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Author's Subject: new book: Mazur on Pereslavl-Zalesskii

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<<http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-EarlySlavic&month=1307&week=e&msg=XR/d51KcN6X3N1eTBcqJQg&user=&pw=>>

L. D. Mazur. *Pereslavl'-Zalesskii v XVII stoletii: opyt istoriko-gradostroitel'nogo analiza s prilozheniem perepisnoi knigi 1677 goda Stepana Timofeevicha Saltykova i pod'iachego Iakima Sharapova*. Moskva: OOO "Kolliazh," 2012. 92 pp. ISBN 978-5-904130-28-2.

This modestly produced book is not the best introduction to Pereslavl'-Zalesskii, even though both the town and the book deserve one's attention. One might better start by looking at William Brumfield's "Pereslavl-Zalessky: Reviving spiritual culture," published on-line on 23 November 2012 as part of his now 80 + (and counting) illustrated series of essays for Rossiiskaia gazeta's "Russia beyond the headlines" <http://rbth.ru/articles/2012/11/23/resurrecting_pereslavl-zalesskys_cultural_treasures_20377.html>. The architecture of the town's many churches and monasteries is important and in Brumfield's elegant photos, striking in the landscapes on the shores of Lake Pleschcheevo, where Peter the Great built his first "fleet" and where the local museum preserves his "botik" *Fortuna*. For those interested in Russian architecture, Pereslavl'-Zalesskii is best known for the Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior, begun in 1152 by Iurii Dolgorukii, one of the oldest masonry churches in northeastern Rus. Also of considerable interest architecturally is the tent-roofed Church of the Metropolitan Peter built in 1585. Apart from Brumfield's essay, an accessible introduction to the architecture is M. A. Il'in's Ch. 2 in his *Put' na Rostov Velikii (ot Aleksandrova do Rostova Iaroslavskogo)* (1975; in the pocket guidebook series, *Dorogi k prekrasnomu*).

Mazur, who is affiliated with the Department of the History of Architecture and City Construction in the Moscow Architectural Institute, sets as the goal here the reconstruction of the town's plan in the 17th century. The analysis offers an solidly based example of how one might approach such a task, which had not previously been attempted for Pereslavl'-Zalesskii, even though it has been done for other early Russian towns. As is well known, the challenge arises because of Catherine the Great's imposition of rational city planning across Russia, with the result that the old, meandering parish boundaries and streets disappeared under an Enlightenment grid of rectangles and squares. While the volume of her new city plans that was published in the *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* may include the dotted outlines of the old streets under the new grids, it is important to locate, as Mazur has done, any city maps which antedate the 1780s. Among those reproduced (in marginal quality) here is one drawn in connection with the Catherine's earlier decision to secularize church lands.

To go back beyond that requires especially sifting through cadastral data and various other inventories of town resources compiled in the 17th and early 18th centuries. Of the several tax censuses for

Pereslavl'-Zalesskii, only that from 1677 has survived; its publication here in, presumably, accurate form is valuable, since the previous publication by N. A. Naidenov in 1884 in a collection of documents on the socio-economic and demographic history of the town was riddled with errors. As was typical for the early cadastres, that from 1677 records only males, unless there was a widow who was thus head of a household. Unfortunately, the structure of the cadastre does not permit one to divine a street plan, although the population was recorded by the separate quarters in which it resided.

Mazur spends some time discussing the distribution of the various social classes within the town's quarters and where possible provides some comparative statistics on social change for the 17th century. It is clear from the catalogue of the town's woes that, like so many early Russian towns, it suffered all too often from invasion, fires, and neglect, although the fact that it today is something of a "provincial backwater" (when the railroad was built in the 19th century it bypassed the town) has helped preserve the traditional character of the region. Much has been lost: notably, fragments of the 12th-century frescoes in the Transfiguration Cathedral, which were boxed up when Catherine decided to have the church re-painted, but then never sent off for safekeeping. However, as Brumfield has documented, extensive restoration of the surviving churches is still underway.

The book has a bibliography, the complete text of the 1677 cadastre, accompanied by carefully compiled indexes to its geographic and personal names, and reproduces (with new captioning) the Catherinian plan for the town's reconstruction, earlier maps from 1754 and the 1770s, and the author's reconstructions of the 17th-century plan of the town's center and the town within its larger region. My copy of the book has a loose inserted replacement page 25, since the original page did not print properly.

My somewhat limited experience in using the old city cadastres (for Khlynov/Viatka) reinforces the impression gained here that there is a huge amount of interesting information yet to be had from their detailed analysis. Mazur's book alerts us though to the likelihood that the many late 19th-century editions of the texts probably should all be re-done, and, of course, there are undoubtedly many more awaiting first publication.