Names 301 - Introduction to Russian Names

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Reference

• A Dictionary of Period Russian Names by Paul Wickenden of Thanet
  – 3rd Edition can be purchased through the SCA stock clerk
  – Pretty much the definitive work on Russian names in the SCA

Definitions

• Given Name
  – Main personal name
  – Usually given at birth or naming ceremony
  – The modern “First Name” is a given name
  – Some cultures allow multiple given names
    • Such as modern “middle” name
Definitions

• Byname
  – Part of the name other than a given name
  – Different cultures had different types of bynames
  – Modern “last name” is a type of byname, specifically an “inherited surname”
  – Different types of bynames described in detail in SENA Appendix B

Definitions

• Types of Bynames
  – Locative
    • Describes where the person is from
    • Can be marked
      – “of York”
      – “de Marseilles”
      – “von Hamburg”
    • Can be unmarked
      – “Jack London”

Definitions

• Types of Bynames
  – Patronymic
    • Formed from the person’s father’s name
    • Some of the earliest and most common bynames
    • Can be marked
      – “Nialsdottir”
      – “Johnsson”
      – “Petrovich”
    • Can be unmarked
      – “John Henry”
    • Occasionally, matronymics (mother’s name) were used
Definitions

- Types of Bynames
  - Descriptive
    - Formed from a distinguishing characteristic
      - "the Tall"
      - "Grosse"
      - "gullskeggr"

- Occupational (type of Descriptive bynames)
  - Describes the person’s occupation
    - "Draper"
    - "Guerrero"
    - "Sardello"

- Congnomento, alias, or dictus
  - A second given name the person goes by
    - "Iohannes dictus John"

- Inherited
  - Clan names
    - Ó Conchobhair (masculine)
    - inghean Úi Chonchobhair (feminine)
  - Inherited surname
    - Basically the modern "last" name
Introduction

• Modern Russian Names:
  – Given Name (имя)
  – Patronymic (отчество)
  – Inherited Surname (фамилия)
  – Ivan Vasilevich Romanov

Introduction

• Period Russian Names:
  – Given Name (имя) came first
    • Until the 10C it is rare to see anything but a given name
  – Patronymic (отчество) appeared next
    • Appeared in the 10C, and were used throughout our time period
  – Inherited Surname (фамилия)
    • Arrived late in period, 15 or 16C
    • Weren't common until 18C
  – For most of our period, inherited surnames are not appropriate

Given Names

• After the Christianization of Russia in 988, most Russians used two given names – a Christian given name, and an Old Russian given name
• Christian given names (also called “Canonical” or “Baptismal” names)
  – Many Biblical in origin
  – Many Byzantine in origin
Given Names

• Christian given names
  – Examples
    • Ivan
    • Konstantin
    • Pavel

Given Names

• Old Russian given names (also called “Pagan” names)
  – Some from pre-Christian native tribes
  – Some from Scandinavian origins
  – Examples
    • Oleg
    • Igor
    • Guba

Given Names

• Usage
  – Most Common is Christian + Old Russian
    • Konstantin Oleg
    • Ivan Guba
  – Reverse occurs fairly frequently
    • Oleg Ivan
  – Single given names occur occasionally
  – Double Old Russian names occur occasionally
  – Double Christian names happen, but are rare
Given Names

- Usage
  - Nicknames and diminutives were often used as “real” given names in period
- Female names are hard to come by
  - Women had little or no rights in medieval Russia
  - Thus, their names weren’t recorded that often

Patronymics

- Formed from the given name of the father
- Follow specific grammar rules to transform from “given name form” to “patronymic form”
- The grammar rules are complex, and have many exceptions
  - I recommend explaining to submitters that grammatical changes may be needed

Patronymics

- If the given name ends in a hard consonant, add -ov
  - Son of “Anton” becomes “Antonov”
  - Son of “Mikhail” becomes “Mikhailov”
- If the given name ends in a soft consonant, add -ev
  - Son of “Uliy” becomes “Uliev”
Patronymics

• If the given name ends in –a, replace ending with –in
  – Son of “Boroda” becomes “Borodin”
  – Son of “Guba” becomes “Gubin”
• If the given name ends in –ia, replace with –yn

Patronymics

• If the given name ends in –ii or –iy, replace with –ev (‘ is the Russian soft sign)
  – Son of “Vasilii” becomes “Vasil’ev”
  – Very occasionally, the first vowel will be kept, to form “Vasiliev”, but this is unusual

Patronymics

• If the given name ends in a different vowel, replace vowel with –ev
  – Son of “Aleksei” becomes “Alekseev”
• If the given name already ends in –ov or –ev, add –lov or –lev, respectively
  • Son of “lev” becomes “levlev”
  • Son of “lakov” becomes “lakovlev”
Patronymics

• The simple patronymic, transformed as above, is by far the most common byname construction in period Russian
• Often, the word ‘syn’ (son) was added
  – More commonly after the patronymic
    • Vasilii Ivanov syn
  – Can also come before the patronymic
    • Vasilii syn Ivanov

Patronymics

• When father has two given names, just one or both names may be used to form the patronymic
  – Vasilii, son of Ivan Guba could be known as:
    • Vasilii Ivanov
    • Vasilii Gubin
    • Vasilii Ivanov Gubin

Patronymics

• If ‘syn’ is used, it can go before the first patronymic, between the patronymics, or, rarely, after the second patronymic
  – Vasilii Ivanov syn Gubin
  – Vasilii syn Ivanov Gubin
  – Vasilii Ivanov Gubin syn (rare)
Patronymics

- If the grandfather is famous, the grandfather’s name can be used, in patronymic form, with the word ‘vnuk’ (grandson) added
  - ‘Vnuk’ is used in the same way as ‘syn’
- In extreme cases, ‘pravnuk’ (great-grandson) and even ‘pra-pravnuk’ (great-great-grandson) can be used

Patronymics

- The patronymic (the last one if there are two) may also be placed in the genitive case, showing a greater degree of possession
  - Vasilii Ivanov syn Gubina
  - This can be formed by taking the modified patronymic and placing it into genitive case, or by taking the unmarked father’s given name and putting that into genitive case
  - Russian cases are beyond the scope of this class

Patronymics

- In some cases, patronymics used the ‘-ich’ ending
  - This ending was popular in Novgorod and Pskov among the upper classes
  - By the 16th and 17th centuries, this ending was restricted to the highest nobility (boyars and high court official) and required the tsar’s permission to use
  - In most cases, simply adding “-ich” to the basic patronymic formation is correct
Patronymics

- In some cases, patronymics used the ‘-ich’ ending
  - This ending would only be used with a single name of a two-name patronymic, most often the Christian one
    - But can mix-and-match when using multi-generational patronymics
  - Never used with the genitive formation
  - Vasilii Ivanovich
  - Vasilii Ivanich
  - Vasilii Gubinich

Patronymics

- In earlier period (10-13C) an additional formation was used
  - Names adding in ‘-av’ could be put in patronymic form by adding “–l’” at the end
  - Iaroslav becomes Iaroslavl’

Patronymics

- Prince Vladimer Sviatoslavich, vnuk Vsevolod, pravnik Olgov, pravnik Sviatoslavl’, prapravnik Iaroslavl’ [1176]
  - Given name: Vladimer
  - Sviatoslav – father
  - Vsevolod – grandfather
  - Oleg – great-grandfather
  - Sviatoslav – great-grandfather
  - Iaroslav – great-great grandfather
Feminine Patronymics

- Due to the low social status and lack of legal rights of women in Russian society, feminine names, including patronyms, are much harder to come by.

- Most feminine patronyms are formed exactly as the masculine patronymic, and then put into the feminine gender, by adding ‘-a’ at the end:
  - Alekseev becomes Alekseeva
  - Antonov becomes Antonova
  - Mikhailovich becomes Mikhailovicha

- Most commonly, especially in late period, is the familial form which takes the form of “patronymic + doch’ “ (doch’ mean daughter):
  - Makrina Dmitrieva doch’ (1570)
Feminine Patronymics

• Upon being married, the same construction can be used with the husband’s name and “zhena” (wife) instead of “doch’”
  – Usually, the husband’s patronymic (or other byname) would also be used
  – All elements placed into the feminine gender
  – Katerinka Stepanova zhena Proniakina (1538–9) – Katerinka, wife of Stepan Proniakin

Feminine Patronymics

• Other relationship markers include:
  – mat’ – mother of
  – vdova – widow of
  – devka – mistress or servant of

Feminine Patronymics

• Combination of father’s and husband’s names were used, using the conjunction “a” (and/but)
  – Varvara Avdeeva doch’, a Stepanova zhena Ivanova (1610) – Varvara, daughter of Avdei, wife of Stepan Ivanov
Feminine Patronymics

- Modern ending is often “-ovna” or “-evna”
  - Very rare in period, a few citations from gray period
    - Marfa Ivanovna (1618)
    - Princess Evdokia Luk'ianovna (1643)
  - Used primarily with the Christian name

Metronymics

- Very rare
- May occasionally suggest bastardry
- May occur when mother is far more important than father (royalty)
- Rules of construction are basically the same as for patronymics, but there are so few it’s hard to establish patterns

Descriptive Bynames

- Fairly common, especially among women
- Two grammatical form – patronymic and adjectival
Descriptive Bynames

• Patronymic form
  – An adjective, noun, or combination of the two receives a patronymic-style ending
  – All other rules of grammar, such as gender, must be observed
  – Usually the simplest form of patronymic ending was used
    • Bezborodov – clean-shaven
    • Dolgonosov – long-nosed
    • Nepotselueva (f) – the un kissed

Descriptive Bynames

• Adjectival form
  – Most commonly simply using a common adjective in the correct gender
    • Korotkii(m)/Korotkaia(f) – short
    • Dorogoii/Dorogaia – dear

• Possessive form
  – Used to indicate ownership, usually of a woman by her husband.
  – See Wickenden

Locative Bynames

• Toponyms
  – Formed from the place name in three ways:
    • Patronymic form
      – Pskovich – literally “son of Pskov”
    • Noun form
      – Pskovitsin – “Pskovite”
    • Adjective form
      – Pskovskii – “the Pskovian”
Locative Bynames

• Toponyms
  – In SCA use, sometimes formed by adding “iz” (from/of) followed by the name of the place in genitive case
    • iz Pskova – From Pskov
    • This seems to be a SCAdianism, not period usage

Caution

• Many bynames “look” like patronyms
  – Descriptive
  – Occupational
  – Locative
• Be careful of trying to back a given name out of a patronym
  – The byname “Miasnikov”, meaning “Butcher” is an occupational byname – we cannot turn it into the given name “Miasnik”

Final Thoughts

• Registerable vs. Authentic
  – A submission must be registerable, it need not be authentic
  – While we can encourage clients to design authentic names and devices, we cannot, and should not force the decision
  – If a client is set on a registerable but not very authentic submission, you should process it!
Final Thoughts

- Registerable vs. Authentic
  - Wickenden is a fantastic resource but has limitations
  - If a client wants a truly authentic name, you need to use Wickenden carefully
    - Look at the cited forms, not just headers
    - Better yet, go to other sources, including Wickenden’s cites
      - Tupikov and Moroshkin are available in ebook

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