

Traditions of female folk decoration in the Left-bank Ukraine in 17th - 20th century

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Abstract – this paper acquaints us with an authentic women's decorations of 19th and 20th centuries created in the Left-bank Ukraine. This topic is unexplored because of the historical events that took place in the Ukraine over the centuries. In his research the author made a conclusion about an insufficient of source base on this subject. Masters of jewelry usually are unknown, so author began to explore the centers where this women decorations was made, their symbolic significance in Ukrainian culture and beliefs of the people, and the evolution of these jewelry under the influence of time and other cultures.

Key words – adornments, goldsmith, beads, coins, dukaches, crosses, small icons, incense burners.

I. The History of goldsmiths in Ukraine

Mentions in the literature about the goldsmiths (as in Ukraine is often called the masters jewelers) indicate that this craft developed in the 14th and 16th centuries. In the Ukrainian cities of Lviv, Kyiv, Kamenetz-Podolsk, Lutsk, etc. Base metal for making women's jewelry was gold and silver. Endowed with a high plastic properties, malleability, these metals beautifully reflect light rays and allow modeling of volumes and shapes to form interesting light and shadow effects. Often was used in the decorations colored precious stones, which in the 14th and 16th centuries was valued not for the quality and purity, glitter or material value, but mainly for their color - delicate sapphire, mysterious emerald, hot color of jahont.

Approach to the stones has changed in the second half of the 17th century, when they became less and less seen as colored spots on the background of the metal. These changes occurred as a result of close contact with the craftsmen from Constantinople, where mainly imported to the city and other cities of colored stones, richly decorated with jewels of the Greek masters.

Since then, in the local wares appears typical for East abrupt matching of emeralds and rubies arranged in the different ornamental forms.

A various neck and breast adornments that absorbed basic tendencies connected with the ancient beliefs and rites have enjoyed wide popularity among Ukrainian women since long ago. A complex breast adornment consisted of a few components harmonically connected with each other always ranked high. To create such adornment goldsmith used different beads, coins, dukaches, crosses, small icons and incense burners. Among the variety of bows, goldsmiths was offering to their customers three main types of dukaches, that were the most widespread in Ukraine. They were called – “braided”, “horned” and “Veremiyivsky” - dukaches. In each of them there are specimens that differ in sizes, which depend

on the nominal value of the throne coin, which suspended in the form of the locket - dukaches. “Braided” - is the oldest type of bow. About such bows even the masters was saying “old work”. Although in some families from Cossack villages such as Samovitsya, Demky, they still was carried till the 30s of the 20th century. The basis of the composition of the bow was the contours of two intertwined hearts. “Horned” dukaches were worn in many areas in the Left-Bank Ukraine. But most popular they were in the towns like Chornobay and Irklyiv. The composition of the bow has the form of fantastic flower that has been stretched horizontally. The flower has three pairs of major petals. The ends of the leaves go beyond the general contour of the bow, that resembles a horn. There are placed the precious stones, between the leaves. The third type of the dukaches its “veremiyivski” – named after the town Veremiyivka where they was the most popular. By its design, decorated colors they have been look like the colorful and glorious flower. That is why they were called “flower”. Dukaches with “Veremiyivski” bows was spread, not only in Veremiyivka, but also in the neighboring villages. We should also mentioned that on the Left-Bank the goldsmiths was working for an order nearly in every village.

II. A review of scientific literature about the women's jewelry

Among the major researchers of female breast adornments we can define the research of Ivan Spasky “Ukrainski dykachi” [Ukrainian dukachi and dukaches], Mark Petrenko “Ukrainske zolotarstvo XVI – XVIII stolittia” [Ukrainian jewelry of 16th – 18th centuries], Hanna Vorochynska “Ukrainski narodni zhinochi prykrasy XIX –pochatku XX stolit” [Ukrainian women folk jewelry 19th and early 20th centuries] The authors of these books telling us about the history of making jewelry in Ukraine. Dukachi with bows worn only in the villages on the left bank of Ukraine. [1] On the right bank they could be found only at those who migrated from the left coast. Album of watercolors of 18th century by O. Shafonskoho featuring the distinctive types in Ukrainian national costumes and clearly demonstrate that “dukach” was a central, frontally, that was organizing the whole complex of the breast adornment in a women's costume. A written sources prove that in the 17th- 18th centuries more affluent Ukrainian women and girls, daughters and wives of Cossacks was using in the dresses necklace of pearls, garnets, coral, gold coins, chains and crosses framed with jewels. A foreign traveler O. von Goon in 1805 was shocked with wretchedness of Ukrainian villages near Yahotyn, but at the same time he noticed that the jewelry on the women's neck frequently have cost more than the whole house. He also make a sketch of a girl in a national costume with coral necklace on her neck. The researcher of the folk costumes Holovatskoho noticed that in those days it was usual to postpone a certain amount of money for the economic turnover and the rest of the money saving as the incorruptible capital in the corals, dukaches and other

women's jewelry, that have been passed down from generation to generation.

In contemporary researches there is an opinion that the widespread of using coins in jewelry is undeniable sign for degeneration of goldsmith.

III The decline and the revival of women's adornments against the background of historical events in Ukraine

Jewelry from the ancient times always was having meaning of the very important amulets, that should have been protecting women, especially her breasts where the human soul should be located.

Crosses, earrings, were more simple than on the left bank. Instead of corals women was wearing "red stone necklace" or a necklace made of colored glass. How we can explain this? The causes are rooted in path of historical development of different regions of Ukraine. Major events of the Liberation War under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky took place on the right bank, so economics of these regions carried the burden of wartime. Right Bank of Ukraine was fractured by Polish nobility and was suffering from a horrible harassment. Fragile peaceful development on the left bank was broken by the actions of Hetman Vyhovskiy who began to restrict the rights of local people. At the end of 17th- the first half of the 18th century, a significant development of goldsmith craft has undergone in the Kiev and the cities on the Left-bank of Ukraine: Nizhyn, Chernihiv and others. This period has become the century of prosperity of the old Ukrainian jewelry. Masters have used here almost all known techniques of forging, casting, soldering, carving, extraction of wire and so on. For finishing products applied carving, engraving, gilding, filigree, niello and enamel.

In the 19th century the population of Ukraine tried to defend their belonging to the Cossack status, people was imitating Cossacks traditions, style of clothing and jewelry choices. As example they was taking the time of the Hetmanate.

In the Left-bank Ukraine one big dukach decorated with the metal bow dominated among other kind of breast adornment. Beads the most popular component of a women's breast adornment, are widely-spread over the whole Ukraine. They differ from one another by material, color, shape and way to wear [2].

A bead made of coral, amber, smalt, and transparent glass always ranked high.

Coral beads were widely spread in Ukraine, although weren't affordable for poor people. Such adornment has been passing from one generation to another to the rich maidens dowry.

Sometimes a neck adornment made of coral cost more than the whole country house or even the whole farm. A family jewelry in the countryside has been accumulating through the generations. Honored with three hundred years old fashion, these beads, dukaches and crosses have been inherited from one generation to another and always been kept properly [3].

With time in complexes of female jewelry has been widely used decorations of royal minting coins. Bows and medals was made from coins into dukaches, it was richly decorated with beads, from coins people was making an earrings, women was preferring to wear, a big silver or golden coin with the image of the empresses, among the people they were called dukach "with tsarina". Fig. 1

Sometimes we can found dukaches with foreign silver coins with the image of Mother of God, to them we can include the famous "PATRONA BAVARIAE"



Beads, coral, glass, silver (coins). Dukach "with tsarina". Unknown goldsmith. Voronizh (currently Russian Federation). 19th century.

In 1940s all such countryside adornments have gone out of fashion but nevertheless been kept by villagers for many decades, especially those made of corals.

As I was taking part of the exhibition "Ukrainian national women's jewelry of XVIII-XXth centuries" that took place at the Holy Dormition Cathedral in Poltava, I get a lot of priceless information about dukach on the Left-bank Ukraine. By this work I hope to raise an interest to masterpieces created by bygone Ukrainian masters. These folk women's adornments would become a gem of many museum collections.

Nowadays women's old adornments are booming again. This time they are becoming widespread as important attribute of the modern stylish clothes.

References

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