

# The Making of Modern Ukraine

## 09 - Polish Power and Cossack Revolution

Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_lBll--m7ql](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lBll--m7ql)

- 00:12 - Okay, greetings everybody, happy Tuesday.  
You have an exam, not this Thursday, but the one after that.  
It will be a 50 minute exam in this space.  
You will have blue books.  
Very exciting.  
The TFs and I are gonna remember to get blue books.  
And if you have an accommodation for this exam, please make sure that your TF knows about it between now and then, so we can make sure that everyone is set up the way they need to be set up.  
The format will be very simple.  
There'll be a shorter essay.  
There'll be a longer essay.  
There'll probably be some IDs, maybe some dates.  
But nothing very confusing.
- 01:00 Okay, any questions about the practical side of this class? The exam? Sections? Everything's good? I was just waiting to see how long it would take for you guys to nod.  
I was like letting the blank stares go by, waiting for you to realize you had to nod.  
Okay, good.  
What we're gonna try to do today is bring the Polish factor into our class.  
And this is a very important thing to do because without the Polish factor, no Ukraine, no Ukraine as it exists today.  
I hope by now you've gotten used to the idea that nations are not vertical constructions, which were born a long time, and then continue continuously over the same territory in the boring way that it's presented to you in your school textbooks.  
I hope you've gotten used to the idea that nations are a result of encounters of larger units and things bouncing off each other, and unexpected reactions and counterreactions.
- 02:09 We've already worked through how at the basis of Ukrainian history, we have this encounter between the Franks and the Byzantines, with the Vikings kind of sliding from one to the other.  
Without that encounter, no Ukraine.  
We've then worked through how in the 13th century there was the progress of the Teutonic Knights from the West, the Mongols from the East, and in that encounter, Lithuania ends up

controlling most of what had been the territories of Rus.

Again, without that encounter, no Ukraine as we understand it.

We're now moving into another encounter, the encounter between Lithuania and Poland.

And in this encounter between Lithuania and Poland, Ukraine, for the first time begins to emerge as something like a distinct entity.

So at the end of this lecture, it should be pretty clear that there will be the emergence of some distinct Ukrainian political features, which are recognizable up to the present.

03:09 Now, I'm gonna give you just a few things very abstractly before I get into the historical part.

We need Poland for a lot of reasons, but very briefly, like telegraphically, the things that are going to come in from the Polish side have to do with the West.

They have to do with the Franks, the Holy Roman Empire, Western Christianity, right? Like in a way, when Poland enters the story, it's like a delayed, you know, six centuries delayed, but it's delayed encounter with the Franks, the Frankish version of Europe, with the Western Christian version of Europe, because Poland, as you'll remember, converts to not Eastern, but Western Christianity.

So from Poland, we are going to get Catholicism, an encounter with Catholicism, with Roman Catholicism.

04:00 We're also going to get the emergence of something called Greek Catholicism, which still exists in Ukraine today.

From Poland we are going to get the Polish language and a Polish version of the Renaissance.

And from Poland, we're going to get the idea of a republic.

It is a very important idea, a very ambiguous idea.

A republic means a state, which is for the public, which sounds wonderful.

Republic, res publica, rzeczpospolita in Polish, respublika, if you insist in Ukrainian.

It means the common matter, right? But it means the public, the public matter.

But who is the public? Is the tricky question for republics, you know, right down to and including the republic in which we are inhabiting, which we are inhabiting today.

So, if the republic is a state, which is not for just a king, not just for a monarch, but it's for a public, who's the public? Who's in and who's out? That political question is posed very powerfully in Poland.

05:09 As we're gonna see, it's gonna be posed vis-a-vis Ukraine.

And in some sense, an attempt to answer that question by the Cossacks is where a clear national history, or at least anticolonial history of Ukraine begins.

So Poland has a structure, and this is my very last preliminary remark, and then we're gonna dive in.

Poland has a structure which is different from Muscovy.

So we're gonna see these points.

We're gonna see the contact between Poland and Muscovy over and over again.

But if you think of Muscovy as being founded as a post-Mongol state with a very centralized vertical type of regime, Poland is something else.

Poland is a horizontal regime in which the nobles are much more important than the monarch, in which the nobles have rights, unlike in Muscovy, in which the nobles rights increase over time.

06:07 And in which by the end of this lecture, actually around the middle, the nobles are actually selecting the monarch rather than the other way around.

In Muscovy, the monarch selects the nobles.

In Poland, the the nobles select the monarch.

And that's a very, very different kind of setup.

And with this notion of a republic and the notion of nobles who belong to the republic comes the idea of rights.

Again, not rights for everyone, but rights for the people who belong to the noble estate.

That's a Polish notion.

We're gonna see how it emerges over time.

But again, you have to see the difference between that and Muscovy where the notion that anyone has rights is really not present at all until much, much, much later.

And the Cassocks, the Ukrainian Cassocks are gonna emerge in this story, and who we saw a bit of in the last lecture, the Ukrainian Cassocks are somewhere in between.

07:07 The Ukrainian Cassocks are going to get their idea, some ideas about rights from the contact with Poland.

And the Cassocks in some way are going to want to, they're gonna be a group that wants to get inside this system in order to enjoy the rights of being inside the system, but are not going to be able to do so, but are going to be able to rebel.

And that's where we're going to end, okay.

So let's, so, for the purposes of, so you get the method, right? This is a class about Ukraine, but there is no way to do national history by just doing national history, right? If you try to tell, so you might have noticed this, like you go to a party and you meet a new person, and what do you do? You talk about yourself the whole time, right? And when you talk about your yourself the whole time, what happens? The other person falls in love with you instantly and everything goes great, right? So, national history is like that.

08:03 You can't just say, oh, there's just me, me, me, me, me, right? If you just say Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine, Ukraine, I might get a lot of like thumbs up, you know, from like certain Ukrainian nationalists or whatever.

But, you can't make sense of yourself without other people, right? And you can't make sense of yourself without listening, and you can't make sense of who you really are without understanding what influences are coming in from where and what circumstances.

So if we're gonna get to Ukraine, but if we're gonna understand the Ukraine of the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, we really have to fundamentally understand the Polish system.

So we're gonna work on the Polish system or the Polish-Lithuanian system, okay.

So, the first thing to know about Poland, where I just left off, the rise of the noble estate, very important historical difference from Muscovy and from other countries like France, for example.

The rise of the noble estate.

The noble estate is in Poland, first of all, very big, about 10% of the population, which means that by the time the noble estate has a parliament and can vote, more people in Poland can vote than in any other country.

09:12 So it's a more representative system than any other country until British parliamentary reform in the 19th century.

More people can vote in Poland than anywhere else.

10% by early modern standards is a huge number to participate in politics, okay.

So it's very large.

By the 15th century, the membership has been stabilized.

So all of these groups that are like, that are very selective, you know, you know what I'm talking about.

You're at Yale, like all these selective groups, you know, that you can't get in all those groups.

So all these groups at one time were very open, right? Like, so the trick of it, like all the things which used to be which are now exclusive were once inclusive, maybe not all, okay? But you get the basic idea.

Historically, there's often a period where you can join something and then that group decides, okay, no one can join anymore.

10:05 The nobility in Poland is an example of that.

So in the 15th century, the nobility in Poland had managed to define who it was.

The nobility is gonna pass on from father to son, no one else is going to join.

Membership is stabilized.

And the nobility has by the 15th century at the latest, a sense of a common identity in Poland.

Now, what happens in the Polish system is that the power of the nobility only ever ratchets upwards.

It only ever goes upwards until the 18th century when they have a constitution and they break it.

And they have a very interesting moment of political thought, which goes on for a few years.

And then the Russians come and it's all over.

If this were a Polish history class, we'd spent a lot of time on that.

I just spent 15 seconds.

So, but for now, what we need to know is that the power of the nobility ratchets upward.

And there are logics to this.

One logic is that the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, okay? So, oh yeah, the essence of the Polish system is that they have a Lithuanian monarch, right? You remember that, right? They have a Lithuanian monarch Jogaila or Jagiello, from 1385 until until 1572.

11:18 So for almost two full centuries, they are governed by a Lithuanian dynasty, right? So the, the greatest, or at least the most interesting period of Polish history is when they had Lithuanian monarchs.

This is very important for our class, right? Because it's because there's a Lithuanian connection for Poland that there's a Ukrainian connection for Poland.

Because when Lithuania and Poland come together, Lithuania controls most of what is today Ukraine.

So, it's through the monarch, it's through Jagiello and his descendants, descendants, descendants for almost 200 years that Ukraine and Poland are in the same state.

It's through the body of the Lithuanian ruler, but the Lithuanian Grand Duke, in order to become the Polish king had to make promises to the nobility, okay? And so every time, I'm simplifying a little bit that basically every time the Lithuanian ruler dies, the Lithuanian ruler then has to go to the Polish nobility.

12:15 They make tours, actually.

They travel from castle to castle.

It's not you imagine because of, you know, you imagine that the king has a big castle and everyone comes to him.

That's a little bit later.

These were actually itinerant monarchs.

They would, you know, you'd travel from place to place.

You'd go like seasonally, you'd hunt with this person, you'd fish with this person, and that's what you would do.

You travel the entire time if you were king.

It's kind of interesting.

And so they would have to campaign to become kings of Poland.

And what do you do? What do you promise people? Well, you say things like, okay, if I agree to give you a privilege in exchange for taxes.

So there are no regular taxes.

Now think about how the state's gonna operate.

There are no regular taxes.

Every time a tax is levied on the nobility, the monarch has to give them something.

13:00 But the nobility has a sense of its own interests and is smart.

And unlike the monarch who's kind of a, it's in a one-off situation, the nobility is thinking long term.

And so what do you trade the taxes for? You trade them for rights.

You say, okay, we'll pay taxes as a one-off, but in exchange, we are gonna get rights and these rights last forever.

And they're gonna last forever because we're gonna have pieces of paper with beautiful cursive and wax, right? Okay, that's not really why, but they did have that.

But, you see the notion, you see the logic here, right? And so those rights then only accumulate over time.

And so then there's another logic to this, okay? The other logic to this besides election is that there are a few very powerful families, most of them, Lithuanian or Ukrainian, actually.

A few powerful nobles who are called magnates, M-A-G-N-A-T-E, magnates.

14:03 Magnateria was the Polish word for this group.

That if you think oligarchy today, you won't be far off.

So, and the king would be in many ways less powerful than these most powerful nobles who would tend to own hundreds of thousands of acres and have tens of thousands of serfs and be able to raise private armies of their own when they wanted to.

And so, if you're the king, you need to counterbalance the force of these magnates, of these great nobles.

And so what do you do? Again, you give rights to the nobility as a whole.

You try to bring the lesser nobility, the middle nobility over to your side.

And so in order to do that, you give them rights.

So some of these rights as they accumulate over time, are listed on your sheet.

There's the Czerwinski Privilege of 1422, which is about property rights, very familiar concept.

And it's a big concept, right? Property rights is a very important thing.

15:03 Again, remember the difference in Muscovy.

In Muscovy, if you die, I can just decide that your property is gonna go to somebody else.

I mean, you don't even have to die, but you don't have to do me the courtesy of dying.

I can just decide.

But if you die, you'll only own the property in a contingent way.

Whereas in 1422, the Polish nobility is already arranged for something, which it looks very much like property rights at Czerwinski.

1430, they get the right that they cannot be imprisoned for no reason.

Again, you might be thinking, or you might not be thinking depending on where you come from, what your background is.

That doesn't seem like a big deal, but that's a very, very big deal.

In the English tradition that will be known later as habeas corpus, that you can't just imprison somebody without giving a reason.

Again, the difference between this and Muscovy is stark.

So these basic rights that you can have property and that your body can't just be put behind bars for no reason, that establishes a fundamental kind of political, let's call it, dignity, okay.

16:03 So, and then a third thing which happens, and this is under Casimir the Jagiellon.

I think I listed these characters on your sheet.

Casimir the Jagiellon ruled in the middle end of the 15th century.

He encouraged the lower nobility to create local parliaments.

Very big deal.

Because when you talk about how this is something which is cool about the early modern period.

When you talk about how there's like democracy or assemblies, you have to look very carefully to see what's meant by this.

Because very often, and the Cossacks are a good example of this, very often when you say, okay, there was popular approval, there was voting, there was an assembly, what's really meant is like, one guy gets to stand up on a chair or at the top of a palace, which is even cooler, and like, shout out what's gonna happen.

And then ideally with a spear, you know, and then everyone else says, yeah, right? And so like, in this form of democracy, you're like, your role is reduced to saying, yeah! You don't have to do that.

17:09 Actually, you know, definitely don't do that actually, 'cause like, we'll all regret it later if you do.

But, so acclimation is one form of participation, right? And traditionally, the king and the royal council in Poland, in the capital, which at the time was Krakow, they would announce a decision and then there would be like a lot of shaking of spears and shouting.

And that would be approval, right? But under Casimir the Jagiellonian, the idea was that you can, you as the nobility can organize yourself into local parliaments, which were called Sejmikis or dietines in English.

Very awkward word, diet sounds like a regimen of eating.

But a diet is another name for a parliament.

And then the diminutive of a diet, a little diet is a dietine, okay? You definitely learned something today, right? A dietine, so if you wanna tell your friends, like, I'm just going on diet, only on Thursdays, you can call it dietine.

18:05 And they'll be like, wow, what's a dietine? And you can say, well, my History of Ukraine class, I learned that under Casimir the Jagiellon, the minor Polish nobility was encouraged to organize itself into local assemblies, which were called dietines.

Okay, now you know, you'll never forget.

So, but the, no, I don't plan these jokes.

So, but this is important because it's moving towards representation, right? Not just acclimation, but representation.

And these dietines then elect representatives who go to the central diet or in Polish, very important word in Polish, Lithuanian too, also exist at Ukrainian, Sejm, that's the name of the parliament, the lower house of the parliament, the Sejm.

And so if, you know, you guys were all minor nobles in a certain region, you could elect one of you to go to the, so then you actually do have something which is like representative democracy.

19:07 And that's a step so then you can discuss your interests over the course of the year.  
You send your representative and you actually get to vote.

The voting still had to be unanimous, which we'll talk about maybe later, that can pose a problem, as the European Union sometimes notices.

But, you had a vote, you actually had a vote.

You were, you were represented, okay.

In foreign policy, three questions for Poland.

Very quickly, I just want you to know about these things.

Mazovia, Mazovia is the central district of Poland.

It's where the current capital of Poland, Warsaw is.

Warsaw is not the historic capital of Poland.

The historic capital of Poland is Krakow.

Warsaw becomes the capital of Poland after 1569.

Krakow is the capital of Poland, historically.

Mazovia is only added the Poland in 1526.

20:01 So, the Dukes of Mazovia die out and Mazovia becomes part of Poland in 1526.

Okay. just so you know.

Second thing I need you to know, and we'll return to these guys in a couple of lectures, the Habsburgs.

There's a very important central European family called the Habsburgs who are going to emerge and they're going to be in competition with the Poles for, you know, only about half a millennium.

And they are going to, in general be making alliances with the Russians or later, with the Prussians against Poland.

And as a result of this rivalry, we get these two very interesting moments that define Poland as an East European and not a Central European country.

The first is very early, we already talked about it, when the, the Polish king Jadwiga marries Jagiello.

21:07 Jadwiga's a she, she marries Jagiello instead of marrying a Habsburg.

We talked about that a couple lectures ago.

Because Jadwiga marries Jagiello instead of marrying a Habsburg, Poland then becomes an East European country, right? Poland and Lithuania together instead of Poland and the Habsburg are together.

The second moment like this is 1515 and 1526, the early 16th century, when as part of an attempt to make peace with the Habsburgs, there is a complicated marriage deal, which I have to spend basically a whole lecture explaining in my other class.

And I'm not gonna do that now, I'm just gonna say complicated marriage deal.

The result of which is that a Pole dies in a battle in 1526.

And this is something you never wanna have happen.

His brother-in-law then inherits all of his claims.

22:02 And these include the claims to Bohemia and Hungary, which from 1526 onward are at least theoretically part of the Habsburg domain.

So that's the next part of Poland becoming an East European rather than a Central European power, okay.

The third little thing in foreign affairs that again, I just need you to note because it's gonna become important later, before we can get to, you know, Angela Merkel, and you know, Willy Brandt, and Hitler, and the Second Reich, and the unification of Germany and all of these nice things, we have to get to Prussia.

Prussia is the bit, the little tiny bit, the little tiny German state originally, which eventually will grow and expand and unite Germany in January of 1871.

Prussia at this time in the 16th century is a little tiny state, which Poland recognizes in 1563.

23:10 And Poland accepts a family called the Hohenzollerns.

I didn't write that down.

The Hohenzollerns will be allowed to govern.

That family is then going to be the princes of Prussia then the kings of Prussia, and then eventually they're going to be the rulers of Germany.

It's under them that Germany is going to be unified.

So I just mention this because later on, Prussia is gonna take advantage of moments of Polish weakness to become more important to declare itself a kingdom, declare itself independent of Poland, and so on and so on and so on, until later in the 18th century, Prussia will take part in partitioning Poland, and then Prussia will become a great power.

It will become Germany and so on.

Okay, so that's Poland in domestic and in foreign policy, very briefly.

24:03 What about the relationship between Poland and Lithuania? This is also very important.

When Poland and Lithuania come together, it raises the question of what Lithuania is and how Lithuania is different from Poland.

On the one side, Lithuanian nobles take something from Poland, which is the idea of rights, a pretty important thing to take.

So the Polish noble clans adopt, join themselves with Lithuanian noble families.

And the Lithuanian noble families take the idea that they have rights.

Up until that point, they had not had rights.

But at the same time, Lithuania remained a distinct state in the sense that you had to be a Lithuanian to serve in office under the Grand Duke of Lithuania.

And here's an important one, which we have to remember for the Cossacks later on.

In order to own land in Lithuania, you had to be a Lithuanian.

So, and remember Lithuania at the time I'm talking about means not Lithuania, today's Belaya Rus, all the way down into most of what's today's Ukraine.

25:07 So in order to own land in those places, you had to be Lithuanian, okay.

So the encounter between Poland and Lithuania is kind of a two way thing.

A Lithuanian family is ruling Poland for almost 200 years.

Fine.

The Lithuanians preserve the court of the Grand Duke in Vilnius and they have their own administration, they have their own language of law, which is, I'm gonna be so happy if you guys know this.

Chancery Slavonic, but you took the last class, right? I'm outing you, okay.

Chancery Slavonic.

So, this would be a great exam question, by the way.



The Chancery Slavonic comes from where? Cyril and Methodius trying to convert the Moravians, failing, their successors, taking the language to Bulgaria, that language coming to Kyiv as the language of religion.

26:09 Kyivan Rus taking that language and turning it into a language of politics and law.

After the fall of Kyiv to the Mongols, that language migrates to north Vilnius.

And so in this grand circle, right, which lasts, you know, eight centuries or so, by the time the Lithuanian statutes are written in the 16th century, there are three statutes of Lithuania.

And they are there in part to distinguish Lithuanian law from Polish law.

They're written in Chancery Slavonic, so the point is, this is an inheritance from Kyiv, right? This is an inheritance from Rus.

So, things are going both ways, but in general, the high culture is spreading from west to east.

So people in Poland are not learning Lithuanian, but people, nobles in Lithuania are learning the Polish language.

And this is a time in which the Polish language is very, is flowering thanks to the Renaissance and is also a powerful language of disputation, thanks to the Reformation.

27:11 So the Polish language becomes the language of the literate people in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which includes, again, Belaya Rus and Ukraine.

By about, as far as we can tell, by about 1640 most serious discussions in what's now Ukraine among theologians, educated people were taking place in the Polish language.

Okay, so this brings us to the attitude towards Moscow.

So in Lithuania, the attitude towards Moscow was necessarily different than in Poland, why? Because Lithuania was a direct neighbor of Moscow.

The Lithuanians were more or less constantly fighting wars with Moscow, the Lithuanians, most of them were Orthodox, and very often they were related to people on the other side.

28:04 And the Lithuanians, until the time, many Lithuanians at least until the time of Ivan the Terrible had the idea that we can make a deal with the Muscovites, right? The Poles might not be involved.

We can make some kind of separate deal with the Muscovites.

When this ends and when Poland and the Lithuania are brought together is with Ivan the Terrible and the Livonian wars.

I think I mentioned this a couple of lectures ago.

It's a very interesting thing to think about right now.

When Russia is fighting a war in Europe, which has had this surprising consequence of bringing European powers together.

And everyone is making historical analogies.

Is this like the first World War? Is it like the second World War? You know, is it like 1917? Is it like the Russian Revolution? But, one analogy, which people aren't making a lot, but which you guys are gonna be able to make and I'm sure you will, like, at your next party when you're talking about yourself.

I wanna tell you all about me.

29:00 I know about the 1560s.

In the Livonian Wars, that's when Ivan the Terrible, as you'll remember, that's when he overreaches, right? He has that fateful thing that you don't wanna do, which is overreach.

And the problem with overreaching is that you never know, you never know until you've done and then until it's too late.

Like that's the tragedy of overreach.

Like, should I talk about myself for five minutes or 10 minutes? Oh no, it should have been five minutes! So he overreaches in the Livonian Wars, and this has the consequence of bringing Lithuania and Poland together.

So we're now gonna tell this story not from the Muscovite point of view, but from the Lithuanian Polish point of view.

The Livonian Wars were the great opportunity for probably the greatest Polish King, who was Zygmunt II.

Sigismund II, Zygmunt II, who ruled technically from 1520 when he was crowned as a boy until 1572.

So Zygmunt II Grand Duke of Lithuania, king of Poland, he is the big winner in the Livonian Wars, whereas Ivan is the big loser.

30:09 So Livonia, you'll remember.

it sounds like a fairy tale name, right? Livonia, it's basically Latvia Estonia today.

The Livonian state is the successor of the Teutonic state in the Baltic.

Livonia exists as a German-speaking state because of the Teutonic Knights.

These are Baltic territories, which they do seize, where the Lithuanians don't stop them, they then convert to Protestantism as many Germans did.

We have to remember, I know it's tough, but like while I'm talking, the Renaissance and the Reformation are taking place, you know, not in the background, but also in the foreground.

So they convert to Protestantism and the Grandmaster of the Livonian Order asks for Polish protection.

And then they also ask in the north for Swedish protection, which leads to this very complicated war.

31:02 But from the Polish point of view, what happens is that this brings Poland and Lithuania together.

And the Livonian Wars, the Lithuanian nobles understand we have to fight Muscovy.

We're not gonna be making a deal.

And their Grand Duke, also the Polish king Zygmunt II goes to the Polish parliament and says, we need to fight a war, we need to raise taxes.

It's an interesting moment because he appears, this is a very kind of modern political moment.

He appears in Polish dress, right, in order.

So how you dress and what language you speak, very important.

He appears in Polish dress to make the speech about how we have to go to the field.

We have to raise taxes.

Oh, what is, okay, this one is really hard.

All right, although I just dropped a keyword.

What did he normally wear? What did he normally wear, do you think? - [Student] Lithuanian clothes.

- Okay, 200 years ago, that was right.

Like that's where they, when Jagiello was showed up, he was like, he was wearing fur and like unmistakably Lithuanian.

32:08 What was cool in the 1560s? Yeah.

- [Student] Well, in Polish, but basically it's something they got as a contribution from Turks and the Macedonians.

- Okay.

- [Student] In Turkish fashion.
- All right, in combat, that's true.

And we'll talk about that.

He was wearing Italianate Renaissance costume.

That's what he normally wore.

He normally wore Italian Renaissance costume.

That's what he, you know, puffy hat.

That's what he normally wore.

So on, exception because this was the Renaissance, right? I realize we hadn't enough time to get into all of this, but this was the Renaissance.

This was the Renaissance.

His mother was Italian, his court was largely Italian.

He normally wore it as one did at the time, he normally looked Italian, okay? So with the Zygmunt II dresses in Polish garb, calls parliament in order to raise taxes, right? So, remember this is the way it works back then.

33:03 Parliament shows up.

What are you gonna give me? We're gonna give you some land after a war.

What else are you gonna give me? Okay, I'm gonna give you a bunch of land that was also part of the deal.

Zygmunt II gave the nobles a bunch of land.

What else are you gonna give me? Okay, we'll let you elect the kings.

Promise, you can elect the next king, because theoretically they've been electing kings for a long time.

But somehow it always worked out that even though there was an election, it was always a Jagiello.

It was like one Jagiello after another for, so, you know, for 200 years.

Okay, fine, next time you can really elect the king.

And that actually the next time they really did elect the king, which is another chapter which we're gonna get to.

So Zygmunt II, this is like a wonderful story of like, of a king achieving, overcoming his own youth.

In his youth, he had like various Lithuanian romances, and there was a Lithuanian prince who thought he had 'em in his back pocket because of these romances, but no, Zygmunt II gathers the Lithuanians and the Poles, goes to the battlefield, they win the Livonian Wars, basically.

34:02 Poland expands northward into Livonia, and Lithuania takes part, Poland takes part.

And in trying to then establish a new political equilibrium, Zygmunt II does the thing which begins to define what Ukraine is going to be.

And that is that Zygmunt II in something called the Union of Lublin, 1569 recreates Poland-Lithuania, not as a personal union.

So for 200 years, it's been a personal union.

You're the Grand Duke and you're the Polish King.

Now it's gonna be a constitutional union.

So by definition, the leader of Poland and the leader of Lithuania, you're gonna be the same person constitutionally, okay? And that person's gonna be elected, great.

And we're gonna call it a republic.

It's the Polish-Lithuanian Republic, Rzeczpospolita.

35:00 But, and here's the but, which is crucial to Ukrainian history.

Zygmunt II in the Union of Lublin, and it seems like a footnote to the Poles and also sometimes the Lithuanians, but for the Ukrainians is not a footnote at all.

In the Union of Lublin, it's still a Polish Lithuanian state.

But the border between Poland and Lithuania is changed drastically, such that now the Ukrainian part is part of the Polish crown, and Lithuania is much smaller than it was before.

Why is this so important? This is hugely important because it means that suddenly, no longer is there Lithuanian law in Ukraine, but now there is Polish law in Ukraine.

So just to give you a very important central example.

Now, Polish nobles can own land in Ukraine, which is, it's like the opening of the frontier, basically.

In fact, it is like an opening in the frontier because these are rich lands, agricultural lands.

And again, I know this stuff is happening in the background and is tough, but this is also the age of discovery, the age of exploration.

36:05 It's the first globalization, the 16th century, and all that grain that you can raise by enserfing Ukrainian peasants, you can then sell on the world market and get gold and silver.

So suddenly, it's like a globalization, which involves the Ukrainian steppe.

Okay, and so anyway, but I wanna be clear, there's now a new line which didn't exist before.

There was never a line.

If you imagine the northern border of Ukraine now, Ukrainian Belaya Rus, that line was never there before.

As of 1569, there is something like that line.

As of 1569, the notions of Ukraine and Belaya Rus start to make sense.

That old territory, which is all part of Rus, now will follow two distinct routes.

The Belaya Russian part will have more to do with Lithuania.

The Ukrainian part will have more to do with Poland, dramatically to do with Poland.

Okay, what's all the drama? What's all the drama? Number one, the drama is language.

37:05 The drama is language.

In the Renaissance, there's something called the language question, which is fateful for, you know, many of us.

The written language question is, do you keep using Latin or do you take the vernacular and you turn the vernacular into a language of literature and education? So up until that time, it was normal for universities to be using Latin, and it was normal to write, even novels, correspondence in Latin.

But in the language question, which was answered by Dante, and the answer was, make up Italian, create in Italian, which is, it sounds easy when I say it that way, but it's actually an extraordinary achievement to take a vernacular and turn it to a written language and then have that version of the written language be accepted by everyone.

It's an extraordinary thing, right? In England, it's largely a matter of Shakespeare or the King James Bible.

But, you know, so the language question, what's the answer, right? So some places it might seem more or less obvious, like, okay, you take a version of French or version of English, but in Ukraine, what's the answer? What's the answer to the language question in Ukraine? You have old church Slavonic, which is still around somewhere.

38:16 You have the Ukrainian vernacular, which is perfectly well exists.  
 And you have Polish.  
 And all these things are possible, right? These are all possible answers to the language question.  
 But the way it's answered, the actual answer to the language question in Ukraine is Polish, as I said before.  
 So people start writing in a language which isn't an ancient language, which is not Greek, it's not old church Slavonic, it's not Latin, it's Polish.  
 But this answer to the language question is fundamentally different from the other answers elsewhere.  
 If the answer to the language question in Poland is Polish, that means suddenly everybody has the same, not everybody, but many people have the same language, top to bottom, right? The nobles and the peasants can be speaking the same language.

39:01 In France, the same.  
 England, the same, Germany the same.  
 But in Ukraine, if the answer to the language question is Polish, then suddenly roughly one to two, maybe three percent of the population has one language, and 97% and 98% has another.  
 That's a very different social outcome, very different social outcome.  
 So the language question always gets answered in terms of the modern language, but it doesn't always get answered in terms of the vernacular, right? So that's one thing which is very dramatic about the situation.  
 Secondly, which is very dramatic, is religion.  
 So again, while I'm telling you about the Czerwinski Privilege, while I'm telling you about these Polish details, the Reformation is going on.  
 And the Reformation is going on also in Poland.  
 And in Poland in the 16th century, most of the nobility actually goes Protestant.  
 So like during the period, which the Poles find themselves find the most interesting, which is the 16th century, they had a Lithuanian dynasty, and they had a Protestant parliament, which is just worth remembering, small talk for your Polish friends.

40:02 And in Ukraine, you also have the Reformation.  
 But in the Reformation in Ukraine is going to involve Protestants, it's going to involve Catholics in the Counter-Reformation, but the population is mostly Orthodox, right? This is Rus, this is Eastern Christianity.  
 So you have a Reformation and a Counter-Reformation, which are overlaying onto this population, which is mainly Orthodox.  
 And the Reformation and Counter-Reformation are gonna go through all kinds of gymnastics.  
 And the elite families are gonna, they're first gonna go Protestant, and then they're gonna go Catholic.  
 And it's all very interesting.  
 But at the end of the day, what happens is that after about three generations of this, you're going to have a top layer of the Ukrainian population, generally the richest nobles.  
 The people who also own a lot of land and a lot of serfs, they're gonna be Roman Catholic, and they're also gonna be the same people who are speaking Polish, right? So that's the second thing which happens.  
 There's a new religious question.

41:01 And then the final thing which is going to happen, which I've already suggested, is the social question.  
Suddenly, Poles can own land in Ukraine.  
So if you're an ambitious Polish noble with maybe not enough land, you go east, right? And you go east with European land management practices, and you go east with your almost certainly Jewish manager, right, and his family, and you go off and you colonize and you make money.  
And then the local Ukrainians who see what you were doing, the local Ukrainian nobles, they immediately copy what you're doing.  
They also insert their peasants.  
They also take a surplus.  
They also sell it up to the Vistula River into Europe and the wider world if they can.  
And so the result of this is that you have suddenly a population which is ever less free, which enserfed, which is bound to the land.  
And you have a noble class, which is small.

42:00 So I said in Poland as a whole, 10% of the population is noble, yes.  
In some places, more.  
Mazovia, it's like 25%, right? So basically in Mazovia, if you're not a noble, you have some explaining to do.  
But, in Ukraine, 1%, 2%, okay? So 1%, 2% of the population owns the land, controls much of the rest of the population, largely speaks Polish, and is largely Roman Catholic.  
And that whole transformation takes place very quickly.  
Three generations from about 1569 to the 1640s.  
That's the Polish connection.  
So, on the one side Polish connection, very beautiful, right? The Polish connection means variety.  
The Polish connection means the Renaissance.  
The Polish connection means a whole lot of really interesting theological disputes.  
The Polish connection means that the Ukrainian clerics start their own academies and use Greek, force themselves to learn Greek, which they'd been, you know, lazy about for the previous six centuries.

43:09 But now they do it and they learn Latin, and they learn Polish, and they learn French.  
And you know, and they become some most interesting debaters because they have a lot, frankly, they have a lot to handle.  
They have to handle the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.  
They also have to handle after 1596, something called the Union of Brest, which is an attempt to bring the Catholic and the Orthodox churches together.  
They have a lot to talk about, and they learn how to do it, right? The Polish connection means the Baroque.  
It means fabulous architecture, right? The Saint Sophia, as it stands today in Kyiv is not the same one, which was built sadly in the 11th century.  
It's a kind of Baroque reconstruction, and it's very beautiful.  
And there are lots of churches in Ukraine that are very beautiful, but they're in a kind of Orthodox Baroque style, right? So the, the Polish connection is very interesting.

44:01 It's very beautiful.  
It's also hugely polarizing because it puts a small number of people with one language and

one religion, and who have property rights against a much larger group of people who have none of those three people, which leads us to the Cossacks.

So, the Cossacks are free people who manage to escape this system.

They escape the system in which either you are a noble or a serf, right? That's the Polish system.

They escape that system by going into the steppe, right, into the steppe into what's now the southeast of Ukraine.

They have their headquarters and what they call the Sich in the middle of the Dniepr River, they farm, they fish, and they raid.

They raid the Crimean Khanate, which we're gonna talk about.

Sometimes they even try to raid Istanbul.

45:00 And they survive by being out of reach.

They are at the fringes though of the Polish system, and they understand the Polish system, and many of them are educated by some of them anyway, like Bohdan Khmelnytsky, they're educated by Jesuits, right? They know the Polish system and they have the idea of rights, very important idea.

They have the idea of rights.

They have the idea that if we were nobles, we would have rights, right? And the Cossacks wanna be in the Polish system, but they're not allowed into the Polish system because the existing Polish nobility won't let them into the Polish system.

So there's a compromise, which is struck, which is called being a registered Cossack.

So, there was a list of a few thousand Cossacks who had some kind of status in the Polish state, and then the rest of them were called unregistered Cossacks, and they had no kind of status in the Polish state.

Every time Poland wanted to fight a war, the Cossacks suddenly became very important.

46:00 And this, by the way, was the period when the Poles were extraordinarily successful on the battlefield, late 16th century, early 17th century, when they were defeating the Ottomans and they were defeating the Russians.

In the early 17th century circa 1620, Poland is bigger than it ever will be, ever will be before or again.

And that's when the Cossacks are essentially serving as infantry.

And the Polish nobility is serving as cavalry.

And they fight extraordinarily well together.

It's not a combination you would wish to face on the battlefield.

But in 1648, this all breaks up.

And you've heard some about this already.

The underlying reasons are what I talked about, the social, religious, and linguistic differences.

The precipitating reason has to do with the Cossacks themselves and whether or not Cossacks are part of the Polish state or not.

In particular, this guy whose name I probably forget to write down, write down Khmelnytsky Bohdan.

47:12 He has a claim which has to do with his wife and property.

And he's unable to get his claim through the Polish courts.

And at least, in legend, the king laughs at him, you know, and he naturally thinks, if I were a Polish noble, I would have access to the Polish courts.

And he doesn't, and so he does what you do when you don't have access to the law, which is that he rebels.

But he rebels at a time, this is the 1640s, at a time when the Cossacks were all gathered anyway on the field for what was going to be a war against the Ottoman Empire.

And instead of fighting against the Ottoman Empire, Khmelnytsky rouses them to fight against the Poles.

This happens at a time when the Polish king dies, which means that there's a while when the Cossacks have a great deal of success on the battlefield fighting whom? This is important.

48:04 Fighting generally the Polish speaking Roman Catholic, Ukrainian nobility, right? This is largely a, this is not how it is in the Ukrainian textbooks, but this is largely a Ukrainian-Ukrainian Civil War.

At least at the beginning.

It's the Cossacks against the Ukrainized, the Polandized Roman Catholic Polish-speaking local Ukrainian nobility, until the Polish army eventually shows up and turns the tide.

When the Polish army shows up and turns the tide, we have a very fateful moment.

And the very fateful moment is that the Cossacks have to seek an ally.

Up until about that time, their ally had been the Crimean Tatars, the Crimean Khanate.

As of 1654, the Crimean Khanate has withdrawn, the Cossacks are losing to the Polish state.

And so they need an ally.

And for an ally, they find this fairly exotic and unknown to them state, which we've talked about a little bit.

49:02 And we'll talk about more in the next lecture, which is Muscovy.

And after that, everything changes, thanks.