


Nationalism and Siberian archeology of the 19th century

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Abstract

The article provides a comparative characteristic of the nationally motivated ethnocultural concepts of the 19th century, based on the interpretation of Siberian peoples' history. Finnish nationalism was looking for the ancestral home of the Finns in Altai and tried to connect them with the Turkic-Mongol states of antiquity and the Middle Ages. Under the influence of the cultural and historical theories of regional experts, the Siberian national discourse itself began to form, which was especially clearly manifested in the example of the genesis of Altai nationalism. Russian great-power nationalism sought to make Slavic history more ancient and connected it with the prestigious Scythian culture.

If we rely on the well-known periodization of the development of the national movement of M. Khrokh, then in the theory of the Finns' Altai origin, we can distinguish features characteristic of phase "B," when the cultural capital of nationalism gradually turns into political. In turn, the historical research of the regional specialists illustrates the earliest stage in the emergence of the national movement, the period of nationalism not only without a nation but also without national intellectuals. The oblasts are forming the very national environment, which does not yet have the means for its own expression, but it obviously contains separatist potential. At the same time, both the Finnish and Siberian patriots, with their scientific research, solved the same ideological task—to include the objects of their research in the world cultural and historical context, to achieve recognition of their right to a place among European nations. However, Florinsky's theory, performing the function of the official propaganda, is an example of the manifestation of state unifying nationalism, with imperial connotations characteristics of Russia.

Keywords

Siberia, nationalism, Russia, nation-building, finnish nationalism

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The process of establishing nation-states in 19th century Europe was accompanied by massive rethinking of historical narrative. Political formations of a new type needed legitimizing cultural and historical justifications: it was required to present the country's population as a universal aggregate political entity, endowing it with a single will and associate it with prestigious characters and events of the past. Accordingly, it was not the last role in the construction of national identity which was assigned to historical knowledge. History began to fulfill an important political function, a national discourse became a part of historical research (Smith, 2002, pp. 236–238),¹ which was especially evident in the study of antiquities (Diaz-

Andreu & Champion, 1996; Shnirelman, 2013; Silberman, 1989; Stiebing, 1994, pp. 9–25).²

In this regard, the historical science of the Russian Empire in the 19th century is of particular interest. A national discourse had a significant impact on the formation of

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Russian archeology and contributed to its institutionalization as a science (Platonova, 2010; Shnirelman, 1996), pp. 43–70).³ The cultural diversity and unevenness of modernization processes (which were the integral parts of empires) gave rise to a wide variety of forms of national discourse, due to which, both developed and emerging nationalisms came into contact and competed in interest in the ancient past. V.A. Shnirelman identified three problematic areas that were actualized in the Russian Empire in connection with the national question. There are relations between Russia and the West, relations between the Russian and non-Russian populations, and the relations between groups of the non-Russian population among themselves (Shnirelman, 1996, p. 219).⁴

The purpose of the article is to compare the national discourse of historical concepts based on the interpretation of Siberian antiquities: the Finno-Ugric concept of the Siberian ancestral homeland, developed by the Finnish researchers M.A. Castren and I.R. Aspelin; “eastern hypothesis” developed by oblastniki (Siberian regionalists) like N.M. Yadrinsev and G.N. Potanin and the national-patriotic theory of V.M. Florinsky.

The problem under consideration is relevant due to two reasons. The first is connected with understanding the formation of national discourse in the Russian Empire, while the second touches the theme of modern ethno-historical interpretations, in which internalistic attitudes often prevail in relation to historiography.

First Russian scientists and participants in the expeditions of the 18th century laid the foundations of the historical and ethnographic interpretations of the ancient monuments of Southern Siberia. Their hypotheses were based on linguistic data like written sources, while from an archaeological point of view, burial grounds and rock paintings were of the greatest interest. D.G. Messerschmidt and F.I. Stralenberg carried out the first excavations of tumuli in Siberia, as well as their description and systematization. They also drew attention to the linguistic similarity of the peoples of Scandinavia, the Urals, and Siberia (Belokobylskiy, 1986, p.22).⁵ Reflecting on the topic of linguistic kinship, G.F. Miller noted the proximity of the Samoyedic people to the Tomsk and Narym Ostyaks and their complete difference from the Ostyaks of Surgut, Tobolsk, and Berezovsk. Later, Miller defined the people who built the tumuli as “ancient Tatars” and divided their existence in southern Siberia into pre-Mongol and Mongol periods. Thus, he explained the presence of rich and poor tumuli as “a different state of the same people” (Miller, 1999, p. 514).⁶ I.E. Fischer agreed with Stralenberg, who stated that “the Ostyaks, living next to the Tom, and the Kamasins who live near the Kan and the Manna rivers with Pustozerskaya and Yugorskaya Samoyadya (Samoyedic people) have the same origin,” but he also considered that their resettlement was in the opposite direction from south to

north: “... but most of all I think that they are ancient and original inhabitants of the middle part of today’s Siberia ... who were afraid of the Tatars ... left from there (from the previous place) to the Arctic Ocean ...” (Fischer, 1774, p. 74).⁷ P. S Pallas also expressed his point of view on the ethnic processes of antiquity. He, like his predecessors, drew attention to the lack of continuity of modern aboriginal culture with the ancient culture of Southern Siberia: “the Tatars do not recognize them as their ancestors, but also they are not able to name them either.” In his opinion, the similarity of the ancient mines of the Altai and Hungary mines and the continuous chain of tumuli from Siberia to the Danube indicated that the ancestors of the Hungarians originally inhabited southern Siberia (Demin, 1989, p. 5).⁸

The participants of the first complex expeditions not only outlined the main directions of ethnic interpretation of the ancient monuments of Siberia but also laid the foundations of the ethnographic methodology itself. As noted by H. Fermoylen, the collision of educational ideas with real cultural diversity led to a change in approach, and served as an impetus for the formation of ethnographic science. Researchers of Siberia, using an unprecedentedly vast empirical material, developed an innovative paradigm, where the feature characteristics of the era of romanticism were already guessed. The methodology of Messerschmidt and Stralenberg (also completed by Miller and Fischer) was based on Leibniz’s ethnolinguistic concept and the concept of comparative anthropology developed by Lafito (Vermeulen, 2008, pp. 271–286).⁹ It is also important to note that the ethnographic discourse formed by Miller (thanks to the works of Pallas, Georgi, and Falk) at the end of the 18th century began to influence the formation of public opinion, in which political identity was previously determined by religious affiliation (Fermojlen, 2008, pp. 177–198).¹⁰

The concept of the South Siberian roots of the Finno-Ugric culture that took shape in the first half of the 19th century was entirely derived from the ethnological generalizations of the scientists of the 18th century. It was no coincidence that the initiative to involve Finnish patriots in the study of Siberia belonged to academician Pallas, who in 1795 suggested Portan (the leader of Finnish national intellectuals) to start researching the origins of Finnish culture in Siberia (Zagrebin, 2007, p. 233).¹¹

The scientific formulation of the Finno-Ugric concept is associated with the name of M.A. Castren. Besides the achievements of comparative linguistics and the historical and cultural concept of I.G. Herder, Castren was also inspired by the works of Miller: «The historiographer of the Finnish tribe F.G. Miller says that “to this tribe belong many peoples famous for military exploits and trade activities” and that “it was the Finnish peoples who gave the strongest impetus to the movements of peoples that are known in Europe as the Great Migration of Nations”» (Kastren, 1999, p. 52).¹²

Castren's research interests more likely were driven by the rise of Finnish nationalism. After the annexation of Finland to Russia, the Russian administration, with the aim of cultural separation from Sweden, began to stimulate actively the formation of the Finnish national identity (Suni, 1982, p. 71).¹³ In the first third of the 19th century, this intensified development Finnish national movement—Fennomania. The socio-political atmosphere of the national upsurge had a huge impact on the younger generation of Finns, prompting them to study their native history and culture: “Until recently, almost no attention was paid to the entire Finnish tribe. Not knowing its most ancient destinies, the scattered branches of it revered as useless shoots of the family tree of mankind, which the historian calmly chopped off, consigning to oblivion and death” (Ibid, p. 51).¹⁴

In the 1840s, when the Finnish national movement reached its peak, Castren, after the suggestion of the Academy of Sciences, made a trip to Siberia in order to study the languages of Siberian tribes. “Research will not be satisfied in any way until it finds relationships connecting the Finnish tribe with some more or less part of the rest of humanity”—Castren wrote (Ibid, p. 52).¹⁵ The inclusion of Finnish culture in the world historical process was his main civil mission. “Castren not only stood at the origins of panfinnism,” noted A. V. Golovnev “but was also its brave missionary, primarily among the Finns themselves. With light irony, he spoke about the attachment of his compatriots to “his little world,” and his imagination drew a huge Eurasian world, where the fates of the Huns, Chinese, Mongols, and ancient Finns were interspersed” (Golovnyov, 2004, p. 19).¹⁶

In one of the letters from Siberia, Castren explained his conclusions and guesses as follows: “Because the affinity of the Finnish tribe with the Samoyedic tribe has been sufficiently proven by my present journey, and the Finns are obviously related to the Turks and Tatars, it is quite natural that the immediate task of linguistics should be finding out, with the help of the Samoyedic language, the relationship between the Finns and the Tungus. From the Tungus, there is a direct path to the Manchurs, and all the paths lead to the Mongols, because, apparently, both the Turks and the Samoyeds, and the Tungus, and the Manchurs are certainly in affinity with them” (Kastren, 1999, p. 210).¹⁷ However, having become acquainted with Siberian realities, Castren had to admit that they had nothing to do with the Finns. As a result, he entered the history of science not as the discoverer of the Siberian ancestral homeland of the Finns but as “an outstanding researcher of the Uralic languages and cultures, who convincingly showed the relationship of the Finnish and Samoyed peoples” (Golovnyov, 2004, p. 22).¹⁸

The awareness of ourselves as “the descendants of the despicable Mongols ...” had to become a serious test for the nascent Finnish national identity. After all, not so long ago, the connection of the Finnish language with Hebrew,

Ancient Greek, and even Arabic was seriously considered (Tiander, 1904, p.6–8).¹⁹ This circumstance led Castren to reflections in which the desire to personalize the people and endow them with psychological properties was manifested: “As for me, I do not attach particular importance to noble ancestors, I am even more disposed to people whose fathers were millers, masons, hosiery, etc. It is somehow less of a risk to be the son of a shoemaker, not a senator: if something comes out of you, the more honor. Landless peasant... so one can be comforted by the fact that our fathers were also landless peasants. This is my conviction, and therefore I am infinitely glad that every day I find more and more similarities between the Finnish and Siberian languages” (Kastren, 1999, p. 100).²⁰

Moreover, this tendency was manifested in Castren's constant emphasis on the universal human properties of Finnish nature. He stated that this nature consisted of being quiet, well-behaved, and hardworking, and he also added the absence of thieves, parasites, onlookers, innocence, ingenuousness, and modesty (Ibid, p. 24–25, 112, 295).²¹ These properties naturally extended to the Siberian peoples: “By their nature they (the Yenisei Ostyaks) are very close to us, the Finns are kind, quiet, peaceful, poor, and not at all whimsical people” (Ibid, p. 171).²²

The strong patriotic feelings characteristic of nascent nationalism lay at the heart of Castren's unparalleled personal dedication and his devotion to a scientific idea. “Castren with his broad and ardent soul,” wrote K.F. Tyander “was imbued with that national feeling, which attached a very special significance to his discoveries” (Tiander, 1904, p. 44).²³ Castren himself admitted that everything (concerning the Finns and their kinship with the Samoyedic and other peoples) was intended not so much for the Academy of Sciences as for “the Finnish public, which does not even watch this. I wanted to arise their attention because in my opinion, my compatriots are most capable of cultivating this Siberian field” (Kastren, 1999, p. 94).²⁴ As A.E. Zagrebina aptly observed, for the first Finnish explorers, these research studies were “not just expeditionary routes but also ways of gaining self-identification” (Zagrebina, 2007, p. 169–175).²⁵

A new upsurge of Finnish nationalism followed the expansion of Finland's autonomy in the 1860s and in the late 1880s. I. R. Aspelin continued to search for the ancestral homeland of the Finns in Siberia. In his theoretical views, the opposition of romanticism and positivism was noted. In 1877, at the IV All-Russian Archaeological Congress in Kazan, Aspelin named “the search for national peculiarities in archaeological materials” as the main task of archeology. The central theme of his work was the process of separating the Finnish community from the wider Finno-Ugric (Salminen, 2003, p. 106–107; 2011, p. 133–134).²⁶

In his activities in Siberia, Aspelin focused on copying runic writing, searching for new inscriptions, and comparing

them with burial complexes. However, as the Turkic origin of the Orkhon inscriptions had been explored (what Aspelin considered as an absolutely reliable source on the ancient history of the Finns), he refused to work with the materials brought from expeditions (Belokobyl'skij, 1986, p. 88)²⁷

Two other nationally motivated historical concepts of Siberian historiography developed within the same ethno-historical paradigm.

In the second half of the 19th century, with the advanced political views of oblastniks (Siberian regionalists), progressive ideas of nationalism began to penetrate into Siberia and occupy strong positions in the social movement, opposing the dynastic, religious, and tribal principles of the political organization of society.

The oblastniks' ideas regarding the content of the Siberian nation had undergone significant evolution. Initially, the regionalists believed that the core idea had to be based on the Russian population and demonstrated an openly paternalistic attitude toward the natives of Siberia. The first disappointments in the attempts to form a regional identity on the basis of the Russian community changed the attitude of oblast residents to the other tribes' issue. "However, they had started with the opposition of the interests of "Russian" Siberia to the interests of Russia itself, now, the "Siberphilles" gradually included indigenous peoples in the actual context of oblastnichestvo (regionalism) in the mid-1860s" noted S. V. Seliverstov. According to Yadrintsev, Russian Siberians "should lend a hand to these "Siberian guerrillas" with whom "the period of enmity is over" and who "should equally share a common fate in the history of Siberia" (Seliverstov, 2011, p. 67–70).²⁸ In addition to the political passivity of the Siberian public, the change in the attitude of the regional residents to the indigenous population was associated with new trends in the development of anthropological knowledge, expressed in the revision of the very concept of primitive culture (Tol'c, 2013, p. 72–73).²⁹

The historical and cultural research of Yadrintsev and Potanin greatly influenced the formation of the image of the Siberian community. At the same time, if at the first stage, the leaders of oblastnichestvo (regionalism) romanticized the Russian development of Siberia, then later they focused on the history of the local population, now "oblastniki (regionalists) intended to make Siberian history common (albeit not conflict-free) for the entire Trans-Ural population, eliminating its division into "pre-Russian" and "Russian periods" (Remnev, 2011, p.121).³⁰

The formation of the cultural capital of nationalism in Siberia was facilitated by the inherent desire of the regionalists to connect the antiquities of Siberia with modern tribes. A characteristic feature of their work was a pronounced journalism, and, at times, openly propagandistic character. Concerning the Finno-Ugric theory of N. M. Yadrintsev noted: "Imagine the tribes that lived in the

south, accustomed to a different climate and by the force of historical circumstances thrown back into the icy tundra. What this people had to experience! After all, this is worse than many historical metamorphoses, worse than the martyrology of the unfortunate Jewish tribe! (Yadrincev, 1885a, p. 643–644)."³¹ Inspired by the principles of Finnish researchers' work, Yadrintsev also set an example of the "deep humanity and almost tenderness" that they showed toward the Finno-Ugric peoples (Kovalyashkina, 2005).³²

The interest of N. M. Yadrintsev to study the culture of the local population was provoked by anti-colonial sentiments. In contrast to the civilizing policy, he tried to prove the former greatness of the Siberian aborigines, and in particular, the existence of agriculture in their ancient times. Without stopping at this, he sought to show the connection of local culture with European civilization, and even the primacy of the former in relation to the latter: "Thus, European history and culture itself could not do without the influence of these peoples. The Aryan tribes also did not pass the north of Asia and Siberia." But the main intention of Yadrintsev's historical research was to include the modern culture of the aborigines in the world historical context: "As for the transfer of cultural knowledge, crafts, and discoveries, the Asian world also could not remain alien to the European one, even the extinct cultures could not be completely lost for humanity, and therefore, the abyss by which we separate the European world and European culture from the Asian, with a careful study of history, will not be so great" (Yadrincev, 1885b, pp. 172–177).³³

In his ethno-historical constructions, Yadrintsev relied on data on the Indo-European origin of the Yuezhi tribes inhabiting Central Asia. "This can also explain the Indo-European influence in the Turkic languages themselves, and finally, the very similarity of the Minusin runes with the Gothic and European ones. Therefore, it is hardly necessary to transfer the runes from the European Goths and Finns to the Asian peoples when we see the origin of these peoples in Asia" (Yadrincev, 1885c, pp. 456–477).³⁴

The well-known figure of "Marxist archeology" M. G. Khudyakov noted that one of the fundamental shortcomings of Yadrintsev's historical views was the idealization of the past in the spirit of petty-bourgeois romantics. The idea of a loud past and a poor present "provided material for the further development of regional and nationalist concepts in the history of Siberia" (Hudyakov, 1934, pp. 138–139).³⁵

Similar tendencies were manifested in the "eastern hypothesis" of G.N. Potanin, which were developed in several works (Kovalyashkina, 2005, p. 251).³⁶ Comparing Türkic legends with biblical stories, he tried to prove the presence of eastern roots in the European epic. "There is no doubt," Znamensky noted, "that the Potanin's "Eastern hypothesis," along with other ethnographic constructions of regionalists with their broad generalizations, contributed to the

formation of ethno-nationalist fantasies of the Altai intelligentsia” (Znamenski, 2005, p. 44).³⁷ Despite the fact that the bold international parallels of Potanin were generally coldly received by specialists (Sagalaev & Kryukov, 1991, pp. 21–22),³⁸ S. F. Oldenburg reacted sympathetically to them (SHilovskij, 2004, pp. 235–236),³⁹ with whom Potanin had relations in the Russian Geographical Society. Oldenburg himself developed similar ideas based on the materials of French medieval sources, relying on the traditions of European oriental studies (Ol’dengburg, 1991, pp. 41–54).⁴⁰ Oldenburg was a prominent representative of the Russian school of Orientalism, which sought to nationalize the east of the empire (Tol’c, 2013, pp. 5–40).⁴¹ In particular, it was assumed that the development of small homeland’s sense would allow the natives to be included in the all-Russian context. In addition, the formation of the national intelligentsia was facilitated by the purposeful transformation of local residents from informants into independent researchers (Ibid, p. 70, 84, 195, 199).⁴² Already at the beginning of the 20th century, these tendencies were fully manifested in the activities of Potanin, who called for the widespread study of “homeland studies” (Smokotina, 2008, pp. 96–99)⁴³ and actively involved local residents in the research process, which resulted in the well-known “Anos Collection” in Altai, created by N. Ya. Nikiforov.

Analyzing the ideological foundations of the regional cultural and historical views, E.P. Kovalyashkina pointed to their inherent duality. On the one hand, Eurocentrism is clearly manifested in their categorical apparatus, and on the other hand, “these concepts and speech clichés do not correspond to the internal structure of their thoughts, the pathos of their work” (Kovalyashkina, 2005, p. 242).⁴⁴ Kovalyashkina believes that cultural pluralism and functionalism lay at the heart of the historical research of regional experts (Ibid, p. 258, 272, 278).⁴⁵

Remnev A. V. approached the issue differently. He emphasized that it was the use of “Western theoretical and classical tools from colonialism and nationalism” that became the basis of the project of the Siberian nation (Remnev, 2011, p. 117),⁴⁶ which was opposed by regionalists to both bureaucratic centralization and the cosmopolitan attitudes of the revolutionary and liberal camps (Remnev, 1997).⁴⁷

However, nationalism, as it was noted by B. Anderson, is not a political ideology, but a cultural system that asserts the very principle of the people-state (Anderson, 2001, p. 35).⁴⁸ At the same time, various interpretations of the form and content of the nation (liberal, conservative, socialist) can and should be in constant confrontation with each other, which in many respects determines the content of the political process in modern times. The same applies to cultural relativism: “Relativism is not a weapon that can be aimed at enemies chosen arbitrarily. It shoots in all directions, knocking off legs not only from “absolutism,” dogmas and

firmness of Western traditions, but also from traditions focused on tolerance, diversity and freedom of thought” (Fukuyama, 2010, p. 495).⁴⁹

The regionalists purposefully formed the local intelligentsia (Seliverstov, 2011, pp. 67–70),⁵⁰ arming it with national ideas. These ideas, whereupon, in a new political situation, naturally transferred from the regional context to the ethnic context.

In terms of Siberian nationalism cultural capital’s formation, the works of regional specialists played the same role that the concepts of Russian academicians of the 18th century played for Finnish nationalism. Theories linking modern Siberian aborigines with the cultures of the past and revealing their contribution to world history latently formed a new national project. Including the Siberian aborigines in the world historical process, the regionalists transformed them from an amorphous class-religious mass, an object of civilizing politics, into a phenomenon similar to European peoples. Thus, the local population not only acquired an ancient prestigious history, but also received theoretical grounds for understanding itself as an independent political entity, which will clearly manifest itself during the years of the revolutionary crisis and ultimately determine the ways of Siberia’s sovereignty.

The Russian national discourse, which largely determined the initial stage in the development of Russian archeology, did not pass by the Siberian antiquities. At the level of state policy, nationalism in Russia began to take hold in the second quarter of the 19th century, when, through the efforts of S.S. Uvarov, a large-scale ideological campaign had been carried out to assemble national ideas into the dynastic doctrine of power (Anderson, 2001, p. 109).⁵¹ This tendency was reflected in the change in the conjuncture of archaeological research: “If the adaptation of the Russian Middle Ages to the antique model is characteristic mainly of the Alexander era, then another tendency—the opposition of national antiquities of antiquity—was especially clearly manifested in the Nikolay’s time” (Formozov, 1961, p. 51).⁵² It was with this period that the institutionalization of archeology as an independent science was associated. The Department of Russian and Slavic Archeology played a leading role in the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society, created in 1846, nationalism became an important component of the first archaeological congresses and influenced the formation of the first museums (Shnirelman, 1996, pp. 222–225).⁵³ Slavic archeology was becoming an important factor in domestic politics, one of its functions was to prove the greatest antiquity and primacy of Slavic culture in relation to other peoples of the empire. The actual archaeological monuments of the Slavs began to be studied with the support of the state already in the 1830s–40s, and at the end of the century, Florinsky V. M. was the most active popularizer of Proto-Slavic history (Ibid, p. 224).⁵⁴

Florinsky's work "Primitive Slavs on the monuments of their prehistoric life" was based on Siberian materials, while his methodology was based on naturalistic attitudes. He considered the archaeological culture of the tumuli to be a single phenomenon and identified it with the people. It was understood that each nation as a universal phenomenon possesses a set of stable features ("according to the instinctive sense of national self-awareness") and its own destiny. Fate was based, among other things, on a natural connection with the territory where "alien parasites" would always be unstable. Hence came the "instinctive" desire of the state to restore its borders.

The starting point of Florinsky's reflections was the comparison of the geography of the burial tumuli with the territory of the Russian Empire. The second important feeling that led Florinsky was jealousy that other peoples were claiming the territory of Russia as an ancestral homeland, "and not a single piece of land was left for the colossal Slavic organism, which he could call his cradle." This question acquired an ethical character, since it was important for the "popular conscience" how to interpret the spread by the capture of someone others and the return of what was lost (Florinskij, 1884, p. IV-VI).⁵⁵ The problem of domestic archaeologists, according to Florinsky, was that, in the absence of national identity, they followed the educated Finns who were looking for their great past (Ibid, p. XIV-XV).⁵⁶ Florinsky's methodological reasoning was very close to Aspelin's views: "Thus, the national question involuntarily asked itself on the pages of archaeological works. It could not be otherwise. Any archaeological fact is not significant in itself, but only in relation to the ancient destinies of one or another people" (ibid, p. XVII).⁵⁷ Hence follows the directive "to keep in mind not abstract ideas about extinct, no longer existing peoples, or extinct cultures, but to restore the connection of the past with the present—the cradle of peoples with their historical destiny and the flourishing of national forces" (Florinskij, 1898, p. 560).⁵⁸

Following the regionalists, Florinsky emphasized the importance of local history for all mankind: "Our Siberian antiquities receive not only local, according to the present concept, alien, but general European significance." However, he believed that the arguments in favor of its foreign origin were untenable: firstly, no culture could degrade so much, and secondly, it was impossible to imagine that the ancestors of the modern peoples of Siberia could have founded the cultures of the Caucasus and the Danube (Ibid, p. 558).⁵⁹

The Siberian tumuli, according to Florinsky, were not associated with the Xiongnu tribes, they belonged to the Aryans, which could only be the Slavs, since the rest of the Aryans were already in Western Europe. The first wave of advancement from the east was headed to Scandinavia, then the Bulgarians advanced to the Kama and the Volga, then they came to Europe and merged with the earlier advancing

Slavs (Scythians, Sarmatians, and Massagets, later—Antas, Alans, and Roxolans) (Ibid, p. 569).⁶⁰

The Aryans who remained in Siberia mixed with the Xiongnu and received this name; thus, the Xiongnu people became a symbiosis of the Slavs and Mongols. At the same time, the role of the Slavs was constantly increasing in view of the obviously higher culture, and by the time of Attila the Mongols acted only as an auxiliary brute force. Attila, according to Florinsky, may have carried a piece of Mongolian blood from distant ancestors, "but in all his actions, in his way of life, in the atmosphere of the court staff, we clearly see Slavic features." In political and military matters, he was on an equal footing with rivals, in contrast to the more primitive Mongols like Genghis Khan or Tamerlane (Ibid, p. 570).⁶¹

In addition to Great Russian national pride, Florinsky's concept also had other grounds of a more pragmatic political nature. As V. A. Shnirelman's concluded, the Central Asian ancestral home of the Russians made it possible to provide an ideological basis for the imperialist expansion of Russia in Central Asia (Shnirelman, 1996, p. 224; 2008, pp. 63–89).⁶²

Thus, in the second half of the 19th century national attitudes were an important motive for historical researchers and largely determined the nature and direction of ethnic interpretations. Finnish nationalism was looking for the ancestral homeland of the Finns in Altai and tried to connect them with the Turkic-Mongol states of antiquity and the Middle Ages. Under the influence of the cultural and historical theories of regional experts, a national discourse began to form in Siberia itself, which was especially clearly manifested in the example of the genesis of Altai nationalism. Russian great-power nationalism sought to make Slavic history more ancient and connect it with the prestigious Scythian culture.

The role of the theories considered in the history of science is different, but they have not lost their political relevance in subsequent periods up to the present day.

The idea of "Greater Finland," which was developed by Finnish intellectuals in the 1930s, appealed to a single Finno-Ugric world from Altai to the Baltic Sea, causing the righteous anger of Soviet ethnographers: "such "concept" has nothing to do with science, it only serves to whet the appetite of Finnish fascists" (Potapov, 1953, p. 45).⁶³ The post-Soviet nationalisms that received a new breath began to form a new cultural and political agenda, in which Castren's national ideas came to life. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of "recreating" a certain "Finno-Ugric world," which was thought as a broad cultural identity, called upon, based on linguistic kinship, to unite different Finno-Ugric peoples into a kind of ethnopolitical and socio-cultural integrity, began to develop actively" (SHabaev, 2006, p. 13).⁶⁴ On this basis, panfinno-Ugricism was institutionalized in the form of public organizations, congresses, and international conferences.

The Soviet nation-building in Siberia was naturally based on the cultural heritage of the oblasts: during the years of autonomization and indigenization, their political, anti-colonial backlog was actively exploited, after the national turn of the mid-1930s when the cultural and historical heritage was used. The widespread use of historical narrative is characteristic of modern Siberian nationalisms.

Florinsky's concept is also finding supporters today. His ideas were developed by the well-known popularizer of the *Velesovaya Kniga*, Yu.P. Mirolyubov, and in the 1990s, they were enthusiastically picked up by Russian nationalists, struggling in the field of historical writing (Shnirel'man, 2008, pp. 63–89).⁶⁵

The considered theories are formed within the framework of a single scientific paradigm and serve as a good illustration, on the one hand, of vectors, on the other hand, of various stages of the formation of nationalism. If we rely on the well-known M. Krok national movements's development periodization (Hroh, 2022, pp. 21–146),⁶⁶ then in the theory of the Altai origin of the Finns, we can distinguish features characteristic of phase “B,” when the cultural capital of nationalism is gradually turning into political. On the one hand, Finnish nationalism was already institutionalized in the form of autonomy; on the other hand, even enlightened Finns were not widely involved in the national process. In turn, the historical research of the regional specialists illustrates the earliest stage of the birth of the national movement, the period of nationalism not only without a nation, but also without national intellectuals. The oblasts are shaping the very national environment, which does not yet have suitable means for its own expression, but it obviously contains separatist potential. At the same time, both the Finnish and Siberian patriots, with their scientific research, solved the same ideological task—to include the objects of their research in the world cultural and historical context, to achieve recognition of their right to a place among European nations. At the same time, Florinsky's theory is an example of the manifestation of state unifying nationalism, with imperial connotations characteristic of Russia.

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