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LOCAL KARELIAN PARISH COMMUNITY AS OBJECT FOR SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH: YALGUBA AREA IN CONTEXT OF XIXth CENTURY ARCHIVAL QUANTITATIVE DOCUMENTARY SOURCES*

The author's attention is focused on the archival historical documentary sources of mass character – metric books, minutes of soul revisions, confessional lists. A complex comparative analysis of the information concerning South Karelian parish territory enabled to collect verifiable demographical data. On the example of Yalguba local community the traditional network of settlements has been examined. The initial complexity of administrative subordination and inner oscillatory development, the quantitative characteristics of population in different times and instability of growing processes have been discovered. This publication represents the first part of the article, which will be continued in the next issue.

Key words: Local history, church parish community, archival sources of mass character, historical demography, network of settlements, quantitative characteristics of territorial population

THE AREA STUDIED

For centuries the church of *Nikola Chudotvorets* (Saint Nicholas) in Yalguba parish was a centre of spiritual and social life for inhabitants of about fifteen neighboring settlements. The following villages were located there: Okulovskaya, Berezovye Mosty (or Mander), Yalgora (or Tyurmino), Selga, Novyi Pochinok, Minki Babkina, Yemelyanovskaya, Karpovskaya, Ankhimovskaya, Kullievskaya, Baraniy Bereg, Suisar Yuzhnaya, Suisar Severnaya, Suisarsky Ostrov. On the modern map, Yalguba village is located on the western shore of the lake Onego, twenty five kilometres to the north-east from Petrozavodsk, boundaries of which include not only closely adjoining (although they remained independent longer than others) villages Emeliyanovskaya, Ankhimovskaya and Minki Babkina, but also Okulovskaya that was situated at some distance and consisted of two parts. The church was then standing in Okulovskaya village, and in the last decades of the XVIIIth century there were altogether about 950 parishioners, and later – in the second half of the XIXth century – more than 1300 persons of both genders (hereinafter referred to as “pers. of b. g.”), which means the population increase of about 40 percent.

DOCUMENTARY SOURCES AND THEIR DRAFTSMEN

The sacraments (christening, wedding, extreme unction) after being performed in church were written down into church registers – *metricheskie knigi* (metric books), which were rigorously kept month after month, year after year by priests, deacons, and psalm readers in service at the time¹. Namely, thanks to this practice we can now recreate a picture of the

parish inhabitants' lives in characteristics – most important from the point of view of self-organisation and survival of the local peasant society – such as birth rate, life expectancy, death causes, and also marriage traditions, formed and practiced in each village within the territorial limits of the parish². During this research, metric books from 1847–1873 and 1885–1905 were carefully studied [1].

A special feature of this kind of sources is that the information they contain is of precedent nature. The cause of each entry is a particular event pertinent to a specific person, being it birth, wedding or death. At the same time, in the first two situations other people are also mentioned: parents and godparents, brides' fathers, relatives or neighbours vouching for persons being wed.

In this way, the information that can be derived from metric books is of unique personalized character and cannot be used for drawing general conclusions, since it represents only everyday collisions pertinent to the parish as a whole. At the same time, these metric books make a great supplement to the documents containing laconic information of mass nature, subject of the strict purpose of taxation. In our research the *revizskie skazki*, namely soul revisions (hereinafter referred to as “SR”) – nominal lists of household's inhabitants, categorised by village – serve this function. In this case we have studied in detail minute accounts of SR IV (1782), SR V (1795), SR VII (1816), SR IX (1850) and SR X (1858) for all settlements, which were located in the Yalguba parish [2].

Revizskie skazki were put together on the request of the state government and – after reading aloud at the village-community gathering when everyone could, after hearing the information entered about

him/herself and their family, request to make necessary corrections – dispatched to central authorities by the delegates invested with trust of both the state administration and peasant society.

These documents were also filled in as was specified in a special directive, but nevertheless, the number of parameters to be noted down varied from time to time. For instance, age of the female part of the population was not always indicated “from the previous revision”; female names as such first appeared in SR III (1763) and were dropped when composing SR VI (1811); only in the second half of the XVIIIth century (SR III, SR IV and SR V) we can find records of native villages from which wives and daughters-in-law of local Yalguba peasants came from, and the names of men who were there fathers. Besides household inhabitants’ names we can find information about their age, degree of kinship between them, and even reasons for their eventual absence at the moment of revision compilation, such as the following: “*otdan v rekruty* (recruited for military service)”, “*umer* (died)”, “*soslan na katorgu* (condemned to penal servitude)”, “*zapisalsya v meshchane* (became a petty bourgeois...)”, “*perepisan po zhitel'stvu i osedlosti* (was included into another list in accordance with a new living place where he moved and settled in...)”.

Utterly important – from the point of view of how informative this kind of sources can be – is their attention to previous descriptions. Very often they enable obtaining authentic information, which one would think to be irretrievably lost together with the original document itself. As a rule, compilers of the *revizskie skazki* first wrote down the names and age of the persons mentioned in accordance with the previous revision – for the purpose of comparison with the “present day” situation at the time. Presence of this prior information does provide a unique opportunity for retrospective recreation of certain parameters of once described reality. Some limits of potential and real information kept by soul revisions and so-called *ispovednye vedomosti* (confessional lists) were comparatively examined to be sure our preferences to *revizskie skazki* (SR) as a source are more suitable for eventual verification [18; 96–103].

RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Consecutive analysis of the changes in status of the parish settlements has revealed a process of new *pochinok* (the settlement recently initiated) appearing while old villages merged with each other as their population increased. The search for explanation of the extraordinary fluctuations observed in the total number of parish population in the period from the XVIIth to the beginning of the XXth century resulted in investigation of mortality causes that has shown a wide spectrum of illnesses of people inhabiting this territory. Extremely high mortality caused by *chakhotka* (consumption) has been revealed, even though parish inhabitants lived in the most favourable natural conditions.

This revelation became a motivating force for a particularly detailed study of the local peasants’ marital behaviour. It proved possible to find out that a circle of marital connections had not been particularly wide, moreover, most of the marriages were between partners residing no further than in neighbouring households.

But first several remarks should be made about the embodiment of parish society from the standpoint of social – village by village – organisation and population. Clearly, petty bourgeois and local officials are mentioned only very few times. Clergy is slightly more noticeable. Obviously, the majority of the inhabitants in Prionezhie, to which Yalguba parish belonged, were peasants. However, one has to be aware of a different administrative status of *gosudarstvennye* (state-owned), *ekonomicheskije* (economic, belonging to monasteries before the secularization), *obel'nye* (nontaxable) peasants who lived side by side in villages of Saint Nicholas’ church of Yalguba parish during the studied period.

SETTLEMENTS IN VIEW OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE FORMATION

Okulovskaya village consisted of two settlements: in one of them there were households of economic peasants, who at one time used to be under the patrimony of Novgorodian Khutyn monastery, at another point of time – households of *obel'nye* (this Russian term literally means “whitened”, i. e. relieved of the tax burden) peasants. The origin of the latter was well researched back in the pre-revolutionary historiography [12; 203–215].

The fates of this particular group of peasants in *Zaonezhie* and *Prionezhie* – gradually grown in number and reaching hundreds of families – have been followed in our detailed study right up to the beginning of the XVIIIth century [16; 194–205]. The further history of these widespread families is not in the focus of our attention at the moment.

As for Yalguba parish, some of its inhabitants were the descendants of Grigory Merkuliev. He was the first one to receive *tarhannaya gramota* (deed of exemption from taxes and duties) from Boris Godunov himself under quite mysterious circumstances in the very first spring of the XVIIth century. This unprecedented episode of presenting a common peasant with Tzar’s favour, inconceivable in those times, continues to excite the imagination of researchers [11; 298–303].

Berezovye Mosty pochinok has been established by Trifon Nikitin. He was a peasant of *obel'ny* (free from tax) status who moved from Okulovskaya village in 1738. By the second half of the XIXth century, it grew to become *Mandera* village [13; 8].

There are reasons to believe that he was a twin brother of Egor Nikitin who later on – in 1750 – together with his elder brother Grigory also left his father’s household in order to settle in a new *pochinok* – in *urochische* (glade) *Yalgora* [3]. In the sec-

ond half of the XIXth century this settlement became known as *Tyur'mino* village [4].

Na Sel'ge (literally meaning "on the Sel'ga") *pochinok* was first mentioned in the minutes of SR IV (1782) and without a stipulated reference to the previous revision entry about age of its inhabitants [5]. This allows us to conclude that this settlement was formed between SR III (1763) and SR IV, and that the head of its only household, Mitrofan Ivanov, can be identified as its founder. This assumption is confirmed by a special remark made by the compiler, who was from Okulovskaya village himself and mentioned in the appropriate place, that Mitrofan Ivanov moved "*v davnikh godekh na novoi pochinok v urochishche na Sel'gu poluchetvertki Osipovoi pozhni za maloimeniem pashennoi zemli* (moved to the newly established settlement in a glade of Selga onto the half-quarter of Osipov's hayfield a long time ago because of not having enough ploughed field)" [6]. At the time of previous SR III he was twenty years old. One can assume that he was the eldest of Ivan Fedorov's four sons, two of them had already been sent as army recruits by *volost* (local administrative district) authorities. This small newly established settlement never grew into an independent village. In the middle of the XIXth century – when it was last mentioned – there was one household inhabited by a widow with two teenage girls while its only male inhabitant was sent as an army recruit by the district of Yalguba authorities [7].

One of the ancient local villages, *Minki Babkina*, by the second half of the XIXth century, merged with *Ankhimovskaya* village. Villages *Karpovskaya* and *Kullievskaya* stopped being mentioned in the beginning of 1870s. They merged together with *Emeliyanovskaya* village, which in turn repeatedly appears in our well-known documents covering the period of our research.

Baraniy Bereg pochinok existed as a new *zazhivka* (newly arable land) only for a very short period of time. It was first mentioned in the minutes of SR VII (1816) as a part of the household that belonged to the family of peasant Philipp Petrov, which had moved from Lindozero parish [8]. However, according to a remark entered by Vasily Nemirov – compiler from Yalguba's village community during SR IX in 1850 – this *pochinok* was no longer in existence and peasants inhabiting it had gotten *zhitel'stvo i osedlost'* (a place and a settled way of life) in villages Okulovskaya, Emeliyanovskaya and Kullievskaya [9].

Yalguba parish also included a group of Suisar' villages located both on the mainland and on the neighbouring island and in different time periods was recorded in official documents as one or several settlements. During centuries they were located in immediate proximity to each other, practically merging and "flowing" into each other along the shore of lake Onego. However illogical this may seem, they traditionally belonged to different administrative units: different privately owned *boyarcshiny* (bo-

yar ownships of land) (in the XVth century), different *pogosty* (parishes) – Shuya and Kizhi (in the XVIth–XVIIth centuries), different *volosti* (local administrative district) – Yalguba and Suna – of Shuya patrimony attributed to the newly founded Petrovski iron foundry (in the first half of the XVIIIth century). In their entity they were only included in united Yalguba parish community in the second half of the XIXth century. For more details on the early period of Suisar' settlements existence, where reasons for the peculiarities of their administrative subordination are rooted, one can see collective monograph devoted to multidimensional study of this ancient Karelian place of settlements [15; 30–35].

To avoid misunderstanding, we will unite data on Suisar' villages under the single title "Suisar'" in general tables. What settlements and when constituted Suisar' is shown in Table 1. Names of the villages are listed strictly in accordance with the way they are named in the documents.

Quantitative information available through minutes of soul revisions and *spisok naseleennykh mest* (list of populated areas) obviously demonstrates that during the studied period Yalguba parish settlements in general had not been developing synchronously (Table 2).

In villages of Berezovye Mosty and Yalgora, founded in the first half of the XVIIIth century as newly settled farms towards newly arranged arable plots by brothers Nikitin, exempt from taxation peasants from Okulovskaya village (in 1738 and 1750 respectively), the demographic situation can be with good reason characterised as progressive and dynamic right up to 1905.

The same can be ascertained for Okulovskaya village consisting of two halves, one inhabited by economic peasants and another – by *obel'nye*. Decrease in the number of its inhabitants in the beginning of 1870s – contrary to the general tendency – can be explained by resettlement of some families to newly established *pochinok* mentioned above.

The population of two more ancient settlements of the parish as well as of four Suisar' villages decreased dramatically at the end of the XIXth century as registered at the beginning of the next century [14; 38–39].

Meanwhile, five settlements ceased to exist as independent villages – Minki Babkina, Karpovskaya and Kullievskaya merged with Emeliyanovskaya and Ankhimovskaya.

As mentioned earlier, inhabitants of *pochinok* on Selga and Baraniy Bereg migrated to the same villages even earlier – according to the data of 1873 [13].

FLUCTUATIONS IN POPULATION GROWTH AND DECLINE

The data compiled in Table 2 with intervals of thirty four, once more thirty four, twenty three and thirty two years demonstrates that Yalguba parish population had been increasing for about one hun-

dred years – from the last third of the XVIIIth century until 1870s – and as a whole had grown by more than 40 percent (from 854 persons in 1782 to 1342 persons in 1873). Then it somewhat decreased again on the threshold of the XIXth and XXth centuries.

Particularly strong and spasmodic increase in population – by more than a quarter – took place during a short period of time, over three decades between 1816 and 1850, which is clearly demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 1

Four initial villages in Suisar area, their names and administrative subordination from the end of 17th to beginning of 20th centuries

Date	Shuya pogost		Kizhi pogost	
1678	Na Suvisere Mikhalevskaya	V Suvisere na ostrovu Rodivonovskaya	Na Suvisere byvshi pochinok Ivashki Klementieva	Na Suvisere na Vnecheostrove
1707	Mikhalevskaya	V Suisari na ostrovu	Suisar' na Mandere	V Suisari na ostrovu
1720	Suisar'skaya	Na Suisarskom ostrove	Suvisar'skaya na Mandere	<i>Was not mentioned</i>
1749	Suisar'skaya	Na Suisarskom ostrove	Suisar'skaya na Mandere	–
1763	Suisar' Mandera	Suisarski Ostrov	Suisar'skaya na Mandere	–
1782	Suisar' Mandera	Suisarski Ostrov	Suisar'skaya na Mandere	–
Yalguba volost'			Suna volost'	
1795	—	—	Suisar' na Mandere	Suisarski Ostrov Newly founded
1816	Suisar' Mandera	Suisarski Ostrov	Suisar'	Suisarski Ostrov
1826	Suisar' Mandera	Suisarski Ostrov	Suisar'	Suisarski Ostrov
Yalgubskoe mirskoe soobshchestvo Shuiskoi volosti (Yalguba local society of Shuya volost')				
1850	Suisar'			
1858	Suisar'			
1873	Suisar'			
1905	Suisar' na materike	Suisar' na ostrovu	Suisar' Severnaya	

Table 2

Number of inhabitants in the villages of Yalguba area from the end of 18th to the beginning of 20th century

Village	1782		1816		1850		1873		1905	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Okulovskaya	106	111	126	109	148	178	152	130	190	213
Berezovye Mosty (Mandera)	15	21	24	22	34	33	37	44	62	65
Yalgora (Tyur'mino)	9	8	20	25	32	31	39	32	30	42
Sel'ga	4	1	3	2	1	3	–	–	–	–
Minki Babkina	29	35	48	34	48	61	–	–	–	–
Suisar'	148	149	146	171	190	191	231	200	158	175
Emel'yanovskaya	65	70	63	57	69	64	141	149	100	115
Karpovskaya	19	19	21	16	27	26	–	–	–	–
Ankhimovskaya	45	40	42	37	50	53	105	82	70	80
Kullievskaya	30	26	28	39	34	42	–	–	–	–
Baraniy Bereg	–	–	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total (men and women)	470	480	523	514	633	682	705	637	610	690
Total (both sex)	950		1037		1315		1342		1300	
Sex ratio	97.9		101.7		92.8		110.7		88.4	
Man coefficient	0.49		0.50		0.48		0.53		0.47	

Analysis of Suisar' villages' population over a longer period of time convinces that the process of quantitative increase of parish population goes beyond the period indicated in the title of the present article. Diagrams and tables, which were presented in our previously published observation, clearly illustrated this and at the same time indicated evidently oscillatory nature of the process. Noteworthy,

periods of population diminution coincided mostly with decades adjoining the end of the century and beginning of the next one [15; 54–55].

The first noticeable population decrease on the threshold of the XVIIth and the XVIIIth centuries finds its roots in natural and climate cataclysms that, as known to us from stingy documental records, befell the whole Northwest Russia, Baltic territories,

and Finland in the first half of 1690s [16; 273–277]. At the same time, the duration of this decrease can also be partially explained by the fact that data of the first revision was quite probably characterised by the extreme incompleteness of recordings. For more details on the scale of the population concealment, which took place in Olonets region, and phases of its exposure see an example of Rebola parish [17; 44–45].

However, other periods of deterioration of the demographic situation are both less perceptible and more difficult to explain. The national tradition of census procedures had taken shape solely within the framework of cadastre policy of the state, and unfortunately one has to ascertain that the condition of the available source base is objectively such that it is impossible to find lists of female names in the documents of mass character from the XVIIth – first half of the XVIIIth century. Likewise, it is impossible to analyse population development on the basis of a shorter interval between recordings of the mass data.

This, however, does not prevent us from seeing a certain dynamics of the process as a whole, which, for all its oscillatory nature, showed clear tendency toward general population growth. Nevertheless, one cannot avoid noticing that in the last decade of the XVIIIth – beginning of the XIXth century a certain kind of demographic slump also took place there, although not so evident on the level of the parish as a whole as a century earlier due to fragmentariness of the available to us SR V (1795) and wittingly incomplete SR VI (1811).

So, population of Suisar' village on Mandera (the northernmost one among the group of Suisar' villages) decreased very visibly by almost one third over thirteen seemingly quite peaceful years that had passed since preceding SR IV (1782). The population of other Yalguba parish villages evidently increased, however, for some of them the tendency was quite to contrary – their population decreased over the same time period, although not so drastically as in Mandera (by 10–14 percent, as Table 3 demonstrates).

Table 3

Changes in population of Yalguba parish villages in the last third of the 18th century

Village	Years	Inhabitants			Decrease
		Men	Women	Total	
Suisar'skaya na Mandere	1782	77	72	149	30 per cent less (45 person)
	1795	54	50	104	
Emel'yanovskaya	1782	65	70	135	10 per cent less (13 person)
	1795	57	65	122	
Karpovskaya	1782	19	19	38	13 per cent less (5 person)
	1795	19	14	33	
Kullievskaya	1782	30	26	56	14 per cent less (8 person)
	1795	29	19	48	

Finally, a drop in the parish population is quite evident on the threshold between XIXth and XXth centuries. Amplitude of fluctuations also deserves our attention. So, the number of inhabitants of the four Suisar' villages grew by more than two thirds over 110 years (from 1763 until 1873), but then dropped again on the threshold of the centuries to the level of the end of the XVIIIth – beginning of the XIXth centuries, which is clear when comparing data from 1905 with 1782 (for men) and 1816 (for women). This is clearly confirmed by absolute figures presented in Table 4.

This fact needs further explanation not only due to the diminution of the absolute figures, which was not so significant on the level of the parish as a whole, but also in connection to unprecedentedly low sex ratio index revealed by the data from 1905 (see Table 2).

It seems that this particular characteristic of the population can serve as some sort of “diagnosis” for better or worse demographic situation (certainly, except times of wars when the state recruited additional number of men for military service).

According to the United Nations standard for local territorial groups, for so called “closed population with constant level of mortality”, which Yalguba

parish obviously must have been in the XIXth century, gender ratio at birth is expected to approximate 105 [10; 27–28]. Based on our calculations, this index should be near 98 in average, sometimes decreasing, sometimes increasing in each age group. In this case gender ratio barely exceeds 88. That might explain this nonpresumable situation, given the fact that the local society lived on the shores of the cleanest water basin, lake Onego, and, as one might expect, had unlimited opportunity to supplement their traditional corn and vegetables ration with fish, as well as with the most valuable products of forest trades: stalked game, berries, and mushrooms?

Table 4

Changes in population of Suisar' villages in the second half of the 18th – beginning of the 20th century

Years	Men	Women	Total
1763	128	113	242
1782	154	146	300
1816	146	171	317
1850	190	191	381
1858	191	209	400
1873	231	200	431
1905	158	175	333

To be continued in the next Social Sciences and Humanities issue of Scientific Journal Proceedings of Petrozavodsk State University.

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NOTES

¹ During 1840–1870s the following priests were serving in turns in the church of Saint Nicholas in Yalguba: Aleksei Il'insky, Antony Zamoshsky, Ioann Mirolyubov, Vasily Belyaev and – during the entire period – Matvei Pochezersky. The last one was an irreplaceable sexton and later a deacon in a position of a sexton, along with a psalm-reader Flegont Mishurin. In the final decades of the XIXth – first years of the XXth century, priests Ioann Blagoveshchensky, Mikhail Mirolyubov, Iakov Ponomarev, Grigory Lyuboslavsky, Georgy Drugov, Nikolai Tsvetayev, Georgy Gumilyov served there.

In the beginning of the 1890s Matvey Pochezersky was still carrying out duties of a deacon, until Olonets Eparchial administration sent Nikandr Zverolovlev to replace him in 1894. In 1897, his place was taken by the priest Pyotr Romanov who was forced by some circumstances to agree to a position of a lower rank, which was not quite uncommon at that time. Ioann Petrovsky, who served there at the end of the 1880s – beginning of the 1890s, found himself in a similar situation: having a rank of a deacon, he received a vacant position of a psalm-reader. At the beginning of the century, the same situation occurred with Pavel Molchanov. During all this time Nikolai Nimensky served continuously as a psalm-reader. Nikolai Skvortsov occupied a position of the parish deacon for some time, but starting from 1903 we find out that this job taken by Mikhail Mirolyubov, a grandson of one of the local priests, Ioann Mirolyubov, who served in Yalguba half a century earlier. He was educated in Petrozavodsk ecclesiastical seminary at full expense of his father, Mikhail Mirolyubov, also a priest of the church of Saint Nicholas, as was common in the circles of parish church intellectuals of that time in Russia.

² These documents are hand-written books – a new one for each following year – filled in day after day with names of local people in three separate parts: “*rodishiyesya* (new-born)”, “*brakosochetavshiyesya* (just wedded)” and “*umershie* (deceased)”. Entries were made into peculiarly ruled sheets of paper, and later – into special typographically printed forms, sent to every parish community for filling in. Filled sheets or forms were to be returned to the church authorities in accordance with their hierarchical structure.

All such hand-written books are now kept in the National Archive of the Republic of Karelia (hereinafter referred to as “NA RK”). All of them were categorised by year and church districts and were in the form of enormous volumes, many of which still show the remains of the fine bindings made of natural leather on wooden boards with stampings, laces and sealing-wax stamps of attestations.

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