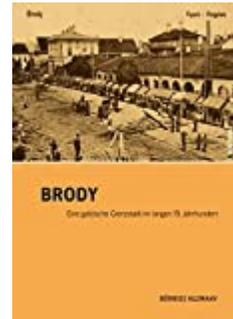




Börries Kuzmany. *Brody: Eine galizische Grenzstadt im langen 19. Jahrhundert.* Vienna: Böhlau Verlag Wien, 2011. 406 pp. EUR 35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-205-78763-1.



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Brody is Always Brody: A Galician Border City in the Long Nineteenth Century

One suspects, even if unfamiliar with the place, that the city of Brody's identity is first and foremost, itself. Even before the introduction, historian Börries Kuzmany offers his explanation of transliterations and tells the reader that, "only Brody is always Brody" whether in German, Polish, Ukrainian, or Russian. Even in Yiddish it was *Brod* or *Brodi* (p. 12). Call it local, transnational, ethnic, or borderlands history, this is a book about a specific place, over time. Brody is more than a metaphor, and more than a microhistory. Kuzmany positions himself in "the long century," starting his account in pre-Partition Poland and extending it until the outbreak of the First World War, with an afterword addressing the memory of the place before and after the Soviet era. Brody recently made the news when protestors tore down a monument to Field Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov, who led Russia to victory against Napoleon in 1812. Kuzmany even mentions the monument in passing.

Börries Kuzmany himself seems to embody simultaneous identities as much as his city of study. An Erwin Schrödinger fellow of the Austrian Science Fund re-

cently affiliated with the Institute for Advanced Study at Central European University, he produced this work while completing a joint doctorate in history and German language and literature for the University of Vienna and the University of Paris IV Sorbonne. The book under review is being considered for translation into English and a Ukrainian edition is already underway. One can read his articles in a multitude of languages and journals.

Brody is organized into three parts. The first looks at the economic development of the city and uses both quantitative and qualitative data, relying on statistics and official reports, but enlivened by memoirs and travelogues. The second part offers a look at Brody as a multicultural town, a center of Jewish life in eastern Europe, positioned at an imperial crossroads. The final section addresses perceptions of Brody, offering the contemporary scholar or visitor a unique and utterly delightful view into this city, its internal and external identity, and why it matters. In his conclusion, the author asks "Brody-âeine Misserfolgsgeschichte?" but it is clear that despite this, he is fond of this city and its history.

In his discussion of late eighteenth-century trade in Brody, Kuzmany analyzes the relative strength of Jewish and Christian merchants and their regional influences. Jewish and Christian traders focused on different markets, with the former moving goods from Leipzig and Frankfurt into central Ukraine and to the Black Sea, while the latter were stronger in Poland, the Austrian heartland, Italy, and Trieste. Kuzmany argues that Brody was a critical player in east-west cross-border trade (p. 56). The growth of Odessa, the interests of Armenian traders from Tiflis, and the exigencies of German markets all involved or affected Brody. Using census and import/export data, Kuzmany demonstrates the importance of Brody to Russo-Austrian trade. The vagaries of revolution (1848) and war (1856) notwithstanding, almost all goods transported from Russia across Austrian territory to Western Europe and likewise in the opposite direction, passed through the customs office at Brody (p. 78). Multiple consulates in Brody also testified to its importance.

In his chapter titled "Stagnation and Crisis," Kuzmany investigates the century after the Congress of Vienna and the mysterious midcentury disappearance of Brody from central Austrian economic statistics. Brody faced multiple challenges, from smuggling to a massive fire in 1859 that destroyed hundreds of buildings, including the new telegraph office and a relatively new hospital, a Roman Catholic church, and a *Realschule*. As elsewhere in the text, Kuzmany reinforces his argument with both statistical tables and images, including a newspaper illustration of the fire. The tragedy was a mixed blessing, causing devastation but also reintroducing Brody to the international community. Kuzmany demonstrates his ability to move from closely calculated graphs to sensational news reports in his analysis of Brody's role in the economic life of the Austrian empire and debates about its customs status, and then to an analysis of poverty and the social condition of Brody's Jewish population. The city suffered from antisemitism, poverty, prostitution, child abuse, and the ever-present smuggling trade. No wonder contemporaries noted that in Brody "moral integrity was a luxury" (p. 94). Brody also became a transit point for outmigration of Russian Jews. As the century wore on, keeping Brody youthful was a challenge. While a center of Jewish learning during the Enlightenment, Brody never had a university and its intelligentsia moved to Cracow, Vienna, or L'viv, while young workers looked further afield, migrating to the United States. Brody's decline was influenced and reinforced by slow or nonexistent modernization. With few established industries and shrinking investment capital, even a railway connection

could not rescue Brody, and neighboring cities on both sides of the border provided stiff competition.

After this slightly disheartening chapter, however, Kuzmany's strength in narration and insight into the social fabric of this city are put on display. The second section of the book, "Eine Aussergewöhnliche Galizische Kleinstadt," considers the Jewish city, its Christian minority, multicultural life, and the borderland. In his account of schools and education in Brody, Kuzmany addresses such varied topics as curriculum for girls, salaries and marital status for men and women teachers, language politics, and school funding. Teasing out the relative positions of the Brody population, Kuzmany argues that the fault lines for language and culture tended to fall between the German- and Polish-speakers. The author argues that the Israelitischen Hauptschule fell on the Polish side, using that language as its primary teaching language, with Hebrew and German as additional subjects, while the Rudolfgymnasium faced debates ostensibly driven by proponents of Polonization vs. Germanization of the curriculum, but actually revealing divisions in which elite Ruthenians preferred German as a neutral language of instruction, even though Polish would have been easier for the children to understand. Decisions were also economic, as German-speaking teachers cost more. By the time the famous son of Brody, Joseph Roth, was attending school in 1906, the school was still led in German, but the last class graduated in 1914, and soon afterward Brody was occupied by the Russian army, and any debate about language was closed. Since the purpose of the book is ostensibly to study the "long century," the interwar disposition of Brody as part of Poland's Second Republic is not discussed, and thus, the analysis of language policies is left incomplete.

Kuzmany offers insight into Brody as a microcosm of ethnic and confessional coexistence in his analysis of schools because, as he argues, schools were and are a place "in which children from various religious and national backgrounds come into contact with one another. They are therefore an excellent barometer for understanding in a multicultural city like Brody" (p. 220). When children were brought together and had breaks between classes, several languages were at play—German, certainly, but Polish and towards the end of Austrian rule, also Ukrainian. What Kuzmany attempts to do is differentiate between proximity and togetherness. For instance, Polish was used in Roman Catholic religious classes and Ukrainian in the "Greek-Catholic" classes. Dorms were also sites of meeting or division, starting in 1879, being organized by confession (and secondarily,

ethnicity), increasingly subdividing over the next generation. By 1913, when a Jewish dorm was opened, Kuzmany observes, it is noteworthy that the Jewish dormitory was accepted as a quasi-national association, especially relevant since the Reichstag representative from Brody was Zionist Adolf Standâ (p. 229). Thus, Kuzmany argues, referencing Judson, that by the twentieth century, Brody demonstrated a shift from a supranational to a regional mindset, more focused on Galicia.

Was Brody, then, a dilapidated little border town, destined to have its heyday in the early half of the long century, and afterwards simply a microcosm of growing ethnic division, emblem of the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire? Kuzmany proves himself capable of writing about tragedy, like the cross-border impact of pogroms at the turn of the century, while still demonstrating the important role the city had in its waning years as a transit site, facilitating aid to thousands of Jews crossing the border. Kuzmany delicately argues that Austrian officials faced a difficult situation. After accepting relief funds and assisting in the transfer of refugees, officials feared that instead of moving on to France, or the Netherlands, or Germany, the refugees would remain. Patrols would arrest those crossing the border illegally, and Brody became both a site of escape and of imprisonment. While acknowledging smuggling as an unfortunate element of the economy, the author definitely offers an intriguing and enlightening account of Brody's identity as a site for undercover trade, in secrets as well as in goods. The author employs an admirable variety of sources in this section, ranging from stories of Napoleonic espionage and Yiddish songs about the life of the smuggler to official correspondence connecting France and Warsaw, to customs statistics accounting for the class and confession of arrested and convicted smugglers. (Hint: on the Austrian side Christian smugglers outnumbered Jewish smugglers three to one.)

Saving the best for last, Kuzmany's final section offers both a tour of contemporary Brody and a vision of a place which is a shadow of itself. Brody is both everything and nothing. It encompasses ethnic divisions, but was not the center of culture for Poles or Ukrainians. It was both central to trade between Austria and Russia and pushed to the periphery when it came to development or infrastructure. Using wonderful travel narratives and literary sources (it is in this section that Joseph Roth becomes indispensable), Kuzmany elicits more than a description of a place; he plunges into theory and practice of memory studies. What started as a straightforward economic and social history of a border town blossoms

into an analysis of Soviet/Bolshevik historical narratives, the complex relationship of Polish history to the *Kresy*, and a reading of Ukrainian *Gedenkbücher*. As he does throughout, Kuzmany deftly completes his analysis by returning to Brody's Jewish identity, reminding the reader that for centuries, Jewish populations have excelled at putting memorials into writing when communities and congregations were threatened or destroyed. The walking tour of Brody is informative and even charming. Maps and color photographs comparing prewar and contemporary views demonstrate a generosity and a commitment to place on the part of the author seldom seen in print. One would expect to see such lovely images only at a conference panel or lecture. Not only is this beautiful to see, but the analysis before and after is a model for others, offering rich images of memorials and gravestones—Soviet, Jewish, Polish, and Ukrainian. The interwar Sokol building now serves as a house of culture; teachers inhabit the former Chamber of Commerce. Some spaces remain, like the lovely front of the former Hotel Bristol, but the graves of soldiers who fell in the Great War are overgrown, not to mention the all-too-common sight of synagogues with walls covered in vines, roof open to the sky. The author offers at least a paragraph of explanation for each site, like the best academic walking tour one could imagine.

The production of this volume is of the highest quality. Part of its usefulness comes in the thorough end material. Appendices range from the text of a free trade agreement with Trieste and Fiume in 1779 to comparative currency tables, including raw data for various tables in the text, and extended quotes from travelogues in multiple languages. It has a ribbon placemaker sewn into the hardback binding. It has two indices, both an *Ortsverzeichnis* and a *Personenverzeichnis*, and a bibliography that reflects research in archives across Europe, dozens of periodicals and reference materials, and, to the delight of this reader and any graduate student, not only a separate list of printed sources but an explanation of the difference between "printed sources" and "secondary literature" as defined by the author. Kuzmany's bibliography of secondary literature equally reveals him to be transatlantic as well as transnational, with works by Pieter Judson, Larry Wolff, Nancy Wingfield, and Anthony Polonsky, as well as a myriad of works in German, French, and Polish. It is no surprise to find Fernand Braudel and Maria Bogucka among these.

The writing is clear, enthusiastic, and elegant, a combination much welcome to students and scholars. This is a credit to the subject, author, editor, and publisher.

This book should be put on the reading lists for scholars of Austria-Hungary, Poland, and Russia and those interested in identity and local history. It would be an appropriate source for graduate students or advanced undergraduates with German as a second language and for students of the Habsburgs or Joseph Roth. Those who have found other recent city histories useful or interesting, such as Gregor Thum's *Uprooted: How Breslau became Wrocław* (2011) or Cynthia Paces's *Prague Panoramas* (2009) would also appreciate *Brody*. It is broader in

chronological scope than either of those, but not quite as ambitious as Peter Loew's *Danzig und seine Vergangenheit 1793-1997* (2003). Kuzmany's work also touches on themes of modernization or its absence, bringing to mind Nathan Wood's book on Cracow, *Becoming Metropolitan* (2010). It would be interesting to hear him on a panel with Timothy Snyder and Kate Brown, whose works do not appear in the bibliography but whose themes also intersect with Kuzmany's. All in all, this is a useful and welcome study of an interesting and relevant city.

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