A short note on the 7th International Conference of the European Rural History Organization (EURHO) in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) on September 11–14, 2023

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In September 2023, 385 scholars from 36 countries participated in the 7th International Conference of the European Rural History Organization (EURHO) in Cluj-Napoca (Romania). The program of the conference consisted of 76 panels, some of which combined two or three thematic sessions. Such a thematic variety is a result of the organization's development since the mid-2000s, when two working groups focused on the conceptual and methodological foundations of research on agrarian history. Officially the EURHO started its work in the 2010s, which includes organizing its international conference every second year.

This year, the conference was held at the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, the participation fee included a two-year membership in the EURHO and for reasonable additional payment participants could visit the Romulus Vuia Ethnographic Park of the Transylvanian Museum of Ethnography, the "Hungarian village" in the mountains, etc.

26% (almost every fourth participant) of scholars at the conference were agricultural historians from Southern Europe (Spain, Italy and Portugal), about 5% came from Ibero and Middle Americas (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru) and the United States. Given the conference venue, the surrounding East-European countries were widely represented: 23% of participants came from Romania, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia; if we add Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the representation of Eastern Europe will be 29%. About 40% came from the other Central, Western and Northern European countries: France, Germany, Sweden, UK, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Greece, Finland, Ireland, Serbia, Norway, Estonia, Iceland, Ukraine, North Macedonia, and even Turkey, Israel and India, but not from Russia.

The 76 conference panels were scheduled in chronological order — from the Middle Ages, early modernity, 19th and 20th century to the

present time. The collection of abstracts of the papers presented at the panels was distributed among the participants in advance. To give the reader an idea of the diversity of the rural history issues considered at the conference in time and space, further I will present the list of the largest panels (consisting of two-three sessions), mention the selected one-session panels, and finally make some comments on five panels.

Panels consisting of two or three sessions, thus, lasting four-six hours:

- Nature vs Commerce in Times of Crisis, 1200–1800 (6 papers);
- Spatial Pattern of Inequalities in Rural Areas, 1300–1910 (10);
- Organization of Agrarian Production and Labor Relations in the Ottoman Large Landed Estates (7);
- The Actors of Rural Modernization in Late Habsburg Empire and Post-Habsburg Space, 1867–1938 (7);
- Commodity Frontiers in Latin America and the Caribbean, 19th–20th Centuries (9);
- Agricultural Competition in Europe, 19th–20th Centuries: An International Perspective (9);
- Rethinking Innovation, Technological Changes, and Global Agricultural Knowledge Circulations in the 20th Century (6);
- Soy and Agro-Food Change (7);
- Land Ownership and Land Tenancy as Driving Forces of Landscape Change in Rural Spaces (8);
- Agrarian Change, Socio-Ecological Transition and Social-Environmental Impact in the 20th Century Agriculture (7);
- Contemporary Land Grabbing and Colonial Land History (7);
- Representing Property and the Uses of Land: The Use of Imagery in Analyzing Land Relations and Their Changes (9);
- Microcredit as an Economic Rural Resource: Comparing Models in the Historical Perspective (6);
- A Long-Run Approach to Village Communities: Family, Elite and Social Mobility (10);
- Meadows in Europe: Historical Perspectives on Sustainable Agricultural Land Use (7);
- When Rural Historians and Film Makers Meet (5).

My selection of other panel topics is as follows:

- Epidemics and Famine-Related Mortality Crises;
- Urban Landownership and Short Food Supply Chains in Medieval Europe;
- Administering Medieval Rurality (13th–15th Centuries);
- Day Laborers, Well-off Peasants and Social Mobility in Late Medieval Europe;
- Economic Efficiency in Agricultural Economy in Late Medieval and Early Modern Central and Eastern Europe;
- Demographic Crises in Rural Areas;

- The Technical and Intellectual Challenges of Plant and Animal Species during the Colombian Exchange (16th–20th Centuries);
- Access to Property as an Indicator for Living Standards and Social Mobility;
- Changes and Continuities of the Peasant Work Culture after Collectivization in East Central Europe;
- Harvest Failures — Impacts and Consequences;
- Land Ownership and Inequality;
- Animal Health in the Industrialized Stable;
- Property Rights and Social Groups in Context: Overcoming the Individual–Commons Dichotomy;
- Always at the Bare Minimum? The Standard of Living of Rural Households;
- Rural Societies and Climate Change.

The following five panels which I attended might be of special interest to the reader of the *Russian Peasant Studies*:

1. Panel 32: The Impact of the World Wars on the Public Supply Conditions in Europe (1914–1953). What exactly caused the reduction in grain production and marketing during the World War I is still questioned in Russia and other countries. The German case presented by Uwe Müller (Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe) seems to be relevant for comparison with Russia, while there were also presentations on Poland and Ireland, and one presentation on Hungary after the World War II.
2. Panel 33: Agriculture in European Socialist Countries: Pattern, Ideology and Pragmatism. This panel focused on the 'scale' of Sovietization in agriculture in Eastern Europe after the World War II. Some presentations considered the work of the Swedish Economic Intelligence during the cold war, others argued that Stalin's "Soviet model" had little to offer as work incentives and that finding reasonable ways for renumeration for work inputs was rather a joint effort of the Socialist countries after the death of Stalin. The results of collectivization were systematized for Slovenia, Hungary and Romania.
3. Panel 36: Knowledge Networks: The Role of Experts and Technicians in Agricultural Modernization (1900–1980). This panel consisted of three sessions and twelve presentations on Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Belgium, Galicia, Italy, Greece and Hungary. However, I would add to this list the Soviet Union as the country joined many agricultural associations after Stalin's death.
4. Panel 56: The Rules of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Waste of Natural and Economic Resources (this topic is also very important for the Soviet Union). Four presentations focused on Italy to show that spending huge amounts of mon-

ey on the regulation of the European Union agricultural market (guaranteed prices for producers) was a waste of subsidies as the welfare and structural goals of this policy were not achieved: farmers' incomes grew due to increased production, but this led to the EU market saturation as the guaranteed prices did not reflect the market dynamics. Thus, resources allowed to produce surplus food, but surplus produce was sold abroad at dumping prices, damaging agriculture of importing countries, and unsold goods with limited shelf-life were destroyed. However, compared with the Soviet Union, the EU agricultural policy was much more successful: by guaranteeing stable prices above the world-market level, the EU made agricultural producers search for more efficient ways of production, which significantly increased agricultural produce and yields, and the USSR could only dream about such results of its agricultural policy. The Soviet Union also kept increasing subsidies for agriculture but failed to increase yields and produce: in the state command economy, farms were never forced or put in a position to improve work efficiency as there were no high quality machinery and equipment.

5. Panel 66: Crossing Micro with Macro: Data to Observe and Transform Agriculture. This was a well-organized panel with an excellent and inspiring commentator, raising important political questions on the use of data. Federico D'Onofrio (University of Vienna) made a presentation on "Averaging Pears and Apples: Farm Accountancy Data on the Eve of the Keynesian Revolution", Beatrice Penati (University of Liverpool) — on "Hitting the Ground: Peasant Household Budget Studies Meet Agricultural Policy in Early Soviet Uzbekistan", Margot Lyautey (Helmut-Schmidt-University in Hamburg) — on "Agricultural Statistics in Occupation: When French and German Ways Collided (1940–1944)", Niccoló Mignemi (National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris) — on "Mapping French Agricultural Potential through the Lens of Its Regional Variety (1940s–1960s)", and Sylvain Brunter (National Centre for Scientific Research in Paris) — on "Controlling Farmers or Controlling Agricultural Administration? A History of the Common Agricultural Policy through Data (1980s–1990s)".

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