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On the issue of historical origins and civilizational preconditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022: attempts of scientific reflection

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Abstract

The aim of the article was to determine the current state of the ideological basis of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022. The purpose was to achieve a scientific reflection on the historical and civilizational foundations of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022, with a key focus on the distorted facts of the past. The presentation of the research results is carried out on the basis of the chronological method. The main sources of the work are written historical evidence (Hypatian Chronicle and Chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, etc.). In addition, the problem of the main historical and political origins of the divergence between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, the features of the formation of Asiatic-type despotism in Russia and the problem of Eurocentricity of Ukrainian territories over the centuries were considered. In conclusion, it is summarized that the simplified schemes of interpretation of the history of Ukrainian and Russian peoples became the main feature for the

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Russian, anti-Ukrainian propaganda in the period of 2014-2022. On the basis of distortion of historical facts and financial opportunities poured into the information sphere, the old Soviet and imperial myths are actively replicated in Russia.

Keywords: historical background; foundations of civilization; Russian-Ukrainian war; Russian propaganda; contemporary political history.

Sobre la cuestión de los orígenes históricos y las precondiciones civilizatorias de la guerra ruso-ucraniana de 2014-2022: intentos de reflexión científica

Resumen

El objetivo del artículo fue determinar el estado actual de la base ideológica de la guerra ruso-ucraniana de 2014-2022. El propósito fue lograr una reflexión científica sobre los fundamentos históricos y de civilización de la guerra ruso-ucraniana de 2014-2022, con un enfoque clave en los hechos distorsionados del pasado. La presentación de los resultados de la investigación se realiza sobre la base del método cronológico. Las principales fuentes del trabajo son las pruebas históricas escritas (Hypatian Crónica y Crónica de Thietmar de Merseburg, etc.). Además, se consideró el problema de los principales orígenes históricos y políticos de la divergencia entre los pueblos ucraniano y ruso, los rasgos de la formación del despotismo de tipo asiático en Rusia y el problema de la eurocentricidad de los territorios ucranianos a lo largo de los siglos. En conclusión, se resume que los esquemas simplificados de interpretación de la historia de los pueblos ucranianos y rusos se convirtieron en el rasgo principal para la propaganda rusa, anti-ucrania en el periodo de 2014-2022. Sobre la base de la distorsión de los hechos históricos y las oportunidades financieras vertidas en la esfera de la información, los viejos mitos soviéticos e imperiales se replican activamente en Rusia.

Palabras clave: antecedentes históricos; fundamentos de la civilización; guerra ruso-ucraniana; propaganda rusa; historia política contemporánea.

Introduction

The Kremlin regime began its active expansion against Ukraine in 2014, when it took advantage of anti-government protests and a degree of chaos in the state and occupied the Crimean peninsula (Ishchuk, 2022). Russia also tacitly supported pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine by providing them with volunteers, equipment, and military supplies (Johnson, 2022).

The ideological justification for this aggressive policy was the Russian regime's conviction of its own historical rights to these territories, which were replicated in all possible media channels and even partially found their way into European and American analytical resources that had contacts with Russian news agencies (Bîná and Dragomir, 2020). The effectiveness of such actions was quite high because even completely inert citizens were persuaded of their own rightness (Bîná and Dragomir, 2020). The military aggression against Ukraine in 2022 demonstrated the destructive influence of militaristic and pseudo-historical propaganda, which created a false picture of the real situation.

The present situation had little in common with the intrusive material, but the Russian attack and the behavior of the invaders in the occupied territories vividly demonstrated the fallacy of perceptions of brotherly peoples, common heritage, and cultural affinity. The deep divisions between Ukrainian and Russian societies, which had previously attracted little scholarly attention and were sometimes denied at all, became undeniable.

1. Research Problem

The historical origins of the Russian-Ukrainian war were formed back in the Middle Ages, that is, during the formation of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples. Modern researchers see them primarily in the disagreements of mental and worldview principles, so they speak of the war between societies of a completely different mentality, historical memory, cultural identity, and traditions. These disagreements have not been emphasized in the public consciousness for a long time (Krasnozhon, 2019).

Russian media resources celebrated theses about the "unity" of the Ukrainian and Russian nations (and specifically as a Russian nation), while the Russian narrative was popular in the Ukrainian information field even after 2014 (some political forces and the resources under their control even on a general level sought to use the national issue to gain popularity among their voters). For this reason, the problem of differences in worldview, culture, and historical past requires additional consideration and argumentation, especially given the aggressive Russian propaganda and the imposition of false imperial values.

1.1. Research Focus

The main focus of the research is on historical, cultural and diplomatic coverage of the processes that distinguish truthful information from constructed false and biased assessments. The problems of Russian propaganda tools and its ideological basis require additional coverage. It is about Russian imperial, Soviet and modern Russian authoritarian mythologemes that are actively introduced into public discourse and replicated by all possible means. The historical origins of civilizational differences between Russia and Ukraine through the prism of historiosophical reflection are also emphasized.

1.2. Research Aim and Research Questions

Consequently, the purpose of the article is to scientifically reflect on the historical and civilizational preconditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022. Consideration of this purpose involves the search for answers to questions related to the origins of Russian despotism and authoritarianism, the past of Rus-Ukraine in the system of international politics of the Middle Ages, Eurocentricity of Ukrainian lands through the centuries, the peculiarities of the formation of the modern European integration path of Ukraine in historical retrospective.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. General Background

The methodological basis consists of several scientific principles and methods of research: general scientific and specifically historical. Among the general scientific methods include synthesis, analysis, induction, and deduction. In the study, the main part is formed on the historical methods of research: historical-comparative, historical-typological, historical-systemic, etc. Presentation of the results of the study begins with the VI century and in chronological order are described events of the Middle Ages, early modern, modern time in order to compare events in Russian and Ukrainian history.

2.2. Materials

The main materials of the study are historical sources of Russian and European origin. In particular, the materials of the Ipatiev Chronicle were used.

Among the European narrative sources, we shall single out:

1. The Annales Bertiniani, created in the ninth century, Describing events in the West Frankan kingdom and neighboring countries and their diplomatic relations (Bertiniani, 1964).
2. The Chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, created in the early 11th century, describes the Prince of Rus', Volodymyr Sviatoslavych, and the individual circumstances of the Christianization of Rus' (Thietmar, 1889).
3. "The Journey of Patriarch Makarii," by Paul of Aleppo, which describes the customs and life of Cossack Ukraine (Stanytsina, 2020).
4. The Description of Ukraine, by Guillaume Le Vasseur de Beauplan, which describes in detail the climate and population of the Ukrainian lands of the XVII century (Beauplan, 1660).

The use of descriptions of archaeological monuments, in particular coins, which circulated in the territory of Rus and Hetmanshchyna was of separate importance (Stanytsina, 2020).

2.3. Instrument and Procedures

Based on the analysis the main subject of research (the origins of the Russian-Ukrainian war) is divided into smaller parts (the study of mental structures of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, the analysis of Russian-Ukrainian relations through the centuries, etc.). By means of synthesis, the mentioned parts are united and own conclusions about the main historical origins of the Russian-Ukrainian war are formed. As a result of the use of historical and comparative method comparativistic analysis of the development of the mentality of the Ukrainian and Russian people was carried out. At the same time, the historical-systemic method was aimed at the study of separate phenomena of the past of Russia and Ukraine as integral world historical systems (Gushchyn *et al.*, 2022).

The study took place in several stages. On the first - a thorough analysis of modern historical literature, on the second - the mental difference between the Ukrainian and Russian people was characterized, the origins of the Asian despotism of Russia were traced, the belonging of the Ukrainian nation to the European family of nations was investigated, the genesis was characterized. The third stage formed conclusions and prospects for further research on this debatable problem.

3. Research Results

3.1. The Origins of Asian Despotism in Russia

Russia in its historical memory mostly did not perceive European ideas and values, this rejection is explained by the historical creation of the Moscow kingdom on the territory of the Genghis Khan Empire (Golden Horde). The latter is known for the fact that it was a despotism of the Asian version with characteristics of totalitarian thought. Even K. Marx noted in his time in *The Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century* that: "The Moscow Empire was created in the humiliating conditions of Mongol slavery and represents a typical Eastern despotism" (Marx, 1889: 123). From this time the Moscow tsar became the heir of the Mongol khans. The overthrow of the Tatar yoke involved: 1. Replacement of the Tatar khan by an Orthodox tsar; 2. Transfer of the capital to Moscow (Hrushevskiy, 1966).

It is known that many boyars and military nobles of the Moscow tsar consisted of Tatar nobles. At the same time, in contrast to the Russian people, the Ukrainian people had long been an organic part of the European nation. The national differences between Ukraine and Russia were also explained by the fact that the Ukrainian territory (before the establishment of Russian domination) was more connected with Europe in the social and cultural sense (Chupriy, 2018).

The famous historian M. Hrushevskiy also noted the powerful influence of Asian despotism on the formation of the culture, traditions, and mentality of the Russian people (Hrushevskiy, 1966). He believed that, compared to the Great Russian (i.e., Russian) people, the Ukrainian is a people of Western (European) culture. He further remarked that although the Russian people are becoming more Europeanized, yet they are in captivity of Eastern culture (Hrushevskiy, 1966).

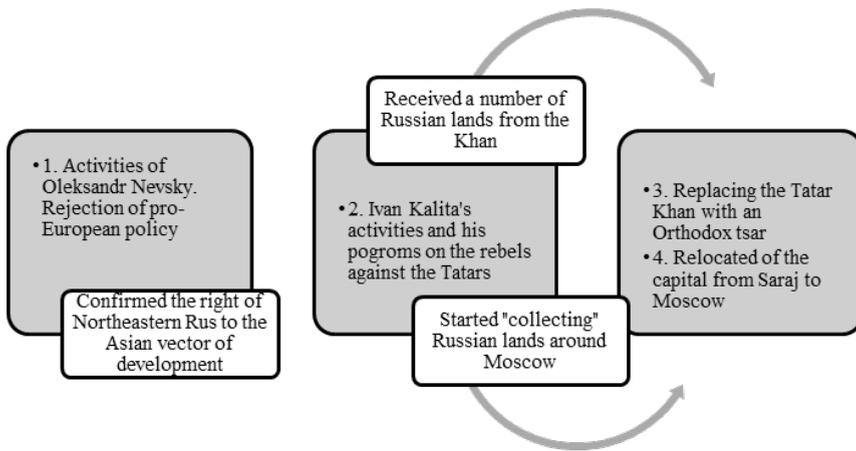
Oleksandr Nevskiy promoted the formation of Golden Horde eastern despotism in Northern Russia, who refused the prospect of the European anti-Mongolian alliance headed by Pope Innocentius IV and the Galician-Volyn (Ukrainian) prince Danylo Romanovych. Oleksandr Nevskiy contributed to the Mongols in every way, exposed his brother Andrii Yaroslavovych (who wanted to oppose the khan), and received his lands as a reward from the Mongols.

By his victories over the European knights in 1240-1242, Oleksandr approved the right of Northeast Rus for the Asian vector of development. Oleksandr Nevskiy made a final choice between east and western civilization in favor of the eastern one.

At the same time, a new stage in the formation of eastern despotism in Russian lands is associated with Ivan Kalita, who committed brutal pogroms

on the rebels against the Tatars (Konta, 2017). As a result, he became the head of the Golden Horde administration on the Volga (Chupriy, 2018). Because of his loyalty to the khan, he was able to annex to Moscow other principalities that were subject to the khan. Thus began the “assembly” of Russian territories by Moscow. In addition, the Moscow nobility happily invited Tatars to military service.

Figure No. 01. The scheme of formation of the Asian despotism of Russia



Source: Authors' development.

Consequently, the Asian culture and mentality of Russians does not accept Western values and negatively relates to its carriers, as well as Ukrainians, who have repeatedly confirmed their European aspirations in their squares in 2004 and 2013-2014.

4. Rus-Ukraine in the system of international European politics

By synthesizing influences from the West, Rus' itself exerted considerable influence on its Western neighbors. An active foreign policy, numerous treaties, and agreements present Rus as an independent medieval state with influence in the political space (Hrushevskiy, 1966).

A unique source of the ninth century is the *Annales Bertiniani*, which for the first time among European sources mentions Rus. The Rus ambassadors were first received by the Byzantine emperor and then, at his request, by the king of the Franks (*Bertiniani*, 1964).

This is convincing proof of the existence of the Rus state as early as 839 and evidence of its military and political power (*Bertiniani*, 1964). The European community was aware of the zeal for the campaigns. Indeed, the campaigns of the princes of Kyiv against Byzantium in the ninth and tenth centuries received publicity in Europe and this further helped to establish the military and political reputation of Rus (*Chupriy*, 2018). Therefore, Byzantium constantly sought to maintain friendly relations with the Russians by concluding peace treaties.

Unconditional proof of the influence of Rus in the international political arena also dynastic ties of the princes of Kyiv with the courts of European states in the XI-XII centuries. Dynastic marriages were one of the forms of interstate relations in the Middle Ages. The practice of dynastic marriages is connected with the activity of Yaroslav the Wise, Vladimir Monomakh. Thus, the dynasties of Byzantium, Western Europe, and indeed Germany and France had kinship ties with the representatives of the Rurik dynasty (*Hrushevskiy*, 1966).

Marriage was accompanied by certain political goals, so the rulers sought to be born with the Kyivan princes, in order to obtain their military and diplomatic support. Dynastic ties together with various diplomatic combinations and wars represent Rus' as part of the European state and political system. It is also important that representatives of the Rus elite carried their culture and education to the European world (*Thyret and Hollingsworth*, 1995; *Tsekhmister*, 2022). A striking example is a daughter of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, Anna, who became the wife of the French King Henry I. She probably brought the Reims Gospel to France.

The political activity of Rus is a no less important proof of its role in the system of trade routes. It was through Rus lands that the route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" passed, combining the Baltic and Black Seas and closing the trade routes in Eastern Europe. An important land trade route was the way from Kyiv to the west through Krakow, Prague, and the German city of Regensburg, which was a major trading center on the Danube (*Thyret and Hollingsworth*, 1995).

In the 10th century Rus' trade relations with Germany were recorded. Rus' merchants passed through the Czech and South German lands, heading west, but it is also important that German merchants were also frequent in Rus, they were interested in local or Byzantine goods, which were in Kyiv (*Hrushevskiy*, 1966). The presence of important trade routes in Rus contributed to its economic, cultural growth (*Parshyn and Mereniuk*, 2022).

These facts confirm the political activity of Rus', for which the European world was open. This state did not develop in isolation, it formed its own levers of influence on the European continent. Then-Rus was an independent state based on its own traditions combined with Byzantine and European traditions. Even after the end of political history, the cultural influence of Rus was noticeable on the historical development of Europe. The heir to the state tradition of Rus' became the Galicia-Volhynia state, and its rulers continued the actions of their predecessors (Ishchuk, 2022). At the time of Roman Mstislavich, Danylo Romanovych, Lev Danylovych, and others, the state continued to be politically active, the cultural center of Europe at that time.

5. Eurocentricity of Ukrainian lands through the ages

The thesis about the unity of Ukrainians and Russians does not correlate with historical facts. The events of ancient times testify to the ancient harmonious ties of Ukraine with the civilized world. Greek and Roman influences on the territory of Ukraine can be traced from the VII century BC, it is from this time begins the period of Greek colonization of the Northern Black Sea area (Hrushevskiy, 1966).

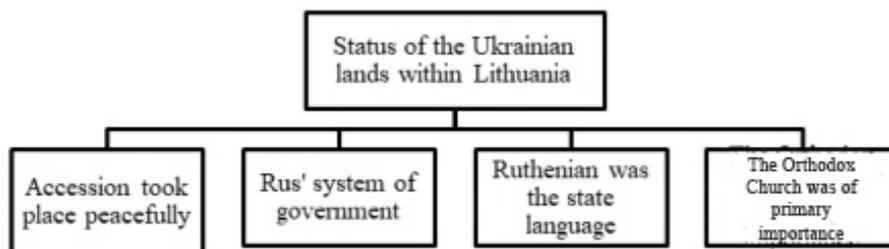
Note that medieval European values are based on the elements of Roman culture, the Greek idea of statehood. These elements also passed to Eastern Europe, which territorially encompassed Ukraine, where the idea of statehood was realized in Rus'. This first Ukrainian state of Rus' in its main parameters was a typical state formation for medieval Europe, and thus an organic part of the young European civilization (Thyret and Hollingsworth, 1995).

Rus appeared along the famous trade route "from the Varangians to the Greeks". This route was the eastern part of the continuous European network. Note that the silver coin denarius, typical of Europe, was distributed in the territory of Rus (Hrushevskiy, 1966). This demonstrates the predominance of the European connections Rus'. Analysis of the dynastic marriages of the Kyivan princes confirms that mainly their sons and daughters married Europeans. It is known that Prince Yaroslav the Wise is called in historiography "the father-in-law of Europe".

Adoption of the European religion of Christianity incorporated in the spiritual plan Rus' into the European civilization community. During the Lithuanian-Polish period of the XIV-XVIII centuries. Ukrainian lands at first voluntarily became part of Lithuania. This accession occurred mainly peacefully, primarily as a result of the principality's desire to get rid of Mongol dependence (Konta, 2017). However, even now Ukraine has not lost its orientation towards Europe and has maintained close diplomatic

relations with it. Note that the Lithuanian Statutes (the basic law in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) were based on Rus' law (See Figure 2).

Figure No. 02. Status of the Ukrainian lands within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania



Source: Written by the authors of the article.

It should be noted that European coins were spread in Ukraine from the 10th century to the beginning of the 18th century. This is confirmed by written sources and numerous archaeological finds (Vynar, 2020). The presence of such material facts confirms that the Rus' lands had close relations with the leading European countries.

At the same time, during the Cossack period, Ukraine's relations with European countries strengthened considerably. Directly agrarian colonization of Ukrainian steppes in the 16th-XVIII centuries was a consequence of the powerful development of Europe and the growth of demand for Ukrainian agricultural products. Colonization of fertile territories of Ukrainian steppes and forest-steppe in the realities of the Tatar threat acquired armed expression (Konta, 2017).

Consequently, it is the phenomenon of the Ukrainian Cossacks that is associated with important social and economic processes in Europe at that time. Ukrainian territories were familiar with the revolutions of the 17th century that swept through Europe. It is significant that A. Cromwell, the leader of the English revolution, congratulated Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the leader of the national-liberation rebellion in Ukraine, on his victory.

The proclamation of the hetman state laid the beginning of the formation of a legal society of the European type in Ukrainian lands, which presupposed

the election of officials. At the same time, the Ukrainian cities of that time possessed democratic European principles based on Magdeburg Law and polyethnicity. The latter presupposed the choice of the head of the city. In particular, the example of Lviv can be traced to the powerful coexistence of several Christian and Muslim communities, which for the Middle Ages can be considered an exceptional practice even for then Europe (Parshyn and Mereniuk, 2022).

The judicial power was exercised independently of the state administration. It should be noted that during the Cossack period Ukraine became a place of European culture and education. The well-known traveler Pavel from Aleppo, having arrived in Hetmanshchyna, recollected that the peasants here were also literate. At the same time, the foreigner was amazed by the knowledge of the music by the population of Hetmanshchyna. The Customs and writing of the Ukrainians also surprised the famous French engineer Guillaume de Beauplan (Beauplan, 1660).

Following the example of European universities of that time in Kyiv was founded the first high school in Eastern Europe - the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The vast majority of the Hetmans of Ukraine studied at this institution. Among the nobility of that time, many people studied at Western universities. Since that time Latin, which was the basic language in Europe, also spread in Ukraine (Thyret and Hollingsworth, 1995). Let us mention the fact that at that time the noble entourage of the Russian Tsar Peter I was illiterate. A striking example is A. Menshikov, a Russian statesman and military leader, a favorite of Peter I.

As for the art of that time, it also developed under the influence of baroque, a style that was widespread in Europe. At the same time, in Ukraine, it had its own, autochthonous expressed features, for which it was called - Cossack Baroque. It was under the patronage of the Hetmans that this style developed. At that time isolated from European values, Muscovy was not able to create its own Baroque style and received it in the ready form from Ukrainian Hetmanshchyna.

Forced separation of Ukrainian lands from Europe began by Peter I, using his aggressive policy of "state mercantilism". At first, he ruined Ukrainian merchants, who were taxed with a complicated duty. However, Russian merchants received the right of duty-free trade (Chupriy, 2018). In addition, there was a brutal monetary reform, which had the effect of preventing Ukrainians from using European coinage. Thus, the Russian authorities tried to pull Cossack Ukraine into the economic system of Russia (Hrushevskiy, 1966). Especially difficult time in the history of Ukraine were the years 1764 (abolition of Hetmanshchyna), 1775 (liquidation of Zaporizhian Sich), 1783 (introduction of serf system), 1801 (prohibition to build Churches in Cossack baroque style).

However, the Western Ukrainian territories were part of European countries (Austria-Hungary, Poland). Despite the lack of state sovereignty, the lands of Galicia and Volhynia generally maintained close economic and cultural relations with European countries. At that time there was a distinctive church elite in these territories, which developed Ukrainian culture and art.

Consequently, the inhabitants of these territories managed to preserve their national consciousness despite many negative historical events and circumstances. After the seizure of the Western Ukrainian lands by Soviet Russia (1939), mass brutal repressions began, which introduced collectivization and industrialization here (Ostropolska, 2021).

However, the Russian authorities, using the mechanisms of brutal repression, did not succeed in destroying the national consciousness of the Ukrainians (Ishchuk, 2022). Thus, the analysis of history refutes the theses about Ukraine as an original part of Russia. Historical facts show that the Ukrainian territory ended up first in the Russian Empire and later in the USSR not of its own free will, but as a result of the Russian harsh expansion. Eastern Ukrainian territories were part of the repressive and despotic empire 200 years ago, and western Ukrainian territories only after brutal repression after World War II.

6. Discussion

The importance of historical myths for contemporary Russian politics is very high, as researchers have repeatedly pointed out (Bînă and Dragomir, 2020). The delirium of the imperial past, which has been created for more than one hundred years, has had its specific mythologemes. They are heterogeneous, devoted to several historical periods, and have their own semantic load. In the first place, it refers to the justification of the superiority of the Russians and its rights to the surrounding lands. Such policies appeared as early as the late Middle Ages, but in essence, these messages have been unchanged for centuries. Moreover, they do not take into account the real differences between Ukrainians and Russians.

One of the frequently repeated theories is the designation of Moscow as “the third Rome”. This ideological and theological concept was first proposed by Philotheus of Pskov in 1523. Its essence was that Moscow was becoming the spiritual successor of the Roman and Byzantine empires. Rome fell because “heretical Catholics” seized it, and “the second Rome” (Constantinople) was seized by Muslims. True Christianity (Orthodoxy) remained only in Moscow, therefore after it the concept of Rome as spiritual and imperial capital cannot exist. Another myth heard even from the top officials of the Kremlin regime already during the Russian-Ukrainian war,

is that Ukraine was created by Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin) in 1918, giving the Ukrainians territories that belonged to the Russians. By then, no such ethnic, cultural, and historical space seemed to exist. Thus, the “return” of the southeastern regions of Ukraine to the Russian state is a legitimate goal, which can be realized in different ways, including military-aggressive ones.

Such mythologies do not take into account civilizational differences between the Ukrainian and Russian nations but are based on something else. First of all, Russian propaganda presents its claims as a priori facts and reproduces them using all possible channels of information dissemination (Johnson, 2022). This creates a “numerical advantage” in the information field. Given the long and systematic work, Russian ideas have their supporters abroad. At least many influential people, until the Russian army showed its real face in Ukraine, took such arguments seriously.

Among them, in particular, was the influential multibillionaire Elon Musk, who sensibly took the thesis of ancestral Russian territories as part of Ukraine, and Pope Francis, who spoke out in favor of ending the war, but for some time did not perceive the Russians’ responsibility for the crimes committed. Current trends to remove fake pages and bots’ farms that spread lies, limiting the influence of lobbyists and paid influencers are effective steps to counteract machinations (Bină and Dragomir, 2020).

Another psychological maneuver used by the Russians was the distortion of facts (Kuzio, 2021). Emphasis was placed on visible truthful details, while “inconvenient” facts were suppressed or erased (Martz, 2022). The examples of the proposed mythologies show that they do not stand up to detailed criticism. In particular, the Pskov monk declared Moscow to be the third Rome in its own right. The Christian traditions of Moscow are quite young, while much older Orthodoxy spread to Moldova, Serbia, Georgia, etc.

Indeed, after its fall and capture by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the role of the Orthodox center in Moscow increased. At the same time, there was also Orthodoxy in the Ukrainian lands - calls for the primacy of the modern Russian capital are artificial. Also, Lenin actively used the word “Ukraine” in his activities and on his own behalf, berating tsarism (Kuzio, 2021).

However, the concept of Ukraine itself appeared much earlier, and at the time of the Bolshevik coup, the Ukrainian Central Council operated in Kyiv as the democratic parliament of the Ukrainian people within the ethnic limits of its settlement. In general, the term Ukraine was first mentioned in the Hypatian chronicle in 1187 (Hypatian chronicle, 1908: 663) Historical truth is a powerful tool in overcoming the propaganda used by the Kremlin regime.

A weighty factor was also the weakness of Ukrainian positions in 2014-2021. Ukrainian society was unprepared for the mass replication

of fakes, perceived some of them (Ishchuk, 2022). There was no effective counteraction in the information field: pro-Russian politicians had the right to vote in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, openly demonstrated their views on national TV channels, and had some support from the population (Schläpfer, 2016).

The state cultural policy was weak. For this reason, explaining the civilizational differences between Russians and Ukrainians was the business of a few intellectuals and enthusiasts, whose views were drowned in the sea of Russian propaganda. The situation has changed dramatically since February 24, 2022, but now quite a few media figures who had taken a moderate or pro-Russian stance before the open phase of the war have taken the Ukrainian side (Martz, 2022). At the same time, only time will allow time to build a reliable information model capable of countering Russian fakes.

Much to demonstrate the Kremlin's war crimes have been committed by the Russians themselves. In particular, many Ukrainians believed before the open expansion in 2022 that the Holodomor of 1932-1933 was not the result of a deliberate policy of Soviet Moscow, but a coincidence of natural factors. After the atrocities of the Russian army in the occupied regions of Ukraine, doubts about the artificial causes of the Holodomor disappeared. Thus, the gradual destruction of Russian myths is also carried out by the hands of the Russians themselves.

Conclusions and Implications

So, the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022 has a long basis of the historical and civilizational plan. It is about significant differences in the psychology and mentality of two different people. Ukrainians from princely times (Kyivan Rus) gravitated to the European vector of development, while Moscow princes chose for themselves the Horde subjection and the corresponding despotic model of statehood.

As the analysis of historical coexistence showed, the differences only multiplied in the future - the conquest of Ukrainian lands and the development of their Russian nobility approved the possibility of imperial myths about the absence of the Ukrainian people as a whole.

All opponents of this viewpoint were subject to repression, which intensified after the Bolsheviks gained power. If M. Hrushevsky could still write about the history of Ukraine-Rus, during the Soviet rule Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians were considered one people, which had disintegrated due to the Horde invasion, but always aspired to unity.

Such simplified schemes of history and cultural history have formed the basis of modern Russian propaganda. The Kremlin regime, through its

controlled media, has used considerable resources to broadcast selected materials.

At the same time, Ukraine's information policy was weak, and many Ukrainian politicians were still influenced by Russian centralism even after 2014 and the outbreak of hostilities in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Obviously, only a revival of real research on Ukrainian history and culture will allow the civilizational differences between the Ukrainian and Russian peoples to be demonstrated.

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