

Research on the history of Ukrainian scientific societies: Symon Naryzhny's *The Odesa Society of History and Antiquities*

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Abstract: Odesa, one of the most important cities in southern Ukraine, is historically a Ukrainian city. As such, it is crucial for both the population and the academic community of Ukraine to affirm that Odesa is indeed a Ukrainian city. Currently, significant efforts are underway in Odesa to reclaim the city from its imperial and Soviet legacy. This article aims to present a factual and unbiased history of the founding and activities of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities, an institution established by Ukrainian scholars. We turn to historical heritage, drawing from the work written in the mid-20th century by the renowned Ukrainian historian Symon Naryzhny. His work, dedicated to the activities of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities, was published in 1941 by the Ukrainian Historical and Philological Society in Prague. It serves to demonstrate that the scientific centers established in Odesa were Ukrainian. These centers reflect the affection and respect of the Ukrainian people, and the Ukrainian intellectual and academic elite, for their homeland and its past. The novelty of this article lies in the fact that, for the first time in modern Ukrainian historiography, special focus is placed on identifying the Ukrainian component in the society's activities.

Keywords: *Odesa Society of History and Antiquities, Symon Naryzhny*

The history of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities (OTIS) has long attracted the attention of researchers. The study of the Society's legacy can be divided into three periods:

1. *Late 19th to early 20th century.* This period includes works written during the Society's existence, including those by F. Brun (1870, pp. 8–9), A.K. Markov (1888), B.V. Varneke (Varneke, 1914), M.H. Popruzhenko (1914) and V. Yurkevich (1886; 1889).
2. *1920s to mid-1980s.* This period encompasses research carried out after the Society had ceased its activities. Only once during this period did the general history of the Society become the subject of a dedicated study. In Prague in 1941, through the efforts of the Ukrainian Historical and Philological Society, Symon Naryzhny's work was published, possibly as the author's attempt to commemorate the centenary of the Society's founding (Naryzhnyi, 1941). This period also includes the research of M.I. Marchenko (1959, pp. 177–179).
3. *Late 1980s to early 21st century.* This new stage in the study of the Society's history is marked by the works of T.F. Hryhoryeva (1991), S.I. Appatov, O.B. Demin and Z.V. Pershina (1995), V.V. Kravchenko (1996b, pp. 193–194), O.A. Saltzova (1993) and, notably, V.M. Khmarskyi (2002).

Many of these studies portray the Society as a Russian organization. Yet, Naryzhny was the first and, for a long time the only, researcher to emphasize and explore the Ukrainian component of the Society's activities.

At this point, it is necessary to pause and focus on the figure of Symon Naryzhny to recall who he was and to highlight his contribution to Ukrainian historical scholarship.

Symon Petrovych Naryzhny (January 30, 1898 – July 23, 1983) was a Ukrainian scholar, historian, bibliographer and researcher of Ukrainian emigration. Born in Sokilka, the Poltava region, into a Cossack family, he completed his secondary education in 1917 ('*Biohrafia Symona Narizhnoho...*', no date) and studied history and philology in Poltava from 1918 to 1921 (Mushynka, 2021).

During the occupation of the Ukrainian People's Republic by Russian Bolsheviks, Symon Naryzhny was forced to emigrate to Czechoslovakia. He enrolled in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Ukrainian Free University in Prague and upon graduation in 1927, received a Professor of Philosophy diploma (Shenderovskiy, 2009). After completing his studies, he became a lecturer on world history of the

Middle and Modern Ages at the Ukrainian Higher Pedagogical Institute named after M. Drahomanov in Prague, where he taught for four years (1928–1932). During his teaching career, he authored and published methodological materials for the courses he taught. From 1932 onward, he worked at the Department of Ukrainian and Eastern European History at the Ukrainian Free University in Prague—initially as an associate professor and later as a full professor. He lived and worked in Prague until the end of Second World War (Atamanenko, 2013). Between 1929 and 1944, he served as secretary of the Ukrainian Historical and Philological Society. From 1945 to 1948, he was the director of the Museum of Ukraine's Liberation Struggle (Mushynka, 1998).

A student of the prominent historian Dmytro Doroshenko, Naryzhny published several valuable studies on Cossack history between 1928 and 1942. He also researched scientific societies and organizations. His most notable work, the monumental book *Ukrainian emigration: cultural work of Ukrainian emigration, 1919–1939*, was published in 1999.

Since 1951, Symon Naryzhny lived in Australia. He passed away on July 23, 1983, and is buried in Sydney.

One of Symon Naryzhny's works *The Odesa Society of History and Antiquities*, dedicated to the study of Ukrainian scientific societies, was published in 1942 by the Ukrainian Historical and Philological Society in Prague. Naryzhny writes that “the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities may formally be considered Ukrainian because it was founded, developed and operated in Ukraine” (Naryzhnyi, 1941). He further emphasizes that the Society's membership and founders included a significant number of Ukrainians. “There were a considerable number of Ukrainians, and they carried out very important scholarly work within the Society” (Naryzhnyi, 1941). Naryzhny notes that despite the clearly Ukrainian elements in the character of the Society, Ukrainian literature had, for a long time, failed to give due attention to this important historical-archaeological organization. Therefore, he defines the purpose of his work as follows: “To examine the founding and activities of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities” (Naryzhnyi, 1941).

In his work, Naryzhny explores the following topics:

- The Odesa Society of History and Antiquities as the oldest historical-archaeological society in Ukraine;
- Its contributions to the Ukrainian nation;

- Literature about the Society;
- The beginnings of historical and archaeological research in southern Ukraine;
- Its early pioneers, such as P. Dubrux, J. Blaremborg, I. Stempkovsky and others;
- M. Kiryakov and the founding of OTIS;
- The Society's objectives, membership and activities;
- Archaeological excavations;
- Support for individual researchers and private collectors;
- Meetings and academic presentations;
- Publishing activities, including the *Notes* and other publications of OTIS;
- The Society's contributions to museology and the preservation of historical monuments in the Steppe region of Ukraine;
- The OTIS museum and its collections;
- The library;
- The initiative to establish a historical archive in Odesa;
- The scholarly significance of OTIS. (Naryzhnyi, 1941)

Naryzhny notes that after the death of the pioneers of South Ukrainian archaeology, their like-minded colleagues from the circle of Mykhailo Mykhailovych Kiryakov continued the scientific research and preservation of antiquities (Murzakevych, 1844). The idea of founding an academic society dedicated to local history and the protection of antiquities in southern Ukraine is attributed to Kiryakov. Unfortunately, Naryzhny lacked broad access to various sources and mistakenly identified Kiryakov as a native of Odesa. This is incorrect. We aim to provide a more accurate account of Mykhailo Mykhailovych Kiryakov, a key figure in the founding of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities.

Mykhailo Mykhailovych Kiryakov (May 23, 1810 – March 26, 1839) was a historian and one of the founders of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities (Kiryakov, 1895). He was born in the village of Kovalivka in Kherson Province (now Mykolaiv Province, Mykolaiv region) (Averchenko, 2014) into an old Ukrainian Cossack family. His father became wealthy through trade in colonial goods and owned large estates in the Kherson Province. Kiryakov was considered a prominent agronomist. After graduating from Moscow University, he engaged in agriculture on his inherited estate in Kherson from 1833. Many of his works were devoted to agricultural issues. In his final years, he worked on the Statistical Description of the Kherson Province and an agricultural calendar

for the Novorossiya region. His work *Historical Overview of Kherson Province* was published posthumously in 1839 (Kiryakov, 1895, p. 150).

Kiryakov considered it a matter of honor to contribute to the economic development of Odesa and the Black Sea region. After graduating from Moscow University in 1828, he worked at the office of the Novorossiya and Bessarabia Governor-General (Kiryakov, 1999). He travelled extensively abroad, visiting Moravia, Bohemia, Silesia, Holland, Austria, Hungary and France. His travels in Normandy, rich in medieval monuments, deepened his interest in history. His academic interests included statistics, geography and regional history (Chyckalyuk, 2016).

In conversations with his peers, Mykhailo Mykhailovych came up with the idea of founding the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities. His like-minded companions included his friends Mykola Murzakevych and Apollon Skalkovsky (Averchenko, 2014). Kiryakov drafted the Society's Charter, while Murzakevych created the Society's program and took on all responsibilities related to its establishment. On April 5, 1839, the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities (DAOOU) was officially founded. Mykhailo Mykhailovych Kyriakov passed away in 1839 at the age of 29 after a prolonged illness and was posthumously named the Society's honorary founding member.

Another founder of the Society was Apollon Skalkovsky, a Ukrainian by origin. Apollon Oleksandrovykh Skalkovsky (January 13, 1808, Zhytomyr, Volyn Province – December 28, 1898 [January 9, 1899], Odesa, Kherson Province) was a Ukrainian historian, archivist, statistician, economist and public figure (Khmarskyi, 1998). In 1827, he graduated from the Department of Ethics and Politics of Moscow University. Since 1828, he worked as an official in the Office of the Novorossiya and Bessarabia Governor-General in Odesa. In 1830, he began conducting regional studies. In 1845, he became head of the Main Statistics Office of the Novorossiya region. Nearly all of Skalkovsky's approximately 300 works were dedicated to the history and statistics of Southern Ukraine. (Kravchenko, 1996a, pp. 260–287; Novikova, 2003)

The State Archive of the Odesa Region preserves the minutes of the Society's meeting from October 24, 1839, titled 'On the opening of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities' and the election of Apollon Skalkovsky as a full member.

In June 1898, the city of Odesa celebrated Skalkovsky's 90th birthday and the 60th anniversary of his public service. The Odesa Society of History and

Antiquities marked the occasion by awarding Skalkovsky the title of honorary member of the Society.

Skalkovsky was a highly versatile scholar, with a broad range of academic interests. Researchers of Skalkovsky's legacy highlight his significant contributions to various fields of historical science:

- The history of Ukraine (Kravchenko, 1996b, pp. 193–194);
- The history of the Haydamak uprisings (Kravchenko, 1992);
- The folklore of Ukraine's Steppe region (Ivannikova, 2016);
- The scientific study of the history of the Zaporizhian Sich (Shvydko, 2007);
- The development of archival studies in Southern Ukraine (Khmarskyi, 1998);
- The ethnographic processes in Bessarabia (Stepanov and Romanova, 1995);
- The history of Southern Ukraine (Borovoy, 1960) among others.

Naryzhny, among the members of the Society, highlights notable Ukrainian professors such as M.O. Maksymovych, A.S. Petrushevych, V.B. Antonovych and F.I. Leontovych.

Mykhailo Oleksandrovych Maksymovych (September 3, 1804 – November 10 [22], 1873) was born in the hamlet of Tymkivshchyna, present-day Bohuslavets in the Poltava Governorate, currently part of the Cherkasy Oblast. He was a prominent Ukrainian scholar, natural philosopher, historian, ethnographer and writer. He was born into a noble family descended from the middle and lower ranks of the Cossack Hetmanate elite (Bohatchuk, 2021). He became a member of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities in 1839.

Maksymovych was one of the earliest researchers of Ukrainian history. He made significant contributions to the study of natural sciences, Ukrainian folklore, literary studies and linguistics (Korpaniuk, 2003). Maksymovych consistently collected materials related to the history of the Ukrainian people (Markov, 1973). He studied songs, epic poems (*dumy*), legends and archival documents and was among the first historians of Ukraine and a founder of ethnography and folklore studies (Bohatchuk, 2021).

One of the key issues he researched was the history of the Old Rus' state. By studying chronicles, Maksymovych argued for the Slavic origin of ancient Rus' (Boyko, 2001). He paid special attention to the themes of the Cossacks and the liberation struggle. Maksymovych was also the first Ukrainian historian to

recognize Bohdan Khmelnytsky as an outstanding Ukrainian figure. He studied Khmelnytsky's activities not only as a military leader but also as the founder of Ukrainian statehood (Boyko, 2005). In describing the Cossacks, he provided detailed accounts of their daily life, customs and traditions. He viewed the Zaporizhian Sich as the embryo of Ukrainian statehood. The scholar thoroughly studied popular movements in Right-bank Ukraine, including the Koliivshchyna uprising. Through archaeological and archival research, Maksymovych gathered vast information on the history of Ukraine.

Volodymyr Bonifatiyovych Antonovych (January 6 [18], 1834, Makhnivka, Makhnivka County, Kyiv Governorate – March 8 [21], 1908, Kyiv) was a Ukrainian historian, archaeologist, ethnographer and archivist, Doctor of Science, professor at Kyiv University (since 1878) and a member of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities (Korotkyi and Ulianovskyi, 1997).

Antonovych studied at the Richelieu Lyceum and the 2nd Lyceum in Odesa (1845–1850). He graduated from the medical faculty (1855), which he entered at his mother's insistence, and from the historical-philological faculty (1860) of Kyiv University, earning a candidate degree in history and philology. During his university years, his worldview as a historian was shaped, particularly under the influence of the works of Taras Shevchenko and Panteleimon Kulish.

His first scholarly work, *On the origin of the Cossacks*, was published in 1863 (Antonovych, 1991).

In the 1860s, he led the Khlopomanstvo circle whose members advocated for Ukrainians' right to national revival and self-identification. In 1870, Antonovych defended his dissertation and received a master's degree, marking the beginning of his teaching career. He later defended another dissertation titled *Essays on the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania until the death of Grand Duke Olgerd* (Antonovych, 1885).

From 1880, Antonovych served as the dean of the historical-philological faculty. He was a distinguished educator, dedicating over 30 years to teaching. Among his students were Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Dmytro Bahaliy, Mitrofan Dovnar-Zapolsky and Petro Holubovsky. He combined teaching with scholarly work. Between 1860 and 1890, he published numerous monographs, articles and books on the history of Right-Bank Ukraine from the ancient times to the 19th century. These works laid the foundation for the development of historical regional studies.

Antonovych's *Essay on the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania* (1878) is still highly valued by researchers. In the work, Antonovych thoroughly examines the incorporation of Ukrainian lands into the Lithuanian-Ruthenian state in the 14th century.

He also studied Neolithic monuments and pioneered in the archaeological research of discovered artifacts. He authored works such as 'Archaeological finds of 1879', 'Excavations in the lands of the Drevlians', 'Archaeological map of the Kyiv Governorate' (1895) and 'Archaeological Map of the Volyn Governorate' (1901). Antonovych also made a significant contribution to the study of the history of Right-Bank Ukraine and conducted anthropological research. He compiled, edited and published nine volumes of the Archive of Southwestern Russia, covering the history of Right-Bank Ukraine from the 16th to the 18th centuries. In 1882, he co-founded the journal *Kyivska Starina* (Kyiv Antiquity).

Volodymyr Antonovych left behind a vast scholarly legacy—over 300 works on the history, archaeology and ethnography of Ukraine. Historian M. Braichevsky aptly characterized Antonovych's place in Ukrainian historical science:

His orientation toward European culture, particularly historiography, distinguished Volodymyr Antonovych from the majority of his predecessors and contemporaries, who tended to rely on Russian and Polish literature. He was the first truly European scholar in Ukrainian historiography, elevating it above the provincialism in which it still remains.

Antin Stepanovych Petrushevych (January 18, 1821 – September 23, 1913) was a historian, archivist, archaeologist, linguist and public figure. Born in the village of Dobryany near Stryi, he studied at the Dominican Fathers' Gymnasium in Lviv and later at the Faculty of Philosophy and Theology at Lviv University.

While attending the Lviv Theological Seminary, he met D. Zubrytsky, the "father" of Galician history. In 1847, he was ordained as a priest by H. Yakymovych. In August 1847, Metropolitan M. Levytsky invited Petrushevych to the Univ Basilian Monastery and appointed him as his chaplain and notary of the metropolitan office. In 1856, he received his own parish in the village of Novytsia (now in Kalush District, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast), where he moved in 1858 after the Metropolitan's death.

In 1888, he was awarded the diploma of full member of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities, and in 1901 became an honorary member.

Petrushevych's scholarly legacy was diverse. His body of work includes over 200 publications drawing from a rich source base. His interests were remarkably broad. He was particularly fascinated by the origins of the Slavs, the creation of their writing systems and alphabets—both Cyrillic and Glagolitic—and studied the work of Slavic enlighteners Cyril and Methodius. A major focus of his research was ancient manuscripts, and he studied *The tale of Igor's campaign* in depth. Petrushevych made great efforts to collect documents from the time of the Slavic revival. His interests included the history of the Slavic world, philology, archaeology and bibliography.

He also focused on medieval history and the ecclesiastical life of Galicia, Volhynia and Bukovina. He conducted archaeological research, co-organized archaeological exhibitions in Lviv, Kolomyia and Ternopil, and founded a library and museum at the Narodny Dim (People's House) Society in Lviv.

Fedir Ivanovych Leontovych (January 3 [15], 1833, Popivka village, Konotop County, Chernihiv Governorate – December 21, 1910 [January 3, 1911], Kislovodsk) was a legal historian, professor of legal history at the Imperial Novorossiysk University, and rector of the same university (now Odesa National University named after I.I. Mechnikov) from 1869 to 1877 (Muzychko, 2005a; 2005b). He also served as a professor of history at the University of Warsaw from 1892 to 1902. In 1864, he defended a master's degree in public law, and in 1868, a doctorate in public law. He was a full member of the Odesa Society of History and Antiquities.

Professor Leontovych was a recognized expert in the history of state institutions and the law of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Zaruba, 2010). Together with Professor Mykhailo Vladimirskiy-Budanov, he founded the influential Kyiv historical-legal school (school of historians of Western Rus' law) (Oleynyk, no date). Leontovych is known for his foundational research on Lithuanian-Ruthenian law (Bondarchuk, 2009). His scholarly output includes around 80 bibliographic entries.

By examining the personal composition of the Society's founders and members, it can be confidently stated that the Society of History and Antiquities was a scholarly institution with a Ukrainian orientation in its activities. It was the first in Southern Ukraine to study history and preserve monuments across nearly the entire European South of the Russian Empire. (Mykhailiuk, 2016)

The Society was initiated by Ukrainians—history and statistics enthusiasts Mykhailo Kyryakov and the prominent historian Apollon Skalkovsky. A key figure

in the Society's activities was the renowned Ukrainian historian Leontovych, who served as the Society's secretary from 1883 to 1884. Prominent Ukrainian scholars such as Antonovych, Maksymovych, Petrushevych, and many others collaborated with the Society. The Odesa Society of History and Antiquities had a significant influence on the formation of the modern Ukrainian nation. The Society operated a library and a museum, and had its own printed publication.

Symon Naryzhny emphasized in his work:

The Society expanded knowledge about Southern Ukraine, sparked interest in historical and archaeological research in the region, outlined scholarly questions and resolved many of them, and most importantly—collected a substantial body of literary and material resources for future researchers (Naryzhnyi, 1941).

It is particularly notable that Naryzhny, as a Ukrainian historian, highlighted the Ukrainian component in the Society's activities and, thus, he was the first domestic researcher to focus on the Ukrainian orientation of the Society's work. His research remains especially relevant and significant today.

The Society's publications, especially its *Notes*, along with its collections of antiquities (coins, medals, maps, plans, drawings and various publications), continue to serve as valuable resources for Ukrainian historians and archaeologists.

The Odesa Society of History and Antiquities played a prominent role in the development of historical science in Southern Ukraine from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. Researchers note that one of the Society's key activities from its founding in 1839 was archival and documentary work.

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