

Hrushevsky, Mykhailo. *History of Ukraine-Rus'*. Vol. 8, *The Cossack Age, 1626–1650*. Edited by Frank E. Sysyn. Translated by Marta Daria Olynyk. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2002. lxxxi + 808 pp. \$90.00. ISBN 1-895571-32-4.

This book is nothing less than a monumental work. Although the translation of over seven hundred pages of scholarly prose is itself a monumental achievement, the publication also testifies to Mykhailo Hrushevsky's dedication and perseverance in writing and publishing such a tome during the revolutionary years between 1905 and 1917, the skill of his narrative and comprehensiveness of his research, and his imposing scholarly stature among Ukrainians many decades after his death.

In both sweeping scope and meticulous detail Hrushevsky chronicles the failure of various attempts to reach a mutually satisfactory *modus vivendi* between the Ukrainian Cossacks and the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth between 1625 and 1650. In a period characterized by religious strife between Orthodox and Uniates, and attempts by the Cossacks to preserve their traditional rights and privileges in the face of government constraint, some Ukrainians sought accommodation with the Polish crown, while others became increasingly alienated. Hrushevsky characterizes "the great masses of the Ukrainian people" on the eve of the Khmelnytsky uprising as "deprived of rights" and "angry and hostile" to the Commonwealth (p. 346). While the Cossack leadership continued to seek compromise, even after the Cossack rebellion and the routing of the Polish Army in 1648, the masses could not settle for a return to the past. They prepared for war and ruthlessly destroyed all vestiges of Polish rule. By 1649, Bohdan Khmelnytsky and the Cossack leadership were pushed into a "decisive breach with Poland" and subsequently sought to create a "sovereign

state." Hrushevsky ends his narrative with the Zboriv Agreement, which Khmelnytsky was forced to conclude upon the defection in August 1649 of his ally, the Crimean Khan. This "hopeless" agreement reversed the Ukrainian gains of 1648 and set the stage for future conflict.

Although the fate of Ukraine as a nation is a central part of Hrushevsky's story, this is no simple nationalist melodrama. He demonstrates the Cossack leadership's pursuit of "class interests" prior to 1637 and its reluctance to get involved in a "people's war against Poland" in 1648 (pp. 414, 429). In spite of his insistence that the rebellion was preceded by "a single unending series of national wrongs" (p. 357), he devotes considerable attention to the various, ultimately unsuccessful, efforts aimed at compromise. His portrait of Khmelnytsky is a balanced, critical study that is informed by the insight that Khmelnytsky's biography is "as short on verifiable facts as it is long on legends" (p. 376). Those in the historical profession who still value rigorous positivist analysis and meticulous source criticism will discover in this work several examples of those venerable arts.

Frank Sysyn's introductory essay "Assessing the 'Crucial Epoch'" situates this volume in the context of Hrushevsky's scholarly career and provides interesting insights into his life during the time he was writing it. Sysyn also provides an excellent assessment of Hrushevsky's reception and historical legacy in the twentieth century. The editor has also supplied detailed additions to Hrushevsky's extensive notes on the scholarly literature about the period (pp. 655-703) and these are a particularly indispensable guide to Ukrainian and Polish historiography. These additions will make the volume requisite reading for specialists in East Slavic history, religion, and culture. A detailed editorial preface clearly explains the conventions adopted for terms, titles, translation practices, and conversion from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar. The editorial board elected to use Ukrainian names for places on "Ukrainian ethnic territory" and local names or commonly accepted English forms in other cases. The overall tendency is to employ contemporary Ukrainian forms (hence, for example, Oziv in place of Hrushevsky's Azov). The preface clearly explains how recurring terms are translated and an extensive glossary (pp. lxx-lxxv) assists the curious reader in tracking down terms. The volume is also enhanced by the addition of four maps and an extensive index.

The translation itself is an excellent achievement. Comparison with the original (the edition I used is Mykhailo Hrushevsk'kyi, *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy*, vol. 8, [New York, 1956], henceforth "the original") demonstrates that it reproduces the tenor of Hrushevsky's scholarly prose. Marta Daria Olynyk can also be congratulated for making the full scope of Hrushevsky's narrative available in English for first time. Extensive passages of seventeenth-century primary source material ranging from Ukrainian folk songs to learned ecclesiastical discourses are translated with care and precision. In spite of the size of the text, it is well edited and contains few noticeable glitches.

It is admirable that the volume retains contemporary terms such as the ethnonym *Liakh* for Ukrainian references to Poles and *Cherkasian* for Russian references to Ukrainians. Surprisingly, however, no explanation is given for the decision to translate *zhyd* as "Jew" in virtually all contexts. This is even more interesting given the fact that the translator chose to render the word *chern'* in various ways according to perceived connotation: in some situations as "rabble," in others as "common people," and in others as "rank and file" (p. lxx). Given the importance of Ukrainian-Jewish friction in the period covered in the book and during subsequent centuries, the term *zhyd* would seem to have merited at least a brief discussion, if only to inform the modern reader that in early modern usage it is not necessarily pejorative.

The editor and translator deserve to be commended for their decision to retain the term *Rus'* and its derivatives throughout the text in order to accurately convey early modern conventions. While the decision to employ the term "Ruthenian" for both the adjective *rus'kyi* and the ethnonym *rusyn* conforms to accepted conventions, in certain contexts the terms "Rus'ian" and "Rusyn" might have provided a more appropriate reflection of seventeenth-century semantics. The rendering of *Rossia* (in reference to Ukraine) as "Rus'," however, is less justified. Thus in place of "remember how *Rossia* used to be" (original, pt. 1 p. 185) we find "remember how Rus' used to be" (p. 144).

It is noteworthy that both Ukrainians and Russians were using the term *Rossia* simultaneously to denote their respective territories, but this is not apparent from the translation or notes.

In one important case word choice seems to have been influenced by modern, rather than early modern, political concerns. The term *piddanstvo*, which in the book is usually translated as "subjugation," "submission," or "subordination" (p. lxxiii), becomes "vassalage" in a particularly crucial situation: Hrushevsky's statement that Khmelnytsky "developed the concept of Ukraine's vassalage to the Muscovite tsar" (p. 557, corresponding to pt. 3 p. 173 in the original). Given the acrimonious debates that have raged for centuries over the Pereiaslav events, this case represents a curious, but not necessarily conscious, deviation from the standard pattern on the part of the translator.

Finally, I find the translator's treatment of the term *ukraina* (from which the country name is derived) and its derivatives to be somewhat problematic. They are rendered throughout as "borderland," conflating them with Ukrainian *pohranyche*, which clearly carries connotations of borders and is used frequently by Hrushevsky and the authors he cites, thereby diminishing any connotations of peripherality implied in the original. That the terms are different is demonstrated by the fact that they sometimes occur together as in the case of "*do pohranychnykh, ukrainnykh voievod*" (original, pt. 3 p. 243). The translator renders this phrase as "to the voevodas on the steppe borderland" (p. 617). In my opinion, the term frontier conveys many of the connotations of the original and does not skirt the problem of an *ukraina* being a territory situated at the edge or outer extremity of a geographic unit such as city, country, or region. The use of "borderland" is also problematic in adjectival cases such as "*ukrains'ki zemli*," which is rendered in one place in the text (here p. 551, in the original pt. 3 p. 166) simply as "borderlands" (avoiding the necessary redundancy of "borderland lands") but in another as "Ukrainian lands" (here p. 179, in the original pt. 1 p. 228). The latter is one of several cases in which the translator chose the modern, national meaning over other possibilities. This choice particularly comes into play in statements such as those on page 349 (corresponding to pt. 2 p. 120 in the original) in which a primary source from the seventeenth century is presented as speaking about the "Ukrainian people." This preference gives the clear impression that rather than residents of frontier districts the author is talking about members of a community defined as Ukrainian with a capital "U."

These examples only testify to the soundness of the national edifice that Hrushevsky's historical narrative has helped to construct. In ambiguous cases the national reading has become the natural one. While Hrushevsky's study is still a major contribution to the history of the early modern period, its lasting value transcends its historiographic relevance to discussions of the seventeenth century. It is of fundamental value in tracing the history of modern Ukrainian identity and Ukrainian nationalism because it provided a Whig interpretation of history and made seventeenth-century events relevant to twentieth-century Ukrainians. Herbert Butterfield defined the Whig interpretation of history in 1931 as "the study of the past with direct and perpetual reference to the present," and when re-reading Hrushevsky I was struck by the extent to which his text is permeated with modern terminology: "national Ukrainian policy" (p. 3), "an explosion of Ukrainian irredentism" (p. 100), "a final, decisive struggle for national existence" (p. 108), "conservative Cossacks' national sentiment" (p. 183), "storehouse of Ukrainian revolutionary energy" (p. 217), "Ukrainian intelligentsia" (p. 253), "organic unity of the people's life" (p. 293), "Polish regime" (p. 347), "a national war" (p. 358), "Ukrainian patriot" (p. 357), "the size of the Ukrainian army" (p. 98), "the idea of Ukrainian statehood" (p. 518), "Ukrainian government," "Ukrainian politicians" and "the Ukrainian question" (p. 524), "liberated Ukrainian territory" (p. 602). By speaking and writing about seventeenth-century Ukraine as a modern nation, Hrushevsky gave contemporary concerns grounding in a Ukrainian past. To his credit, however, these modern parallels mainly cluster in introductory and concluding sections of his chapters.

It would be a shame if this handsome volume only finds its way onto the bookshelves of émigré families and into the syllabi of Ukrainian studies programs. It deserves the attention of a wider audience. Although the size of the volume prohibits the possibility of assigning the whole text to undergraduates, its quality makes it essential for research on various aspects of the history

of east central Europe. Excerpts from it should become required reading for courses on the history of eastern and central Europe in the early modern period and also for seminars on nationalism and historiography. While some will want to read Hrushevsky for genuine insights into the history of early modern Ukraine, others will read this work as one of the great, monumental, multivolume grand narratives of modernity and nationalism.

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