PHILOSOPHY

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RUSSIA'S NAME IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

*Abstract. **The purpose of the study** is the theoretical justification of the transformation of the historical names of Russia from the princely period to the present. **The research methodology** includes retrospective analysis, historical analysis, theological analysis, philosophical analysis, comparative and bibliographical methods that contribute to understanding of Russia's history, Russian philosophy of name and Russian belief in own unique culture. **The scientific novelty** of the article is based on analyzing the genealogy of name "Russia" along historical, theological, geopolitical and philosophical lines within the Moscow school of philosophy. Special attention is paid to religious nature of Russia's understanding of own history, as well as some specific facts regarding Russian historical narratives which arise in the sector of Russian nationalistic ideology. **The Conclusion.** Using the mentioned methods, it is proven that the toponym "Russia" indicates the artificiality of the name of the territory of the modern Russian Federation, which was adopted by the Moscow monarchies in order to prove their right to create their own geopolitical empire.*

Keywords: Russia, Kyivan Rus, Orthodoxy, history, historical narrative, historical myth, philosophy of history, philosophy of name, theory of ethnogenesis.

Relevance of the topic. Any reader of the history of the Russian Federation at some point will face way too many answers to a very simple question: where did Russia take its name from?

There's no single prevailing narrative on this in the Russian historical literature. Being produced most of the time by historians, who are loyal to the Russian government, such literature is usually filled with ideological conclusions rather than fair analysis.

Formulation of the problem. Right now, when Russian Federation is fighting the war against Ukraine, trying to bring to Ukraine its historical narratives, it's important for us to have a better understanding of what Russia is and where it came from. In my previous articles, I wrote several explanations on what ethnicity should be considered to be Russian per se – meaning, ethnicity that created Russian nation. Such an ethnicity is Mordva, a territory not far away from the cities of Moscow and Vladimir.

Russian historians kept trying to prove that Mordva is a Finno-Hungarian ethnicity and, basically, one of the European identities. For instance, Lev Gumilyov wrote about this profoundly (Gumilyov, 2018). However, no serious argument was ever made on why we should believe that territories to the east from Moscow were populated by Finnish and/or Hungarian tribes.

We know that Gumilyov didn't have any sort of academic freedom in modern sense. To be able to publish his writings in the Soviet Union, he had to obey the rules. Moreover, his father Nikolay was put to death by the Bolshevik regime in 1921 – and, therefore, Lev Gumilyov had to keep proving that, unlike his father, he's loyal to the Soviet government in Moscow.

Gumilyov's task was to contribute to the Soviet theory of ethnic identities that had several subsets of political tasks:

1) Establishing a narrative that Russians, Belarussians and Ukrainians are the same nation.

2) Establishing a narrative that Russia is a European country, not an Asian country.

3) Establishing a narrative about Soviet identity, which was important for political use in the Caucasian region and Baltic countries.

4) Creating a theory of melting pot for smaller nations (Yakutia, Buryatia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Tuva, Birobijan etc.) where they would

eventually be recognized as people of Soviet ethnicity. (Gumiloyv, 2018; Hill, 2021).

That's why Gumilyov was constantly writing about all kinds of medieval ethnicities populating eastern and central regions of Europe, as well as western part of Asia. To him, Russians were proto-Hungarians mixed with proto-Finns in the age before the Mongolian era of 13th century. This shouldn't be taken at face value.

Firstly, such a presupposition is based on a belief in a thesis that most of the migration processes in early medieval times were happening along the East-West axis, while it's obvious that North-South axis was at least as important. To Gumilyov, that's Mordva people who came to live on the territories where modern Hungary and Finland is. But what seems to be more likely, is that northern tribes from Siberia and Arctic archipelagos traveled to the South in order to find a more comfortable climate and do some sort of agriculture work. So, instead of Gumilyov's theory of Finn-Hungarian identity being born somewhere to the east of Moscow, we should rather pay attention to how Arctic tribes were able to travel to the Moscow region and what kind of ethnic culture prevailed there.

Secondly, we can't really see any proximity, any substantial parallels in the structure, phonology, semantics and semiotics of modern Russian, Hungarian and Finnish languages. You can always find similarities between pretty much any languages spoken on the planet if you need to do so for political reasons, but, to be fair, Russian, Hungarian and Finnish languages are way too different between each other.

Thirdly, in the medieval times, Moscow was not in any way an influential geopolitical center. If Moscow somehow would by connected to principalities in Finland and Hungary through dynastical lines, this would bring to substantial political consequences. For instance, Kyiv had connections with Scandinavian dynasties in in he 10th−11th centuries, which is why Kyiv principality had rulers of Scandinavian origin. Nothing of this type was happening in Moscow. Only much later, dynasty of Romanovs tried to interconnect with older Byzantium dynasties, but that didn't become an important development for the Moscow monarchy. Windsors, a British dynasty, had connections to Greek royal families, so Russians though this way: if we get connected dynastically to Greek and/or

Byzantium elites, we'll get closer in our connection to Windsors. This is a very doubtful logic.

Purpose of the article is to present the results of the study of the genesis of the toponym "Russia", which is the basis of the name of the modern country, the Russian Federation. In older manuscripts, the territory to the East from Ukraine are called "Moscovia" or "Muscovia". We see this in "Samovydets Litopys" (Dzyra, 1971), "Samiylo Velychko Litopys" (Boryak, 2020), we see this in writing of Kyiv Lavra monks, like Ioannyky Galyatovsky (Chepiga, 2011). The very verbal root "Rus" was born in the city of Kyiv in 10th century, when local prince Volodymyr the Great, who was a Swede, called his principality "Kyivan Rus".

Presentation of the topic. In later XVII century, when the Russian army de facto occupied Ukraine following the 1654 Pereyaslav treaty that Russian side broke, Moscow historians started creating this narrative that it's Moscow that is "Rus" de facto, while "Kyivan Rus" was a historical mistake. Basically, Moscow privatized linguistical root "Rus" in 17th century, after the era of Bogdan Hmelnitsky, a political leader of Ukraine, and metropolitan Petro Mogyla, a spiritual leader of Ukraine. Those were too vocal on the European political scene on the Ukrainian matters, which is why Muscovites had to wait for both of them to die in order to privatize name "Rus" for own geopolitical purposes.

Then, Muscovites, who started calling themselves "Russians" in early 18th century, turned to monastic writers who were becoming increasingly popular. With most of the local literature being too elitist for ordinary Russians, that's the monastic writers who were read by people living in rural regions, outside the big cities in the Russian Empire. Many of those monks, who were writing books on history, were contributing to the narrative that Moscovia is Rus per se.

We see signs of this in writing of Ioann Tobolskiy (1651−1715), a bishop of the Russian Church who was born in the ancient Ukrainian city of Uman, but later went to serve the Christian mission to Siberian tribes (Panchenko, 1999). Then we should also mention books by bishop Leonid Krasnopevkov (second part of 19th century) (Smirnova, 2015). We also see signs of this in later ages – take writings of Illarion Troitsky (1886−1929) (Gorbachev, 2016).

That's how we know that Russia wasn't really Russia before the XVII century, but it was Moscovia – this is the name by which this territory was known on the scene of global diplomacy of that age. But, to substantiate own understanding of why Moscovia needs to be an empire, Moscow put a lot of efforts in spreading the narrative about it being Russia, sometimes even know by the name "Greater Russia" ("Velikorossiya").

Let's pay attention to the philosophy of renaming Moscovia into Russia. This is a very, very important factor. As a country having a monastic type of Christianity, Moscovia was following the most conservative version of faith in God, in Holy Trinity. In eastern Christianity, when a person chooses to become a monk, he or she should get his or her name changed. That means that, after becoming a monk or a nun, that person is now a totally different human individual and has to start writing own biography from scratch.

To Moscovia, changing the name to "Russia" was a symbolic act of analogous to a monastic tonsure. Moscovia wanted a greater life, a greater historical fate – and by changing the name of this country through a monastic-like procedure meant it wanted to devote itself to God to receive this holy blessing for being a big and mighty empire. That was the logic.

Earlier, elder Filofey Pskovskiy (1465−1542) created a narrative about Moscow becoming a third Rome, after another two Romes – Rome of the Roman Empire and Rome of the Byzantium Empire – lost the virginity of their Christian faith. That's a totally Moscovian narrative as we know well – both western Europe and eastern Europe have been having their own, very interesting Christian traditions. "Moscow is the third Rome and where won't be the fourth!" – Filofey Pskovskiy wrote.

Now let's go back to how Moscovian intellectual tradition understands what name is. It has its own philosophy of name, which is somewhat based on the medieval Latin philosophical tradition that also paid a lot of attention to what names and words mean philosophically.

The greatest accomplishments in the sector of the philosophy of name were bade by Russian philosophers Sergey Bulgakov, Pavel Florenskiy and Aleksey Losev. All of them knew each other and learned a great deal from each other. Florenskiy was one of those who persuaded Bulgakov to become a Christian priest. Meanwhile, Losev, who also talked to Florenskiy, decided to become a monk, taking name Andronik. Later,

Florenskiy's grandson also become a monk, taking this very name – Andronik. That was the special feature of the spiritual life of this Russian intellectual group.

All three, Bulgakov, Florenskiy and Losev presented their own philosophy of name. To Bulgakov, name was a theological reality, where spiritual energy gets substantiated through a word (Bulgakov, 1999). This philosophy is based somewhat on the Jewish intellectual tradition, but also on the Bible and how names are described there.

Florenskiy's philosophy of name took a lot from Aristotle and Immanuel Kant. To Florenskiy, name is a matter of teleology, which means a person, a human individual should be trying to reach the goal of own life which is transcribed in that person's name. Such an approach is also a basis for changing the name in Russian monasticism (Florenskiy, 2004).

Losev was a much more conservative philosopher, than both, Bulgakov and Florenskiy. Spending most of the time writing about Antique Age, Losev prioritized logic over other intellectual methods and, therefore, his philosophical descriptions are usually very, very lengthy. The word-count in Losev's book is enormous which makes them difficult for many to read. Finally, Losev's philosophy of the name is a matter of so called "spiritual geometry", where numbers co-exist with names in the world of ideas (Losev, 2018). Such a theory is based on Platonic tradition that has own methods for analyzing these issues. As a seeker of principles of metaphysical harmony, Losev was thinking that the name is something that puts you in a certain place in this complicated world of being and not-being. Name brings a person, an individual or, basically, any essence from not-being to being. So, Losev's philosophy of name is existential.

Given how important the philosophy of name is to Moscow philosophical tradition, there's nothing surprising that Moscovia decided in XVII century to change its name which symbolizes a radical shift in its geopolitical trajectory. Russians, having own tradition of Christianity, believe that the name matters a great deal. The world is all about the name. And life is in its nature carrying a name.

Now, let's pay attention to writings of metropolitan Ioann Snychev (1927−1995). As a bishop of Petersburg in the Soviet times, he was known for being a Russian far-right spiritual radical. A Russian nationalist.

An author of a nationalistic version of Russia's history. As an ideologist, Snychev was a very prolific writer, spending most of his spare time with books. Some of his faithful even though that metropolitan Ioann should be doing more praying and more spiritual work, serving liturgies for the believers. But Snychev thought that writing books is like a prayer to him. That's his way of praying with words (Snychev, 1996).

I obtained a collection of historical works of Snychev in 2004 in a small private library in Russia's Tver region, that's to the north from Moscow. Snychev was no longer popular in that part of Russia, nor he was popular in Moscow or Petersburg. The reason was this. In 2000, Vladimir Putin became a ruler of the Russian Federation and soon decided that the Russian Orthodox Church plays a role which is too big within the Russian society, which is why it needs to be sidelined.

Snychev was one of the most influential Orthodox thinkers in Russia in the early 1990s. Born in a Russian ethnic settlement in Ukraine's Herson region in 1927, Snychev was a spiritual student to bishop Manuil Lemeshevsky, another Russian nationalist. Herson used to have lots of people of Russian ethnicity that were brought here in late 17th centuries from places like Siberia and Arctic. There, in Herson, these people had a much better climate where they could live with their families.

It's well known that agriculture industry has serious problems in Siberia and, of course, Arctic region. Back in the 1990s, the World Bank was providing investments for Boris Yeltsin's government in order to finance development of Russia's North. In order to receive those funds, Yeltsin's government had to implement certain social and economic reforms. However, when Vladimir Putin became Russian leader, he refused to cooperate with the World Bank, saying that he's not going to obey any of the Western demands for reforms in the Russian Federation that has to pursue own path, thought Putin. Since then, many Russians living in Siberia and Arctics had to relocate to different parts of the country to make a living. After Russia exited the World Banks's "Northern Development" program, no one has ever invested anything substantial in Russia's North.

Kremlin decided to sideline books by Snychev from the Russian historical mainstream, so they wouldn't be producing any serious impact on what Russian citizens think about own history. It's not Snychev's

nationalism that scared Putin. It's the essence of Snychev's nationalism that Kremlin had fears about. While Putin was more of a communist-type political leader, Snychev was standing behind the idea of resurrecting monarchy in Russia through a modern political system. Moreover, Snychev was a big fan of historical teaching of Anton Denikin, Russian general who fought against the Bolsheviks in 1917−1922.

Some of the Putin's advisors were telling him he should also get engaged into Denikin's political philosophy, but, as a former KGB officer, he didn't really like the so called Russian White Movement led by Denikin, since it was anti-Soviet. Besides this, one of Denikin's generals – Petr Krasnov – led the Russian Cossack regiment within the German army, fighting against the Soviet army during the World War II. So, there's no way Putin would trust Denikin's theories.

Back to Snychov's philosophy of Russian history. Metropolitan Ioann Snychev was pushing forward this idea that European dynasties were trying to take over Moscow in most of the historical ages (Snychev, 1996). They were creating tension that surrounded Moscow. They tried to influence Russian emperors through their embassies. They were crafting plans for overthrowing Romanov's dynasty in Russia. That what Snychev wrote. His main concept for producing own version of Russian history was grounded on this West vs Russia geopolitical approach. That what made Snychev somewhat popular among Russian nationalists and different far-right groups.

The Conclusion. Let's draw some conclusions. In this article, we explained where the name "Russia" came from and why modern Russia is de facto Muscovia. This territory's key ethnicity is Mordva, which produced a cultural genotype of contemporary Russian nation.

Throughout the ages, Russian historians tried to hide this. They were claiming European roots of the Russian nation, they were trying to prove that Ukrainians and Belarussians are Russians. They were producing lots of fake narratives for own political reasons which were imperialistic in their nature.

What matters now is that Russia faces own national history the way it is, in a proper and fair manner. There are no reasons to believe that Russia possesses any sort of "greatness" which would allow it to invade neighboring countries – Moldova (1992), Georgia (2008), Ukraine

(2014, 2022), political operation in Belarus (2020). Russia needs to be changed and should become a peaceful nation. It shouldn't be organizing wars or so called "special military operations". A price for these wars and these operations is too costly for Russia which has been mostly living in poverty for the past 30+ years.

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