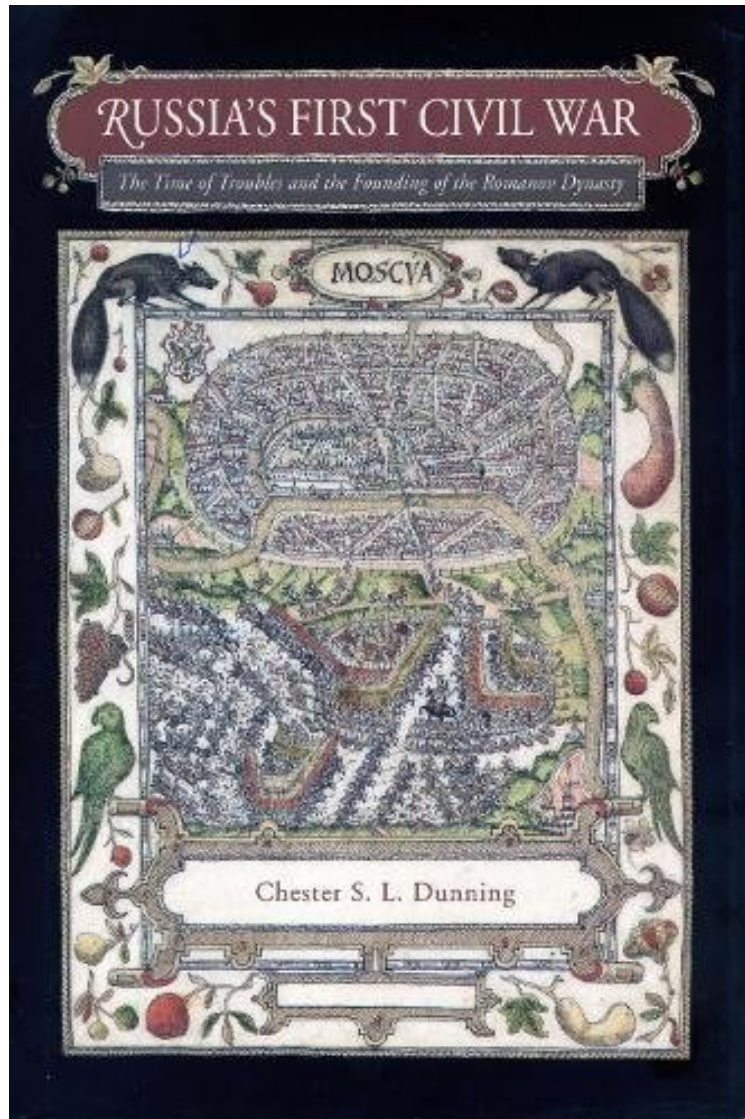


[Download] Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty

Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty

Chester S. L. Dunning

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Chester S. L. Dunning : Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russia's First Civil War: The Time of Troubles and the Founding of the Romanov Dynasty:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Detailed and Complicated By Sue Ferdig A good book but very detailed. Perhaps Dunning has some real arguments against other writers on the subject, I just did not want to get in

the middle of it. I felt he could have stated his position without bringing in so many contras. I am still plowing my way through. It is interesting to note the Russian political maneuverings of the 17th century. Very complicated..0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Sarah E GarciaVery interesting. It didn't hurt that the author was my professor too. ;)6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. In the eye of the beholderBy GDPChester Dunning's 'Russia's First Civil War' offers a microscopic look into "history", not only the period known as Russia's 'Time of Troubles' but also, as a by-product, into the very nature of "history" itself, that is, the shifts that take place in historical judgments based upon re-evaluation of evidence, new evidence, and changes in the perspectives of historians. In the case of the 'Time of Troubles' that means, among other things, sifting through the layers of propaganda produced by successive regimes from Boris Godunov's to the Romanov dynasty, and confronting the long-accepted version of events interpreted through the lens of Marxism (i.e., the 'Time of Troubles' was a conflict between social classes).To-date there are two reviews of the book, and BOTH are fair based upon the POV of the reviewers. The four-star review (9/7/03) points out a strength of the book, specifically "Dunning's analysis into the underlying social, economic, and political causes of the Time of Troubles" yet warns that the book best serves "Russophiles" (and general readers less so). Agreed. The three-star review (10/19/13) emphasizes that the book "seems to be more a critical survey of the history literature of the period than it is straight historiography". That also seems right and could be off-putting to some readers. Certainly there are books that present a smoother general narrative of events while touching upon the salient features of the time.So why five stars? Dunning reveals the complexity of personal motivations for both the key players and many of the "interest groups" involved in those tumultuous times. Rather than a simplified Tsar vs. Boyars vs. serfs narrative we are shown the varieties of aristocrats (high-born, low born, service gentry, et al), bondsmen (serfs, slaves, et al), cossacks (Volga, Don, or others who have "gone cossack"), and military personnel (pomeshchiki, streltsy, et al), not to mention "pretenders" (false Dmitri I, II, and III, as well as Tsar Petr, et al) that intersected as temporary allies or enemies. History is a vortex of persons jockeying for a chance at advancement, prosperity, or personal freedom not as monolithic groups, but as individuals within a Russia expanding, confronting unrest across its extended borders, grappling with dynastic changes, and subject to the effects of the "little ice age" that impacts all of Europe.One is left with the real sense that throughout this period people were constantly recalculating their best bet as tsars come and go, and as "pretenders" come and ... well, they never seem to go, they miraculously survive and then reappear! Towns are conquered and oaths are sworn to the victors and those oaths remain binding until circumstances change (that is, if you hadn't been thrown out of a tower or cudged and stuffed under the ice before reconsidering). The deep cultural and spiritual influence of the Russian Orthodox Church within the populace is also ever-present. History is rarely simple and straightforward, but rather multi-dimensional.So the beauty of Dunning's book is that it presents the complexity of this history (and by extension all 'history') - persons navigating immediate circumstances within the context of longer term factors such as climate change, geopolitical struggles, religious considerations, and inequality (... gee, like me, you might feel right at home!). He also comments upon the period's influence upon subsequent periods of Russian history (and some of the consequences are quite ironic).If you want a good "beach read", forget it. If you are looking for a good general history of the 'Time of Troubles' that provides access to this most remarkable period and place, this might not be your best choice. But if you are familiar with and fascinated by Russia's 'Time of Troubles' and would enjoy the insight into a complex story and the shifting historical judgments made over time then this is a wonderful book, well worth the time and effort. At least, that's how I see it.

The Time of Troubles was a period of great upheaval in Russian history. It began when the ancient ruling dynasty died out in 1598 and Boris Godunov defeated rival boyars to become the tsar. For more than a decade thereafter, Russia was plagued by dynastic struggle, devastating famine, widespread uprisings, and invasion by Polish and Swedish armies. The Time of Troubles finally ended in 1613 with the establishment of the Romanovs as the ruling dynasty. Russia's state crisis had been so severe that it nearly destroyed the country and seriously delayed its emergence as a great power. Ever since then the Time of Troubles has occupied a unique place in Russia's collective memory. Russia's First Civil War is the first major post-Marxist reassessment of the Time of Troubles and the first detailed study of that tragic era in English. Historians have long misinterpreted popular uprisings during the Times of Troubles as the first social revolution of the Russian masses against serfdom. Dunning overturns this view and demonstrates that at the heart of the "Troubles" was a long and extremely violent civil war that divided Russian society vertically instead of horizontally. He shows that serfs did not actively participate in the civil war and that the abolition of serfdom was never a rebel goal. Instead, most rebels were petty gentry, professional soldiers, townsmen, and cossacks who were united in fierce opposition to tsars they believed to be illegitimate usurpers. Based upon exhaustive research, Russia's First Civil War is a masterful mix of social and military history, firmly placing the Time of Troubles in the context of the waves of wars and rebellions that swept through early modern Europe and Asia.

“This is clearly the best and most judicious account of the Time of Troubles in any language. A magnificent achievement that will significantly benefit the reading world, especially those interested in Russia and comparative

civil disorders.”—“We can thank Chester S. L. Dunning for explaining, much more than anyone before him, why and how this stunning reversal of fortunes occurred.”—Marshall Poe, *Times Literary Supplement*“Comprehensive and highly original interpretation of the Russian ‘*Smutnoe vremia*’ (Time of Troubles)”—Walter C. Uhler, *Journal of Military History*“A sweeping, detailed, readable account of the first Russian civil war and an excellent analysis of the war’s causes and development. . . . This one deserves a place on the shelf of anyone interested in the period.”—Martha Luby Lahana, *Russian* “Dunning’s book is a welcome addition to the literature on the Time of Troubles, offering a chronological narrative of events that provides more detail on the military campaigns of 1604–07 than other English-language accounts.”—Maureen Perrie, *Slavic* “Likely to remain the standard English-language work for some time to come. [This book] offers a comprehensively detailed narrative account of events, every twist and turn of every conspiracy and campaign. This is underpinned by a constant critical engagement with the historiography.”—Roger Bartlett, *Slavonic and East European* “Chester S. L. Dunning’s new book is a historical tour de force, a major reconceptualization of Russia’s Time of Troubles, 1598-1613.”—Carol B. Stevens, *American Historical* “Chester Dunning’s book is, therefore, an invaluable contribution to Russian history, arguably the most in-depth monograph to be published on the ‘Time of Troubles’ in English. Overall, Russia’s First Civil War is an exceptional source on this crucial but little-known era of Russian history.”—Debra Coulter, *History: Journal of the Historical Association* “Chester Dunning’s book is therefore, an invaluable contribution to Russian history, arguable the most in-depth monograph to be published on the ‘Time of Troubles’ in English. Overall, Russia’s First Civil War is an exceptional source on this crucial but little-known era of Russian history. It is a thorough and well-documented account, if somewhat dry in style, and will be of inestimable value to all Russianists and scholars of early modern history.”—Debra Coulter, *History: Journal of the Historical Association* “This prodigious piece of scholarship represents an ambitious comprehensive approach to the political, military, social and economic crisis that befell Russia in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Written primarily for an audience of specialists, this volume provides a new framework for the understanding of the Time of Troubles that goes beyond traditional Marxist and Western interpretation and takes a fresh look at the vast array of primary sources of the period.”—Isolde Thyret, *Sixteenth Century Journal* “This prodigious piece of scholarship represents an ambitious comprehensive approach to the political, military, social and economic crisis that befell Russia in the beginning of the seventeenth century.”—Isolde Thyret, *Sixteenth Century Journal* About the Author Chester S. L. Dunning is Associate Professor of History at Texas AM University. He is editor and translator of *The Russian Empire and Grand Duchy of Muscovy* by Jacques Margeret (1983).