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**PROBLEMS OF AGRARIAN HISTORY OF THE CARPATHIAN REGION  
AT THE END OF THE XVIII – THE MIDDLE OF THE XIX CENTURY  
IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

**Summary.** *The purpose of the research* is to analyze and generalize the views of modern Ukrainian scientists on the problems of agrarian relationsdevelopment of the Carpathian regionpopulation at the end of the XVIII – the first half of the XIX century. **The methodology of the research** is based on the principles of consistency, reliability, historicism, logic. General scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization) and specifically historical (historically genetic, historically typological, historically system) methods are used in the article. **Scientific novelty.** For the first time it was made an analysis of the latest scientific research devoted to the problems of agrarian history of the Carpathian region of the late XVIII – the first half of the XIX century, presented not only by historians, but also by specialists from other branches of science: economists, geographers, and lawyers. **Conclusions.** Having analyzed the

works of contemporary Ukrainian historiography representatives, which cover issues of the evolution and transformation of agrarian relations in the Carpathian region at the end of the XVIII – the first half of the XIX century, it can be argued that the issues of the Rusyn agrarian history of the reforms period of Maria Theresa and Joseph II and themes of the serfdom abolition in 1848 remain extremely relevant among the researchers. Modern Ukrainian historians, while outlining the region of research, mostly use the term «Transcarpathia», and only some of them go beyond the terminology developed by Soviet historiography. At the same time, Ukrainian scientists operate statistical data extremely full, publishing figures highlighting land ownership issues, categories of lands and peasants in a defined period. In the vast majority of works, the colonial status of the region is emphasized, and the brake factor for the development of the Carpathian region is called feudal land tenure, which prevented the wealth growth of the bulk of the Rusyns. This approach reflects the contribution of Soviet historiography to this topic in some way, but growing interest in the history of wealthy Rusyn peasants suggests finding new foundations for research and re-evaluating scientific knowledge.

**Key words:** Carpathian Ukraine, Rusyns, agrarian relations, historiography.

## ПРОБЛЕМИ АГРАРНОЇ ІСТОРІЇ КАРПАТСЬКОГО РЕГІОНУ КІНЦЯ XVIII – СЕРЕДИНИ XIX ст. У СУЧАСНІЙ УКРАЇНСЬКІЙ ІСТОРІОГРАФІЇ

**Анотація. Мета дослідження** – проаналізувати й узагальнити погляди сучасних українських науковців на проблеми розвитку аграрних відносин населення Карпатського регіону кінця XVIII – першої половини XIX ст. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на принципах системності, достовірності, історизму, логічності. Використано загальнонаукові (аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення) та спеціально-історичні (історико-генетичний, історико-типологічний, історико-системний) методи. **Наукова новизна.** Вперше здійснено аналіз найновіших наукових досліджень, присвячених проблемам аграрної історії Карпатського регіону кінця XVIII – першої половини XIX ст., представлених не лише ученими-істориками, а й фахівцями інших галузей наук: економістів, географів, правників. **Висновки.** На основі аналізу праць представників сучасної української історіографії, в яких висвітлюються питання еволюції і трансформації аграрних відносин у Карпатському регіоні кінця XVIII – першої половини XIX ст., можна стверджувати, що наразі серед дослідників надзвичайно актуальними залишаються питання аграрної історії русинів періоду реформ Марії Терезії і Йосифа II та тематика скасування у 1848 р. кріпосного права. Сучасні українські історики, окреслюючи регіон дослідження, здебільшого послуговуються терміном «Закарпаття» і лише окремі виходять за рамки напрацьованої ще радянською історіографією термінології. Водночас надзвичайно повно українські науковці оперують статистичними даними, оприлюднивши цифри, що висвітлюють питання земельної власності, категорій земель і селян в окреслений період. У переважній більшості робіт підкреслюється колоніальний статус краю, а гальмівним чинником для розвитку Карпатського регіону назване феодальне землеволодіння, яке перешкоджало зростанню статків основної маси русинів. Такий підхід децю відбиває посыл радянської історіографії на цю тематику, проте все більший інтерес до історії заможних селян-русинів свідчить про пошук нових підвалів у дослідженнях і переоцінку наукових знань.

**Ключові слова:** Карпатська Україна, русини, аграрні відносини, історіографія.

**Statement of the problem.** The agrarian sector is an important component of the economic system of a large number of countries, and Ukraine is not an exception. Agriculture has been determining the level of development of Ukrainian territories for centuries. The problems associated with the land were always the most urgent, painful and demanding their solution, because the land, at any stage of society's development, remained the main means of production and the source of social wealth. Therefore, the subject of evolution and transformation of agrarian relations at both national and regional levels is constantly in the field of researchers.

Recently, the interest of scientists has been increased in the agrarian sector of those Ukrainian lands that were part of the Russian Empire. This is especially true for the period

of the second half of the XIX and the beginning of the XX centuries, marked by a series of reforms that gave a significant impetus to modification processes in all spheres of life of the contemporary society, including the agricultural segment. The results of historical studies of such a plan, according to their authors, can be used at the present stage of reforming the agrarian sector of the Ukrainian economy.

However, the history of land relations would be incomplete, if it is limited only by Russian territories. The Carpathian region, whose main directions of economic development were determined by the policy of those states in which these territories were presented in different historical periods, also became the subject of researchers' study.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Domestic and foreign scientists devoted a considerable amount of basic researches to the problems of agrarian relations in Western Ukraine as a whole and, in particular, in the Carpathian region. Among the scientists whose works are the most important in the study of agrarian history of the region, we can name V. Botushanskyi, O. Hotsuliak, I. Kolomiets, O. Mytsiuk, I. Shulha, and others. The generalization and assessment of their scientific heritage were reflected in the publications of a new generation of researchers in the agrarian history of the Carpathian Ukraine Rusyns (Ilko, & Olashyn, 1995; Olashyn, 2000; Tovstropiat, 2004; Nesukh, 2005; Zhigalov, & Fominykh, 2014; Postolnyk, 2014; etc.).

In 1995 it was published the first issue of the Scientific Herald (History Series) of Uzhhorod University, which contained the article *The Problem of Agrarian Relations in Transcarpathia during the Era of Feudalism in Soviet Historiography* by well-known researchers of the agrarian history of the mentioned region V. Ilko and M. Olashyn. Summarizing their historiographical review, the authors noted that «... not everything in the above-mentioned studies of Soviet historians corresponds to the modern level of historical science development and the requirements of the present ... there are still a lot of «white spots» and poorly studied places in the history of the feudal development of Transcarpathia. For historians, a wide range of unsolved questions concerning the agrarian relations in the Transcarpathian era of feudalism continues to exist» (Ilko, & Olashyn, 1995, p. 26).

Today, the issue study of agrarian relations in Carpathian Ukraine has become a subject of interest not only of historians, but also other branches of science specialists: economists, geographers, and lawyers. Taking into account the above stated, **the purpose of the article** will be to analyze and generalize the views of modern Ukrainian scientists on the problems of the agrarian relations of the population of the Carpathian region in the end of the XVIII – the first half of the XIX century.

**Statement of the basic material.** One of the central problems that modern researchers are paying attention to is the evolution of land tenure. Issue of land ownership and its conditions of use is not new among scientists, but the changes that are taking place in Ukraine now require a new evaluation of it, since reform of the agrarian sector cannot be carried out without rethinking past experience. In this regard, the theme of the reforms that took place in the Austrian Empire, which included the mentioned region, at the end of the XVIII century and in the middle of the XIX century is becoming relevant.

«The system of land use in different regions of our country was formed under the influence of natural, historical, ethno-cultural, and socio economic factors. The system of land use is not static, conservative, but with the change of factors it evolves and develops» (Pankiv, 2012, p. 3), – precisely from this angle of view Z. Pankiv highlights the peculiarities of the use of Ukrainian land resources in different historical periods and the essence of the basic land-use reforms in his monograph *The Evolution of Land Use in Ukraine*.

Among the factors that significantly influenced the development of land relations in Carpathian Ukraine, the author names the reforms of Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II, as well as the abolition of serfdom in 1848.

According to the researcher, the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, which restrained and standardized the peasants' duties, were primarily aimed at increasing the power of the state, and factors that could contribute to it at this historic stage were increasing the productivity of agriculture and population growth (Pankiv, 2012, p. 73). In general, according to the historian, the bills of Joseph II were progressive, but their subsequent abolition by the Hungarian Sejm was also a consequence of the redistribution of land ownership: the reduction of the area of peasant holdings (80–90% of the farms were low-landed) and the increase in the area of landed estates (Pankiv, 2012, p. 75). As Z. Pankiv points out, the law of 1836, which confirmed the right of the nobility to own land, did not settle the original question of land use and its effectiveness (Pankiv, 2012, p. 76).

The next attempt to solve the problem of land relations, which drew the attention of the researcher, was the abolition of serfdom. He considers it a large-scale land reform, «since the abolition of the land use principle formed for centuries and the creation of preconditions for the intensification of land use, the transition to a new level of development» (Pankiv, 2012a, p. 15). Analyzing in detail the main provisions of the patent of the emperor Ferdinand I on the liberation of the peasants from serfdom and other duties, Z. Pankiv emphasizes that the document was aimed primarily at protecting the landowners' land tenure, since it was done the separation of peasant forests and pastures (segregation) and connection into one massif of peasant farms' arable lands (land consolidation) (Pankiv, 2012, p. 83). And although the elimination of the legal dependence of the peasants from the courtyard court was definitely positive, however, in the question of peasant land ownership, a lot of problems remained there, because the size of the peasant lands was determined by the landowners and their rulers at their discretion, which eventually led to the remaining of land lack, and sometimes peasants' landlessness; and the quality of land received by the peasants left much to be desired. As a result, after the agrarian reform within Transcarpathia, 53% of the land belonged to large landowners. For 120 large landed estates with an area of more than 1,000 holds (*land measure, 0.57 hectares – authors' clarification*) of land, half a million holds was land, which is five times more than the total land area of all parcel areas (Pankiv, 2012, p. 83).

In terms of land tenure analysis, the monograph *Transformation of land relations in the Ukrainian village (IX – early XXI century). Comparative analysis* by P. Korinenko is significant. However, the historical part of the time, which is of interest to us, is represented mainly by the territory of Russian Ukraine and in the western Ukrainian region by Galicia. Regarding Carpathian Ukraine, concerning the reform of 1848, the author confirms the fact of preservation (and, in some situations, an increase due to easements) of the landowner's land tenure, which in his opinion was 70,9% (Korinenko, 2015, p. 150), but in the post-reform period became gradually decreasing. The peasant land ownership, by contrast, had a tendency to increase, although most of the peasants remained lack of land and the process of their further landlessness continued.

V. Yakubiv stresses the necessity of studying the system of agrarian relations. «The essence of this decisive goal is revealed through the economic history study of the agrarian relations system development in order to identify important essential tendencies, features, positive and negative characteristics in the process of formation of the agricultural mechanism and to take them into account in planning and development of a strategy for balanced development

of agrarian enterprises and qualitative growth of rural areas» (Yakubiv, 2015, p. 10). Analyzing the history of the agrarian sphere of the Carpathian region comprehensively, the researcher notes that the main factor determining the system of land relations was the presence of various territories of different states. Therefore, under the influence of the great political interests of individual states in the areas of modern western regions, different agrarian reforms were carried out in essence and depth (Yakubiv, 2015, p. 10).

V. Yakubiv considers the urbarial reform of the Austrian archduchess Maria Theresa and the agrarian reform of 1848 traditionally important milestones in the agrarian history of Carpathian Ukraine. According to the researcher, these reforms can be described as positive, in particular the reform of Maria Theresa, the main evidence of which was the intentions of the authorities to improve the state of the peasants. However, given the deteriorating situation of the peasants in post-reform years, ultimately, all the changes made in the region did not yield the expected results; they were not completed and did not create the prerequisites for further successful development of the agricultural sector of the region.

The fact of the permanent dismemberment of Western Ukrainian lands as a factor influencing the development of agrarian relations in the region was reflected in the views of P. Sukhyi and K. Darchuk: «...this or that state, which owned this territory or its separate parts, determined not only the structure of the economy, but also its organization, which developed directly on legally fortified land relations and land management» (Sukhyi, & Darchuk, 2011, p. 78).

Through the retrospective analysis of the land relations development in Western Ukraine, the researchers focused their attention on land management activities of the governments in Galicia of that time. As far as the Carpathian region is concerned, the information about it is limited to the reform of 1848. The main reason for this reform is the decline of the serfdom system of economy, which significantly impeded its economic development. The initiative to solve the peasant question came from the Austrian and Hungarian governments. As a result, the landowners lost their supreme power over the peasants, but retained land ownership. So, at the beginning of the XX century, in Carpathian Ukraine, 70.9% of the land was concentrated in the hands of large landowners, monasteries and state (Sukhyi, & Darchuk, 2011, p. 80). The abolition of serfdom gave impetus to the process of mobilizing land ownership. In Carpathian Ukraine, 756 landowners (0.8% of the total number of landowners) owned 45% of the land (Sukhyi, & Darchuk, 2011, p. 80).

Consequently, changes in the system of land relations were primarily aimed at providing a comfortable life to the dominant sections of the population. However, this situation, in the opinion of the researchers, contributed to the «interest of landowners in the rational and most efficient use of land resources» (Sukhyi, & Darchuk, 2011, p. 81). Moreover, they defend the position that the concentration of large areas of land in the hands of a small number of landowners is «precisely this division, which to some extent is justified by rational land use» (Sukhyi, & Darchuk, 2011, p. 81).

This view of the situation is really new in historiography, because in most works the preservation of feudal land tenure is necessarily characterized as a lack of reforms. Although this is an echo of Soviet historians' views. It must be admitted that the property right is intact and its availability in a separate stratum cannot be a disadvantage of the reform of society. Therefore, the emergence of works with redefined criteria for the effectiveness of agrarian reforms is a real breakthrough in Ukrainian historiography.

Numerous works devoted to the problems of agrarian development of the developed region were written by N. Zhulkanych. Describing socio economic relations on the eve of the

revolution of 1848 – 1849, the author adheres to the view that the status of Western Ukrainian lands among other provinces of the empire was approaching colonial, because these territories in the middle of the century «turned into an agrarian and raw material appendage of the Austrian provinces, supplier of food products and raw materials for industrially developed regions and market of goods» (Zhulkanych, 2011, p. 72).

The researcher also highlights the subject of the serfdom abolition. Recognizing the peculiarities of the reform implementation, as well as the situation prevailing in the agrarian sector of the region in the post-reform period, N. Zhulkanych concludes about the halfness of the reform which, on the one hand, eliminated the socage, on the other hand – did not touch the foundations of the landlord's land ownership, slaughtered an agrarian question (Zhulkanych, 2011, p. 73). Evaluating the situation in the post-reform village, the scientist drew attention to the changes that took place in the situation of the peasants of the Rusyns and landlords. The historian noted that there was a gradual increase in peasant land tenure (although the size of the land plots of a significant number of peasants tended to decrease), a process of concentration of land in the hands of wealthy hosts, which deepened the stratification of the peasantry. Regarding landowner land ownership, which prevailed in the Carpathian region, its size gradually decreased, and mortgage debt grew (Zhulkanych, 2011, p. 74). In general, like most scientists of this historical period, N. Zhulkanych is in the position that all attempts to reform undertaken by the Austrian authorities have not resolved the agrarian question.

The confirmation of this thesis is also found in works of one of the leading agrarian history domestic researchers V. Ilko, the chronicler of the Carpathian village, as his contemporaries named him. He notes that the tasks that were solved during the revolution of 1848 were still not resolved, since large landlord land tenure was preserved, the situation of the bulk of the Carpathian peasants had not changed for the better, and some of them, which did not belong to the urbarial categories, even deteriorated (Ilko, 2010, p. 23). Therefore, the solution of the agrarian question remained open.

It is naturally that, in assessing the agrarian sphere of production, first of all we analyze land resources. However, the picture will not be complete without paying attention to those who owned this land and worked on it. From this point of view, there is a quite informative publication *Influence of social relations on the law norms formation on Ukrainian lands in the composition of Austria-Hungary in the XVII – XVIII centuries* by L. Tovstopyat and L. Kuznetsova, which contains a detailed description of the various social strata of society of that time, the position of which defined «...the same laws of social development, as in other Ukrainian lands and in the countries of feudal Europe of that time» (Tovstopyat, & Kuznetsova, 2015, p. 47). Among the Ukrainian peasantry, which constituted the bulk of the population of the Carpathian region, the categories of private ownership, state, monastic, and free ones were distinguished. Using the data suggested before by I. Shulha, the authors conclude that such a small percentage of free peasants, as in Carpathian Ukraine (1.38% of the total population), was not in any part of the Ukrainian lands (Tovstopyat, & Kuznetsova, 2015, p. 48).

Taking into account the peculiarities of the organization and activity of the tax apparatus of the Habsburg monarchy in Carpathian Ukraine, Yu. Tluschchak analyzed some aspects of the agrarian sphere of the region, in particular, describing the categories of peasants, types of taxes, the urbarial reform of Maria Theresa, etc. Emphasizing the urbarial reform, he notes that the Empress primarily aimed at resolving peasant duties in order to restrict landowners' oppression and thus secure the collection of taxes from the category of population that constituted an absolute majority. Consequently, regular replenishment of the state budget is one

of the main tasks that should have been solved in the process of reformation (Tlushchak, 2006, p. 83).

The same vision of the tasks and consequences of the urbarial reform is found in the views of L. Nesukh. In the opinion of the researcher, one of the main tasks to be solved was the legal consolidation of land for the peasants and, in general, the improvement of their legal status (Nesukh, 2010, p. 206), since the well-being of landlords and the filling of the state treasury depended directly on the effective development of peasant farms. Therefore, the reformist activity of the Austrian government was conditioned not so much by the care of the peasants as the need to turn them into more solvent taxpayers. The state took under its protection not a specific serf farmer, but only the used land (Nesukh, 2010, p. 206).

The author analyzes in detail the various categories of land in terms of peculiarities of their use by peasants and landlords. Thus, L. Nesukh refers the main constituents of the land fund to allotment land, virgin land (wasteland), residual land, communal land (pastures, forests, reeds) (Nesukh, 2010, p. 204). In his vision of the consequences of agrarian reform, the researcher is in solidarity with other domestic scientists regarding the growth of peasant land tenure and a partial weakening of the feudal system (Nesukh, 2010, p. 209).

In the context of forming the national idea among the Rusyn community of Carpathian Ukraine, the problems of socio economic development of the region of the first half of the XIX century were reflected in the study of M. Kashka. Analyzing the development of commodity relations in the northeastern counties of the Kingdom of Hungary, the author notes that the owners of large demesnes became the first on the way of the commoditization of their farms. And this was natural, because «they had their own raw materials and free labor, their serfs» (Kashka, 2007, p. 8). The reverse side of the process of accumulation of the necessary capital in the hands of the landlords was a sharp decline in the living standard of the bulk of the peasants, which, from the perspective of the researcher, was predetermined primarily by the extensive character of management in the estates of the landlords (the expansion of the cultivated area of land through its alienation from the peasants, the foundation of folwarks and an increase in social duties) (Kashka, 2007, p. 8). The researcher also draws attention to the fact of property stratification in the peasant environment and the involvement of rich peasants in commodity-money relations. But «their management,» M. Kashka writes, «which was already commodity one formally, still had all the signs of feudal exuberance» (Kashka, 2007, p. 9), because they continued to pay state taxes, natural duties, etc.

**Conclusions.** The analyzed works of historians make it possible to state that in recent years Ukrainian scientists have created a series of works devoted to the problems of the agrarian history of the Rusyns of the Carpathian region in the late XVIII – the middle of the XIX century. In the center of attention of modern researchers, there are two important events for the village's life of that time: the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II and the abolition of serfdom in 1848. These are the factors that had a decisive influence on the development of land relations in the region of a defined period. Continuing the traditions begun by the Soviet historical science (though it is important to acknowledge that during this exact period, in our opinion, significant works were written, devoted to the agrarian development of Carpathian Ukraine), modern scientists talk about the significance and importance of these reformist steps, but at the same time they evaluate them as halfness, incomplete, because they could not completely eliminate feudal remnants. Modern Ukrainian scientists are convinced that the main brake factor in the agrarian sector remained large feudal land tenure, which prevented the wealth growth of the bulk of the Carpathian Rusyns. However, we emphasize that this

approach shows that modern Ukrainian historical science has not completely liberated itself from the Soviet ideology, because, in our opinion, the preservation of feudal land tenure cannot be considered a disadvantage of reform, since property right is a sacred key right in every civilized state. Therefore, the availability of land owned by different social strata is only a historical fact, and not a disadvantage of reforms of the specified period. In general, modern scientific intelligence has a unifying idea: Carpathian Ukraine during the crisis of feudal serfdom relations is a backward agrarian land whose status was approaching colonial one. The given statistical material confirms their position. At the same time, heightened attention to the activities of the wealthy peasantry, drawn into capitalist relations, already testifies to the gradual departure of historians from an established unambiguous point of view. A positive aspect of contemporary Ukrainian historiography is the emergence of works in which the authors already use the latest terminology, distinguishing the stratum of wealthy Rusyn peasants.

However, a number of important issue components need more attention from scientists. In particular, there is a lack of works in which the role of landed estates would be redefined in ensuring economic stability of the region. There is also a need for historiographic works where the authors compared the level of agrarian relations development of the Carpathian region with other regions of Ukraine.

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