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PROSPECTS OF PEASANT STUDIES AS AREAS OF RESEARCH OF MODERN UKRAINIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

The article is devoted to the tasks currently encountered by Ukrainian historians – researchers of peasant issues. The author sees their solution in several areas: first, by attracting a new spectrum of visual sources (photos), and also through the use of epistemological approaches offered by the latest European (world) humanitaristics. It promises good cognitive perspectives for peasant studies, in particular the elimination of a noticeable gap that has long existed in Ukrainian historiography between interpretive models of the «traditional village» and «modern» city of the late nineteenth and first third of the twentieth century.

Key words: *peasant studies, methodology, history, historiography, traditional society, Naddnipranshchyna.*

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ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ СЕЛЯНОЗНАВСТВА ЯК СФЕРИ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ СУЧАСНОЇ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ІСТОРІОГРАФІЇ

Пізнавальні парадигми, що отримали прописку в сучасній історичній науці, потребують фахової оптимізації. Автор бачить її в кількох площинах: насамперед у залученні нового спектру візуальних джерел (світлин), а також у використання епістемологічних підходів, які напрацювала новітня європейська (світова) гуманітаристика.

У статті звернуто увагу на, так би мовити, «національний характер» українського селянства доби модерності. В останні десятиліття тут спостерігався відчутний спротив істориків, які працюють у сфері селянознавчих студій із огляду на вимоги постмодерної візії. Сам наголос на модерному понятті «українське» щодо його вживання в контексті з традиційним селянським світом виявися напрочуд провокаційним. Проте в першу чергу не ця невідповідність спонукала діяти критиків. Більшою мірою їх турбувала сама спроба робити акцент на етнічній стороні справи. В умовах новітньої історії України, яка почалася в 1991 р., також пожвавлення євроінтеграційних процесів вони тлумачили такі зусилля виключно як підтримку конкретних політичних амбіцій. Частково погоджуючись з опонентами, автор вбачає в такій критиці передусім намагання знехтувати особливим етнокультурним світом селянства на догоду новій кон'юнктурі, яка відносно швидко сформувалася в науковому (навколо-науковому) середовищі.

Добрі пізнавальні перспективи він вбачає в ліквідації помітної прогалини, яка існує в українській історіографії між інтерпретаційними моделями «традиційного села» і «модерного» міста кінця XIX – першої третини XX ст. З-поміж інших, корисними тут мають стати методологічні поради Ю. Габермаса про те, що нові життєві світи, які приходили на зміну традиційним світам, створювалися радше шляхом рефлексії самих традицій, котрі де поволі, а де порівняно швидше втрачали свою самобутність.

Ключові слова: *селянознавство, методологія, історія, історіографія, традиційне суспільство, Наддніпрянщина.*

The statement of the problem. Cognitive paradigms that «have received a residence permit» in modern Ukrainian historical science, require a professional inventory. The long-standing practice of formal understanding and presentation of theoretical and methodological principles of research led to the marginalization of this section of science. In the sphere of practical use and until now there has been a stereotype of Soviet historiography. For example, by substantiating the epistemology of scientific research, the authors write something like «the methodological basis of the study is...» and this phrase is limited to the theory of concrete knowledge. And although in the last decade the situation has changed considerably, the inertia of the declarative attitude to «principles and methods» has been mostly preserved. Now the notion of «multivariation methodologies» is often used, but the situation can not be substantially improved so far.

The abovementioned does not exhaust the range of problems involved in the methodological support of modern peasant historical studies. Moreover, solution of these problems should not be considered as an end in itself. But with this research, I propose, first of all, an urgent refusal of extreme aspects, when the researcher only outlines the methodology of the proposed discourse as «promising» or, on the contrary, «outdated», «unproductive».

The analysis of researches. Since the abandonment of the monopoly on «Marxism-Leninism», the methodology of historiography of the peasantry has developed unconvincingly. For most researchers, the power of inertial thinking remained characteristic, and it was extremely difficult to overcome it. Only a small fraction of Ukrainian historians kept the course on «explaining the past states of life and aspirations» of the peasantry «in specific historical conditions and in a concrete socio-cultural environment» (Zashkil'niak, 2007: 104). Andriy Zayarnyuk, Oleksandr Mykhailiuk, Vasyl Marochko, Yuriy Prysyazhnyuk, Vadym Bondar are among those, who responded to such a challenge. A peculiar historiographical summary of their work, which simultaneously contains a range of problems that require additional clarification, became the article of the latter two in this list of researchers «Modern historiography of the post-reform peasantry». It was published in 2011. Among the opinions expressed in the article, attention is drawn to precisely the reflections on the prospects for the creation of new syntheses on the principles of «cultural modernization of the traditional village» (Bondar, Prysyazhnyuk, 2011: 201).

Purpose. The purpose of this article is determined by the desire to expand the range of cognitive capabilities (perspectives) of peasant studies by attracting a new set of sources and interpretative approaches, based on modern humanities. At the same time, the author localizes the chronological limits of his exploration in the XIX – the first third of the twentieth century, and the geography of the study – in Naddnieprianska Ukraine.

The statement of the basic material. The explicitly increased interest of Ukrainian historians in the past peasantry is based upon several circumstances. Working for many years in this area of research, I eventually came to somewhat paradoxical conclusions for myself (apparently, to a lesser extent, they became such for my colleagues, especially the representatives of the younger generation, focused on the demands of the new world humanitaristics).

One of them is connected with the «national character» of the Ukrainian peasantry. And I must admit that here I felt a special resistance from historians working in the field of peasant studies. The fact that the very emphasis on the modern concept of «Ukrainian» regarding its use in the context of the traditional peasant world was surprisingly provocative. However, in the first place, this discrepancy did not encourage my criticizers to act. To a greater extent, they were concerned about the attempt to focus on the «ethnic side» of the case. Like the traditional peasantry of peoples is close in its uniformity, therefore why to single out Ukrainians as carriers

of something special. In the conditions of national-state history, which began in 1991 for the contemporary Ukraine, they interpreted such attempts solely as support for specific political goals and their own ambitions. I, partially agreeing with my opponents, considered such a criticism as an attempt to neglect the special cultural world of the Ukrainian peasantry in order to take advantage of the new state of affairs, which was formed in the scientific environment.

In a slightly different interpretation of this problem, the situation looks like that the author is not inclined to ignore ethnocultural identity of Ukrainians, but rather on the contrary, sees in it a feature that is worthy of special attention. And it is not a matter of any unnatural, as for a scientist, love of «his national culture», but in the intention to trace the ethno-cultural uniqueness, which had to be quite definitely reflected in the historical process of the last centuries, moreover, of not only Ukraine. The characteristics of this uniqueness include those realities that in the far («pre-romantic») year of 1772 made the English traveler Joseph Marshall write about the Ukrainian village: «…Ukrainian peasants are the best farmers in the whole of Russia…» (World about Ukraine and Ukrainians, 2016: 225). Somewhat later, in 1807, the Danish geographer Conrad Malt-Brun added to these words the following considerations: «Peasants in Ukraine are more economical than the Moscow ones: they do not damage their woods in a destructive way. Houses of Ukrainian peasants are good and strong, none of them wears bast shoes, as in Moscow region. They are more solid-bodied and more educated than peasants of, for example, Lithuania» (World of Ukraine and Ukrainians, 2016: 227). And if the quote regarding education looks somewhat contraversial (because today there is an evidence of the opposite state of affairs), there is little doubt about the «general tidiness» of Ukrainian peasants. The memoirs of Englishman Edward Daniel Clark contain the following data typical of the views of those times: «There is greater tidiness at the table of a Ukrainian peasant, than at the table of the Moscow prince» (World of Ukraine and Ukrainians, 2016: 227).

It is clear that the image of the Ukrainian peasants, which was reflected in the commentaries, periodicals, reflections and memoirs of foreigners of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is far from completely positive. They find themselves in the «innate lazyness of the Little Russians», and their «strong stubbornness». But, in my opinion, it only strengthens the factor of ethnic identity. Moreover, the «outside critics» who pointed to «national flaws» of Ukrainian peasants were not too concerned about disguising their cultural difference. When the situation changes, they, logically, will start vividly talking about the versatility of traditional culture, «Slavic unity» and so on.

Thus, within the limits of the selected chronological boundaries, it should be noted that the «cultural face» of the Ukrainian peasantry of the Naddnipranschyna, their livelihoods represented the then rural way of life. Villages, their inhabitants were the islands of the traditional world, which in the XIX – the first third of the twentieth century had to live along with rather turbulent urbanization processes that developed in society synchronously. The completion of the industrial revolution, emergence of powerful factory and trade centers, relatively rapid construction of railways, cooperative movement and other radical changes clearly and unambiguously confirmed the fact of the historically irreversible formation of an industrial society.

Based on the approach to distinguishing the stages of social progress proposed by Max Weber, we have the reason to state that the prospects of development are increasingly becoming a modern society in which human behavior was driven by economic expediency (beneficial), current laws (the role of state regulation of social processes was incomparably increasing), the activity of the state institutions and various social structures. However, the historical feature of «Ukrainian-like» modernization was, as noted above, the passive preservation

of the traditional village, which still clearly dominated both quantitavely and culturally. It is worth recalling that more than 80% of the Naddnipriansсhyna population lived in the countryside. In other words, this percentage of the population remained directly related to the agricultural sector of production.

According to their basic characteristics, these two worlds (traditional and modern) represented essentially different historical epochs. But they could not coexist autonomously from each other. Ukrainian historians have applied a lot of efforts to find out the forms and extent of their interactions. Numerous studios convincingly testify that at the turn of the twentieth century. «Traditional idyll» of the Ukrainian village (the term «village» is understood not as a locality of non-urban type, but as an actual cultural world represented by its inhabitants) was already substantially underestimated.

However, it is precisely in historiographic practices, besides various scientific schools, that stable biases have emerged, reflected in the desire to somewhat artificially, as it seems, accelerate the flow of historical progress. The role of a peculiar «catalyst for progress» is given to various factors: capitalism, industrialization, modernization, sometimes referred to as education, cooperation, revolution, migration, the First World War, and the reform. Such absolutization of «progressive changes» significantly alleviates the interest in the village itself, its cultural identity in the broadest historical and anthropological meanings, which prompts again to return to the analysis of this problem.

Given the real state of affairs and general trends in development, and both society and science, we will emphasize the following: the history assigned the role of «material» to peasantry of the turn of the twentieth century, from which intellectuals, workers of «creative professions» were called to build up modern images of this distinctive socio-cultural world (often with certain risks for their professional reputation and even personal safety). Exactly these segments of the urbanized population had to mentally transform the peasant traditional culture into Ukrainian, now a national one, provide it with «strengths, determine the nature and directions of its development» (Babak and others, 2014: 126). The analysis of such a phenomenon, inherent to the Ukrainian culture of the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as a typical folklore activity, testifies the way it happened in particular.

Recently (2014) I have been directly involved in the creation of a unique edition of «Rural photography of the Middle Naddnipriansсhyna» (total volume of 718 p). It represents important «everyday trivialities» of the life of the Ukrainian peasantry of Central Ukraine on the background of the epochal events of the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The group of humanitarian scholars – historians, philosophers, cultural scientists, folklorists, ethnologists, philologists – led by Mykola Babak, scientifically demonstrated the historical and social value of rural photography, its importance to understanding Ukrainian traditional culture, and most importantly, showed the «evolution of ceremonial-folklore, ideological and social traditions of the Ukrainian village», reflected in the photographs (Babak and others, 2014: 14). In other words, this book proved to be a successful attempt «to trace the development of the village… in the context of the impact of civilization processes and socio-ideological attacks on it» (Babak and others, 2014: 14). The broad genre and thematic mosaic of the peasant world, both the personal life of people and their social life, as well as the industrial sphere, have been received. The sub-topics, according to which the classification of photos has been made, are of a particular interest. If the Soviet period is represented by the plot sections «collectivization», «Soviet village», then the pre-Soviet – by the announcement of «beliefs and customs», where these beliefs and customs reflect «the traditional way of life of the inhabitants of the Naddnin-

pianschyna villages associated with the prominent role of the Orthodoxy…» (Living in modern city, 2016: 119).

Researchers should be interested in the fact that rural temples, as well as priors with parishioners, and often church choirs, were the most demanded photography objects in pre-revolutionary (up to 1917) photographs. And already in the pictures of the Soviet era, which neglects and forbids faith in Lord God and corresponding traditions, persecuting them, new rituals and customs are proposed, most often – registration of newborns in village councils (authorities), demonstration of loyalty to the political regime, exaltation of the party leaders. At the same time, steam-threshing machines that are fantastic at that time will become popular, which, even at the turn of the 1920s and 1930s, will be of particular interest to local authorities, «nationalized» peasants (collective farmers), their children. However, the communist (Stalin's) modernization will be compromised in its own way, because the «pagan ideas of the world» of the peasants and those who fixes them in photographs, will not completely disappear (Living in modern city, 2016: 119). The Malanka feast, farewells to winter, memorials at cemeteries etc., will be preserved in a somewhat altered form.

Perceiving the photos as a source of research for the Ukrainian peasant world of the chosen historical period, we draw attention to the various aspects of life of rural people. Such, which, on the one hand, remained traditional in terms of content and purpose, but significantly changed in ways and methods (plowing of soils, sowing, harvesting, hay collection), on the other hand, were new phenomena in the lives of peasants: agronomy, veterinary medicine, electrification, broadcasting, collective «shock» brigades and units, agricultural exhibitions, political information and political training, awarding of transitional flags to the winners of the socialist competition, send-off ceremonies and service of young men in the Red Army.

With the intention to expand the cognitive prospects of peasant studies, in this case – to deeper understand the meaning of peasant photos that are at our disposal, it is advisable to take advantage of the theoretical work of contemporary European humanities. In particular, the writings of Jürgen Habermas, representative of the German «Frankfurt school» of philosophers. Known for his work on social philosophy, he was able to substantially expand his knowledge of «communicative action, discourse and rationality», essentially laying the foundation for a new humanistic foundation for an actual critical theory. Relying on the provisions, proposed by M. Weber, to present «rational» as a process of demythologization, «which in Europe led to the release of the secular (high society. – Auth.) culture from the religious pictures of the world, that were disintegrating» (Habermas, 2003: 19). So it turns out that with the coverage of cultural and social rationalization of everyday life, the traditional (primarily communicative and economic) forms of life were destroyed. In future, given the policies of the «great turning point» introduced by Stalin, these processes will only accelerate.

By involving Emile Durkheim and George Herbert Mead in his studies, J. Habermas offers a very interesting idea: new life worlds that replaced traditional worlds were created rather by the reflection of the traditions that lost their identity. In other words, this was due to the universalization of «norms of action and generalization of values that liberated situations of «wider opportunities», and communicative action from constrained contexts; after all, with such socialization samples, designed for the formation of abstract self-identities and forced individuation of the younger generation» (Habermas, 2003: 21). According to Habermas, this is «in general, the image of the modernist, as depicted by the classics of the theory of society» (Habermas, 2003: 29). It remains to add that such a methodological technique passed by the attention of historians who are investigating the past of the Ukrainian peasantry. And it

seems to us promising, especially given the extremely slow and fragmentary «rozselianennia» (decomposition of the peasant class during capitalism. – Auth.) of modern Ukrainian community (Graziosi and others, 2010: 8–44). Therefore, in order to find out the corresponding processes in the Ukrainian village, the concept of «modernization» is justified not as a certain universal (Western European) standard, but in the light of neutral (potentially Ukrainian and others) «spatially-temporal» correlation of properties (Habermas, 2003: 49).

In view of the above, the modernization of the Ukrainian (Naddniprianschyna) village was carried out by depriving its natural ritual and historically existential components inherent in it. Beliefs and ceremonies did not disappear, but, as O. Nayden notes, «the traditional content of unconditionally naive trustedness» vanished, «the elements of theatricality, external decorative visibility became more intense» (Babak and others, 2014: 126). Village made barely noticeable to contemporaries, but still a significant step towards the city, at least in the sense that in both cases «the rite became external formalized and theatrical performance». The attention to locally-familial intimacy, the clan-carnival genre was gradually vanishing, and «mass fashion was being introduced» instead. The intellectuals, different in terms of their mental activity, paid more and more attention to «structured communication principles» and «strategies for choosing life values», changes in the «philosophical foundations of everyday behavior» of peasants, all of which showed that the traditional village gradually disappeared into past. At the same time, intellectuals responded to the invasion of «eclectic-cultural lack of culture» to the peasant everyday lives (Babak and others, 2014: 126), had an opportunity to observe and represent the process of sublimation of profound traditions, their formalization, and basically, destruction of moral and spiritual criteria of life, established by millennial evolution.

In the context of the tasks facing Ukrainian historiography, creation of the image of a traditional-modern village is expected to revive. In the process of creating narratives, it is worth taking into account the hypothesis proposed by the British cultural historian Peter Burke. He believes that in the pre-industrial (agrarian) era, there was no modern understanding of leisure, because then «there was no regulated division between working and free time»; he suggested the term «festive culture» for an adequate interpretation of life «without leisure» (Living in modern city, 2016: 112). Its obviousness in the photos adds additional motivation for us to think so.

In search of signs of the destruction of the festive culture of Ukrainian peasants, it would also be useful to take advantage of the arguments of the Russian sociologist Mykola Khrenov, that during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was not only a «blurring of the boundaries between humdrum and festive life» in the city, but also the formation of a stereotype in the rural population (including that part that fell into the whirlwind of urbanization) that the city was a kind of «continuous holiday» (Hrenov, 2005: 460). This stereotype will prove to be so stable that its recurrence can be observed even at the beginning of the XXI century, but it is important for me to find out the «traces» of its fixation and comprehension in the vision of the Naddniprianschyna intellectuals of the last decades of the nineteenth to the first decades of the twentieth century. The answers to problems of intellectuals' interpretation of private cultural space of peasants, massification of their leisure time, emergence and operation of new civic organizations that set to previously unknown daily care of «lower» layers and stratas of the population, can be fruitful. They include dissemination of newspapers (press), books, photographs (potentially – cinema), in fact anything that will increase the role of reading (wider – informing) and will expand the horizons of rural people.

The conclusions. Therefore, this refers to the demand for «continuation of the age» of peasant studies by strengthening them with theoretical approaches of modern humanities. This

opens the prospects for further thematic studies of the «uncomfortable» mass (peasant) history, progressive filling of those gaps in knowledge that have emerged in Ukrainian history.

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