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## ARCHIVAL SOURCES ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN THE SETTLEMENTS OF THE NORTH-WESTERN AZOV REGION IN THE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

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**The purpose** of the article is to consider, on the example of Berdyansk and Melitopol districts, Tavricheskaya guberniya, one of the little-studied aspects of the cultural life of the Orthodox population in the 19th – early 20th centuries, associated with church construction in their settlements. The authors set themselves the task, on specific examples, to trace the main features and features of this process. Church building occupied a prominent place in the inner life of local communities, as evidenced by the relevant archival materials collected in the funds of the state archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. We will dwell only on some of them, relating to fund 118 of the Tavricheskaya Spiritual Consistory, concerning the territory of the then Berdyansk and Melitopol districts, the Tavricheskaya gubernia. A number of general scientific and disciplinary **methods** were used. Thus, the purpose and objectives of the study defined the theoretical and methodological approach to knowledge of historical reality, which is based on dialectical methods of knowledge. **Results.** According to the 1897 census, there were about ten Orthodox churches in the city, two Jewish and one Karaite synagogue. Chief among them was the Ascension Cathedral Church. Its construction began in 1842 and ended in 1848 (consecrated on May 18, 1848). The stone building of the church had a fence and a wooden bell tower on 2 pillars. Somewhat later, in 1854, a stone bell tower was added to it, and in 1903–1904 the church building was expanded with new additions. Among other Orthodox churches in the city, archival documents mention the Epiphany Church (built in 1863), the Peter and Paul Church (built in 1892), the Intercession Cemetery Church (built in 1865), and the Alexander Gymnasium Church, built in 1876 in the courtyard city gymnasium. **Concluding** a general review of this issue, we can conclude that the local population and Bulgarian settlers played a rather active role in church construction in the settlements of the Azov region of the Tavricheskaya gubernia in the post-reform period. This equally applied to both the Bulgarian proper and the neighboring villages of the North-Western Azov region. Such construction was carried out mainly at the expense of local communities, and local churches were not only religious centers, but often served as primary schools.

**Key words:** construction, Bulgarian settlements, archive fund, Tavricheskaya guberniya.

## АРХІВНІ ДЖЕРЕЛА ПРО БУДІВНИЦТВО ПРАВОСЛАВНИХ ЦЕРКОВ У ПОСЕЛЕННЯХ ПІВНІЧНО-ЗАХІДНОГО ПРИАЗОВ'Я У ХІХ – НА ПОЧАТКУ ХХ СТОЛІТТЯ

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**Метою статті** є розгляд на прикладі Бердянського та Мелітопольського повітів Таврійської губернії одного з маловивчених аспектів культурного життя православного населення у ХІХ – на початку ХХ століття, пов'язаного з церковним будівництвом у їхніх поселеннях. Автори ставлять своїм завданням на конкретних прикладах простежити основні риси та особливості цього процесу. Церковне будівництво посідало помітне місце у внутрішньому житті місцевих громад, про що свідчать відповідні архівні матеріали, зібрані у фондах державного архіву Автономної Республіки Крим. Ми зупинимося лише на деяких із них, які належать до фонду 118 «Таврійської духовної консисторії», що стосуються території тодішнього Бердянського та Мелітопольського повітів Таврійської губернії. Було використано низку загальнонаукових і дисциплінарних **методів**. Таким чином, мета та завдання дослідження визначили теоретико-методологічний підхід до пізнання історичної дійсності, який базується на діалектичних методах пізнання. **Результати дослідження.** За переписом 1897 року в місті було близько десяти православних церков, дві єврейські та одна караїмська синагога. Головною серед них була Вознесенська соборна церква. Її будівництво розпочалося в 1842 році і закінчилося в 1848 році (освячено 18 травня 1848 року). Кам'яна будівля церкви мала огорожу та дерев'яну дзвіницю на 2 стовпах. Дещо пізніше, у 1854 р., до неї прибудували кам'яну дзвіницю, а в 1903–1904 рр. будівлю церкви розширили новими прибудовами. Серед інших православних церков міста в архівних документах згадується Богоявленська церква (1863 р.), Петропавлівська церква (1892 р.), Покровська цвинтарна церква (1865 р.), Олександрівська гімназія 1876 р. Завершуючи загальний огляд цього питання, ми можемо зробити **висновок** про досить активну роль місцевого населення та болгарських переселенців у церковному будівництві у поселеннях Приазовського регіону Таврійської губернії у пореформений період. Це однаково стосувалося як власне болгарських, і сусідніх із ними селищ Північно-Західного Приазов'я. Подібне будівництво велося головним чином за рахунок місцевих громад, а місцеві церкви були не лише релігійними центрами, але й часто виконували функції початкових шкіл.

**Ключові слова:** будівництво, болгарські поселення, архівний фонд, Таврійська губернія.

### 1. Introduction

In modern conditions of the development of historical science, the study of issues related to regional history is of great importance. Among them is the history of the south of modern Ukraine. Until now, most of the scientific research on this topic has focused on the socio-economic development of this region. At the same time, there are still enough “white spots” in the study of issues related to the cultural life of its population. This, in our opinion, determines the general relevance of the chosen topic.

The purpose of the article is to consider, on the example of Berdyansk and Melitopol districts, Tavricheskaya guberniya, one of the little-studied aspects of the cultural life of the Orthodox population in the 19th – early 20th centuries, associated with church construction in their settlements. The authors

set themselves the task, on specific examples, to trace the main features and features of this process.

Church building occupied a prominent place in the inner life of local communities, as evidenced by the relevant archival materials collected in the funds of the state archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. We will dwell only on some of them, relating to fund 118 of the Tavricheskaya Spiritual Consistory, concerning the territory of the then Berdyansk and Melitopol districts, the Tavricheskaya guberniya.

### 2. Territorial boundaries of the research

The Tavricheskaya guberniya itself was created in 1802 as a result of a general territorial and administrative reform of the tsarist government, which determined the boundaries of the three provinces of Southern Ukraine, which existed without any changes until

1917. Initially, it consisted of 7 separate counties: Simferopol, Perekop, Dnieper, Evpatoria, Melitopol, Tmutarakan and Feodosia (Кабузан, 1969: 272–291).

Somewhat later, in 1842, in connection with the division of the Melitopol uyezd, another uyezd of the Tavricheskaya guberniya arose – Berdyansk (Вернер, 1889: 7). According to the modern territorial-administrative division, the territory of the Melitopol and Berdyansk districts fit within the boundaries of most of the modern Zaporizhzhia and eastern Kherson regions.

The main center of the Melitopol district, the city of Melitopol, received its name and city status in 1842. Prior to that, a settlement called Kiziyar or Novoaleksandrovka was located in its place. In 1834, Novoaleksandrovka was located on both sides of the Kiziyarskaya beam and included 297 courtyards. In the village there was a wooden church in the name of Alexander Nevsky, there were 6 shops and 2 drinking houses. Since 1821, fairs have been held three times a year: on the week of Christ's Sunday, on June 29 on the day of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and on the day of St. Nicholas in December. Trade at fairs was carried out primarily in cattle, silk and paper goods.

According to archival data, back in 1830, the cathedral church of Alexander Nevsky was consecrated in it, built at the expense of parishioners. It had a stone bottom and a wooden top. The church did not have a bell tower, and the bells themselves hung on special beams. The church building was surrounded by a stone fence with wooden bars (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 5945: 1–2).

Somewhat later, with the acquisition of the city status of Melitopol and the main center of a large district, it became necessary to build a more monumental church building in the city. In 1899, the already existing city cathedral church of Alexander Nevsky was rebuilt in the form of a large stone building with an iron-covered bell tower. On the territory of the church there was a one-story house made of baked bricks; a gatehouse, a church candle shop, an outbuilding and a mud-brick shed. According to the same data, in 1910 the local merchant I.M. Cherednichenko built a house for religious and moral readings near the church fence, which was also the property of the church. Part of the church land was leased for 2,100 rubles a year. The church had a church school, where at that time 138 boys and 6 girls were studying (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 94–96).

### **3. Information of the main archival funds**

The data of the mentioned archival fund inform about the existence of Orthodox churches and other settlements of the Melitopol district. In particular, in the village of Tambovka (the modern village of Tambovka, Melitopol district) in 1904, a stone church of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John

the Theologian was built. She opened a school where 40 local children (30 boys and 10 girls) studied (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 151).

A similar school was also opened in the village of Fedorovka, Melitopol district (the modern village of Fedorovka, Melitopol district) at St. Basil's Church, built in 1857, which was attended by 50 boys and 10 girls (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 185).

We have similar information for many other settlements of the Melitopol district. So, in 1859, in the village of Semenovka (the modern village of Semenovka, Melitopol region), the stone Archangel-Mikhailovskaya Church was built by local believers (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 124).

In 1862, at the expense of the parishioners of St. Troitskoye (modern village of Troitskoye, Melitopol region), a church was erected from baked bricks on a stone foundation named after the Life-Giving Trinity (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 167).

In 1867, in one of the oldest villages of the county, the village of Terpenye (the modern village of Terpenye, Melitopol district), the Church of the Intercession was built at the expense of local parishioners (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 155).

A similar situation can be traced at this time in the territory of the neighboring Berdyansk district. The main administrative center of the county, the city of Berdyansk, became a city in 1835. It was one of the most important port centers of the grain trade on the Sea of Azov.

According to the 1897 census, there were about ten Orthodox churches in the city, two Jewish and one Karaite synagogue. Chief among them was the Ascension Cathedral Church. Its construction began in 1842 and ended in 1848 (consecrated on May 18, 1848). The stone building of the church had a fence and a wooden bell tower on 2 pillars. Somewhat later, in 1854, a stone bell tower was added to it, and in 1903–1904 the church building was expanded with new additions (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 5978: 1).

Among other Orthodox churches in the city, archival documents mention the Epiphany Church (built in 1863), the Peter and Paul Church (built in 1892), the Intercession Cemetery Church (built in 1865), and the Alexander Gymnasium Church, built in 1876 in the courtyard city gymnasium (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6396: 68).

In 1868, in the city of Nogaisk, Berdyansk district (modern Primorsk, Berdyansk region), the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was erected. Its construction was carried out at the expense of the money of the townspeople and the funds allocated by the Holy Synod. The building of the church was a brick building on a stone foundation with a bell tower surrounded by a stone fence with a wooden lattice. The church had a church library with 70 titles of books and 170 volumes (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6396: 2).

Similar sources of funding were also used in the construction of the Church of the Holy Trinity in the village of Petrovka, Berdyansk district (modern Novopetrovka, Berdyansk region). It was built in 1865 at the expense of parishioners and money from the treasury (500 rubles). Its clergy consisted of 2 people (a priest and a psalm reader), there was a library of 19 titles of books and 30 volumes, and since 1879, a zemstvo school was located here (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 23).

The placement of zemstvo schools at churches was not uncommon for that time. Similar examples, in particular, are mentioned for the village of Orlovka, Berdyansk district (the modern village of Orlovka, Berdyansk district), where since 1877 the local zemstvo school was located on the territory of the rural church of the Archangel Michael, built in 1869 (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 35).

A similar situation was observed in the village of Novoalekseevka, Berdyansk district (the modern village of Novoalekseevka, Berdyansk district), in the local church in the name of St. Alexei the Wonderworker, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia. It was built in 1845 at the expense of parishioners. A zemstvo school was also opened here, where, according to the data of 1910, 87 boys and 10 girls studied (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 41).

Among other similar cases, we can mention the village of Stepanovka, Berdyansk district (modern Stepanovka Pervaya, Melitopol district), where at the Church of the Intercession of the Holy Mother of God at the expense of parishioners in 1886 since 1876 a zemstvo school was also opened (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 97).

Some churches were built at the expense of private individuals. So, in the village of Obitochnoye, Berdyansk district, a stone church of the Holy Trinity was built by the local landowner Count Orlov-Denisov. According to the documents of that time, she had a church library with 170 titles of books and 205 volumes; as well as a church school, where 60 boys and 18 girls studied (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6450: 11–12).

A prominent place in this process was occupied by the Bulgarian colonists. Their first settlements appear on the territory of the Berdyansk district in the 1860s. So, in one of the documents of the mentioned fund, under the title “Clear statements for the Deanery of the 1st part of the Nogai district, Berdyansk district for 1895”, mentions the participation of Bulgarian colonists in the construction in the second half of the 19th century of churches in the villages of Annovka and Girsovka, Berdyansk district (modern villages Annovka and Girsovka, Melitopol district, Zaporizhzhya region). According to these data, in the village of Annovka in 1870, a stone church of St. Nicholas was built at the expense of local parishioners (consecrated on January 19, 1871). Somewhat

later, in 1889, the local church of St. Elijah was erected by the inhabitants of the village of Girsovka (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6450: 79, 81).

The same document also mentions one of the earliest Bulgarian villages in this region – Inzovka, which arose in 1861, on the right bank of the Lozovatka River, on the site of the Nogai settlement of Ormanchi (the modern village of Inzovka, Berdyansk district, Zaporizhzhya region). The village was named after General I.N. Inzov – chief trustee and chairman of the committee in the affairs of the Bulgarian colonists. According to these data, in 1892, at the expense of the local community, the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was erected in the village (consecrated on November 14, 1893). The building of the church and the bell tower were built of burnt bricks and had a wooden fence. The church had a church library with 21 titles of books and 77 volumes. Since 1877, the zemstvo school was also located here (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 29).

Among other Bulgarian villages, this document also contains the name of the modern village of Manuilovka, Berdyansk region. In 1871, the church of St. Nicholas of Myrmikiy was built by the local community in the village (consecrated on March 20, 1871). The building of the church was built of stone with a wooden top, a stone fence. The church library consisted of 25 book titles and 47 volumes. According to archival data of 1895, the church building housed a zemstvo school, where 53 boys and 17 girls studied (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 49).

Part of the information from this archival source concerns one of the largest centers of the Bulgarian diaspora in the Azov region – the village of Preslav (the modern village of Preslav, Berdyansk region). It was founded by Bulgarian settlers in 1860 at the mouth of the Obitochnaya River, 1.5 km from the Sea of Azov, on the site of the abandoned Nogai village of Shekla. The Azov colony immediately received a high nominal status – it was named Preslav in honor of the old capital of Bulgaria. In confirmation of this capital status, in 1870 Preslav became the center of administration of the Bulgarian colonial district. In 1869, the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built on the territory of the colony. Its official consecration took place on December 12, 1869.

According to archival documents, the church building and the church bell tower were built of stone. The church territory had a stone fence with gaps made of tiles. The composition of the clergy consisted of 3 people (priest, deacon, psalmist). The church had a church library, which consisted of 61 titles of books and 178 volumes. Since 1984, a parochial school has been opened with her. According to the data of 1895, 74 boys and 54 girls studied here (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 17).



In case No. 6396 “Vedomosti about churches and forms of ministers of the church of Berdyansk district for 1910” the participation of Bulgarian immigrants in the construction of the church named after St. Prince Alexander Nevsky in the modern village of Vyacheslavka, Berdyansk region is also mentioned. According to these data, since 1869 it became active (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 139).

The same source reports on the construction in 1870 by the Bulgarian colonists of the Church of the Holy Trinity in the modern village of Raynovka, Berdyansk region (consecrated in January 1871). The building of the church and the fence were wooden, the bell tower was located separately on 4 stone pillars. The document noted the general dilapidated condition of these buildings. As in other similar cases, the church had a church library of 46 book titles and 139 volumes. Since 1876, a zemstvo school has been located here, where, according to the data of 1895, 42 boys and 3 girls studied (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6210: 85).

Archival file No. 6399 entitled “Cler’s list 1 of the Berdyansk district for 1910” contains information about the participation of Bulgarian settlers, along with other ethnic groups of the local population, in the construction of rural churches in the modern villages of Gyunovka and Elizavetovka, Berdyansk region. In Gyunovka the local village

church of Alexander Nevsky was built in 1886. According to archival documents, the church building was built of stone and covered with iron. The Church of the Blessed Virgin in the village of Elizavetovka has been operating since 1899. It was built of brick with a separate bell tower on 4 wooden pillars (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6399: 42, 52).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Finally, file No. 6450 entitled “Vedomosti about churches and forms of church ministers in the Berdyansk district for 1911” contains a brief mention of the construction in 1903 by Bulgarian settlers of the Intercession Church in the village of Nelgovka, Berdyansk district (modern village of Nelgovka, Berdyansk district) (ДААРК, Ф. 118. Оп 1. Справа 6450: 84).

Concluding a general review of this issue, we can conclude that the local population and Bulgarian settlers played a rather active role in church construction in the settlements of the Azov region of the Taurida province in the post-reform period. This equally applied to both the Bulgarian proper and the neighboring villages of the North-Western Azov region. Such construction was carried out mainly at the expense of local communities, and local churches were not only religious centers, but often served as primary schools.

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