

МІЖКУЛЬТУРНИЙ ДІАЛОГ СЛАВІСТИКИ

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Larysa Vakhnina

THE RESEARCH OF JEWISH FOLKLORE IN UKRAINE

Статтю присвячено дослідженню єврейського фольклору в Україні. Особливу увагу приділено висвітленню архівних джерел, починаючи з 20–30-х років ХХ ст., і до нашого часу. Проаналізовано нові видання й праці Інституту мистецтвознавства, фольклористики та етнології ім. М. Т. Рильського НАН України.

Ключові слова: єврейський фольклор, фольклористика, етнологія, Україна, архівні джерела.

The article is dedicated to the study of Jewish folklore in Ukraine. Particular attention is paid to the coverage of archival sources starting from the 1920s – 1930s to our time. New editions and works of the NAS of Ukraine Maksym Rylskiy Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology are analyzed.

Keywords: Jewish folklore, Folkloristics, Ethnology, Ukraine, archival sources.

The researches in the field of traditional culture and folklore of the national minorities in the 1920s – 1940s are connected mainly with the activities of the Ethnographic Commission established in the 1920s in the system of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (UAS or AUAS). A great number of various materials are preserved in the archives of Kyiv and Odesa. An important place is occupied by the sources connected with the traditional Jewish culture. At present all of them need to be covered and assessed in a new way

both as to the Ukrainian materials and those relating to the history, culture and folklore of the national minorities.

Traditional materials have been collected and studied by various commissions, cabinets and museums engaged in scientific work. In 1936 the Institute of Ukrainian Folklore has been opened (from 1944 it is the Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, since 1991 it is known as the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine Maksym Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology). The activities of the Ethnographic Commission, headed by academician A. M. Loboda [3], is the most systematic and diversified. At the same time in 1921 the Local History Commission with its numerous branches and the F. Vovk Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology are also founded in Kyiv.

The results of the researches of each of these institutions can be found in the numerous published works of those years as well as on the pages of such editions as *The Ethnographic Bulletin* (10 issues have been published in 1925–1932) and *The Bulletin of the AUAS Ethnographic Commission* (16 issues have been published in 1926–1930). We cannot help mentioning *Materials for Ethnology* (three volumes, issued in 1929–1931). The materials, dealing with Folkloristics, Ethnology, People's-Decorative Art as well as numerous methodic materials, in particular the programs and instructions on materials collecting (including Jewish ones) have been published constantly in the enumerated editions. Such well-known researchers as academicians V. Zhyrmunskyi, K. Kvitka, brothers B. and Yu. Sokolovs, K. Rykhlyk, V. Kravchenko, P. Popov, M. Haidai have stood at the cradle of the Ethnographic Commission. They have conducted a number of various investigations of interdisciplinary nature and dealt both with the culture of Ukrainian ethnos and its ties with the cultures of the other nations, dwelling in Ukraine.

The materials collected in those times are still of a considerable interest. Some of them are preserved in the National Academy

of Sciences of Ukraine Maksym Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology Archival Scientific Funds of Manuscripts and Audio-Recordings as well as in the Institute of Manuscripts of the Volodymyr Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine and in the other archives of Ukraine.

In the 1920s – 1930s in Ukraine, like in the other republics of the former USSR the “experiment” on creating national regions and districts has been held. In 1928 more than 3 500 national schools, 500 people’s clubs, national village soviets and organs of justice have functioned in Ukraine [1].

Correspondingly the departments and sections are created aimed at training cadres for national higher schools in them. Thus, seminars on national cultures, held by professor K. Rykhlyk, functioned attached to the Institute of People’s Education in Zhytomyr. A Department of Jewish Culture is created at the same time. Various editions have been published, national theatres and clubs function in the languages of the national minorities. In this respect one cannot help remarking that everything, connected with culture and education, in those years has the corresponding ideological colouring, performing the political order of Stalin’s regime that as early as at the beginning of the 1930s put an end to almost all above-mentioned institutions.

At that time a great significance belongs to the scientific and collecting activity of the Cabinet of National Minorities established at the Ethnographic Commission of the UAS in 1929. The main field of its sphere of interest consists of the complex studies of all ethnic groups in Ukraine (including Jews), as well as the collection of historic, demographic, ethnographic and folklore materials among the rural and urban population. In the Cabinet materials collecting is the competence of special departments run by well-known researchers, members of the Ethnographic Commission.

Attention is paid to the scientific activity of M. Berehovskiy [1–3] and K. Kvitka who have attached special importance to

studying traditional Jewish culture in Ukraine. A greater part of the Jewish department's materials deals with the regions the Jewish population dwelt compactly in; information on the census of the 1926 in the Volhyn district included later into Zhytomyr oblast. The Jewish department has also concentrated a plenty of statistics data which nowadays still remain a valuable demographic source. These are, first of all, lists of settlements in the regions of Central Ukraine as well as those of national village Soviets. These are unique photographs to be identified.

Materials and documents, dealing with the traditional Jewish culture in Ukraine in the 1920s – 1930s, preserved at the Funds of Manuscripts of the IFE of the AUAS, are numerous and valuable for modern scholars. The majority of them is little-known and hasn't been published so far, except the records of the musical Jewish folklore of M. Berehovskyyi, a former research fellow of the Ethnographic Commission and later – of the Institute of Ukrainian Folklore. His articles and materials on Jewish folklore have been published in the Ethnographic Bulletin and later are issued as separate books in Moscow [3, pp. 37–51; 2, pp. 1].

A Research Department of Jewish Culture, the documents of which have also been preserved, is organized at the beginning of 1928 in the system of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. It is distinguished by its active work.

The Cabinet of Musical Folklore, attached to the Ethnographic Section of the AUAS Institute of the Jewish Proletarian Culture, is established in October, 1929. M. Berehovskyyi is a head of the Cabinet of Musical Folklore. The Cabinet's heritage is also kept in the Funds of Manuscripts of the AUAS Institute of Folklore and Ethnography. The Cabinet's main task has been to collect and study Jewish musical folklore. It is fulfilled successfully. It should be noted that the Cabinet's staff schedule has included only 2 persons – the Cabinet's head and laboratory assistant. As it is seen in M. Berehovskyyi's account, on January 1, 1933 the record

library of the Cabinet consists of 751 cylinders with the recording of 1 500 music folklore works of different genres. In its turn, the gramophone record collection is divided into several subdivisions: the Cabinet's contained more than 300 discs; composer Yu. Yenhel's fund, given over to the Cabinet of Musical Folklore by his daughter in 1930. It has included 29 phonographic cylinders of the 1912 records made during his folklore expedition to Volhynia; the fund of the former Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society in Leningrad has contained 400 cylinders with the records of 1912–1914. Folkloristic activity of the composer Yu. Yenhel is described broadly and in detail by the modern researcher of Jewish musical culture L. Sholokhova in her article *At the Cradle of Jewish Musical Folkloristics in Ukraine* [10, pp. 79–85].

This fund includes also record libraries of the former Society of Jewish People's Music (Petersburg, 1908–1918) and Jewish Historical Topographic Museum as well as of the Jewish Historical Ethnographic Society in Leningrad, closed in 1930; its materials are given over to the Institute of Jewish Culture.

The Musical Folklore Archives is organized in the structure of the Cabinet of Musical Folklore. The collected materials are kept copied on special cards, pointing, as we see in M. Berehovsky's report, «the original tune in which they were composed or recorded in the original. It is done for the purpose of alleviating research (comparative) work on variants, separate musical expressive elements, etc.» [1]. The Musical Archives numbers about 800 units of manuscripts.

The composer Yu. Yenhel's archives; the musical archives of the Society of Jewish People's Music; the musical archives of the former musical section *Cultural League* (Kyiv Jewish public organization, created in 1918); a number of manuscript music copy-books, another documents as well as photographs (of Jewish professional musicians, cantors, etc.) are preserved at the Cabinet's Archival Funds.

The Cabinet's most important sphere of activity consists of conducting field researches. Thus, 4 expeditional trips to Bila Tserkva district of Kyiv oblast, Slavuta in 1929, Odesa and Uman – in 1930 have taken place under M. Berehovskiy's guidance in 1920s – 1930s [3, pp. 37–51].

The results of the researches are generalized by the scholar in his work *The Songs of Jews of Ukraine, Byelorussia and Poland in Strange and Different Languages* [3, pp. 37–51], which, apart from the analysis, includes 36 records of songs. The collection *Jewish Music Folklore* is prepared for publishing in Jewish and Russian in Moscow by *Muzgiz Publishing-House*. Its first part consists of 15–17 printed pages. M. Berehovskiy has mentioned the second part of the edition being prepared for publishing too.

The importance of collecting and publishing Jewish folklore is emphasized also by well-known Ukrainian folklorists – for instance, by K. Kvitka, known as the head of the AUAS Cabinet of Musical Folklore. As M. Berehovskiy points out, it is by his instruction that the AUAS Cabinet of Musical Folklore of the Ethnographic Section of the Institute of the Jewish Proletarian Culture has prepared the first printed collection *Jewish Musical Folklore*, «which is looked through by K. Kvitka in its manuscript». The name of K. Kvitka is mentioned again in the introduction to the already published book: «I owe many valuable instructions to the head of the Cabinet of Musical Ethnography of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences professor Kl. V. Kvitka for which I am expressing my gratitude to him» [3, 1934/1].

M. Berehovskiy has collaborated with many folklore collectors in provinces, such as the collector of Jewish folklore Sh. Kupershmidt from Bila Tserkva, where on May–June, 1929 the first music-folklore expedition is organized with his assistance. As M. Berehovskiy points out, «comrade Sh. Kupershmidt has recorded the word texts of all the songs I phonographed in Bila Tserkva» [3, p. 29]. These records are included into the edition, published in Moscow.

M. Berehovskiy has also shown interest to the everyday culture, customs and musical folklore of the Crimean Karaites, dwelling in Ukraine. The manuscripts of his research in Ukrainian *Music in the Crimean Karaites' Mode of Life* (31 printed pages) as well as the *Crimean Karaites'-Tatar Songs* (45 printed pages, 1933) have been preserved, the dates are absent. Undoubtedly, these materials are also worth paying attention to and publishing – the more that recently the interest, taken in both Jewish and Crimean Karaites culture in Ukraine, has grown considerably.

The decade of the collecting and research activity of M. Berehovskiy has become a discovery for the modern researchers of Jewish musical culture and folklore. Unfortunately, in the post-war years his scientific activity has stopped. His materials have been returned only at the beginning of the 1980s, when his book *Jewish Instrumental Music* (1982) is published in Moscow again. In 1992 the 1st International conference, devoted to M. Berehovskiy, has been held in St.-Petersburg. His records have become known and are issued in Israel as well.

It should be noted that many Ukrainian folklorists of those times have recorded not only the works of Ukrainian folklore, but also that of folklore of the other nationalities dwelling in Ukraine. The collectors and researchers are united under the guidance of the well-known folklorist-musicologist K. Kvitka, the husband of poetess Lesia Ukrainka. They have recorded Ukrainian folklore together on the cylinders in the Cabinet of Musical Ethnography and in the Cabinet of Ukraine's National Minorities. They have also recorded systematically the samples of Jewish Folklore in different regions of Ukraine. It is confirmed first of all by the plans and accounts of the mentioned Cabinets, kept at the Manuscript Funds of the NASU IASFE.

Peculiar attention should be paid to the activities of the well-known Ukrainian folklorists and researchers of the folklore of the national minorities M. Haidai and V. Kharkov. This is the manuscript *Jewish People's Songs* – 3 printed pages, 5 printed pages [II].

The Cabinet of Musical Ethnography has taken part in the International Musical Exhibition, held in Frankfurt am Main in 1927. Its printed works and exhibition of people's musical instruments from Kyiv museums are presented in Berlin.

The name of Vasyl Kravchenko should be mentioned also among the Ukrainian folklorists understanding the necessity of collecting materials in provinces. The organizational activity of this Ukrainian folklorist and ethnologist from Zhytomyr is colossal. He has not only collected himself a plenty of materials, relating to the traditions, mode of life and beliefs of Ukraine's Jewish communities, dwelling in different regions, but also promoted the organization of collecting activities in provinces. V. Kravchenko's personal records deal with a rather long period – from 1917 till 1932. They are distinguished by their great variety and diversity, pointed out by the academician of the NAS of Ukraine H. Skrypnyk [4, pp. 52–78].

The first group includes records of Jewish folklore, mainly in Idish; some texts are of the author's character with the ideologic colouring inherent in those times – like, for example, different variants of the «Song about the Tractor». But it is thanks to authenticity that a number of materials is of tremendous value, – for instance, records of the Jewish wedding rite in the village of Bekhy in Zhytomyr oblast, where the Jewish people's traditions get Ukrainian colouring. Unluckily, the materials, recorded by the researcher, in fact represent traditions lost for Ukraine at present.

The second group consists mainly of narrations about Jews in Ukraine. They may be attributed to such a characteristic genre of Ukrainian folklore as *bylychky*. It is interesting that in many of them we can see traditional stereotypes of the images of «our» and «strange» in the folklore perception of the neighbouring cultures. On the basis of the textological analysis one may consider different levels of links between Ukrainian and Jewish cultures that coexist in the same space and time dimensions in the places of mixed settlement. It is illustrative that Ukrainians have always evaluated

Jews' sense of humour and improvised it as it is proved by a plenty of that very bylychky, for example, – *About Yankel, About how a Jew has Discovered a Means of Curdling His Wicked Wife, About how Rabe has Beaten an Impudent Person and Gave Him a Lesson on Who is a Real Jew*. The very characters are presented in a humorous manner too – *About how Moshko has Deceived the Kahal, Where Have the Jews Got Their Long Hair*, etc. V. Kravchenko has also recorded a number of narrations on beliefs connected with the Doomsday, matzah and Jewish customs and holidays as well as with the Jewish calendar. As we see, V. Kravchenko's works are of special value for modern Ukrainian folklorists as well and worth considering separately.

His correspondence with different museum and cultural institutions, touching upon the collection of Jewish folklore and customs remains little-known so far.

«The Five-Year Plan of Research of Volhynia National Minorities of the Volhynian Local History Museums in 1929–1934» is preserved in the Manuscript Funds of M. Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnography. It is characteristic that many museums have sent letters to Kravchenko with requests to consult them. It is interesting to the historians of Ukrainian and Jewish folkloristics that the scholar has correspondence with the Berdychiv Social Historical Museum and the First All-Ukrainian Museum of Jewish Culture in Odesa. V. Kravchenko's correspondence only with the Odesa museum in 1928–1929 contains 123 pages.

A similar correspondence is also maintained with the representatives of the local authorities of those regions where the Jewish population lives compactly. It should be noted that in fact it has become constant from the early 1920s when the Ethnographic Commission of the AUAS is established. V. Kravchenko's correspondence with the Kodlian Jewish Council in 1923 [III], the Berdychiv Social Historical Museum [IV] and the First All-Ukrainian Museum of Jewish Culture in Odesa [4, pp. 478] is preserved at the Manuscript Funds.

Recently we have succeeded in discovering some additional materials on the Mendele Mocher Sforim First All-Ukrainian Museum of Jewish Culture, located in Odesa in Babel Street. These facts are found in the State Archives of Odesa Oblast. They include *The Explanatory Note* to the accounts of the Museum of Jewish Culture from October 1, 1928 to October 30, 1929 on the opening of the museum, its visitors, staff, number of exhibits, inventory and catalogue. At first the museum has been opened for visitors only 2 times a week and 4 hours a day, as its opening (on May 1, 1928) coincides with the beginning of leaves. In the rest of the days «the newcomers, especially those from abroad, are allowed to examine the museum. Those visits haven't been registered by us, but they aren't few» – director Rubinstein and secretary Garber have pointed out in the *Explanatory Note*¹. The administration of the museum and its scientific fellows are focused on collecting materials among which an important place is occupied by Jewish culture and folklore. A separate aspect of the *Annual Report* belongs to the research work including scientific expeditions, the list of the scientific works by the museum's research fellows and editing activity. A detailed list of the expedition testifying tremendous collecting activity is of a great interest. Generally, over a year after the museum has been established, field researches are held not only in Odesa Oblast, but also practically in all regions of Ukraine – in places where the Jewish population is dwelt compactly in those years. Archival sources mention the expeditions to Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Khmelnytskyi Oblasts (as well as the examination of Jewish culture in different cities and settlements: Kyiv, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Proskuriv, Cherkasy, Kaniv, Zlatopillia, Mykolaiv, Kremenchuk, Rzhyschiv, Pereiaslav, Dunaivtsi, Satanov, Volochisk and other settlements of Ukraine). Certainly, Odesa is in the highlight.

Among the materials, kept in the museum, 5 000 units are the documents of the Odesa Society of Education Expansion among Russia's Jews. The museum's exhibitions have been changed

frequently, so it is difficult to call their general number, although such a figure is available in the *Annual Account* – about 15 000. According to it from October 1, 1928 to October 1, 1929 the museum has been visited by 1 378 persons. Among them 769 have visited it with organized excursions and 609 individually. The information on the fixation of the visitor's social status at that time and their division into workers, peasants, clerks, pupils, Red Army men and others may be of certain interest nowadays. It is characteristic that the pupils (both group and individual visits) are on the first place and they are followed by clerks and workers. Among the peasants who have visited the museum individually there are 19 persons and 2 Red Army men.

The museum's annual account, according to the covering note and the stamp of its receiving, is sent to the «Odesa People's Education». Unfortunately, we haven't succeeded in clearing up completely the fate of its exhibits and archival materials. They are partly kept in Odesa and Kyiv archives.

Undoubtedly, the majority of the mentioned sources and materials we have submitted in this published work is of interest for the history of Jewish folklore in Ukraine, which, like the other national cultures, is reviving in the independent Ukrainian state at present. The scientific ties with Israel's folklorists and ethnologists are expanding. In 2007 the NAS of Ukraine M. Rytskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology has published the book by the senior research fellow of the Haifa University Larysa Fialkova *When the Mountains are Converging: An Essay of Ukrainian-Israeli Folklore Relations*, and in 2008 – the special issue of the journal *Folk Art and Ethnography*, devoted to Israeli ethnology (no. 4). They have become a real discovery of modern Israel scientific achievements for Ukrainian readers. Larysa Fialkova has become the scientific coordinator and editor from Israel, while Larysa Vakhnina and Lesia Mushketyk – from Ukraine. «The studies in the modern Ukrainian-Israeli cultural ties are a comparatively new

field of interests of ethnologists and folklorists from M. Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine at present, but now cultural and scientific collaboration is distinguished by its openness and changing stereotypes» – the academician Hanna Skrypnyk, editor-in-chief of the journal, has pointed out in the introductory article to this issue [6, pp. 8].

The systematic search for the little-known materials and notes of Jewish folklore from archival sources in Ukraine as well as their publication still remains relevant nowadays.

In the modern period, IASFE carries out extensive publishing activities, especially of materials stored in the Department of Archival Scientific Funds of Manuscripts and Audio-Recordings. The heritage of Vasyl Kravchenko, who has studied traditional Jewish culture, is published. The director of the Institute, academician Hanna Skrypnyk, pays attention to this fact in the introductory article to the edition [4–6].

According to her initiative, a special issue of the *Folk Art and Ethnography* journal dedicated to Israeli folkloristics is published. Project coordinators are Larysa Fialkova (Israel) and Larysa Vakhnina with Lesia Mushketyk (Ukraine) [6]. The significant contribution of the Israeli researcher Larysa Fialkova [11], a professor at Haifa University, who has made a lot of efforts to develop Ukrainian-Israeli scientific ties in the field of folkloristics should be noted. Her book is published in the IASFE and has not lost its relevance. In recent years, folklorist Tetiana Shevchuk [7–9] has turned to the figure of Vasyl Kravchenko and the study of Jewish folklore in Ukraine, in particular in the Zhytomyr Oblast, in her new research.

The study of archival sources of Jewish folklore and issues of modern Ukrainian-Jewish folkloristic relations by the scholars is relevant and requires new approaches and a modern vision.

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¹ State Archives of Odesa Oblast. Fund 134.

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[II] IASFE. Fund 8–13. Unit of Issue 151.

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SUMMARY

Folklore and ethnological materials of the 1920s – 1940s, belonging to the Jewish traditional culture and folklore, are described in the article. Most of them are preserved at the NAS of Ukraine Maksym Rylskyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology the Archival Scientific Funds of Manuscripts and Audio-Recordings, as well as Odesa Oblast Archives and others. They have been collected thanks to the activities of the Ethnographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, the Cabinet of National Minorities (created in 1929 under the Ethnographic Commission of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR), the Cabinet of Musical Folklore (created in 1929 at the Ethnographic Department of the Institute of Jewish Proletarian Culture at the UAS), the first All-Ukrainian Museum of Jewish Culture in Odesa, as well as local history museums in Volhynia and Podolia. Much attention is paid to the folklore activities of the head of the Musical Folklore Cabinet

of the Ethnographic Section of the Institute of Jewish Proletarian Culture of the UAS, the famous researcher of Jewish folklore M. Berehovskyyi, as well as the studies of famous Ukrainian folklorists – K. Kvitka, M. Haidai, V. Kharkiv, V. Kravchenko, who have collected a large number of materials of Jewish folklore and rituals in various regions of Ukraine. Folklore and ethnographic records of those years, both Jewish and Ukrainian, about Jews living in Ukraine, in the context of cultural connections and influences are considered in the article. Most of them are still little-known and unpublished.

Scientific activities of the NAS of Ukraine M. Rylskyyi Institute of Art Studies, Folkloristics and Ethnology on the study of Jewish folklore in Ukraine is also described. This is a publication of works by the Ukrainian ethnographer Vasyl Kravchenko, who has studied traditional Jewish culture in Volhynia for many years. On the initiative of the director of the Institute, academician Hanna Skrypnyk, a special issue of *Folk Art and Ethnology* journal, dedicated to Israeli folklore, has been published. The project is coordinated by Larysa Fialkova (Israel), Larysa Vakhnina and Lesia Mushketyk (Ukraine). The Institute has also published a book by Israeli folklorist Larysa Fialkova. In recent years, a number of articles on Jewish folklore in Ukraine has been published by Ukrainian folklorist Tetiana Shevchuk. The very problem of studying Jewish folklore in Ukraine remains relevant and deserves further study.

This valuable material undoubtedly is worth attention and requires detailed study.

Keywords: Jewish folklore, Folkloristics, Ethnology, Ukraine, archival sources.