

UDC 780.614.11-051(477)
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.20.240041

Tetyana FILINA

PhD (History), Associate Professor of Department of Art-Management and Event Technologies National Academy of Culture and Arts Management, 9 Lavrska Street, Kyiv, Ukraine, postal code 01015 (tfilina01@gmail.com)

ORCID: 0000-0002-0685-8177

Yuriy CHUMAK

PhD (Art History), Associate Professor of Folk Musical Instruments and Vocals, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, 24 Ivana Franka Street, Drohobych, Ukraine, postal code 82100 (juchumak@ukr.net)

ORCID: 0000-0002-5944-2917

Тетяна ФІЛІНА

кандидат історичних наук, доцент кафедри арт-менеджменту та івент-технологій, Національна академія керівних кадрів культури і мистецтв, вул. Лаврська, 9, м. Київ, Україна, індекс 01015 (tfilina01@gmail.com)

Юрій ЧУМАК

кандидат мистецтвознавства, доцент кафедри народних музичних інструментів та вокалу Дрогобицького державного педагогічного університету імені Івана Франка, вул. Івана Франка, 24, м. Дрогобич, Україна, індекс 82100 (juchumak@ukr.net)

A NEW LOOK AT THE PHENOMENON OF UKRAINIAN KOBZARISM.

Review of the monograph: Khai M. O. Mykola Budnyk and Kobzarism. The 2nd, updated and supplemented edition. Lviv: “Astrolabiya” Publishing House, 2020. 380 p.

НОВИЙ ПОГЛЯД НА ФЕНОМЕН УКРАЇНСЬКОГО КОБЗАРСТВА.

Рецензія на монографію: Хай М. О. Микола Будник і кобзарство. 2-ге, оновлене та доповнене видання. Львів: Видавництво “Астролябія”, 2020. 380 с.

The Ukrainian kobzarism is a socio-historical and at the same time artistic phenomenon that has long attracted attention of domestic and foreign researchers. Recently, in Lviv publishing house “Astrolabiya” there was published the work of a famous Ukrainian art critic, Professor Mykhailo Khai, dedicated to the historical tradition of kobzarism, lyre and bandura studies, as well as the work of Mykola Budnyk, a kobzar, a bandura player, an artist, a master of folk musical instruments, a founder of the organization “Kyiv Kobzar Workshop” (1953 – 2001).

The monograph consists of five chapters, which focus on historical, art and sometimes philosophical and aesthetic issues of the Ukrainian kobzarism. In Chapter I “Epic (epic-thought) and Old Man (kobzar-lyre) Traditions of Rus-Ukraine” M. Khai traces the influences of kobzar culture on the work of Taras Shevchenko, analyzes various aspects of the origin and evolution of kobzar instruments in the light of the concepts of Hnat Khotkevych, Volodymyr Kushpet,

Heorhy Tkachenko and Mykola Budnyk, traces the views of famous Ukrainian scientists (from Ivan Franko to Yuri Sherekh-Shevelyov) on the genesis of the Ukrainian epics. The author dedicated a separate section to Filaret Kolessa as a researcher of the kobza-lyre tradition.

Professor M. Khai assures that despite the influence of romanticism on the work and worldview of Taras Shevchenko, he still had a realistic view of kobzarism as an element of the Ukrainian culture. The researcher considers Taras Shevchenko's artistic descriptions and assessments of kobzarism to be reliable, accurate and almost identical to the well-known ethnographic observations of field folklore practice, which was just emerging (Panteleimon Kulish, Porfiry Martynovych, etc.) at that time (p. 22). However, it was the creative work of Taras Shevchenko that contributed to the fact that researchers of kobzarism resorted to idealization, romanticization and heroization of the folk kobza-lyre tradition later (p. 14).

Considering the genesis issues of folk instruments (harps/husli, kobzas, banduras, lyres), M. Khai emphasizes that nobody was able to record the form-construction, the number of strings, the system, or the way of playing the ancient Ukrainian harps. There are hypotheses about this by A. Famintsin (the XIXth century), but the author rejects them, calling them "phantasmagoric assumptions". He believes that at the territory of Ukraine in later times than Kievan Rus harps (husli) were not recorded precisely because they were transformed into a more perfect and closer to the European lute, and later to the form of the Asian kobza-kobzya propagated by the Cossacks. At the territories of Bila and Novgorod Rus, where this transformation did not take place, this form and, probably, the ways of playing lasted longer, till (though in its original form hardly) almost to the present day. At the same time, the researcher emphasizes that the symmetry of the "majority" of kobza-banduras is recorded, as a rule, in iconographic images (most often in folk paintings "Kozak Mamay"), which, as well as their plot and naively reproduced colors, cannot serve a sufficiently reasonable basis for serious scientific conclusions. The scientist denies the productivity of philological (etymological) approaches to explaining the genesis of kobza and kobzarism. Therefore, he opposes equating of a kobzar player and a bandura player, although he admits that the commonality of the repertoire and forms of activity was characteristic of the performers of kobza and bandura playing (p. 33–34).

The author of the monograph criticizes the conclusions of Iryna Zinkiv, a researcher, who drew conclusions about the "revival of the traditional bandura" and its evolution into a "bandura-hybrid of an advanced type" in her work "Bandura as a Historical Phenomenon". M. Khai argues that obsolete ethnographic rudiments are not naturally revived – they can be only reconstructed experimentally, and a scientifically incapable requirement to "improve" the attributes of folk life in order to meet the criteria of technical progress in terms of ethnology is completely absurd, because it destroys their ethnographic identity and value as such, creating, instead, its surrogate derivative with completely lost authentic features of a primary ethnographic phenomenon (p. 43).

Investigating the genesis of kobzar songs, the researcher also touches on the issues of the kinship of the Russian epics (antiquities) with the Ukrainian duma. He admits that this issue is poorly studied. M. Khai is somewhat critical of Yuri Sherekh-Shevelyov's idea, who proposed an original method of considering historical phonology, "which has to do with thirty to forty phonemes" and therefore, in his opinion, "... is fully committed to such task and is of the highest degree of persuasiveness". M. Khai believes that the filling of "voids" in the Ukrainian history by methods of oral history and culture, namely – restoration and reconstruction according to the oral testimony of old people and legends, recorded by "oral" historians, ethnographers and folklorists, the facts collected in the folklore heritage are

much more effective than the written structural and phonological reconstruction proposed by Yu. Sherekh-Shevelyov (pp. 48–49).

In Chapter II “Historical and Social Status of Epic and Old Man Performing Practices” M. Khai paid attention to the poorly studied aspects of the musical epic tradition of the Ukrainians, analyzed the usage of the term “singing”, shared his thoughts on the work of Hnat Khotkevych “Bandura and its Repertoire”, analyzed the structure of kobzar and lyre societies. The scientist devoted the last sections of Chapter II to the lyre tradition, in particular its regional characteristics.

The author of the monograph pointed out the reasons for not understanding the nature, depth and essence of the Ukrainian kobzarism. He noted the objective reasons (the natural tendency of tradition to fade and level the immanent features), artificial causes (repression and physical destruction of kobzarism during the 1920s and 1940s by the Russian and German totalitarian regimes), scientific reasons – an extremely insufficient study of the basics of kobzarism as a folk tradition, the lack of popularization of existing scientific knowledge about it. The biggest misunderstandings is caused by especially weak research of such important from the point of view of musical ethnography aspects of kobzarism studying, as: 1) the genesis of epic individual singing and instrumental forms in ancient Ukraine; 2) musical and performance characteristics of kobzarism and lyre tradition at different historical and temporal phases of their evolution (the ratio of tradition and innovation, oral and authorial, indigenous and influential, sacred and secular, collective and individual, common and different, etc.); 3) different phases and stages of the tradition: the emergence and development, decline, natural extinction and forced extermination, restoration and scientific professional secondary reconstruction; 4) ethno-pedagogical principles of its imitation, restoration, scientific and reconstructive reproduction; 5) ethno-organological and ethno-phonetic features of kobzarism and lyre tradition (pp. 64–65).

Professor M. Khai is against the usage of the term “singing”, introduced into a scientific circulation by Kharkiv researcher Kost Cheremsky in 2005. Instead, he advocates the usage of the commonly used terms “kobzarism”, “kobzar-lyre / epic tradition”, “old age”. According to the author, the term “singing” was introduced to a categorical generalization of all singing genres and performing practices of ancient Ukraine. However, K. Cheremsky did not propose clear criteria for the classification of these genres and practices, that is why, to this concept any performance may belong, including amateur, which is often difficult to be called singing (p. 67). On the other hand, M. Khai singles out K. Cheremsky’s scientific achievements, in particular, the discovery of previously unknown documents and facts, for example, about the mass extermination of kobzars during the 1920s and 1930s. Among the achievements of Kharkiv researcher is the publication of “Twelve Vustyn Statutes”, which for the first time introduced into a scientific circulation the entire volume of unwritten laws and regulations of customary law of the Ukrainian bandura players, kobzars and lyre players. The author cited no less significant and important materials in the appendices “Singing Creativity” and “Singers of the Sloboda Kobzar Workshop of the XIXth– XXth centuries” (p. 70).

M. Khai expressed not less critical judgments concerning the above-mentioned book by H. Khotkevych. Noticing in it many contradictory statements, the researcher did not share H. Khotkevych’s opinion on the need to develop academic kobzarism. M. Khai emphasizes that kobzarism is possible only within the framework of the “folklore line”, according to which only “quasi-bandura art” is possible, in which the authentic form and essence of tradition never existed and could not exist (p. 84).

Characterizing the existence of kobzar-lyre communities in ancient Ukraine, M. Khai speaks of the hierarchical ladder of the ruling kobzar-lyre “top” led by the work-shopmaster or “a priest” at the head. A priest-teacher was assisted by the institute of the work-shop foreman (judge and дума councils) and the treasurer, who collected a hundredth part of the earnings from each member of the community. However, the researcher expresses some ideas concerning adoration of kobza-lyre workshops by the city workshop organizations. He states that in the Ukrainian ethnic environment kobzarism and lyreplaying were not just another artistic craft (as, for example, typical urban medieval music workshops, whose function, in addition to playing at folk holidays, was to perform academic – the so-called “Italian” – music), aimed at serving the demands of the bourgeois community. Kobzarism and lyre playing were basically a peasant folklore tradition that professed spontaneous primordial and syncretic forms of creation and principles of functioning; it was a spiritual, artistic and aesthetic need of the common people, without which neither the singer himself could imagine life, nor his living environment or wanders. From city and town cultures, this folklore tradition took only certain elements of workshop organization and administrative hierarchy. However, the level and degree of organization was much more veiled (oral) than it was in the bourgeoisie workshops. But the rules of the oral customary statute, which kobzars and lyre players followed unconditionally, were professed by them with orthodox strictness inherent in all other “closed” fraternities and communities (blindmen, ordinary old men-beggars, monks, the Cossacks, etc.). That means that the type of kobzar “professionalism” was based on the postulates not of the town, but of the so-called “sincere” rural ethics and aesthetics and, more broadly, culture, ethno-pedagogical and ethno-artistic principles of which followed from diametrically opposed to the generally accepted understanding of the professionalism bases (p. 86–87). Interesting is the explanation of a three-year process of teaching a young student to play the bandura by a priest-master during the 30s of the XXth century, described by the author (p. 94–95).

The author states that in Ukraine the kobzar tradition was destroyed physically at the original authentic level during the severe 1930s, and the lyre tradition also died out: information about the last lyre players, who until recently wandered in Volynia, Polissia, Podillia and Hutsul region dates back to the 50s–60s and at least the 70s–80s of the previous century. Mykola Tovkaylo from Pereyaslav, Volodymyr Kushpet from Stritivka, Taras Kompanichenko from Boyarka, Kost Cheremsky and Nazar Bozhynsky from Kharkiv, Yurko Fedynsky from Kriachkivka, not blind bandura players Yaroslav Krysko and Nazar Cherkas from Lviv, Vasyl Kyrylych from Drohobych, blind Layosh Molnar from Lviv and Oleksandr Trius from Romen, not blind lyre players Stefan (Mykhailo Khai), Yarema (Vadym Shevchuk), Boroda (Yuriy Avdeyev) from Kyiv region, Serhiy Tkach, Andriy Liashuk from Volyn, Viktor Levytsky from Hutsul region, etc., are the most productive at the level of scientific restoration and sometimes reconstruction. The scheme of reconstructive work on the restoration of the extinct tradition at the secondary level consists in the following positions mainly: a) selection and study of a certain local tradition (or a specific singer); b) recording, research processing of the material for the purpose of its scientific comprehension; c) the study of the characteristic features of tradition as a specific ethno-phonetic phenomenon, notation and preparation of the material and performing means (voice and instrument) for reconstructive reproduction; d) the secondary reproduction of the manner of performing, as close as possible to the authentic sample; e) functioning of the received variant of performing at the secondary level and popular science representation (p. 102).

Emphasizing that one of the most characteristic forms of the Ukrainian traditional music culture is the ancient epic (old age) practice of wandering singers – kobzars and lyre players, the researcher notes: the situation with lyre tradition in Ukraine is not less sad as

with kobzarism. Due to the hectic demand for the study of the kobzar tradition at the end of the XIXth – the beginning of the XXth centuries, which catastrophically disappeared from everyday life at that time, those who began to save it then, did not notice how the lyre tradition disappeared unnoticed, remaining almost unrecorded. Thus, the researchers' attention was focused on "more noble and peculiar to us" kobzarism, the areas of distribution of which, in comparison with lyre tradition, reached only a third of the territory of Ukraine (p. 105).

Professor M. Khai considers the origin of the Ukrainian lyre tradition from Western Europe. He considers the kobzar tradition to be oriental. The researcher analyzes the social origin and state of kobzars, bandura players and lyre players, points out their common features (old men casual and professional singing), as well as differences: lyre players most often sang songs of a religious nature, and kobzars and bandura players – secular, domestic, heroic, and etc. He also writes about the repression of the Soviet authorities against kobzars and the repression of the Nazis against lyre players (p. 113). He regrets that the famous lyre players Dmytro Gintsar from Putyla (Bukovyna Hutsulshchyna) and Ivan Vlasiuk from Zaliuttia (Volyn) were the last lyre players in Ukraine, and the living authentic tradition was interrupted finally.

The section on a regional distribution of lyre tradition is interesting. M. Khai emphasizes that the most characteristic features of lyre playing as a tradition in the Ukrainian Carpathians area were most densely concentrated not in the mountains, but at the foothills (Nadsiannia, Opillia, Boikivske Pidhiria, Pokuttia), from where lyre players extended their practice to the neighboring mountainous regions of Lemkivshchyna, Boikivshchyna, and Hutsulshchyna. However, in Transcarpathia, no traces of its functioning were found, despite few facts of the typical lyre repertoire fixating in the so-called "passive" practice. The traditions of Volyn-Polissia zone, despite all the mentioned information in the scientific and fiction literature, are the least recorded and studied, and therefore their reconstruction at the secondary scientific level is perhaps the most problematic nowadays. Instead, the lyre traditions of the Dnieper and Poltava-Sloboda areas have, perhaps, the most vivid and the most complete material for such reconstructions (pp. 120–131).

In Chapter III, M. Khai describes the instruments (harp/husli, bandura, kobza, lyre), the repertoire (epics, dumas, historical songs, psalms and chants, etc.) of the Ukrainian kobzars, lyre players, bandurists. The author notes that for a long time researchers considered the kobza and the bandura to be the same instrument, except that the bandura was a somewhat more modern instrument option. However, based on the descriptions by the composer Mykola Lysenko, who described the kobza of the famous kobzar Ostap Veresay, the master Mykola Budnyk managed to make kobza (p. 141). In one of the sections of this chapter, M. Khai mentions the issue of repression against kobzars one more time, interpreting them as a method of waging a "small war" against the Ukrainians (pp. 185–196).

Chapter IV deals with the biography, artistic and social activities of Mykola Budnyk. In detail the researcher considers the principles of making kobzar tools by M. Budnyk. The author focused on M. Budnyk's kobza repertoire. It should be noted that the section is full of author's memoirs, because M. Khai was a student of M. Budnyk for two years. The last, Chapter V contains appendices to the monograph: publications and reviews, photos, audio albums, note transcriptions.

In general, M. Khai's monograph is an important interesting synthesis of scientific analysis of the epic and old man traditions foundations of the Ukrainians; the monograph with worldviews, philosophical, national and existential visions of the author and kobzar, and a master M. Budnyk. The monograph contains a critique of modern, the so-called "academic" bandura tradition and exposes a number of quasi-scientific and romantic myths about kobzarism.

The article was received November 30, 2020.

Article recommended for publishing 31/08/2021.