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**THE ODESSA PERIOD OF LIFE AND CREATIVITY OF AN OUTSTANDING  
REGENT MIKHAILO LITVINENKO**

*The article presents the biography of the head of the Kiev Metropolitan choir M. S. Litvinenko. On the basis of documents found in the archive of the Odessa Theological Seminary, made accent the period of study in this institution. Based on memories of the Regent, reproduced Cathedral choir panoramascope of the cathedral of 1956 year, where the artist worked, and stresses the importance of this phase in his creative life.*

*Keywords: Litvinenko M. S., regent, seminary, the Cathedral, the Metropolitan's choir.*

Current status of the Orthodox singing in Ukraine is due to hard work of many artists whose work is related with Odessa. This statement, in turn, acquires relevance ii scientific novelty, because among these people – the head of the Kyiv Metropolitan Choir *Mikhailo Semenovich Litvinenko* (b. 1927). Biography of the artist highlighted in the book by Volodymir Glushko [1], and in numerous journalistic publications and therefore within this article confine its main moments that preceded the Odessa period. A native of the village Kybyntsy Poltava region, with 14 years he sang in the church, and from 1948 to 1952 – studied at the Kiev Theological Seminary. It seemed there were no signs of trouble, but the young man had to stop training. Denounced classmate spring 1952 he was accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda", and sent in a separate camp on the river Unzha item (which is geographically situated at the intersection of Kostroma, Gorky and Kirov regions). M. Litvinenko was imprisoned three and a half years, and so gained the respect of the leadership that led the amateur choir Unzh-log. After the amnesty in 1955 returned to the capital, while singing and was a church-choir conductor Ascension church (on Demiivka) and Kyiv-Pecherska Lavra. And the next – with the blessing of Metropolitan of Kyiv and Galician John (Sokolov), – went to Odessa and completes a full course of study at the Odessa Theological Seminary [ibid, p. 71-78].

Here, we applied *a biographical method*, which is an important prerequisite for the *objectives of the study*, in fact reveals little-known facts in the life of the person and shows their role in the professional development. Describing published editions, it is worth noting that V. Glushko and other authors (V. Dyatlov [3], O. Nemkovich [4, p. 137], A. Yaremchuk [6, p. 23]) casual mention of the Odessa period in his works, limited to only brief information. Very interesting in relation to the chosen problem has a film-interview "Witness

era" with the participation of the regent (the director – O. Mironchuk), which was broadcast on 30 March 2007 in the Orthodox TV channel "Glas"(The Voice) [12]. Therefore, this aspect is inherent in these sources, needs fleshing out and further search operation. The result was that we managed to find informative and convincing information, which concerns a young age by M. Litvinenko; in particular, the analysis of archival materials of the Odessa Theological Seminary, as well as information interpretation rendered by the artist and his younger contemporaries-Odessa, will be the next *tasks* of the study.

The author of the article was revised personal file L-10, which was submitted for review Archimandrite Tikhon (Vasiliou)<sup>1</sup>. Existing documents can be divided into several groups, because much of it relates to the period of study regent in Kiev. In the list of mandatory markets for the applicant spiritual institution (dated 1948 year), there are two copies of copies of birth certificates in Ukrainian and Russian (manuscript); certificate of health and family situation; student questionnaire, written recommendation Palladiy (Kaminsky), Bishop of Poltava and Kremenchuk (typing); personal request addressed to the Rector of the Kiev Theological Seminary (autograph). After enrollment M. Litvinenko to Odessa Theological Seminary named documents were sent from the capital (confirming certificate to the rector of KDS Archpriest Vasil (Kremliov), and supplemented autobiography and two letters, which refers to the differences in the curriculum of both schools<sup>2</sup>. Materials containing information on academic performance regent, it is appropriate to allocate a separate unit. Among them – a certificate of completion Kybyntsy High School (published July 12, 1947), table of transferable estimated for 4 year CDS and certificate graduate of Odessa Seminary (issued June 21, 1956 year). Apparently, uncovered documents represent a significant value, because give an idea about the level of education and personal culture of the artist, which, in turn, become essential touch to his creative portrait.

Therefore, it is advisable to allocate Odessa period in the biography of M. Litvinenko. Although he did not last long, less than a year – a young musician managed to do quite a lot. Despite their problems, he remained true to his chosen profession, constantly increased their

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<sup>1</sup> Archimandrite Tikhon (Vasiliou, born. 1964) – teacher of the Odessa Theological Seminary (1992).

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the rector CBC Archpriest Mykola (Kontsevich) of 19 may 1956 mentioned about the lack of timesheets M. Litvinenko marks in the Russian language, Constitution and History of the New Testament. Concerning the last item it was stated, that "...Litvinenko M., like other students of the 1951-52 edition, the year of the Biblical story of the New Testament have not studied neither in the first nor in the author's classes, what was the transition from the old curriculum to the new".

level and found a new circle of acquaintances. This is due to its diligence, experience in dealing with people and, of course, the presence of special skills, without which overcome these obstacles almost impossible. That's what it characterizes the aforementioned Bishop Palladiy (here is the text of the document in the original language): "... *Mikhailo Litvinenko is very pious, church-oriented, with good Christian behavior, what are the quality he obtained from his relatives. According to secondary education certificate, graduated ten years school to "Excellent". Send him as an award holder, writing petition from Poltava diocese*". Without exaggeration, an artist for life remained loyal to foster ideals, and its activity considered only duty of service to the Church.

But despite the patronage of influential people – Metropolitan John (Sokolov), Bishop Palladiy (Kaminsky) and KDS rector Archpriest Mykola (Kontsevich), – M. Litvinenko faced with injustice and in the walls of the spiritual institution, in real life too. In this sense, we should pay tribute to the political situation (it's 1956), and "camp past" seminarian somehow leaves its mark on relations with others. "*My life in Odessa, so to speak, flew hard and hurry, – says the regent. – From I jumped aside like the plague, called a dissident, but I tried to not even submit the form. In Kiev seminary I passed four exams, all – "perfectly." And in Odessa – managed and quadruples and even triples some grab, and I, frankly, it never was!*"<sup>3</sup> But approaching the long-awaited finish, and June 21, 1956 Litvinenko Mikhailo Semenovich received a certificate, which stated that it "... *seminary graduate course on the second level*".

We allow ourselves a little away from the subject, and note that almost all classmates M. Litvinenko chose a pastoral way and led parishes in different cities of Ukraine. Based vignettes provided by Archimandrite Tikhon, are available with former pupils of the tenth issue of ODS and, in particular, with photos of Mikhailo S., placed at the bottom left. Among friends of the artist to call the head of the seminary choir Annunciation Cathedral in Kharkiv and mitered Archpriest Anatoly Tsololo (1926-2009). Later, his son Mykola Tsololo (b. 1957), also a cantor and church composer, – willingly shared their works and dedicated artist "The Night Vigil", which included some songs in the repertoire of the Kyiv Metropolitan chorus<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter interview with M. Litvinenko. – Kiev-Pecherska Lavra, December 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with M. Tsololo. – December, 2015.

Equally important for the professional growth of M. Litvinenko is the practice in the Cathedral in honor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Thanks to solid data and voice training kliros he gets chorister and later, and assistant regent. Even during the anti-religious campaign (which in Odessa was more loyal than in other cities of Ukraine), – Bishop choir was considered a serious team where people sang conservatory education, opera singers, and performed works appropriate level. *"It was a chorus of 50 people, extremely powerful and mobile. I remembered soloist Viveya: magnificent crystal clear soprano, which is rarely seen these days. But her name and place of employment can't remember,"*<sup>5</sup> – Mikhailo Semenovich shared their experiences. Here he met with Oleksiy Korzhynetsky, that was a regent in the cathedral from 1949 to 1961 year [2], and remembered him as a man noble and highly educated. But their creative communication did not last long, as the master was seriously ill, and so gradually withdrew from leadership duties, handing them to Mykola Viranovsky. With the latest Mikhailo Litvinenko also developed friendly relations, they talked and were lively conversation, although, according to the artist, *"... in terms of morality Viranovsky was the complete opposite of his older colleague, and, of course, repelled"*. Professional atmosphere Assumption Cathedral significantly influenced the future regent, and, as he later recalled that *"... it was not easy to get here, and I, naked, barefoot – and the conductor"*. This fact alone says something.

Time spent in Odessa coincided with a major event in the personal life of Mikhailo Litvinenko: he married. His companion for many years was a student of medical college Lyudmila Nikonkova (1936-2015), who miraculously combined kliros service and training. They got married on September 9 at the Assumption Cathedral (with the participation of the whole chorus), and this is evidenced by an entry in the register book 1956, was provided by the church rector Archpriest John (Zhelihovsky)<sup>6</sup>. Born in Odessa, Lyudmila was the granddaughter of the famous priest in the city Trophim (Liuty) – teacher of the seminary and the abbot of Exaltation of the Cross church on Peresyp (destroyed during the Soviet era). By the way, mother-in-law of M. Litvinenko – Raisa Trofimivna Liuta, – also linked their lives with the Church: in the 50 years she worked as chief accountant

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<sup>5</sup> It comes Viveya Oleksiivna Sidorova (1924-1998) – soloist of the Odessa Philharmonic in the 50s. The Data are drawn from interviews with Stakhovska Olena Volodymirivna, Professor OSMA named by A. Nezhdanova. – Odessa, December 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with the rector of Dormition Cathedral, Archpriest John (Zhelihovsky). – Odessa, December 2015.

metropolis. Litvinenko created perfect Orthodox family, raised two sons and lived together more than 60 years. Despite the family ties with clerics and the many difficulties that have befallen those who, according to the artist, *"earned a disqualification and second-class status"*. And the first "no" was the fact that the couple had the right of permanent residence. Here he writes about this regent's biographer V. Glushko: *"I am married, graduated and thought I forgot about. But on the third day after the wedding was a detective with the standard order – to leave the city within 24 hours"* [1, p. 79]. Therefore, we had to move to Ismail (where the family lived for several months), and then began "wandering", and so – almost two decades.

But in the years of wandering Mikhailo Litvinenko never abandon his favorite things. And, most importantly, did not deny the faith – although it seemed this was facilitated everything. In addition to working with amateur choirs, he "illegally" held service in parish churches (almost in 14 cities of Ukraine), communicates with the regents and the clergy, collects its own music library, which contained many rare hymns. It later it will be useful, because in this way acquired experience with the church choir, which, in principle, can't learn without regular practice.

Mikhailo Litvinenko's name became famous thanks to the Kiev Metropolitan Choir, with which he worked during 33 years: from 1975 in Volodymir's Cathedral, and from 1992 to 2008 – in Kyiv-Pecherska Lavra. Without exaggeration, the artist opens new horizons for the group, known only in a narrow environment. By the way, shortly before celebrating the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus (which is 1988), – Kyiv Metropolitan Choir of the largest church choir and Ukraine totaled composed of up to 60 people. As mentioned in previous publications<sup>7</sup>, in addition to traditional worship and participate in religious activities, this group gave charity concerts, recorded three audio albums, voiced movies, went on tour in Finland and Germany. In the metropolitan choir under the direction of M. Litvinenko sang exemplary cast, among them – opera singers Vsevolod Pekarsky (baritone), Oleksandr Ulyanytsky and Petro Bilynnyk (tenors). Appreciation of famous choir

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<sup>7</sup> Kondratenko I. Mikhailo Litvinenko: a portrait of the Regent of the Metropolitan chorus / Irina Kondratenko // Kiev musicology: Sat. article / NMAU n. by P. I. Tchaikovsky; Kiev Institute of music n. by G. M. Glier. – K.; 2014. – Vol. 48. – P. 253-262.

Kondratenko I. To the problem of professional approach of the Regent concerning the management of a Church choir (on the example of creative experience M. S. Litvinenko / Irina Kondratenko // Kiev musicology : Sat. article / NMAU n. by P. I. Tchaikovsky, Kiev Institute of music n. by G. M. Glier. – K.; 2015. – Vol. 51. – P. 230-242.

gave Ivan Kozlovsky, who had already sang in the Volodymir's Cathedral, but only prayed while standing on the balcony. This is not a complete list of the achievements of the team. According to former choristers, festive repertoire was so varied that Eucharistic canon chants rarely repeated – a maximum of twice a year, and some concerts to mark the feast and major holidays, – only once.

Confirming the above, we said Archimandrite Tikhon (Vasiliou) describes his familiarity with the regent and his chorus: *"In July 1988, I attended a liturgy celebrated by Metropolitan Filaret on the ruins of the Assumption Cathedral of the Kiev-Pecherska Lavra. Odessa Seminary Choir also participated in the celebration, and I served as an order specialist. I remember, drew the attention of a huge choir, which sounded freely in the open air, but most impressed by his repertoire. We can say that it was kind of a surprise – especially for those accustomed to the traditional Russian practice, that infiltrated literally in flesh and blood. Here I first heard "Cherubs" of K. Stetsenko, "Worthy Is" of M. Leontovich, as well as songs written by Mikhailo Semenovich. I noticed, that the regent is not indifferent to the works of the composer E. Makkaveisky, and extremely tranquilized heard the familiar "triple Litany"*<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, M. Litvinenko was one of the few who appealed to Ukrainian music of the twentieth century. Begun to actively implement it in worship and at the same time, not afraid of critics. The bold innovation of the artist is often caused outrage pro-Russian clergy and had good reason for this, as raised the issue of personal taste, and at the same time, the absolute unwillingness to change. According to some of them, a departure from the repertoire of the St. Petersburg and Moscow authors (which is nothing less than a tribute to tradition), – without exaggeration, is seen as a kind of heresy. It deserves respect patriotism regent of Kiev, which found its expression in Soviet times, and in such a conservative industry as canonical Orthodox singing.

In art of conducting, Mikhailo Semenovich established himself as a talented composer and church cantor. He penned more than 30 hymns for liturgical purposes, by the way, despite the considerable age, continues to today. Works M. Litvinenko distinguished by their aesthetic qualities, ease to perform, prayerfulness and sincerity. Some of them – "Praise the Name of the Lord" [9], "The greatness of the Lord my soul" [8], "Trisagion" [7], – can be heard in the interpretation of the author. Dedicated to all Orthodox Archpastors, its miniature

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<sup>8</sup> A conversation with Archimandrite Tikhon (Vasiliou). – Odessa, December 3, 2015.

"Eis polla ety, Despota" was a masterpiece of sacred music and performed in churches where there is a relatively large professional choirs. Again, this chant entered the repertoire of the Odessa Metropolitan chorus, and we can read it in the first part of the film "Shepherd" (director – O. Leontenko, 34:22) [11]. Add that vocal training helped save regent voice to old age, as evidenced by the staff and audio footage from newsreels "My Lavra" (Part I, 49:25) [10], and recording by Lavra's male choir [7]. He sang solo, being 80 years of age! Thus, achieving this person convinced that is a remarkable phenomenon in the Orthodox choral culture of independent Ukraine, and therefore deserve research attention.

Concluding the conversation about Odessa during the life and work of M. Litvinenko, it is useful to exaggerate the importance of this stage in his career. Apparently, this city its associated training, practice singers and deep family roots; here crossed paths with many personalities, among them found many friends and associates. Experience gained a Master in the walls of the seminary and the Assumption Cathedral, helped him become a professional regent and a model for future generations. Using available materials and memories, we were able to recreate the life panorama singers Odessa Cathedral in 1956. Also open for its outstanding modern science minister, whose name – Mikhailo Semenovich Litvinenko.

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