

Prehistoric Ukraine, as a part of the Pontic steppe in Eastern Europe, played an important role in Eurasian cultural contacts, including the spread of the Chalcolithic, the Bronze Age, Indo-European migrations and the domestication of the horse.[1][2][3]

Part of Scythia in antiquity and settled by Getae in the migration period, Ukraine is also the site of early Slavic expansion, and enters history proper with the establishment of the medieval state of Kievan Rus', which emerged as a powerful nation in the Middle Ages but disintegrated in the 12th century. After the middle of the 14th century, present-day Ukrainian territories came under the rule of three external powers:[4]

the Golden Horde

the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland – during the 16th century these lands came under the rule of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland, then of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (from 1569)

the Crimean Khanate (from the 15th century)

After a 1648 rebellion of the Cossacks against the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky agreed to the Treaty of Pereyaslav in January 1654. The exact nature of the relationship established by this treaty between the Cossack Hetmanate and Russia remains a matter of scholarly controversy.[5] The agreement precipitated the Russo-Polish War of 1654–67. In consequence, by the Treaty of Perpetual Peace, signed in 1686, the eastern portion of Ukraine (east of the Dnieper River) was to come under Russian rule,[6] 146,000 rubles were to be paid to Poland as compensation for the loss of the Right Bank of Ukraine,[7] and the parties agreed not to sign a separate treaty with the Ottoman Empire.[7] The treaty was strongly opposed in Poland and was not ratified by the Polish–Lithuanian Sejm (parliament) until 1710.[7][8] The legal legitimacy of its ratification has been disputed.[9] According to Jacek Staszewski, the treaty was not confirmed by a resolution of the Sejm until its 1764 session.