

# The Image of Peasant Communities in European Written Sources, Culture, and Art from Antiquity to the 20th century

Lublin

16-17 April 2024

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## International Conference

The Institute of History at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin in cooperation with the Institute of History and Archive Studies at the Pedagogical University of Cracow kindly invite you to the International Conference *The Image of Peasant Communities in European Written Sources, Culture, and Art from Antiquity to the 20th century*.



Residents of the village of Motycz, near Lublin, 1936.  
Private collection of A. Obara

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In recent years, the number of publications on the history of peasant population has increased significantly. The publications include strictly academic works, popular fiction, and belles-lettres. Their authors aimed at presenting the history of peasants, (re)defining of their role and significance in history, and restoring the memory of specific people originating from this social-class. Although some of these works are variously assessed by recipients, sometimes engendering objections and controversies, the increased interest in the history of peasants is the undoubted result of these publications. It is expressed not only in academic polemics, but also in discussions carried out in the press, radio, and the internet. The question of whether the discussed tendency is manifested in research conducted in Europe is particularly intriguing. At the time when the world of information society became a global village, the local peasant identities can appear to be an interesting and useful alternative. The conference organisers would like to offer a chance to recreate the perceptions of peasant populations, which are present in the written sources, culture, and art of the “Old Continent”. The construction of these images will require to include such important factors as: intellectual, religious, and political climate of the given period, the then philosophical, ideological, and cultural trends, social and economic transformations, and the world view of the authors of specific works. Chronological scope of these studies were defined very broadly: from the earliest times to the present day. The conference is addressed to the representatives of various academic disciplines, primarily to historians, archaeologists, art historians, anthropologists, sociologists, literary scholars, political scientists, etc.

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The following topics are of particular interest:

- 1) stereotypes associated with the perception of the peasant population by the representatives of other social classes;
  - 2) attitude of other social groups (the wealthy, clergymen, nobility, intelligentsia, workmen, etc.) to the peasant class, and the image of the peasant population they shaped;
  - 3) the image of peasants in the eyes of their own social group (realistic, critical, idealistic);
  - 4) the influence of philosophical and religious systems, ideological and political trends, business and economic transformation on the images of the peasant population throughout the ages;
  - 5) the phenomenon of “peasant-mania” and its impact on the idealization of the rural life and folk culture;
  - 6) presenting various aspects of the peasant population lives in the sources:
    - everyday life (housing, garments, food, hygiene, work, entertainment,
    - external appearance and personality traits of the representatives of this group,
    - world view, system of beliefs and opinions,
    - folk culture,
    - issues concerning social matters (the functioning of the peasant population, relationships within a family, cooperation and conflicts with the representatives of other social strata);
  - 7) comparison between attitudes towards the peasant population in specific countries throughout the ages;
  - 8) peasants in their micro-worlds in the past and nowadays: the impact of organisation and local ties on the shaping of the image of the entire community (local government, locality, familiarity, traditions, associations and institutions);
  - 9) the image of the peasant micro-community in the regional and local history – from amateurs to historians;
  - 10) genealogy vs. the identity of peasants, bourgeoisie, and nobility (post-nobility);
  - 11) city vs. village – mutual relations, pride and repressing of peasant background in the long term – reasons for the phenomenon vs. criteria of advancement and degradation.
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Details of the conference organisers: Institute of History, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (UMCS), pl. M. Curie-Skłodowskiej 4a, 20-031, Lublin, Poland.

Conference language: English and Polish (simultaneous interpreting in English will be provided to guests who do not speak Polish). It is possible to give a paper in another language, provided that the organisers are provided with a full English version of the paper one month in advance.

Schedule:

15 January 2023- deadline for the abstracts (200 words maximum in either Polish or English). In addition to the abstract, the application should include: speaker's name and surname, affiliation, title, contact details. PhD candidates are requested to send a scanned document that their paper topic has been accepted by their supervisors.

The abstracts should be sent to: [peasants2024@gmail.com](mailto:peasants2024@gmail.com); [malgorzata.kolacz-chmiel@mail.umcs.pl](mailto:malgorzata.kolacz-chmiel@mail.umcs.pl).

7 February 2023 – the speakers will be informed of their papers' approval.

16-17 April 2024 – conference.

The organisers will select the papers, based on the submitted abstracts. The conference is planned to take place in Lublin, Poland. (However, the organisers reserve the right to reschedule the conference to an online format). Should the conference take place in person, the organisers will cover the costs of tickets (for planes and trains), accommodation, and meals.

The detailed conference plan and additional information will be sent via email in advance.

Organising committee:

Mateusz Wyżga (Pedagogical University of Cracow)

Anna Obara (UMCS in Lublin)

Małgorzata Kołacz-Chmiel (UMCS in Lublin)

Anna Miączewska (UMCS in Lublin)

Mariusz Bartnicki (UMCS in Lublin)

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