

Ukrainian cultural-educational life in Lemkivshchyna
(the end of the 19th – the first thirty years of the 20th centuries)

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Thus, national self-awareness of the lemkos was combined with cultural-national elation of the whole Ukrainian nation. The destructive political influences could not destroy the lemkos and their national originality. Some unions in Diasporas and in cultural unions (founded in independence Ukraine) still cherish historical memory, art, cultural values of Lemkivshchyna.

The biggest west ethnographic group of the Ukrainian was the lemkos, who played the important role in the history of Ukrainian ethnos' formation. In spite of unfavorable social-political conditions in the end of 19th – at the beginning of 20th centuries, there were a lot of processes of national revival. Public unions and famous figures became the guides of national awareness and the initiators of cultural-educational work. The most active in the sphere of revival in Lemkivshchyna were the following unions: 'Prosvita', 'Native School', 'Rural Master', 'Ukrainian revisionary union', 'Lemkivska commission', etc. Thanks to their active work, educational institutions of different levels, funds of help, educational nucleus, museum and art centers were founded; periodicals were published and expanded, 'strolling libraries' were set up.

Difficult historical and socio-cultural conditions and particularly purposeful destructive political influences in 40-s years of the 20th century could not destroy the lemkos and their national originality.

Key words: Lemkivshchyna, national upbringing, cultural-educational life, ethnic self-awareness, national-cultural assimilation.

The lemkos is the most west ethnographical group of the Ukrainian, inhabiting both slopes of West Carpathians (Beskids) between the rivers Syan and Poprada. They made a great contribution to the diversity of Ukrainian ethnicity. Scientists believe that the east-slavik tribe of white Croats, who settled this territory in the 6th-7th centuries, was the ancient ancestors of the lemkos. In the end of the 10th century West Carpathians were territorially united with the Kievan Rus' and then the belonged to the Galician and Galician-Volhynian principality. This territory was under the power of other countries during a long period of time: from the beginning of the 14th century – under Poland's control, then after the first partition of Poland in 1771 it was under Austria's control, and then from 1918 again under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The politics of these countries was directed on the assimilation and denationalization of the indigenous population.

The distant placing of the region, the absence of Ukrainian towns and national intelligentsia caused a weak national-cultural connection between Lemkivshchyna and other Ukrainian ethnic lands, especially with Galician and Naddnipyrianshchyna. It inconvenienced

the distribution of progressive social-political thought. The dominant social current in the end of 19th – in the beginning of 20th centuries was Moscowfiliation, the ideology of which was based on the conception about the history of Galician and Pidcarpathian Rus' as a part of Russian history and local rusyns as a part of 'total Russian' nation¹. They objected the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation, treated Ukrainian literary language inimically, did not allow the use of national language during divine services, and blamed Greek-Catholic church. After losing its influence in the main centres of Galicia, representatives of this conservative camp, especially among orthodox priests, began its activity in Lemkivshchyna. Russophiles concentrated on the building up of the network of credit unions ('Ruska kasa', 'Ruskyj rolnychnyj sojuz') as well as reading halls societies named after M. Kachkovskuj, which were counted more than hundred members before the beginning of the World War I in 300 villages in Lemkivshchyna². Nevertheless, in spite of unfavourable social-political conditions, Ukrainian national life in Lemkivshchyna did not stop. In the end of 19th- in the beginning of 20th century active processes of national revival of the Ukrainian, which developed at that time on the West-Ukrainian lands especially in Galicia, had a connection with Lemkivshchyna region. Having comprehended some educational-cultural achievements, progressive Ukrainian intelligentsia of Galicia had the aim to give possible assistance to the Ukrainian in Lemkivshchyna.

The union 'Prosvita' (in Lviv) was the first public organisation which strove for national awareness of the lemkos. But it took some time when the results of this deal were seen. In the end of 1892 (after a quarter of century after the union's establishment) in a big village in Lemkivshchyna – Odrehov (in Sjanichyna) with the help of a native priest Vasyl Lavrivskyj the first reading hall of 'Prosvita' was established in counterbalance to the Russophiles' reading halls³.

The union 'Prosvita' activated its cultural-educational work among the Ukrainian lemkos in the beginning of 20th century. Because of that fact there were searches of local enthusiasts and leaders of public life. Organizing actions researched a success in 1902, when the first branch of 'Prosvita' was established in Novyj Sanch. Petro Linytskyj and Vasyl Javorskyj were its first famous public-cultural figures. They both were the graduating students of the Lviv University, where they studied law, then held different administrative posts in judicial and financial agencies of Galicia, they were chosen as ambassadors to the Seym of

¹ Андрусак, М. (1935): *Нариси з історії галицького москвофільства*. Львів, р. 25.

² Мицько, К. (1979): Лемківщина в роках 1918-1919. *Ін Лемківщина* 1. Нью-Йорк, рр. 4-5.

³ Красовський, І. (2010): Діяльність "Просвіти" на Лемківщині. *Ін Україна: культурна спадщина, національна свідомість, державність* 19. Львів, р. 322.

Galicia and Viennese parliament. In the 90-s years of 19th century because of the conflicts with governmental circles they were transferred to the districts of Lemkivshchyna, where they began a great cultural-educational work of this region⁴. V. Javorskyj became the head of the new branch and was at that position to the end of his life. The members-founders of this cultural-educational nucleus were teachers. This branch of 'Prosvita' had a success from the beginning, because in two years there were 118 its members.

On 15th August, 1906 the general conference of the branch and the reading hall of 'Prosvita' took place in Novyj Sanch. The newspaper 'Dilo' called this event 'the big and the majestic holiday for the whole Lemkivshchyna'. It published a big note about the run of that national-cultural event⁵. The importance of that event is the participation of the famous cultural-educational figures, such as I. Bryk, A. Chajkivskyj, O. Kolessa, I. Rakovskyj, Z. Kuzel, F. Vovk, etc. in the session of representative delegation from the union 'Prosvita'.

From the report, it may be discovered that in spite of 'unpleasant conditions' the activity of the branch was 'earnest and bride'. The opening of a theological seminary was a special merit of the educational nucleus in Novyj Sanch, where more than 50 pupils lived. Six pupils were totally deprivation of payment, the others had a weighty privileges. V. Javorskyj gave a patron's help in the maintenance of this establishment. He also gave a half of the income from the realisation of his brochure 'Ukrainian deal in European lightening' (The collection of articles of the European scientists and politicians about Russian-Ukrainian question, published in Vienna, in 1905)⁶. The all local intelligentsia and workers were attracted to the active cultural-educational work in this branch. They organized theatrical performances, controlled the building of churches, realized the courses for the illiterates. Among the further priorities of this branch's activities was the necessity for the bride attraction of the peasants in Lemkivshchyna and local clergy to the work. The others positive improvements in the sphere of national awareness was the appearance of the political educational-scientific and economical weekly paper 'Pidgirskyj Dzvyn' at the beginning of the 20th century in 1902 in Novyj Sanch (the first Ukrainian newspaper in Lemkivshchyna); the establishment of new branches of 'Prosvita' in Sjanoc and Jasla as well as the branches of 'Silskyj Hospodar' and 'Lemkivskyj bank' in Sjanoc and Novyj Sanch.

The First World War deepened the polarization of lemkos on the pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces. This division was proved by two republics, which arose in 1918: East-

⁴ Діячі науки і культури Лемківщини; <http://lemko.org/history/krasovskiy/diyache/6.html>

⁵ Загальні Збори філії й читальні "Просвіта" в Новім Санчі. (1906): In *Діло* 168, p. 3.

⁶ Загайкевич, Б. (1961): Освіта і школи в Перемишлі. In *Перемишль – Західний Бастіон України*. Нью-Йорк, p. 239.

lemkivska (Komanchanska) strove for the addition to the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR), West-lemkivska (Florynska) – for the addition to Russia. The liquidation of these political organisations by the Polish forces caused anti-Polish moods among the lemkos, their ideological approach with the people of Galicia, more support of the Rusyns of Carpathian region to the Ukrainian national idea⁷.

However, the years of military hard times favored to the consolidation of Ukrainian national ideas in the consciousness of lemkos. This was influenced by the relationships of lemkos with Ukrainian fighters and soldiers of the Austrian and Russian armies, military service of lemkos, their participation in the legion Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (USS) and Ukrainian Galician Army (UHA), and peculiarly continuance in the Russian enthrallment in Ukraine⁸. Moreover, after the decline of ZUNR a lot of Ukrainian intelligentsia, mostly from the east regions of Galicia, appeared in Lemkivshchyna, became teachers and started to renew different organisations, which were till the year 1914. The young Greek-Catholic priests also arrived in Lemkivshchyna and they actively worked in the sphere of national revival.

Cultural-educational activity of 'Prosvita' (in Lemkivshchyna) peculiarly activated its work in 20-s years of the 20th century. In 1923 there were almost 30 nucleuses. From over ten to some tens of members might be counted in one reading hall. Teachers or Greek-catholic priests were their leaders⁹. Lemkos delegated their representatives to all congresses which took place in Lviv with the aim to join actively to all cultural-educational initiatives and to develop the work of public societies and cooperative movements in their region. At the same time the union 'Prosvita' in Lviv tried in every possible way to support the national-selfless movement of lemkos. In 1906 a special expedition of the Schevchenko Scientific Society from Lviv visited Lemkivshchyna with the aim to learn more about the history, ethnography, anthropology and folklore of lemkos. The famous Ukrainian scientist F. Kolessa worked in Lemkivshchyna from 1911 to 1913. He wrote down more than 800 songs of lemkos in 18 villages which were published in a separate collected volume¹⁰.

With the aim of working common actions of public societies and organisations in the sphere of national revival of lemkos the main people of the union 'Prosvita' initiated conducting the first conference concerning Lemkivshchyna in Sjank in 1926.

⁷ Бучацький, В. (1959): *Лемківщина. Історично-побутова розвідка*. Торонто; <http://www.lemko.org/books/buczackyj/index.html>

⁸ Мицько, К. (1979): Лемківщина в роках 1918-1919. In *Лемківщина* 1. Нью-Йорк, р. 4-5.

⁹ Шафран, П. (2004): Український національний рух на Лемківщині після першої світової війни. In *Лемківщина* 2, р. 7-12.

¹⁰ "Просвіта" на Лемківщині в XIX-XX ст.; <http://lemky.com/history/zagalne/151-prosvyta-na-lemkivshhini>

Fifteen representatives of local and central economical and cultural-educational Ukrainian organisations of Galicia raised a question about the foundation of the organizing centre in Sjank with the aim to coordinate the work of all organisations in Lemkivshchyna. For instance, Revisionary union of Ukrainian cooperative societies had to coordinate the all work and provide the organisations with necessary literature; the union 'Rural master' had to provide agronomical help in Lemkivshchyna, organize the courses connected with the methods of farming; 'Public commerce' and 'Centrosojuz' were responsible for creating warehouse of goods for Ukrainian cooperatives and shops; Maslosoyuz had to be responsible for the opening of dairies and the enterprises where milk may be remade; 'Centrobank' and the union 'Dnister' had an obligation of a credit help in Lemkivshchyna; the union 'Native School' was responsible for opening schools, theological seminaries, courses of sewing, for preparing staff of teachers in Lemkivshchyna¹¹.

The second conference in the deals of Lemkivshchyna, which took place in December, 1932 in Lviv, confirmed the great intents of 'Prosvita' to continue the purposeful and systematic job in different spheres of cultural-educational and economical life of Lemkivshchyna. The result of the conference was the adoption of the extensive resolution, sent to the central economical and cultural-educational, Ukrainian ambassadors in the Polish Sejm. It was said there that the 'deal of Lemkivshchyna is the deal of the whole Ukraine' and that only 'immediate and attentive help of the whole Ukrainian nation will save Lemkivshchyna'¹².

The Lemkivska commission became the executive organ for the organisation of this work at the Main department of the union 'Prosvita', while the committees in districts were local organs of work. The personal complement of commission was confirmed. It contained the following famous figures N. Dzerovych, I. Bryk, I. Hyzha, A. Havrylko, V. Zubrytskyj, S. Mahalyas, V. Brylynskyj, V. Kobiv, etc. They sent letters and addresses to many cultural-educational institutions, financial organisations, Ukrainian parties, youth companies, editorial offices of the Ukrainian newspapers, publishing houses, bookshops with a pressing demand to give a close help to the Lemkivshchyna. These letters had a bride response among peoples.

Throughout the year 1933 eighteen new reading halls of 'Prosvita' were established; the union 'Rural master' organized its nucleus, delegated instructors; cooperative societies were founded, which united 6300 people. The action of collecting books (initiated by the

¹¹ Вавричин, М. (2010): Архів Лемківської комісії товариства "Просвіта". In *Україна: культурна спадщина, національна свідомість, державність* 19, p. 632.

¹² The same, p. 632.

Lemkivska commission) under the slogan 'Book for West' had a peculiar success. As a result, the lemkos of Carpathians received some periodicals such as 'Sunday', 'Aim', 'Rural Master', 'The World of Child', 'Bell' free of charge. Fourteen strolling libraries, the price of each was 25 000 of zloty, were sent to Lemkivshchyna¹³. The newspaper 'Matter' in 1933 suggested to the Lemkivska commission for the circulation the works of S. Belej, O. Konyskyj, M. Voznjak. The publisher 'National deal' published 50 books with the aim of the expansion of Ukrainian books in Lemkivshchyna. The union 'Rural master' worked in this sphere the most productively. It gave 3114 books of rural-economical content and 1100 calendars for the needs of national awareness of the local people¹⁴.

In 1932 the publisher V. Tyktor started to print the periodical 'Our lemko' at the cost of 'Prosvita'. In the first article of the newspaper 'To our readers' the following hope is expressed: 'this magazine will arrive in every village of Lemkivshchyna, under each roof of Lemkivshchyna, to every reading hall and cooperative, everywhere, where is a native word... it will be our hearty tutor, sincere defender, clever adviser'¹⁵. The magazine, which was published up to 1939, was one of the most important periodicals and it made a great contribution to the national awareness of Lemkivshchyna.

With the help of the Lemkivska commission, connections with the lemkos in emigration were established. For this aim, the main person of 'Prosvita' gave to the student M. Dudra, who was moving to the USA, повноваження to work for the sake of 'Prosvita' and the Lemkivska commission. This work had positive results – the lemkos-emigrants in the USA formed the 'Organisation of protection of Lemkivshchyna' (OOL) and started to publish the periodical 'The bell of Lemkivshchyna'. In June, 1936 there were 26 departments of OOL and nearly 750 thousand of zloty were gathered for the help of Lemkivshchyna; 'a strolling library' of Lemkivshchyna was bought¹⁶. Thanks to this help, the youth of Lemkivshchyna had a possibility to reside and to study in Ukrainian schools out of native land, to acquire new knowledge and experience of useful public work. For instance, 14 capable pupils from the families of the lemkos in 1933 studied in Peremyska gymnasium, three pupils got practical skills in the professional school of Vasylian sisters in Lviv, 8 pupils-lemkos received a disposable help in gymnasium in Javoriv¹⁷.

¹³ Люзьяк, М. (1999): Поширення української книги Товариством "Просвіта" на Лемківщині у 30-х рр. ХХ ст. In *Вісник Львівського університету. Серія історична* 34, р. 492.

¹⁴ The same, р. 492.

¹⁵ До наших читачів. (1934): In *Наш лемко* 1, р. 2.

¹⁶ *Нарис історії "Просвіти"*. (1993): Львів; Краків; Париж, р. 59.

¹⁷ Щерба, Г. (2000): Розвиток освіти в Північній Лемківщині ХУІІ-ХХ ст. In *Визвольний шлях*, рр. 37-41.

The pupils of Ukrainian nationality, who studied in the gymnasium of Sjan, (it was the only one Polish-speaking school) also received help. There was one hour per week for studying Ukrainian language and literature in each form as well as two hours for the disciplines of religious cycle, where catechism of Greek-Catholic belief. However, pupils of the lemkos wanted to get more well-grounded education, to master native language, history and language perfectly and that is why they set up self-educated circle. It became the nucleus of national education, environment of the formation of the intellectual elite. Pupils collected the library, prepared thematic reports, concerned national problematic. Discussions, which were arising in the process of discussing speeches, caused the conditions for the consolidation of beliefs, formation of national ideals, gathering the youth¹⁸.

The notable centre of conservation and development of the culture of Lemkivshchyna was the ethnographic museum in Sjanots, founded in 1930 in an ancient stone castle. The opening of the museum was a great impulse for the investigation of material and spiritual culture of the lemkos, which kept very ancient forms¹⁹.

The museum union 'Lemkivshchyna' was founded in 1931 with the aim of development of a museum deal in Sjanoc. The work of the union had a historic character and a character of regional ethnography. The members of the society investigated the history and culture of the villages of Lemkivshchyna, gathered some exhibits. The research work of F. Kokovskyy 'History of cultural movement in Lemkivshchyna' was also published with the help of the union. Within three years of the museum's existence 4065 models of national art and monument to the past of Lemkivshchyna were collected. Among them there were valuable icons, flinty axes, books.

Different collections were registered in the museum: 292 books, 74 icons, 90 documents of Ukrainian national republic, 1442 of ancient documents, 351 items of numismatics, 127 embroidered shirts, 100 painted Easter eggs, 30 medals, 30 Ukrainian notes. Improvised scientific library of the museum was enriched in valuable presents from Shevchenko Scientific Society in Lviv, Ukrainian institution in Warsaw and the editorial office 'Chronicle of Guelder Rose'²⁰.

One of the important events in cultural life of Lemkivshchyna was the tours of Ukrainian national theatre. One performance which took place in rural locality on workday counted 300 visitors. For the reason that there was not a suitable building in Sjanok where all

¹⁸ Стебнович, Я. (1938): Студенський кружок в Сяноці. In *Наши Лемко* 13, p. 11.

¹⁹ Добрянська, І. (1972): Про матеріальну і духовну культуру лемків. In *Лемківський календар*, p. 81

²⁰ Лемківський музей в Сяноці розростається. (1934): In *Наши лемко* 11, p. 1.

spectators could find place, the new idea arose to build Ukrainian national house²¹. At the same time it was decided to set up 'Ukrainian National Theatre' under the leadership of P. Karabinevych for the reason of high interest of people to art and the absence of any theatre in this region. All amateur circles and choirs were invited to collaboration. It was planned to open the hire of suits, decorations, which could be used by amateurs, as well as courses for stage-directors what could raise the level of the art of actors and stage creative work²².

The union 'Native school' in Sjank played a particular role in the processes of national-cultural revival in Lemkivshchyna. The circle of that union was founded in 1926 on the initiative of V. Chajkivskyj (professor of local gymnasium). Its first members were the priest S. Mentsinskyj, the priest S. Vengrynovych, the doctor V. Konstantynovych, B. Shuljakevych, V. Mykula, S. Tsar, etc. The circle of 'Native school' in Sjank had a status of district and it became the tutorial body for all others circle of this union. It managed all deals, concerning the development of Ukrainian school, national upbringing of the youth in Lemkivshchyna.

One of the important educational directions of the circles of 'Native school' activity in Lemkivshchyna was the foundation of kindergartens and filling of national content their work. There were children from 4 to 14 years old. These kindergartens organized their work during school holiday, when parents worked in fields. Their aim was to add new knowledge, to increase the educational influence on children in national content, because it was not made by state school for clear reasons.

The appeals for the kindergartens' opening in every village appeared from time to time in periodicals. The weight of such activity was emphasized as well as its creative character 'If there were kindergartens in each village, then our people would be regenerated in some years, they would become a nation, which did not rely on any help, and no one would write our history, but we would become its creators'²³.

Since the local poverty captiously treated such Ukrainian initiations, the district circle of 'Native school' in Sjank supplied the accomplishment of many demands (selection of qualified teachers, searches of suitable buildings, etc.) in order to receive the permission for kindergartens' opening. For conducting lessons different buildings were used, for instance reading halls, public institutions, the buildings of church, even the houses of rulers.

²¹ Вражіння з театральної подорожі по Лемківщині. (1935): In *Наши Лемко* 4, p. 5.

²² До українського громадянства Лемківщини. (1935): In *Наши Лемко* 16, p. 2.

²³ «Гать будуймо!» (1934): In *Наши лемко* 7, p. 6.

Children in kindergartens were supplied with nourishment and medical service. The local committees of guardianship over kindergartens endeavored about this. They gathered money and organized special funds. Payment was made by children's relatives, members of cultural-educational unions. The lemkos, who emigrated to the USA, also gave money. For this purpose informational papers were published (there were 600 items of such papers in 1932) with proclamation about the support of this important national action. The work of kindergartens was ending in the end of summers. A big holiday for the whole Ukrainian community was organized. Children sang songs, danced, recited poems and in such a way assure their love, feelings towards the Ukrainian history and culture.

A lot of efforts were made to prepare suitable staff for the work in kindergartens. The female pedagogues, who had a special certificates of teachers' seminaries, were attracted to the work. the circle of 'Native school' in Sjank in 1936 organised a special course for teachers with the aim of adding the knowledge for kindergartens' teachers. They could enrich themselves here in theoretical facts and practical skills of working with children. There were 20 Ukrainian kindergartens in Lemkivshchyna in 1936, where almost 500 children studied²⁴.

The activists of 'Native school' also took care of primary school. The condition of Ukrainian schools was actively discussed at the meetings of the circles of 'Native school' and at special meeting. Professor M. Halushchynskyj, who was the director of the union 'Native school', visited Lemkivshchyna in 1936. This event caused the conducting of many meetings of community in Sjank, Zahutyn, Bosk and other Ukrainian localities of Lemkivshchyna.

Taking into consideration unsatisfactory state of education and upbringing of Ukrainian children, the absence of school in some places at all, the lack of teachers, etc. with the help of the district circle of 'Native school' Ukrainian private schools were founded in two villages of Lemkivshchyna – Dushatyn and Romanivska Zavadtsa. Such teachers as P. Ikalovycg, P. Sterpak, O. Chaban began their work here, they 'accented their action in the direction of national upbringing of the youth'²⁵. These schools existed for a short time, since the Polish government found different reasons (the absence of suitable building, foundation of a state school) to make their actions impossible. However, even the fact of the schools' foundation emphasized the desire of the Ukrainian in Lemkivshchyna to have native schools.

The circle of 'Native school' in Sjank together with other unions, for instance with the branch of 'Rural master', also initiated the conducting of educational courses for the youth in

²⁴ Ванчицький, С. (1969): Лемківщина – самоцвіт України. Огляд українського суспільного життя на Лемкіщині 1918–1944. In *Лемківський календар на Божий 1969 рік*. Торонто, р. 51.

²⁵ The same, p. 50.

villages. From 1935 to 1938 a chain of 6-weeks-courses was organized. They combined obtaining practical skills, particularly skills of knitting stockinet articles (sweaters, caps, mittens), with the information from Ukrainian history, literature, preparation for theatre performances, etc²⁶.

The foundation of the library for the youth and adults in Sjank by the circle of 'Native school' was an important action for the cherishing of national spirit. In 1935 the circle took care of 23 libraries, one of which (in Sjank) had a status of stationary, the others were 'strolling'. The last ones were an interesting phenomenon in the history of Lemkivska culture. They had a look of small wooden boxes, full of books. When the books from the box were read, the community received the other box. As a result these 'boxes of knowledge' were travelling in Lemkivshchyna. In general there were 1738 items of different literature. On the basis of libraries there were readings on economical themes²⁷.

The process of cultural-educational revival and formation of national identity in Lemkivshchyna was under severe politics of national discrimination, which activated during 30-s years of 20th century. The aim of a state action in Lemkivshchyna was to mark off the lemkos from any outside influences and to put them under the influence of Polish culture which at the end would cause their national assimilation. For the weakening of Ukrainian society a lot of unions and committees were founded, the activity of which was directed on the polonization of Ukrainian nation, the politics of western Ukrainian Rusophiles was also supported. For this purpose the influence of church was used. In 1934 Apostolska administration for Lemkivshchyna was founded, which became a nucleus of russification²⁸. All of these measures were directed on the weakening of influence of Ukrainian cultural-educational and economic institutions in Lemkivshchyna.

In spite of the fact that that the lemkos started their Ukrainian national revival (which strengthen itself here very slowly under the influence of different anti-national moods) later than other ethnic groups, it may be claimed about the increasing Ukrainian national influences among them.

²⁶ Господарський курс трикотарства. (1936): In *Наш лемко* 5, pp. 4-5.

²⁷ Сянницька хроніка. (1935): In *Наш лемко* 23, p. 8.

²⁸ Прах, Б. (2014): Апостольська адміністрація Лемківщини: соціокультурні передумови і канонічне підґрунтя. In *Наукові записки Національного університету «Острозька академія»*. Серія Історична 22, pp. 260-275.