

How Sissi Became a Ruthenian Queen: Some Peculiarities of the Peasant Worldview

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The assassination of Queen Elizabeth (Sissi, 1837–98) was met with grief throughout the Habsburg lands, and Austrian-ruled Galicia was no exception.¹ This is attested, inter alia, by a local Ruthenian (Ukrainian) song recorded in the Buchach region several months after the tragic event. Among its lines are the following:

Вона була така добра,
як та рідна мати.
Як тота добра мати
що нас породила,
а царівна добра була,
що край боронила.
Скасувала всі кайдани,
вулиці тай буки,
тай зазнала від ворогів
тяженької муки.
Наша панна цісарівна
є руського роду
тай пішла ся бай купати
в швайцарську воду.
Бодай тота Швайцарія
була ся розпала
була би ся цісарівна
в сім краю скупала.²

The song is full of empathy for the deceased queen and could be regarded as just another example of naive peasant monarchism. What is striking here, however, is the statement that the queen shared the origins

¹ See, e.g., Larry Wolff, “Dynastic Conservatism and Poetic Violence in Fin-de-Siècle Cracow: The Habsburg Matrix of Polish Modernism,” *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (June 2001): 735–64.

² Ivan Franko, “Zrazok novozlozhenoj nar[odnoj] pisni,” *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* 10, no. 4 (April 1900): 54.

of the peasants who sang the song—that she was of Ruthenian descent (*ruskoho rodu*). This is obvious nonsense, since Elizabeth was a Bavarian German and a Roman Catholic: in other words, nothing in her origins or status even remotely suggested any link with Ruthenian peasants in Galicia.

It is the task of historians to make sense of nonsense. In this case, the only way to do so is to reconstruct the ways in which peasants thought about themselves and the world they were living in. A standard explanation suggests that peasants did not possess an overarchingly broad identity. They identified themselves with the place they were born, their religious denomination, and their occupation (“I am a local, I am Catholic/Orthodox, and I am a peasant”). Peasants allegedly lacked the mental tools that would allow them to identify themselves with a larger world. Their social solidarity focused on their family, and their fatherland literally meant a plot of land they inherited from their ancestors and passed on to their successors in the family. Connections within the family and with the land were regarded as sacred, and transgressing against them was considered a grievous sin. It took long and sustained effort on the part of the state and the intelligentsia to lead the peasants out of their private fatherland and bring them into the ideological one—or, in the words of the renowned Polish social scientist Stanisław Ossowski, from a fatherland with a small “f” into a Fatherland with a capital “F.”³

Such conclusions were drawn on the basis of field research done in particular areas among certain ethnic groups at specific times,⁴ which raises the question of the extent to which those findings can be extrapolated to other societies. Moreover, even though these studies were local, interpretations of them conclude with the universal concept of “traditional society.” That concept is thought to explain peasant behavior in Eastern Europe as a whole throughout the millennium extending from their Christianization in the ninth and tenth centuries to the First World War (and, in certain cases, up to the Second World War).⁵

³ Stanisław Ossowski, *O ojczyźnie i narodzie* (Warsaw, 1984), 15–46. See also Volodymyr Mendzhetsky [Włodzimierz Międzyrzecki], “Seliany u natsiotvorchykh protsesakh Tsentralnoi i Skhidnoi Yevropy u druiii polovyni XIX — na pochatku XX stolittia,” *Ukraina moderna*, no. 6 (2001): 56–79; and Swietłana N. Tolstaja [Svetlana N. Tolstaia], “Ojczyzna w ludowej tradycji słowiańskiej,” in *Pojęcia ojczyzny we współczesnych językach europejskich* ed. Jerzy Bartmiński (Lublin, 1993), 17–22.

⁴ Stanisław Ossowski conducted his studies in postwar Silesia, i.e., the German-Polish borderlands, whose population was (and largely still is) characterized by a bivalent (German and Polish) culture and had a strong regional identity that quite often resists definition in clear-cut German or Polish national terms. See Antonina Kłoskowska, *National Cultures at the Grass-Root Level* (Budapest, 2001), 232–33.

⁵ Kazimierz Dobrowolski, “Peasant Traditional Culture,” in *Peasants and Peasant Soci-*

Recently these interpretations have been challenged by new studies of peasant and borderland societies. These new studies question the idea that the simultaneous possession of two fatherlands, private and ideological, was a privilege of the educated classes and that the imagination of some peasant groups was as narrow and parochial as the established theory suggests.

Austrian-ruled Galicia seems an ideal proving ground for both interpretations. On the one hand, it is considered the epitome of traditional society;⁶ on the other, one is hard pressed to find another region that has so much well-preserved and recorded data. The song about Sissi was published by Ivan Franko (1856–1916), who himself amassed rich ethnographic materials and published a three-volume collection of Galician Ruthenian proverbs, one of which contains the term “fatherland” in a broader meaning—“Otechestvo na yazytsi, a v sertsy obluda.”⁷ To be sure, this single example does not constitute definite proof that peasants had a concept of an ideological fatherland. Moreover, the term itself—the Church Slavonic *otechestvo* rather than the colloquial *otchyzna/otchyna*⁸—suggests its bookish origins. This derivation is quite understandable, given the Eastern Christian roots of the Greek Catholic Church, which was dominant among Galician Ruthenians. Nevertheless, the incidence of this and other bookish concepts helps correct the notion that peasants thought only in parochial terms. Some of these concepts were derived from the alternative Latin tradition, which enjoyed currency among the educated classes. For example, the proverb “Piznaty durnoho po smikhu yoho” corresponds to the Latin “Per risum multum poteris cognoscere tultum”; “Yedyna lastivka ne robyt vesny” is a literal translation of “Una hirundo non facit ver”; and “Voda kamin tochy” sounds similar to “Gutta cavat lapidem non vi, sed saepe cadendo.” It may of course be assumed that these parallels do not reflect Ruthenian borrowings from Latin per se but, rather, derive from common Indo-European lore. In some cases, however, the fact of borrowing is undeniable—to wit, a vulgar travesty of Cicero’s famous line: “Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?”—“Doky Ty budesh, Katery-

eties, ed. Teodor Shanin (Harmondsworth, 1971), 277–98; Ivan-Pavlo Khymka [John-Paul Himka], “Istoriia, khrystyianskyi svit i tradytsiina ukrainska kultura: Sproba mentalnoi arkeolohii,” *Ukraina moderna*, no. 6 (2001): 7–24.

⁶ Suffice it to say that Kazimierz Dobrowolski elaborated his concept of “traditional society” (see notes 4 and 5 above) on the basis of his fieldwork in interwar Galicia.

⁷ Ivan Franko, ed., *Halytsko-ruski narodni prypovidky*, 3 vols. (Lviv, 1901–1909), 2: 484.

⁸ See Michał Łesiów, “Batkiwszczyna, witeczyzna, ridnyj kraj. Ojczyzna w języku ukraińskim,” in Bartmiński, *Pojęcia ojczyzny*, 93–96.

no, khodyty u nashu kukuruzu sr[...]?”⁹ Another example is the proverb “Vono by takoho kazusu narobylo, shcho i ne prypovisty,” on which Franko commented: “From the Latin ‘casus,’ specifically in a juridical sense.”¹⁰

The numerous examples of bookish concepts in Galician Ruthenian folklore illustrate a weak point of the theory of two fatherlands, which is based on the opposition of “high” and “low” elements. Such a situation may have obtained in regions like Polissia or certain localities in the Balkans far removed from centers of high culture. In many if not most cases, however, “low culture” was not the spontaneous creation of a poorly educated or uneducated population. Rather, it was the result of a downward filtering of high culture to the lower classes, which was accompanied by an upward filtering of low culture. The interplay of these processes may have created a modicum of common cultural space in a “traditional” society, in which there was room for a common fatherland.¹¹ Quite often the concept of this common fatherland was articulated as a “holy land.”¹²

The concept of Ukraine may serve as a good example here. As a geographical term, it is encountered sporadically in medieval chronicles starting from 1186. In these chronicles there is a clear tendency to use it in the sense of “small fatherland” (*okrainy*, not *krainy*): it was used, inter alia, to denote the southeastern borderland of the Galician kingdom (*Ponnyzzia*).¹³ The concept of Ukraine as a large fatherland was rather late to emerge, making its appearance in the political culture of the eighteenth-century Cossack state.¹⁴ Folklore collections reveal the persistence of this term in the folk culture of territories such as Galicia, which had never belonged to that state. In the introduction to his collection of Ukrainian

⁹ Franko, *Halytsko-ruski narodni prypovidky*, 2: 246.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2: 237.

¹¹ Robert T. Anderson, *Traditional Europe: A Study in Anthropology and History* (Belmont, Calif., 1971), 141–51; Leonid Heretz, “Russian Apocalypse, 1891–1917: Popular Perceptions of Events from the Year of Famine and Cholera to the Fall of the Tsar” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1993), 130; Kłoskowska, *National Cultures*, 48; Alexander H. Krappe, *The Science of Folklore: A Classic Introduction to the Origins, Forms, and Characteristics of Folklore* (New York, 1964), 153.

¹² Conor Cruise O’Brien, *God Land: Reflections on Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1988); Adrian Hastings, “Holy Lands and Their Political Consequences,” *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 1 (2003): 29–54.

¹³ *Litopys ruskyi za Ipatskym spyskom*, trans. Leonid Makhnovets (Kyiv, 1989), 343, 375, 432, 434.

¹⁴ Frank Sysyn, “‘Otchyzna’ u politychnii kulturi Ukrainy pochatku XVIII st.,” *Ukraina moderna*, no. 10 (2006): 7–19.

folk songs (1836), Platon Lukashevych claimed that in order to collect songs about Ukraine one had to go to Austrian Galicia. “Who would believe,” he wrote, “that a Galician shepherd knows many more songs about the heroes of Ukraine and its history than a settled Little Russian Cossack? He takes pride in the deeds of Little Russians as though they were his own. He rejoices in their joy and longs in his beautiful songs for ‘Cossack adventures.’”¹⁵

As a Ukrainian patriot, Lukashevych may have exaggerated the extent of Ukrainian memory in Galicia, but its existence cannot be denied. It is reflected in numerous songs Franko recorded in his native village. In these songs Ukraine is identified with a distant free land defended by the Cossacks against the Turks, Tatars, and Poles, to which some local young men dare to go, leaving their sweethearts behind.¹⁶ The problem with this folk memory is that it gives us no criteria for identifying the geographical location of Ukraine or the ethnicity of its population. George S. N. Luckyj analyzed close to a thousand folk songs that mention Ukraine. In the absolute majority of cases, Ukraine figures in them as a sacral or mythical concept, not as a historical or geographical one.¹⁷ The only geographical feature that can be identified in them is *Dunai* (the Danube), which constitutes a boundary to be crossed in order to enter Ukraine. If one juxtaposes the area in which these songs were sung (Austrian-ruled Galicia and the Ukrainian provinces of the Russian Empire) and its location vis-à-vis the Danube (north and east of the river), a paradox emerges: the Ukraine of folklore should lie either in the Pannonian Plain or in the Balkans. The paradox can be resolved quite simply: in folklore, *Dunai* does not stand for the Danube but means any great river, sometimes even a flood. And a great river, in turn, has a sacral meaning: crossing it is tantamount to a rite of passage that gives rise to a new identity. By extension, crossing the Danube meant reaching a faraway land and breaking all ties with the old life in order to gain freedom and independence. The “Cossack Ukraine” “on the other side of the Danube” was a transcendental concept, a utopia, a land without “lord, Jew, or Union [the Uniate Church]” (“shcho ne maie pana, shcho ne maie zhyda, ne maie unii”).¹⁸

¹⁵ [Platon Lukashevych], *Malorossiiskiiia chervonorusskiiia narodnyia dumy i pesni* (St. Petersburg, 1836), 103.

¹⁶ O. I. Dei, ed., *Kolomyiky u zapysakh Ivana Franka* (Kyiv, 1970), 34; Vasyl Sokil, ed., *Narodni pisni z batkivshchyny Ivana Franka* (Lviv, 2003), 147, 187, 234, 302.

¹⁷ Yurii Lutsky, “Rozdumy nad slovom ‘Ukraina’ u narodnykh pisniakh,” *Suchasnist*, 1993, no. 8: 117–22.

¹⁸ Words of a carol dating from the years 1600–20, as quoted in Mykhailo Drahomanov, *Vybrane ... mii zadum zlozhyty ocherk istorii tsyvilizatsii na Ukraini* (Kyiv, 1991), 23.

However, the modern ethnonym “Ukrainian” does not appear in folk songs and proverbs, most probably because the concept hardly existed in eighteenth-century high culture.¹⁹ It is also absent from the works of Taras Shevchenko, who consciously modeled his poetry on Ukrainian folklore.²⁰ In the late nineteenth century, when Ukrainian activists in Galicia tried to introduce it to the local Ruthenian peasantry, they encountered a wall of misunderstanding. One of Franko’s contemporaries, the Reverend Fylymon Tarnavsky, related a story about a young Ukrainian agitator who urged peasants to call themselves “Ukrainians,” not “Ruthenians”: “He entered the house of the old *gazda* [master of the house] Mykhailo Kaluzhka and told him he [Kaluzhka] was a Ukrainian. Kaluzhka went to the tavern and asked the landlord, Shaia Wenglar: “What is a Ukrainian?” Shaia Wenglar told him: A Ukrainian means a poor peasant who lives on the outskirts of a village. You, however, are a *hospodar* [master] from the center of the village, so you are no Ukrainian! If I were you, I would sue him for such a great offense.”

Tarnavsky concluded his story with the comment: “This shows that the term ‘Ukrainian’ was not known to many at the time [1897].”²¹

The example of “Ukraine” illustrates the ambiguity of folk geography: on the one hand, it included concepts that could be read as symbols of a “large fatherland”; on the other hand, those symbols were transcendental and could not be identified with any particular geographic locale.

This is not to say that Galician folklore was devoid of terms denoting precise geographic locations. There were many such terms: Cracow, Sighet, Kyiv, Olomouc, Moravia, “the Hungarian lands,” “the Turkish lands,” and others.²² In one way or another, they were related to everyday peasant experience: their meager existence obliged them to travel a good deal in search of additional resources. The Habsburg censuses reveal a steady increase in the numbers of Galicians who moved away from their birthplace: ten percent in 1880, fifteen percent in 1890, and twenty percent in 1900.²³ These migrations were bound to leave an imprint on the

¹⁹ For a few exceptions, see Oleksander Ohloblyn, *Liudy staroi Ukrainy* (Munich, 1959), 185, 217.

²⁰ See Oleh S. Ilnytskyj and George Hawrysh, eds., *A Concordance to the Poetic Work of Taras Shevchenko*, 4 vols. (Edmonton and Toronto, 2001).

²¹ Fylymon Tarnavsky, *Spohady: Rodynna khronika Tarnavskykh iak prychnok do istorii tserkovnykh, sviashchenytskykh, pobutovykh, ekonomichnykh i politychnykh vidnosyn u Halychyni v druhii polovyni XIX storichchia i v pershii dekadii [sic] XX storichchia* (Toronto, 1981), 171.

²² Dei, *Kolomyiky*, 56, 82, 100, 110, 114.

²³ Krzysztof Zamorski, “Zasadnicze linie przemian demograficznych Galicji w drugiej połowie XIX wieku i na początku XX wieku,” in *Galicja i jej dziedzictwo*, ed. Jerzy

peasant worldview, as evidenced in folklore. In any case, peasants drew a distinction between the “Ruthenian land” and the “foreign land” or “faraway country.”²⁴ There is one recorded proverb that can be interpreted as referring to a national fatherland—“Velyka ruska maty” (Great Ruthenian Mother).²⁵

The question arises whether the term *rus'kyi/rus'ka* (Ruthenian) could be translated into the language of modern nationalism. The answer would appear to be no. Yakiv Holovatsky stated in 1847 that “In general, every person of the Greek [Catholic] denomination in Galicia calls himself a Ruthenian and calls his fatherland Rus'.”²⁶ He emphasized the religious character of Ruthenian identity, very much in the vein of Michael Cherniavsky in his classic study of traditional Russian myths. Cherniavsky showed that “Holy Rus'” rarely denoted a particular East Slavic territory: rather, it referred to a transcendental, ahistorical Rus' that was identified with Eastern Christianity. That Rus' was alien to the westernized Russian nobility of both the Principality of Moscow and the Russian Empire. It was the East Slavic, Eastern Christian peasantry that monopolized this image for self-identification purposes (reflected, inter alia, in the formula “Ruthenian = Orthodox/Eastern Christian = peasant”).²⁷ The peasants identified themselves in this way until the First World War at the very least, and in some places until the Second World War,²⁸ when this concept was replaced by modern national (Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian or, in some cases, Polish and Hungarian) identities.

Austrian-ruled Galicia was the westernmost borderland of the Eastern Christian world. In this region Eastern Christianity came into direct contact with Western Christianity, which made confessional identification much more intensive. Aside from that, this region of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was officially known as the Rus' palatinate (*Województwo ruskie*, *Ruske voievodstvo*) before it was annexed by the Habsburgs. Owing to lack of research, it is impossible to determine what

Chłowiecki and Helena Madurowicz-Urbańska, vol. 2 (Rzeszów, 1995), 104.

²⁴ Dei, *Kolomyiky*, 14, 16, 100, 113.

²⁵ Hryhorii Ilkevych, ed., *Halyski pryrovidky i zahadky* (Lviv, 2003), 11, 91.

²⁶ Ya. Holovatsky, “Velykaia Khorvatiia abo Halichsko-Karpatskaia Rus',” in *Vinok rusynam na obzhynky*, vol. 2, ed. B. I. Holovatsky (Vienna, 1847), 169.

²⁷ Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths* (New Haven, 1961), 104–20.

²⁸ Volodymyr Pashuk, *Zarobitchany Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy: Druha polovyna XIX st.* (Lviv, 2001), 140; David Saunders, “What Makes a Nation a Nation? Ukrainians since 1600,” *Ethnic Groups* 10, nos. 1–3 (1993): 111–12; Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 206–207.

Ruthenian peasants meant more often by *ruskyi/ruska*—their own province or the broader Eastern Christian world. I shall venture only a few remarks here on the basis of proverbs. One of them was “Vid Kyieva do Krakova vsiudy bida odnakova” (From Kyiv to Cracow, the same misfortune prevails). In commenting on it, Franko used modern ethnic terminology: “Dopikaie odnakovo ukraintsiam i poliakam” (It upsets the Ukrainians and the Poles equally).²⁹ This interpretation implies that Ruthenian peasants imagined their fatherland as a large space—larger, at least, than their own province—with its center in Kyiv. There are, however, similar Ruthenian proverbs in which Kyiv is replaced by Lviv or not mentioned at all.³⁰ Another proverb mentions Kyiv as a large city but lacks any further territorial identification: “Kyiv ne vidrazu zbudovanyi” (Kyiv was not built at one go). Characteristically, in other versions of this proverb Kyiv is replaced by Lviv or Cracow, and the form of the proverb is reminiscent of the famous Latin maxim “Non uno die Roma aedificata est.”³¹

In Galician Ruthenian folklore there are, however, instances in which Kyiv means Kyiv and not any other city. One such instance occurs in a Christmas carol Franko’s friend and colleague, Mykhailo Zubrytsky, recorded in the village of Mshanets near Staryi Sambir. The subject of the carol is the St. Sophia Cathedral, the “sacred church in sacred Kyiv” (“v sviatim Kiiovi”). Zubrytsky passed the text of this carol on to Franko, who published it in 1889 in the leading Ukrainian ethnographic journal, *Kievskaia starina*.³² This publication provoked a lively discussion about the carol’s authenticity. Franko himself doubted whether peasants in such a remote locale were aware of Kyiv’s existence. A legend about the Kyiv Caves Laura (“tam v Rosyi ie vylyky take misto Kyiv i tam ie nailyshcha na tsilyi svit tserkva i nazyvaie-si Lavra”) that was recorded later obliged Franko to reconsider his opinion.³³ It is important to note that both the Mshanets carol and the later legend contained an image of Kyiv as a city of God’s mercy³⁴—in other words, as the center of Holy Rus’. It is therefore reasonably safe to conclude that the proverbial Kyiv had a double meaning, standing sometimes for any great city (in this sense, it could be replaced by Cracow or Lviv) and sometimes for a

²⁹ Franko, *Halytsko-ruski narodni prypovidky*, 2: 252.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 302, 370.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 252, 302, 370.

³² [Ivan Franko], “Zamechatelnaia koliadka,” *Kievskaia starina* 24, no. 1 (1889): 232.

³³ Volodymyr Hnatiuk, ed., *Halytsko-ruski narodni legendy* (Lviv, 1902), 186.

³⁴ Ivan Franko, *Zibrannia tvoriv*, 50 vols. (Kyiv, 1976–89), 42: 259, 261.

sacred city, just as the proverbial Danube could mean either any great river or a large waterway with particular sacred connotations.

The easternmost point in the mental geography of Galician Ruthenian folklore was Moscow, or, rather, an epithet deriving from the name of that city (*moskovskiyi*) as a synonym of the Russian Empire. This epithet had explicit negative connotations: “Muscovite salary” meant “harsh punishment,” while “Muscovite penalty” could refer to any nuisance. Local folklore had another image derivative of Moscow, that of the *moskal* (Muscovite). In some cases the word could be interpreted as meaning a Muscovite soldier, in others, an ethnic Russian, and in a few cases, even non-Christians (e. g., “those Muscovites who are there now, they came from the Tatars” and “the Muscovite tsar converted to Christianity only when he saw a cross in the sky, and with this sign he began to win victories over his enemies”).³⁵ Among the proverbs Franko collected and commented on there is one that reveals an explicitly negative attitude to those educated Galician Ruthenians who identified themselves as Russians: “Katsap katsapom, pase svyni zahalom, lupt shkiru pazurom” (A *katsap* remains a *katsap*—all he does is herd pigs [and] flails skin with his claw).³⁶

This did not necessarily mean that at that point the local peasantry treated Russians as constitutive “others,” like they did Poles and Jews: the negative image of a “Muscovite” did not prevent them from welcoming Russian soldiers in 1849 and again in 1914. Ruthenian peasants particularly liked the soldiers’ “strong faith”—the way they prayed and fasted fervently. From the 1860s to the 1880s there were rumors that the tsar would soon come to Galicia to expel the Jews, punish the Poles, take land away from the gentry, and distribute it among the peasants. In these rumors, the Romanov monarch figured as the “Ruthenian tsar”: it seemed that the peasants made no distinction between “*ruskii*” (Russian) and “*rus'kyi*” (Ruthenian). As with their attitude toward Russian soldiers, they were fascinated that the tsar “displays strong faith and behaves that way.”³⁷

The last point requires elaboration. As noted above, Eastern Christian peasants did not identify their “Rus” with the modern Russian state or with the Russian nobility. In their understanding the latter were personifi-

³⁵ Hnatiuk, *Halytsko-ruski narodni legendy*, 187.

³⁶ Franko, *Halytsko-ruski narodni prypovidky*, 2: 247. *Katsap*, the pejorative term for a Russian, is derived from “*kak tsap*” (like a billy goat).

³⁷ John-Paul Himka, “Hope in the Tsar: Displaced Naive Monarchism among the Ukrainian Peasants of the Habsburg Empire,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 7, nos. 1–2 (1980): 125–38; I. Naumovych, “Nazad k narodu!” *Slovo*, 1881, no. 54 (19 [31] May): 2.

cations of the devil and related evil forces that lived off the peasants' hard labor. Only a monarch—a representative of God on earth—could save the peasants from the lords, and between “us” and “them” the monarch was on “our” side.³⁸ Galician Ruthenian peasants differed from other Eastern Slavs in that they were loyal to two monarchs at once: to Francis Joseph and his family on the one hand, and to the “White Tsar” on the other. By this token, not only the Romanovs but also the Habsburgs were “Ruthenian,” which certainly made Elizabeth a Ruthenian queen. One can only guess what hard choices the Ruthenian peasants would have been obliged to make if Austria-Hungary and Russia had gone to war between the 1860s and 1880s—if, in their words, an “Austrian” were to attack a “Muscovite.”³⁹ In the context of the present discussion, it is important to note another point: for the peasants, their large fatherland of Rus' required personification in the figure of a monarch. Without this figure, it was incomplete. Thus Ruthenian identity could exist only as long as there was a monarchy. With the collapse of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian monarchies in 1917–18, that identity lost its axis, which could not be said about the image of Ukraine as a synonym of a free land subject to no government.

My analysis of Galician Ruthenian folklore has led me to make a few, very tentative conclusions. But even so, they call for some corrections to the theory of “private” and “ideological” fatherlands. The first conclusion is that before the peasants began moving into an ideological (national) fatherland, their traditional identity was not exclusively local. They had a feeling of belonging to a community larger than their village. It could hardly be otherwise, since both their everyday experience and their religious beliefs made them identify with a larger world. To be sure, their ideas about that world were vague and insufficiently articulate to meet the criteria of modern nationalism, but they did allow the peasants to orient themselves sufficiently (and, at times, most efficiently) in their traditional world.

My second conclusion concurs with the results of Peter Sahlins's classic study of the Franco-Spanish borderlands, in which he calls for a rethinking of what had become the accepted model of the identity of European rural society. In a nutshell, that model is highly reminiscent of

³⁸ Heretz, “Russian Apocalypse,” *passim*.

³⁹ Semen Vityk, “Iz moikh spomyniv pro Franka,” in *Ivan Franko u spohadakh suchasnykiv*, ed. O. I. Dei, vol. 2 (Lviv, 1972), 48–49. See also an interesting article by Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, “Not Quite Martin Guerre: Notes on People's Politics in the Russian Empire at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 29, nos. 1–2 (summer–winter 2004): 39–45, in which she examines several cases of peasants choosing one monarch over another.

Ossowski's theory: an image of concentric circles in which the growth of national identity implies decreasing loyalty to a locality (village or parish) and increasing attachment to the nation. Sahlins suggests that this circular model be replaced with one of opposing counter-identities, none of which is fixed in a permanent hierarchy: on the contrary, "lower" oppositions can potentially be fused in a "higher" and more generalized opposition. The nationalization of peasants was by no means a top-down process *only*: by choosing this or that identity, villagers made their own "bottom-up" impact on nation building.⁴⁰

In the same vein, Galician Ruthenian peasants divided their identities and loyalties between two general concepts, Rus' and Ukraine, which in some cases were mutually exclusive, and in others mutually compatible. However, both of them were of a transcendental and utopian nature. In this sense, the history of peasant identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was less concerned with the shift from a private to an ideological fatherland than with the replacement of general traditional concepts with modern ones. Getting rid of monarchs—either by assassination, as in the case of Elizabeth, or by dethronement as a result of political crisis—was the *sine qua non* of this replacement. In this sense the First World War and the ensuing collapse of monarchies also marked the beginning of the end of old modes of identification.

⁴⁰ Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, 1989), 110–13.

the Ukrainian Heraldry Society. He is the author of *Ukrainska miska heraldyka* (1998) and *Herby ta prapory mist i sil Ukrainy*, part 1 (2004); and the coauthor of *Herby mist Ukrainy (XIV–persha polovyna XX st.)* (2001) and *Herby ta prapory mist i sil Rivnenskoï oblasti* (2002).

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