

²¹ Там само. – С. 116.

²² Павловский, И.Ф. Немецкие колонии в Полтавской губернии в XIX веке... – С. 77.

²³ Там само. – С. 58.

²⁴ Там само. – С. 82-83.

²⁵ Там само. – С. 94

²⁶ Там само. – С. 96.

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TRADITION AND THE PAST: THE SWEDES OF ALT-SCHWEDENDORF 1782-1852

У статті проаналізовані механізми збереження селянами шведського села в Україні своєї національної самоідентифікації, культури та мови протягом 200 років в умовах інонаціонального оточення.

In August 1781, a group of Swedes from the Baltic Island of Dago (Hiiumaa in today's Estonia) started a journey to the province of Novorossiiia. The exodus of most of the Dago Swedes, who have populated the island since at least fourteenth century, was caused by a sharpening conflict with the local estate owner. After eight months and a winter break, the Swedes reached the territory appointed to them by the authorities on 1st May 1782. However, due to the hardships and diseases during the journey and the initial years in their village in the vicinity of the town of Beryslav, number of Swedes dwindled from 967 at the departure to 135 in 1783.

In 1836, Alexander Isaac Nymann, a chemist from Finland who worked in Kherson, described the village briefly in letter to a Finnish newspaper. In 1849, Carl Russwurm, a school inspector from Haapsalu interested in the culture of Estonian and Livonian Swedes, sent a letter to the village. On both occasions, the news about the faith of the Swedish villagers was brought to the attention of the Swedish speaking public in Finland¹. However, it was a report from docent Wilhelm Lagus from Finland, who visited the village in the Easter of 1852 that intensified the concern for the village. The news about the remote Swedes reached Sweden and a book

(mainly based on Russwurm's findings) was published by August Sohlman, editor of *Aftonbladet*, a Swedish newspaper. The close attention paid to the cultural, social and economic situation in Alt-Schwedendorf (in Swedish: *Gammalsvenskby*) culminated in the years preceding the First World War and the 1920's, when most of the village Swedes were brought to Sweden after a massive media campaign and diplomatic negotiations between Swedish and Soviet state officials².

The goal of this text is to explain how the villagers retained a Swedish identity during the first seventy years of the colony's existence – from the arrival in 1782 to the visit of Wilhelm Lagus in 1852. In the text, fundamental suggestions as to the character of the early modern peasant societies have been employed. Literature and printed sources about the village are used along with samples from Kherson Slate Oblast Archive. The findings of this text mirror a work in progress. Rather than claiming to have emptied the subject, they point at the direction of the future research.

1852 has been chosen as the concluding year of the analysis, as this year marked a start of influx of cultural impulses and economic aid from Sweden and Swedish speaking society in Finland to the village. The villagers were increasingly viewed as a lost Swedish tribe that heroically has preserved its customs and religion, but needed a helping hand to prevent its extinction in the hostile milieu of southern Russia. Within 30 years, no less than three village teachers from Finland had taught in the village school. The village was provided with new Church Books and literature to the school. In 1885, the village church was completed thanks to the fund collection initiated by the Swedish Crown Prince. The faraway Swedes were now in focus of interest of the highest echelons of Swedish society. With increasing economic help and growing number of visitors, late nineteenth century Swedish nationalism entered the village. It was conservative in character and royalist in content. For considerable time, the cultural manifestations imported from Sweden co-existed with the old beliefs and practices, but were succeeding them gradually.

The main argument of this text is that preservation of old *Dagö* customs, Swedish language and Lutheran religion in Alt-Schwedendorf of the first half of the nineteenth century was a result of the village being a largely illiterate, and deeply traditional peasant society. This reality created a particular way of transmission of culture and tradition that stimulated status quo and safeguarded custom and tradition. The villagers displayed several characteristics normally ascribed to early modern peasant societies. These features facilitated preservation of the old customs further. The text is ordered in accordance to the above-mentioned suggestions and divided into

two parts. Each part of the argumentation is supported by general observations about the illiterate and traditional peasant societies and provided with several examples from the reports from, and observations of, the village, and samples from archival sources.

An illiterate society

In a society when the level of literacy is low, the transmission of tradition usually appears in three ways. Firstly, it is channelled through material resources (including natural resources) available to the members of the group. Secondly, tradition is transmitted by standardised ways of acting, passed not merely by verbal means, but by imitation (in this context, synonymous with socialisation), for instance cooking, cultivation of crops and handling of children. Verbal transmission however, usually passes the most significant elements of culture. Customary behaviour (plus beliefs and values), information about space and time and most general goals and aspirations of a group are verbally transmitted. In a predominantly illiterate society, most forms of knowledge are mediated between individuals in face-to-face contacts. The whole content of the social tradition is kept in memory³. In this process, the family is very important; "the family farm was not only the basic unit of production, consumption and biological reproduction, but also almost the sole agency of socialization, transmitting the ideology and training appropriate to peasants' economic and social roles"⁴.

When it comes to material tradition, one finds mixed opinions about how the Swedes adapted to the new farming and fishing conditions. Lagus reported that the catch offish was mediocre due to poor adaptation to the conditions of Dnipro River. Hedman and Ahlander, on the other hand, claim that the villagers successfully adopted new fishing methods and tools from Cossacks who resided in the vicinity in the end of eighteenth century. The authors also found that Samuel Contenius, the state appointed supervisor of the village, described the Swedish peasants as industrious in 1799, while he characterised the Swedes as lazy and inclined towards fornication and drinking in 1802, only three years later⁵.

Mats Magnusson Kotz (1756-1839), bell-ringer and parish school-teacher of the village, had a role similar to that of a guru, a mediator and interpreter of the past. He was mentioned in the first report about the village in 1836 as the sole tutor of the villagers in religion, and was mentioned again in a letter written by his son and two other villagers to Carl Russwurm in 1849. A guru adds his "personal charisma to book-learning, in a combination of oral and literate modes of communication". In societies where literacy is limited, the art of narration flourishes⁶. Kotz seems to

have remained the sole interpreter and mediator of knowledge linked to Dago and Lutheran religion in its early eighteenth century version. His "guru" function lasted well over three decades. After Mats Magnusson Kotz's death, his son Kristian Matsson Kotz took over this function until his death in 1856. Kristian's son, Henrik Kristiansson Kotz, succeeded his father. Kristian Matsson Kotz was one of three men who could read and understand Carl Russwurm's letter written in Swedish to the village and answer it⁷. Thus, one finds that literacy did hardly extend beyond singing from the Book of Psalms and reading the required parts of the Bible. In fact, literacy (ability to read and write) seemed to have encompassed three men in 1849.

However, the songs, riddles and proverbs of old Dago times were preserved at least up to the times of the First World War. They were disappearing from the daily use, but have been recorded for the future generations⁸. Even if not usually described as guru-like creatures of Mats Magnusson Kotz type, other elders of the village who lived three to four decades into the nineteenth century probably played a significant role when in transmitting tradition to the younger generations. Lagus reported that the best soil was very far away from the village. During the most labour intensive farming season, the adults were permanently on the far away fields, leaving running of the households "to the elderly and the children"⁹.

Apart from Mats Magnusson Kotz (whose cultural capital was generating yields for the preservation of custom and tradition long after his death), there were several elders in 1830's and 1840's who were in their late teens or arrived to the village as adults. There was Mats Nilsson Buskas (1761-1836), Mickel Greisson Albers (1765-1844) and two women, Maria Matsdotter Mutas (born 1761) and Margareta Larsdotter Larsas (born 1767) who lived well into 1830's. In fact, fifty out of two hundred twenty villagers in 1830's were born in the eighteenth century. While the Swedish chroniclers of the village, Hedman and Ahlander, see it as a sign of the Dago culture fading away, the number rather suggests that there was a large group of people in the village who were pretty well accustomed to the Dago tradition¹⁰, either personally or through their parents. The number of elders at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century suggests that the generations overlapped. People who were passing away were grandchildren of the colonists of 1782, and had probably encountered several elders from Dago and the first generation of villagers born in Alt-Schwedendorf in the eighteenth century in their childhood and adolescence. In 1905-1913, fourteen elders born between 1816 and 1839 died. Two of them were born in 1810's, two in 1820's and ten in 1830's¹¹.

A traditional peasant society

Anthropologist Ludwik Stomma has claimed that Polish peasantry in the nineteenth century was a spatially, socially and mentally isolated group. This was particularly valid for peasants under Romanov and Habsburg rule. The mental isolation made the peasant society exceptionally resistant to adaptation of impulses and change from the exterior world. In addition to that, few peasants travelled beyond their native area or socialised with other societal groups, thus adding spatial and social isolation to the mental one. It was a culture that frequently looked into the past for guidance and referred to an *ab initio* state, when the order of things was as it was supposed to be. A natural order of things in the ancient times, an essence of things, are standard components of what the past may have to offer in form of guidance¹². Stomma's findings can neatly be applied on Alt-Schwedendorf.

According to Herman Neander who visited the village in the early twentieth century, the whole of the village "treated each other almost as members of the same family", adding that regrettably, genetically this almost was the case, as there were 140 families, but only 22 family names¹³. This points at high level of endogamy, and relatives marrying each other, a situation that apparently lead to several children born with slight mental handicaps.

Three reports about the village between 1836 and 1912 claim that the villagers seldom married outsiders. Marriages with Germans or other outsiders were very uncommon (or "uncommon exceptions", as Lagus wittily put it in 1852¹⁴). In a letter written in 1849 to Haapsalu school inspector Carl Russwurm, three representatives of the villagers claimed there were 52 families of "pure Swedes" (*rena swänskar*) before providing the exact numbers of men, women and children in these families¹⁵. The expression might have been an answer to questions asked by Russwurm (unfortunately unavailable), but nevertheless the mere fact suggests that the writers fully understood this particular question. The three Swedes did not write "villagers" or "locals" which would had been more inclusive. They wrote "pure Swedes". Wilhelm Lagus reported that few Swedes ever left the village for seasonal work, as this was unpopular with the village collective. At the same time, he noted that the relations between villagers were "thoroughly patriarchal", as "all they [the villagers] know have root in their [the elders'] experience"¹⁶. Lagus' observations were confirmed fifty four years later by a Swedish visitor to the village, Anton Karlgren, who again characterised relations between the villagers as "thoroughly patriarchal", adding that the young ones had great respect towards the older generations¹⁷.

The aforementioned letter from the villagers also suggests that customs from Dagö remained largely intact, with exception of language used at church weddings and baptisms (one may explain the condition with the fact that German pastors provided the spiritual services). The villagers claimed they did not know much about the exodus from Dago and the long wandering across the Empire, as "old folks" were all dead. This collective amnesia seems very unlikely and rather indicates a peasant watchfulness vis-à-vis an unknown person with an elevated position (likely to be on governmental pay role). The state was the prime agent of the migration, once Catherine II: s decree about migration to the south was issued in 1781. To thoroughly describe the biblical dimensions of misery and death brought upon the Swedes by their journey and the initial years in the south would be to indirectly blame the state. This watchfulness can be noted once again in 1852. The villagers were rather reserved towards him, Wilhelm Lagus noticed, until they realised he was not a state official. Lagus mastery of Swedish seemed to be his key argument in winning of the villagers' hearts. Then, an account of memories from the migration and the initial years was made to the Finnish scientist. Lagus also noted that village elders and "honorationes" were summoned¹⁸. One should add that there was a living memory of the exodus of Swedes from Dagö among the tiny remnant Swedish population on the island in the 1920's and 1930's, as interviews made by Nils Tiberg with islanders born in mid-nineteenth century have shown¹⁹. This makes the 1849 collective "amnesia" of the Alt-Schwedendorf Swedes even more unlikely.

Needless to say, religion was for a long time an important, if not main, component of a pre-modern peasant's identity. Among the books available to the villagers, church books printed in Stockholm and Reval (Tallinn) are mentioned along with schoolbooks from Abo (Turku). The schoolteacher used this books in accordance to the "old Swedish Church Law" (apparently the Church Ordinance of 1686, as no newer Church Ordinance was produced before Dagö was snatched from Swedish authority in 1710). The use of the old versions of the Book of Psalms and the Bible (although the village was running out of books brought from Dago by the mid-nineteenth century) by the villagers constantly turned their attention not only towards God and prayer, but also towards the past as Swedish subjects and islanders.

The aforementioned accounts suggest that, at least still in the middle of nineteenth century, the village of Alt-Schwedendorf was a society that cherished the tradition as represented by the elders and retained strong ties within the group. It was a society that was very cautious and slow to

adapt impulses from the outside. To considerable degree, the population lived in self-imposed mental isolation.

Conclusion

The preservation of the Swedish language and traditions brought from Livonia to the village of All-Schwedendorf owed much to a) low level of literacy among the villagers; b) the village being a traditional peasant society of early modern type. The two features reinforced each other. The former conveyed a great bulk of transmission of knowledge and values to the oral communication, ensuring passing of information from older to younger generations. The latter minimised contacts with the outside world (intermarriage, seasonal work outside the village) during the initial seventy years of the village's existence and referred to the past and the elders as the main acceptable sources of knowledge.

Notes

¹ The report of Nymann was published in *Helsingfors Tidningar*, 1836.12.03, while Russwurm published a notice about the village and a letter from the villagers in *Helsingfors tidningar*, 1850.10.12 ("Om svensk koloni vid Dniepern"). Nymann never visited the village; a person from his household was sent for a reconnaissance. However, the chemist received a small group of visitors from the village in his home in Kherson.

² Hedman, Jörgen; Ahlander, Lars, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby och svenskarna i Ukraina* (Stockholm 2003), p. 38-142; p. 160-178.

³ Goody, Jack; Watt, Ian, "The Consequences of Literacy", in (ed.) Goody, Jack, *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge 1975 [1968]), p. 28-30.

⁴ Hoppe, Göran; Langton, John, *Peasantry to capitalism. Western Östergötland in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge 1994), p. 6.

⁵ Lagus, Wilhelm, "Utflygt till Dniepern I April 1852", *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 1852.06.10, p. 549; Hedman; Ahlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, p. 51-52.

⁶ Goody, Jack, "Introduction", in (ed.) Goody, Jack, *Literacy*, p. 13.

⁷ Russwurm Carl, "En svensk koloni wid Dniepern", *Helsingfors Tidningar*, 1850.10.12, p. 405.

⁸ Neander, Hermann, *Gammal-Svenskby* (Stockholm 1912), p. 14; Hoas, Sigfrid, *Banditer i byn. Min barndoms äventyr i Gammal-Svenskby* (Klippa 1959), p. 12-20.

⁹ Lagus, Wilhelm, "Utflygt till Dniepern I April 1852", *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 1852.06.09, p. 545.

¹⁰ Hedman; Ahlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, p. 65.

¹¹ State Archive of Kherson Oblast, fond 323, opys 1, sprava 1, p. 135-288; fond 323, opys 1, sprava 2, p. 36-299; fond 323, opys 1, sprava 3, p. 34.

¹² Stomma, Ludwik, *Antropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.* (Warszawa 1986), p. 143, p. 146.

¹³ Neander, *Gammal-Svenskby*, p. 17.

¹⁴ Lagus, Wilhelm, "Utflygt till Dniepern I April 1852", *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 1852.06.10, p. 549.

¹⁵ Russwurm Carl, "Om svensk koloni vid Dniepern", *Helsingfors Tidningar*, 1850.10.12, p. 404.

¹⁶ Lagus, Wilhelm, "Utflygt till Dniepern I April 1852", *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 1852.06.10, p. 549.

¹⁷ Hedman; Ahlander, *Historien om Gammalsvenskby*, p. 121.

¹⁸ Lagus, Wilhelm, "Utflygt till Dniepern I April 1852", *Finlands Allmänna Tidning*, 1852.06.07, p. 537.

¹⁹ Loit, Alexander; Tiberg, Nils, *Gammalsvenskbydokument* (Uppsala 1958), p. 10-13.

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ИСТОРИЯ ШВЕДСКИХ КОЛОНИСТОВ ЮГА РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ конца XVIII – XIX ст. В АРХИВАХ УКРАИНЫ

Проаналізовані документи Державного архіву Дніпропетровської області, Державного архіву Одеської області, які стосуються історії шведських колоністів Півдня Російської імперії. Дослідження є першою спробою детального вивчення та характеристики ступеня репрезентативності та інформованості архівних джерел із вказаної проблематики.

Проблема появления и бытия представителей шведского этноса на просторах Юга Российской империи представляет собой одну из интереснейших и мало изученных страниц отечественной исторической науки. По сему, необходимой предпосылкой объективного и беспристрастного изучения данной проблематики является тщательное и кропотливое исследование источниковой базы, а именно архивных документов указанного периода.

Российскими исследователями был осуществлен аналитический обзор фондов РГИА, относящихся к истории шведских общин в России. Ими же была отмечена перспектива изучения данной проблема-