bricks were used to build the Contract Hall, where the Contract Fair was held during the remaining decades of the nineteenth century.

From the destruction of the High City by the Mongols in 1240 until the early decades of the nineteenth century, Podil was Kiev’s population center, and, in fact, Kiev and Podil were virtually synonymous. Ivan Pantiukhov provides estimates, averaged by century, of the three barely connected settlements that would ultimately become the core of modern Kiev (table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1
Estimated Average Population of Kiev by Century

<i>Century</i>	<i>Old Kiev</i>	<i>Podil</i>	<i>Pechersk</i>	<i>Total</i>
9th	8,000	1,000	—	9,000
10th	15,000	2,000	—	17,000
11th	25,000	3,000	100	28,100
12th	25,000	5,000	300	30,300
13th	10,000	3,000	400	13,400
14th	6,000	3,000	500	9,500
15th	4,000	4,000	500	8,500
16th	2,000	5,000	2,000	9,000
17th	1,000	6,000	3,000	10,000
18th	1,500	8,000	6,000	15,500

SOURCE: I. Pantiukhov, *Opyt sanitarnoi topografii i statistiki Kieva* (Kiev: Kievskii gubernskii statisticheskii komitet, 1877), 114.

UPLAND KIEV: OLD KIEV (HIGH CITY)
AND PECHERSK

Vladimir's Town, built on high ground but away from the Dnipro bluffs, had been the political and ecclesiastical center of medieval Kiev. It was named for Prince Vladimir who built a strong fortress surrounded by a deep moat and earthen and wooden ramparts, with gates leading to Podil, Pechersk, and the St. Sophia Cathedral, founded in 1037. Fortifications were expanded by Iaroslav, and the new ramparts had three gates, Lviv, Polish, and the famous Golden Gate, built in 1037 and named for the Golden Gate in Constantinople. Initially, the Church of the Annunciation was built on top of the Golden Gate, which served as a passage through a two-story log wall built atop an earthen rampart. Until it was destroyed by the Mongols in 1240, it was the main fortified entrance to the old city.³³ Periodic Tatar raids hindered efforts to restore the great hilltop churches, and Vladimir's Town, which came to be more commonly called High City or Old Kiev, remained a sparsely populated area notable mainly for its ruins. Traveler Reinhold Geidenshtein reported in 1596 that of the great churches that had once stood there, only St. Sophia was functioning and that even there services were not being held because of the destruction.³⁴

Old Kiev was never granted Magdeburg autonomy, and the area was administered by St. Sophia and St. Michael's of the Golden Domes Monastery. After 1654 their authority was shared with the Russian troops who were garrisoned there, and in 1782 Russian officials assumed full fiscal and administrative control. Old Kiev would grow significantly in the nineteenth century, but when St. Vladimir University was founded there in 1834, it was still a mostly empty land of ruins and ravines.

The third of Kiev's settlements, Pechersk (called Bishop's City by the Poles), was the hilly embankment overlooking the Dnipro and surrounding the labyrinth of underground cells and passages that had been turned into hermitages and then monasteries by the early Christian population. The famous Cave Monastery was founded here in 1051. Aside from the monastery, Pechersk remained very sparsely populated. A bazaar and trade community were established early in the seventeenth century, but significant growth came only after Peter the Great (Peter I, 1682–1725) decided to build the Russian fortress in Pechersk. The Russian governor-general shared administrative responsibility over Pechersk with the Cave Monastery and the Ukrainian Cossack state known as the Hetmanate. As in High City, the Russian state assumed full control over the area in 1782.

By then Pechersk had 1,131 homes, 36 of them owned by the Russian government. Even during the nineteenth century, Pechersk remained an odd amalgam of soldiers, monks, and religious pilgrims.

COSSACKS AND RUSSIANS

In the seventeenth century Poles, Russians, and Ukrainian Cossacks waged a fierce battle for control of Ukraine. An egalitarian organization of free frontiersmen, many of whom lived on the Right Bank to the south of Kiev, Cossacks had their headquarters “beyond the rapids” in the so-called Zaporozhian Sich (Sech), just to the south of the future site of Katerynoslav (Ekaterinoslav, today Dnipropetrovsk). To one historian, the Cossacks were “exceptional people,” adventurers who left “the security of communities where families had lived for generations . . . , setting out for a borderland known in the folk tales for its bloodthirsty infidels, the cruelty of its winters, the loneliness of its vast plains.”³⁵ Some were runaway serfs from Russia or escapees from the Ottoman slave ships, but most were probably from Ukraine. Only Jews were reportedly unwelcome in the ranks of these aggressive frontiersmen, who became notable as “an army of mercenaries and freebooters.”³⁶

The Zaporozhian Sich functioned as a state and had relations, for example, with the pope. Under the leadership of Hetman Petro Sahaidachny (1614–1622), the Cossack army took the side of the Orthodox population in its struggle against the Catholics and the Uniates, and the powerful Zaporozhian army joined ranks with the Kiev Orthodox Brotherhood. Under Sahaidachny’s leadership, Kiev had the potential to become the capital of an Orthodox Ukrainian state, and when he died in 1622, “the population of Kiev turned out en masse.”³⁷

Beginning in 1648 the Cossack hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595?–1657), said to be “Ukraine’s greatest political and military leader,”³⁸ led a massive rebellion that initially drove most of the Poles from Ukraine and slaughtered tens of thousands of Jews as well. Khmelnytsky destroyed Kiev’s Catholic monasteries, and in 1649 the city’s Orthodox hierarchy welcomed him “as ‘the second Moses’ who had ‘liberated his people from Polish slavery.’”³⁹ With the help of Lithuanian troops, Poles regained Kiev in 1651, and in August of that year fire destroyed much of the city (including the documents certifying its ancient privileges). In 1654 Khmelnytsky sought the protection of the Muscovite Tsar Aleksei (1645–1676), and at Pereiaslav took an oath of loyalty to him, thereby linking Ukraine’s fate inextricably with Russia’s. Aleksei affirmed virtually all of Kiev’s privileges, and in the next few years Poles, Jews, and Armenians were expelled from the city. Cossacks, loyal to Russia, settled

in devastated and depopulated Podil to ensure against a resurfacing of pro-Polish sympathies.⁴⁰

During the decades following Khmelnytsky's death in 1657, Cossack armies, some loyal to Poland, some to Russia, battled each other; the resultant period of devastation in Ukraine is often called "The Ruin." Exhausted by warfare, Russia and Poland reached an agreement at Andrusovo in 1667, which left Russia in control of the Left-Bank provinces and the city of Kiev, and in 1686, after further fighting initiated by the Cossacks, the agreement won international recognition. That same year Kiev's metropolitan was subordinated to the patriarch in Moscow. Peter the Great affirmed Kiev's privileges in 1700 and 1710, and in 1701 a new road was begun to forge a better link between Podil and Pechersk. In 1706, during a visit to Kiev, Peter laid the groundwork for the construction of his great fortress, and the city took on new importance as part of a fortified line designed to expand the Russian Empire to the south and west, while protecting its flanks from Poles, Swedes, Ottoman Turks, and steppe nomads.

"GOOD MEN BECOME BAD"

In the eighteenth century Kiev continued to be a frontier city with a frontier blend of peoples, a fortress city with soldiers from many places. The city even acquired a reputation as a nerve center, where spies intent on learning what they could about Russia, Poland, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimea congregated. Eastern Europeans, many bound for the open lands of New Russia and the lower Volga, came through Kiev, and some stayed. In 1726 Kiev had at least twenty-two Greek merchants. Around midcentury, Serbs settled in the city and helped manage the state vineyards. These Balkan peoples helped establish Kiev's silk industry and its reputation as a center for cooked and candied fruits. In 1758 more than a thousand Montenegrins came for the purpose of forming a hussar regiment. Under Catherine the Great, who encouraged foreign colonization in the empire, at least a hundred Germans settled in Kiev. Religious pilgrims also poured into the city, and sometimes "ordinary people traveled south simply as a diversion, much in the way one would now visit a foreign land."⁴¹

Podil continued to be the burgher stronghold (in 1785 they owned 1,974 of the quarter's 2,110 homes),⁴² but throughout the century Kiev's burghers had to wage a persistent, and only partially successful, battle to maintain their autonomy against encroachments by Cossacks and the increasingly powerful Russian state. More than principle was at stake. Officeholding had become very profitable. In the eighteenth century the

mayor received one hundred vedros of *horilka* (distilled spirits), mead, and beer annually, as well as one hundred pine logs, one hundred carts of firewood, and hay, and more spirits at Christmas and Easter. He was given a city-owned hut and still, hayfields, and a fishing lake for his personal use. Underlings were also paid in smaller quantities of *horilka*, beer, mead, and firewood. In addition, the ruling oligarchy came to view the various sources of city income as its own.⁴³

One of the magistracy's rights and obligations that was altered with the onset of a Russian presence in the city was that of self-defense. Kiev's burghers had their own martial tradition. In medieval times the city's population had been grouped into units called *sotni* (hundreds), which provided an organizational basis for raising a militia, collecting taxes, and carrying out projects related to public welfare. The size of the burgher militia is unclear, and may have changed over time, but it was large enough to defend the city, escort trade caravans, and chase Tatar marauders into the steppe. In 1624 the Polish king Sigismund III (1587–1632) released the militia from the obligation of pursuing Tatar raiders unless they actually came into Kiev's territory.⁴⁴ After 1654 defense of the city fell to regular Russian troops, but old traditions died hard, and the corps, a symbol of Kiev's ancient rights, continued to mobilize when the city was threatened and for important ceremonies.

Peter the Great required Kiev's burghers to assist in the construction of the Pechersk fortress and in the provisioning of Russia's troops, who numbered about three thousand in 1708.⁴⁵ In 1736 burghers were excused from this obligation. In 1743 local rights were again affirmed, but the city was subjected to general taxes for the maintenance of imperial troops. Subsequent actions by the Senate restored the local exemption, but in the 1760s the issue of state prerogatives versus local rights again came to a head, this time over whether burghers could be forced to quarter a Moldavian hussar regiment posted in Kiev. Friction intensified when some of the hussars opened taverns, infringing upon the burghers' right to monopolize tavern trade.⁴⁶

Although Moscow had established control over Cossack Ukraine, the Cossack Hetmanate continued to operate with considerable autonomy, especially during the reign of Elizabeth I (1741–1762). Between 1750 and 1764 the leader of this state was Hetman Kyrylo Rozumovsky, a personal favorite of Elizabeth. Few Cossacks actually lived in Kiev—in 1752 only 28 of the 2,140 homes in Podil were owned by Cossacks⁴⁷—but the Cossacks had a special love for the city, “where the source and beginning of our religion glitters, where the holy places are preserved with great pomp.”⁴⁸ In 1737 Cossacks had helped Russian officials arrest Kiev's burgher mayor Pavel Voinych for refusing to obey a state directive. Car-

ried out in a public way, the arrest dishonored Voinych and threatened Kiev's independence. Under Rozumovsky tensions between burghers and Cossacks escalated, partly over who was responsible for maintaining the Khreshchata "road," at this time a network of dirt paths through the Khreshchata ravine that connected Podil, High City, and Pechersk. In 1751 Rozumovsky tried to have Ivan Sichevsky appointed mayor even though Sichevsky was not a member of the magistracy. Above all, burghers and Cossacks battled over distilling rights.

The importance of alcohol in the culture of Russia and Ukraine has been noted by many, and tavern trade had long played an important role in Kiev's commerce and public life. Lamented one early graffiti-writer in St. Sophia Cathedral: "I drank away my clothes while I was here."⁴⁹ In 1474 the visitor Kontarini observed that by three o'clock in the afternoon Kievans were already in the taverns, where they would stay until nighttime. Needless to say, brawls were common.⁵⁰ In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if not before, the city derived almost all of its income from the making and selling of spirits. The magistracy paid the Imperial Russian government for the right to protect its distilling monopoly, and the Russian government reaffirmed the magistracy's monopoly many times. Neither the monasteries nor the Cossacks respected this privilege, however. Cossacks enjoyed distilling rights outside of Kiev. Why should Kiev be different? The main monasteries had numerous stills. In the 1750s monks from the Cave Monastery ran fourteen taverns in Pechersk, one on each street.⁵¹

The fact that Cossack leaders recruited local burghers, who in turn were accused of being lazy turncoats wanting nothing more than to live off illegal trade in *horilka*, also added to the tension. The "free life" of the Cossacks carried a certain fascination and was widely respected. The wife of the burgher Maksym Gorbanenko, for example, had been previously married to a Cossack and fervently wanted Maksym to join their ranks. After conspiring to get her unfortunate husband drunk, she enrolled him in the Cossacks against his will, or so he later claimed. Gorbanenko fled to the vagabonds who lived along the Dnipro banks, but was captured again by the Cossacks. Disputes of this kind usually ended up in court and provided further pretext for brawls.⁵²

On the matter of distilling rights, the Russian Senate tended to back the burghers against Cossack encroachments. Illegal distilling nevertheless continued, as did feuds and deadly brawls. In the 1760s, of eighty-four farmsteads near Kiev cited in one survey, sixty-two were involved with distilling,⁵³ and Hetman Rozumovsky himself warned that Ukrainians were neglecting their land and livestock, exhausting the supply of firewood, and deforesting the countryside, all for the sake of distilling. A few decades later, in 1816, Tsar Alexander I (1801–1825) would observe:

“Distilling has completely exhausted Little Russia; it resembles a weakened man.”⁵⁴ As for the city itself, for all of Kiev’s “miracle-working icons,” ran an eighteenth-century lyric, “its men, though charitable to the poor, are in the end destroyed by the taverns. They become stingy. Good men become bad.”⁵⁵

THE CENTRALIZING REFORMS OF CATHERINE THE GREAT

More than any other Russian ruler before her, Catherine the Great sought to bring a centralized, uniform administration to the empire, and the autonomy of Kiev and the rest of Ukraine diminished accordingly. In 1764 Catherine boldly abolished the Hetmanate, appointing a governor-general and an administrative body known as the Little Russian College to administer its territory. The Cossack companies were phased out, and the Orthodox church was brought fully under Moscow’s control. Evaluating the position of Kiev’s burghers during the early years of Catherine’s reign, Zenon Kohut contends that their concerns included “the high taxes in support of Russian troops; the cost of quartering Russian officials and officers; foreigners, particularly Greeks and Vlachs, trading in the city without payment of municipal taxes; and the all too familiar problem of Cossacks and their officers competing with the burghers in trade.”⁵⁶ Requesting that the Cossacks either be expelled from the city or be forced to pay municipal taxes, Kiev’s burghers fought to defend their Magdeburg autonomy, but in 1785 Catherine’s Town Charter introduced a new city council (*duma*), which was to oversee day-to-day management of municipal affairs. Policy-making power and supervision of the police were given to the governor, appointed in St. Petersburg. Russia’s military presence in Pechersk continued to be extensive. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774, for example, Kiev became the main supply base for the Russian army, and in 1784 construction of the Arsenal, which manufactured supplies for the Russian army, was begun. Some historians have concluded that the magistracy lost virtually all of its power under Catherine, and that from 1785 it functioned mainly as a judicial body.⁵⁷ Kohut takes a different approach, noting that the 1785 Town Charter’s “provisions were skillfully blended with local traditions. Magdeburg Law remained in force, and the Kievan patriciate maintained control over government and finances, even reinstating a traditional part of Kievan administration, the militia.”⁵⁸

As part of an effort to undo his mother’s reforms, Catherine’s successor, Paul I (1796–1801), sought to restore Kiev’s traditional administrative structure. Under Paul, Kiev became the capital of a new province

carved out of territory taken from Poland during the second partition. At best, Paul's initiatives produced two overlapping and conflicting structures, neither of which could balance the city's books. Magdeburg Rights were affirmed again in 1802 by Alexander I, but the magistracy had become a shadow of its former self. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the groundwork for the full absorption of Kiev into the empire, and the subsequent Russification of the city, was in place.