

VOLODYMYR SPIVAK

CULTUROLOGICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING PHILOSOPHICAL  
COMPONENT OF UKRAINIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS  
OF THE BAROQUE ERA

## TARGET SETTING

Various aspects of the Ukrainian spiritual culture of the Baroque period have long been the subject of researchers' attention and remain relevant to this day. In particular, various aspects of Ukrainian Baroque culture continue to attract the attention of researchers, including Ryszard Łużny,<sup>1</sup> Maria Grazia Bartolini,<sup>2</sup> Iryna Bondarevska,<sup>3</sup> Larysa Dovha,<sup>4</sup> Volodymyr Spivak,<sup>5</sup> and others. However, this style still poses to scholars a number of complex methodological problems related to the peculiarities of the culture of that period, which includes, in particular, the close connection of philosophical understanding of life with theology, para-liturgical practices, artistic culture and so on.

The choice of academic approaches to studying the Ukrainian philosophical space of the seventeenth century is complicated by the specifics of the source

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<sup>1</sup> Ryszard Łużny, "Dawne piśmennictwo ukraińskie a polskie tradycje literackie," *Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji PAN. Oddział w Krakowie*, no. 1 (1971): 24-26.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Grazia Bartolini, "The Discourse of Martyrdom in Late 17th-century Ukraine. The 'Passion Sufferers' Boris and Gleb in the Homilies of Antonii Radyvylovs'kyi and Lazar Baranovych," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 61, no. 3 (2016): 499-527.

<sup>3</sup> Iryna Bondarevska, *Paradoksalnist estetychnoho v ukrainskii kulturi XVII-XVIII st.* (Kyiv: PARAPLAN, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Larysa Dovha, *Systema tsinnostei v ukrainskii kulturi XVII stolittia* (Kyiv–Lviv: Svichado, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Volodymyr Spivak, "Filosofskyi aspekt leksemy 'fortuna' v tekstakh Antonii Radyvylovskoho," *Sententiae* 37, no. 1 (2018): 30-46, <https://doi.org/10.22240/sent37.01.030>.

base, which is mostly religious in its nature (sermons, treatises for confessors, polemical compositions, etc.). Such non-specific philosophical sources give rise to a number of methodological and conceptual difficulties.

For example, this factor requires the researcher to be aware of not only philosophy but of theological problems as well. It is also necessary to take into account the broad context of these sources creating, which are mostly compulsory in their nature.

This circumstance has led to certain stereotypes about the interpretation and approach to studying philosophy of this era. Such patterns include, first of all, the idea of the “immaturity” of Ukrainian philosophy (especially in the pre-modern period). This interpretation is firmly entrenched in historical and philosophical science and still remains the conceptual basis of many researches. However, some scholars (Vilen Horskyi, Serhii Krymskyi, etc.) tried to present this fact as a very original feature of the culture: the development of philosophy in the form of “wisdom”.

Another approach is to doubt the existence of the Ukrainian national philosophy as such or philosophy in its “pure” form, at least until the time of academic philosophy of the XIX century. Regarding the Ukrainian tradition, an example of such a vision of the history of philosophy is the concept of Dmytro Chyzhevskyi.<sup>6</sup> The presence of these problems and attempts to solve them gave rise to a variety of methodological approaches according to which Ukrainian religious and philosophical thought of the XVII century can be studied.

#### THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this research is to systematize the main approaches to studying Ukrainian philosophical tradition and identify the most productive methodological foundations for studying early modern philosophical culture, in particular the philosophical component of religious texts.

Recently, several attempts have been made in order to classify the main approaches to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy. For example, Serhii Rudenko believes that modern approaches to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy can be divided into five main areas:

- symbolic-form (descriptive) model,
- “historiography of the history of philosophy”,
- thematic and personal concept of the history of philosophy of Ukraine,

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<sup>6</sup> Dmytro Chyzhevskyi, *Narysy z istorii filosofii na Ukraini* (Kyiv: Orii, 1992).

- historical and philosophical Ukrainian studies,
- “philosophy of the history of Ukrainian philosophy”.<sup>7</sup>

Serhii Rudenko himself proposes the method of rational reconstruction (to which all the non-descriptive directions outlined above tend) as the main approach to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy, supplemented by the method of reconstructive reflection.<sup>8</sup>

Descriptive approach is one of the most common ways to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy. Its representatives are a wide range of researchers of the – nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who were engaged in finding and primary analysis of the sources on the history of Ukrainian philosophy. For example: Dmytro Bahalii, Fedir Zelenohorskyi and Fedot Kudrynskyi, who thoroughly studied Hryhorii Skovoroda’s heritage. In spite of the fact that this trend emerged in the last century, it still remains relevant. After all, a significant part of texts, mostly of a religious nature, which are potential sources on the history of Ukrainian philosophical thought of the Baroque era, remains out of scientific circulation.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the descriptive method as an auxiliary one is inherently presented in any research.<sup>10</sup>

The drive of “Historiography of the history of philosophy” (Yuryy Kushakov, Vitaliy Tabachkovskyi, I. Fytsyk, and others) focuses on maintaining “critical analysis of worldviews and methodological foundations of historical and philosophical concepts of various philosophers of the past, aimed at working-out and developing the theory of history of philosophy”.<sup>11</sup> This drive rejects Hegel’s concept of the history of philosophy *per se* that does not correspond to Ukrainian specificity. Instead, a view of the Ukrainian history of philosophy from the standpoint of “dialogue of epochs” is offered. This process can take place not only in a diachronic but in a synchronous dimension as well. This view involves introducing the principle of “partial removal”, which states not complete but partial absorbing the previous stage in the history of philosophy with the next one: “philosophical ideas, teachings, systems, eras in the process of removal the next stage of development, but also coexist with it”.<sup>12</sup> This direction takes into

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<sup>7</sup> Serhii Rudenko, *Suchasni metodolohichni kontseptsii doslidzhennia istorii ukrainskoi filosofii* (Kyiv: VPTs “Kyivskiy universytet”, 2012), 53.

<sup>8</sup> Serhii Rudenko, “Istoriia ukrainskoi filosofii: metodolohichni stratehii doslidzhennia,” *Visnyk Kyivskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni Tarasa Shevchenka*, serii: *Filosofia, Politolohiia*, no. 1 (2013): 27.

<sup>9</sup> Larysa Dovha, *Systema tsinnostei v ukrainskii kulturi XVII stolittia* (Kyiv-Lviv: Svichado, 2012), 37.

<sup>10</sup> Rudenko, *Suchasni metodolohichni kontseptsii*, 74.

<sup>11</sup> Rudenko, 30.

<sup>12</sup> Rudenko, 32.

account another important aspect of the development of Ukrainian philosophical thought, “which, while maintaining a direct connection with non-philosophical spheres of culture, had a low degree of independence from them compared to the Western European tradition.”<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, a significant part of Ukrainian thinkers’ philosophical ideas is available in an implicit form. Therefore, their detection requires using the method of active interpretation of sources.<sup>14</sup>

The next methodological approach to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy is thematic-personalistic or comparative one (V. Lisovyi, N. Mozhova, V. Nichyk, I. Ohorodnyk, M. Rusyn, and others). The main method of this drive is historical-comparative analysis (comparative philosophy). Its application “is aimed primarily at studying of a particular philosophical tradition, identifying the semantic field in which various philosophical teachings are combined.”<sup>15</sup> This approach allows us to identify the peculiarities of different thinkers’ communication within a single tradition.<sup>16</sup>

Among the representatives of this drive, Valeriia Nichyk paid the greatest attention to studying philosophical thought of the Baroque era. Like the vast majority of the researchers, Nichyk abandoned the methodological principle of “linear progress in world history, including in the history of the spiritual life of society”.<sup>17</sup> According to the researcher, this approach allows us to study long-term phenomena of spiritual culture (such as a religious worldview) and to treat the Ukrainian Baroque as a “valuable” cultural phenomenon. The latter involves overcoming negative assessments of Baroque thinkers’ contribution, inherent in a number of researchers of the 19th-early 20th centuries,<sup>18</sup> Nichyk proposes to put the figure of a thinker with his religious and philosophical ideas, as well as with “not always rationally meaningful feelings, thoughts and superstitions” in the center of research attention.<sup>19</sup> The texts of a thinker should be studied in the broad context of the historical epoch, which should take into account all the variety of material and spiritual influences.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Rudenko, 34.

<sup>14</sup> Rudenko, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Rudenko, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Rudenko, 25.

<sup>17</sup> Valeriia Nichyk, *Petro Mohyla v dukhovnii istorii Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Ukrainyskyi tsentr dukhovnoi kultury, 1997), 7.

<sup>18</sup> Mykhayl Markovskiy, *Antonyi Radyvyllovskiy, yuzhnorusskyy propovednyk XVII veka* (Kyiv, 1894); Nykolai Sumtsov, *Yoanykyi Haliatovskiy. K ystoryy yuzhnorusskoi lyteratury XVII veka* (Kyiv, 1884); Ivan Franko, *Narys istorii ukrainsko-ruskoj literatury do 1890 r.* (Lviv: Nakladom Ukr.-rus. vyd. Spilky, 1910).

<sup>19</sup> Nichyk, *Petro Mohyla*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Nichyk, 6-7.

Another methodological approach to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy is the “philosophical history of ideas” proposed by Serhii Yosypenko. This approach, according to the researcher, is “a historical and philosophical research of Ukrainian spiritual culture in general, where the part that can be retrospectively called philosophical thought, functions as an element that connects and determines thought and experience, past and future”.<sup>21</sup> Historical and philosophical research should be based on the ideas expressed and understood by specific figures in the relevant social and cultural context.<sup>22</sup>

The application of such an approach makes it possible to use non-specific philosophical texts (in particular, of a religious nature) and ideas that lie outside modern notions about the subject of philosophy. This, according to the researcher, eliminates the need to look for “in religion or mythology superior philosophical thinking, they will be the subject of historical and philosophical research *per se*.”<sup>23</sup>

As it seems the approaches outlined above do not contradict the view of the phenomenon of Ukrainian philosophy of the Baroque era as a part of spiritual culture. It allows us to speak not only about philosophy or philosophical thought, but also about philosophical culture. This view is inherent in the drive of historical and philosophical Ukrainian studies, which actively operates on this concept.

An approach to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy through the prism of the concept of philosophical culture can help to take into account all the dynamics of philosophy and its various manifestations, even those that do not quite correspond to modern academic ideas about philosophizing. In Ukrainian science, a significant contribution to the development of a culturological approach to studying the history of philosophical thought was made by Vilen Horskyi,<sup>24</sup> Serhii Krymskyi,<sup>25</sup> Maryna Tkachuk<sup>26</sup> and others.

This approach is most clearly developed in Horskyi’s methodological studies. The researcher substantiated the culturological approach to historical and philosophical research, which “involves understanding the phenomena of philosophy of

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<sup>21</sup> Serhii Yosypenko, *Do vytokiv ukrainskoi modernosti: Ukrainska rannomoderna dukhovna kultura v yevropeiskomu konteksti* (Kyiv: Ukrainskyi Tsentru dukhovnoi kultury, 2008), 6.

<sup>22</sup> Yosypenko, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Yosypenko, 71.

<sup>24</sup> Vilen Horskyi, “XVII stolittia v istorii ukrainskoi filosofii,” in *Ukraina XVII stolittia: suspilstvo, filosofii, kultura* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2005), 55-67.

<sup>25</sup> Serhii Krymskyi, “Filosofii – avantiura dukhu chy liturhii smyslu?” in *Filosofii: khrestomatiia (vid vytokiv do sohodennia)*, ed. Leonid Hubersky (Kyiv: Znannia, 2009); Serhii Krymskyi, “Kulturna universalnist ukrainskoho baroko,” *Visnyk Natsionalnoi akademii nauk Ukrainy* 10 (2000): 47-56.

<sup>26</sup> Maryna Tkachuk, “Istoriia filosofii v kulturolohichnomu vymiri (z dosvidu kyivskykh istorykiv filosofii XIX – pochatku XX st.),” *Naukovi zapysky NaUKMA. Filosofii ta relihiieznavstvo*, no. 20 (2002): 19-29.

the past in the dimension and in the context of culture”.<sup>27</sup> This approach also significantly expands the source base of Ukrainian philosophizing researching, since, according to Horskyi, “the results of functioning philosophical ideas in culture are reflected not only in philosophical treatises, but also in various products of non-philosophical creative activity.”<sup>28</sup>

Special attention should be paid to the value-based approach to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophy of the Baroque era,<sup>29</sup> as well as the closely related the history of philosophical concepts. It was developed as a genre in the West by Georg Gadamer,<sup>30</sup> and is recently being tested in the field of research of the history of Ukrainian philosophy.<sup>31</sup>

The value-based approach is represented mainly by the works of Larysa Dovha while speaking about Ukrainian Baroque. It is aimed at studying the system of values “inherent in the bearers of the culture of early modern Ukraine”. The researcher believes that such an analysis “allows us to reduce to a common denominator the multidirectional search of religious and secular thinkers.”<sup>32</sup> Such fixation of the system of values is an important element of the description of culture, which “is needed to reconstruct the ideas of its bearers about everyday landmarks in objective or social reality, attitudes to current events and phenomena, normative or deviant behavior, etc.”<sup>33</sup>

The researcher offers as a methodological approach to theological sources their culturological analysis, which takes into account the context of their existence within a particular culture.

The peculiarity of theological sources is their universal nature, which is due to the focus on timeless and supra-ethnic ideals or man’s relationship with God. These texts, along with the universal aspects, reflect the specifics of moral and ethical, anthropological and other ideas relevant to the culture in which they existed. Thus, on their basis it is possible to study the ideas of Ukrainian church thinkers about man and their moral life.

On the basis of these texts it is possible to reconstruct the features of Ukrainian culture, which differs in the variety of interacting factors. The researcher explains

<sup>27</sup> Vilen Horskyi, *Bilia dzherel: Narysy z istorii filosofskoi kultury Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Vydavnychiy dim “Kyievo-Mohylianska akademiia”, 2006), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Horskyi, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Dovha, *Systema tsinnostei*.

<sup>30</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Aktualnost prekrasnoho*, trans. Volodymyr Bibihov (Moskva: Yskusstvo, 1991), 26-43.

<sup>31</sup> Larysa Dovha, “Poniattievyyi aparat u dyskursi ukrainskykh tserkovnykh intelektualiv XVII st.: do postanovky problemy,” *Sententiae* 34, no. 1 (2016): 132-43, <https://doi.org/10.22240/sent34.01.132>.

<sup>32</sup> Dovha, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Dovha, 8.

such a variety of influences through the concept of polymorphism of Ukrainian Baroque culture, which was proposed by Giovanna Brogi Berkoff<sup>34</sup> and developed by Nataliia Yakovenko.<sup>35</sup> According to this concept “the ability of the Ukrainian Baroque to assimilate and adapt foreign elements, to include them in their own semantic field is its essential characteristics.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, it is not an issue of “mechanical copying” of other people’s samples and ideas, but of the ability of a culture to “critically evaluate the achievements of another and select from them only what is already immanent in the depths of the affected culture”,<sup>37</sup> that is what meets its needs and “fits the spirit” (in the case of the Mohyla tradition does not come into sharp conflict with the Orthodox canons).

#### CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the review of the main approaches to studying and interpreting the peculiarities of philosophical thought in Ukrainian spiritual culture, it is necessary to emphasize those principles and methods that seemed to be the most productive in the study of the philosophical component in texts of the Baroque era.

The culturological approach, developed in the papers of Vilen Horskyi, Larysa Dovha and Serhii Yosypenko, can be considered effective. A key field for studying the heritage of church thinkers is the philosophical culture of the era. This concept is broad enough to include the whole variety of forms and functioning of philosophical thought, including the existence of philosophy on the frontier and in connection with religion or art. However, this concept allows us to stay within the field of philosophical issues, because it distances the “philosophical” from other forms of understanding the world. The culturological approach lets us consider the religious texts as a source that reflects the features of philosophical culture and moral-ethical thought of Eastern European Baroque. At the same time, the theological character of the source is taken into account, which makes it possible

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<sup>34</sup> Giovanna Brogi Berkoff, “Ruś, Ukraina, Ruthenia, Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie, Rzeczpospolita, Moskwa, Rosja, Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia: o wielowarstwowości i polifunkcjonalizmie kulturowym,” in *Contributi italiani al XIII congresso internazionale degli slavisti*, ed. Alberto Albertietal (Pisa: University Press, 2003), 325-87.

<sup>35</sup> Nataliia Yakovenko, “Vybir imeni versus vybir shliakhu (nazvy ukrainskoi terytorii mizh kintsem XVI – kintsem XVII st.),” in *Mizhkulturnyi dialog*, part 1, *Identychnist* (Kyiv: Dukh i litera, 2009), 57-95.

<sup>36</sup> Larysa Dovha, *Systema tsinnostei v ukrainskii kulturi druhoi polovyny XVII stolittia (na materialakh teoretychnoi spadshchyny Inokentiiia Gizelia)*, PhD diss., abstract (Kyiv: Taras Shevchenko National University, 2013), 12.

<sup>37</sup> Dovha, 292.

to interpret it adequately, distinguishing the general confessional view and the specific point of view of one or another author on various issues.

While studying anthropological and moral-ethical issues in religious texts, the value-based approach is productive. It enables identification of the place of these ideas in the hierarchy of values inherent in the culture of the Ukrainian Baroque, as well as possible meanings invested in this concept by the authors.

The principles outlined above can be quite useful in the process of studying the heritage of intellectuals whose status as philosophers is uncertain, but whose texts have a powerful philosophical component that needs to be studied.

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CULTUROLOGICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING THE PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT  
OF UKRAINIAN RELIGIOUS TEXTS OF THE BAROQUE ERA

Summary

The main methodological approaches to studying the history of Ukrainian philosophical thought were systematized in the article. Among all the available methodological postulates and techniques, were chosen those most effective for studying philosophical component of Ukrainian early modern religious texts, for example, an approach that analyzes these texts through in light of philosophical culture. This methodological approach makes it possible to separate philosophical component from non-philosophical sources, such as sermons and theological treatises. In this case, the authors of religious compositions, subject to a number of criteria, are understood as bearers of philosophical culture. The philosophical component of their texts shows that philosophical knowledge, vocabulary and ideas are also reflected on at the non-academic level.

**Keywords:** history of culture; history of philosophy; culturological approach; Baroque; Ukrainian philosophy

KULTUROLOGICZNE PODEJŚCIE DO BADANIA FILOZOFICZNEGO KOMPONENTU  
UKRAIŃSKICH TEKSTÓW RELIGIJNYCH EPOKI BAROKU

Streszczenie

Artykuł systematyzuje główne podejścia metodologiczne do badania historii ukraińskiej myśli filozoficznej. Spośród wszystkich dostępnych postulatów i technik metodologicznych wybrano te, które są najskuteczniejsze w badaniu filozoficznego komponentu ukraińskich wczesnonowożytnych tekstów religijnych, np. analiza tych tekstów przez pryzmat pojęcia kultury filozoficznej. Takie podejście metodologiczne umożliwia oddzielenie komponentu filozoficznego od źródeł niefilozoficznych, takich jak kazania i traktaty teologiczne. Jednocześnie autorzy dzieł religijnych, według wielu kryteriów, są rozumiani jako propagatorzy kultury filozoficznej. Filozoficzny komponent ich tekstów pokazuje, że wiedza, słownictwo i idee filozoficzne stosowane są również na poziomie pozaakademickim.

**Słowa kluczowe:** historia kultury; historia filozofii; podejście kulturowe; barok; filozofia ukraińska