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TOPONYMS “MOSCOVIA” AND “RUSSIA”: SPECIFICITY OF THEIR USE IN IMPERIAL TRANSLATIONS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The paper investigates the facts of falsification by tsarist translators of the 19th century of the content of texts by foreign diplomats about the late medieval possessions of the Muscovite Rurikovichs. To this end, the use of the toponyms «Muscovy» and «Russia» in the letters of foreign diplomats and in their Russian translations was traced. The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism, comparative analysis, and comparison of information about Muscovy contained in the letters of foreigners of the 16th century with the Russian translations of these letters, made under the reign of strict imperial censorship. The scientific novelty of the article lies in the fact that for the first time a comparative analysis of the historical descriptions of Muscovy by foreign diplomats Alberto Campense and Pavel Iovius Novokomsky for Pope Clement VII with their translations into Russian in 1836 has been carried out. It is proven that the tsarist writers V. Semenov and M. Mikhailovsky, adhering to the doctrine of «Moscow – the Third Rome», in their explanations to the translations justified the right of Moscow to seize Lithuanian territories with the Orthodox Rus' population. The claims of the then Moscow leaders to the Byzantine heritage, which led to the addition of the title *In Latin* «dominator totius Russias», to the title of the ruler of Muscovy, are also analyzed.

Conclusions. It is proven that the tsarist translators V. Semenov and M. Mikhailovsky deliberately committed falsifications, replacing the Finno-Ugric name of the Muscovite possessions of the Rurikovichs «Muscovy» with the Orthodox term «Russia» in the translations of the letters of Alberto Campense and Pavel Ioviy Novokomsky.

It is found out that the strategies of transforming the content of translations, applying methods of omitting or replacing geographical terms were used by imperial historians to substantiate historical mythologies, which are also used by modern Russian historians.

Taken together, this made it possible to comprehensively reveal the subject field of the study.

Key words: toponyms «Russia» and «Muscovy», refutation of historical mythologies, methods of falsifying the content of historical sources, strategy of text transformation.

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ТОПОНІМИ «МОСКОВІЯ» ТА «РОСІЯ»: СПЕЦИФІКА-ВИКОРИСТАННЯ В ІМПЕРСЬКИХ ПЕРЕКЛАДАХ ХІХ СТОЛІТТЯ

У роботі досліджуються факти фальсифікації царськими перекладачами ХІХ століття змісту текстів іноземних дипломатів про пізньосередньовічні володіння московських Рюриковичів. Для цього простежено вживання топонімів «Московія» й «Росія» у листах іноземних дипломатів та в їх російських перекладах. **Методологія дослідження** спирається на принципи історизму, порівняльного аналізу та зіставлення відомостей про Московію, що містяться в листах іноземців ХVІ ст., із російськими перекладами цих листів, виконаними в умовах панування жорсткої імперської цензури. **Наукова новизна** статті полягає в тому, що вперше проведений порівняльний аналіз історичних описів Московії іноземних дипломатів Альберто Кампензе та Павла Іовія Новокомського для Папи Климента VII з їх перекладами російською мовою у 1836 році. Доведено, що царські літератори В. Семенов та М. Михайловський, дотримуючись доктрини «Москва – Третій Рим», у своїх поясненнях до перекладів обґрунтовували право Москви на захоплення литовських територій із православним руським населенням. Також проаналізовано претензії тодішніх московських лідерів в візантійську спадщину, що призвело до додавання титулу «Государь всієї Русі» до титулу правителя Московії.

Висновки. Доведено, що царські перекладачі В. Семенов та М. Михайловський навмисно вчинили фальсифікації, замінивши у перекладах листів Альберто Кампензе та Павла Іовія Новокомського фінно-угорську назву московських володінь Рюриковичів «Московія» православним терміном «Росія».

З'ясовано, що стратегії трансформації змісту перекладів, застосування методів упуцнення або підміни географічних термінів імперські історики використовували для обґрунтування історичних міфологем, якими послуговуються і сучасні російські історики. У сукупності це дало змогу всебічно розкрити предметне поле дослідження.

Ключові слова: *топоніми «Росія» й «Московія», спростування історичних міфологем, методи фальсифікації змісту історичних джерел, стратегія трансформації текстів.*

Problem statement. Russian imperial historiography and the modern political elite of Russia support the scientific hypothesis about the existence of the medieval Slavic state of Moscow Rus, which, in their opinion, continued the tradition of ancient Russian statehood. Russian historians and scholars conceal the Finno-Ugric roots of the Muscovites and defend the idea of their Slavic origin. For this purpose, within the limits of censorship at that time in historical research and Russian translations of foreign descriptions of the medieval Moscow state, instead of the Finno-Ugric name Muscovy, the term «Russia» was used. And in our time, the mythologeme about the so-called «historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians» has become the ideological basis for President V. Putin's full-scale invasion of Russian troops into Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

It should be noted that in the conditions of the full-scale war that Russia started against Ukraine in 2022, refuting Russian historical mythologemes becomes an urgent task for historians.

Analysis of modern research and historical sources. Regarding the mythologeme about the «Kyiv heritage», which the Russian elite sought to reclaim, the famous researcher of Russian historical myths E. Keenan stated: «This myth was finally adopted by the Moscow political elite in the 17th century and «appeared during or immediately after Moscow's expansion into Kyiv territory» (Кінан, 2001).

By the end of the 1940's in the Soviet empire, another mythologeme was created that the Kievan state of the Rurikids was supposedly the initial stage in the history of the three fraternal Slavic peoples – Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians (Мавродин, 1946; Мавродин, 1951).

While the belonging of the Ukrainian and Belarusian peoples to the Slavic ethnos does not raise doubts among researchers, the statement of the party historian V. Mavrodin about the belonging of Russians to the «ancient Russian Slavic community» caused many objections from specialists even in Soviet times. Using rich archival material, modern Ukrainian historians and philologists refuted the claims of both tsarist historians about the existence of a «united Rus» (Денисенко, 2023; Півторак, 2001; Півторак, 2010: 124–129; Плохій, 2019; Штепа, 2003; Штепа, 2014), and Soviet historians about the formation in the Kievan state of the so-called «united ancient Russian

nationality», which in the 14th – 15th centuries allegedly turned into three East Slavic nationalities: Russian, Belarusian and Russian (Юсова, 2002: 152–163; Ніколаюк, 2022: Т. 33 (72) № 2. 74–81).

According to this historical concept, the ethnic basis of the Russian nation was precisely the Slavs, and medieval Muscovy was inhabited predominantly by the Slavic-Russian ethnos. This approach was used in attempts by the ruling circles of the Russian and Soviet empires to conceal the Finno-Ugric roots of the Muscovites and emphasize their exclusive «Slavicness». For this purpose, in historical sources and literary translations, the Finno-Ugric name of the Moscow Tsardom was systematically replaced by the Slavic name Rus or the Greek name Russia.

The historical sources for our study were the originals of letters from foreigners Albert Campense and Paolo Giovio Novocomsky to Pope Clement VII, written in Italian and Latin, as well as Russian translations of these documents by tsarist writers – V. Semenov and M. Mikhailovsky (Lettera, 1836: 457–513; Письмо, 1836: 409–457; Pauli, 1836: 569–590, Павел, 1836: 517–567, 590–608).

The originals and their Russian translations were published in the first volume of the «Library of Foreign Writers about Russia» in 1836. The author became acquainted with these sources in free access on the website of the Presidential Library named after B. M. Yeltsin, located in St. Petersburg.

The scientific novelty of the study was determined by: comparative analysis of historical descriptions of Muscovy made by foreign diplomats Alberto Campense and Paolo Giovio for Pope Clement VII, with translations of these descriptions into Russian made in 1836. It is proved that the tsarist writers V. Semenov and M. Mikhailovsky in the explanations to the translations gave justification for the right of the Moscow Rurikids to seize foreign territories with an Orthodox population. It was found that the tsarist translators V. Semenov and M. Mikhailovsky consciously used the strategy of transforming the texts of primary sources by replacing the Finno-Ugric name of the Moscow possessions of the Rurikids «Muscovy» with the Greek-origin church term «Russia» in Russian-language analogues of letters.

The purpose of the publication is to carry to substantiate the illegitimacy of identifying Muscovy with Rus in 19th century Russian translations, and to prove

the fact of falsification by imperial translators of the content of texts by foreign diplomats about the possessions of the Moscow Rurikids of the 16th century.

Presentation of the main material. The diplomat Alberto Campense in 1523 wrote a letter to Pope Clement VII, in which he tried to convince him of the need to contribute to the unification of the Orthodox and Catholic churches into a single church, which would have the power to resist Protestantism in Europe, which was gaining strength. He also proposed to conclude a military alliance with the Moscow prince Vasily III against the Turks.

The 16th century bishop Paolo Giovio Novocomsky, also a supporter of the unification of churches and the involvement of Moscow troops in the war against the Turks, in 1526 wrote for the papal chancery «A Book on the Embassy Sent by Vasily Ivanovich, Grand Prince of Moscow, to Pope Clement VII» (Pauli, 1836: 569–590). In the book, he described in detail the geographical position of Muscovy, the ethnic composition of its population, its character and customs.

A. Campense in a letter to Pope Clement VII noted: «... many still consider Muscovites and Russians, or Ruthenians, to be the same, based on the fact that they speak the same language and profess the same faith» (Lettera, 1836: 463).

However, below in the letter, the author presented quite a lot of facts that refute this statement. Thus, the diplomat noted that the Russians are an ethnos separate from the Muscovites, they lived in Lithuania side by side with Lithuanians and Samoyeds (Lettera, 1836: 462). At the same time, the author of the letter listed the nationalities that were under the rule of the Moscow prince: Pechorans (perusrami), Ugrians (ugri), Voguls (vahulzrami), Karelians (corelli), Cheremis (czeremissi), Bashkirs (baschirdi) (Lettera, 1836: 460). Thus, according to A. Campense, medieval Muscovy was inhabited by Finno-Ugrians and Turks who do not belong to the Slavs.

Paolo Giovio Novocomsky in his letter also distinguished between Muscovites and Russians, describing the inhabitants of Muscovy as descendants of the Finno-Ugric people *mochi*, mentioned in the works of the historian Pliny the Elder and the geographer Claudius Ptolemy back in the 1st – 2nd centuries (Pauli, 1836: 574, 579). In the Latin text, he revealed the composition of the inhabitants of Muscovy, which corresponds to the Ugro-Finnic ethnos: Perm (*permiis*), Pechora (*pecerris*), Ugrians (*inygris*), Voguls (*ugulicis*), Penyazhans (*pinnogisque*) (Pauli, 1836: 578). Thus, medieval diplomats testified to the fact of the presence of a numerous non-Slavic population on the territory of medieval Muscovy.

A. Campense in his letter to Pope Clement VII paid much attention to the description not only of the Moscow state, but also of the territories adjacent to it, mentioning the «Kingdom of the Russians» (Lettera, 1836: 462). He noted that the territory of the kingdom is part of the Lithuanian and Polish states (Lettera 1836: 462), in the east it borders with the Smolensk principality captured by the Muscovites (Lettera, 1836: 476), in the west and south – with Wallachia and Bulgaria (Lettera, 1836: 476) and, as part of Poland, «stretches north and northeast from the Sarmatian mountains» (modern Carpathian mountains) (Lettera, 1836: 476). Campense also outlined in detail the geographical borders of the Russian state – («between the Borysthene, the Maeotian swamps and the Tanais», that is, between the Dnieper, the Sea of Azov and the Don, and calls its capital the city of Kyiv, «at the Borysthene» (Dnipro), describing it as a very beautiful and richest European city of that time (Lettera, 1836: 462, 467).

That is, Rus has been called from ancient times the territory that mostly coincides with the borders of modern Ukraine, and the inhabitants of this territory were called Ruthenians. However, as noted by the author of more than 250 works on the history and dialectology of East Slavic languages, ethnogenesis of Eastern Slavs G. Pivtorak: «The term Rus never became a political attribution of Ukrainian territory. It was appropriated by our neighbours – the Russians» (Півторак, 2001: 81–82).

Thus, the Greek ecclesiastical name of the lands of Muscovy as part of the Orthodox *ecumene*, separated from the Muslim Tatar possessions, began to be used in medieval cartography.

The same Paolo Giovio noted that Muscovy, populated by Muscovites, was called White Russia (In Latin – *Russia alba*), and part of Slavic Lithuania, populated by Roxolani (In Latin – *Roxolani*), was called Lower Russia (In Latin – *Russiam inferiorem*) (Pauli, 1836: 576).

Thus, foreign authors testified that most of the Orthodox lands of the former Kyivan state with its centre in Kyiv at the beginning of the 16th century remained under the rule of the Polish king and simultaneously the Lithuanian prince, their boundaries did not geographically coincide with the territories of the Muscovite state, while most of the Orthodox possessions of the Moscow Rurikids were populated by non-Slavic Finno-Ugric ethnic groups who had previously adopted Orthodoxy. This territory was marked on medieval maps by the Finno-Ugric Latin toponym «Moscovia», which was sometimes duplicated by the Greek ecclesiastical Latin term «*Russia alba*» (Ніколаюк, 2022: 33 (72), № 4. 214–215, 218).

Another argument, which, according to modern Russian historians, proves the belonging of Muscovites to the so-called «ancient Rus nationality», i.e. to the Slavic ethnos, is the common language allegedly spoken by Muscovites and Rus people. To denote it, Paolo Giovio used the term «Illyrian» in his description (Pauli, 1836: 586). Note that it was about the Church Slavonic language. Paolo Giovio noted that in the houses of the Moscow nobility he saw many books written in this language. As an educated clergyman, Paolo Giovio knew that Church Slavonic was used in canonical Orthodox worship in the Rus state centred in Kyiv, and later became established in the Orthodox liturgy of Muscovy (Pauli, 1836: 586). The language used by medieval Orthodox Moscow, Rus and Lithuanian elites for cultural and business needs, according to tsarist linguist A. Sobolevsky, was Old Bulgarian: «This language was used by Cyril and Methodius for translations from Greek of the Holy Scriptures, and after Cyril and Methodius became the literary language of Bulgarians, Serbs and Russians» (Соболевский, 1980: 23).

According to this approach, the church language of the Orthodox liturgy became the language of the public sphere primarily for a narrow circle of educated Moscow, Rus and Lithuanian medieval elites. But this does not turn the Finno-Ugric and Tatar population of medieval Muscovy into the «ancient Rus nation» invented by Soviet ideologists, since in everyday life Muscovites continued to use local, non-Slavic languages.

Based on the false claim of their exclusive right to the Rus heritage of the Kyivan Rurikids, Moscow princes pursued an aggressive foreign policy to instill proper fear in their neighbours and expand their possessions (Lettera, 1836: 469).

For example, A. Campense reports that Moscow princes Ivan III and his son Vasily III waged numerous wars with Polish kings and simultaneously Lithuanian princes Casimir IV, Alexander Jagiellon and Sigismund I for the lands of the Ros people that were part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Lettera, 1836: 462). Foreigners noted that the Moscow Rurikids justified the right to annex the Slavic lands of Lithuanian Rus by the commonality of the Orthodox faith among Muscovites and Ros people (Lettera, 1836: 462–463). Such argumentation of territorial seizures looks cynical, since as early as 1458 Moscow rulers broke canonical communication with the Constantinople Orthodox Patriarchate, monopolizing the right to appoint a separate Moscow metropolitan without approval by the Constantinople Chancellery.

In particular, Paolo Giovio emphasized Vasily III claims to the title of emperor, because he called him-

self exclusively as In Latin «dominator totius Rus-sias», that is, «ruler of all Rus» (Pauli, 1836: 573). At the same time, the so-called «dominator totius Russias» actually controlled only a small part of the territories inhabited by Slavic Rus people, essentially the Chernihiv and Pskov lands, as well as Novgorod. Other peoples mentioned by the Moscow ruler in his titlature as his subjects belonged to the Ugro-Finnic and Tatar ethnic groups.

These ambitions were based on the established political concept in Muscovy that allegedly with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Muscovy inherited some universal historical mission to protect universal Orthodoxy from «infidels», i.e. Muslims and Catholics. Even during the reign of Prince Ivan III (father of Vasily III), they began to glorify the Moscow ruler as the supreme champion and defender of Orthodoxy, as a «tsar» – in the Byzantine-ecclesiastical interpretation of the word. For this purpose, the historiosophical scheme of Byzantine historians about the wandering Kingdom, about the succession of kingdoms was used. Thus, began to emerge the idea of «Moscow – the Third Rome» (Капрашев, 2007: 256–257). Even later, Moscow princes were proclaimed heirs of Byzantine emperors, which served as the basis for the illegal addition of the Greek ecclesiastical term «Russia» to their secular titlature (Клосс, 2012: 6).

However, during the reign of Ivan III, the idea of «Moscow – the Third Rome» was not yet finalized as an ideological doctrine. It was later formulated by the Pskov elder of the Spaso-Eleazar Monastery, Philotheus, for Moscow Prince Vasily III (Филофей, 2000). According to Philotheus, after the capture of the Byzantine Orthodox Empire by Muslims in 1453, the mission of the Second Rome (Constantinople or Tsargrad as the centre of Orthodoxy) passed to Muscovy, which, in turn, acquired the status of the «Third Rome», and universal Orthodoxy was allegedly saved from complete destruction: «So let your power know, pious tsar, that all Orthodox kingdoms of the Christian faith have come together in your single kingdom: you alone in all the universe are the tsar for Christians» (Филофей, 2000). At the same time, contrary to historical facts, the ancient Orthodox Kyiv was not mentioned at all, and its role as a prominent centre of the Rus Orthodox ecumene was silenced.

This contributed to the further introduction into Moscow diplomatic practice of the ideologeme about the right of Moscow Rurikids to the legacy of Byzantine emperors, and also prompted the contemporary Moscow diplomacy to make demands to foreign monarchs and Roman popes regarding the recognition of equal rights of Moscow princes and Roman emperors (Pauli, 1836: 572).

At the same time, Moscow rulers began to make territorial claims to the Lithuanian state, which included the lands of the former Kyivan state of the Rurikids (Яковенко, 2010: 140). Moscow princes, calling themselves «*dominator totius Russias*», believed that they had the right to the lands of all Rus, including those that at that time were part of Lithuania. Already at the end of the 15th – beginning of the 16th century, Moscow-Lithuanian wars began.

Despite this, it should be noted that to denote the state ruled by the so-called «*dominator totius Russias*», the Finno-Ugric toponym «*Moscoviae*» was used. Foreign diplomats in correspondence clearly distinguished between Rus and Rus people who lived in the Lithuanian-Rus principality, and Muscovites who lived in Muscovy, whose rulers appropriated the ecclesiastical title «*totius Russias*» without owning all the lands of the Rus people they then claimed.

In the 17th century, the idea of the need to return the Orthodox «Kyivan heritage», i.e. the territory of the former Kyivan Rus, was finally established among the Moscow elite (Кінан, 2001). This concept was formulated in the 17th century by the theologian of German origin I. Gizel in the «Kyiv Synopsis», which essentially laid the foundations of the concept of a «triune people», justifying the «historical rights» of Moscow to the «Kyivan heritage». After all, it was the author of the «Kyiv Synopsis» who represented Moscow rulers as successors of the princes of ancient Rus, and Moscow as the heir of Kyiv (2002): «And then Volodymyr Monomakh was crowned by those envoys (Byzantine) with the royal crown... And from that time the Grand Prince Volodymyr Monomakh was called the Tsar of Russia, and after him – his heirs. From them all that royal treasure, by God's grace, to this day with the great sovereign tsars and grand princes of Moscow and all Russia autocrats worthily and rightfully remains» (Жиленко, 2002).

This postulate was approved in the new name of the Muscovite state, which Peter I introduced under the influence of Theophan Prokopovich after Muscovy's victory in the Northern War with Sweden (Ареева, 1999). In 1721, the Greek ecclesiastical name Russia was legally established for the geographical naming of the territorially enlarged Muscovite Tsardom.

Obviously, Peter I should have called the Muscovite Tsardom the Muscovite Empire, and this would have been logical. But to justify the territorial claims of Muscovy to neighbouring states, the Moscow tsar chose the ecclesiastical term «Russia» to name his state. Then all of Europe knew that the lands of ancient Slavic Rus in the 18th century belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was these territories that the Muscovites seized in the future, car-

rying out three partitions of Poland at the end of the 18th century.

Now it becomes clear why tsarist writers in the 19th century resorted to semantic transformation, by omitting and replacing part of the information, distorting facts from foreign sources. In particular, trying to hide the Finno-Ugric roots of the Muscovites and objectify their Slavicness, tsarist writers used the omission technique in translating culturally significant proper names (*Muscovy – Russia*) (*Russia alba – Russia*). The modified names became part of the narrative necessary for the ruling circles, Moscow princes who pursued an aggressive foreign policy. Thus, replacing the Finno-Ugric name of medieval Muscovy with the Latin name Russia without the component *alba* was needed to expand their influence to a larger number of territories and, in addition, to legitimize the inhabitants of Muscovy as descendants of the Slavic ethnos.

Translators of documents of medieval diplomats were forced to obey the requirements of strict imperial censorship and provide unreliable historical explanations. For example, when translating a letter from Alberto Campense to Pope Clement VII, V. Semenov formulated the main Russian imperial thesis in a comment to note 24 as follows: «Украина издревле принадлежала России, а Киев был столицей Великих князей Русских» («Ukraine has belonged to Russia since ancient times, and Kyiv was the capital of the Great Russian Princes») (Письмо, 1836: 492), not distinguishing between the territory of Rus-Ukraine inhabited by Slavic Rus people and the possessions of the Moscow Rurikids inhabited by Finno-Ugric and Tatar tribes.

In turn, another imperial writer M. Mikhailovsky in a comment to note 25 in Paolo Giovio's letter unequivocally voiced the Russian historical mythologeme: «Московиты – это россияне, а имя московитам дано было западными писателями по названию их столицы – Москвы» («Muscovites are Russians, and the name Muscovites was given by Western writers according to the name of their capital – Moscow») (Павел, 1836: 601). In the explanation to note 30, he again identified the Slavic Rus people with the Muscovites, who were allegedly «baptized by Vladimir the Great», justifying the unceremonious appropriation by the ruling circles of the Russian Empire of the historical heritage of Rus-Ukraine (Павел, 1836: 601).

In order to preserve the cultural values of the original in the translated text or to adapt the translated text to the value paradigm of the receiving culture, Russian translators used a culturally-oriented domestication strategy. This strategy involves including a certain cultural reality in the contexts of the recipient culture, by omitting or replacing «foreign» elements

with others in the translated text. It was this strategy that imperial writers applied when translating the passage in which Paolo Giovio reports on the capture of Smolensk by the Muscovites in 1522. Thus, the diplomat in the letter informs that during another Moscow-Polish war, the Moscow ruler Vasily III, having lost the battle of Orsha in 1514, later, in 1522, concluded a favourable peace agreement with the Poles, according to which Smolensk captured from them passed under the rule of the Muscovites. In the original Latin text, Paolo Giovio noted: «Smolenchum oppidum, quod antea Moschovitae occuparant, post tantam etiam victoriam a Polonis partem, in ditone Basilii relinqueretur» (Павел, 1836: 589). In the Russian-language version, this means the following: «Смоленск, ранее оккупированный московитами, остался во власти Василия III» («Smolensk, previously occupied by the Muscovites, remained under the rule of Vasily III»). Thus, the foreigner confirmed the fact that Smolensk had never before been part of the Muscovite state.

However, the imperial writer M. Mikhailovsky translated this passage, based on the requirements of tsarist censorship: «Smolensk, the ancient possession of Muscovy, remained as before under the rule of Vasily III» (Павел, 1836: 565). With this version of the translation, the writer confirmed the right of Moscow princes to capture Smolensk. The Muscovites justified this legal succession by the fact that Smolensk was allegedly part of the possessions of the Kyivan Rurikids, that is, in their opinion, it should «return» to the Moscow representatives of this dynasty as former property.

Let us recall that after the collapse of the Kyivan state of the Rurikids, independent principalities and boyar republics were formed on its lands. Later they were captured or fell under the influence of neighbouring states, ceasing to be independent subjects of international law. Lithuanian princes, having recaptured most of Rus from the Tatars in 1362 (except for Galicia and the Novgorod and Pskov lands), adopted the laws, language and Orthodox faith of the Rus people. This gave them the right to consider themselves their successors. While the Zalesye Rurikids, who came under

the rule of the Golden Horde, became the object of the legal, economic and political system of the Tatar state. Therefore, according to medieval law, the Muscovite state, which until the end of the 15th century was not an independent political subject, had no legal grounds to claim the lands of independent states. Although, according to the then Russian historians, Polish kings and simultaneously Lithuanian princes owned these lands illegally, so their capture by the Muscovites was considered absolutely justified and fair.

Another distortion of the text by M. Mikhailovsky is observed in the translation from Latin of another passage from Paolo Giovio's letter. Thus, on p. 539 instead of the double Finno-Ugric and Church-Orthodox name of the Moscow lands of the Rurikids, marked by him in the Latin version as *Moschovia* appollat *Russia alba* (In Russian – Московия, именуемая Русь Белая) (Pauli, 1836: 576), the translator used only the ecclesiastical term «Russia» (In Latin – *Russia alba*), «forgetting» to mention the Finno-Ugric name *Muscovy* and ignoring the component «alba» (Павел, 1836: 539). In the preface to this letter, the tsarist writer just as unequivocally renamed *Muscovy* to *Russia* (Павел, 1836: 520–521).

Conclusions. By comparing the authentic letters of foreign authors with their translations made by Russian writers V. Semenov and M. Mikhailovsky, it was found that instead of the Finno-Ugric designation *Moscovia* for the Rurikid possessions used by foreigners in their letters, the translators unjustifiably used the Greek ecclesiastical name *Russia*, which was only introduced to name the Muscovite state in 1721.

It can be argued that the tsarist translators of the 19th century deliberately employed a strategy of text transformation to alter the original content of messages from medieval foreign writers about the Muscovite state, including through the use of ideologically biased ways of naming its territory. The basis for using this strategy was the legal establishment of the Orthodox name *Russia* in the international arena. At the same time, the transformation strategy in translations contributed to the identification of Muscovites with the Slavic ethnos.

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