

UDC 008(477)
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.32.311507

Vira KOTOVYCH

PhD (Philology), Full Professor, Head of the Ukrainian Language Department, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, 24 Ivan Franko Street, Drohobych, Ukraine, postal code 82100 (virako@ukr.net)

ORCID: 0000-0001-6370-8135

Research ID: M-6500-2018

Petro MATSKIV

PhD (Philology), Full Professor, Ukrainian Language Department, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, 24 Ivan Franko Street, Drohobych, Ukraine, postal code 82100 (petro_matskiv@ukr.net)

ORCID: 0000-0002-1853-5375

Research ID: T-2629-2018

Vіра КОТОВИЧ

докторка філологічних наук, професорка, завідувачка кафедри української мови, Дрогобицький державний педагогічний університет імені Івана Франка, вул. Івана Франка, 24, м. Дрогобич, Україна, індекс 82100 (virako@ukr.net)

Петро МАЦЬКІВ

доктор філологічних наук, професор, професор кафедри української мови, Дрогобицький державний педагогічний університет імені Івана Франка, вул. Івана Франка, 24, м. Дрогобич, Україна, індекс 82100 (petro_matskiv@ukr.net)

TRUTH IS WHAT SCIENCE EXISTS FOR (peer-review on the scientific publication: Path from Primitiveness to Civilization. Ukrainian Ethnogenesis in the Middle Ages / NAS of Ukraine, Institute of History of Ukraine. Kyiv: Akademperiodyka, 2023. 658 p., 136 p. ill. (Ukraine. Essays on History))

ІСТИНА – ЦЕ ТЕ, В ІМ'Я ЧОГО ІСНУЄ НАУКА (рецензія на наукове видання: Шлях з первісності у цивілізацію. Українські шати середньовіччя / НАН України, Ін-т історії України. Київ: Академперіодика, 2023. 658 с., 136 с. іл. (Україна. Нариси історії))

“Know the truth, and it will set you free” is a slogan that, without exaggeration, may be the epigraph, leitmotif, and epilogue of the scientific publication “Path from Primitiveness to Civilization. Ukrainian Ethnogenesis in the Middle Ages”. A group of well-known authors – Vasyl Balushok, Oleksandr Halenko, Dmytro Haskevych, Oleksandr Diachenko, Oleksandr Motsia, Valentyn Pankovsky, Illia Parshyn, Volodymyr Rychka, Olena Rusyna and Vitaly Smoliy, the editor-in-chief, Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine – ensured the book not only a scientific recognition, but also significant success among a wide readership.

Having chosen the essay as the main form of material presentation, the researchers set an important goal – to introduce the past of the Ukrainian people “into the common historical river” (p. 17), to demonstrate “the chronological sequence of changes in historically established civilizational forms of a social organization, political cultural and spiritual spaces, the formation and destruction of which depend on the anthropological factor directly, in a special way socialized in collective and individual activity practices” (Ibid.).

In Foreword, it is quite reasonable to state that “the further into the centuries the cognitive interest of a scholar is projected, the more difficult it becomes for him to synthesize <...> extra-source knowledge with the mass of information he gleaned from sources, <...> and, accordingly, the choice of research tools aimed at forming a complete, filled with events and results of a human activity framework of the past eras” (Ibid.). Therefore, “Beginnings of Historical and Cultural Landscape Formation of Ukraine” (Dmytro Haskevych) is framed by the issues of origin, evolution and spread of hominids (pp. 31–46); homo sapiens on the territory of Ukraine at the end of the Ice Age (pp. 47–62); crises of hunting industry and “a broad-spectrum revolution” (pp. 63–77); the Neolithic revolution and Neolithic colonization (Dmytro Haskevych, Oleksandr Diachenko, pp. 78–124).

The second part of the book “Transition to Early History: Period of Primitiveness and Civilization Coexistence” is permeated with a description of the process of “transition from prehistory to history of humanity of the Old World” (“Bronze Age”, Oleksandr Diachenko, Valentyn Pankovsky, pp. 127–157); aimed at studying of not only archaeological, but also written (from the 7th century BC), even foreign-language, sources (“The beginning of the historical logo of the Northern Black Sea Region”, Valentyn Pankovsky, pp. 158–174); recreated by understanding the path travelled by the Veneds, through a scientific discussion about whether “the Antis and Sklavins were later tribal formations that arose as a result of division of the Veneds into two parts under new names” (p. 176) before the so-called Great Migration of Peoples, “Temporal Years Novella” and the formation of “a new ethnic group, which from the middle of the 1st millennium AD began to influence European historical processes at that time and spread over large areas and was divided into three branches – eastern, western and southern” (p. 175) (“Slavs are a new ethnic group in the south of Eastern Europe and adjacent territories”, Oleksandr Motsia, pp. 175–186).

The third part of the book “Kyiv Rus in Political and Sociocultural Challenges of the Middle Ages” (Volodymyr Rychka) begins with a very symbolic section “Acquiring a Name and “Land”” (Volodymyr Rychka) (pp. 189–204). First of all, the name of the “early state that arose on the banks of the middle course of the Dnipro river at the turn of the 9th – 10th centuries” is interpreted in the section (p. 189); the so-called “Rurik Legend” is characterized; milestones in the life of Oleh “the man wise and brave”, nicknamed Vishchy, are traced; the significance of the Dnipro river campaign was revealed and it was proved that “the beginnings of Kyiv-Rus statehood are lost not in Novgorod or Ladoga, from where unifying impulses allegedly spread to the south of Kyiv” (p. 204), quite the opposite.

Section “Rooting” (pp. 205–221) is the study on “Oleh’s town” and the “military and munitions industry” of that era; the march to Byzantium; overcoming the Dnipro rapids; the shield on the gate of Constantinople; Ihor’s reign and the bloody drama under the walls of Iskorosten (p. 221).

“A decisive break in the organization of the system of state administration and rule in Kyivan Rus was manifested by the energetic activity of Princess Olha” (p. 222) – the section “Fundamentals of the State System” (Volodymyr Rychka, pp. 221–238) begins with this

thesis. The scholar claims: despite the fact that “the application of the concept of ‘statehood’ or ‘state’ to the realities of an archaic society, which were ancient Russky communities during the reign of Princess Olha, her son Sviatoslav and grandchildren, is to some extent conditional” (p. 227), the princess’s restoration of order in administrative management, state finances, and the judiciary strengthened the power of the Kyivan princely family and contributed to the empowerment of tribal princesses, and thus to overcoming political and cultural isolation of Kyivan Rus, its establishment “among the countries that formed the then European (Christian) world” (p. 228). Therefore, from the point of view of a current reader, Chapter “Civilizational Choice” is quite expected (pp. 239–255). However, this period was tense and full of fateful events to contemporaries – from the “seven-year break between the tragic death of Prince Sviatoslav on the Dnieper Rapids and the establishment of Volodymyr Sviatoslavych on the Kyivan throne” (p. 239) to the first religious reform, a difficult and often tragic “choice of faith”, the formation of the court hierarchy and traditions of the princely court and, finally, baptism!

Chapter “Time of Trials and Achievements” (pp. 256–276) initiated by an objective vision of the “dynastic discord” grounds (p. 256), strengthened by firm intentions to move “from strife to order” (p. 265) and unconditionally framed by the ideas of “spread of a new faith and Byzantine cultural influences” (p. 269).

The third part of the book is completed by Chapters “Shaky Equilibrium” (pp. 277–294) and “Split Line” (pp. 295–310). In the first chapter there is described the “golden age” of Kyivan Rus – the era of Yaroslav the Wise; “triumvirate” of the Yaroslavychi; the nature of the political system of Kyivan Rus at the turn of the 11th–12th centuries, and in the second one – the rift drawn by the sword of Andriy Boholiubsky between the Kyiv south and the Volodymyr-Suzdal north.

The fourth part of the peer-reviewed edition “Mongolian Breakthrough. Transition of the Black Sea Region under the Rule of the Ottomans” (Oleksandr Halenko) – consists of six chapters: “Civilizational Landscape of the Southern Steppe of Ukraine in the Pre-Mongol Era” (pp. 313–327); “Imperial Ambitions of the Mongols” (pp. 328–340); “Territorial and Administrative Organization of Juchi Ulus” (pp. 341–356); “Mongolian Practices of Economic Administration” (pp. 357–368); “The Genoese Colony of Kafa under the Supremacy of the Mongols” (pp. 369–378); “Subjugation of the Black Sea by the Ottomans” (pp. 379–390). The problems of the Northern Black Sea region at the beginning of the Middle Ages are presented with deep conviction; the consequences of Northern European intervention; the existence of the Hun Empire and the Khazar Khaganate; vicissitudes of the nomadic world under the conditions of Byzantine-Russky positions strengthening in Prymorie; the existence of the Mongol Empire at the end of the 12th – mid-14th centuries as one of the turning points in human history and the consequences of the Mongol conquests for Eastern Europe. After updating the model of a family rule and revealing the related threats to the state integrity of the empire, the historians analysed the territorial and political structure of the Juchi ulus, under whose authority the Ukrainian southern steppe area came at that time; the system of ulus administration and features of district organization; the scheme of military civilian administration and economic exploitation of the population. They characterize the specificity of state duties; the role of Kapha in the Golden Horde trade; the development of sugar production as a factor in the slave trade activation; the influence of the Genoese trading factory on the genesis of colonial practices, and ultimately, the Ottoman conquest of Kafa. “For more than three hundred years, from the end of the 15th to the beginning of the 19th

century, the Ukrainian south was part of the Ottoman Empire” (p. 379). The description of this period is completed with an analysis of the administrative and management system and economic structure of the northern Black Sea provinces.

By the will of history, the fifth part ends in “Galician-Volyn State: at the Crossroads of Worlds” (Illia Parshyn). The essay format of the book made it possible to name the sections of this part of the publication in a somewhat journalistic way (“Dynasty and power”, pp. 393–421; “Social mechanism”, pp. 422–444) and the phenomenon in the author’s scientific presentation of the term “concept”. “At the end of 1198 or during the year of 1199, Prince Roman Mstyslavovych made a campaign to Halych and annexed Halych land to his Volodymyr possessions. This step became the basis for the formation of a political entity, which later in historiography will be called the Galicia-Volyn Principality or the Galicia-Volyn State for a long time. The convention of such a name is generally accepted, because it has never been used in historical sources. However, it will continue to function as a certain phenomenon, a kind of *concept* (emphasis in italics is ours – V.K., P.M.), which is easily associated in the mind with a number of important events of the Ukrainian past of the 12th – 14th centuries. First of all, this concept is associated with Prince Roman Mstyslavovych...” (p. 393). *The concept kingdom* is highlighted (pp. 424, 426) in combination with the name of Danylo Halyskyi primarily; then – attested in the sources of the 14th century *Little Rus’ concept* (p. 425); the hierarchy, ethnos, and religiosity of the contemporary society are described, and finally the focus is on *the concept of war* (p. 435), which made it possible to show the activities of the Romanovych family through the prism of military conflicts.

The sixth part of the book “Meeting of Ukraine and Lithuania” (Olena Rusyna) is formed by the chapters “Beginnings of Lithuanian Rule” (pp. 447–463); “The Stormy 15th Century” (pp. 464–481); “Ukrainian Lands between Vilno and Moscow” (pp. 482–497); “The Age of Sigismund-Augustus” (pp. 498–508); “Economy and Society” (pp. 509–515); “Culture: Trends and Paradoxes” (pp. 516–529). In this chapter there is the question: *quid est veritas – what is the truth?* The author gives the answer by tracing the formation process of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; analysis of the Union of Krewo and its consequences, the reign of Vytautas; the battles on the Vorskla banks; Svidrigailov Wars; ways of overcoming crisis phenomena during the time of Kazimir Jagiellończyk. The researcher explains relations with the Crimea; problems of the metropolis unity; all-Russian claims of Ivan III; the war for Severshchyna and other Muscovite-Lithuanian wars of the first half of the 16th century. The hetmanship of Konstantyn Ostrozky is also characterized; the reforms of Sigismund-Augustus; the significance of the Union of Lublin and the actions of Prince Dmytro Vyshnevetsky. In the separate essays there is described the economy (traditional crafts and husbandry, domestic and international trade) and spiritual climate of that time – works of literature and art.

In the part “Between the Hungarian and Polish Crowns: Ukrainian Lands during the Period of Unions and Struggle” (Illia Parshyn) and the sections “Political and Social Transformations” (pp. 533–551), “Culture of Education and Intellectuals: Searching of one’s Own against the Background of Transformations” (pp. 552–574) the focus is on the issues of the Transcarpathian territories becoming part of Hungary and the rest of the Ukrainian lands – to the Polish Crown and, accordingly, on the specifics of a social, spiritual, cultural and public life of the Ukrainians at that time.

The eighth part of the scientific edition concluded with “Ethnogenesis of the Ukrainians” (Vasyl Balushok): “Cognitive Practices and Cultural Characteristics of Ethnogenesis” (pp. 577–600), “Formation of Ethnic Identity” (pp. 601–623), in which the approaches to the

study of Ukrainian ethnogenesis are formulated, the methodology, methods, and source base of the research are crystallized.

Thus, the peer-reviewed scientific publication “The Path from Primitiveness to Civilization. Ukrainian Ethnogenesis in the Middle Ages” demonstrates that history is the ground on which national consciousness is formed; the essay format of the book facilitates the understanding of “historical and generally socio-humanitarian knowledge about the past of Ukraine from the earliest times” (p. 13) to the era of the late Middle Ages greatly; the publication, without any doubt, will find its admirers both among historians and truth-seeking readers.

*The article was received December 30, 2023.
Article recommended for publishing 30/08/2024.*