

Fall-Winter
2014

Mykhailo Hrushevsky. *History of Ukraine-Rus'* Vol. 6: *Economic, Cultural, and National Life in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries*. Translated by Leonid Heretz. Myron M Kapral, Consulting Editor and Frank E Sysyn, Series Editor, with the assistance of Uliana M Paicznyk. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press: 2012. lxxii + 619 pp. \$119.95. Review by CAROL B. STEVENS, COLGATE UNIVERSITY.

Volume 6 of Mykhailo Hrushevsky's *History of Ukraine-Rus'*, which focuses on life in Ukraine between Kyiv and the Cossack Age, was originally published in 1907 from Kyiv. The book offers an interpretation of the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries as transitional. Hrushevsky was faced with the difficult task of trying to distinguish the Ruthenian/Ukrainian elements within multi-national and changeable boundaries—a process that is key in Hrushevsky's definition of a nation as a people rather than a political unit. At the same time, there are no clear characteristics that delimit the period in question. Rather, the interaction of a variety of economic, cultural, political and religious factors frames the analysis.

The first two sections of the book offer a detailed discussion of the changing economic conditions in Eastern and Western Ukraine from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Hrushevsky argues that the nature of Ukrainian economic life changed dramatically during the Polish-Lithuanian period. Urban commercial centers and urban manufacturing, so important in Old Rus' life, declined rapidly from the thirteenth century, and in particular under Poland-Lithuania. Among other things, this took place in the context of Polish protectionism, noble controls, and competition from Polish cities. On the other hand, village economies grew significantly over the same period. While at the beginning of the era, some parts of the population remained outside the monetary economy, somewhat later forest products and other natural resources were ruthlessly exploited for export. By the end of the period, the export of grain had taken on great significance, especially from northern and western Ukraine.

Section III discusses the composition of Ukraine's population by stratum (magnates, nobles, burghers and peasants) as well as by specific region. Here, Hrushevsky examined the ethnic composition

of the different orders and the degree to which they retained their national identity in the face of spreading polonization. Especially in the western part of Ukraine, it was assimilation in the face of Polish cultural influences, rather than ethnicity, that proved the more important. And in many cases, burghers and noblemen were the most susceptible. Hrushevsky also discusses everyday ethical and cultural standards, basing his comments on wills, contemporary accounts and religious works. Part IV extends this discussion by providing in-depth information about cultural transitions, the mingling of religious and cultural traditions, the growth of western artistic elements and their merger with Eastern traditions to create a valued Ukrainian style. At the same time, Ukrainian letters and education were relatively late to appear. The religious lay brotherhoods and the guild system are also carefully analyzed.

The last two sections of volume 6 focus on the origins and development of the struggle within the Orthodox Church for and against church union with, Hrushevsky argues, deeply divisive results. Discussions of the role of the Catholic Church, the beginnings of a national cultural reaction, and an in-depth discussion of the religious lay brotherhoods, as well as related political debates, are all included. Also discussed are the literary polemics that shaped the struggle over the Union of Brest (1596) and the works of Ipatii Potii, Stefan Zyzanii, and Meletii Smotrytsky. The volume relates the course of the struggle to the first decades of the seventeenth century, and to the new role of developing Cossackdom in Ukrainian affairs.

Since this volume was published, the nature of scholarly debate about the region in this period has changed significantly. Comparisons with West European events, including the introduction of West European cultural labels such as the Renaissance and Reformation have transformed the discussion of social, cultural and economic themes. Studies that focus on rather various specific subtopics touched on by Hrushevsky, using source materials not available to him, have helped to transform the field further. And the creative nature of cultural syncretism has been carefully examined. Nonetheless, Hrushevsky's presentation of the Ukrainian lands as having a fundamental cultural and historical unity remains a key focus of Ukrainian historians of the era.

As one has come to expect of this series of translations in the monumental CIUS Press Hrushevsky series, Prof. Leonid Heretz, from the Department of History at Bridgewater State University, has provided a very readable and accurate text from the early twentieth-century original. Hrushevsky's own notes have been included and the editor has added some comments about the development of relevant historiographic topics. A glossary, two maps, a bibliography of works cited by Hrushevsky, two appendixes, and a comprehensive index have also been provided for the reader's benefit. Prof. Frank E. Sysyn, director of the Petro Jacyk Central and East European Resource Centre, remains the series editor, assisted by Uliana M. Pasicznyk, managing editor. The consulting editor—Myron M. Kapral, director of the Lviv branch of the M. S. Hrushevsky Institute of Ukrainian Archeography and Source Studies and professor of history at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv—offers a succinct and illuminating discussion of the volume and its historiographic context.