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EARLY MODERN UKRAINE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF GLOBAL HISTORY (review of the monograph: D. Vyrsky. The Beginning of Modernity: the Second Wave of Globalization, the End of the Old Order and Ukraine (the 15th – mid-19th centuries). 2nd ed., supplement. Kyiv: National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Institute of history of Ukraine, 2022. 217 p.)

РАНЬОМОДЕРНА УКРАЇНА З ПОГЛЯДУ ГЛОБАЛЬНОЇ ІСТОРІЇ (рецензія на монографію: Вирський Д. Початок сучасності: друга хвиля глобалізації, кінець Старого Порядку та Україна (XV – середина XIX ст.). Вид. 2-е, доп. Київ : НАН України, Ін-т історії України, 2022. 217 с.)

The monograph by Dmytro Vyrsky, Doctor of Historical Sciences, covers the Early Modern period in Ukraine in the context of global history. The author set a bold objective: to analyse the course of events on the Ukrainian lands beyond over-engaged concepts of state (imperial and national) modern historiographies. He sought to clarify the European and

world context of challenges that formed modern Ukrainians, as well as to do research on the “structure” of the Ukrainian Early Modern period and its historical experience, which makes this “transitional” period the beginning of modernity.

The researcher used the concept of the French historian Fernand Braudel and his students, in particular Immanuel Wallerstein, the American, according to which the history of Europe and the world is a whole-system (world-economy, world-system) and the formation of global system began in the early modern era precisely. It should be noted that historians and philosophers of history consider a gradual formation of the global world during early modern period to be the second “globalization”. The first “globalization” took place in antiquity supposedly, but such statements are questionable, because the ancient world-system did not have a planetary scale.

The chronological framework of D. Vyrsky’s research needs some explanation. Of course, the 15th century (approximately in 1400) is accepted as a tentative date of the beginning of Early Modern by many European researchers. However, everything is not so clear-cut with the upper chronological limit. For the countries of Western Europe, where the formation of the world-system began, the Great French Revolution of 1789 was a turning point, but for the peripheral countries of the world system, including the Eastern European ones, the early modern period lasted until the middle of the 19th century. That is why, D. Vyrsky chose such a chronological framework for his monograph.

In Chapter I “Macro-Reflections on Early Modern Ukraine: Ecology and Economy – Natural Reconquest and Integration into the World-System”, D. Vyrsky first of all dwells on the description of climatic and demographic changes in the Ukrainian lands. In our opinion, this approach imposes on the traditions of positivist historiography. However, the author writes about global climatic changes, in particular about the cold period (the Little Ice Age), which happened during the period of 1250 and the end of the 19th century. He writes about three cold peaks periods – the middle of the 14th century, approximately the years of 1570 – the 1710s and 1790 – the 1880s – during which it was slightly warmer, and gives many facts about the consequences of cold winters in Ukraine and Europe.

More interesting are the author’s reflections on demography of early modern Ukraine. According to his observations, during the period of the 14th – 15th centuries the population of the then Ukrainian lands decreased, which, to a certain extent, was the consequence of the “Black Death” – the plague of 1346 – 1353. In his opinion, the local population even moved from the former Kyiv and Dnipro-centric core-hinterland to the marginal areas-shelters: Pidhiria-Halychyna, Pokuttia and Bukovyna, Polissia, the Crimea. It should be noted that such considerations are associated with the well-known theory of the Russian historian M. Pohodin (although the latter wrote about the resettlement of people from the middle of the Dnipro region to the north-east as a result of the Mongol conquests of the middle of the 13th century).

The author also notes that in the 14th – 15th centuries economic conditions degraded: the Golden Horde steppe urbanization came to nothing, Podillia declined in its development, the Ukrainian steppe became a Wild Field, the Genoese had to flee from the cities of southern Ukraine, the Greek and Armenian diasporas lost their state metropolises and began the path of integration into local societies, etc. In our opinion, D. Vyrsky, writing about the climate, nature, demography, economic system, cites many facts that were not the direct consequences of climatic and economic changes. For example, about the loss of access to the Black Sea by the Ukrainian-Rusyns (the last port available to them, Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky, was invaded by the Turks in 1484 (p. 30)), the historian mentions in the context of describing economic processes, but this fact is more proper to mention in the military and political canvas of events.

The author of the monograph writes about a gradual colonization of uninhabited lands in the south and east of Ukraine, using the term “natural Reconquista”. D. Vyrsky even considers this process to be the main content and meaning of the history of Ukraine during the early modern period (p. 35). He pays a lot of attention to “feudal capitalism” and the inclusion of Ukraine’s economy in the world system. In his opinion, in the “dimensions of economy”, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is the first state system on the Ukrainian lands that functioned under the conditions of early modern “feudal capitalism”. The latter differed from the classical feudalism of the Middle Ages by the phenomenon of “forced labour for the market economy”. Local (Ukrainian) society began to live for the first time as the part of the world-economy (pp. 39–40). The author draws a logical line between the unification of the majority of the Ukrainian lands in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, huge colonization opportunities in the Ukrainian territories, low population density, the agrarian nature of towns (whose life revolved around town mills) and the prevalence of extraordinary monopolies in them (the right of warehouse in Lviv, Lutsk, Kyiv, Kamianets-Podilsky), a high percentage of the nobility and the spread of transitional “states” (servants-boyars, the Cossacks, ethnic business, etc.), a gradual spread of *filvark* enterprises, minor lordships and emergence of serfdom with the mass use of free-hired labour. To this state of affairs there was added the introduction of civilizational novelties: the Roman/Western civil law, the Renaissance education (“seven liberal arts”), book printing and scholarship (pp. 41–48, 57–58).

It is important that the author denies the myth about Ukraine of the 16th – 17th centuries, which is widespread in romantic and positivist historiography as “the granary of Europe”. Actually from the 16th century till the second half of the 18th century the “world market” considered the Ukrainian lands as not a grain supplier, but a “forest products” supplier (honey, wood, potash, etc.) and beef cattle. The wheat produced in Ukraine was consumed at the “domestic market” mainly – here it was used to make *horilka*, the sale of which brought much higher income than grain trade. The author also calls the stories about the fantastic yield of cereals throughout Ukraine “fairy tales”. The modest level of agriculture rationalization in Ukraine at that time is an important marker. After all, a high level of agricultural technologies achieved earlier is considered a prerequisite for the development of the Industrial Revolution in early modern England (pp. 49–54). Among the export products of the Ukrainian industry, the researcher mentions only the Carpathian salt and linen fabric (however, the majority of fabrics was imported to Ukraine).

Depicting the early modern “economic face” of Ukraine, D. Vyrsky also mentions the Jews, who made up the third largest ethnic group, which, however, did not exceed 10% of the population even in western Ukraine. The researcher also writes about the nomads, in particular, denies the idea of despotism of the Horde people, emphasizes that the level of social solidarity among them was clearly more tangible (and therefore the “level of happiness” of the nomads, as well as the Cossacks, was significantly higher). The historian rejects the image of “bloody lands” for early modern Ukraine, but admits that the frontier was characterized by dosed violence, and human losses, especially among civilians, were not catastrophic. However, Ukraine was not a “country of free will and freedom”, because there were slave practices that already disappeared in the “civilized” world of the West (pp. 61–70).

The author focused on the oriental civilizational component of Ukraine’s existence. Of course, he mainly meant an Islamic prism, although he is not restricted exclusively to it (Christianity – especially Eastern Christianity – also had numerous connections with the East-Orient). However, competition with the civilization of Islam is rather a pan-European than

purely Ukrainian early modern issue (and it is a theme about the movement of the Europeans to catch up with Asia mainly) (pp. 74–75). Therefore, the author writes about the dependence of Western Europe and Ukraine on Eastern spices, emphasizes that the Ukrainian garden culture (“cherry orchard near the house”) appeared precisely under the influence of the East.

In Chapter II ““The Tectonic” 15th Century: Signs of the Future”, D. Vyrsky emphasizes that this century is in many aspects key in the history of Ukraine, although the majority of historians do not accept this. The author enumerated many events and processes of the 15th century that became an impetus for development in the following centuries: the Hussite movement, the Florentine Union of Churches in 1439, Gutenberg’s book printing, the first success of the Renaissance in Eastern Europe, the beginning of the era of Great Geographical Discoveries, the “golden age of labour” (due to the depopulation of post-plague Europe, workers became a great value, that is why, wages increased and the number of working days decreased). Significant events also took place in Ukraine and its neighbours: the congress of European monarchs in Lutsk in 1429, the confederation of the Lesser Poland and Russian nobility in 1439, the mass rebellion headed by Mukha in 1490 – 1492, the appearance of the Zaporizhzhia Cossacks, “urban revolution” (the spread of the Magdeburg law in the Ukrainian cities), the transformation of Lviv into the main “megalopolis” of Ukraine. At the same time, the author writes about the changes experienced by Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, Moldova, Muscovy in the 15th century. For example, D. Vyrsky writes about the rise of Moldova, the policy of Stephen the Great, the desire of the Moldovans to take over a part of the Russian lands – Podillia and Halychyna (pp. 91–92).

In Chapter III “Enthusiasm of the “Golden” 16th Century: The Noble Revolution – the First Modernizing Revolution on the Ukrainian Territory” D. Vyrsky focuses on the formation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its noble system. The author used the concept of the “noble execution movement” of the Polish historian Andrzej Sulima-Kaminski. The revolutionary nobility (inspired by the ideas of the Renaissance and Reformation) determined the vector of the country’s public life from the Radom Constitution of 1505 until the suppression of M. Zebzhidovsky’s rebellion in 1606 – 1608. It was in the context of the Noble Revolution that the conclusion of *pacta conventa* with elected monarchs (first signed in 1573), the Union of Lublin was concluded in 1569, a certain secularization of society was initiated, and the idea of “Sarmatism” was formed. In a diachronic dimension, the author traced the struggle of the nobility representatives for their rights, their relations with kings and magnates, and also attributed the foreign policy success of Poland and Lithuania, for example, military victories over enemies, to the achievements of the Noble Revolution (pp. 110–112). According to the historian, the Nobility Revolution was also one of the impulses of the Cossack revolution.

In Chapter ““Iron” of the 17th century: the Cossack Revolution – the Experience of “National” Transformation of the State and the Church”, D. Vyrsky writes about the exhaustion of extensive development opportunities and the need to move to more intensive practices (England and France were at the forefront of social reformation). The Thirty Years’ War of 1618 – 1648 provided a “new” example of a pan-European military conflict. Medieval and Renaissance dependence on the “antique model” was overcome. “New people” (new elites) appeared, particularly in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – the Cossacks. In the first half of the 17th century the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was at the peak of its political and economic rise. It took an active part in the Russian Troubles, avoided the grueling Thirty Years’ War, stopped the Turks near Khotyn in 1621, fought for the Swedish inheritance of

the kings of the Vasa dynasty, actively intervened in the affairs of the Crimean Khanate in the 1620s, and maintained influence in Moldova and the Romanian principalities, founded an overseas colony called New Courland on the Caribbean island Tobago (pp. 118–119).

On the other hand, it was during this period that the Cossacks became active, who in the first half of the 17th century reached parity with the crown nobility army (this was especially evident in the Battle of Khotyn, during which the Cossacks saved the Poles from defeat). Writing about the Cossack Revolution, D. Vytsky dates it to the years of 1648 – 1709. As in the case of the Nobility Revolution (1505 – 1608), the historian tied the upper limit of the Cossack Revolution to the date when the development-growth of the “Cossack project” ended and the development-degradation began (the key was the Poltava defeat of Mazepa supporters in 1709. It is positive that the author emphasized an important social advantage of the “Cossack project”, namely the openness of the Cossacks to the common people, which far exceeded all the “social elevators” sanctioned by the Noble Revolution. In 1648 the mass revolutionary Cossack movement among the Ukrainians led to the fact that a few percent of the nobility were opposed by tens of percent of the revolutionized peasants-Cossacks. Of course, it is impossible to talk about the Ukrainian national support for the Cossacks (this is a rather modern rhetoric of the 19th – 20th centuries) (p. 139).

D. Vytsky’s statement that the only chance for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to stop the Cossacks at the beginning of the revolution (somewhere before the year of 1651) was to return to the plans for the Turkish war, which Vladyslav IV had been hatching (p. 142), seems doubtful and debatable. We believe that the war of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Turkey and the involvement of the Cossacks in it would delay the start of the revolution in Ukraine, but would not stop the development of the “Cossack project”. The set of social, religious, national and economic contradictions between the Cossacks and the Polish nobility was already so acute that the explosion would have occurred, if not in 1648, then a decade later. We can’t help mentioning the fact that only 4 years passed from the joint struggle of the Poles and the Cossacks against the Ottoman Empire in 1621 to the next Cossack anti-Polish uprising, and not even ten years passed until Taras Fedorovych’s rather successful war against the Poles.

In Chapter V “Overflow” of the 18th Century: Tsarist Counter-revolution and Resistance of the Old Revolutionaries – the Nobles and the Cossacks. The Choice between Empire and Nations” the author focuses on the description of the influence of the Enlightenment ideas on the fate of the Ukrainian Cossack state and its neighbours. D. Vytsky rightly noted that at that time, when the Great Border (of the Christian and Islamic civilizations) retreated from the Ukrainian lands, the border war ceased to determine the lifestyle of a Ukrainian. The ancient agricultural and nomadic symbiosis in Ukraine also collapsed. There was only one way of development – agriculture. The “historical landscape” changed, because the Russian Empire appeared, the project of which was both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary at the same time. The historian describes the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, its transformation into a second-rate state, and it was against the background of the rise of the Polish education and science. At the same time, he interprets the Haidamat uprising as the final “degeneration”, the degradation of the Cossack revolution (pp. 134, 170–171).

The author also describes the decline of the “Cossack autonomies”: the Slobid regiments, the Zaporizhzhia Sich and the Hetmanship. D. Vytsky’s opinion on the chronological limit of the end of the “Cossack cycle” of the Ukrainian history appears to be original. If the majority of historians write about the years of 1775 (the liquidation of Zaporizhzhia Sich) and 1783

(the abolition of the Cossack territorial regiments in the Hetman region), the author suggests a different vision. The disappearance of “eternal Ukrainian borders” – Turkish as a consequence of the Russian-Turkish war of 1787 – 1791 and Polish as a consequence, the historian considers the second partition of Poland in 1792 to be the real markers of the “end” of the Cossack revolution’s momentum, the completion of its development-degradation phase.

Summing up, it should be noted that D. Vyrsky’s monograph is, in a word, an interesting study in the global history, full of sound, non-linear considerations and analytical constructions regarding the Ukrainian history of the early modern period. The author’s erudition, his good knowledge of world historiography and new methodological and conceptual scientific trends are evident on the pages of the work. Of course, the work has some shortcomings, such as repetitions (see pp. 16 and 137, pp. 17 and 181–182), lack of general conclusions, lack of Chapter on Ukraine in the first half of the 19th century (because the author declared the upper limit of Early Modern in Ukraine to be the middle of the 19th century). However, D. Vyrsky’s attempt to see the inclusion of Ukraine in the world system during the period of the 15th – 18th centuries, to consider the history of the Ukrainians and their neighbours from the standpoint of Martin Malia’s theory of “institutionalized revolution”, frontier and network concepts, deserves attention and gratitude of scholars.

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