

УДК 398.33–053.6(477)"18/19"

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YOUTH CALENDAR IN THE CONTEXT OF TRADITIONAL CULTURE OF UKRAINIANS

У статті розглянуто інваріантну модель українського молодіжного календаря, ритуали й фольклорні твори у виконанні молоді протягом обрядового річного циклу українців. На практиці вони існують у численних формах і діалектних варіантах. Корпус усіх діалектних форм молодіжного календаря на всіх українських етнічних територіях є органічною складовою українського традиційного календаря.

Ключові слова: українська фольклорна календарна традиція, молодіжний календар, модель, інваріант, ритуальні ігри.

В статье рассматривается инвариантная модель украинского молодежного календаря, ритуалы и фольклорные произведения в исполнении молодежи на протяжении обрядового годового цикла украинцев. На практике они существуют в многочисленных формах и диалектных вариантах. Корпус всех диалектных форм молодежного календаря на всех украинских этнических территориях – это органическая часть украинского традиционного календаря.

Ключевые слова: украинская фольклорная календарная традиция, молодежный календарь, модель, инвариант, ритуальные игры.

This article covers invariant model of Ukrainian youth folk calendar, major folklore genres that accompany ritual and ceremonial actions. In practice, they all function in various dialect forms and variants. The range of all the dialect forms from all Ukrainian territories form youth calendar as an organic part of the general folk calendar. The anthropocentric view of the world is typical for youth calendar and is an element of Ukrainian traditional culture in its entirety.

Keywords: Ukrainian folk calendar tradition, youth calendar, model, invariant, ritual games.

The calendar that divides, organizes and regulates the timing is a complex synthetic formation. It consists of a public calendar, religious calendar and actually the calendar of folk customs, rites

and rituals. The latter is older in origin, but attached to the first two as to a *sui generis* coordinate system. Religious calendar was introduced in times of Kyivan Rus, together with the adoption of Christianity and significantly affected the structure of local ancient calendar. In the same time, some religious holidays were exposed to the influence of folk «exegesis» and changing of semantics. The structure of Ukrainian folk calendar is determined by different world view models (Christian and pagan), seasonal holidays and everyday customs and rituals of various gender-age strata and social groups.

The folk calendar can be segmented on a set of individual models. For example, the model associated with the Christian holy souls. Within this model other calendar models are distinguished: holidays / weekdays, fast / meat days, weddings / funeral ceremonies etc. Another model is stipulated by natural cycles, generates the appropriate vegetative, solar, moon models. The model associated with human economic activities is divided into agricultural, livestock, weaving, apiary, hunting and others. Separation of such models is rightful, but relative act: in the real life calendar subsists as integrity.

A gender-age principle underlies YC. Its structure is formed by the holidays, in which young people are involved; actually, youth calendar rites, customs, games, entertainments, signs, songs, ritual dialogues, prayers, incantations, divinations etc. YC functions exclusively in dialectal forms, countless variants, of the same type genres and styles of folk works. The combination of all dialectal forms from all Ukrainian territories forms YC as an organic part of the traditional calendar. The latter exists as a certain 'avanttext' with the structural invariable core and permanent changes in the periphery.

Depending on the degree of social relevance of youth ceremonies and the degree of involvement of girls and boys in the general festive activities, several types of participation of unmarried youth in the calendar-ritual complexes can be distinguished:

Type I – youth ritual actions as the main core of the calendar holiday (urging spring; Kupala holiday), games, fortune telling, entertainments on St. Andrew's Day);

Type II – youth actions as a part of the general celebration of the whole society (rounds of homes with boys Christmas carols and girls songs (shchedrivka); spring games and songs, drawing rituals, customs of throwing on Monday as components of general Easter celebrations, participation in reaping rituals with the last sheaf, wreath; keeping «goat» game, knitting of scarecrow at Shrovetide);

Type III – exceptionally youth communication practices which are inscribed in the general annual range and attached to the certain calendar period / dates (evening meetings, in-door and out-door games, street meetings).

Youth calendar actions also perform socio-normative function. Start of evening and street meetings attendance by adolescents, their accession to the youth group sanctioned the transition to the age stratum of those, who already have the right to marry. Those who did not participate in youth entertainments, aroused suspicion of inferiority, were subject to ridicule and ostracism. In the young men communities, the relics of ancient initiation ordinances bound to a calendar were preserved [1, p. 91–105]. Researchers reject the presence in old Slavs of maiden initiation rites (V. Yeryomina, A. Bayburin). A genetic connection with «rites de passage» on the level of subjects and motifs is seen in the folklore, particularly, in the spring girls' games and songs [17, p. 93–94].

Youth strata united 15–24 years-old boys and girls. Unmarried to 25 years were considered as old maids and old bachelors and did not take part in youth entertainments. Unmarried young people differed from other age strata with clothes, ornaments, hairstyle. Clothing of girls was bright, with predominance of red color. They adorned head with wreaths, natural flowers, colored ribbons. Hats of boys differed with bigger tops than in the elderly» [3, p. 5, 32]. Beginning from 15 years-old, the youth united in girls and in boys

communities which celebrated holidays together, participated in evenings meetings, entertainments, etc. Teens of 11–14 years-old, followed the elders and also arranged evenings. According to our observations, groups of teenage girls played separately during spring rites near the main participants of spring games [16, p. 69]. Such actions had demonstrative character, showed willingness of teenagers to move to the youth strata.

In the hierarchical structure of traditional society youth of premarital age, proceeding from the social and socio-economic status, occupied a lower stratum than married one. Matrimonial strategy, preparation for marriage was its main function and task. Expectation of future wedding, choose of couple are the major subjects of calendar and ritual folklore.

New agricultural year for Ukrainians-farmers began in spring. Records of nineteenth and twentieth centuries registered the rite of urging of spring in Central, Northern, South-Western regions of Ukraine. It was performed exceptionally by girls – in early spring, from Candlemas (14.II), on «St. Yavdokha's Day» (14.III), «when snow begins to melt away», «when marmot whistles» and so on. Usually urging of spring coincided with the Lent, when singing and entertainment were strictly prohibited. Exception was made only for girls: «In March, when the Lent starts and also spring songs. Already then sing nothing, only the spring songs- because the Lent has started» [18].

In our ancestors concepts they sang, not because spring came, but spring came because it was called [12, p. 39]. Girls climbed into trees, roofs of the houses and barns – closer to the sacred space of the sky and the sun – in order the appeals to spring to be heard far off. They came on the high bank of the river, bridge. Reflecting from the water, sounds resounded in echo on a substantial distance. At Kyiv and Chernihiv left bank of Dniپر girls carried a ball of straw, threw it on the snow and began to «call the spring», loudly singing songs, in which called for the spring to «come quickly»,

«bring the warm summer», «put away, the winter». At the end of each stanza scanned «Hoo-oo-oo!». Therefore, such spring songs are called «hookanky», «calling songs». Ritual shout «Hoo-oo-oo!» with increasing of the tone in the end and clapping hands had apotropical nature: had to frighten and drive out the hostile to man forces, associated with winter and cold [2, p. 152–153].

Another topic of callings is appeal to the Spring with a question: «Where is your daughter?». The subject of a mother who lost and looks for a daughter is the archetypical [7, p. 133–138]. Ukrainian folklore has not saved such an extended myth, like the ancient Greeks about Persephone and Demeter. But the traces of common genetic roots are traced in the motive the daughter staying in the charming garden during embroidery of shirt for a sweetheart, in the motive of magicians-assistants who helped her to prepare, obviously, wedding shirt for the groom etc. Concept of the garden in the traditional culture has rich associative meaning connected with the semantics of paradise, perfect, otherworld garden that is the sacred locus, in which the events of myth are developed. In Ukrainian folklore, the theme of Spring and her daughter is limited solely with callings of early spring period.

The meeting of spring turned into a general celebration of youth. When the snow has melted, calls to spring were finished and games and dances began. In the western regions of Ukraine, spring round dance and game complex is entitled «haivky», «hahivky», «mahivky»; in Volhynia Polissia – «rohulky»; in Chernihiv region – «karagody», in Central and Eastern regions – spring games, round dances. According to records of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, round dance and game complex started from the Annunciation (7.IV) and lasted until the Ascension (40th day after Easter).

Spring youth repertoire also includes calendar dedicated lyrics, glorifying songs, «couple songs». In antiquity, probably, it was a part of love magic. One of the main motifs of round dance and game songs is the theme of «growing- ripening» of plants (games «Millet»,

«Oats», «Buckwheat», «Peas»). It is caused by the main reason of spring rites: with the beginning of a new year, the symbolic «creating of a new world» starts. Morning, period of a new moon and spring – is a time of creation of the world, as far as, the year of ancient Slav-farmer began in spring. Probably, this event was devoted to the time of the vernal equinox, that marked the line between an old and new year cycle [11, p. 23–24; 5, p. 209].

Spring ceremonial complex also included unmarried young men sports competitions that in ancient times had a sacral meaning and were devoted to a particular deity [15, p. 89–92; 14, p. 148–158]. These games are known to many European nations, and in Ukraine they have remained in Western regions (Pokuttya and Hutsulshchyna). On the third day of Easter boys make «live pyramid», which is called «Tower», «Bell tower», «Hayloft». Five boys join their hands, form a circle, four stay on their shoulders, then three, two and finally one participant of the game appears on the top. «Tower» bypasses around the church, that symbolizes the completion of spring rites. Their origin is associated with the ancient solar cults [9, p. 322].

Relics of primitive dualism are contained in songs-competitions between maiden and bachelor communities (praise of girls' virtues, and taunt at boys). Majority of domestic and foreign folklorists consider these songs unconnected to the rites. Analysis of such songs gives us reason to come to the opposite conclusion: these songs between the parties of participants of the ritual are an organic and integral part of the sacral actions. The phenomenon is not peculiar to only the Indo-European agricultural festivals, but exists in all people at some stage of their development. In its basis – an archetype of the struggle, competition and victory. Ridicule has always existed alongside with elevation. Ritual struggle, competition both physical and verbal have ancient roots, and how the studies of even J. Fraser have shown that in the *homo naturalis* they were a metaphor of fighting as salvation and victory over death. This inaturalisinitial

agon determined in great extent the nature of the culture of archaic and classical Greece and Rome [14, p. 95]. Thus, if in the primitive society the winner in the fight against animal or enemy received life as a reward, in the classical – sufficiently increased his social status (became Olympic champion, triumpher). So, the victory was realized as a synonym of life. Another important function of agon was a psychotherapeutic function. Psychophysical strain of sacred action was removed by alternate mutual ridicule of members of one group by participants of other. Laughter, fun as archaic sign of the victory of life over death formed primary emotional tone of spring ritual songs and entertainments. They were not simply an expression of joy, but ritual prescribed behavior, aimed to ensure success in serious agricultural matters. In the ritual songs-competitions between boys and girls communities during spring, summer holidays, at wedding, and youth meetings at the street, emotional and sexual tension that took place in the youth strata was removed.

Round dance and game actions already at the time of their first recording had already lost ceremonial affiliation and turned into one of the components of youth recreation and entertainment complex that took place with the arrival of spring in the fresh air. Finally, life of youth and full range of youth communications were transferred from the house out of doors into the street.

Combining of youth in girls and boys groups occurred on the territorial principle: neighbors, youth of one district gathered for the common pastime. Element of stability in the overall picture of YC were girls. They stuck their street and usually competed with their neighbors' girls, who also kept their territory. In order to attract boys to go to up them, not to neighbors, the girls buried on the corner of the street a pot of ritual porridge, adding to it sanctified poppyseed and claw of the crayfish. At the same time sang:

Buried a pot of porridge and nailed with pin,
In order to visit boys only our street [6, p. 32].

Men, on the contrary, fulfilled the function of a mobile element. According to established tradition, they visited meetings of girls around the village on the streets, at homes. Bachelors went to nearby villages, what caused conflicts. «If there were sisters in a family, the girls went to different streets. In order not to put off boys. Apart. A guy can go, where he wishes» [19].

On Sunday or holidays youth went to the village holiday place, where boys and girls from all street gathered. Often it was a place in the village center, near the church or out the village: in the pasture, near pond, river, mill. Traditionally, young people from different villages met during the patronal festivals, which took place once a year, or twice if the village was large and had two churches. While elders exchanged news and had meal, youth arranged festivities near the church, where they made acquaintances. Usually, there were no conflicts between men from different villages: «feast» legalized presence of young people in a foreign territory.

Young people also made acquaintance on the so-called «matrimonial fairs» that took place during big religious festival in the villages of western Ukraine (Transcarpathia, Bukovyna). Such fair held in the village. Krasnyy Brid near the Basilian monastery. «A thousand-thousand devout Rusnaks and their daughters with flowing and decorated with flowers hair came there... It was a real maiden fair three times in a year. When some boy liked a girl, he despite her resistance and opposition from her family and relatives, led her to the priest for the marriage» [8, p. 324]. In the early twentieth century «maiden fairs» kept on in Nadvirna area in the towns Perekhynsk and Solotvyno, which took place respectively at the Epiphany and St. Stephen's Day.

Green holidays celebrated on the Trinity and Kupala day (7.VII) constitute separate ritual cycles. According to our observations, in those villages, where Kupala actively celebrated, Trinity Sunday usually celebrated modestly and vice versa. At Trinity Sunday the tradition of setting milestone with the wheel, cross, human-like

figure above is still saved (Kyiv, Chernihiv regions). Around the milestone branches of linden, birches, forming the analog of the «divine garden» with the axis mundi in the middle are stuck into the ground. Trinity milestone is decorated with towels, greenery, the icon is hitched above. The night before the Trinity boys and girls from one district make a fire near the milestone, sing songs and keep it from youth of nearby districts: a special courage is to bring down milestone of competitors and shame for those who failed to protect it. On the Right bank of Dnieper in the region between Bila Tserkva and Fastiv the youth sets up and protects the milestone on the Maccabeus (14.VII). It is called Makovei, decorate it with flowers and attach pumpkin with a candle inside.

During the week of Trinity houses were believed to be visited by the souls of those, who died «wrong», died unbaptized, was born or died this week. They were called mermaids (rusalki). A week later *Rozyhry* took place: young people in wreaths of flowers and green branches led mermaids out of village in the fields, forest or graveyard. The solemn procession was accompanied with songs and throwing with water to invoke rain: «Led rusalki, that they not visit us, not break our rye, not catch our girls» [6, p. 120].

The central holiday in YC was the feast of Kupala. It involved the entire youth community. Those, who ignored it were threatend in the songs with all kinds of plagues: «*Who will not go to Kupala, his legs will be broken...*» [6, p. 157]. Parents, who were not allowed their children to go to Kupala celebration, took off the gates, smeared gates with tar, broken eggs etc. Before the feast of Kupala boys had to cut down a ritual tree – *kupaylytsia*. Girls decorated it with flowers, ribbons, candles (Polissia region).

In Kyiv region (Tarashcha, Rokytno districts) *kupaylytsia* was decorated with cherries, cookies, candies, that in ancient times symbolized the ritual donation. Kupala feast had bright erotic tint and accompanied with mostly love songs, ballads. Ritual purification by fire and water over the centuries also got erotic connotation.

Purification of air has become a form of entertainment on swings. Boys placed them at the crossroads, near a cemetery. Later, swings were placed anywhere on the streets, in the places of youth meeting. Depending on local tradition, swing placing was devoted to some holidays. Swinging also had erotic-semantics in songs: «In the forest, on the nutwood, near the oak, Ivan hung the swing and sat Holiana-lover» [6, p. 176].

In the ceremonial complex of harvesting youth played an honorary role in the actions with the last sheaf, reaping wreath, which was solemnly carried by a boy and a girl («prince» and «princess») in the village. It was an allusion of a wedding ceremony.

After harvesting, the active life of young people was moved from the street to the premises. Young people usually gathered for evening parties. The biggest were on the St. Andrew's Day. The tradition of this day celebrating, albeit, in reduced and modified form is still saved in Ukraine. The invariant structure of St. Andrew's holiday complex consists of the following components:

- baking the ritual bread (Kalyta, dumplings-«bull», «Balabusky»);
- divination by means of bakery, objects, sounds;
- ritual actions aimed at predicting the future (urging of fate, sowing on the snow flax, hemp, poppy seeds);
- interpretation of prophetic dreams;
- ritual tricks.

Youth took active part in Christmas and New Year celebrations. Usually boys sang carols (kolyadki), performed with puppet theatre, also played games «Goat» and «Malanka». Boys «group» was formed in advance from the guys of one district. They learned performance texts, carols, arranged costumes and props, shared functions and roles. The boys chose a senior – «bereza» and «mikhonosha», who gathered gifts in the bag, «zvisdar», who carried the Star of Bethlehem. The group of carolers visited every yard of their district, raised hosts, wished them health and wealth

to get gifts and money. Often brawls occurred between these youth groups of carolers, if someone called into a foreign territory.

Ukrainian Christmas carols belong to the so-called differentiated type. They are performed especially to host, hostess, girl, boy, older people (grandfather, grandmother), beekeeper, widow, priest and even the deceased, who died during the year. Carols to boy and girl traditionally chanted their positive features, predicted a successful marriage with a decent pair.

Girls sang calendar-ritual songs (shchedrivka) under the windows of villagers on New Year (Shchedryi Vechir) (13.I). They did not come into the house, and hosts gave them gifts on the street. In the basis of ritual rounds of youth on Christmas and Generous Eve are concepts about souls of dead ancestors, which in the form of «maskers» visit all for Christmas and New Year. Not to give presents to carolers was considered as a bad luck, a sin for which an inevitable nemesis would be in the form of crop failure, misery, disease and so on during the year. After the ritual rounds, the youth met in the house for festive «clubbing», where all collected food was put on the table.

During the holidays girls told their fortunes. On Shchedryi Vechir they went to the gate with a pot of buckwheat porridge and asked «My fate, answer» (Kyiv region) or rumbled with pair of spoons and shouted: «Fate, fortune, I need salt for bread» (Kharkiv region). Then, tried to guess by sounds, where the girl got married. Often they asked a first comer a name, and believed that this is the name of her future husband. In Polissia region, girls went to listen under the windows of villagers: if the word «sit» was heard – yet to sit as a maid, if «go» – soon to be married. On the Epiphany, youth had fun on the carousel, skated. Man arranged horse races, ritual fisticuffs. In the end of Christmastide, carolers washed themselves from «devilish filth» in a river.

A new wedding season was started after the holidays, that ended at Pancake week (Maslyana). The last holiday of the annual

cycle was called Kolodka. To the legs of young unmarried men of marriageable age, a block was tied and lagniappe was demanded. The block was also tied to girls who refused matchmakers, to parents, who did not marry their children. At the same time humorous, caustic songs: «Time from Christmas to Shrovetide has finished, you did not marry, like a dog's tail trailed» were sung [10, p. 139]. Girls fastened blocks in the form of twigs flowers, decorated with ribbons to boys, and got ransom from them. Respectively boys presented girls Easter gifts. During Maslyana youth drove in a sleigh from hills, and on the last day they were solemnly broken or burned. It was the sign that winter ended and the labor agricultural year started.

Summarizing material, we can conclude that expectations of wedding is the major topic of the youth rites. During the year cycle a clear dynamics of love and marital motives in the youth ritual songs is traced. Spring songs glorify the birth of romance between young people. During Kupala holiday the motif of pairing is dominated. In then reaping songs the motif of expectation of the marriage is common. On the Day to the Epiphany (19.I) the youth was looking for the predictions of the future wedding. The rites during the week before the Lent became the logical completion of wedding theme circle (these rituals aimed at condemning and ridiculing those, who did not get married during the year.

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SUMMARY

Youth rituals, customs and games are inseparable elements of the Ukrainian folk calendar. The youth rituals create their own group (we will call it a model) within in the general structure of the yearly cycle of the holidays and weekdays, fasts and meat days, weddings, funeral ceremonies, etc. The calendar exists as integrity and each of its units exists separately as a syncretic, indivisible unity. This article covers invariant model of Ukrainian youth folk calendar, major folklore genres that accompany ritual and ceremonial actions. In practice, they all function in various dialect forms and variants. The range of all the dialect forms from all Ukrainian territories form youth calendar as an organic part of the general folk calendar. The anthropocentric view of the world is typical for youth calendar and is an element of Ukrainian traditional culture in its entirety.

Keywords: Ukrainian folk calendar tradition, youth calendar, model, invariant, ritual games.