

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE URBAN CULTURE ON THE COSSACK RURAL POPULATION OF THE DNEIPER UKRAINE DURING THE MODERNIZATION OF THE LATE XIX – EARLY XX CENTURIES (BASED ON OBSERVATIONS OF PARISH PRIESTS)

Olena Bachynska\*

### Abstract

The article considers the influence on everyday life and spiritual traditions of the Cossacks of the Dnieper Ukraine city culture, process of modernization and imperial Russian implementations. The main sources for analysis were the observation of local rural priests. They recorded that in special periodicals of “diocesan vedomosti” (magazine). It should be stressed that “vidkhidnytstvo” (seasonal working migration) to the cities for earnings or transportation of goods affected the life of the Cossacks. It was revealed that the consequences of this influence were changes in the everyday life of individual families as well as the whole rural community. As a result, the traditional notion of fashion, cultural values, spiritual traditions, Russification were transformed.

**Keywords:** everyday life, transformation, modernization, Cossacks, urban culture, seasonal working migration.

In the records of the late XIX century in the Ukrainian land being a part of the then Russian Empire, after the Great Reforms of the 1860s-1870s, the Ukrainian Cossacks (Kozatstvo) were referred to as “former Small-Russia Cossacks”. They accounted for 33% of all Chernihiv province population and 65% of the province’s rural community. In Poltava province they made 46 and 88% respectively<sup>1</sup>, while in Budzhak the number of the Cossacks of the former Denube (New Russia) Host amounted to 13, 000 people oció<sup>2</sup>. They Cossacks lived both in the villages along with the state and landowner serf, and separately, however even residing in different villages they could make a part of one parish. The parish priests differentiated the representatives of different groups in village community quite clearly, so they made records about each group’s features.

The history of Kozatstvo of the late XIX century is studied quite profoundly in terms of its military-and-political and socioeconomic nature. This research paper’s objective is to look at the changes in the everyday life and church traditions resulting from the global social transformations in the Russian Empire, caused by the modernization. In particular, since the late XIX – early XX century, the rural area is absorbing urban traditions, trends and lifestyle, which, in their turn, “degrade” the traditional everyday-life pattern. The records, made in 1901 by the priest of Obolonnia village say, “recently, the people’s clothing has

\* Prof. Dr. İ.İ.Meçnikov Odesa Milli Üniversitesi Felsefe-Tarih Fakültesi Ukrayna Tarihi Bölümü, olena\_an@ukr.net

<sup>1</sup> *Pamyatnaya knizhka Poltavskoy gubernii za 1865 g.*, Poltava, 1865, pp. 125–126; *Pamyatnaya knizhka Chernigovskoy gubernii na 1861 g.*, Chernigov, 1862, pp. 80–81.

<sup>2</sup> Olena Bachynska, *Dunays’ke kozats’ke viys’ko*, 1828-1868, Odesa: «Astroprint» 1998, pp. 183-195.

been getting foppish; the city fashion is infesting the young generation”, while “the display of foppishness and crave for decorating themselves are meant to disguise the true material standing of a local individual, which is their poverty. Looking cheerful, neat, and content, they always struggle”<sup>3</sup>. “Seeking this outer culture is a burden for the people who are too poor already; this can’t fail to alter the progress of the ethnic development”, said the priest of Komarivka village of Kobeliatsky district of Poltava province<sup>4</sup>.

It echoes the words, dated 1896, by Leonid Maksymovych, the priest of Deptovka village of Konotop district of Chernihiv province, where Cossacks were making a majority of population. “Except for the landowner serf, one could spot it in their outlook, manner of speaking, surnames, and Cossack ranks. However, the former Small Russia type of the residents has changed dramatically over the past three decades...Today’s men’s outlook and clothing still has quite a few traditional features...but the trend of taking after the city-dwellers in everything is becoming more pronounced. These days, you can encounter both a man with the “round” haircut and the one with the hair parting in the middle (they don’t shave their head for 30 years or so); those in common straw hats or in city-style peaked-cap, or in fine felt hats...”<sup>5</sup>.

The priest from Komarivka village of Kobeliatsky district of Poltava province mentions that its residents “are losing their national outlook due to the impact of a “external” culture...of the colonists from Katerynoslav and Kherson provinces. They interact closely when earning their living...They believe if they look more like those colonists, they will turn from a muzhik into a gentleman... For no reason did they shed off their national shirts, chemarka frockcoats, plakhta skirts, Cossack trousers, and polished shoes etc. and readily put on the jackets, coats, bashlyks with colorful lining, the blouses of different design, leather-belted skirts, slim trousers, boots with shining bootlegs, shoes and galoshes. The boys of the parish school also follow the fashion and imitate the older ones, wearing in mud, in dry weather, in creeping frost or thaw jackets with a low red belt, galoshes and bashlyks with their red or blue ends carelessly thrown backwards”. In the opinion of the Komarivka inhabitants, it is not a young man who has no bashlyk, “red belt”, galoshes, and it is not a girl who has no “bell”-skirt, “shirt” blouse, “vesnianka” or “keraska” top blouse, boots and galoshes. The foppish “gloves” substituted the coarse mittens, so that fops often did not use to remove them when mark themselves with a sign of a cross. They also borrowed from the Germans mutual handshakes, even in church, addressing as “You”.

---

<sup>3</sup> P. Solomakha, “Selo Obolon’ye Krolevetskogo uyezda (neskol’ko slov ko dnyu stoletiya prikhodskogo khrama)”, *Pribavleniye k Chernigovskim eparkhial’nym izvestiyam*, 1901, №10, pp. 560.

<sup>4</sup> “Arkhistratigo-Mikhailovskaya tserkov’ sela Komarovki Kobelyakskogo uyezda i eye prikhoda. Istoriko-statisticheskoy ocherk”, *Poltavskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1908, № 28, pp. 1147-1152.

<sup>5</sup> P. Solomakha, “Selo Obolon’ye Krolevetskogo uyezda (neskol’ko slov ko dnyu stoletiya prikhodskogo khrama)”, *Pribavleniye k Chernigovskim eparkhial’nym izvestiyam*, 1901, №10, pp. 560.

The “gentleman’s” speech is followed with a considerable blend of soldier’s lexicon. Samovar on the table, flowers on the windowsills, print curtains on the windows, painted pads instead of carpets on the walls. There are pasted illustrations from different magazines on the walls almost in every house. Under the influence of the Germans, the former “Chumak” cart or maze with the ointment, mentioned in Little Russian songs, goes into the narration area, giving way to lighter and more comfortable “processions” or motley painted wagons, which make up the subject of pride for the owner and the craving dream for the needy ones.

This desire for an external culture is a hard oppression for the material budget for already poor people, and it can not but badly affect the progress of ethical development<sup>6</sup>. Another priest in the village Mali Budyschenky also admitted significant pursuit of urban fashions: “Due to the great poverty of the villagers, they have seen an unreasonable craving for their outfits. Both a wealthy master and a poor debtor ... all of them try to compete one in front of another with a cloth-jacket, a beautiful sheepskin hat, pretty high-heeled boots on “three-level horseshoes”, while boys and girls boast with elegant skirts, blouses, expensive coral necklaces and red boots<sup>7</sup>”.

Living together with peasants, the Cossack population differed from him also in assimilation of new traditions. Such a characteristic feature was noticed by the priest from the village Vyshenky of the Krolivetsky district of the Chernihiv province, where in 1869 there were 1150 former serfs of Princess Dolgoruka, 612 Cossacks, urban people, soldiers, etc.: “A strange difference between the Cossack and the peasant. The first one, keeping behind the boastful ambition, is hardly exposed to the influence of time and education; he is reasonable, restrained in his home life, honest. A peasant, especially a young man, is willing to face everything new, he is smart, foppish, profligate. In many cases, he even reveals some kind of subtlety of life, for example, the use of samovars, cigarettes, etc.”<sup>8</sup>. The difference of the peasants was also noticed in consciousness of the Cossacks. This is evidenced by the priest Mykola Pirsky from the town Perevolochna, Kobeliatsky district of Poltava province. He admitted that even in a very difficult economic situation, not often people were hired in “service” because of “the Cossack pride that is typical for the town inhabitants, which does not allow them to go to the laborers<sup>9</sup>”. There is evidence that, even in the Cossacks of Budzhak, even in the 1880s, the Cossacks did not go to serve at a significant difficulty in the economy: “They were ashamed of time-work:

<sup>6</sup> “Arkhiestratigo-Mikhaylovskaya tserkov’ sela Komarovki Kobelyakskogo uyezda i eye prikhoda. Istoriko-statisticheskii ocherk”, *Poltavskiyeparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1908, № 28, pp. 1147 – 1152.

<sup>7</sup> Io. Mikhaylets’ Io. “Selo Malye Budishchenki. Istoriko-statisticheskii ocherk”, *Poltavskiyeparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1887, №12, pp.486 – 488.

<sup>8</sup> Vasiliy Lipskiy, “Prihodskaya letopis’ sela Vishenok Krolevetskogo uyezda”, *Pribavleniye k Chernigovskim parkhial’nym vedomostyam*, 1875, № 2, pp. 64-65

<sup>9</sup> Nikolay Pirskiy, “Istoriko-statisticheskoye svedeniya o m. Perevolochne Kobelyakskogo uyezda, i nakhodyashchegosya v nem Spaso-Preobrazhenskoy tserkvi”, *Poltavskiyeparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1893, No. 14, pp. 548.

they say, I am the Cossack commander, the clerk and holder of the order, it is unprofitable and ashamed for me to serve and work for others”<sup>10</sup>.

It is interesting to explore the parish priests’ recollections of the times when people were engaged not in seasonal working migration or hauling but in real *chumatstvo* and the connection between these occupations. At one time the inhabitants were engaged into *chumatstvo*. The local residents arranged a number of bullock carts which made their way to the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea to bring fish, caviar and salt. This type of occupation provided persistent Chumaks with much money. However, the birth of the railways and especially the reduction of excise duty on salt were to put an end to *chumatstvo*. Now, we can witness only dilapidated carts somewhere at the back of the homesteads as silent traces of the *chumatstvo* of those days. Thinking of that time, we are convinced of Chumaks’ strong liking for this type of trade because adventurous Chumaks found pleasure in their need to travel as well as in financial reward. As a result of the heritage or old legends about Cossacks’ and Chumaks’ palmy days and their wealth, the current young generation in the village of Perevolochna also goes off in search of a living to Novorossiia where they remain till late autumn when the demand for labour decreases in the region. Although there are years when they benefit a lot by going off there, more often they complain about lack of work because of wheat shortage or labour abundance...

Even nowadays, when this occupation is no longer profitable, the inclination of Perevolochna residents to travelling forces them to set off to bring fish, salt and clay from more or less faraway places<sup>11</sup>.

Another priest emphasized that ‘the opening of railways set an end to parishioners’ seasonal working migration. However, about 35 years ago we had a well-run *chumatstvo* in our parish. At that time, the strings of Chumaks headed from the village to the Crimea to bring salt from there. Some of them returned home and sold salt at fairs, but most of them went to Don oblast to sell salt and buy salted fish which later was sold retail at fairs or wholesale to the merchants from towns. Then every Chumak had from 2 to 12 large oxen of Ukrainian breed<sup>12</sup>.

Most priests considered seasonal work harmful not only for cultural and ethnic development, but also for spiritual and moral state of population. In particular, in their opinion Chernihiv province had such a seasonal work effect on moral and spiritual level: because of seasonal works groups of people “go to Odesa and Chisinau for brick producing, some people go to steppe provinces (Kherson, Ekaterynoslav, Tauride) for cattle grazing and for land cultivation,

---

<sup>10</sup> Aleksandr Bur’yanov, “Istoriko-statisticheskoye opisaniye tserkvi i prikroda seleniya Volontirovki, byvshey kazach’yey stanitsy Akkermanskogo uyezda”, *Kishinevskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti*, 1877, № 16, pp.679.

<sup>11</sup> Nikolay Pirskiy, “Istoriko-statisticheskoye svedeniya o m. Perevolochne Kobelyakskogo uyezda, i nakhodyashchegosya v nem Spaso-Preobrazhenskoy tserkvi”, *Poltavskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1893, No. 14, pp. 547.

<sup>12</sup> Evtimiy Efremov, “TSerkovno-istoricheskoye i statisticheskoye opisaniye Aleksandro-Nevskey tserkvi i prikroda s. Serednyakov Gadyachskogo uyezda Poltavskoy eparkhii”, *Poltavskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1905, №. 25, cc. 934.

and many of them, living there for decades and forgetting their families and getting used to new places, have their new homes and stay there forever. Lately, the South afforded good earnings on coal mines, which attracted the best and strongest youth aged 18-30 (they earned 25-30 karbovanetz per month)". However, according to the priest "those who spent several years working at coal mines became lazy and unable for land cultivation, weak, pale and sluggish. They were prone to consumption and they were of no help to their parents, but only caused troubles"<sup>13</sup>. According to some Poltava province priests, the results of such work included "immoral behaviour" among parish. "Beside alcoholism there is increased lechery among youth. They do not keep chastity, and only our parish annually has 5-12 illegitimate children. This is the result of seasonal working migration which means that the youth live separately unsupervised. This trend is also encouraged by work on tobacco plantations on the local estates which employ annually a number of girls and boys"<sup>14</sup>.

Grigorii Prykhozhyi, a priest from village Ivanivka of Khorolskyi district tells the same: "Due to this (low birth rate), the problem of seasonal working migration in Ivanivka is becoming quite urgent. In spring, almost all youngsters (girls and boys) go to Katerynoslavsk and Tavriya provinces to earn money. This tendency is highly undesirable. These opportunities may lead those who leave their towns because of low birth rate to petty consequences. Besides, when they "rob" the local population of man power, it might provoke an evil much worse, the morality collapse of the youth. As a rule, youngsters become lazy, disrespectful to elderly and impious to church. One can explain it... with common work partially, and with life itself being full of different kinds of occasions"<sup>15</sup>. There was also a great influence on the appearance of the Cossacks in over Dnieper land region of Ukraine. The urban fashion became more popular and people borrowed styles of other ethnical groups. Thus, "after several years in working migration, a youngster comes home with 'a nil of money, but demonstrating a scarf, a jacket, high boots and an absolute lack of respect towards his parents"<sup>16</sup>. The environment changes of Cossack community could also be seen in cultural and spiritual spheres. Volodymyr Shch., a priest, wrote: "There is also a dip in folk creativity, one of the main spiritual factors. They don't sing deep poetical songs, tell parables, fairytales, legends and bylins... One will struggle to notice the national costumes of Little Russia, especially worn by women. Everybody want to look city-like"<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> P. Solomakha, "Selo Obolon'ye Krolevetskogo uyezda (neskol'ko slov ko dnyu stoletiya prikhodskogo khrama)", *Pribavleniye k Chernigovskim eparkhial'nym izvestiyam*, 1901, №10, pp.344.

<sup>14</sup> Gavriil Kovalenko, "Rozhdestvo-Bogorodicheskaya tserkov' m. Varvy Lokhvitskogo uyezda (Istoriko-statisticheskoye svedeniya po tserkovnym dokumentam)", *Poltavskiy eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1900, № 22, pp.603-604.

<sup>15</sup> Grigoriy Prikhozhyi, "Selo Ivanovka i ego khramy Khorol'skogo uyezda", *Poltavskiy eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1899, № 26, pp.603-604.

<sup>16</sup> Gavriil Kovalenko, "Rozhdestvo-Bogorodicheskaya tserkov' m. Varvy Lokhvitskogo uyezda (Istoriko-statisticheskoye svedeniya po tserkovnym dokumentam)", *Poltavskiy eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1900, № 22, pp.603-604.

<sup>17</sup> V[ladimir] Shch, "Stranichka iz tserkovno-prihodskoy letopisi", *Poltavskiy eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1897, № 8, pp.302-204.

Therefore, the influence of urban traditions on Cossack life had a positive result (education, fashion trends) and a negative one (collapse of traditional Cossack lifestyle, borrowing of a foreign imperialistic and ethnic culture, globalization assuming a higher profile).

## Öz

### XI Yüzyılın Sonu İle XX Yüzyılın Başlarında Kent Kültürünün Ukrayna Dineper Kırsaldaki Kazaklara Etkisi (Misyoner Rahiplerin İzlenimleri Üzerinden)

Bu makalede, şehir kültürü, modernleşme süreci ve Rusya İmparatorluğu uygulamalarının Ukrayna Dinyeper Kazaklarının gündelik yaşamı ve dini gelenekleri üzerindeki etkisi incelenmektedir. İncelemede kullanılan başlıca kaynak yörede yaşayan köy rahiplerinin gözlemlerinden oluşmaktadır. Rahipler gözlemlerini belirli aralıklarla “diocesan vedomosti” dergisinde kayıt altına almıştır. Para kazanmak ya da ürün ticareti için şehirlere yapılan “vidkhidnytstvo” (mevsimsel iş göçü)’nün Kazakların yaşantılarını etkilediğini vurgulamak gerekmektedir. Bu etkinin sonucunda ailelerin ve tüm kırsal kesimin gündelik yaşamında değişimler meydana gelmiştir. Sonuç olarak moda, kültürel değerlere, dini geleneklere, Ruslaştırma politikasına ait geleneksel algı değişmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** gündelik yaşam, değişim, modernleşme, Kazaklar, kent kültürü, mevsimlik iş göçü

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- “Arkhistratigo-Mikhaylovskaya tserkov’ sela Komarovki Kobelyakskogo uyezda i eye prikhoda. Istoriko-statisticheskoy ocherk”, *Poltavskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1908, No 28.
- Bachyns’ka Olena, *Dunays’ke kozats’ke viys’ko*, 1828-1868, Odesa: «Astroprint» 1998.
- Bur’yanov Aleksandr, “Istoriko-statisticheskoye opisaniye tserkvi i prikhoda seleniya Volontirovki, byvshey kazach’yey stanitsy Akkermanskogo uyezda”, *Kishinevskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti*, 1877, No 16.
- Efremov Evtimiy, “Tserkovno-istoricheskoye i statisticheskoye opisaniye Aleksandro-Nevskoy tserkvi i prikhoda s. Serednyakov Gadyachskogo uyezda Poltavskoy eparkhii”, *Poltavskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1905, No. 25.
- Kovalenko Gavriil, “Rozhdestvo-Bogorodicheskaya tserkov’ m. Varvy Lokhvitskogo uyezda (Istoriko-statisticheskoye svedeniya po tserkovnym dokumentam)”, *Poltavskiy eparkhial’nyye vedomosti, chast’ neofitsial’naya*, 1900, No 22.
- Lipskiy Vasilii, “Prikhodskaya letopis’ sela Vishenok Krolevetskogo uyezda”, *Pribavleniye k Chernigovskim eparkhial’nym vedomostyam*, 1875, No 2.

- Pamyatnaya knizhka Poltavskoy gubernii za 1865 g.*, Poltava, 1865.
- Pamyatnaya knizhka Chernigovskoy gubernii na 1861 g.*, Chernigov, 1862.
- Poltavskiye eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1887, No12 .
- Prikhozhnyy Grigoriy, "Selo Ivanovka i ego khramy Khorol'skogo uyezda", *Poltavskiye eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1899, No 26.
- Pirskiy Nikolay, "Istoriko-statisticheskiye svedeniya o m. Perevolochne Kobelyakskogo uyezda, i nakhodyashchegosya v nem Spaso-Preobrazhenskoy tserkvi", *Poltavskiye eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1893, No 14 .
- Solomakha P., "Selo Obolon'ye Krolevetskogo uyezda (neskol'ko slov ko dnyu stoletiya prikhodskogo khrama)", *Pribavleniye k Chernigovskim eparkhial'nym izvestiyam*, 1901, No10.
- Shch VI[adimir], "Stranichka iz tserkovno-prikhodskoy letopisi", *Poltavskiye eparkhial'nyye vedomosti, chast' neofitsial'naya*, 1897, No 8.