

THE HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC
SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

**The Galicians Dwelling in
Canada and their Origin**

BY

MICHAEL A. SHERBININ, B.Sc.

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY

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At a late meeting of the Manitoba Historical Society, Mr. Michael Sherbinin, a graduate of St. Petersburg University, and the possessor of some six or seven European languages, read a most interesting paper on our Galician people. Mr. Sherbinin, who is a new member of the Society, is engaged in teaching a number of Galician students in the city. A hearty vote of thanks, moved by Mr. W. J. McLean and seconded by Mrs. (Dr.) Bryce, was presented to Mr. Sherbinin. The following is Mr. Sherbinin's interesting lecture:

In studying a new people it is good to know both wherein they differ from us and also wherein they are like us.

It seems to me that although both methods of studying a nation are useful, the second one or the one where we look into the common ground that a people has with us, is more interesting and gratifying. By beginning a study from all points of similiarity between us and a new people, we will see that the points wherein that people is unlike us will gradually be reduced and partly even vanish away.

We would dwell on the people commonly called here Galicians, known also under the more scientific name of Ruthenians (or Little Russians).

The Ruthenian language belongs to the same family of languages as English, French, Latin, Greek, Gaelic and Welsh, that is to the Aryan family of languages. The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that Aryan means honorable and noble.

If we were to imagine the Aryan family as a tree with many branches, then the English language would proceed from the same branch as German, Dutch, Swedish and Icelandic, and the Ruthenian tongue would proceed from the same branch as Bohemian, Polish, Russian and a dozen of other Slav languages, whereas Latin would belong to the Italic subdivision and Greek to the Hellenic.

SIMILAR TO ENGLISH.

In travelling over a settlement of Slavic people we would be astonished to find from 5 to 800 words which have some similarity with English, Latin, French and Welsh.

“ Andrey ore ploohom ”

would mean: Andrew plows with the plough, where “ore” reminds us of Latin “arare” to plow and of “arable” land in English. “Marina pase hoosy” means: Mary feeds the geese. “Tomko pase swyni” means: Tom feeds the swine. Pasty means to feed or to tend a flock and therefore pastor means pastyr in Ruthenian. “I am the good shepherd” sounds: “Ya yesm ‘pastyr’ dobry” in Ruthenian.

Surely the ancestors of the Ruthenians and of those who speak the English tongue spoke languages much similar to each other. We need not consult many books to find the truth of it. Take for instance such phrases as this: “Bystra struja rushila cherez dolynu.” It means: The boisterous stream rushed over the dale. “Pohanskij hetman lezhav prosterty pered tzarem” means: The pagan chief lay prostrate before the czar (or the king, which means practically the same thing).

And to change the subject into one more idyllic:

How would that phrase sound in Galician:

“The sister is sitting a while in the garden and is plaiting a garland from roses, periwinkle and tulips.”

“Sestra sydyt’ hvylu oo horodi i plete girlandu z rozh, barvinku i tuli-paniw.”

Then we ought not to be astonished in seeing a common ground which both languages have in words handed down to them by the Christian religion such as Angel, Archangel, Apostol, Kleric (Cleric), Parochialny, Episcop, Presveeter (Presbyter), Diakon (Deacon), Eucharistia, Christiane, which sound almost alike in both languages.

ETHNOGRAPHICALLY RUTHENIANS ARE ONE WITH OTHER SLAV PEOPLES.

The vast plain of Eastern Europe was inhabited in prehistoric times by Sarmats and later on by Scythians, of whom Herodotes wrote in the Fourth Century, B.C. Then the Avars, the Huns and the Goths wandered through those plains and left but very few traces of their settlements.

The Hermitage Museum at St. Petersburg possesses two vases of a high artistic taste, representing Scythians. They are the silver vase of Nicopol and the golden vase of Kertch, and date from the Fourth Century, B.C. The Scythians of the silver vase are represented breaking-in and bridling their horses. They have long hair, long beards, large features, tunics and trousers, and look very much like the present Slav inhabitants of those countries.

The ancestors of the present Galicians, Russians, Poles and all Slav nations had one national catch-word by which they designated those who were akin to their nation. It was not the political union; it was not the one higher principle of nationality they tried to maintain. They were yet too childish and perhaps too harmless to rise to that abstraction. The measure by which they measured a man is this: Does he speak intelligibly?

"Slovak, Slovinez, Slovianin," all these words, which are used up to this day, mean: A man who talks, one who speaks intelligibly, one whose "words" I can catch. Slovo means word, catch-word, intelligible, or articulate speech. Therefore a man whose word I understand is for me a "Slovak," a "Slovian, a man of the "plain speech." I can get along with him and I don't care for other distinctions. This is the philosophy of the Slavs or the first scientific attempts to raise a standard of nationality.

On the other hand all the people whose speech the Slavs could not understand they called Niemetz—dumb man—one whose speech is not intelligible to me.

This is a very simple classification and it requires very little exercise of our brain powers.

By the name of Niemetz, the Russians and Galicians designate up to this day the Germans.

Precisely as the Germans in their turn called all peoples related to them Deutsch, that is distinctly speaking or speaking so you can catch it.

THE BIBLE IN SLAVIC.

To show how the dialects of the Slavs are related, it will be useful here to say that the language in which the service of the Greek Church is conducted among the different peoples of the Slav sub-division is the dialect of the Slavs of Pannonia among whom two brothers, Cyril and Methodius, translated the Holy Scriptures in the IX. Century (862-885). They came from Thessalonica and were the apostles of the Moravians and Bohemians; in 966 Micislav, duke of the Poles, was baptized.

The fact of the translation of the Bible by these men is no doubt a greater victory and one of more importance to call to life the individuality of the Slavs, than many a conquest made by the sword.

Now in the Slav peoples of the Greek Church from the Mediterranean to the Pacific Ocean, the Divine service is still held in the dialect into which these two brothers translated the Scriptures one thousand years ago.

To the year 862, when these brothers began their work, we must refer an event which gave birth to the Ruthenian nation, known here as Galicians.

A Galician calls himself Russin and his language Russki. A Russian calls himself also a Russki. These two nations had one common origin.

THE AGE OF VIKINGS.

And now here we will recall some interesting events which England and the duchy of Russ, from which these Galicians spring, had in common.

You will remember that the first Danes or Northmen who came to England made their first incursions in 789. About that time the Northmen came to the north of France and imposed their power in Normandy. These incursions of the Northmen continued all through the IX Century and we know that the wave of these Scandinavian vikings, whom some historians call pirates, broke against England, France, Paris, Sicily, Naples and other lands.

It is these very Northmen who reigned in England as Danish kings from 1014 to 1044, and then under the name of Normans from 1066 to 1154, who settled also in Iceland in 861 and in Russia in 862. They wore the same coat of mail, the same pointed helmets, and spoke the same language, probably with a few distinctions of dialect.

These Northmen would impose their rule on the nations whom they subdued; sometimes they would share the power along with the assembly of the people as in the Republic of Novgorod in Russ or Russia of to-day; sometimes they would form a corps d'elite or a pretorian guard of more powerful rulers as in the instance of Constantinople, and would help these monarchs in their campaigns against other powers.

NESTOR'S CHRONICLE.

It would be very interesting now to hear the first historic record known by the Ruthenians and the Russians of their origin as a kingdom. This document is the chronicle of Nestor, the Monk, who lived in Kiev, South Russia, and who died about the year 1115.

The Chronicle of Nestor, written in Slavonic, reads thus:

"In the year 6367 (= 859), the Varingians sailed over the sea and took tribute from Chud and Slovens from Meria from Ves' and from the Krivichi, but the Khozars took tribute from the Polanes and from the Severians and from the Ventichi."

Then Nestor continues: "In the year 862 three tribes chased the Varingians over the sea; they refused to pay them any tribute and they governed themselves and they did evil in the administration of justice. One clan rose against another clan and party-spirit and discord were prevailing among them and they began to make war among themselves.

And they said then to each other: Let us seek for a prince who could rule over us and who could judge in righteousness. And they went over the sea to the Varingians, to Rus', for so were these Varingians called: Rus', even as others were known as Swedes, others Normans, others Angles, others Goths.

And the clans of Chud, of Slovens, of Krivitchi, and of Vess, said to Rus: "Our land is vast and rich, but order is not found there. Come over to rule and govern us."

And three brothers were chosen with their escort and they took with them all Rus and they came. And the eldest, Ruric, settled in Novgorod, and the second, Sineus, in White Lake, and the third, Truvor, in Izborsk (south of Peipus Lake), and the land of Rus, namely Novgorod got its name after these Varingians; these are the men of Novgorod of the Varingian stock. Aforetime the Novgorod people were Slavs. And in these towns did the Varingians settle; the earlier dwellers in Novgorod were Slavs, in Polotsk Krivichi, in Rostov Meria in Murom Muroma, and over all these Ruric became ruler."

The Swedish sea-faring men of that time were known under the name of Roths-men; and Rods-folk or Ross-folk is the name by which fishermen are designed to-day in Norway, when they go on their fishing expeditions.

Even to this hour Ruotsi is the name by which the Swedes are called by the Finns.

We see, consequently, that the Vikings, who founded the duchy of Rus, imposed their names upon the Slavs, who were under their power.

As the Northmen in Normandy and in Rouen after a few generations began to speak the language of the people, whom they conquered, and as the descendants of Tancred in Naples and in Sicily began to speak Italian, so in the plains and forests of the Slavs, the Northmen, who settled there in the ninth century, began soon to speak the dialects of Slavs.

It sounds peculiar that Nestor says that some Varingians were Normans, some Goths, some Angles, and some Rus. Yet we will give credit to Nestor if we remember that Varingian does not denote a nation, but a band of armed exiles or of peoples who associated for making war. An exile or a refugee was called vaergenge in Anglo-Saxon. These exiles or Varingians made several raids on Constantinople and returned with their booty. They made also a treaty with the Greeks and the record of that treaty has reached us and the names of the Varingian vikings, who signed it, speak eloquently of their Scandinavian nationality.

In the tenth century these Varingians formed a body—guard of the Emperor's armies.

In the eleventh century a good many of those Varingians were English and Britons.

Gaufredus Malaterra says in his *Historia Sicula* III., 27, in 1081, that the English who served in the Greek army were called Varingians. We are told even that in the twelfth century that body of life guards was recruited almost entirely from English and Danish warriors.

Hence we can easily understand why Nestor, who wrote about 1115, said that some of the Varingians were Angles.

During the wars with the Teutons many Slavs were taken captives and sold into slavery and their very name gave rise to the word slave.

Many Scandinavian names were used by the Slavs and the titles of the first nobles and officers of Russia's early days were Scandinavian; some of these names, as bo'arin (tiun), yanbednik, (i. e. g. kniaz), are found in the Russian language even to-day. The very word dooma, now used for parliament, seems to be a remainder of the Viking times, and is related to doom-house.

TWO TENDENCIES.

This nucleus of a rising kingdom became divided into several feudal duchies of which we see two elements gradually emerge and become centres of the two great divisions: of Rus—the Great Russians, known also as the Russia of the Tsars in the north, with Moscow as capital, and the Oukraina

(or in the French spelling Ukraine), with Kiev as chief town, in the south. The northern branch developed into what now is Russia, the southern branch into Little Russia or the Republic of Kozacks, of which the Galician Ruthenians made a part.

The conception of an unbroken succession of princes ruling in Russia's towns and duchies is wrong, as in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteen centuries Russia had several republics with more or less developed rights.

The chief republics were those of Novgorod and Pskov. Novgorod was a flourishing town belonging to the Hanseatic League and inhabited by many foreign merchants.

This powerful republic, which styled itself as "the Lord, the great Novgorod," was annexed to the principality of Moscow by John III. in 1478. It was sacked and crushed by John the Terrible in 1570, who brutally murdered several of its citizens.

Among the Slavs of the Russian principalities two opposite tendencies were continually at work; the tendency to aggregation and national unity and the tendency to dispersion and independence.

A centripetal tendency characterizes the North, or Russia, while the tendency to independence or a centrifugal force is dominant in the South or in Oukraina.

NO DISCRIMINATION, OBEY!

The ideal of Russia is to yield to the will of the majority, to the power of the prince, to have the individual will drowned in the will of the ruler. A Russian carries that principle so far that with him obedience, subordination, and, if necessary, patient endurance, is the greatest virtue. To this principle everything else is sacrificed. Motto: Obey and don't discriminate. The will of the individual is often crushed before the will of society or state. This is the centripetal ideal of Russia.

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

On the other hand, what ideal do we see in Oukraina? A love of liberty, respect of individual opinion, and that craving for individual freedom is so great that sometimes, if carried to an extreme, it weakens the welfare of the community. The Little Russian, or Galician, can stand for his opinion. He can sometimes hold it with a rare obstinacy, and he will stand for his convictions. He is bred in an atmosphere of comparative freedom.

Ruric's great-grandson, whose old Norse name, Valdemar (Ruler of the Sea), was corrupted into Volodimer and Vladimir (972-1015), embraced Christianity and married the daughter of a Greek Caesar. Valdemar, who had been a cruel and sensual heathen prince, is told to have undergone a thorough change after his conversion. He became mild, hospitable, thoughtful and spent much in charities.

This prince is called Vladimir the Great by his people, and his name has been woven into the folklore, as a successor of the pagan divinities whom he destroyed.

Although the title of kniaz, which these rulers bore, is translated by prince, we are entitled to interpret it as king, as it is practically derived from the Scandinavian konung or king.

One of Vladimir's descendants, worthy of the name of king, was Yaroslav the Wise, 1116-1154. He edited the Code of Laws. He occupied a glorious place among the princes of his time. His sister Mary was married to Casimir, King of Poland; his daughters also became the wives of kings; Elizabeth of Harold the Brave, King of Norway; Anne of Henry I., King of France; Anastasia of Andrew I., King of Hungary.

Of his sons, Vladimir, the eldest, is said to have married Githa, daughter of Harold, King of England; Isiaslav, a daughter of Miecislav II., King of Poland; Vseslav, a Greek princess, daughter of Constantine Monomachus; Viatcheslav and Igor, two German princesses.

Yaroslav gave an asylum to the proscribed princes, Saint Olaf, King of Norway, and his two sons; a prince of Sweden; Edwin and Edward, sons of Edmund Ironside, King of England, expelled from their country by Knut the Great.

It is very important to note that the humane and mild element not only characterizes the reign of Vladimir the Great, after his conversion, but this spirit of mildness is also the chief trait of Yaroslav the Wise's legislation. He is reputed to have published the first code of law known among the ancestors of the Ruthenians, as the Ruskaya Prava (the Russian law).

Capital punishment, death by refinements of cruelty, torture, even a public prison were unknown. These are Scandinavian principles in all their purity.

The descendants and successors of Yaroslav the Wise were often contending for power, and as there was no law in force for the succession to the throne, the principality of a deceased king was divided into several parts, according to the number of his sons.

It is only the Mongolian conquest that partly put an end to these quarrels between the princes. The Tatar armies, numbering 500,000 warriors, flooded the plains of Rus. The princes of the House of Ruric joined their ranks to have a deciding battle with the terrible foe. Such a battle was fought at the Kalka river, near the Azof sea, in 1224.

Danilo, who later on was crowned as King of Rus in 1253, had joined the other Russian princes in the battle of Kalka. In it the princes of Rus were defeated and this defeat resulted in two and a half centuries of humiliation of Ruric's descendants, when they became but vassals of the Mongolian Khans.

It was only in 1480 that John III. emancipated Rus from the Mongolian yoke.

King Danilo, of whom we spoke above, reigned in Galicia and his subjects were the ancestors of the Ruthenians of Galicia.

Before the Tatars evacuated Russia, Galicia and Oukraina became parts of the kingdom of Lithuania, and its prince, Olgerd, gave the Tatar invaders a heavy blow by repelling them into their plains.

In 1386 the Lithuanian Prince Yagailo married the Polish Princess Hedvige, and was crowned King of Poland in 1386 in the city of Crakow.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Turks and Tatars, which are akin to them, raided the settlements of Oukraina, and the population, who had to protect themselves against these incursions, banded themselves into a permanent army, the army of the Cozaks (Cossacks).

This army at last concentrated on an island situated on the river Dnieper, some hundred and fifty miles north of the Black sea. The centre of culture was in the city of Kiev, where during centuries academies flourished, and while the kingdom of the Moscow Tsars groped in darkness and ignorance, Kiev abounded with learned men who were versed in Latin, Greek and Slavonic, and who influenced even the northern Russian towns by their culture.

We wish to quote a piece of poetry by the Russian poet, Rylaef, in the gifted translation of T. Hart-Davies, of the Bombay Civil Service.

NALEVAIKO'S CONFÉSSION.

By Rylaef. Translated by T. Hart-Davies.

Try not with threats my soul to shake,
Persuasive words no change can make,
For hell to me is to have viewed
My loved Ukraine in servitude;
To see my fatherland set free,
This, this alone, is heaven for me.

E'en from the cradle was my breast
With love of liberty possessed;
My mother sang me glorious lays
Of those long-past historic days,
Whose memory yet lives 'mongst men,
For no fear seized Ukraina then.

This poetry pictures the exalted patriotic feeling of Nalevaiko, a Cozak chief of the Ukraine.

Another fragment of Rylaef's poems gives an insight into the fierce expeditions of these war-like Cozaks:

Freedom we breathed, and loved her breath,
And oft would we who mocked at death
Unsleping o'er the wild steppe born
Taste but a handful of dry corn,
Heav'n's air to us was meat; and when
We went, a band of gallant men,

On some wild raid, the bright star showed
 And lighted up our darkling road,
 Or else the heaped mounds we traced
 By the wind howling o'er the waste:
 Then like a cloud in thund'rous skies
 We roused the stillness with our cries.
 In some strange land in wild foray,
 The hostile troops we swept away;
 Village and town it was our joy
 Alike to level and destroy.

Several centuries were spent in Oukraina in this struggle with the Tatars and also the Poles, who succeeded in holding their power for a time over Kiev and whose realm reached at a time from the Baltic to the Black Sea. After a war with the Poles, the leader of the army of Cozaks, Bogdan Chmelnitski, on conferring with his people resolved to apply to the Tsar of Moscow, Alexis, asking the protection of Moscow against the outward foes.

An alliance was then concluded between the Tsar of Russia, Alexis Michaelovitch, and the Republic of Kozaks, at Pereyaslav, and then Oukraina enters upon a new period of her history.

This event took place in 1654, when Oliver Cromwell ruled over the Commonwealth of England.

Galicia which had been meanwhile under the power of Poland during three centuries, became a province of Austria in 1772. The farming and working classes of the Ruthenian nationality were in an oppressed economical condition although for the last 50 years the poorer classes were somewhat better favored with schools than in Russia.

Another province of Austria, Boukovina, is mostly inhabited by Ruthenians known as Boukovinians. These people had been for a long time under the power of Mo'davian gospodars or princes and have been less privileged with good schools than Galicia. The Boukovinians adhere to the Greek Church.

During centuries the learned classes wrote in a kind of archaic dialect which was a mixture of the church language with the vernacular Ruthenian. In Russia, after the alliance of 1654, the educated classes gradually gave up their mother tongue to use the Russian language for literature.

Some 65 years ago a patriot of Oukraina, John Kotlarevski, started a literature in the vernacular tongue. His example was followed by others and now several periodicals are being printed in that language both in Austria, Russia and America.

The national poet of the Ruthenians is Taras Shevtchenko (literally: Taras Shoemaker's-son). This son of the people, born in the province of Kiev, displayed great literary talent. He was privileged to receive his education in St. Petersburg and was developed as an eminent painter and poet. His name is a rallying-point for the national feeling of the Ruthenians and a national watch-word. His songs are filled with mournful tones, recording the

wars of Oukrainia and the oppression of a portion of the people in serfdom. Taras was himself born as a serf and some rich friends succeeded in purchasing his liberty.

He fell into disgrace with the Emperor owing to some temerity in the use of his pen and had to serve eight years as a common soldier on the sandy banks of the lake of Aral in Central Asia. This shattered his health and although permitted to return to his country, he died after three years in 1861.

The following verses are Shevtchenko's legacy to his people which we have endeavored to render in English rhyme, as near as possible to the original:

Learn from other men, my brethren,
Love to think, love reading;
Hear from strangers' lips the teaching
Yours by far exceeding!
Hold fast to your fathers' wisdom
And learn from another,
For God's doom awaits the traitor,
Who forgets his mother.
Strangers will forsake him likewise,
No good will befall him,
Both his kindred and the stranger
An outcast will call him.

OUR GALICIANS.

The Galicians residing in Canada have proved that they can thrive as an agricultural people. They are fond of locating on bushy and slightly hilly homesteads and also near watercourses, reminding them of their old country. They understand living on very scanty provisions in the first years of their settlement and, after some years of toil, they have succeeded in obtaining here a measure of welfare which the Canadian soil and people are extending to them.

They find here ample scope for gratifying their love of liberty, and some of them have so far been identified with their new conditions, that they are proud and happy to be called Canadians.

In this respect they are faithful to the standpoint of the old Slav, who tried to identify himself with all people whose language he could understand



