

SECTION 1. HISTORY OF UKRAINE

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ETHNOGENESIS OF THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE: AN ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CELTIC THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF RUS'

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In the Russian academic tradition, for an extended historical period, scientifically questionable concepts predominated – most notably the doctrine of the «Old Rus' Ethnicity» («древнерусская народность») and the Normanist theory of the origins of Rus', which underpinned the foundations of the ethnogenesis of the Russian people. By contrast, in Russian scholarship, the ethnogenetic processes of the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples were not only questioned but openly denied.

At the same time, according to Leonid Zalyzniak's concept of the ethnogenesis of Ukrainians, the overwhelming majority of European peoples living within the sphere of the cultural and historical influence of the Roman Empire were formed in the Early Middle Ages (5th–7th centuries) – including the French, English, Serbs, Croats, Poles, Ukrainians and others [4, p. 225]. Moreover, in Zalyzniak's view, imperial peoples (Rome, England, Spain, Kyivan Rus') engendered in their subordinate provinces so-called «daughter ethnoses» (Romance, English, Spanish, and Rus' groups), whose histories began within the corresponding empires [4]. From this it follows that the Ruthenians/Ukrainians are not a part of the Russian ethnos; on the contrary, they became one of the factors in the formation of the Finno-Muscovite (Russian) ethnos.

A further significant argument in favour of the early formation of the Ukrainian ethnos is provided by the linguistic research of Kostiantyn Tyshchenko. The scholar demonstrated that the Ukrainian language developed under the influence of ancient peoples who left a discernible imprint on its structure and lexicon. Tyshchenko identified ten historical «witnesses» of the Ukrainian language that reflect these processes:

I. The first witness of the existence of the Proto-Ukrainian language is the Upper Sorbian language.

II. The second witness of the existence of the Proto-Ukrainian language is the Polabian language.

III. The third witness of the existence of the Proto-Ukrainian language is the Lida-Loyev isogloss belt.

IV. The fourth witness of the antiquity of several Ukrainian linguistic features (11th–12th centuries) is the Novgorod birchbark letters.

V. The fifth witness of ancient elements of the Ukrainian language (4th century) is the Gothic language.

VI. The sixth Ukrainian witness (2nd century AD) is the Celtic neighbors, particularly the Celtic origin of the suffix **-yna**.

VII. The seventh Ukrainian witness is the popular Latin future imperfect tense (2nd century AD).

VIII. The eighth Ukrainian witness serving as a «clock» for Proto-Slavic (2nd century AD) is the M. Swadesh list: a comparison of Swadesh wordlists across Slavic languages.

IX. The unexpected ninth Ukrainian witness (5th century BC) is the Scythians, specifically Aristophanes' references to Scythian pronunciation.

X. The tenth Ukrainian witness is the Ukrainian language itself

Particular attention should be paid to the sixth linguistic «witness», which is associated with Celtic neighbours (2nd century CE). In particular, the spread of the suffix **-yna** in Ukrainian (as in *liudyna* (person), *divchyna* (girl), *khlopchyna* (boy), *rodyna* (family), *tvaryna* (animal), *perlyna* (pearl), *drabyna* (ladder)) may be the result of Celtic influence. Moreover, among possible Celtic borrowings, Kostiantyn Tyshchenko highlights the words: *sluha* (servant), *vlada* (power), *lyky* (medicine), *bevz'* (simpleton), *shchyt* (shield), *molytysia* (to pray), and *salo* (lard) [6, p. 34].

Thus, it can reasonably be asserted that the Ukrainian language is an ancient language of a formed Ukrainian ethnos that existed long before the emergence of the concept of the formation of the Russian nation. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the concept of the «Old Rus' Ethnicity» and the Normanist theory of the origins of Rus' do not withstand scholarly scrutiny, particularly in light of the Celtic hypothesis of the origins of Rus'.

In our view, the Celtic tribe of the Rutheni may have played a key role in the formation of the proto-Ukrainian ethnos, significantly influencing its identity, endoethnonym, and the development of state structures. Accordingly, the migration of the Celtic Rutheni may have occurred even before the formation of Kyivan Rus', and their presence is attested by toponyms in the Baltic region (*Ruge*, *Rugenhof*, *Rugeshus*, *Rugard*, *Ruschvitz*, *Rugenwalde*) and the Danube region (*Rotularius*, *Reodarii*,

Rosdorf, Ruzische Mushel). In addition, a considerable number of European toponyms may be connected with the Rutheni or the Rus' (see Fig. 1), which constitutes an additional argument in favour of this hypothesis.

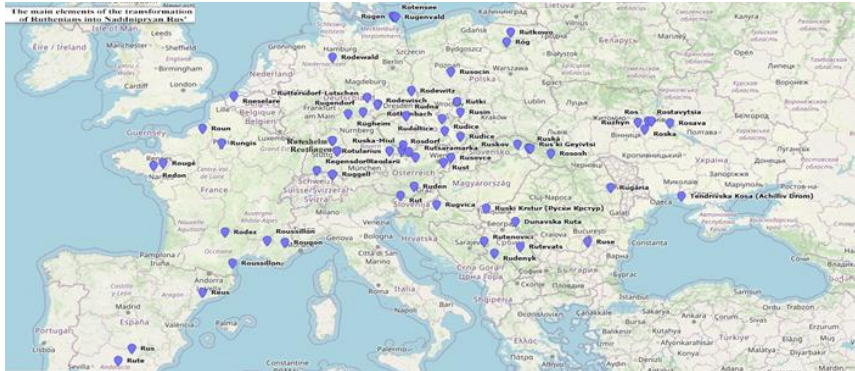


Fig. 1. Map of place names associated with the ethnic groups «Ruthenians», «Rugii», «Rusyns» (Source: Compiled by the author)

Historical sources also contain information about the connection between the Rus' and the Celts. Thus, chroniclers such as Symeon Logothete, Gallus Anonymus and Suger identified the Rus' as descendants of the Celts. According to this hypothesis, the Celtic Rutheni who penetrated the territory of present-day Ukraine may have played an important role in the formation of the proto-Ukrainian ethnos, leaving behind their endoethnonym, which later became the basis for the name of the state of Rus'. It is known that in Narbonne Gaul (modern southern France) there existed a Celtic tribe of the Rutheni, which probably migrated eastward.

These data correlate with the conclusions set forth in the monograph «Genesis and Formation of Rus' (6th–10th centuries)» [2] and in the article «Revisiting the Concept of “Old Rus' Ethnicity” in Light of the Celtic Theory of the Origin of Rus'» [3]. According to the proposed concept, the probable migration of the Celtic Rutheni took place between 469 (after the collapse of the Hunnic Empire) and 562 (the formation of the Avar Khaganate). At the same time, archaeological evidence allows one to assume their presence in the Dnieper region even earlier. Subsequently, the Rutheni were likely assimilated with the Slavs, who during that period belonged to federative alliances with the Huns.



RUTHENIAS. Messages by Julius Caesar, Pliny the Elder, Marcus Lucan, Gregory of Tours, Simeon Metafrast, Gallus Anonymous, Sugerius. Tendra Spit peninsula. Slab in Salzburg. Mention of Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Western missionaries Ebon and Herbert called the state of Rus and Baltic Rugiland is Ruthenia. RUTHENIAS, RUGGI. Place names such as Ruzaramarcha, Rotularius, Reodarii, Rosdorf, Ruzische Mushel, Rugenwalde, Rugenhof. CHERNYAKHIV CULTURE (II-VII centuries). **RUS'**

Fig. 2. The main elements of the transformation of ruthenians into Naddniprianshchyna Rus' (Source: Compiled by the author)

The Normanist theory of the origins of Rus' also exhibits substantial shortcomings, as it rests on two principal postulates:

1. The assumption that the name «Rus'» derives from the Finnish word «Ruotsi», used to designate the Swedes.

2. The interpretation of the names of Rus' princes and the Dnieper rapids in a Scandinavian framework.

With regard to the first postulate, according to the hypothesis of S. P. Shelukhyn, the Finns called the Swedes Ruotsi because the latter conducted active trade with Rus', just as in Kyiv merchants trading with Greece were referred to as «hrechnyky» («Greek traders») [7, p. 53].

It should also be noted that no Old Rus' or Byzantine source records the borrowing of the word Rus' from the Finnish language. Moreover, the self-designation Rus' is attested prior to the establishment of close contacts with the Scandinavians. It is likewise important that the ethnonym Rus' encompasses a far wider area than the territory of Finno-Scandinavian interactions. If this hypothesis were correct, its use would be expected to extend only to the northern lands; however, the name Rus' became firmly established for the Middle Dnieper territories.

The second postulate concerns the interpretation of the names of the Dnieper rapids mentioned by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. Byzantine authors often rendered foreign toponyms in forms comprehensible to the Greek tradition or through the mediation of other peoples, which does not prove their Scandinavian origin. In addition, a serious flaw of this postulate is the absence of systematicity: not all the Dnieper rapids received Scandinavian equivalents, and most of their names have Slavic or Turkic etymologies. Accordingly, the attempt to present these names as purely Scandinavian is selective and tendentious.

At the same time, it is more appropriate to speak of interaction rather than domination: the presence of certain Scandinavian influences in Kyivan Rus' does not negate its local, Slavic or Celtic foundations. The Scandinavians may have acted as merchants, mercenaries or even individual princes, but this does not mean that they themselves founded the state of Rus'.

Thus, this concept is rather a political ideologeme than an objective historical explanation, whereas the Celtic theory of the origins of Rus' is gaining increasing prominence in scholarly discourse.

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