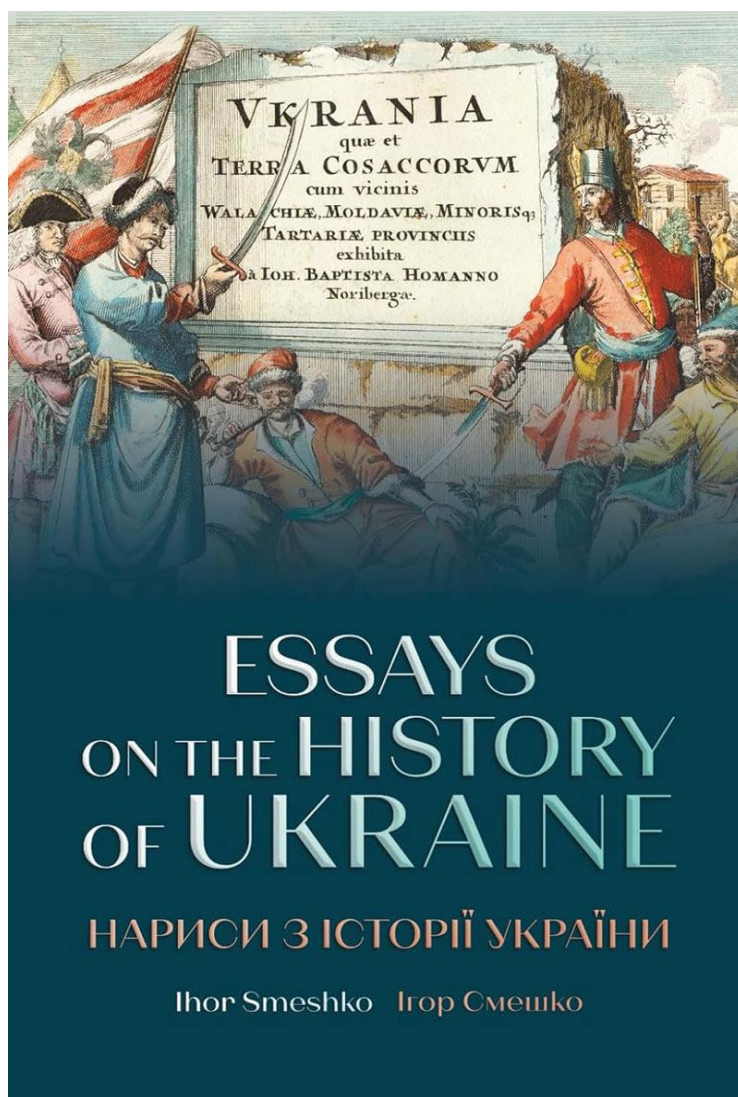


## **“Essays on the History of Ukraine” shatters Putin propaganda on Russo-Ukrainian fraternity**

Despite Putin’s insistence that there is no Ukraine and Kirill’s (not that subtle) blasphemous “triune” analogy of “one people” with three subsets, the fact is that more and more excellent books and historical treatises are emerging that demonstrate the futility of their efforts.

There is one book, however, that belies every claim made by Putin and his propagandists. That book, Col.-Gen. Ihor Smeshko’s “Essays on the History of Ukraine” should be on every Ukrainian family’s coffee table and bookshelf. It has been my privilege to review it alongside a review by Archduke Karl Habsburg-Lotharingen, who is (fittingly) the grandson of the last Austro-Hungarian emperor.



This short (100-page) book takes the reader on Ukraine’s fascinating and largely unknown journey from the dawn of European civilization to the present day. It shatters the myth of Ukrainian-Russian “fraternity” and “common history” and has evoked frantic responses and denunciations from “historians” on Russia’s most popular television programs.

In a series of essays on key periods, events and personalities in Ukrainian history, Mr. Smeshko validates his thesis that Ukraine, unlike Russia, was not merely a very early beneficiary of European civilization but also one of its contributors and builders. Were it not for what Russia (then known as Vladimir-Suzdal) had looted and learned from Kyiv-Rus’ as early as the 12th century and continued doing so at various times, Russia would be seen, more appropriately, as the primary antagonist to that civilization. Putin and his many predecessors in power to this day

continuously inveigh against it and are committed to its destruction and replacement with “Ruskiy Mir” (the Russian world).

Mr. Smeshko’s background – he holds a doctoral degree in technical sciences and is a professor of system analyses – manifests itself in his analogy that civilizations, like architectural designs, are built on foundations in the form of pivotal periods in their history that he refers to as “pillars.”

Europe’s pillars consist of the Hellenic and Roman periods, followed by Christianity and the influence of the Renaissance and the French Revolution. He then traces the impact and interaction of each of these periods on the early residents of Ukraine, including the migratory tribes that settled in the area for various periods and left their mark before moving on to permanent European “homes.” According to Mr. Smeshko, “Ukrainians, more than most others, can readily claim to be descendants of the original multi-ethnic Europeans.”

His essays are packed with little-known but very illustrative segments, such as one essay that addresses the reason why many European royal families adopted “Philip” as the preferred name of their progeny; why one of Karl Marx’s books was banned in the USSR; the completely false historical claims Putin espouses in noting the “sacral significance” of Crimea for Russia; or the very first European constitution that not only recognized the rights of citizens but also introduced the principle of separation of power.

Although Symon Petliura is widely seen as the “hero” of Ukraine’s early 20th-century republic, Mr. Smeshko explains why the real credit belongs to a largely forgotten “hetman” who, during his brief eight-month tenure, succeeded in restoring his peoples’ economy and stabilizing their financial system, introduced a national currency, reopened Ukrainian schools and universities, recreated the National Academy of Sciences, and founded the National Archives and Library.

Of more significant interest to those who follow current trends and research in the ethnic composites of nations would be to learn the identity of the Germanic nation that settled in Ukraine for centuries and then, in the 5th century, went on to found one of the two great Gothic kingdoms within the Western Roman Empire.

Given Mr. Smeshko’s extraordinary and unique background, his vision for ensuring Ukraine’s future as a powerful, democratic, prosperous and independent European state is particularly interesting. Having traveled widely, observed various societies, engaged in discourse with some of the world’s most respected historians and statesmen, and researched the many hidden corners of Ukraine’s past, his insights

and counsel – contained near the end of the book – are invaluable in designing Ukraine’s own “architecture.”

“Essays on the History of Ukraine” is now available through Amazon in Kindle, paperback and hardcover formats. It contains both the Ukrainian and English versions in one volume.

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