
Discussion

The Change of the Name of the Russian Language in Russian from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii*: Did Politics Have Anything to Do with It?¹

TOMASZ KAMUSELLA

INTRODUCTION

My initial field of research was the interdisciplinary study of ethnicity and nationalism, which attuned me to seemingly inconspicuous choices of names for such entities as nations, states, and languages. After scratching the surface, it often turns out that changes in the names of these entities are frequently dictated by various politically motivated maneuvers and (national) groups' needs, expressed on the political plane. While examples of this phenomenon abound in world history, a particularly clear instance is revealed by scrutinizing the emergence of the term "Ukraine" as the name of a polity and the expression "Ukrainian" derived from it for the polity's nation and its national language.

Until the end of World War I, few Westerners would have heard of a "Ukraine" in the modern meaning of this word.² The word achieved interna-

1 I wrote this article when on a Foreign Visitor's Fellowship at the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan. This fellowship accorded me the necessary time and freedom to conduct research, while the SRC's invaluable library and its understanding staff provided me with indispensable publications. I thank my friend, Michael O'Gorman, for his invaluable help with my prose, and Michael Moser and the anonymous peer reviewer for their insightful comments, critiques, advice, and suggestions for improvement. It goes without saying, however, that I alone am responsible for any error or infelicity that remains.

I am also grateful to the editors of *Acta Slavica Iaponica* who not only accepted, but actually acted upon, the idea that this article could open a discussion on the 1830s change in the Russian name of the Russian language. It is a pleasure that on their invitation, Oksana A. Ostapchuk kindly agreed to comment on my text. Her commentary read in conjunction with the article contributes to delimiting the field where an answer to the question about the name of the Russian language may be found. I hope that with this guidance it will be easier for other scholars to arrive at a plausible explanation of the issue at hand.

2 In two searches for books with the word "Ukraine" in the title, conducted using the electronic catalog of the Library of Congress on August 14, 2011, the first search for the years 1800–1913 revealed six such publications, and the second search for the period 1914–1918, seven. In the former case, "Ukraine" actually featured in the subtitle in three of these six books, rather than in the main title; the place name in these cases referred to a region in former Poland-Lithuania, rather than to the territory today comprehended by the term "Ukraine."

tional currency in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), which led to the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922, with Ukraine as one of its ethnonationally construed “Soviet socialist republics.” In common Slavic, *ukraina* literally means the “edge of a country or land,” hence “borderland.” In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Rus’ chroniclers applied this term to various border regions and areas. In 1569, the personal union between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland was made into a real union, yielding a new polity by the name of the Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita* in Polish and *Rech' Pospolita* in Ruthenian, the Cyrillic-based official language of the Grand Duchy) of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In the process of unification, the southern half of the Grand Duchy was transferred to Poland, and the largest chunk of this vast territory was organized as the Voivodeship (administrative region) of Kijów [Kyiv]. At the turn of the seventeenth century, it became popular to refer to this voivodeship as *Ukraina* [Ukraine], due to its distant and peripheral location vis-à-vis the kingdom’s capital in the faraway west, first in Cracow, and after 1596, in Warsaw. Furthermore, the Kijów Voivodeship bordered on Poland-Lithuania’s two main rivals for dominion over Eastern Europe, namely Muscovy (or the Russian Empire after 1721) to the east and the Ottoman Empire to the south.³

In Muscovian (later, Russian) vocabulary, this voivodeship was dubbed “one of the lands of Rus’.” In the late fifteenth century, Muscovy espoused “gathering the lands of Rus” as its political and legitimizing program, thus claiming to be the sole rightful heir to the historical Rus’ and to its political and cultural heritage. This amounted to a standing claim to those western Rus’ lands of Poland-Lithuania that were located in the east and center of the Commonwealth. In the Polish political terminology of that time, *Ruś* (or *Ruthenia* in Latin) denoted the Rus’ lands within the frontiers of the Kingdom of Poland. It was quite common to refer to the Kijów Voivodeship as *Ruś kijowska* [Kijów Rus’]. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Slavophone and Orthodox Cossacks, initially under the leadership of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi, defied Poland-Lithuania by establishing their short-lived independent polity of the Hetmanate.⁴ It

3 cf. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Podole pod panowaniem tureckim. Ejalet kamieniecki 1672–1699* (Warsaw: Polczek, 1994).

4 And, again, the Hetmanate is a late nineteenth-century coinage introduced by historians sympathizing with the Ukrainian national cause. cf. M. Dragomanov, *Pro ukraïns'kykh koza-kiv, tatar ta turkiv* (Kiev: V. I. Davydenko, 1876), p. 56. They derived the name from the leader of the Cossacks, whose position was that of hetman. (In turn, this title was originally accorded to the two highest military commanders in the Commonwealth, one in the Kingdom of Poland and the other in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.) The polity’s official name was the *Viis'ko Zaporiz'ske* (literally, the “Zaporizhian Army [of the Cossacks]”), usually translated into English as the Zaporizhian Host. In his international dealings, Khmel’nyts’kyi spoke of his realm as the “State of Rus” (*Państwo Ruskie*) with the Poles or as the “State of Russia” (*Hosudarstvo Rosijskoe*) with Muscovy. Volodymyr Kubiiovych, ed., *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, Vol. 2 (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 472; Leo Okinshevych, *Ukrainian Society and Government 1648–1781* [Ser: Monographs, Ukrainian Free University, Vol. 27] (Munich: Ukrainian Free University, 1978), pp. 113, 115.

stroved for survival by veering between its powerful neighbors, the Commonwealth and Muscovy (and, sometimes, the Ottoman Empire, too). Finally, in 1667, the voivodeship was split between Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania along the River Dniepr, with the city of Kijów (now known as Kyiv) and its vicinity falling to the former, thus becoming Kiev.

In Muscovy, in accordance with the aforementioned state ideology of gathering the lands of Rus', the Hetmanate was known as *Malaia Rus'* [Little Rus'], the name being an early modern invention (as explained below). When the name of Muscovy was changed to the Russian Empire (*Rossiiskaia Imperia*), *Malaia Rus'* became *Malaia Rossiia* or *Malorossiia* (both meaning "Little Russia") as a result. Some institutions of the Hetmanate had survived within Muscovy in an autonomous Little Russia, before this autonomy was rescinded in 1764 and the region turned into an ordinary Russian *guberniia* or governorate (administrative region), named Little Russia. The name survived in administrative use until 1802, when the Governorate of Little Russia was split into the two governorates of Chernigov [Chernihiv] and Poltava.⁵

However, in Muscovian and Russian nomenclature, the term "Ukraine" did sometimes make an appearance for referring to Sloboda Ukraine (*Slobodskaiia Ukraina*, or "Free Ukraine"), centered on today's Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, and straddling the contemporary Ukrainian-Russian border.⁶ It extended east of the Hetmanate, and remained under Muscovian/Russian control. The local Cossacks enjoyed a degree of autonomy until 1765, when it was made into the Governorate of Sloboda Ukraine. In 1835, it became the Governorate of Khar'kov [Kharkiv] and the term "Ukraine" disappeared from Russian officialese.⁷

Another complication emerged in the late eighteenth century with the three partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth imposed by the Habsburgs, Prussia, and Russia. The division was adjusted in favor of Russia in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Eventually, practically all the Rus' lands, previously in the possession of Poland-Lithuania, found themselves within the frontiers of the Russian Empire. The only exception was the eastern half of the Habsburg Crownland of Galicia.⁸ In Russia, one

⁵ Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s–1830s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1988).

⁶ Afanasiy Shafonskii, *Opisanie morovoï iazvy, byvshei v stolichnom gorode Moskve s 1770 po 1772 god* (Moscow: Pri Imperatorskomu Universitetu, 1775), p. 157.

⁷ V. Pirko et al., eds., *Opisaniia Khar'kovskogo namestnichestva kontsa XVIII veka. Opisatel'no-statisticheskie istochniki* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1991).

⁸ "Galicia" was invented by Austria as its administrative response to the delicate question of how to organize and legitimize its seizure of part of Poland-Lithuania. Officially, the territory was named *Regnum Galiciæ et Lodomeriæ* in Latin and the *Königreich Galizien und Lodomerien* in German, meaning the Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. (The Latin term appeared for the first time in 1205 when on his coronation, the Hungarian king, Andrew II, among others adopted the title of *Rex*, or King, of Galicia and Lodomeria.) "Galicia" and

officially spoke of Little Russia and the Little Russians (*Malorossiiane*, *Malorossiitsy*, *Malorossiantsy*, or *Malorossy*), who as a “branch of the (Great) Russian” *narod* (people or nation) spoke their Little Russian (*Malorossiiskii* or *Maloroskii*) *narechie* [dialect or idiom] of the “(Great) Russian language.”⁹ In Vienna, however, the inhabitants of eastern Galicia were referred to as *Ruthenen* [Ruthenians] and their language, as *Ruthenisch* [Ruthenian].¹⁰ The terms were derived from Latin based on the Polish usage of *Rusini* for the people and *Ruski* or *Rusiński* for their language.¹¹

The difference in names, emphasized by the political frontier between Little Russia and Galicia, was also consciously deepened on a confessional basis. St. Petersburg abolished the Uniate Church in Little Russia (and elsewhere in the lands gained from Poland-Lithuania), thus making all the Slavic inhabitants there homogenously Orthodox.¹² On the other side of the border, Vienna strove for the opposite, and enhanced the status of the Uniate Church by renaming it “Greek Catholic,” an appellation seen as more respectable.¹³ Hence, by the turn of the twentieth century, Vienna had officially differentiated the Little Russians from the Ruthenians as separate peoples (though among these

“Lodomeria” in this name are Latinized forms of the names of the late medieval Rus’ duchies of Halich (Halych) and Vladimir (Volodymyr) in Volhynia. Following the Mongolian invasions, Halich remained the sole powerful (almost) independent Rus’ duchy and managed to seize Volhynia from the Mongols. In 1245, the pope made it a kingdom (*Regnum Galiciæ et Lodomeriae*) and eight years later, crowned its ruler, Daniel (Danylo), the first-ever King of All Rus’ (*Rex Rusiae*). In the mid-fourteenth century, Poland annexed this kingdom in a piecemeal manner.

Importantly, the western half of Austria’s Galicia with the former Polish capital of Cracow at its center never formed part of the medieval Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria. Before the partitions, it had been known as *Małopolska* or Lesser Poland; the extension of the name Galicia westward conveniently (for Vienna) eliminated the name of Poland. Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

9 Iu. S. Sorokin, ed., *Slovar’ russkogo iazyka XVIII veka*, Vol. 12 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2001), p. 49.

10 The German terms *Ruthenen* and *Ruthenisch* were proposed as official names in 1843 by the Greek Catholic bishop, Mykhailo Levits’kyi of the Przemysl (Przemyśl) Eparchy, as the parallel German terms *Russinen* and *Russinisch* sounded too Russian. Vienna approved and adopted the bishop’s proposal. Tomasz Kamusella, *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008), p. 383.

11 Unlike English, in some languages, the names of languages and nations do not begin with a capital letter; in this article, even when referring to them in these other languages, I employ a capital letter for the convenience of the Anglophone reader.

12 Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2002), p. 113.

13 Very often, the name “Uniate” was seen as pejorative by those whom it denoted and also by Roman Catholics with whom the Uniates had been joined by eponymous ecclesiastical unions.

peoples themselves, this distinction was not generally recognized or accepted). The German usage reflected this division, reserving the ethnonym *Ruthenen* for the Greek Catholic Slavs in Galicia, with *Klein Russen* [Little Russians] being used for the Orthodox Slavs in Little Russia.¹⁴ Because Polish became the main language of administration and politics in Austro-Hungary's Galicia after 1869, Polish terms corresponding to *Małorusini* and *Małorosjanie* (borrowed from Russian and German) meaning the Little Russians appeared. Following the tenets of the ideology of gathering the lands of Rus', St. Petersburg saw Ruthenians as "stray" Little Russians and treated both groups as little more than regional branches of the (Great) Russian nation (people). Beginning in the 1850s, many Ruthenians in Galicia concurred, marking the beginning of the Russophile movement in this crownland.¹⁵

At the turn of the twentieth century, leaders of the burgeoning Ukrainian national movement, drawing on ideas formulated in the first half of the nineteenth century, conceived of the Ruthenians and the Little Russians as people forming a single nation, perhaps divided by a political and confessional border, but nevertheless united by a common history and heritage. To underwrite this proposed unity, a common name for both Ruthenians and Little Russians was proposed, "Ukrainians," while Little Russia and eastern Galicia together came to be known as "Ukraine." The Ukrainian national movement had come of age.¹⁶

This change in name worked for the Ukrainians, unlike the case of the White Russians (or today's Belarusians). The traditional Polish-language ethnonym *Białorusini* [White Ruthenians] or its German counterpart *Weißruthenen* connected them either to the Commonwealth's Ruthenians or to Galicia's Ruthenians. On the other hand, in Russia, as in the case of the Little Russians, Belarusians were perceived to be a regional group of the (Great) Russian people (nation), and named adequately as *Belorossianie* or *Belorusy* [White Russians]. As a result, the traditional name of their land, *Belaia Rus'* [White Rus'] in Rus-

14 cf. Johann Philipp Gustav Ewers, *Geschichte der Russen. Versuch eines Handbuchs* [Vol. 1: Von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Alleinherrschaft Peters des Großen] (Dorpat [Tartu], Russian Empire: At author's expense, published in Berlin, Prussia: Realschulbuchhandlung and in Leipzig, Prussia: P S Kummer, 1816), p. 510.

15 John-Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia, 1867–1900* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), pp. 10–11, 51, 99–100, 138–148.

16 Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, *Istoriia Ukrainskoi Rysi*, Vols. 1 and 2 (Lwów: Societas Scientiarum Shevchenkiana, 1899); Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 171–172; Ivan Ohienko, "Nashi nazvy: Rus' – Ukraina – Małorosja," in *Istoriia ukraïns'koï literaturnoi movy* (Kyiv: Nasha kul'tura i nauka, 2001), pp. 98–105; George Wilfried Simpson, *The Names "Rus," "Russia," "Ukraine" and Their Historical Background* [Ser: Slavistica: Proceedings of the Institute of Slavistics of the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, Vol. 10] (Winnipeg: Ukrainian National Association in America, 1951).

sian was changed to *Belaia Rossiia* or *Belorussiia* [White Russia] in the nineteenth century.¹⁷ The change was reflected very clearly in German usage. *Weißenruthen*, which had been an alternative form vis-à-vis *Weißenrussen* [White Russians], became largely obsolete from the 1920s onwards. In the early twentieth century, it was proposed that the Belarusians could disentangle themselves from their putative ethnolinguistic commonality with the Russians by adopting for themselves a name clearly different from that of the Russians, as the Ukrainians had already done. The choice fell on the ethnonym “*Kryvichans*” (*Kryvichi*, *Krivichi*), under which name a medieval Slavic group from the territory of Belarus was known.¹⁸ This time, the ploy did not work, even despite some efforts to revive it after World War II.¹⁹

In the heady days of the short-lived Ukrainian independence after World War I, the roles were reversed. The Ukrainians could name the Russians as they saw fit, and they did, sometimes referring to them as *Moskali* [Muscovians] and to their language as *Moskovs'ka mova* [Muscovian].²⁰ It was a revival of the Polish coinage *Moskale* [Muscovians] current in Poland-Lithuania, and as such was an ideological reply to the Russian coinage “Little Russian,” which Ukrainians wanted to replace with “Ukrainian,” as the standard name for their language and nationality. In part, their wish was soon granted when, following the Polish-Soviet War (1919–1921),²¹ the Ukrainian lands were divided between Poland and the Soviet Union. The Soviet section became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic with Ukrainian as its official language. But in the interwar period, Ukrainians living in Poland continued to be referred to as *Rusini* [Ruthenians], despite their appeals to discontinue this widely disliked practice. (Those who favored this ethnonym either wanted to be recognized as Russians – so-called Russophiles – or were predecessors of today’s Rusyns.) As a result of World War II, practically all the Ukrainian lands found themselves in Soviet Ukraine.

At that time, the country was dubbed “the Ukraine” in English, a direct loan from the German coinage *die Ukraina*.²² The definite article in front of the name indicated the persistence of the memory that the name was derived from

17 Maks Vasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress, 1964), p. 149.

18 cf. Vatslaŭ Lastoŭski, *Padruchny rasiiska-kryūski (belaruski) sloūnik* (Kaunas: Ministerstvo belaruskikh spraў ū Litve, 1924).

19 cf. Ian Stankevič, *Padruchnik kryvoitskai (belaruskai) movy* (3 vols.) (Regensburg: Ukrains'ke Slovo, 1947).

20 The Belarusians, who at the end of World War I found themselves torn between independence, Soviet Russia, Lithuania, and Poland, then also referred to the Russian language as “Muscovian.” cf. Maksim Haretski and Haŭryla Haretski, *Maskouska-beloruski sloūnik* (2nd ed.) (Vil'na: Vydar. U. Znamaroúskaga, 1920). When this dictionary was published, Vilnius belonged to Soviet Russia.

21 Kamusella, *The Politics of Language*, p. 177.

22 I thank Michael Moser for drawing my attention to this route of linguistic transfer, via German into English.

the common noun “borderland.” Only when Ukraine became an independent polity following the breakup of the Soviet Union (1991) was the definite article dropped in English usage, on the insistence of Ukrainian authorities in the mid-1990s. Similarly, independent Belarus requested the international community to drop the forms Belorussia and White Russia, either transliterated or translated from the Russian term, in favor of the direct transliteration of the Belarusian-language name of the country, namely, *Belarus'*. Russian official usage conformed to this request, but the traditional term *Belorussiia* is heard more often in non-official circumstances in Russia than the preferred *Belarus'*. The situation is similar in Germany and Austria; diplomats speak of *Belarus*, but in other contexts, the country is still *Weißrussland* [White Russia]. Interestingly, in East Germany, the Slavo-Germanic coinage of *Belorusßland* [Belorussia] had previously been in general use.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE NAME OF RUSSIA?

In the early 2000s, when I began writing a book on language politics and nationalism in modern Central Europe,²³ I noticed that the Russian name for the Russian language (*Russkii*) appears not to be derived from (or correlated with) the name of the country (*Rossiia*), which is almost a standard procedure elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe for instance, *Deutschland* – *Deutsch* for “Germany – German,” *Latvija* – *Latviešu valoda* for “Latvia – Latvian,” *Magyarország* – *Magyar nyelv* for “Hungary – Hungarian,” *Polska* – *Polski* for “Poland – Polish,” or *Shqipëria* – *Shqip* for “Albania – Albanian.”) This discrepancy is not visible to foreigners, as the usage became “regularized” in languages other than Russian, for instance *Rusia* – *Rusishtja* (derived from *Russkii*) in Albanian, “Russia – Russian” (derived from *Russkii*) in English, *Russland* (or until recently, *Rußland*) – *Russisch* (derived from *Russkii*) in German, *Oroszország* – *Orosz* (derived from *Russkii*) in Hungarian, *Krievija* – *Krievu valoda* (derived from the name of the northern Slavic group, Kryvichans, who bordered the Latvian-speaking area in the past) in Latvian, or *Rosja* – *Rosyjski* (derived from *Rossiiskii*) in Polish.

But even with a minimal knowledge of Russian, one cannot fail to notice that the Russian-language name for the Russians’ country, *Rossiia*, cannot be directly derived from what they dub the Russian language, *Russkii*, or vice versa. Obviously, both terms come one way or another from “Rus’.” However, the latter term developed on the foundations of the Cyrillic-based Church Slavonic language (which became secular Ruthenian in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Russo-Slavonic in Muscovy²⁴). On the other hand, *Rossiia* is Rus’ that was

23 Kamusella, *The Politics of Language*.

24 Interestingly, Ruthenian speakers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania spoke of the vernacular used in Muscovy as “Muscovian,” while the Muscovians reciprocated, dubbing Ruthenian *Litovskii*, literally “Lithuanian,” but obviously *not* meaning the Lithuanian language as officially employed in the Lithuania of today. After the 1569 transfer of the southern half of

first filtered by way of Byzantine Greek (the most prestigious language in the Orthodox world prior to the rise of the Russian Empire) as *Rhōssía* before entering Latin under the guise of *Rossia*. (Another Latin term, sometimes also used for referring to Russia, *Ruthenia*, comes directly from the name *Rus'*, and was typically employed to designate the *Rus'* lands in Poland-Lithuania, *not* those in Muscovy.)

Today, in the Russian language, “Russia” is rendered *Rossia*, whereas the adjective “Russian” may be given in two different ways, either as *Rossiiskii* or as *Russkii*. The former comes from *Rossia*, whereas the latter comes from *Rus'*. Although translated into English and other languages with the use of a single counterpart, for example, “Russian” in English, Russian speakers themselves tend to keep the semantic fields of the two Russian adjectives separate when referring to their state and to their language (in other cases, there is a considerable overlap between *Rossiiskii* and *Russkii*). *Rossiiskii* refers to the state and its citizens (hence usually irrespective of ethnicity), while *Russkii* refers to the Russian language and the ethnolinguistically defined Russian nation that constitutes a subset of Russia’s citizenry.

I was mystified by the discrepancies that clearly departed from the Central and Eastern European norm of deriving the name of a nation and its language from the name of the nation’s country or the other way round. I tried to find information on this phenomenon by consulting the available standard encyclopedias and handbooks on Slavic languages, but to no avail. I extended my search to the bibliographies of the Slavic grammars and dictionaries compiled by the renowned Slavist, Edward Stankiewicz.²⁵ It soon became apparent that in the titles of the majority of Russian dictionaries published between the mid-eighteenth century (when this language was conceptualized and its standardization commenced) and the early 1830s, Russian was referred to as *Rossiiskii* (not *Russkii*, which is the standard usage nowadays).

How did this come about? Muscovy was merely one of a plethora of *Rus'* duchies. Initially, it was one of the smallest and most peripheral of these duchies and, compounding the improbability that it might become influential, the duchy was founded quite late, at the close of the thirteenth century. As a result

the Grand Duchy to the Kingdom of Poland, the term *Litovskii* began to denote the Ruthenian language of the new, smaller grand duchy, as employed in Wilno [Vilnius], while the new term *Volynskii* [Volhylian] emerged for referring to the Ruthenian of the Kijów [Kyiv] Chancery. Kamusella, *The Politics of Language*, p. 152; Boris Andreevich Uspenskii, *Istoriia russkogo literaturnogo iazyka (XI–XVII vv.)* [Ser: Sagners Slavistische Sammlung, Vol. 12] (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1987), pp. 260–261; Andrii Danylenko, “On the Name(s) of the *Prostaja Mova* in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” *Studia Slavica Hungarica* No. 1–2 (2006), p. 101.

25 Edward Stankiewicz and Dean S. Worth, *A Selected Bibliography of Slavic Linguistics*, Vol. 2 [Ser: C. H. van Schooneveld, ed., *Slavistic Printings and Reprintings*, Vol. 49, Pt. 2] (The Hague: Mouton, 1970); Edward Stankiewicz, *Grammars and Dictionaries of the Slavic Languages from the Middle Ages up to 1850: An Annotated Bibliography* (Berlin: Mouton, 1984).

of its entering into a personal union with the Duchy of Vladimir-Suzdal in 1328, Muscovy absorbed the other duchy and was as a consequence elevated to the rank of a grand duchy, aptly renamed the *Velikoe Kniazhestvo Moskovskoe* or *Magnus Ducatus Moscuensis* in Latin. The role of Muscovy grew in influence on several counts. First, it became the main intermediary between the Mongols and their other tributary Rus' duchies from the turn of the fourteenth century until 1480, when Mongolian control over most of the Rus' lands ended. Secondly, in 1325, the seat of the Metropolitan of Kyiv and All Rus' was moved to Moscow. Then, in 1448, the metropolia was de facto divided between Muscovy and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. A local was appointed to the post of Metropolitan at Moscow, instead of a Greek ecclesiast, as had previously been the tradition, marking the loss of control of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople over the Church in Muscovy, and on the other hand, the beginning of an autocephalous Muscovian (later Russian) Orthodox Church.

Ivan III during his long rule (1462–1505) built on the economic strength and politico-religious legitimacy of Muscovy, tripling the territory of his realm. What is more, in 1472, he married a niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium²⁶ and adopted its two-headed imperial eagle as a heraldic symbol for Muscovy. An ideology emerged that presented Moscow as the “third and last Rome,” which, of course, in the eyes of Europe boosted and justified the grand duchy’s prestige and its program of “gathering the lands of Rus” (though in reality, this ideology had little impact on Muscovy’s internal political life).²⁷ Having vanquished the other surviving Rus’ duchies as well as the neighboring successor states of the Mongols (or, rather, those of the Golden Horde, that is, the Khanates of Kazan’ and Astrakhan’²⁸), the Grand Duchy of Lithuania remained Muscovy’s main rival on account of the Grand Duchy’s possession of the western Rus’ lands. In recognition of the rise of Muscovy to the rank of a major regional power, the polity was renamed the *Tsar’stvo Ruskoe* (Tsardom,

26 “Byzantines” referred to their state as *Romania* (country of the Romans) or *Basileia Romaion* (Roman Empire), *not* Byzantium. Byzantium or the Byzantine Empire are the sixteenth-century terms coined in the Holy Roman Empire almost a century after the fall of Constantinople. On the ideological plane, it allowed for a strengthening of the claim of the “Holy Empire” to Romanness, while denying it to the already-extinct medieval Roman Empire with its capital at Constantinople. Clifton R. Fox, “What, If Anything, Is a Byzantine?” *Celator* No. 3 (1996) [http://www.romanity.org/htm/fox.01.en.what_if_anything_is_a_byzantine.01.htm, Jun 22, 2011].

27 Edward Keenan, “On Certain Mythical Beliefs and Russian Behaviors,” S. Frederick Starr, ed., *The Legacy of History in Russia* (Armonk NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), pp. 19–40.

28 It appears that apart from gathering the lands of Rus’, Muscovy tacitly espoused a similar and parallel program of gathering the lands of the Golden Horde. The latter, however, was not trumpeted abroad, because it would have been next to impossible to utilize the essentially Islamic tradition of the Golden Horde for boosting the legitimization and status of Muscovian statehood in Christian Europe. Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), p. 52.

or Kingdom, of Russia). The Hellenized form *Rossiia* also made an appearance in this kingdom's parallel name of *Tsarstvo Rossiiskoe*, while abbreviated versions of the polity's name yielded *Rusiia*, *Rosiia*, and *Rossiia*.²⁹

Finally, in 1721, Peter the Great, as part and parcel of his program of Westernization in an effort to make Russia a significant European power, changed the name of his country to *Rossiiskaia Imperiia* [Russian Empire]. As is readily visible from the name, he settled for the Latinized form of the Greek name of Russia and the Latin term *imperium*, rather than adhering to the Slavic one of tsardom. The word "tsardom" was relatively unknown in Central and Western Europe, where the language of international politics and scholarly discourse was Latin. As such, this term could hardly add to the prestige of Russia in the eyes of the West. Many Orthodox hierarchs and rank-and-file Orthodox priests considered Latin to be the "enemy language" or even the "devil's language" of Catholicism. Peter sought to and was able to curb the influence of the Orthodox Church on the state in various ways. Among these was his imposition of a Latinate name on his realm.

Next to *Russkii* for the Russian language and nation/people, the parallel adjective of *Velikorusskii* was revived for solemn occasions in the late 1830s and it finally entered popular usage three decades later.³⁰ It revived the late medieval distinction that was made by Orthodox Greek-speaking hierarchs in Constantinople when talking about the lands of Rus'. They spoke of the Rus' lands in Poland-Lithuania as *Mikrà Rhōssía* [Rus' Minor, Little Rus'] and to those outside the Commonwealth (thus mainly in Muscovy) as *Megálē Rhōssía* [Rus' Major, Great Rus']. Obviously, with these terms, the hierarchs did not express the territorial sizes of the two parts of Rus', which in any case fluctuated dramatically over the course of time. The more distinguished title of *Megálē* was accorded to the lands where Orthodoxy was the faith of the ruling monarchs, and reserved the title of *Mikrà* for those Rus' lands where the Orthodox faithful lived under Catholic rulers.³¹

The distinction, besides being the ultimate origin of the term "Little Russia" discussed above, also yielded the parallel coinage of *Velikorossiia* [Great

29 G. A. Bogatova, ed., *Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.*, Vol. 22 (Moscow: Nauka, 1997), p. 218; Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, p. 24; Dimitri Strémooukhoff, "Moscow the Third Rome: Sources of the Doctrine," *Speculum* 1 (Jan. 1953), pp. 84–101; Maks Vasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress, 1971), pp. 505, 520.

30 cf. Vladimir Dahl, *Tolkovyj slovar' zhivago velikoruskago iazyka*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg and Moscow: Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti, 1863–1866); V. I. Chernyshev and I. Yu. Barkhudarov, eds., *Slovar' sovremenennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, Vol. 2 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1951), p. 146; Thomas S. Noonan, "Great Russian Language and People," in Joseph L. Wieczynski, ed., *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, Vol. 13 (Gulf Breeze FL: Academic International Press, 1971), pp. 114–120.

31 Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p. 68; Vasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Vol. 1, p. 289.

Russia] that had already appeared in the sixteenth century, conveniently merging the terms “grand duchy” and *Rossia* for referring to Muscovy.³² In 1833, the newly appointed Russian minister of education, Sergei Uvarov, proposed that the unity of Russia (or the limiting of the centrifugal political forces that were then evident) be secured by espousing the idea.³³ Among other factors, this quest for unity and a degree of homogeneity in the empire’s multiethnic and multiconfessional population gave rise to the aforementioned theory that the *Velikorossy* or Great Russians (equated with the Russian nation or people) were the direct descendants of the Rus’ population. The groups of Little Russians and White Russians were “unnaturally” separated from the Great Russians for four to five centuries by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland, but after the partitions of Poland-Lithuania, these two groups were reunited with the Great Russian *narod* within the Russian Empire, as regional or ethnographic groups of the Great Russians.³⁴ Likewise, with the publication of Vladimir Dahl’s authoritative dictionary of the Russian language, *Tolkovyi slovar’ zhivago velikoruskago iazyka* [The Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language] (1863–1866), the concept of the Great Russian language made an appearance. (Curiously, the dictionary itself does not record the word *Velikorusskii*.³⁵) In its scope, Little Russian and White Russian were perceived as *narechiia* [dialects or idioms] of Great Russian (that is, Russian). Like the existence of Little Russians and Great Russians, the persistence of the *narechiia* was also explained by the inclusion of half of the Rus’ lands in Poland-Lithuania. The *narechiia* were seen as a disunifying blemish on the face of the Great Russian language and were slated for extinction or for confinement to folklore, which entailed their official banning from book and journal production in Russia from the 1860s to 1905.³⁶

The concepts of a Great Russian language and a Great Russian *narod* persisted until the Bolshevik Revolution, not least thanks to the four editions of Dahl’s dictionary published between 1863 and 1914. Interestingly, it was the *Obshchestvo liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti* [Society of the Lovers of Russian Language and Culture] that published the first edition. “Russian” in the society’s

32 Uspenskii, *Istoriia russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, pp. 284–285.

33 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959).

34 Mikhail Grushevskii (Hrushevs’kyi), “Obychnaia skhema ‘russkoi’ istorii i delo ratsional’nogo izlozheniya istorii Vostochnogo slavianstva,” *Stat’i po slavianovedeniiu* 1 (1904).

35 cf. Vladimir Dal’, *Tolkovyi slovar’ zhivago velikoruskago iazyka*, Vol. 1 (St. Petersburg and Moscow: Vol’f, 1903), p. 432.

36 Alexei Miller and Oksana Ostapchuk, “The Latin and Cyrillic Alphabets in Ukrainian National Discourse and in the Language Policy of Empires,” in Georgiy Kasianov and Philipp Ther, eds., *A Laboratory of Transnational History: Ukraine and Recent Ukrainian Historiography* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2009), pp. 167–210); Witold Rodkiewicz, *Russian Nationality Policy in the Western Provinces of the Empire (1863–1905)* (Lublin: Scientific Society of Lublin, 1998).

title is rendered as *Rossiiskii* (not *Russkii*). In this way, the already-obsolete term *Rossiiskii* for the Russian language met with the new official contender, *Velikorusskii*, in this edition of Dahl's dictionary.

Velikorusskii fell out of use in Soviet Russia, because the Bolsheviks, striving for a degree of legitimacy for their regime, reviled the imperial past by lambasting it with the label of "Great Russian chauvinism."³⁷ But a degree of ambiguity remained, as they approved the publication of Dahl's dictionary in 1935 and 1955. The title of the former edition was shortened to *Tolkovyj slovar'* [The Explanatory Dictionary]. The offending conclusion, *zhivago velikoruskago iazyka* [of the Great Russian Language], was initially dropped but returned in the 1955 edition, perhaps in recognition of the crucial role that the revived (Great) Russian nationalism had played in mobilizing the population for the war effort during World War II, known in Soviet and Russian historiography as the Great Patriotic War.

QUESTION MARKS

As remarked above, between the 1750s and 1830s, the name of Russia (*Rossiia*) corresponded unambiguously to the name of the Russian language (*Rossiiskii*), as is the norm in the case of other states across Central and Eastern Europe. I do not know why the name of this language changed to *Russkii* and why this occurred in the 1830s. Until 2007, I worked at one of Poland's best centers of Russian studies. I thought that colleagues more knowledgeable than I in the history of Russian and other Slavic languages would have readily provided an explanation. To my surprise, no answers were forthcoming. It appeared that they either did not know of this issue or considered it unimportant. I was flabbergasted at first, because I believed that if, for instance, in the span of a decade it were decided to write about the "Anglian" language instead of the English language, someone would at least bat an eyelid. Should I dare add to the name of the Polish language, *Polski*, a tiny diacritic above the letter [s], resulting in *Pol̄ski*, it would be immediately detected and decried as grossly erroneous. Yet, in the change from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii*, one letter was replaced by another ([o] by [u]) and three were dropped altogether (the first and second [i] and the third [s]), but thus far, I have not managed to uncover any expression of surprise, let alone of dismay, at this occurrence, voiced by those concerned in the 1830s.

I looked for information on the change in encyclopedias and handbooks but to date, I have not found a single line. Concerned that I might have checked in the wrong sources, in 2008, using a lull between terms at Trinity College in Dublin, I decided to enquire further afield. Acting upon the advice of the doyen of Polish historiography, Jerzy Tomaszewski, from the University of Warsaw,

37 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 7–8.

I approached the renowned Belarusian philologist, Adam Maldzis, who has written extensively on literary and linguistic relations in Belarus (or rather, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. I wondered whether an *ukase* [decree] might have been issued that officially replaced *Rossiiskii* with *Russkii* as the name of the Russian language. He replied that despite his two decades of intensive research on the nineteenth century, he had never come across a trace of such a decree. Maldzis proposed that after the war against Napoleon (1812–1815), the Russian elite came to the conclusion that in the multiethnic empire, a distinction should be drawn between the population at large (*Rossiane*, cf. *Rossiiskii*) and the polity's core nation of Russians (*Russkie*, cf. *Russkii*), and that the practice continues to this day, the first term denoting a Russian citizen and the latter referring to an ethnic Russian.³⁸

This conjecture appeared to me to be flawed because it identified the precipitating cause of the name change as a change in the elite Russian disposition occurring in the immediate post-Napoleonic period; it stood at odds with Stankiewicz's bibliographies indicating that the change began in the 1830s and was completed by the 1860s.

I also wrote to Aleksandr Dulichenko at the University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia, a renowned Slavist who had introduced the concept of a "literary microlanguage" for research on small, often neglected and unrecognized, Slavic languages employed for writing and printing books in the ethnolinguistic borderlands.³⁹ He came up with another explanation. According to him, first, at the turn of the nineteenth century, people, especially the elites, began to clearly distinguish between Church Slavonic (or Russo-Slavonic, meaning the Russian redaction of Church Slavonic) and the Russian language (that is, the vernacular spoken by educated people).⁴⁰ It concurs with the equation of Mikhail Lomonosov's "middle style" of Russian with present-day Russian itself, which was achieved by Nikolai Karamzin, Alexander Pushkin, and other literati at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁴¹ In his mid-eighteenth-century tripartite scheme, Lomonosov's middle style mixed the vernacular (dialect) of Moscow with Church Slavonic, while he based the high style on Church Slavonic, which left the low style identical to the Moscow vernacular.⁴²

Following the advice of another correspondent of mine, the Slavist Janusz Rieger from the University of Warsaw,⁴³ I decided to follow the trail in the au-

38 Adam Maldzis, Letter (June 28, 2008).

39 Aleksandr D. Dulichenko, *Slavianskie literaturnye mikroiazyki. Voprosy formirovania i razvitiia* (Tallinn: Valgus, 1981).

40 Aleksandr Dulichenko, Letter (May 9, 2008).

41 G. I. Shkliarevskii, *Istoriia russkogo literaturnogo iazyka* (Khar'kov: Izdatelstvo Khar'kovskogo universiteta, 1967), p. 146.

42 John Bucsela, "The Role of Lomonosov in the Development of Russian Literary Style," Ph.D. dissertation (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1964), p. 62.

43 Janusz Rieger, Email Letter (May 14, 2008).

thoritative dictionaries of the Russian language. The first significant linguistic monument to the Westernization of Russia, initiated by Peter the Great, was the *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi* [Dictionary of the Rossiiskii Academy] (1789–1794), published during the reign of Catherine the Great and dedicated to her. Significantly, in its title, this dictionary does not name the language whose lexicon it describes⁴⁴; nor does it record the lexemes *Rossiiskii*, *Rus'*, or *Russkii*.⁴⁵

This cautious approach to the question of the name of the language is tacitly accounted for in the foreword. The academicians write that they are compiling a dictionary of the Slavic-*Rossiiskii* language (*Slavenorossiiskii*), that is, of Lomonosov's high style.⁴⁶ Next, they proceed to remark that Slavic-*Rossiiskii* is Slavic with an admixture of *Russkii* words, which is an apt description of the nature of the high style.⁴⁷ Later in their foreword, they settle for *Rossiiskii* as the name of the language whose words they record.⁴⁸ It seems that the academicians were not entirely sure (or disagreed) as to whether they were to focus on the high or middle style in this dictionary. But on the basis of their propositions, it seems fair to say that they tacitly labeled the high style Slavic-*Rossiiskii*, the middle style *Rossiiskii*, and the low style *Russkii*. Hence, Slavic-*Rossiiskii* meant Church Slavonic, *Rossiiskii* – Russian, and *Russkii* – the vernacular, or *prostaia mova* (Slavic *lingua rustica*).⁴⁹

Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv [Dictionary of the Russian Language of the Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries] (1975) notes that the coinage *Rusiia*, derived from *Rus'*, appeared in the fifteenth century and remained in the title of the rulers of Muscovy through the seventeenth century.⁵⁰ In the late fifteenth century, the adjective *Rossiiskii* emerged, and in 1551, it was adopted in Muscovy's official name, the *Velikiia Rossiiskia derzhava Moskovskogo gosudarstva* [Great Rossiiskii State of Muscovy]. Three years later, this adjective yielded the noun *Rosiia* (sometimes also spelt *Rossiia*) in the tsar's title, *Vseia Rosiia tsar' i velikii kniaz'* [Tsar and Grand Duke of All Rus' (or Russia)].⁵¹

The adjective *Russkii* initially referred to all the lands and inhabitants of *Rus'*. In 1674, it started to denote European Russia, that is, Muscovy, less its Siberian possessions east of the Urals. It appears that these mountains marked the easternmost frontier of Muscovy proper; the view of the elite (using our modern conceptualization) was that a merely colonial expansion of this polity was taking place beyond this line. In 1623–1624, the concept of the "Russkii

44 cf. *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*, Vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1789), title page.

45 cf. *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*, Vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademiia Nauk, 1794), p. 166.

46 *Slovar' Akademii Rossiiskoi*, Vol. 1, p. v.

47 *Ibid.*, p. vi.

48 *Ibid.*, pp. xii–xiii.

49 Uspenskii, *Istoriia russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, pp. 60–262, 272.

50 Bogatova, ed., *Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.*, p. 259.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 218.

faith" (*Russkaiia vira*) was coined,⁵² which drew the line between the Orthodox "Us" and the non-Orthodox (mainly Muslim and Buddhist) "Them" in Muscovy. Both usages, I infer, contributed to the rise of *Russkii* as referring to ethnic Russians.⁵³

The gap between *Russkii* and *Rossiiskii* was never very wide in the early modern period, because at that time, it was bridged by intermediary forms that are not current (at least in standard Russian⁵⁴) today. They included the following forms for the Rus'/Muscovian male, namely *Rossiianin*, *Rosiiianin*, *Rusianin*, *Rusin*, *Rus*, *Ruski*, and *Russkii*.⁵⁵ A similar series can be extended between Rus' and *Rossia*, namely, *Rus'*, *Rusia*, *Rusa*, *Russa*, *Roseia*, *Rosiia*, and *Rossia*.⁵⁶ And likewise, a similar net of words may be hung between the adjectives *Russkii* and *Rossiiskii*, that is, *Russkii*, *Rus'kii*, *Ruskii*, *Ruski*, *Roskii*, *Rosskii*, *Rosiiskii*, and *Rossiiskii*.⁵⁷

This plethora of forms and their varied and variously overlapping meanings are a testimony to the natural variability of a language⁵⁸ before a standard form is imposed on it with authoritative dictionaries and grammars that constitute the normative basis for any printed matter in a standard language (in the Western meaning of this word) and for school textbooks published in it. (The popular educational system is mainly responsible for instilling this standard among the target population.) The variability observed in the case of Russian continued far longer than in the case of the main Western and Central European vernacular languages. The latter emerged as languages of administration, book production, and finally, education and academic pursuits, especially in the wake of the Reformation (sixteenth century) that decisively undermined Latin as the sole written language of the Western Christian world. On the other hand, among the Orthodox and Greek Catholic populations in the Rus' lands, or mainly in Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania, the commonality of mutual comprehension (underscored by the use of Church Slavonic among the literati) was preserved, thanks to the North Slavic dialect continuum (extending from the

52 It appears that the term in its distinctive function (as the Ruthenian [Ukrainian] form of *vira* [cf. *vera* in standard Russian] may indicate) stems from the opposition of the Ruthenian faith (Orthodoxy) to the Polish faith (Catholicism) current in the Ruthenian territories of Poland-Lithuania from the turn of the seventeenth century. (I thank Michael Moser for this useful insight.)

53 Bogatova, ed., *Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.*, p. 260.

54 Many of these forms are preserved in colloquial Russian. cf. F. P. Sorokoletov, ed., *Slovar' russkikh narodnykh govorov*, Vol. 35 (St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2001), pp. 268–271.

55 Bogatova, ed., *Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.*, pp. 218, 260–261.

56 Vasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Vol. 3, pp. 505, 520–521.

57 Bogatova, ed., *Slovar' russkogo iazyka XI–XVII vv.*, p. 218; Vasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Vol. 3, p. 505.

58 Here "a language" is anachronistic shorthand for a dialectal basis, sometimes employed for writing and printing, of what (we can say retrospectively, with the privilege of hindsight) was to become a language later on.

eastern borderlands of the Holy Roman Empire to Muscovy) and to the cultural and institutional commonality of Orthodox Christianity.⁵⁹

But as evidenced by the titles of the Russian dictionaries recorded by Stankiewicz,⁶⁰ in the course of the standardization of Russian during the second half of the eighteenth century, a consensus was reached. The state was dubbed *Rossia*, its population, *Rossiane*, and the language, *Rossiiskii*. This consensus began to unravel in the 1830s and 1840s, and was definitively broken by the 1850s. It was replaced with *Russkii* for the empire's population and its language, while the polity's name remained the same as before, *Rossia*. Furthermore, a complication in the shape of *Velikorusskii* arrived on the scene in the 1860s. The story can be readily gleaned from Tables 1 and 2.

I attempted to repeat Stankiewicz's research using the electronic catalog of the Russian State Library (Table 3), which yielded an even sharper temporal divide between *Rossiiskii* and *Russkii*, leading one to believe that this change was completed in the single decade of the 1820s (seemingly supporting Maldzis' conjecture). I attribute this apparent sharpness to the mechanical nature of such searches, which do not allow for as much nuance as would be possible for a researcher having access to physical copies of the dictionaries concerned. In addition, the period covered in this article is split between two catalogs in the Russian State Library with the crucial year of 1830 as the cut-off date between them, which also warps the results. Hence, I believe that the picture emerging from Stankiewicz's data is closer to the reality. The last table (Table 4) wraps up these statistical musings by showing the uniform domination of *Russkii* as the name of the Russian language, after the de facto elimination of the linguonym *Velikorusskii* from official use following the Bolshevik Revolution, apart from the disparaging phrase "Great Russian chauvinism" (*Velikorusskii shovinizm*) that Soviet propaganda often employed in the interwar period.⁶¹

Table 1: The Terms *Rossiiskii* and *Russkii* in the Titles of the Dictionaries of the Russian Language Published in 1700–1799

<i>Rossiiskii</i>	<i>Russkii</i>	Total
43	3 (1717, 1731, and the form <i>Ruskii</i> , 1769)	46 dictionaries

Stankiewicz, *Grammars and Dictionaries*, pp. 128–134.

59 On the liturgical and linguistic plane, this continuity was not breached by the rise of the Uniate (later, Greek Catholic) Church, because it preserved the Slavic Orthodox (today known among Greek Catholics as "Byzantine") Rite, complete with its sacral language, Church Slavonic.

60 Stankiewicz and Worth, *A Selected Bibliography*; Stankiewicz, *Grammars and Dictionaries of the Slavic Languages*.

61 cf. Iosif V. Stalin, *Stat'i i rechi ob Ukraine* (Kiev: Partizdat KP(b)U and Ukrainskaia Assotsiatii Marksistsko-Leninskikh Nauchno-Issledovatel'skikh Institutov, 1936), p. 173.

Table 2: The Terms *Rossiiskii*, *Russkii*, and *Velikorusskii* in the Titles of the Dictionaries of the Russian Language Published in 1800–1869 (Data after 1850 seem incomplete)

Decade	<i>Rossiiskii</i>	<i>Russkii</i>	<i>Velikorusskii</i>	Subtotal
1800s	5	2	0	7
1810s	6	0	0	6
1820s	5	0	0	5
1830s	10	4	0	14
1840s	4	22	0	26
1850s	0	1	3	4
1860s	0	0	1	1
Total	30	29	4	63

Stankiewicz, *Grammars and Dictionaries*, pp. 135–144.

Notes:

1. Only these titles are taken into consideration in the information in which the Russian original title was included, thus allowing for a decision on whether the word *Russkii* or *Rossiiskii* was employed to refer to the Russian language.
2. In the case of multivolume publications, the date of the publication of the first volume is decisive for including a dictionary within a given decade.
3. Subsequent editions of a dictionary are treated as a single title.

Table 3: The Terms *Rossiiskii*, *Russkii*, and *Velikorusskii* in the Titles of the Dictionaries of the Russian Language Published in 1761–1899

Decade	<i>Rossiiskii</i>	<i>Russkii</i>	<i>Velikorusskii</i>	Subtotal
1760s	1	0	0	1
1770s	3	0	0	3
1780s	6	0	0	6
1790s	14	0	0	14
1800s	10	0	0	10
1810s	9	0	0	9
1820s	2	4	0	6
1830s	0	8	0	8
1840s	0	20	0	20
1850s	0	12	0	12
1860s	0	17	1	18
1870s	0	37	2	39
1880s	0	40	1	41
1890s	0	75	0	75
Total	45	213	4	262

Sources and notes:

1. Search for the title term *slovar'* ["dictionary"] in the Russian State Library's electronic catalog of books published before 1830. Subsequently, only *slovars* ["dictionaries"] with the term *Rossiiskii* on the frontispiece are taken into consideration; the search did not yield a single item with the term *Russkii* in the title.
2. Search for the title terms *Russkii* and *slovar'* in the Russian State Library's electronic catalog of books published after 1830.
3. Searches for the title terms *Velikorusskii*, *Velikorusskii iazyk*, and *Velikorusskogo iazyka* in the Russian State Library's electronic catalogs of books published before and after 1830.
4. All searches were conducted on June 11, 2011.

Table 4: The terms *Rossiiskii* and *Russkii* in the titles of the dictionaries of the Russian language published in 1901–c 1965

<i>Rossiiskii</i>	<i>Russkii</i>	<i>Velikorusskii</i>	Total
0	70	2 (1903–09, 1955)	72

Stankiewicz and Worth, *A Selected Bibliography of Slavic Linguistics*, pp. 371–376.

The record presented above of the *Rossiiskii*-only consensus as documented by dictionaries and bibliographies, followed by two decades of confusion from which the new *Russkii-Rossiiskii* consensus emerged (with six decades of the *Velikorusskii* irritation), only reveals the changes. It does *not* explain why the changes occurred. The renowned Polish specialist in matters Russian and Soviet, Andrzej de Lazari from the University of Łódź, referred me to his article on the current confusion and partial interchangeability in the use of the adjectives *Rossiiskii*, *Russkii*, *gosudarstvennyi* [of the state], *natsionalnyi* [national], and *narodnyi* (“people’s,” and sometimes “national,” as well) in post-Soviet Russia.⁶²

It must be accepted that the seventy years of the existence of the Soviet Union contributed to this confusion; its very name, reflecting its universalistic pretensions, included no term of geographical or ethnic specificity. (According to Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Revolution was eventually to “liberate” the whole globe.) Frequently conflicting policies pursued in the Soviet Union that veered from Russian nationalism to Soviet “peopleism” or nationalism, and to encouraging ethnolinguistic nationalisms of various peoples on the polity’s territory (*korenizatsiia*), were not conducive to terminological clarity. Perhaps such opacity and imprecision in the use of ethnic, national, and state labels was a good approach to managing the multiethnic and polylingual population in a polity with the largest territory in the world. Maintaining an empire requires a pragmatic muddling through. This knowledge has not been lost on the elite of the Russian Federation. In his speeches, the first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, was fond of referring to Russia’s citizenry as *Rossiane* (not *Russkie*), while his successor, Vladimir Putin, prefers to refer to them as *grazhdane Rossii* [citizens of Russia] or *sootechestvenniki* [compatriots]. The anxiety to avoid ethnic-specific labels (such as *Russkii*), in order not to alienate the ethnically non-Russian segments of the population (at least at the level of rhetoric), is palpable.⁶³

62 Andrzej De Lazari, “Nowa mowa Wowy. Kłopoty z rosyjskim,” *Polityka* 40 (2002), p. 94; Adam Kola, Email Letter (May 24, 2008).

63 cf. Maksim Khrustalev, “Pamiatnik El’tsinu beregut ot dorogikh rossiian,” *Newsland* (Feb. 12, 2011) [<http://www.newsland.ru/news/detail/id/634745/cat/42/>, 14 Jun 2011]; Vladimir Putin, “Novogodnee obrashchenie Prezidenta RF V. V. Putina k grazhdanam Rossii” (2003) [<http://www.putin2004.ru/putin/press/3FFE75D7?session=a592ad6b6016a945f95d555139a7dfe8>, 14 Jun 2011].

The use of the adjective *Rossiiskii* in the name of the Russian (that is, *Rossiiskii*) Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (which was the sole ethnically Russian political entity submerged in the non-national Soviet Union) might contribute to the current confusion. Perhaps it weakened the elevated position of the ethnonym-cum-linguonym *Russkii* whose dominance was unquestioned from the mid-nineteenth century until 1917.

Soviet dictionaries proposed that *Rossiiskii* as the name of the Russian nation and language was an official but obsolete term, and was hence never really adopted by the population at large when it was current in officialese.⁶⁴ They concurred that the term *Rossianin* for “Russians” or “Russian citizens”⁶⁵ was obsolete, too. In turn, all stakes were vested in *Russkii* as the name of the language, as the adjective for referring to the “national customs and folklore” of the Russians, or as the ethnonym for “the people” (*narod*), which was the “constitutive population” of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and, due to its demographic dominance, of the Soviet Union as a whole.⁶⁶ The dictionaries added that *Russkii* could refer either to Rus’ or Russia, thus emphasizing the ideologically sought continuity between these two entities, which, in turn, lent more legitimacy and an improved historical pedigree to the Soviet Union.⁶⁷

Tacitly, the theory of the Great Russian nation/people (as consisting of Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians) and of the Great Russian language (that is, of Russian with its two dialectal branches of Belarusian and Ukrainian) continued unabated. Perhaps if a merger (*sliianie*) of the three East Slavic peoples and their languages could have been effected, it would have been a sign that the ideologically prescribed merger of all the ethnic and national groups living in the Soviet Union into a classless and communist Soviet people/nation was achievable, too.

A HYPOTHESIS INSTEAD OF AN EXPLANATION

Looking for answers to the *Rossiiskii/Russkii* dilemma, I chanced upon the opus magnum on Ukraine’s share of the Polish-Lithuanian lands (or Volhynia, Podolia, and the Kievan lands) in the Russian Empire during the long nineteenth century, written by Daniel Beauvois, the famous French historian of Po-

64 V. P. Felitsyna and I. N. Shmeleva, eds., *Slovar’ sovremennoego russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, Vol. 12 (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1961), p. 1472; B. M. Volin, and D. N. Ushakov, *Tolkovyj slovar’ russkogo iazyka*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo inostrannyykh i natsionalnykh slovarei, 1939), p. 1387.

65 In the Soviet Union, at the level of the state, there were obviously no Russian citizens, but Soviet ones.

66 Felitsyna and Shmeleva, eds., *Slovar’ sovremennoego russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, Vol. 12, pp. 1473, 1582.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 1582.

land-Lithuania.⁶⁸ In the monograph, I found an interesting trace that appears to be of great relevance to the story of the change from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii* in the Russian name for the Russian language.

The basis of the legal system in most of the Polish-Lithuanian lands seized by Russia was the Lithuanian Statute, or in full, the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was written in the Grand Duchy's official language of Ruthenian (*Ruski*) and promulgated in 1529. It went through two more editions (1566 and 1588) before achieving its final shape. Subsequently, it was translated into Latin and Polish. The Polish translation of 1614 became the legally binding one after Ruthenian was replaced with Polish as the Grand Duchy's official language in 1697. After the first partition of Poland-Lithuania (1772), a section of the Grand Duchy's territory found itself in Russia, which necessitated a Russian translation of the statute, hastily made from the Polish edition. Apparently, the Ruthenian-language original, known in Muscovy since the 1630s (at that time, it was also translated into Muscovian), was not comprehensible enough to be deemed usable for legal and administrative practice; in any case, the Polish translation, rather than the original, had been legally binding since the turn of the eighteenth century. After the third and final partition of Poland-Lithuania, Polish remained the language of administration in Russia's zone of partition. An increasing volume of administrative and legal work, however, necessitated an exact and scholarly translation of the statute into Russian, which was published as a bilingual Polish-Russian edition in 1811. Another exclusively Polish-language edition of this statute came off the press in 1819.⁶⁹

The dominance of the Polish-speaking elite (nobility, land-owners, Catholic priests, and literati) was hard to curb, as evidenced by the persistent use of Polish in the administration of the Kiev [Kyiv] region (which had been seized by Muscovy in 1667), despite the decree of 1797 prohibiting this practice.⁷⁰ In the early nineteenth century, the plurality of all literate persons in Russia were literate in Polish, *not* Russian. At that time, those literate in the latter language were spread thinly across the empire; their number appears to be on a par only with those literate in German, who were concentrated in Russia's three small Baltic governorates of Courland, Livonia, and Estland (or today's Latvia and Estonia). The University of Wilno (Vilnius) was then the largest university in the empire. Its medium of education was Polish, and it hence produced graduates literate in this language. Russia's Polish-Lithuanian lands formed a relatively large area that was the most developed in the empire. The area's economic and social capital was indispensable for the ongoing effort to modernize

68 Daniel Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński. Szlachta, carat i lud na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie, 1793–1914* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005).

69 Ibid., pp. 211–212.

70 Ibid., p. 212.

(or rather, Westernize) Russia, and the Polish language and culture were an essential constituent of this capital, for the time being at least.⁷¹

Not that the cultural, economic, and political dominance of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility or of the Polish language in Russia's portion of the Polish-Lithuanian territories was liked in Russia; in this period, there was no alternative to it. This nobility's 1830–1831 uprising against the tsar constituted a watershed. It offered the Russian government a reason to replace Polish with Russian in administration and education in Russia's zone of partition of Poland-Lithuania.⁷² On the other hand, there were already enough university graduates literate in Russian to replace Polish-speaking administrators, civil servants, and school teachers. So the changes did not remain a dead letter, as the decree of 1797 did, but they nevertheless required almost a decade to be implemented in full. The integration of the Polish-Lithuanian provinces (apart from the autonomous Congress Kingdom of Poland, which St. Petersburg gained only in 1815) with the rest of Russia was completed in 1840, when standard Russian law replaced the Lithuanian Statute there. Symbolic of the process was the use of the assets and library holdings of the University of Wilno, liquidated in 1831, to found the Russian-medium University of Kiev [Kyiv] three years later.⁷³

At that time, the traditional sobriquets of "Lithuanian," "Little Russian," and "White Russian," alongside that of the "Grand Duchy of Lithuania," as officially or traditionally applied to Russia's Polish-Lithuanian provinces and governorates, disappeared from Russian administrative use and from publications. They were replaced with ethnically, geographically, and culturally non-specific denotations derived from the cardinal points of the compass. It became common to speak of the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania as the "Northwestern Land" (*Severo-Zapadnyi krai*) and of the Ruthenian lands of the former Kingdom of Poland as the "Southwestern Land" (*Iugo-Zapadnyi krai*). The example was followed by scholars, who began to dub the White Russian dialects or language as "West-Russian" (*Zapadno-Russkii*) and their Little Russian counterparts as "South-Russian" (*Iuzhno-Russkii*).⁷⁴ This change was

71 Daniel Beauvois, *Szkołnictwo polskie na ziemiach litewsko-ruskich 1803–1832*, 2 vols. (Rome: Fundacja Jana Pawła II and Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1991); William H. E. Johnson, *Russia's Educational Heritage* (Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Press, Carnegie Institute of Technology [distributed by Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ], 1950), pp. 63, 287; Kamusella, *The Politics of Language*, p. 376.

72 Polish remained the official language of the autonomous (Congress) Kingdom of Poland (*Tsarstwo Pol'skoe*) until another Polish-Lithuanian uprising against Russia (1863–1864). St. Petersburg gained this kingdom in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna. It was composed of two-thirds of the lands of Napoleon's Polish-Lithuanian protectorate of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1815). In turn, this duchy was created in 1807 from the lands that the Habsburgs and Prussia had gained in the third partition of Poland-Lithuania (1795).

73 Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński*, p. 212.

74 cf. Iakov Holovatski, *Rosprava o iazykcie iuzhno-russkom i ego narechiiakh* (Lemberg, Austrian Empire, 1849); Evfimii Karskii, *K voprosu o razrabotke starogo zapadno-russkogo narechiia* (Vil'na, Russian Empire: A G Syrkin, 1893).

anachronistically extended backward in time, thus leading to the renaming of Ruthenian as “West Russkii” (*Zapadnorusskii*).⁷⁵ Hence, to the uninitiated, West-Russkii, South-Russkii, and West-Russkii appeared as mere varieties of (Great) Russian, well in step with the unifying policies proposed by Uvarov.

But it appears that the Lithuanian Statute did not disappear from legal use before being employed to lend a veneer of legitimacy to these very changes. In 1827, the newly appointed military governor (*voennyi gubernator*) in Kiev,⁷⁶ Petr F. Zheltukhin, reported to the tsar and his ministers on the poor command of the Russian language among the civil servants in his region, where Polish ruled the day. He noted that according to Article 37 in Part IV of the Lithuanian Statute, *Ruski* was the official language in the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He equated Ruthenian (*Ruski*) with *Russkii* [Russian], though at that time *Rossiiskii* was the preferred official label for the Russian language. However, due to the closeness in pronunciation and a small difference in spelling, the form *Russkii* lent itself better to such an equation. He then drew the conclusion that it was on this legal basis that Russian should replace Polish as its official language in the Governorate of Kiev. Zheltukhin’s report was well received and Minister of Justice Aleksei A. Dolgorukov, in late 1827, requested that the Senate (imperial government, parliament, and judiciary rolled into one) order the use of Russian in the areas concerned in accordance with the Lithuanian Statute. However, instead of Zheltukhin’s term *Russkii* for Russian, Dolgorukov employed the then official linguonym *Rossiiskii*. Other ministers, with Nicholas I’s approval, concurred and proposed that the Senate replace Polish with Russian and the Lithuanian Statute with ordinary Russian law not only in the Governorate of Kiev but in all the governorates where this statute still remained in force.⁷⁷

75 Today, some Russian scholars make an effort to emphasize the past position of Ruthenian as a language in its own right by using the Latinate sobriquet “Ruthenian” made into *Rutenskii* in Russian. cf. Vyacheslav Ivanov, “Iazyki, iazykovye sem’i i iazykovye soiuzy vnutri Velikogo kniazhestva Litovskogo,” in V. Vyacheslav Ivanov and Julia Verholantsev, eds., *Speculum Slaviae Orientalis: Muscovy, Ruthenia and Lithuania in the Late Middle Ages* [Ser: UCLA Slavic Studies, New Series, Vol. 6] (Moscow: Novoe izdatel’stvo, 2005), p. 100. Otherwise, the anachronistic practice of referring to the language of Rus’ and its successor states as *Derevnorusskii* (Early Russian) continues unabated in Russia, creating a specious teleological continuity between Rus’an (*Rus’ki*, known as “Old East Slavic” in English) and the Russian language. cf. Evgimii Karskii, *Zapadnorusskii sbornik XV-go veka, prinadlezhashchii Imperatorskoi Publichnoi biblioteke* [Ser: Sbornik Otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, Vol. 391] (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia Akademia nauk, 1897).

76 On a previous occasion, I mistakenly described Zheltukhin as the (civil) governor of the Governorate of Kyiv; I thank Daniel Beauvois for his clarification of the title of the post.

77 Elena Astafieva (Centre d’études des mondes russe, caucasien et centre-européen, L’École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris) proposes a different (though tentative) look at Zheltukhin’s report. Perhaps, drawing on the Lithuanian Statute, Zheltukhin understood *Ruski* (or as he wrote, *Russkii*) to be the local written language, Ruthenian, which had fallen

In this way, a conceptual, juridical, and linguistic jump was made from *Ruski* to *Rossiiskii* via the intermediary form of *Russkii*. The civil servants perhaps knew about the translations of the Statute into Russian, and that its Ruthenian original was not employed in Russian official use, because its language was *not* Russian. On the other hand, many of them might not have cared about such fine distinctions, while the ideological and political needs of the day might well in any case have overridden such concerns, fortified by a widespread belief that *Ruski* was nothing more than a temporarily Polonized strain of Russian. Eventually, the attempt to replace Polish with Russian did not succeed in the late 1820s, but it did prepare the ground for a more successful effort in the wake of the 1830–1831 uprising.

How could these events contribute to the changing of the Russian name of the Russian language from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii*? The uprising brought about major changes in the administrative, ideological, and political organization of especially the western borderlands of the Russian Empire. Uvarov provided a working ideology for such an overhaul, while Zheltukhin and others like him commenced the gradual supplanting of various languages in administrative use, education, and public life in European Russia with Russian, which continued until 1905 (a process that became known as “Russification” among the non-Russophone populations concerned). However, the ethnically non-Russian (that is, Polish-Lithuanian) elite in the west of the Russian Empire was still too influential in the 1830s and too important as a source of social, technical, and economic capital to be brushed aside. The utter alienation of this stratum of society would have been too costly, so the changes had to be buttressed with a degree of legitimacy.⁷⁸

The supplanting of *Rossiiskii* by *Russkii* in the name of the Russian language, in order to make the introduction of Russian in the Polish-Lithuanian lands appear to be in accordance with law, was a small price to be paid for

into abeyance after it had been replaced by Polish at the close of the seventeenth century, or he might also have identified *Ruski* with the Little Russian of Kiev as used in the early nineteenth century. If so, it was the initiative of Dolgorukov himself to equate *Ruski/Russkii* with *Rossiiskii*, or the Russian language. In this view, both Zheltukhin and Dolgorukov wanted to eliminate Polish from the administration of the Kiev Governorate as, by law and tradition, not belonging to the pattern of things there. They differed, however, in the way chosen to achieve this goal, the former referring to the past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or to the local vernacular, with the latter going straight for the language of St. Petersburg. (I thank Elena Astafieva for this valuable remark, which adds nuance to the discussion.) Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński*, pp. 213–214; Daniel' Bovua [Daniel Beauvois], *Gordiev uzel Rossiiskoi imperii. Vlast', shliakhta i narod na pravoberezhnoi Ukraine (1793–1914)* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010), pp. 238–241.

Beauvois disagrees with this view and maintains that in light of the available documents, Zheltukhin's goal was the same as Dolgorukov's: to replace Polish with Russian, not with Little Russian, let alone with the defunct Ruthenian. Daniel Beauvois, Email Letter (June 26, 2011).

78 cf. Beauvois, *Trójkąt ukraiński*, p. 214.

deepening the unification of the empire without losing the modernization impetus. At that time, the vast majority of ethnic Russians were illiterate and the narrow elite was entirely dependent on the tsar (the Decembrist Revolt of 1825 not much denting the regime). The former would not protest because the issue of the change of name of the Russian language was well beyond their more practically oriented concerns with daily life. They tended to refer to their dialects simply as *mova* ("speech" or "language" labeled by native scholars as *prostaia mova*, or "simple folk's idiom"), which they might see as the opposite of the elevated and holy Slavonic language of the Orthodox Slavonic Scripture employed in their local village churches and preserved on the printed page. On the other hand, the elite, consisting mostly of noblemen doubling as civil servants, followed the general consensus spearheaded by the tsar's court, including this change in the name of the Russian language.⁷⁹

Maldzis and Rieger have tentatively expressed their interest in the hypothesis and found it probable.⁸⁰ However, both remarked that it should be evaluated and discussed by a larger group of specialists in linguistics, historiography, and literary studies before a final conclusion is drawn. I hope that this article opens this broader, interdisciplinary discussion that may provide a clearer and better substantiated answer to the question of why the name of the Russian language changed from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii* in the 1830s and 1840s.

79 Revealingly, the Russian language as we know it today was decisively shaped only after the 1830s. It is estimated that the earlier period contributed one-third of the language's words and the later decades in the nineteenth century as many as the remaining two-thirds. Shkliarevskii, *Istoria russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, p. 155. After the 1830s, when Russian had become the dominant medium of communication in the Russian Empire, the top-down imposition both of meanings on already-extant words and of new coinages of existing phenomena must have become more difficult than it had been before.

80 Adam Maldzis, Letter (Nov. 28, 2008); Janusz Rieger, Email Letter (May 22, 2008).