

KOBZAR AND LIRNYK TRADITION IN SLOBODA UKRAINE: ART AS A MEDIUM

Churkina V. G.

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the historical and cultural genesis of the kobzar and lirnyk traditions in Sloboda Ukraine as a unique recreational technology and medium of memory. Within the framework of Healing Memory, the traditional practice of itinerant performers is analyzed not merely as musical folklore but as a complex system of spiritual rehabilitation, social integration, and preservation of national identity^{1,2}. The article defines the Artrium of Memory within the workshop (tsekh) structure, where traumatic historical experience is transformed into heroic narratives, performing a therapeutic function for the community^{3,4}. By examining the transition from archaic pagan roots to Christian ethical frameworks, the study substantiates the role of art therapy and transitional justice in the traditional Ukrainian cultural landscape^{5,6}.

In the twenty-first century, memory is increasingly understood not as a passive archive but as an active force shaping social reality⁷. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes its performative and reconstructive nature, particularly in relation to identity formation and ethical systems⁸.

The concept of Healing Memory shifts focus from trauma toward recovery, positioning memory as a resource for integration and social cohesion⁹.

Ukraine represents a critical case where memory is directly linked to national resilience and future development. In this context, traditional practices function as mechanisms of cultural survival¹⁰.

¹ Assmann A. Cultural Memory and Western Civilization. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2011. 410 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511996306>

² Erll A. Memory in Culture. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 214 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230321670>

³ LaCapra D. Writing History, Writing Trauma. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 240 p.

⁴ Caruth C. Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. 168 p.

⁵ Etkind A. Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied. Stanford University Press, 2013. 320 p.

⁶ Churkina, V., Gryshchenko, T. (2025). *Involvement of personality in the world of art in zdo and zzso in conditions of war and reconstruction* <https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/id/eprint/744849/1/29.pdf#page=152>

⁷ Halbwachs M. On Collective Memory. University of Chicago Press, 1992. 254 p.

⁸ Assmann A. Cultural Memory and Western Civilization. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2011. 410 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511996306>

⁹ Van der Kolk B. The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma. Viking, 2014. 464 p.

¹⁰ Kasianov G. Past Continuous: Historical Politics in Ukraine. Ibidem Press, 2018. 420 p.

The kobzar and lirnyk traditions exemplify this role. As mediators between individual and collective experience, itinerant musicians enabled communities to process trauma and maintain continuity^{11; 12; 13}.

Materials and Methods

This study applies an interdisciplinary methodology integrating historical musicology, ethnopädagogy, and cultural studies¹⁴. The Kobzar tradition is a component of Ukrainian culture, which reflects the socio-political and spiritual processes inherent in Ukrainian society through artistic means. The cultural analysis of the transformation of traditional kobzar and lyre music culture by transferring the main substantive characteristics of the phenomenon with possible variants of genre features and forms allows us to highlight the processes of spiritual and social life of kobzars and lyre players, to reveal spiritual and aesthetic values, and the functioning of established forms of cultural life.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, collectors of Ukrainian epics such as M. Tserteliev, P. Kulish, M. Drahomanov, V. Antonovych, and others made a significant contribution to the study of the formation of traditional communities. At the end of the nineteenth century, a professional approach to recording and researching the poetics of Ukrainian folklore was formed. In the works of M. Lysenko, O. Potebnya, and M. Sumtsov, a scientific methodology for studying epic repertoire was developed. Collectors of folklore K. Kvitka, V. Horlenko, P. Yefymenko, and P. Kulish, when recording kobza music, paid most attention to the poetic epic, but left regional, domestic, and performance aspects unexplored.

The source base for the study of kobzars in Slobozhanshchyna was significantly expanded by works and ethnographic materials collected in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by M. Maksymovych, F. Kolesa, P. Martynovych, O. Slasten, F. Dniprovskiy, M. Lysenko, K. Hrushevskaya, and V. Kharkiv. Scholars used the method of recording kobzars' singing on a phonograph, which allowed them to preserve folk songs as an artistic document of a certain period. The authors of the early twentieth century substantiated information about the formation and development of kobzars. Scientists M. Sumtsov, K. Kvitka, and F. Kolesa were the first to note that Slobozhanshchyna had its own special kobzar and lirnyk practice.

In the field of modern ethnomusicology, the substantial works of F. Kolesa, S. Hrytsa, M. Hordiychuk, O. Vavryk, V. Kushpet, M. Khai, M. Rzhenska, and O. Vasyuta allow us to analyze the regional peculiarities of kobza art, and approach a comprehensive study of the continuity of traditions and its significance in the field of history and culture of Ukraine. In their research, the scientists comment on and analyze the folk works presented by genre and theme, comment on and analyze

¹¹ Hrushevskiy M. S. *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy* [History of Ukraine-Rus]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1997. Vol. 1. 648 p.

¹² Hrytsa S. Y. *Ukrainska folklo rna muzychna tradytsiia* [Ukrainian Folk Musical Tradition]. Kyiv : Muzychna Ukraina, 2006. 455 p.

¹³ Churkina, V. (2012). *Mental values in the system of ethnic education of kobzars and lyre players of Slobozhanshchyna*. *Bulletin of the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts*, 1, 158–162.

¹⁴ Erl A. *Memory in Culture*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 214 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230321670>

the song epic, describe the life of kobzars, study their psychology, tragic fates, factors that influenced their artistic creativity and encourage the preservation of folk traditions at the present stage.

Significant are the works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars O. Bohdanova, O. Vertiy, M. Hrymch, N. Morozevych, N. Suprun-Yaremenko, I. Romaniuk, T. Martynova, N. Kononenko, V. Noll, V. Mishalov, O. Titar, O. Vavryk, K. Cheremsky, and O. Savchuk, which testify to their interest in the historical, philosophical, cultural, and musicological aspects of the traditions of wandering musicians' playing. The biopsychosocial model frames artistic practice as a tool of social resilience^{15; 16}.

The research is structured around the following key methods: Historical-Genetic Method- used to trace the evolution of the kobzar-lirnyk tradition from archaic pagan "priestly" roots to the sophisticated "regimental music" of the Cossack era and the Baroque philosophical synthesis^{17;18}. Systemic-Structural Analysis – applied to examine the internal hierarchy and socio-legal organization of "workshops" (tsekhs) and "brotherhoods" (bratchynas) as proto-institutional forms of public health and social protection¹⁹. Comparative Analysis- utilized to compare Ukrainian itinerant traditions with European medieval knightly orders (e.g., the Templars or the Order of Malta) and the "university" (universitas) models of knowledge transmission^{20; 21; 22}. Theoretical Synthesis- used to develop the concepts of the "Atrium of Memory" and "Healing Memory," framing traditional art as a medium of transitive justice and music therapy^{23 24}.

Materials and Data Sources

The empirical and theoretical basis of this study comprises a diverse range of primary and secondary sources: Ethnographic and Folklore Records – analysis of "Dumas," historical songs, and psalms from the repertoires of the Zinkiv and Kharkiv

¹⁵ Malchiodi C. A. *Handbook of Art Therapy*. 2nd ed. Guilford Press, 2012. 512 p.

¹⁶ Kaimal G., Ray K., Muniz J. Reduction of cortisol levels through art making. *Art Therapy*. 2016. Vol. 33(2). P. 74–80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2016.1166832>

¹⁷ Kolessa F. M. *Ukrainski narodni dumy [Ukrainian Folk Dumas]*. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1970. 160 p.

¹⁸ Khotkevych H. M. *Muzychni instrumenty ukrainskoho narodu [Musical Instruments of the Ukrainian People]*. Kyiv : Vydavets Oleh Filiuk, 2012. 510 p.

¹⁹ Stelmakhovych M. H. *Ukrainska etnopedahohika [Ukrainian Ethnopedagogy]*. Kyiv : IZMN, 1997. 352 p.

²⁰ Etkind A. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford University Press, 2013. 320 p.

²¹ Winter J. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge University Press, 1995. 320 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815348>

²² Churkina, V. Fedorenko, V.(2025). Current trends and features of media discourse about the war in Ukraine <https://dspace.luguniv.edu.ua/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/11325/page=305>

²³ Hrytsa S. Y. *Ukrainska folklo rna muzychna tradytsiia [Ukrainian Folk Musical Tradition]*. Kyiv : Muzychna Ukraina, 2006. 455 p.

²⁴ Churkina, V. (2012). Mental values in the system of ethnic education of kobzars and lyre players of Slobozhanshchyna. *Bulletin of the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts*, 1, 158–162.

schools (e.g., recordings of H. Honcharenko and P. Drevchenko). Archival and Historical Documents- interrogations and inquiries regarding Haidamak kobzars (1769–1772), the 1652 Universal of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, and chronicles describing the "regimental music" of the Zaporozhian Sich. Visual and Artistic Artifacts: Art-criticism analysis of folk paintings, specifically the "Kozak Mamai" cycle (18th–19th centuries), as a visual medium of collective memory and psychological "characterist" (healer) traditions. Scientific Literature- pedagogical and ethnological studies by M. Stelmakhovych, M. Hrushevsky, H. Khotkevych, and S. Hrytsa.

1. Cultural Memory as a Transformative System: Narrative, Trauma, and Artistic Mediation in the Kobzar Tradition

Cultural memory is continuously reconstructed through symbolic practices such as narrative and ritual. It structures identity and mediates between past and present, functioning as a transformative social force. Cultural memory is not static but continuously reconstructed through symbolic practices such as narrative, ritual, and artistic expression. It performs key social functions: structuring identity, legitimizing norms, and mediating between past and present. Importantly, memory is shaped by cultural codes and institutional frameworks, which makes it inherently transformative rather than neutral. Trauma disrupts narrative continuity and requires symbolic mediation²⁵. Narrative transformation enables integration of experience into collective identity²⁶. Artistic and narrative practices enable: structuring fragmented experience, assigning meaning to suffering, integrating trauma into collective identity. Such processes are essential for psychological recovery and social stabilization. Art, especially music, facilitates emotional regulation and social cohesion. Kobzar performance can be interpreted as an early form of music therapy²⁷. Music enables- emotional regulation, collective synchronization, creation of shared experiential spaces. In this sense, the kobzar tradition can be interpreted as an early form of art-based musical therapy.

The Baroque era integrated European intellectual traditions with local practices. This synthesis is particularly evident in the philosophy of Hryhoriy Skovoroda, whose ideas influenced kobzar pedagogy. The roots of the Ukrainian itinerant tradition can be traced back to the archaic period, where "priests" served as the first tribal musicians. The transition from paganism (worship of Veles) to Christianity created a syncretic worldview. Traditional Ukrainian society relied on systems of cultural transmission and regulation²⁸. Musical practice represented a peak of ethnopedagogical achievement²⁹.

²⁵ Caruth C. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. 168 p.

²⁶ LaCapra D. *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 240 p.

²⁷ Churkina, V. (2012). Mental values in the system of ethnic education of kobzars and lyre players of Slobozhanshchyna. *Bulletin of the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts*, 1, 158–162.

²⁸ Stelmakhovych M. H. *Ukrainska etnopedahohika [Ukrainian Ethnopedagogy]*. Kyiv : IZMN, 1997. 352 p.

²⁹ Hrytsa S. Y. *Ukrainska folklo rna muzychna tradytsiia [Ukrainian Folk Musical Tradition]*. Kyiv : Muzychna Ukraina, 2006. 455 p.

Anthropological theories support the universality of cultural transmission. Family-based and institutional education coexisted as complementary systems³⁰.

Archaic Period – folklore functioned as a cognitive and social classification tool. The tradition of singers-musicians had the following stages of formation: the period of paganism (VI–XI centuries) (magi, blasphemers) and the Middle Ages (late IX–XVI centuries) – wandering musicians (soothsayers, accordions, caterpillars, cripples); The Heroic Age (14th–17th Centuries)- the struggle against the Tatar hordes and Polish expansion necessitated the recording of historical information. Musicians became the "archives of the people."Cossack era (XIV–XVII centuries) – representatives of the "registered Cossacks", regimental music, disabled Cossacks; within the Russian Empire (XVI centuries).) – representatives of the "registered Cossacks", "regimental music", "disabled Cossacks"; as part of the Russian Empire (eighteenth century) – "disabled Cossacks", "beggars"; in the era of national revival (eighteenth – early twentieth centuries) – "disabled Cossacks", "beggars", "elders".

The Baroque Synthesis- the integration of European humanist ideas and the rise of Church brotherhoods. The stages of formation of kobza and lirnytsia schools through the study and formation of Cossack and fraternal traditions (fourteenth – eighteenth centuries); that musicians-informants united in public associations at churches, created systems (to ensure the preservation of the cultural achievements of previous generations, the self-survival of the organization with the definition and awareness of the goals of its activities, the education of personnel to ensure the transfer of information and knowledge). The processes of formation of kobzar and lirnyk traditions in Sloboda Ukraine are associated with the Cossack period of history and the resettlement of Cossacks in the eighteenth century (formation of culture and population composition; existence of Slobozhanshchyna as a province of the Russian Empire). The functioning of secret organizations after the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich is noted by M. Sumtsov and P. Zhytetskyi (unification in workshops with professional beggars, the obligatory presence of mutilation, which distinguishes them into a specific social stratum of folk singers-beggars, and changes in repertoire). The traditions of itinerant singers-musicians in Ukraine, which is a synthetic musical and narrative whole and combines religion, philosophy, morality, social structures; peculiarities of the worldview and way of "itinerant" life ("mastering the walk"). In traditional kobzar and lirnytsia schools, the profession was taught by recognized "paniottsi" who used specific methods: survival; narrative learning; vicarious learning (observation, the "do as I do" method); object perception; practical and linguistic-logical thinking; workshop groups were led by recognized "zekhmasters".

Ethnopedagogical Foundations and Social Institutions of the Kobzar Tradition

The study of traditional education within the humanities history, ethnology, ethnopedagogy, and ethnopscychology – reveals that the stability of Ukrainian society was historically ensured through a sophisticated system of values and regulatory norms. Central to this system were folk social institutions that managed self-regulation, emotional expression, and collective identity. As noted by M. Stelmakhovych,

³⁰ Hrushevskiyi M. S. *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy* [History of Ukraine-Rus]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1997. Vol. 1. 648 p.

the culture and musical practice of traditional traveling singers represent the zenith of these folk pedagogical achievements³¹.

In this context, ethno-education is defined as the organized transmission of socio-historical experience and the spiritual culture of the nation. This process aligns with the theories of E. Tylor and J. Frazer, who argued that education is inherent to humanity at all developmental stages³². The evolution of musical instruments-from primitive rattles and drums to complex stringed instruments- parallels the cognitive and social development of the ethnicity.

During the formation of the patriarchal family, the "school-family" served as the primary unit of cultural transmission. This provided the basis for specialized "schools for young men," where initial military training and musical practice were combined. Historical records by Procopius, cited by M. Hrushevsky, describe early Ukrainians engaging in "dancing, humming (music), and clapping," suggesting that rhythmic and melodic expression were foundational to social life³³.

The genealogical continuity of this tradition is evident in famous musical dynasties such as the Ihnatyshchys (Boikivshchyna) and the Tafiychuks (Hutsulshchyna). While the Kobzar environment was primarily a closed male institution, historical evidence suggests the existence of female performers who acquired their skills through strictly family-oriented ethno-education, often in the absence of male heirs. The preservation of the Ukrainian musical tradition was carried out by kobzar and lirnyk organizations, workshops, and associations. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the peculiarities of Zinkiv and Kharkiv kobza practices as a complex of structural and artistic techniques and performance, which is an example of an oral tradition. The chapter raises important questions for contemporary humanities about the place of the creative person in society and his or her possibilities for self-realization. Among the musical instrumental traditions in Sloboda Ukraine over the centuries, the kobzar and lyre practice stood out, due to the influence of instrumental music and the peculiarities of the sound of instruments (lyre, kobza, bandura) on melody, rhythm, form, and character of performance. Through the prism of its ethno-pedagogical foundations, we will consider ethno-education as a single system in the context of specific historical circumstances. "Ukrainian dumas became an educational school for peasants, and later for Cossacks," believed Kharkiv historian M. Sumtsov. They "played an important role in the life of the Ukrainian people, especially in the difficult years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the era of persecution by the Tatars and Poles"³⁴.

³¹ Stelmakhovych M. H. *Ukrainska etnopedahohika [Ukrainian Ethnopedagogy]*. Kyiv : IZMN, 1997. 352 p.

³² Frazer J. G. *The Golden Bough*. Macmillan, 1922. 800 p.

³³ Hrushevskyi M. S. *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy [History of Ukraine-Rus]*. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1997. Vol. 1. 648 p.

³⁴ Sumtsov M. F. *Research on the ethnography and cultural history of Slobodsk Ukraine. Selected works / Arrangement, preparation of the text, foreword, afterword and notes by M. M. Krasnykov*. Kh.: Atos Publishing House, 2008. 558 p.

2. From institutional structures to embodied experience: the evolution of Kobzar and lirnyk workshops and their neurobiological and social implications

The structural integrity of kobzarism evolved from archaic tribal alliances into sophisticated corporate organizations. The "veche" (people's council) model was mirrored in the governance of kobzar and lirnytsia workshops. These workshops functioned as "bratchynas" (brotherhoods) – religious and professional corporations with their own patron saints, treasures, and judicial systems.

The formation of Old Rus culture and its subsequent transition through the adoption of Christianity created a unique "dualistic" spiritual space. The interaction between pagan roots (the magic of the eight-stringed kobza) and Christian ethics (religious psalms and apocrypha) allowed itinerant musicians to serve as "defenders of the faith" and "holy armies."

Historians such as M. Kostomarov and D. Yavornytskyi emphasize that the Zaporozhian Sich was a "Christian Cossack republic" where music was integral to military regulations and moral standards³⁵. The "regimental music" of the Cossacks served as a professional layer of performance, while blind kobzars acted as spiritual mentors.

The concept of the "Artrium of Memory" is most vividly embodied in the figure of Cossack Mamai. The image of Kozak Mamai represents the Artrium of Memory a symbolic space where trauma is transformed into dignity .

This folk painting, found in nearly every Ukrainian home during the 17th-18th centuries, depicts the warrior-philosopher with his horse (symbol of freedom) and kobza (symbol of the soul). As P. Biletskyi noted, this image transformed the traumatic reality of constant warfare into a resource of dignity and resilience³⁶.

The 18th-century Baroque synthesis reaches its pinnacle with Hryhoriy Skovoroda. His pedagogical approach, which he practiced in the schools of Pereiaslav and Kharkiv, integrated music as a tool for "awakening the mind." His philosophical psalms became a staple in the repertoire of itinerant performers, bridging the gap between academic discourse and the "Zhealing Memory" of the common people.

The integration of the Magdeburg Law and European university models (universitas) influenced the professionalization of Ukrainian musicians. Much like the European merchant guilds, the kobzar workshops established: students lived with their paniot (master), adopting not just the technique but a lifestyle of "ascetic service." The repertoire (Dumas and historical songs) served as an "informational ordering of the world," providing the population with a sense of continuity and justice. By performing at fairs and church holidays, these musicians harmonized public memory, helping the community process collective trauma through the sacred adoption of tradition. Through these institutions, the kobzar tradition functioned as a part of transitive justice, ensuring that the "glory of the Cossacks will not die nor

³⁵ Yavornytskyi D. I. *Istoriia zaporozkykh kozakiv* [History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1990. Vol. 1. 592 p.

³⁶ Biletskyi P. O. *Kozak Mamai – ukrainskyi narodnyi kartyna* [Kozak Mamai – Ukrainian Folk Painting]. Lviv : Svit, 2004. 160 p.

fade," effectively anchoring the society's right to honor and an honest interpretation of its history.

The iconic image of "Kozak Mamai" represents the "Atrium of Memory" – a symbolic space where the past meets the future. This visual and musical archetype allowed society to overcome victimhood by emphasizing the "invincibility of the free spirit." The bandura (or kobza) was not just an instrument but a sacred tool of "Healing Memory".

A pivotal figure in the 18th-century Sloboda Ukrainian tradition is Hryhoriy Skovoroda. His concept of "srodna pratsya" (natural calling) found its ultimate expression in his musical-poetic works. Skovoroda's psalms were integrated into the repertoire of blind minstrels, bridging the gap between elite philosophy and folk wisdom. Skovoroda's work "Every Town Has Its Customs and Laws" (Vsiakomu horodu nrav i prava) serves as an early example of social therapy through satire, criticizing corruption and advocating for moral integrity as a path to psychological rehabilitation.

Sloboda kobzars liked to perform satirical and humorous songs and dances, including "Chichitka," "Popadyu," and "Kazachok." Especially popular was the satirical song "To Everybody's Garden" with lyrics by H. Skovoroda, kobzars and lyre players even called it Skovoroda's psalm. This is very interesting, in particular, because authentic kobzars, who were critical of any author's repertoire, were very favorable to both H. Skovoroda's songs and Skovoroda's philosophy in general. A special group consisted of dumas. The дума epic has a bright national specificity, which determined both its poetic and musical structure. Most traditional folk dumas began with a singing chant, a "plachka," followed by the text of the дума, which was always accompanied by musical "overdubs." The style and means of performance depended on the kobzar, but the traditional character of chants, recitations, and instrumental passages is typical for works of the дума genre³⁷.

The main characters of the dumas are legendary figures of the Cossacks, in particular, I. Udovychenko, Holota, Matiash, Ivas Konovchenko, and leaders of popular uprisings: M. Kryvonos, D. Nechai, B. Khmelnytsky, etc. F. Kolessa noted that the melodic-declamatory melodies of dumas are not bound by a beat structure but have a free form of information presentation, unlike stanzaic songs. A verse, or stanza, is the smallest syntactic unit that is marked in recitation. Therefore, musical phrases, approximated by traditional performers to the rhythm of words. After all, a special sound arises in the combination of music and words that reproduce a musical thought. It is important to emphasize that music is one of the elements that affects emotionality. The figurative and emotional capacity of the thoughts helps to specify the musical idea, create a mood, diversify the presentation and development of thematic material, determine thematic accents, and maintain the emotional intensity of the music. And words are carriers of thoughts, images, concepts, and feelings. And all of this is imbued with sound color, has a meaningful figurative arsenal and represents a complex system of associations. Such complex constructions are based

³⁷ Voronina G. , Churkina V. Formation of value orientations of youth using the example of the educational system of kobzar-lirnitky schools <https://naukajournal.org/index.php/naukajournal/article/view/2048>

on a rhythmic structure, and, as you know, rhythm does not depend on syntax, but, on the contrary, affects the structure through meter. Poetic syntax differs from colloquial syntax because it violates the usual word order. The complexity of the poetic and musical constructions of epic works was noted by F. Kolesa, S. Hrytsa, N. Kononenko, M. Plisetskyi, and others³⁸.

This subsection characterizes the structure of the *duma* epic and identifies the following features: the *duma* epic is characterized by special sound patterns and has different structures: "bandura", "violin", "lament", "oblique"; most *dumas* are constructed in the Dorian minor with a fourth degree increase; the harmonic octave system with its introductory tone, which tends to the octave, is a feature of *kobza* structures. Important features of *dumas* are the characteristic bitonality and quintuple principles between two tonics, as well as the chromaticization of intervals. In other words, all *kobza* tunes are united by a special quintuple system, chromaticized pentatonic. All these musical techniques were traditionally used by artists of the Zinkiv (Kharkiv) tradition to improve perception, traditional performance features are associated with the figurative and emotional capacity of *dumas*; complex structures are based on a rhythmic structure; the use of traditional instruments (*kobza*, *bandura*, *lyre*) provided a rhythmic and harmonic texture and served as musical accompaniment to *dumas*. Instrumentalism and technicality are distinctive features of instrumental performance; folk musicians use impression and sensual associations, mastery of the psychology of listeners.

Modern research into neuro-art therapy confirms that the rhythmic and melodic structures of *dumas* (epics) and psalms performed by *kobzars* contributed to: Reduction of collective anxiety- through the ritualization of shared trauma. Social Cohesion-strengthening horizontal connections within the community ("brother to brother"). Identity Reconstruction- moving from the narrative of a "conquered people" to "heroic defenders." To complete your contribution to the collective monograph "Healing Memory: Culture of Memory as a Restoration Technology," these sections are designed to align with Scopus-level requirements, emphasizing the innovative concepts of "Artrium of Memory" and "Healing Memory."

3. Results

The analysis of the genesis and evolution of traveling performers in Sloboda Ukraine yields several key findings.

The *kobzar* tradition demonstrates a dual functionality: on the individual level, it provides psychotherapeutic stabilization through narrative structuring of experience, including the reduction of anxiety; on the collective level, it reinforces social cohesion by restoring the social fabric through shared historical identity and value systems.

The study confirms that the organizational forms of "workshops" and "brotherhoods" functioned as effective socio-cultural and quasi-legal mechanisms. These structures safeguarded and transmitted the intellectual, ethical, and artistic capital of the nation during periods of foreign domination and social transformation.

³⁸ Kolessa F. M. *Ukrainski narodni dumy* [Ukrainian Folk Dumas]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1970. 160 p.

The research identifies a crucial narrative transformation within the tradition: the shift from victim-centered laments to hero-centered epic dumas so the "Healing Memory" Mechanism. This transition operates as a core psychological mechanism for overcoming collective victimhood, enabling the reinterpretation of trauma within frameworks of dignity, agency, and resilience.

Although the kobzar institution was predominantly male, the persistence of family-based ethno-educational practices ensured continuity. This alternative transmission channel allowed women and kinship networks to preserve and reproduce the musical and symbolic "code" of the tradition, particularly in times of crisis such as wars and social disruption.

The integration of traditional performance practices with Hryhoriy Skovoroda's concept of *srodna pratsya* (congenial labor) indicates that the Ukrainian itinerant tradition embodied an early form of holistic regulation -biopsychosocial Integration. It addressed spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions simultaneously, functioning as a culturally embedded system of well-being.

Overall, the study demonstrates the following interconnected dynamics: dual psychological and social impact; institutional resilience; transformation of trauma into narrative; and the continuity of ethnopedagogical systems.

CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical significance of this study lies in the conceptualization of traditional Ukrainian itinerant musicology as a functional recreational technology. The research expands the theory of transitive justice-by incorporating "cultural-therapeutic" practices (kobzarship) into the socio-legal framework of transitional justice, shifting the focus from purely legalistic reparations to the symbolic restoration of dignity. Develops the Concept of "Artrium of Memory": proposes a new spatial-symbolic model where art functions as a "borderline" space for the transformation of traumatic historical experience into a resource for future social development. Substantiates the "Warrior-Monk" pedagogical model – deepens the understanding of the ascetic and heroic components of the kobzar tradition, linking it to European chivalric codes and modern concepts of psychological resilience. Integrates Ethnopedagogy with Neuro-Aesthetics: Provides a theoretical bridge between ancient "workshop" (*tsekh*) training and modern neurobiological understanding of how rhythmic narrative (Dumas) regulates the limbic system and emotional processing.

The findings of this research provide a scalable model for modern psychosocial interventions, particularly in post-conflict societies: Development of "Healing Memory" programs- the research provides a blueprint for using traditional archetypes (e.g., Kozak Mamai) and musical structures in the rehabilitation of veterans and victims of military conflict. Implementation in educational curricula: offers a methodological basis for integrating "Cossack pedagogy" (mentorship, *srodna pratsya*) into modern trauma-informed educational environments to foster national identity and emotional stability. Design of "Artrium" Public Spaces- Provides historical and aesthetic justification for creating interactive museum and community spaces that use "living history" and traditional music for social integration. Corporate and social resilience- the "workshop" (*tsekh*) model of mutual aid and professional

ethics can be adapted for modern professional associations to prevent burnout and strengthen horizontal social connections.

The kobzar and lirnyk tradition of Sloboda Ukraine should be understood as a complex cultural system that integrates artistic practice, memory transmission, and social regulation. Its historical development reveals a high degree of adaptability, allowing it to function effectively under conditions of political instability and cultural disruption.

The findings confirm that this tradition operated as a form of cultural technology of memory, in which artistic expression mediated between traumatic experience and collective identity. Through narrative transformation, it enabled the transition from passive suffering to active meaning-making, thereby fostering both individual resilience and communal cohesion.

Institutionally, the workshop and brotherhood structures provided a durable framework for preserving ethical norms and cultural knowledge. At the same time, ethnopedagogical practices ensured intergenerational continuity, extending beyond formal institutions into family-based systems of transmission.

The integration of philosophical, artistic, and pedagogical elements—particularly through the concept of *srodna pratsya*—demonstrates that the tradition anticipated modern biopsychosocial approaches to health and well-being. In this sense, it may be interpreted as an early form of culturally embedded art-based therapeutic practice.

Thus, the kobzar and lirnyk heritage offers not only a historical phenomenon but also a conceptual model for understanding the role of cultural memory in processes of social stabilization and recovery.

SUMMARY

The historical genesis of the traveling performer tradition in Sloboda Ukraine provides a foundational framework for interpreting art as a dynamic medium of memory and a sophisticated technology of social recovery. The kobzar–lirnyk tradition exemplifies a model of cultural resilience in which memory functions as a mechanism of restoration and continuity.

By transforming trauma into narrative, this tradition enables societies to move beyond victimhood toward dignity and agency. It should therefore be understood not as a static ethnographic relic, but as a decentralized and adaptive cultural infrastructure that ensured the preservation of national identity under conditions of existential threat.

Within contemporary frameworks of transitional justice and the “Healing Memory” paradigm, this tradition offers a multidimensional model of social restoration.

The shift from passive victimhood to the heroic archetype demonstrates how traumatic experience can be reinterpreted as a resource for collective dignity and post-traumatic growth so transformation of Narrative. The ritualized and performative nature of collective musical practices-embedded in fairs, church brotherhoods, and workshops- functioned as a form of group-based emotional regulation. These practices synchronized affective states, strengthened social bonds, and reduced isolation- community psychological rehabilitation.

Institutionalization of the “Right to Dignity” – through the ethical and pedagogical standards of the tsekh (workshop), the tradition maintained historical memory as a living and authentic dialogue, resistant to manipulation and ideological distortion.

Integrating these traditional Ukrainian models into contemporary psychosocial and public health frameworks offers more than cultural preservation; it provides a viable biopsychosocial strategy for sustainable societal development. The revitalization of the “Atrium of Memory” – as a space where creativity intersects with historical truth – can serve as a foundation for the “Healing Memory” paradigm, ensuring that cultural heritage functions as a vital resource for resilience, recovery, and future-oriented transformation.

References

1. Assmann A. Cultural Memory and Western Civilization. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2011. 410 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511996306>
2. Assmann J. Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2011. 300 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511996306>
3. Biletskyi P. O. Kozak Mamai – ukrainskyi narodnyi kartyna [Kozak Mamai – Ukrainian Folk Painting]. Lviv : Svit, 2004. 160 p.
4. Caruth C. Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. 168 p.
5. Churkina, V. (2012). Mental values in the system of ethnic education of kobzars and lyre players of Slobozhanshchyna. *Bulletin of the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts*, 1, 158–162.
6. Churkina, V. Fedorenko, V.(2025). Current trends and features of media discourse about the war in Ukraine URL: <https://dspace.luguniv.edu.ua/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/11325/page=305>
7. Churkina, V. ,Gryshchenko, T.(2025).Involvement of personality in the world of art in zdo and zso in conditions of war and reconstruction. URL: <https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/id/eprint/744849/1/pdf#page=152>
8. Erll A. Memory in Culture. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 214 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230321670>
9. Etkind A. Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied. Stanford University Press, 2013. 320 p.
10. Frazer J. G. The Golden Bough. Macmillan, 1922. 800 p.
11. Hrytsa S. Y. Ukrainska folklo rna muzychna tradytsiia [Ukrainian Folk Musical Tradition]. Kyiv : Muzychna Ukraina, 2006. 455 p.
12. Hrushevskiy M. S. Istoriiia Ukrainy-Rusy [History of Ukraine-Rus]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1997. Vol. 1. 648 p.
13. Halbwachs M. On Collective Memory. University of Chicago Press, 1992. 254 p.
14. Kaimal G., Ray K., Muniz J. Reduction of cortisol levels through art making. *Art Therapy*. 2016. Vol. 33(2). P. 74–80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07421656.2016.1166832>

15. Kasianov G. Past Continuous: Historical Politics in Ukraine. Ibidem Press, 2018. 420 p.
16. Khotkevych H. M. Muzychni instrumenty ukrainskoho narodu [Musical Instruments of the Ukrainian People]. Kyiv : Vydavets Oleh Filiuk, 2012. 510 p.
17. Kolesa F. M. Ukrainski narodni dumy [Ukrainian Folk Dumas]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1970. 160 p.
18. LaCapra D. Writing History, Writing Trauma. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 240 p.
19. Malchiodi C. A. Handbook of Art Therapy. 2nd ed. Guilford Press, 2012. 512 p.
20. McNiff S. Art as Medicine: Creating a Therapy of the Imagination. Shambhala, 1992. 224 p.
21. Ricoeur P. Memory, History, Forgetting. University of Chicago Press, 2004. 660 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226713465.001.0001>
22. Stelmakhovych M. H. Ukrainska etnopedahohika [Ukrainian Ethno-pedagogy]. Kyiv : IZMN, 1997. 352 p.
23. Sumtsov M. F. Research on the ethnography and cultural history of Slobodsk Ukraine. Selected works / Arrangement, preparation of the text, foreword, afterword and notes by M. M. Krasikov. Kh. : Atos Publishing House, 2008. 558 p.
24. Van der Kolk B. The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma. Viking, 2014. 464 p.
25. Voronina G , ChurkinaV. Formation of value orientations of youth using the example of the educational system of kobzar-lirnytsky schools URL: <https://naukajournal.org/index.php/naukajournal/article/view/2048>
26. Winter J. Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History. Cambridge University Press, 1995. 320 p. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815348>
27. Yavornytskyi D. I. Istoriiia zaporozkykh kozakiv [History of the Zaporozhian Cossacks]. Kyiv : Naukova Dumka, 1990. Vol. 1. 592 p.

Information about the authors:

Churkina Victoriia Grigorivna,

PhD in Art History, Master of Management,
Senior Researcher at the Professional Development
Department of the Research
Institute for Digital Transformation of Science
Kharkiv, Ukraine / Sligo, Ireland