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## Apocalyptic Motifs on Century-Old Ukrainian *Rushnyks* Through Today's Digital Folklore Communication

### Abstract

Thoughts about the end of life and subsequent rebirth are among the most popular motifs in Ukrainian epigraphic embroidery. Embroidered towels (*rushnyks*) with inscriptions (folk texts) were a mass phenomenon from the end of the 19th till the first half of the 20th century. For instance, there were numerous variants of embroidered inscriptions (folklore formulas) such as “*Don't mourn for Me, Mother*”, “*My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross*”, “*Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!*” and so on. The author analyzes some of these folklore formulas connected with apocalyptic motif in Ukrainian epigraphic embroidery. Nowadays, many of them are re-actualized via the Internet. It is worth noting that during modern folklorization of ancient *rushnyks*, their meaning may be significantly transformed.

**Keywords:** *rushnyks* (towels) with inscriptions, Paschal greeting, *Holodomor*, folklorization, re-actualization.

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It is important to be aware that nowadays, embroidered folklore may be actualized not only by embroideries modeled on older patterns and even not only by exhibitions of ancient textiles. In our digital era, the re-actualization of embroidered verbal and visual texts often happens on the Internet, mainly on social networks. Therefore, we have to record such cases as well for further investigation. It is worth noting that Internet re-actualization of so-called written (or fixed) folklore has its specifics that we also have to take into consideration.

The examples described below are of particular interest. All of them show that in the modern era some embroidered motifs (that in general could function as apocalyptic ones) may be perceived and interpreted in completely different ways. Let me demonstrate concrete Internet posts with photos of ancient epigraphic *rushnyks* and the comments related to them as a re-actualization of their meanings.

### “Don’t Mourn for Me, Mother! Christ Is Risen!”: Using Photos of Ancient *Rushnyks* as Easter Greetings

On Thursday, April 29, 2021, three days before Orthodox Easter, Ukrainian collector of antique objects Yurii Dakhno (2021b) posted an epigraphic *rushnyk*’s photo on his personal Facebook page. This embroidery was from his private collection. Although there was no technical problem for him to show the whole item, he demonstrated only one end of this towel. Under the embroidered image of the Crucifixion, it contained the embroidered lines: “*Ne rydai Mene, Maty*” [“*Don’t mourn for Me, Mother*”] (see Fig. 2).

Dakhno as the owner of this object added a very laconic description to the photo. Citing the embroidered words, he indicated when and where this product was handcrafted: “*Don’t mourn for Me, Mother...? Rushnyk from the 1910s. Chernihiv region, Bakhmach district*”. There were no other explanations in his post. As a result, several Facebook users asked about the meaning of the embroidered inscription. In his comments, Dakhno briefly answered that it was from the *Irmos* (Ode) of the canon to the Passion of Christ.

Actually, this text is of great importance in the Orthodox tradition (Sadovnikova, 2019, pp. 26–51). The formula “*Don’t mourn for Me, Mother*” sometimes appears on *rushnyks* from the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th century (see Fig. 1). And, the textile containing it was not posted in this particular period of time by accident, as it was in advance of Good Friday.

On Monday, the next day after Orthodox Easter (May 3, 2021), Dakhno posted another photo of an epigraphic *rushnyk* on his personal Facebook

page. As it turned out, this was not a different towel but the other end of the previous *rushnyk*. However, the inscription and the image differed noticeably from the opposite end of this towel. Here, it was a cross surrounded by flowers and the words: “*Khrystos voskres!*” [“*Christ is risen!*”] (see Fig. 3). Dakhno’s post dated May 3, 2021 stated: “Christ is risen! The other end of the early 20th-century *rushnyk* from the Chernihiv region, Bakhmach district” (Dakhno, 2021a).

As we can see, the second description is no less laconic than the previous one. Nevertheless, the meaning of this photo publication on this date leaves no doubt. Given that it was posted on Easter Monday, Facebook users commented on the photo with traditional Easter greetings: “Truly He is risen!”

A few things need noting at this point. According to the Easter customs of Eastern Orthodox believers, on the Sunday of the Resurrection (Easter) and 39 days after it (Forefeast), one must greet another person with “Christ is risen!” and this person has to respond with “Truly He is risen!”. Naturally, people who saw the *rushnyk* with such words during this period considered it proper to answer appropriately. So, some of them showed their reaction via Facebook. It is interesting to us as researchers that they did it in different ways (which was made possible by social networks).

The first type of reaction was a short comment under the post: “Truly He is risen!” (Dakhno, 2021a [May 3]). This is an obvious answer clearly demonstrating the commentator’s perception of this post with photo not as an Internet exhibit, but as the Paschal greeting above all.

The second type of reaction is more interesting. Another collector of antique objects (in particular, *rushnyks*), Tetiana Skliarova, answered with a photo of her own. After clarifying what the whole of Dakhno’s item was, she briefly replied: “Here is one of mine” and attached a photo of a *rushnyk* from her collection (Skliarova, 2021 [May 3]). Besides embroidered flowerpots with roses and bunches of grapes, the towel included initial letters. They were “*Kh. V.*” (at one end) and “*V. V.*” (at the other end). Perhaps not everyone would have immediately guessed the full inscription if not for the appropriate context. Knowing that this photo was Skliarova’s response to Dakhno’s post, one could easily decipher that the whole text was “*Khrystos voskres! Voistynu voskres!*” [“*Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!*”].

In such a manner, two collectors of antique objects greeted each other on the Easter holidays. They did it by means of photos of *rushnyks* from their collections, without long verbal explanations, and they understood each other perfectly. As researchers we can claim that it was not just an act of traditional Easter greetings, but also a re-actualization of verbal



Figure 1. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (Poltava region, first half of the 20th century) with the embroidered inscription: “Don’t mourn for Me, Mother”. Collection of the Vasyl Krychevsky Local Lore Museum in Poltava. Photo by Tetiana Brovarets (June 24, 2016).

and visual embroidered texts (*rushnyks*) fixed on textiles approximately 100 years ago.

To be exact, the other end of Dakhno’s *rushnyk* (used by him as a photo greeting), containing the words “*Christ is risen!*”, actually is such a greeting, whereas Skliarova’s *rushnyk* (used by her as a photo response), featuring the text “*Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!*”, in fact is not only a response, but both a greeting and a response. However, it does not really matter in this context. We have to understand that in the communicative act described, that other end of Dakhno’s *rushnyk* functioned as a traditional Paschal greeting, while Skliarova’s *rushnyk* functioned as a traditional Paschal response. In other potential communicative acts, the functions of these items may be reversed or changed in some other ways.

The third type of reaction is closely related to the one just shown. It involves reposting. That very day (Easter Monday), the famous Ukrainian embroiderer



Figure 2. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (Chernihiv region, early 20th century) with the embroidered inscription: “Don't mourn for Me, Mother” (at one end). Yurii Dakhno's collection.  
 Photo by Yurii Dakhno (April 29, 2021).

and folklorist Dmytro Pozhodzhuk reposted Dakhno's post with the other end of the *rushnyk*, containing the inscription “*Christ is risen!*”, on the Facebook group *Vyshyvaiut Choloviky* [“Men Embroider”] (Pozhodzhuk, 2021 [May 3]). The reaction of Facebook community members was almost identical to that on Dakhno's private Facebook page. Although Pozhodzhuk did not add any comments to this repost, the photo was perceived as the traditional Paschal greeting. One page visitor, Liubov Buhai, thus reciprocally answered with her own photo of an antique *rushnyk* with a similar inscription. This is a towel with the image of a cross surrounded by flowers and the text “*Christ is risen!*” repeated at both ends (Buhai, 2021 [May 3]). Again, in the communicative act between Pozhodzhuk and Buhai, the *rushnyk* (to be exact, its other end) from Pozhodzhuk's repost functioned as a traditional Paschal greeting. And, the *rushnyk* presented by Buhai functioned as a traditional Paschal response (despite the duplicate embroidered phrase “*Christ is risen!*”, which should





Figure 3. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (Chernihiv region, early 20th century) with the embroidered inscription: “*Christ is risen!*” (at the other end). Yurii Dakhno’s collection.  
Photo by Yurii Dakhno (May 3, 2021).

mean the greeting itself and not the answer, but here, however, it functioned precisely as a response).

It should be emphasized that not every post with a photo of an antique object may be considered a full-fledged re-actualization. For example, Buhai (mentioned above) had posted a photo of this very *rushnyk* several months before (Buhai, 2020 [August 11]). Yet that was not such a folklorization process, as there was no connection to a special date or other circumstances which could provoke further analogous communicative acts.

Approaching a generalization, I would like to note one more important aspect. The re-actualization of antique epigraphic *rushnyks* occurs in all three cases, albeit to varying degrees. Whereas the first case represents a simple type of re-actualization, the latter two may constitute double or even triple re-actualization. This means that in the second situation the process of re-actualization happened twice: the first time is when Dakhno posted

the *rushnyk's* photo on his personal Facebook page, and the second time is when Skliarova replied in the comments with a photo of a *rushnyk* from her own collection. In the third case, we can observe even triple re-actualization (also provoked by Dakhno): the first time is when Dakhno posted the *rushnyk's* photo on his personal Facebook page; the second time is when Pozhodzhuk reposted this photo in another Facebook community (*Vyshyvaiut Choloviky*), and the third time is when Buhai replied in the comments under this repost with another *rushnyk's* photo.

As for the topic in question, Dakhno's towel with the inscription "Don't mourn for Me, Mother" (at one end) and "Christ is risen!" (at the other end) originally involved obvious apocalyptic motifs, but in today's digital communication it (or at least its side with the inscription "Christ is risen!") mainly functions as the usual Paschal greeting. At the same time, there may be reverse cases: an embroidered towel which initially did not have apocalyptic semantics is mythologized, acquiring such motifs in the modern world. We will consider this in the next part of the article.

### *Rushnyk* from 1933: Symbolism of the Embroidered Number

Speaking about epigraphic embroidery, we primarily mean, of course, verbal texts or at least initial letters embroidered on a textile. Since historical symbols have almost become forgotten and images could be polysemantic, inscriptions specifically give us an opportunity to get closer to the meaning of a particular visual component on a towel. Nevertheless, it happens sometimes that a number can mean more (or become of great importance after a certain time) than a word. I am talking about embroidered years,<sup>1</sup> which are rather common on textiles from the late 19th and first half of the 20th century.

In those times, embroideresses often fixed the years on *rushnyks* as a memento of the time when these objects were made. The embroidered years have had a tremendous impact on our modern investigation of that period. Obviously, they provide us with accurate data about the age of certain items. However, there is another equally important aspect here as well.

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<sup>1</sup> As a rule, an embroidered year means the year when the item (*rushnyk*) was fully embroidered. However, there may be some exceptions.





Figure 4. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (Central Ukraine, 1933) with the embroidered number “1933”.  
Collection of the Museum in Memory of the Victims of Stalin’s Repressions.  
Photo by Lesia Yasynetska-Yehorova (November 27, 2021).

History is arranged in such a way that some years or dates become significant or even symbolic for a particular nation. In Ukrainian history, one such year is 1933. When this number is mentioned, the first association of most Ukrainians is connected with the Holodomor (Famine Genocide) of 1932–1933. Since 1998, the fourth Saturday in November is established by presidential decree as Holodomor Memorial Day. On November 28, 2006, the parliament of Ukraine (*Verkhovna Rada*) passed the law “On the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine”, recognizing the Holodomor as genocide against the Ukrainian people.

It goes without saying that among the *rushnyks* of that era with years embroidered on them, there were those where the year 1933 was indicated. And although these towels were embroidered during a period of terrible events, this does not mean that a particular item (towel) symbolized the Holodomor. But, as often happens, a thing which has





Figure 5. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (Kyiv region, 1933) with the embroidered number “1933”. Collection of the Fastiv State Museum of Local Lore. Photo by Halyna Tsiapych (November 25, 2021).

even the slightest hint of something that can produce a corresponding association is overgrown with legends. These made-up stories are also the subject of our analysis, since they become part of modern folklore formation.<sup>2</sup> We may also consider such modern legends about *rushnyks* as a form of their re-actualization. They are particularly re-actualized to the corresponding date.

Let me give several examples. In 2021, Holodomor Memorial Day fell on November 27. That day, one Ukrainian woman posted a photo of a *rushnyk* containing the embroidered year “1933” (see Fig. 4) from the Museum in Memory of the Victims of Stalin’s Repressions (Lviv region). In her post, she wrote: “*Rushnyk* from 1933 from Central Ukraine. This towel encodes

<sup>2</sup> At the same time, it is always necessary to distinguish between accurate data about the history of a particular object and the legend surrounding its creation. Both of them are useful for research (naturally, when considered from different viewpoints).



Figure 6. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (Poltava region, 1933) with the embroidered number “1933”. Collection of the Museum of Folk Architecture and Folkways of Ukraine. Photo by Antonina Palakhniuk (November 28, 2020).

the Holodomor of 1932–1933. We remember” (IASynets’ka-IEhorova, 2021 [November 27]).

Prior to this date, a research fellow from the Fastiv State Museum of Local Lore (Kyiv region) also posted a *rushnyk* with the embroidered year “1933” (see Fig. 5). The post stated: “Every year on the fourth Saturday of November we light candles as a symbol of remembrance of people who starved to death. In our museum there are exhibits from those times. [...] *Rushnyk* of home-woven bleached cloth. 1933” (TSiapych, 2021 [November 25]).

And a year before, on Holodomor Memorial Day 2020, there was a similar post with another *rushnyk* featuring “1933” (see Fig. 6), from the Museum of Folk Architecture and Folkways of Ukraine (Kyiv region), from a Ukrainian journalist:

Pyrohiv.<sup>3</sup> St. Nicholas' Church. Funeral prayer for all our fellow citizens who died a martyr's death during the Holodomor. The church keeps a unique towel from the Poltava region. There is this terrible date which is 1933. It is impossible to imagine how anyone could embroider... What was she thinking about?! What was she hoping for?! We don't know the name of the embroideress, we don't know whether her family survived... In prayer we remembered this strong-minded unknown craftswoman who left us her coded embroidered sad message. In order to remember... (Palahniuk, 2020 [November 28])

On careful review of the three posts cited above, we find that two independent stories (the first one, posted on Holodomor Memorial Day 2020, and the third one, posted on Holodomor Memorial Day 2021) share a number of similarities. The main ones are as follows:

- 1) the method of presentation (taking a photo of a *rushnyk* from the museum and then publishing a post connected with it on a personal Facebook page);
- 2) the date to which it is timed (Holodomor Memorial Day);
- 3) the object itself (*rushnyk* with the embroidered year "1933");
- 4) the message of the post (encoding of the famine via embroidery).

Now let us move on to the second post, by the research fellow from the Fastiv State Museum of Local Lore, Halyna Tsiapych. Although it contains no indication of an "encrypted message", here the *rushnyk* from 1933 also becomes part of a text about the Holodomor. Therefore, we can say that in all the above cases (including the second one), the re-actualization of the antique item is connected in its symbolism with the Ukrainian Famine Genocide of 1932–1933.

In fact, we do not know exactly what the message of these particular towels was. An embroideress might really have enciphered her thoughts and suffering connected with that historical period on the towel (for example, the embroidered windmills on the first *rushnyk* with the number "1933" may actually be associated with hunger). Or she might have just recorded the year of the product's making. However, today's perception of it clearly indicates such items' mythologization. And this is how we should perceive their modern re-actualization. Somehow, nowadays embroideries with the mark "1933" often function as a symbol of the Holodomor, which in turns symbolizes a strong belief in the coming of a new life after the end of this one.

<sup>3</sup> Pyrohiv is a village in the Kyiv region where the Museum of Folk Architecture and Life of Ukraine is located; the word "Pyrohiv" is also a folk name for this museum.

## “My Grave Is Under the Cross; My Love Is on the Cross” as a Polysemantic Embroidered Inscription

Not only the mark “1933” on *rushnyks*, but also some embroidered inscriptions may today be associated with the Ukrainian Famine Genocide of 1932–1933. These include, for example, one of the most popular embroidered verbal formulas: “My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross”.<sup>4</sup>

Actually, this folklore formula is polysemantic and thus the functions of *rushnyks* containing it may vary accordingly (Brovarets, 2021, p. 48). It is therefore not surprising that their modern rethinking proposes a number of potential uses, even ones that are opposites. For instance, various online shops selling vintage items feature varying views on their possible applications, from wedding (Ihor, 2021 [November 4]) (see Fig. 7) to funeral ones (Etno Lavka, 2019 [September 27]).

Beyond that, antique *rushnyks* with such a verbal formula are widely used in different professional projects. It is significant that there is no single-mindedness on this issue in this sphere, either. One contemporary use involves life-affirming professional photo sessions. In a photo made for the album *Donetsk Is Laughing* (Senik, 2021 [October 11]) we see the following scene: a smiling girl is sitting on a bench by the window in a house; this window is decorated with a towel containing the inscription “My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross” and a typical image of a cemetery (a cross on a grave between two trees). The girl’s face has a happy expression, which corresponds with the photo album’s title.

On the other hand, in this very same period, a similar *rushnyk* (with the same inscription and image) was applied to the scene of the music concert *Prayer by Kateryna* in memory of the victims of Ukraine’s Holodomor. This concert is held annually on Holodomor Memorial Day at the Kyiv Opera Theatre. In 2021, on the fourth Saturday of November, Deputy Artistic Director of the Kyiv Opera Theatre Bohdan Sobutskyi posted the following message on his personal Facebook page: “*Prayer by Kateryna*. A little more than an hour before the start. You can still make it” (Sobuts’kyi, 2021 [November 27]). What is important for us, he also attached an appropriate photo (see Fig. 8). Here is a red concert grand covered with *rushnyks*. One

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<sup>4</sup> To date, the Interactive Online Index of Folklore Formulas (Epigraphic Embroidery) includes 140 (!) variants of this formula: <http://volkovicher.com/invarianti/pod-krestom-moya-mogilana-kreste-moya-lyubov-realizatsiya-invariantu/> (Brovarets’, 2016–2021). Password: 2707.



Figure 7. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (first half of the 20th century) with the embroidered inscription: “*My love is on the cross, my grave is under the cross*”; sold in 2021 with the comment that it is a wedding *rushnyk*. Photo from the online shop OLX (November 4, 2021).

of the towels’ edges is clearly visible, with a typical image of a grave cross and the inscription “*My love is on the cross*”. There are also ears of wheat and a candle. The whole scene symbolizes the Holodomor. And it was this photo that had been chosen for the Facebook post with a call to attend the concert.

Another example of constant re-actualization of these embroidered lines is found in an essay by a ninth-grade girl. It is about a *rushnyk* containing the embroidered verbal formula “*My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross*” and its connection to the Ukrainian Famine Genocide of 1932–1933. On Holodomor Memorial Day 2021 it was republished on the “Ancient *Rushnyks*” Facebook group. Let me cite an excerpt from this story:

We are inhabitants of Western Ukraine and we know about the 1932–1933 famine primarily from books. Condemning Ukrainian peasants to starvation, the Moscow authorities blocked the Polish-Soviet border. So, very few people were able to





Figure 8. Ukrainian *rushnyk* (first half of the 20th century) with the embroidered inscription: “*My love is on the cross*”; used in 2021 as a decoration for the music concert *Prayer by Kateryna* in memory of the victims of Ukraine’s Holodomor at the Kyiv Opera Theatre. Photo by Bohdan Sobutskyi (November 27, 2021).

break through to the other, not starving bank of the Zbruch river. Although our village was hundreds of kilometers from the areas where the famine was severe, some people came to Richky<sup>5</sup> for food. A resident of our village, Mykhailo Bryn, remembers that in 1933, a woman and a 10-year-old girl came to their house and asked for help. Mykhailo’s mother gave them some millet and they gave them a *rushnyk* in gratitude. It is embroidered with a cross and the words ‘*My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross*’. (Tehlivets’, 2021 [November 27])

People also have memories of such *rushnyks* hanging in many houses during the period of the Holodomor. Embroidering these inscriptions and images to decorate walls at such a time seems like a constant reminder that death is close, but after death there will be resurrection. Obviously, *rushnyks* containing the above-mentioned verbal formula were also widely used for decorating a wall of icons (iconostasis) in churches and private homes. There

<sup>5</sup> Richky – a village in Western Ukraine (Lviv region).



Figure 9. Modern Ukrainian *rushnyk* (2019) with the embroidered inscription: “My love is on the cross, my grave is under the cross, my strength died there, my blood boiled in my chest”; made by a contemporary Ukrainian woman for her late great-grandfather’s grave; it is based on samples of century-old *rushnyks* found via the Internet (including the Interactive Online Index of Folklore Formulas (Epigraphic Embroidery)). Photo by Iryna Makarenko (July 19, 2019).

is a memory which testifies to this. A woman shows photos of a *rushnyk* she embroidered, modeled on her late great-grandmother’s item, saying that “the pattern was completely sewn from the towel of the home iconostasis of her great-grandmother Yepystymiia” (Akymenko, 2019 [July 19]). In one of the photographs, this *rushnyk* covers two icons from the sides.

The re-actualization process under this post went as follows. In the comments, one woman attached a photo of her *rushnyk* inherited from her grandmother and stated that she was not sure about the pragmatics of such textiles. The inscription, to her mind, was rather odd (Vlasenko, 2019 [July 19]).

Another woman demonstrated a photo of a similar *rushnyk* from the Taras Shevchenko Literary Memorial Museum (Cherkasy region), mentioning that such towels had been used to tie to grave crosses (e.g.

instead of wreaths) (Hlid, 2019 [July 19]). It is worth noting that many other Facebook users stated the same below the aforementioned post. Clarifying that embroideresses prepared these towels for death, commentators argued that it was the tradition in their villages. Meanwhile, the *rushnyk* in the photo from the Taras Shevchenko Literary Memorial Museum covered icons, just like in the photo from the author's post.

Yet another woman showed a towel with such an inscription and an image (see Fig. 9) that she had embroidered herself in the modern day (Makarenko, 2019 [July 19]). The uniqueness of Iryna Makarenko's work was that she did not model it on an item by her grandmother (or great-grandmother, etc.), but, in a way, it was the other way round. As the embroideress wrote, she had presented it to her late great-grandfather a year before. In 2018, she posted a photo of her work in a Facebook community called "Secrets of Embroidery" (Makarenko, 2018 [October 2]). Additionally, Makarenko attached several photos from the Internet which, according to her, helped her to produce her work. It is noteworthy that among the photos of antique towels with variants of this inscription and image, there was also a screenshot of the webpage from the Interactive Online Index of Folklore Formulas (Epigraphic Embroidery), which is a scientific project (Brovarets', 2016–2021).<sup>6</sup> Asking the community to help decipher the towel symbols, the embroideress briefly described the story of her product:

I am glad to have the opportunity to share my embroidery designed for my great-grandfather Stepan. He was born exactly 100 years before me. Unfortunately, I did not know my great-grandfather personally. During her life, my grandmother dreamed that her father's grave would always be well kept. (Makarenko, 2018 [October 2])

Again, we have three different ways of contemporary folklorization which has been provoked by one post with a *rushnyk's* photo. The first is an example of simple re-actualization. This is like an answer confirming that such towels happened in the history of our culture. However, the first woman admits that she does not know the purpose of such a product, although she inherited it. This indicates a partial loss of communication between generations.

The second case is more complicated. On one hand, the woman seems to confirm with her photo (on which the towel covers icons) that such *rushnyks* could have been used for the iconostasis. On the other hand, her

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<sup>6</sup> This proves that folkloristic (scientific) developments, being exposed to the public, also affect modern folklore formation.

commentary suggests that textiles with similar inscriptions and images were tied to grave crosses.

The third example is even more interesting than the previous two cases put together. This last type of re-actualization attests to feedback between generations. Furthermore, this is not a simple continuation of tradition (as we can observe in the author's post). It is much more, as it shows that the transmission process may take place not from the elder generation to younger ones (and then return to the former). From the very beginning, these processes may come from younger generations. In this particular case, it takes place via modern technologies, namely the Internet.

To sum up this section, I should state that the embroidered inscription "*My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross*" and the image of a grave cross are, undoubtedly, one of the most popular verbal and visual folklore formulas on Ukrainian *rushnyks* from the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th century. Not surprisingly, therefore, there are many different variants of its semantics and pragmatics. All these interpretations have been included in the general process of folklore formation, whether those items had actually been used in a particular way or not.

## Conclusions

No doubt today's perception of antique objects may be quite different from their original idea. This is natural and we have to take it into consideration when researching them. In fact, modern rethinking of old texts opens up a huge field for scientific (in particular, folkloristic) activity. One should understand that the attribution of new meanings creates a new reality, which in turn also influences the texts' further folklorization. Open access folkloristic developments also affect contemporary folklore formation.

Factors such as time and place have a tremendous impact on the re-actualization of certain texts (in our case, epigraphic motifs on towels, which in general can be attributed to apocalyptic themes). Due to the place and means of re-actualization (via the Internet), there may be a break in time for a fixed text. Thus, Ukrainian historical item collector Dakhno posted two ends of the same *rushnyk* for different acts of communication, with a time interval of several days. However, these two texts were originally embroidered as one holistic text, as this was a single textile product.

The calendar period also affects the folklorization of certain texts. For instance, a towel with the embroidered inscription "*My grave is under the cross; my love is on the cross*" posted on Holodomor Memorial Day

(the fourth Saturday of November) would be perceived somewhat differently than the same photo exhibited on some other date. In the former case, it is more likely to be associated with some apocalyptic motifs, as the date obliges the viewer to remember the people who starved to death.

Also, some *rushnyks* that were most likely not originally conceived as apocalyptic ones can eventually become mythologized. The most striking example is when modern people describe the embroidered mark “1933” as a code of the Ukrainian Famine Genocide of 1932–1933. This happens because 1933 has become a symbolic year (with a sad meaning) for the Ukrainian nation. In fact, this mark may only have meant the year when the product was embroidered and nothing more. But in the process of re-actualization of the antique towel, a new folklore text is created in which 1933 may be associated with the apocalypse.

During re-actualization, an old embroidered text can perform a function that is not quite characteristic of it. For example, Skliarova’s *rushnyk* was used as a traditional Paschal response (only as an answer), whereas it contained the words of both the Paschal greeting and the Paschal response. One should understand that this is not a “mistaken understanding or use” of a historical embroidered text, since permanent transformations and variations (including variations of meaning) are one of the major principles of the folklorization process.

And all this does not prevent these embroidered texts from the late 19th and first half of the 20th century from being understandable in our era, although in other situations they may be re-actualized in a completely different way.

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## Апокаліптичні мотиви столітніх українських рушників у сучасній цифровій фольклорній комунікації

Роздуми про кінець життя та подальше відродження є одними з найчастотніших мотивів в епіграфічній вишивці українців. Ідеться про рушники з написами (фольклорними текстами), що масово виготовлялися наприкінці ХІХ – у першій половині ХХ ст. Зокрема, існували численні варіанти таких вишитих написів (фольклорних формул): «*Не ридай Мене, Мати*», «*Під хрестом моя могила, на хресті моя любов*», «*Христос воскрес! Воістину воскрес!*» тощо. Авторка аналізує деякі з цих фольклорних формул, пов'язані з апокаліптичними мотивами в епіграфічній вишивці. Нині багато з них повторно актуалізуються через Інтернет. Варто зауважити, що під час сучасної фольклоризації старовинних рушників їхня семантика може суттєво змінюватися.

**Ключові слова:** рушники з написами, Великодне привітання, Голодомор, фольклоризація, реактуалізація.

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## Motywy apokaliptyczne stuletnich ukraińskich ręczników w nowoczesnej, cyfrowej komunikacji ludowej

Refleksje na temat końca życia i późniejszego odrodzenia to jeden z najczęstszych motywów ukraińskiego haftu epigraficznego. Tematem artykułu są haftowane ręczniki zawierające teksty ludowe, które były masowo produkowane pod koniec XIX i w pierwszej połowie XX wieku. Istniały liczne wersje takich haftowanych napisów w formie ludowych fraz: „Nie płacz za mną Matko”, „Pod krzyżem mój grób, na krzyżu moja miłość”, „Chrystus zmartwychwstał! Rzeczywiście zmartwychwstał!” itp. W artykule analizuję wybrane ludowe formuły związane z motywami apokaliptycznymi, występujące w hafcie epigraficznym. Obecnie wiele z nich jest aktualizowanych przez Internet. Warto zauważyć, że podczas współczesnego folkloryzowania dawnych ręczników ich semantyka zmienia się w sposób znaczący.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ręczniki z napisami, życzenia wielkanocne, Hołodomor, folkloryzacja, reaktywizacja.

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