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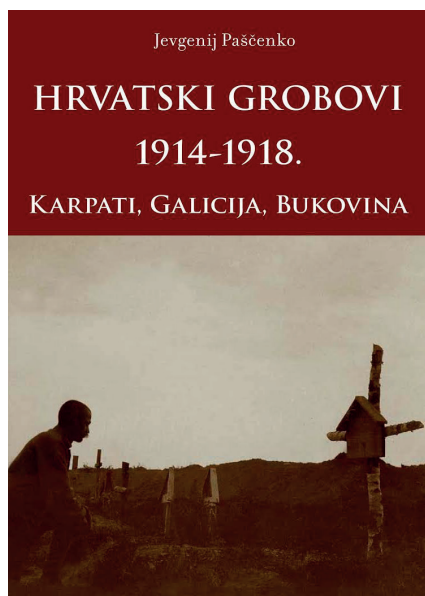
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**[Review of]: Jevgenij Paščenko. Hrvatski grobovi 1914–1918.**

**Karpati, Galicija, Bukovina. Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2016.**

**210 s.**



Jevgenij Paščenko died in Zagreb on 8 May 2021. He was an expert in Ukrainian studies, philologist, historian, professor of University of Kyiv and University of Zagreb, one of major researchers of Croatian-Ukrainian history. He was an ambassador of Ukrainian culture in the countries of former Yugoslavia, and Croatian culture in Ukraine. The scholar left a significant legacy in the fields of philology and history. Among his many books it is worth paying attention to the title monograph on the graves of Croatian soldiers from the First World War (FWW) in Carpathian Mountains, Galicia and Bukovina. I would like to stress here that writing a review of this book is a challenging task. On the one hand, that publication aspires to be academic, using an academic apparatus, and on the other hand it is hard not to get the impression that it aims to popularize its subject matter. What seems to prove that is the manner of description, a significant number

of photographs and numerous calls for reviving the memory of FWW Croatian burials in the north-easternmost areas of the former Habsburg monarchy. Regrettably, that sort of hiatus between genres does not seem to bring the best of results.

The book structure is uneven and not always fortunate. Its contents include: an introductory part called *Zaborav kao obrana od rata* (Oblivion as a protection against war (P. 7)) and particular chapters, i. e. *Rat 1914–1918*. (The 1914–1918 war (P. 9–17)), *Ukrajinsko pitanje u ratu* (The Ukrainian question during the war (P. 19–35)), *Hrvatske postrojbe na istočnome bojištu* (Croatian troops on the eastern front (P. 37–51)), *Grobja, imena...* (Cemeteries, names... (P. 53–56)), *Mjesta pokopa* (Burial places (P. 57–73)), *Hrvatska obilježja*

(The features of Croatian tombs (P. 75–81)), *Svjedočenja Miroslava Krleža* (The testimony of Miroslav Krleža (P. 83–93)), *Vizionarstvo Vladimira Nazora* (The visionary work of Vladimir Nazor (P. 95–102)), *Ratna zbilja zabilježena fotoaparatom* (Wartime reality recorded on camera (P. 101–185)). What concludes the book is: *Dodatak 1. Poginuli u karpatskim bitkama* (Appendix 1. The fallen in Carpathian battles (P. 187–195), *Dodatak 2. Pokopani na groblju u selu Glybivka* (Appendix 2. The buried at the cemetery in the village of Hlybivka), *Umjesto zaključka* (Instead of a conclusion (P. 199–201)), *Summary* (P. 202), *Резюме* (P. 203) as well as Index of people (P. 295–210). Most chapters have been divided into subchapters.

The introductory parts of the book constitute a very superficial and uneven presentation of the history of Galicia and the warfare on the eastern front. Understandably, the author wanted to present an outline of the subject, but in the footnotes he refers us mainly to Croatian-language literature, mainly his own works. Considering that using the footnotes is supposed to make the book available not only to the popular reader, this is hard to explain. The literature on the subject, if only in Polish, Ukrainian, English and German, is vast. The same remarks apply to the chapter on the Ukrainian question during the FWW. Oddly enough, it does not have anything to do with the subject of the publication. While the author had a right to mention the violence Ukrainian/Ruthenian residents of Galicia experienced from Austro-Hungarian and Russian troops, it is worth stressing that the issue is not new in historiography and it was not necessary for the author to back himself up with the authority of Miroslav Krleža. It would have been enough to refer to the many works which describe the problem, providing a lot more examples than Paščenko has cited. The interesting subchapter *Međuetnički odnosi* (Interethnic relations (P. 32–34) is also an example of extremely superficial assessment which does not contribute much to the problem. It is equally hard to give a favorable opinion on the following parts, concerned with the movement of troops, the warfare and the changing front lines. What should be regarded as an advantage, though, is including reproductions of maps from the time of the FWW, which allow the reader to have a clear picture of the described space, which Croatian-language readers are often hardly familiar with.

There are plenty of sentences in that publication which are so general and without any reference marks that one must consider them cliches. For instance, on P. 49 the author writes: «Oz ostale nacionalnosti, Austrijance, Mađare i Poljake, hrvatski su vojnici bili najbliži lokalne stanovništvu. Ukrajinsku sredinu doživljavali su s velikom znatiželjom. Slušali su ukrajinski jazyk koji je bio blizak hrvatskomu, zanimali se na način života, družili se z ljudima, a uspostavljale su se i bračne veze družili se z ljudima, a uspostavljale su se i bračne veze» (Among other nationalities, like Austrians, Hungarians and Poles, Croatian soldiers were the closest to the local people. They watched Ukrainians with great curiosity. They listened to the Ukrainian language, which is very similar to Croatian, they showed interest in local lifestyles, they maintained social contacts, met with people, they would even intermarry). The quoted sentences show that Paščenko perceives the residents of Eastern Galicia as an ethnic monolith, without discerning that even the Ukrainians themselves were not a homogeneous mass and not all Ruthenian peasants (or, as in Paul Robert Magocsi, Carpathian Ruthenians), identified with the Ukrainian national movement. Leaving aside the fact that the author should have written «Austrian Germans», not «Austrians», there were a lot of villages inhabited by descendants of German colonists. Also Poles are to him aliens non-existing in the described area. Jews only appear occasionally, too. Obviously, that very idealized image of Croatian soldiers which the author has created for the sake of his book, is not supported in any way; one cannot find any references which would confirm his hypotheses. Unfortunately, such examples are not isolated ones.

Thankfully, the main body of the book deserves a much better evaluation, like the situation of Croatian graves in the Carpathians, Eastern Galicia (we need to make it specific here that the author does not seem to be interested in the western part of the province) and in Bukovina. Paščenko gives the location of the graves, attempts to write at least a few words about the soldiers whose burial places he has found, usually he also includes photographs of the places of remembrance. He also describes at length to what extent and where particular graves are better preserved and where they require maintenance. This is an important part of the book, as it brings back to Croatian memory the forgotten FWW soldiers who died far from their homeland.

What is rather surprising, though, is the spelling of proper names. I understand that the Croatian language has developed its equivalents of the names of larger cities, like Lwów (Lwów/Lviv/Lemberg), yet I doubt it has official counterparts of all towns and cities. It is sometimes hard to guess at the first glance what city is meant by Peremyśl, Rjašiv or Tarnuv without their original Polish or Ukrainian spellings. It is only on P. 40 that double names (in Polish and Ukrainian) appear, but they often come with spelling mistakes (e. g. Usztryki instead of Ustrzyki, Przemysl instead of Przemyśl). The author usually invents a Croatian version of the names of particular Ukrainian places, which does not seem to be acceptable in Croatian. I do not think their Polish counterparts should be Croatized either; anyway, the author should have explained what method he adopted. The problem of the names of towns and villages in Central Europe, inhabited by so many ethnic groups, who often used their own place names, what with simultaneous changes introduced in the 19th and 20th centuries, is a complex one. The practice in the latest literature, however, is to provide names which were used at a given time (not ahistorical ones), sometimes even in two or three versions (at least when used for the first time in the text). Therefore, using the term «Ukrainian Galicia» (P. 12) to mean the area of today's Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil *oblasts* is ahistorical, as Galicia has never been divided into «Polish» and «Ukrainian» parts. Attempts were made, but it never actually happened. It would have been better to use the terms «Eastern and Western Galicia», assuming that the researcher knows that it indicates the boundaries of the district of the Lviv Court of Appeal, and officially only that. Besides, the Eastern Galicia included the areas which today are partly also in Poland.

Incidentally, it is worth indicating that according to the 1910 census, it was not Stanisławów (Stanyславiv), as J. Paščenko wrote on P. 30, but Przemyśl that was the second most populated town in Eastern Galicia – though not in the whole of Galicia (as he wrote), because here Kraków outdid both Przemyśl and even smaller Stanisławów. It is hardly possible to write that Volhynia in 1914 was situated near the border with Poland (P. 38), as the country did not exist at the time.

Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981) was one of the most eminent Croatian authors, who in 1915 was mobilized and dispatched to Eastern Galicia. He included his experiences among others in the memories *Davni dani: zapisi 1914–1921* (Zagreb 1956) and in the play *Galicija*<sup>1</sup>. The latter is an action-packed and highly expressionist work which is a realistic image of social and ethnic riots in the last days of Austria-Hungary when new states were established on its ruins. The decision to bring closer to a Croatian reader the unfamiliar regions of Eastern Galicia through a figure well-known in the Balkans, is a very successful

<sup>1</sup> Krleža M. *Galicija*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 2002.

move. It also corresponds to the extensive research showing the presence of soldiers from Galicia in the fights in the First World War on the Austrian-Italian or Austrian-Serbian fronts as well as Slovenian and Croatian soldiers on the eastern front<sup>2</sup>. One must evaluate very highly the essay (as it is hard to call this part a strictly academic text) about a short story by Vladimir Nazor *Crveni tank* (A red tank) of 1922. It contains reflections upon the nature of war, based on Nazor's experience of the Great War.

Half of the publication is occupied by illustrations connected with soldier's life during the FWW. They show scenes of everyday life in the region beyond the front line, occasional meetings, landscapes of Carpathian villages, photos of sacred objects, portraits of local peasants in folk dress, at work and at leisure. The selection of the photos is by all means appropriate: with this part of the book Paščenko shows that the fallen soldiers also had their joys and sorrows and before they became war victims they had tried to live far from their homelands as best they could. The book also features photos of soldier's dead bodies, burial places and funeral services. The author is very successful in capturing this alternation of life and death, the desire to find one's place in new circumstances as well as respect towards those who were killed on the outskirts of the monarchy. Unfortunately, the fact that the photographs are small does not make «entering into» soldiers' everyday life in Eastern Galicia easy. Besides, why the author shows mainly Greek Catholic churches, if the majority of the killed Croats were Roman Catholics, is hard to comprehend. Of course, often in Carpathian villages there were not enough churches of the Latin rite, hence even Latin military chaplains would bury Roman Catholics, taking advantage of the hospitality of Greek Catholic clergy – yet an author ought to make such things clear.

It is a shame that the author has presented the issue of FWW epigraphy very superficially. A reader who is not educated enough may get an impression that the problem has been ignored in research so far. This could not be further from the truth. Projects concerned with FWW cemeteries (at least in the Polish part of Galicia) have been carried out for years, both by Poles and Germans, Austrians and Hungarians, and the literature on the subject is really extensive. There are also publications on Polish burials on the territory of Ukraine. The accomplishments of Polish historiography alone are also considerable in this matter; Ukrainian researchers are quite familiar with the subject of war graves as well. The author should have referred at least briefly to epigraphic research and shown how Croatian burials have been noticed so far and to what extent they have been ignored.

It is definitely to the author's credit that he brings closer to the Croatian-language reader the subject matter which has been on the margin of Croatian historiography so far. He thus shows that in the FWW narrative one may not limit oneself only to the historical territories of nation states, as their history, at least at that time, often took place in the areas very far from their centers. This is the case of the title Carpathians, Galicia and Bukovina, which are hardly known in the Balkans. The reviewed publication makes us reflect on the manner of discussing general history in national narrations, especially those issues that constitute part of the history of a given nation or ethnic group. Is this book the best example of how to do it? Despite its many assets, I dare say it is not.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g.: W Galicji i nad Soczą. Polacy i Słoweńcy na frontach I wojny światowej / ed. by A. Cetnarowicz, D. Nećak, S. Pijaj, B. Todorović. Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2016; Wielka Wojna wyzwania duchowych: kapelani wojskowi na froncie wschodnim 1914–1920 / ed. by T. Pudłocki, K. Ruszała. Kraków: Historia Iagellonica, 2020.

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