

✓ Mykhailo Hrushevsky, *History of Ukraine-Rus'*. Volume 8: *The Cossack Age, 1626-1650*. Translated by Marta Daria Olynyk. Edited by Frank E. Sysyn, Editor-in-Chief, with the assistance of Myroslav Yurkevich. Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2002. Pp. lxxxii + 808. Glossary, maps, notes [i.e., appendices], bibliography, index.

Mykhailo Hrushevsky was both the first great historian of Ukraine and one of the major creators of modern Ukrainian nationalism, spreading the already nascent national consciousness of the nineteenth century intelligentsia into a broader audience—in particular the urban middle classes—through his massive ten-volume *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, while at the same time laboring unceasingly for the Ukrainian political cause. His *History* has rightly been regarded as an important contribution in its own right, challenging a long-standing Russian historiographical tradition that

found its fullest nineteenth century expression in the work of V. O. Kliuchevskii. Following the establishment of the Peter Jacyk Centre for Ukrainian Historical Research at the University of Alberta in the late 1980s, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies there and the newly founded Centre undertook to publish an English translation of all ten volumes (in eleven books) of Hrushevsky's *magnum opus*.

Under the general editorship of Frank Sysyn, whose important monograph *Between Poland and the Ukraine: The Dilemma of Adam Kysil, 1600-1653* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute [Distributed by Harvard University Press], 1985) is well-known to readers of this journal, volume 1 of this series, dealing with the early medieval period was published in 1997 (the volume editor was the great Byzantinist and Kievan Rus scholar, Andrzej Poppe of Warsaw). The next volume to appear was number 7: *The Cossack Age to 1625*, published in 1999 and edited by Serhii Plokhly and Sysyn. The present volume is the first to be reviewed in this journal. (In the interests of full disclosure of possible conflict of interests in this review, I should note that I am currently scheduled to be the editor for volume 4, which deals with the late medieval period.) Each volume in the series translates Hrushevsky's text and notes in full, and corrects them if need be, provides an editorial assessment of his work in the context of modern historiography, and updates the scholarly literature published since Hrushevsky wrote. Overall, the project represents both an important venture and a major contribution to—indeed a growing maturation and critical sophistication of—contemporary Ukrainian scholarship.

The eighth volume of Hrushevsky's history picks up the story following the Cossack defeat at Lake Kurukove (1625), traces the next quarter century, and culminates in the failure of the Zboriv Agreement, following which "the decision to break irrevocably with Poland was broached in Ukrainian political circles." (p. 2) This periodization reflects Hrushevsky's own distinctive views, for it broke with both Polish and Ukrainian historiography that traditionally used royal reigns as the basis for divisions. For him, the quarter century treated in this volume (originally published in three parts) constituted "a great and crucial epoch in the life of our nation," (p. 416) The most dramatic developments of this period were a series of unsuccessful Cossack-led revolts, followed by a decade of repression and Cossack stagnation that culminated in the explosion of a "national war" (Hrushevsky uses this phrase in his Preface to Part 1), the Khmelnytsky (Polish: Chmielnicki) Uprising, that "left no room for any enduring compromise with nobiliary Poland on the part of an independent Ukraine." (p. 2) The events of 1648 represented in Hrushevsky's view are the apogee of an era whose crucial character was, for Ukraine, what the Reformation was for Germany and the Revolution of 1789 was for France (see Sysyn's note 1, p. xxxi).

At one level, the treatment of this period appears similar to the approach reflected in the previous volume: long descriptions of heroic battles against a variety of enemies. Certainly there is much of this kind of dramatic narrative, and Hrushevsky's ability to evoke personality and color in his text shows him to have been a powerful literary stylist. But it would be a mistake to see nothing beyond this recitation of events. This volume, in particular, reflects a remarkable analysis of little studied sources, especially for the years prior to 1638. He really was the first to establish a solid empirical basis upon which to study the events and developments he treated. (Earlier volumes in his history had characteristically been reworkings of source material that had been much studied and subjected to a variety of syntheses). For the second half of the volume, his problem was the opposite, for surrounding the Khmelnytsky era were numerous legends, some based in sources from the 17th century, others developed in the 18th and elaborated in the 19th. Hrushevsky's task was to re-examine these materials, use many new sources that had been little exploited by previous scholars, and present an interpretation that attempted to clear away mythic traditions without historic basis. His view of this period (and of Khmelnytsky himself) was not one that found universal acceptance—certainly not among Polish and Russian historians, and not even in some Ukrainian historical circles. For contemporary scholarship, one of the great contributions of Hrushevsky's text is that he utilized and quoted extensively from sources now lost or—in the case of materials in Soviet archives—long unavailable and only now gradually becoming decessable.

There are other strengths to Hrushevsky's work beyond its empirical foundations. Let me mention only a few here. His populist concerns for the "masses" ensured that there is an inner history in his pages that complements the external narration of events. His rethinking of Ukrainian history, especially with respect to the role of elites both secular and clerical, provided stimulating new departures in assessing Ukrainian cultural and ecclesiastical history. His treatment of Peter Mohyla, Orthodox metropolitan of Kiev (Kyiv), and of Mohylan reforms is particularly crucial to his understanding of the Ukrainian nation and independent Ukrainian culture. His reconstruction of the structure and policies of the Cossack Host represents a major advance over what had characterized previous scholarship. Further, his analysis of Khmelnytsky's motivation and his assessment of the Hetman were also important contributions reflected in his history. His challenge to "statist" historiography, consistent with his populism, also represents a step forward in the historiographical debate of his time. Finally, in what can here be only an inadequately brief identification of important points, it should be noted that Hrushevsky's treatment of Jewish-Ukrainian relations in the Khmelnytsky uprising was in many ways remarkably subtle and complex, reflecting an even-handedness that was not characteristic of the era in which he was writing.

One of the very great strengths of this particular volume, apart from the substance of Hrushevsky's own scholarship, is the superb editorial contribution by Frank Sysyn. His insights in the extensive Introduction (and, incidentally, in his comments at the session devoted to Hrushevsky at the Polish Institute's Annual Meeting in Montreal in June 2003) are particularly valuable. Moreover, his command of contemporary scholarship insures that current historiography is fully taken into account. The extensive additions, with analyses, to Hrushevsky's seven "Notes" (pp. 655-718) on materials published since the 1920s is especially impressive. The English translation by Olynyk represents something of a triumph. (She is also the translator for the forthcoming two parts of volume 9 of Hrushevsky's history.) The structure of Hrushevsky's long, complex sentences presented particular problems, and many of these have been broken up to make them more readable. In addition, there is much archaic, specialized language in his text. This includes 17th century Ukrainian material and both Hrushevsky's own Ukrainian translations from sources as well as passages he cited in languages other than Ukrainian—all of which have been rendered in a very accessible way. As a result, readers of English will find a fluid translation and colloquial text that reflects Olynyk's background in literary translation. The series was fortunate to be able to rely upon her skill.

Hrushevsky's *History of Ukraine-Rus'* does not, in many ways, meet contemporary historiographical standards. New archival materials that escaped even his indefatigable research have become available. Moreover the concerns and standards of social and cultural history in the 21st century are not well met in his text. The profoundly nationalist context within which he worked and wrote also means that much of his history has been partially superseded by the criteria of empirical evidence. Modern critical concerns mandate new kinds of history. But all that having been said, his work in this volume is still the starting point for the study of early modern Ukrainian history. For anyone interested in the history of this region, his interpretation is still a challenging one and his work is essential. The publication of this volume in English translation—indeed, the whole multi-volume project—is both a historiographical and a cultural landmark.