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THE INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SHAPING THE URBAN SPACE OF POST-REFORM KHERSON (SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY)

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The purpose of this article is to define the institutional role of the Kherson City Duma and the city administration in shaping the urban space of post-reform Kherson based on an analysis of municipal records, as well as to analyze the mechanisms through which local self-government influenced the modernization of the city's infrastructure, socio-functional organization, and management practices, which shaped the nature of the city's urban transformations during the post-reform era. **The methodological** foundation of the study is modernization theory, which allows for the interpretation of urban self-government as the driving force behind the transition from traditional to rationalized forms of urban space management. Additionally, elements of historical-genetic and structural-functional analysis are applied, enabling the identification of interrelationships between administrative decisions, economic resources, and spatial practices of urban development. **The main focus** of the article is on the analysis of the minutes of the Kherson City Duma meetings, which reflect key areas of urban policy: the development of transportation and logistics infrastructure (cleaning the Dnipro estuaries, regulating navigation, and establishing commercial infrastructure), the modernization of public utilities (water supply, sanitation, and urban improvement), as well as the institutionalization of educational and cultural spaces (reorganization of educational institutions and support for theatrical life). Particular attention is paid to mechanisms for financing urban projects, municipal lending practices, and the city's interaction with state agencies. **The conclusions** emphasize that Kherson's municipal government served as a key institution in the modernization of the urban space, combining administrative, financial, and infrastructural tools of influence. At the same time, its activities demonstrate limited autonomy, constrained by the imperial regulatory framework, even despite the full independence granted to municipal institutions by the 1870 reform, which shaped the specific nature of urbanization processes in the southern Ukrainian region.

Keywords: municipal self-government, urban space, Kherson, Southern Ukraine, city council and administration, infrastructure.

ІНСТИТУЦІЙНА РОЛЬ МІСЬКОГО САМОВРЯДУВАННЯ У ФОРМУВАННІ МІСЬКОГО ПРОСТОРУ ПОРЕФОРМЕННОГО ХЕРСОНА (ДРУГА ПОЛОВИНА ХІХ СТ.)

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Метою статті є визначення інституційної ролі Херсонської міської думи та управи у формуванні міського простору пореформенного Херсона на підставі аналізу матеріалів муніципального діловодства, а також аналіз механізмів впливу самоврядування на модернізацію інфраструктури, соціально-функціональної організації та управлінських практик міста, що визначили характер урбаністичних трансформацій міста пореформенної доби. **Методологічну основу** дослідження становить теорія модернізації, яка дозволяє інтерпритувати міське самоврядування як рушійну силу переходу від традиційних до раціоналізованих форм управління міським простором. Також, застосовано елементи історико-генетичного та структурно-функціонального аналізу, що забезпечує виявлення взаємозв'язків між адміністративними рішеннями, економічними ресурсами та просторовими практиками міського розвитку. **Основний зміст** статті зосереджено на аналізі протоколів засідань Херсонської міської думи, які відображають ключові напрями міської політики: розвиток транспортно-логічної інфраструктури (очищення дніпровських гирл, регулювання судноплавства, формування торгової інфраструктури), модернізацію комунального господарства (водопостачання, санітарний контроль, благоустрій), а також інституалізацію освітнього та культурного простору (реорганізація навчальних закладів, підтримка театрального життя). Особлива увага приділяється механізмам фінансування міських проєктів, практикам муніципального кредитування та взаємодії міста з державними структурами. **У висновках** підкреслюється, що



міське самоврядування Херсона виступало ключовою інституцією модернізації міського простору, поєднуючи адміністративні, фінансові та інфраструктурні інструменти впливу. Водночас його діяльність демонструє обмежену автономію, зумовлену імперською нормативною рамкою, навіть незважаючи на проголошену реформою 1870 р. повну самостійність муніципальних інституцій, що визначало специфічний характер урбанізаційних процесів у південноукраїнському регіоні.

Ключові слова: міське самоврядування, міський простір, Херсон, Південь України, міська дума та управа, інфраструктура.

1. Introduction

The relevance of this study is determined by the need for an in-depth understanding of the historical experience of urban self-government under conditions of social transformation, and of its role in shaping the urban environment. In contemporary Ukraine, which is undergoing complex processes of decentralisation, the reconstruction of territories affected by the war, and a reconsideration of local self-government models, the historical practices of urban development in earlier periods of modernisation acquire particular significance. The historical experience of shaping urban space makes it possible to identify long-term trends in the development of the urban environment, the local specifics of urbanisation processes, and the potential of municipal institutions in ensuring sustainable urban development.

The study of the activities of municipal self-government bodies in Southern Ukraine dates back to the pre-revolutionary period. The first attempts to comprehend the processes of the formation and development of urban communities, the specifics of managing municipal economies, and the functioning of municipal institutions were reflected in the works of nineteenth-century historians and local historians. A significant contribution to this field was made by A. Skal'kovs'kyi (Skal'kovs'kyi, 1836), N. Murzakevych (Murzakevych, 1893), and A. Markevych (Markevych, 1879), among other scholars, who focused on the history of settlement, administrative development, and economic assimilation of the Southern Ukrainian region. Of particular importance are their archaeographic publications, through which a substantial body of documentary material shedding light on the evolution of the urban environment, the system of local governance, and economic processes in the cities was introduced into scholarly circulation. Among the works of this period, a special place belongs to the study by D. Horlovs'kyi (Horlovs'kyi, 1896), devoted to an analysis of the activities of the Kherson City Duma during the first twenty-five years of its existence, in which the author published a number of documents that today remain of considerable importance for reconstructing the practices of municipal administration.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the attention of historians and local historians was largely concentrated on empire-wide socio-economic transformations, the activities of the zemstvo institutions, and issues of socio-political development and the revolutionary movement. Within this context, the functioning of city dumas and municipal boards was

examined only fragmentarily and predominantly as an auxiliary element of broader historical processes. Studies devoted specifically to the mechanisms of shaping Kherson's urban space, or to the role of self-government bodies in developing urban infrastructure, were virtually absent. As a result, a considerable part of the activities of municipal authorities has remained outside the scope of scholarly attention.

Another significant problem lies in the insufficient level of archival material introduced into scholarly circulation. A substantial number of documents of the Kherson City Duma and City Board were, for a long time, used only episodically, which limited the possibilities for a comprehensive study of decision-making processes, the implementation of municipal policies, and the elaboration of urban development strategies. It is therefore a pressing task of contemporary research to expand the source base through archival documents that make it possible to trace the everyday practice of municipal self-government and to reconstruct the underlying logic of urban spatial transformation.

Following the restoration of Ukraine's state independence, a noticeable revival of interest in the history of local self-government and regional urbanisation processes has been observed. This period saw the emergence of studies aimed at reconsidering the role of urban institutions in the modernisation of society and the development of the urban environment. A significant contribution to the study of the history of Southern Ukrainian cities was made by V. Konstantinova (Konstantinova, 2010), F. Turchenko and H. Turchenko (Turchenko, F., Turchenko, H., 2003), and O. Cheremisin (Cheremisin, 2025), who examined the region's urbanisation processes within the context of the modernisation transformations of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time, the activities of the Kherson City Duma as an institutional factor in shaping the urban space remain insufficiently studied.

A significant contribution to research on the activities of the Kherson City Duma was made by O. Cheremisin (Cheremisin, 2025), whose work is devoted to the source-based aspects of the functioning of Kherson's municipal self-government in 1879. The study focuses on reconstructing the everyday practices of urban institutions through an analysis of a body of documents produced by the Kherson City Duma and City Board. The author convincingly demonstrates the considerable heuristic potential of the duma's session journals and the official publications of the municipal public administration as sources for studying decision-making mechanisms, the specifics of interaction

between self-government bodies and the urban community, and the formation of a local administrative culture under the conditions of modernisation transformations in the second half of the nineteenth century.

At the same time, Cheremisin's study did not set out to specifically analyse the role of municipal self-government bodies in shaping and transforming Kherson's urban space. The author's primary focus was on the source-studies characterisation of the documentary corpus of the city duma, the reconstruction of everyday administrative practices, and the topical problem of preserving historical documentary heritage amid the Russian-Ukrainian war, whereas the question of the influence of municipal institutions on the city's spatial development remained beyond the scope of his research.

Thus, an analysis of the existing historiography indicates that the question of the participation of municipal self-government bodies in the transformation of Kherson's urban environment during the second half of the nineteenth century has not yet become the subject of a dedicated, comprehensive study. Existing works predominantly address individual aspects of the city's history or general trends in the region's development, while the potential of archival sources and the possibilities offered by contemporary methodological approaches remain only partially utilised.

The purpose of this article is to determine the institutional role of the Kherson City Duma and City Board in shaping the urban space of post-reform Kherson, based on an analysis of municipal administrative records, as well as to analyse the mechanisms through which self-government influenced the modernisation of infrastructure, the socio-functional organisation, and the administrative practices of the city, which determined the character of urban transformations in the post-reform era.

2. Sources of the Study

The source base of the study comprises two interrelated documents: the «Pam'iatna knyha Khersons'koho mis'koho hromads'koho upravlinnia» [Commemorative Book of the Kherson Municipal Public Administration] for 1880 (State Archives of Kherson Region (DAKhO), F. 4, Op. 1, Spr. 2) and the «Zhurnal zasidan' mis'koi dumy za 1879-1880 rr.» [Journal of the Sessions of the City Duma for 1879-1880] (DAKhO, F. 4, Op. 1, Spr. 1). It is precisely these sources that make it possible to trace the institutional mechanisms through which municipal self-government bodies influenced the transformation of Kherson's urban space during the post-reform period. Whereas the first source reflects the immediate process of administrative decision-making, the course of discussions among the councillors, and the work of standing and ad hoc commissions, the second contains generalised information on the structure of municipal government, the city's financial condition,

the composition of elected bodies, the activities of commissions, and the outcomes of individual municipal projects. Taken together, these documents make it possible to examine the logic underlying strategic decision-making in the sphere of urban space.

Both documents were held in the State Archives of Kherson Region, Fond 4, Opys 1. Following the occupation of Kherson by Russian forces, a considerable part of the documentary holdings was illegally removed, which has substantially hindered researchers' access to the original materials of nineteenth-century local self-government bodies.

By origin, both documents belong to the corpus of administrative records of municipal self-government bodies and arose directly in the course of the practical activities of the Kherson City Duma and City Board. They are characterised by a high degree of authenticity, as they reflect the ongoing administrative activity of the municipal institutions without any subsequent historical interpretation or editorial reworking. It is precisely this feature that makes them exceptionally valuable for reconstructing the mechanisms of municipal self-government and the processes of administrative decision-making, for identifying the range of issues regarded as priorities by the city authorities, and for reconstructing the institutional mechanisms underlying the formulation of municipal policy.

In terms of document type, the Journal of the Sessions of the Kherson City Duma can be classified as minute-taking (protocol) documentation. The Commemorative Book of the Kherson Municipal Public Administration, by contrast, is of a generalising nature. It represents an official publication of the municipal self-government, which systematised the most important documents, reports, financial indicators, government orders, and information on the activities of municipal institutions.

With regard to authorship, the documents are of collective origin. The texts were compiled directly by municipal officials, secretaries of the City Board, and clerks, who were responsible for maintaining the minutes and preparing the printed editions. This accounts for the high degree of official character of the documents while, at the same time, imposing certain limitations, since administrative logic predominates in the presentation of the material.

Both documents cover virtually all areas of municipal self-government activity: budgetary policy, land relations, urban improvement, the development of transport infrastructure, sanitary measures, educational policy, municipal utilities, the functioning of municipal institutions, and interaction with the central authorities.

In terms of reliability, the documents display a high degree of trustworthiness. They were produced within the framework of official record-keeping and were used for the practical administration of the city; however, they did not always fully capture the discussions among

the councillors. They therefore predominantly reflect the official position of the municipal authorities.

3. The Role of Municipal Self-Government in the Development of Kherson's Urban Space

The introduction of the Municipal Statute of 1870 (Polozhenie o gorodskom obshchestvennom upravlenii, 1870: 395-414) constituted one of the key stages in the modernisation transformations of the empire during the second half of the nineteenth century. The reform substantially expanded the competence of municipal self-government bodies in the sphere of economic administration, urban improvement, the development of municipal infrastructure, education, healthcare, and the financial provision of urban needs. Although state administrative oversight of the dumas and boards continued to be maintained, municipal institutions were granted considerably greater scope for independent development. In the second half of the nineteenth century, city dumas gradually became important agents of urban modernisation, acting as the initiators of infrastructural projects, sanitary reforms, educational transformations, and urban improvement measures.

These processes were particularly evident in the cities of Southern Ukraine, whose development took place under conditions of rapid economic growth, the expansion of trade relations, and the region's integration into international markets. The formation of new transport communications, the development of port facilities, population growth, and the increasing complexity of urban infrastructure all necessitated new models of managing urban space. Under these conditions, municipal self-government bodies increasingly functioned as institutions determining the strategic directions of cities' spatial development.

Kherson, as one of the leading administrative and commercial-port centres of Southern Ukraine, fully participated in these modernisation processes. Materials of the Kherson City Duma indicate that, as early as the late 1870s, the municipal authorities were actively intervening in shaping the urban space through the implementation of sanitary measures, the development of water-supply systems, the modernisation of port infrastructure, support for educational institutions, the regulation of land relations, and the creation of new public spaces. It is precisely for this reason that an analysis of the city duma's activities makes it possible to trace the mechanisms through which local self-government was transformed into one of the key factors of urban modernisation in post-reform Kherson.

Throughout the first half of 1879, one of the central areas of activity of the Kherson City Duma was the ordering of the urban environment through the implementation of a set of sanitary and hygienic measures. The impetus for intensifying this work came from the empire-wide policy of combating epidemic diseases; however, in Kherson's case, the sanitary reforms

acquired a considerably broader significance, becoming part of the process of modernising the urban space. As early as the duma's first session on 8 February 1879, a decision was taken to establish a permanent sanitary commission and to allocate 2,000 roubles for measures aimed at improving the urban environment. It is worth noting that, in addition to councillors from the City Board, the commission also included police and medical officials, which indicates the gradual formation of an inter-institutional system for managing the urban space. The very fact of establishing a separate, specialised commission demonstrates a shift from situational responses to sanitary problems towards the formation of a permanent mechanism for monitoring the state of the urban environment (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 8-12).

Particularly indicative was the programme of sanitary improvement for Kherson considered by the duma on 14 February 1879. It provided for the effective zoning of the city's territory by dividing the city into two sanitary-administrative districts and establishing a system of permanent supervision over their condition. In our view, the introduction of special sanitary inspectors is indicative of the formation of new administrative practices for monitoring the urban environment. At the same time, the programme envisaged the organisation of an ordered system for the collection, transportation, and disposal of waste, the designation of specific sites for the storage of refuse, construction debris, and manure, and the arrangement of designated areas outside residential development. In effect, this can be regarded as the formation of elements of spatial planning, whereby different parts of the city were assigned specific economic functions and subordinated to a unified system of control.

The resolution of problems relating to the functioning of slaughterhouses was likewise an important component of the modernisation of the urban space. This issue was addressed at the session of 20 February 1879 and illustrates the gradual shift from private and semi-private practices of livestock slaughter towards the creation of specialised municipal infrastructure. The existing slaughtering establishments were deemed not to meet sanitary requirements and to have a negative impact on the condition of the municipal slaughterhouses funded from the city budget. In this case, one can discern a tendency characteristic of the era of modernization - namely, the concentration of potentially hazardous production functions in specially designated spaces under the control of the municipal authorities (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 18-26). We therefore consider that the contemporary authorities regarded the slaughterhouses as an instrument for ordering the urban environment and improving the city's sanitary condition.

One of the most large-scale directions in the transformation of the urban space was the resolution of water-supply problems. The discussion at the duma's

session of several water-supply system projects indicates that the municipal authorities were aware of the strategic importance of creating a centralised system for supplying the population with water. The proposed projects envisaged the construction of pumping stations and water-purification reservoirs, the laying of a network of cast-iron pipes along the city's central thoroughfares, and the creation of a system of public water-collection points. It is particularly important to note that the introduction of the water-supply system altered the spatial organisation of the city. It raised the sanitary standards of the built environment and created preconditions for the further expansion of the city's territory. In this context, the water-supply system served as one of the key instruments of the modernisation of Kherson's urban space.

Questions concerning the development of transport and port infrastructure likewise occupied a fairly important place in the *duma's* activities. In March 1879, the municipal authorities allocated additional funds to complete works on clearing and deepening the mouths of the Dnieper. This decision was of strategic importance for Kherson's functioning as a major commercial centre. The improvement of navigation ensured the city's integration into Black Sea and empire-wide trade networks, contributed to the growth of trade turnover, and expanded the economic functions of the urban space. At the same session, the *duma* also resolved to deploy the specialised vessel *Dnipro* and to establish a police-and-pilot post. Taken together, these measures indicate the formation of a complex system aimed at ensuring the stable functioning of a transport hub of international significance (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 36-44). It may be argued here that the city *duma* was, in effect, investing in the development of the city's transport framework, which is one of the fundamental hallmarks of urban modernisation in the second half of the nineteenth century.

An analysis of the decisions adopted indicates that the municipal authorities were increasingly moving beyond the performance of purely administrative functions towards the implementation of a comprehensive policy of modernising the urban environment. One of the principal directions of this activity was the transformation of sanitary infrastructure, since epidemic threats were a widespread phenomenon throughout the Black Sea region, prompting the self-government bodies to develop new elements of the urban medical sphere. For instance, at the session of 12 March 1879, the city *duma* considered the establishment of a special isolation facility for potential victims of infectious disease. On the instructions of the City Board, a separate building was leased to house a quarantine hospital. In our view, this may indicate the emergence of new functional facilities within the structure of the urban space. In effect, this represented the institutionalisation of sanitary control and the formation of a distinct medical segment of urban infrastructure,

intended to protect the population under conditions of epidemic danger.

The development of the city's sanitary space was accompanied by an active search for financial mechanisms to implement modernisation projects. This was particularly evident in discussions concerning the construction of the water-supply system and the improvement of city streets. At one session, it was announced that the Ministry of Internal Affairs had declined to provide a state loan for the construction of the water-supply system and the laying of granite paving. Despite the lack of support from the central authorities, the city *duma* did not abandon these projects. On the contrary, the very framing of the issue indicates that water supply and the improvement of the road network were regarded by the authorities as necessary components of a modern urban environment (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 52-64). It may therefore be argued that the city's spatial development depended entirely on the initiative of local institutions and their capacity to mobilise financial resources.

It is notable that the modernisation policy of the self-government bodies was not confined to a single category of issues. An important place among the projects under discussion was occupied by the idea of constructing a new theatre. Within the context of shaping the urban space, this subject acquires particular significance, since it concerned the creation of new public spaces for cultural communication. The municipal authorities regarded the theatre as an important element of the infrastructure of a modern city, one that was expected to foster the cultural integration of the population and the formation of an urban identity. Accordingly, in our view, the development of theatrical infrastructure may be considered a component of the symbolic ordering of the urban space and the formation of new models of a specifically urban way of life. However, the proposed initiative extended well beyond the construction of a single public building. The concept developed by the commission envisaged the creation of an integrated cultural and recreational complex, to include the theatre, the buildings of the city club, and Pavlivs'kyi Park. Of particular significance was the decision to transfer the park for use by a public organisation while retaining the population's right of free access to the greater part of the territory. The users were assigned obligations regarding the maintenance and further improvement of the green space. In this way, the city *duma* acted as an institution shaping a public space intended for leisure, cultural life, and the social communication of the city's inhabitants.

Support for maritime education was likewise an important component of the city's spatial modernisation. The Kherson *duma* paid considerable attention to the activities of the navigation classes, which trained qualified personnel for the merchant and maritime fleet. Support for this educational institution extended

beyond the bounds of local educational policy, since it had a direct bearing on the city's economic specialisation and its role within the system of Black Sea transport communications. In this context, the development of educational infrastructure formed part of a broader strategy of modernising the urban space, oriented towards strengthening Kherson's port functions and its integration into international trade networks.

The materials of the eighth session of the Kherson City Duma, held on 21 June 1879, attest to a further expansion of the functions of the self-government bodies and to the gradual transformation of the дума into a leading institution of urban modernisation. Whereas issues of sanitary safety and anti-epidemic measures had predominated at the beginning of the year, by the summer of 1879 long-term infrastructural and social projects aimed at enhancing the city's competitiveness and improving the quality of the urban environment occupied an increasingly prominent place in the activities of the municipal authorities (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 65-70).

One of the central areas of activity remained ensuring the functioning of transport and communication infrastructure, on which the economic development of Kherson as a major port centre of Southern Ukraine directly depended. The дума paid particular attention to works on clearing and deepening the mouths of the Dnieper. The documents indicate that the implementation of this project required substantial financial resources, amounting to 8,000 roubles, which were used in full for hydro-engineering works and the repair of specialised equipment. Despite the city's difficult financial situation, the дума agreed to continue funding the works and to appeal to the central authorities for additional support.

At the same time, the documents demonstrate the gradual formation of a new administrative culture. The дума required the preparation of detailed reports on the technical results of the works carried out, the volume of funds expended, and the prospects for the project's further implementation. Such a practice attests to the spread of the principles of rational administration and bureaucratic modernisation characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth century. Municipal self-government relied increasingly on financial calculations, technical expertise, and a system of reporting, which was consistent with general trends in the modernisation of municipal administration in European cities.

The session materials convincingly demonstrate that the self-government bodies regarded the system of public education as one of the key instruments of the city's social modernisation. Particular attention was devoted to the funding of schools located in the Voiennyi and Zabalkivs'kyi suburbs (forshtady). Following the zemstvo's refusal to participate in funding these educational institutions, the city дума assumed the additional expenditure itself. In our view, this decision attests to the growing responsibility of the municipal authorities for

the development of the city's peripheral districts and their integration into a unified social space of Kherson (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 70-74).

It is notable that the additional funds were directed primarily towards the educational institutions of the outlying districts, where the less affluent segments of the population resided. In this respect, self-government effectively functioned as an instrument for the social levelling of the urban environment. Educational policy was regarded as an important mechanism for integrating the population into modern urban society.

Of particular interest is the project to reorganise the Kherson Parish School and to establish a new girls' public school in the Pivnichnyi forshtadt. An analysis of the documents indicates that the municipal authorities sought to optimise the territorial distribution of these institutions in accordance with the needs of the population. A survey conducted by the City Board revealed an uneven distribution of access to education across different parts of the city. It was for this reason that the Pivnichnyi forshtadt was chosen as the site for the new school. This district was characterized by a high concentration of poor residents and an insufficient provision of educational institutions (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 1: 76-82).

The second half of 1879 was dominated by the central theme of the construction of the municipal water-supply system. In our view, the concentration of attention on this particular issue may indicate that the self-government bodies already regarded water supply as a necessary condition for sanitary safety. The дума initiated negotiations with the Ministry of Finance regarding the duty-free import of up to 25,000 puds of equipment and materials required for the construction of the water-supply system. At the same time, preparation began on a concession agreement with the Vadon brothers, which, in our view, resembles the use of public-private partnership mechanisms in resolving municipal problems.

The formation of a new municipal financial policy was an important manifestation of modernisation activity. Owing to the limited nature of current budgetary resources, the дума turned to seeking long-term credit mechanisms. To finance infrastructural projects, it was planned to secure a loan of 400,000 roubles against the security of municipal lands through the Kherson Zemstvo Bank. Of particular significance is the fact that the city's land fund was regarded as an economic asset capable of attracting investment. To this end, the municipal authorities initiated the preparation of a copy of the plan of the city lands, the completion of the necessary land-survey procedures, and the acquisition of the official documents required to formalise the security (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 2: 8-12).

At the same time, the materials of the water-supply commission may also attest to the spread of new administrative practices. Particularly indicative is the involvement of the engineer Lev Veishtok in preparing

the project. His communications to the duma demonstrate that, in the consideration of infrastructural projects, technical expertise, competition among contractors, and economic calculations were assuming ever greater importance. In effect, municipal self-government was beginning to apply the principles of competitive selection and professional project evaluation, which was a characteristic feature of modern municipal administration.

The session of 2 November 1879 was of particular significance, as it attested to the expansion of the self-government bodies' competences well beyond the bounds of traditional municipal economy. Symptomatically for present-day Kherson as well, the question arose of publishing a history of Kherson prepared by Lurchenko. In this instance, the municipal authorities acted as an agent in the formation of historical memory and local identity. Support for the publication of the city's history attests to a gradual recognition of the importance of historical narrative as a significant element of urban development and civic self-identification (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 2: 16-22). In effect, the self-government bodies participated in constructing the image of Kherson as a distinct urban community possessing its own historical past.

The Ministry of Finance's decision to grant the city a loan of 150,000 roubles against the security of municipal lands proved exceptionally important for the implementation of the modernisation programme. This decision simultaneously demonstrates both the financial capacities of the self-government and the limits of its autonomy. On the one hand, the city duma gained access to substantial investment resources for implementing the water-supply project. On the other hand, the very mechanism of borrowing attested to the continued dependence of local self-government on central governmental institutions. The implementation of large-scale infrastructural projects remained impossible without the sanction of the imperial administration.

The further development of this trend can be traced at the session of 12 November 1879, when practical preparations for the construction of the water-supply system began. Of particular significance was the involvement of the military engineer Khainovs'kyi in conducting a technical survey of the city and preparing the corresponding project documentation. In our view, this approach reflects the role, characteristic of the second half of the nineteenth century, of the military engineering corps as one of the principal bearers of technical expertise. The self-government actively drew on state technical capacity in order to implement its own modernisation plans (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 2: 28-67).

Equally indicative was the establishment of a special water-supply commission. Its creation may attest to the further specialisation of municipal government and the formation of an increasingly complex system of decision-making. Large-scale infrastructural projects required the establishment of separate working bodies

with clearly defined functions, although the councillors themselves were also actively involved in the commission's work (DAKhO. F. 4. Op. 1. Spr. 2: 72-84).

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the materials of the sessions of the Kherson City Duma for 1879 makes it possible to conclude that, under the conditions created by the implementation of the Municipal Statute of 1870, the self-government bodies were gradually transformed from institutions responsible for routine economic administration into an important institution of the socio-economic modernisation of the urban space. The documents convincingly demonstrate the expansion of the functional scope of the duma's activities, which increasingly intervened in the sphere of engineering infrastructure, transport communications, medicine, education, culture, and financial administration. In practical terms, this manifested itself through the implementation of large-scale projects for the construction of the water-supply system, the improvement of navigation at the mouths of the Dnieper, the reform of the educational network, support for maritime training, and the introduction of new mechanisms of urban improvement. It may therefore be concluded that the city duma became the principal coordinator of modernisation projects aimed at adapting Kherson to the new economic and social challenges of the second half of the nineteenth century.

At the same time, the materials examined make it possible to trace the specific features of the functioning of municipal government within the imperial administrative system. Despite the substantial expansion of the competence of the self-government bodies, their activity remained closely tied to state structures and dependent on governmental decisions. The implementation of the most large-scale processes required obtaining ministerial approval, securing state loans, coordinating financial operations, and drawing on the technical expertise of representatives of the central authorities. It was precisely this interaction that determined both the possibilities and the limits of the modernisation activity of the Kherson City Duma, which was continually compelled to seek a balance between its own economic needs and the regulatory constraints imposed by state administration.

At the same time, it should be concluded that the activity of Kherson's self-government reflected broader processes of the modernisation of urban space in Southern Ukraine. A new administrative culture gradually took shape, grounded in the principles of rational planning, financial calculation, technical expertise, and institutional specialisation. The establishment of specialised commissions, the development of long-term infrastructural programmes, the introduction of sanitary-inspection systems, the involvement of private capital, and the use of competitive mechanisms in the implementation of municipal projects all attest

to the emergence of modern practices of governance at the local level. In this context, the Kherson City Duma emerges as a coordinator of modernisation processes,

whose activity contributed to the city's gradual transition towards a more complex system of modern municipal administration.

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