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## QUESTIONS OF ETHNOGENESIS OF THE BELARUSIAN PEOPLE IN SCIENTIFIC CONCEPT OF MYRON KORDUBA

*Iryna Fedoriv*

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatyuk National Pedagogical University (Ternopil, Ukraine)

e-mail: feirol@i.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1344-8053>

*In the article the scientific views of the prominent Ukrainian historian, professor of the Universities of Warsaw and Lviv Myron Korduba (1876-1947) on the origin of the Belarusian people are highlighted. The key works of the scientist on the problems of nation-building of the Eastern Slavs are taken into account, in particular, the little-known among Slavists study of M. Korduba «Some remarks on the origin of the Belarusian nation (in the margins of Dr. Jan Stankiewicz's article)». The problem of ethnogenesis of the Belarusian people in the interpretation of M. Korduba is considered in the context of modern historiographical discourse.*

**Keywords:** Myron Korduba, origin of the Belarusian people, Lithuanians, Lithuanian-Polish era, pre-modern identities

Belarus, like Ukraine, has undergone long-term linguistic and cultural assimilation by the Russian people as part of joint state formations with Russia. The question of its economic and even political independence is quite acute today, when the threat of its absorption by its northern neighbor has arisen again. Russian historiography is accustomed to emphasizing that Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia have followed a common path of historical and cultural processes. The discussion of the advantages of the union of the three East Slavic, so to speak, «fraternal» peoples continues, moreover, today we hear more and more narratives about the so-called single «Russian» people. All three East Slavic nations have not yet got rid of the «ghosts of the past», and Belarus is timidly trying to gain its place in the world of developed nations, in fact denying its desire to nationalize. Therefore, the study of historical ways of development of the Eastern Slavs in the pre-modern period remains highly relevant, and is one of the important tasks of modern historical science.

In this regard, the concept of the emergence of the Belarusian people proposed by Myron Korduba, the famous student of Mykhailo Hrushevsky, a prominent historian, historiographer, public and political figure, is of interest. In historical science there is a discussion about the role of the Lithuanian factor in the formation of pre-modern Ukrainian and Belarusian nations, which today also acquires a political overtone. A number of scientific works by M. Korduba<sup>1</sup> are analyzing the significance of the

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<sup>1</sup> Кордуба М. Одне з найважливіших питань історії України // Державний архів Львівської області (далі – ДАЛО). Ф. Р-2923. Оп. 1. Спр. 6. 17 арк.; Korduba M. Geneza narodowości ukraińskiej // ДАЛО. Ф. Р-2923. Оп. 1. Спр. 14. 13 арк.; Кордуба М. Найважніший момент в історії України (Україна у складі Литовської держави) // Літературно-науковий вістник. 1930. Т. 102. Ч. 6. С. 539-546; Кордуба М. В обороні історичної правди // Літературно-науковий вістник. 1931. Т. 106. С. 424-438; Кордуба М. Ще кілька слів у справі «Найважнішого моменту в історії України» (Академіку Степанови Смаль-Стоцькому у відповідь) // Літературно-науковий вістник. 1931. Кн. 10. Т. 107. С. 902-903; Korduba M. Die Einstellung der Ukrainischen Nation // Contributions a L'histoire de L'Ukraine au VII-e Congres international des sciences historiques. Varsovie, 1933. P. 19-67.

Lithuanian period in the assertion of the individuality of the East Slavic nationalities.

The outlined problem has become partly the subject of research of modern Ukrainian historiography. In particular, in the context of considering the issue of scientific discussion in Ukrainian and foreign historical science in the interwar years of the twentieth century, we have a number of theoretical and methodological studies on the origin of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian nationalities. These are first of all the works of V. Potulnytskyi<sup>2</sup>, V. Masnenko<sup>3</sup>, L. Zashkilniak<sup>4</sup>, I. Lysiak-Rudnytskyi<sup>5</sup>, V. Danylenko and O. Dobrzhanskyi<sup>6</sup>, S. Plokhii<sup>7</sup>, in which M. Korduba's role in the discussion is emphasized. A more detailed study of the origin of the Ukrainian nation in the concept of M. Korduba can be found in the publications of N. Yusova<sup>8</sup> and I. Fedoriv<sup>9</sup>. However, there has been no comprehensive coverage of M. Korduba's scientific views on the ethnogenesis of the Belarusian people in the scientific literature, what became the subject of this article. The historian's work «Some remarks on the origin of the Belarusian nation (in the margins of Dr. Jan Stankiewicz's article)» remained little known<sup>10</sup>.

Discussions about the possible common history of the Slavic peoples in general, and the Eastern Slavs in particular, kept arising repeatedly throughout the twentieth century. In the 1930s, this issue was actively discussed by well-known European scholars, especially Polish, Czech, German and Ukrainian. The works of Yaroslav Bidlo, Marcel Handelsman, Otto Ghosh and others are well worth mentioning<sup>11</sup>. The discussion about the common Ukrainian-Belarusian nation in the early modern period intensified in the 1930s in Ukrainian historiography as well<sup>12</sup>. The reason for this was the article by M. Korduba «The most important moment in the history of Ukraine», published in the Literary-Scientific Bulletin<sup>13</sup>. Galician and Eastern Ukrainian scholars in emigration actively discussed the origins of Rus and the formation of East Slavic nations in the mass media of that time. Stepan Smal-Stotskyi, Vadym Scherbakivskyi, Simon Narizhnyi,

<sup>2</sup> Потульницький В. Україна і всесвітня історія: Історіософія світової та української історії XVIII-XX століть. Київ, 2002. 480 с.

<sup>3</sup> Масненко В. Історична думка та націотворення в Україні (кінець XIX – перша третина XX ст.). Київ, Черкаси, 2001. 440 с.

<sup>4</sup> Зашкільняк Л. Історіографічна творчість М. Грушевського на тлі європейської історичної думки кінця XIX – початку XX ст. // М. Грушевський і українська історична наука. Збірник матеріалів конференцій. Львів, 1999. С. 32-37.

<sup>5</sup> Лисяк-Рудницький І. Формування українського народу й нації // Історичні есе: В 2 т. Київ, 1994. Т. 1. С. 11-28.

<sup>6</sup> Даниленко В., Добржанський О. Академік Степан Смаль-Стоцький. Життя і діяльність. Київ-Чернівці: Інститут історії України НАН України, 1996. 232 с.

<sup>7</sup> Плохій С. Походження слов'янських націй. Домодерні ідентичності в Україні, Росії та Білорусі. Київ: Критика, 2015. 430 с.

<sup>8</sup> Юсова Н. Міркування Мирона Кордуби стосовно часу й обставин утворення української народності // Україна Lithuania: студії з історії Великого князівства Литовського. Інститут історії України, 2009. С. 197-215.

<sup>9</sup> Федорів І. Концепція етногенезу східнослов'янських націй у науковій спадщині Мирона Кордуби в контексті історіографічного дискурсу українських й зарубіжних учених першої половини XX ст. // Україна-Європа-Світ. Міжнародний збірник наукових праць. Серія: Історія, міжнародні відносини. Тернопіль, 2010. Вип. 5. У 2 ч. Ч. 1. С. 265-272.

<sup>10</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень щодо походження білоруської народності (на полях статті д-ра Яна Станкевича) // Кордуба Мирон. Вибрані статті / Упор., переклад: Наталія Ткачова, Ольга Ткачова. Тернопіль, 2011. С. 14-29.

<sup>11</sup> Потульницький В. Україна і всесвітня історія... С. 17-19.

<sup>12</sup> Плохій С. Походження слов'янських націй... С. 99.

<sup>13</sup> Кордуба М. Найважливіший момент... С. 539-546.

Maksym Slavinskyi, Konstantyn Chekhovych, Panas Fedenko, Fedir Sliusarenko, Serhii Shelukhin, Pavlo Smirnov, Vasyl Simovych, Mykola Chubaty, Stepan Tomashivskyi and others took part in it<sup>14</sup>.

During the controversy over M. Korduba's article, M. Chubaty stated that the dating of the genesis of the Ukrainian people during the period of occupation of Western Russian lands by Lithuania was far too late. He also expressed the opinion that it was Belarusian lands that benefited most from the incorporation of Russian lands into the Lithuanian state, thus claiming that the occupation was much more significant for the origin of the Belarusian nation than the Ukrainian one, the beginning of which, according to M. Chubaty, must have taken place in the 12-13 centuries. In response, M. Korduba in his next publication on this topic in «Dilo» newspaper noted that he had not found any fact that would indicate the existence of a separate Belarusian nation, even in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Belarusian national community and the separation of the Belarusian nation could occur no earlier than in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>.

Such theses of M. Korduba provoked the reaction of the famous Belarusian linguist, historian Jan Stankiewicz, who in response wrote the article «The time of the emergence of the Belarusian and Ukrainian peoples»<sup>16</sup>. It should be added that J. Stankiewicz, known in historiography of this issue as the author of the concept of the origin of the Belarusian people from the Balts, claimed that «when the Slavs came to this territory, they mixed with the Balts and formed a new, Belarusian people». The Baltic-Slavic basis of the Belarusian people, in his opinion, is evidenced by the Baltic geographical names, surnames, common throughout the Belarusian territory<sup>17</sup>. J. Stankiewicz denied the so-called «proto-Rus'» period of the Belarusian people, and transferred the time of its origin (as well as the Ukrainian people) to prehistoric times, generally distinguishing two periods in its ethnogenesis: Baltic and Proto-Slavic. He considered the development of the Belarusian language among other Slavic languages to be quite separate, independent of the intermediate stages in its development, and the language itself to have developed directly from one of the dialects of the common Slavic language<sup>18</sup>.

In the 1960's, an attempt to justify the so-called «Baltic» concept of the origin of the Belarusians was made by the Moscow archaeologist and anthropologist Valentin Sedov, who also believed that the ethno-cultural features of the Belarusians were formed as a result of assimilation by East Slavic groups in the 6-13 centuries of the ancient Baltic population of Belarus, which was the substrate of the Belarusian ethnos in the 14-16 centuries. In general, the concept of «Baltic substrate» was later criticized by Moses Greenblatt, Vasyl Bondarchyk, Mykhailo Pylypenko<sup>19</sup>.

It should be noted that for a long time there was no consensus on the problem of ethnical affiliation of the ancestors of modern Belarusians in the structure of Slavdom. Belarusian ethnologist, anthropologist and historian Igor Chakvin claims that the vast majority of researchers have long convincingly stated the East Slavic ethnogenetic roots

<sup>14</sup> Федорів І. Концепція етногенезу... С. 268.

<sup>15</sup> Кордуба М. Початки української нації (у відповідь Українському історико-філологічному товариству) // Діло. 1930. Ч. 286. С. 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Станкевич Я. Час виникнення білоруського та українського народів // Національна справа. 1931. № 4/5-6. С. 23-35.

<sup>17</sup> Ковалів П. Українська мова та її становище серед інших слов'янських мов. Вінніпер, 1954. С. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. С. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Чаквін І. Походження білорусів. Сучасна історіографія проблеми // Народна творчість та етнографія. № 6. 2009. С. 7.

of Belarusians, but the historiography of this issue has a large number of works, for example, on the West Slavic origin of their ancestors. The Belarusian people were declared a local dialect and ethnographic group of Poles and Russians; in other cases it was artificially divided into independent regional groups «Polischuks», «Lithuanians», «Belarusians», which have long been under the linguistic and cultural influence of neighboring Slavic peoples; yet in still other cases they were considered as a separate Slavic ethnic group with its own features of language, material and spiritual culture, traditions and self-consciousness, which historically arose<sup>20</sup>.

In this regard, M. Korduba's article «Some remarks on the origin of the Belarusian nation (in the margins of Dr. Jan Stankiewicz's article)» should not go unnoticed by historians<sup>21</sup>. In this work the scholar presents a number of strong arguments, confirmed by sources, about the time of origin of the Belarusian people, its language and literature. He also analyzes ethnic names Belarus, «Lithuanians», «Belarusian», the role of the Lithuanian period for ethnic and political life of Belarusians and some other aspects related to the ethnogenesis of Belarusians in the framework of his author's concept of the origin of Eastern Slavs and gives an estimate of the role of Kievan Rus', the Lithuanian-Polish and Khmelnytsky's eras in these processes<sup>22</sup>. M. Korduba makes his arguments and substantiations in the form of a polemic with J. Stankiewicz. Actually, the tasks of our research are the analysis of the above aspects in the scheme of ethnogenesis of the Belarusian people of M. Korduba's.

Ethnonyms attracted the scientist's attention: Lithuanian, Lithuania, Ruthenian, Rus', Russian and Belarusian, the interpretations of which are conceptually different in both historians. J. Stankiewicz denied that the neighbors of the Belarusians and Ukrainians did not distinguish between the two peoples and called them by the common name of the Ruthenians; and claimed that from the first half of the 14th century Belarusians were known to their neighbors as Lithuanians, and Belarus as Lithuania, and that was what Belarusians called themselves. Instead, M. Korduba emphasizes that the names Lithuania and Lithuanians did not have a national character yet. As they were used at that time only in the geographical and political sense to denote people who lived on the lands that were part of the Lithuanian state, as well as, for example, the names Galicians, Silesians, Pomeranians, etc. were used. «Belarusians were called Lithuanians not because this name was intended to describe their ethnic identity, but to denote their political (state) affiliation», the historian wrote, emphasizing that this is how not only Belarusians, but also representatives of other nationalities from Lithuanian state were called, whereas the Belarusians themselves very rarely used this ethnic name<sup>23</sup>. J. Stankiewicz's thesis, claiming that the names of Lithuania and Lithuanians in the 15-17 centuries were used to denote the Belarusians in the ethnographic sense, is rebutted by the fact that the actual Baltic Lithuanians had no other name to identify themselves, thus using it for that very purpose<sup>24</sup>.

At the same time, M. Korduba emphasizes that the following names were much more common among Belarusians: Rus, Rusyn, Ruthenian. He points to the well-known fact that the coryphaeus of «Belarusian» literature, Francisk Skorina, was recorded in the acts of the University of Cracow as a Lithuanian, which certainly meant his state affiliation,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. C. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень... С. 14-29.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. C. 15, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. C. 17.

and he himself called his famous translation of the Bible (1517) «Russian Bible». Therefore, in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, M. Korduba concludes, Belarusians were called (by others as well as by themselves) either Lithuanians or Russians. The first name had a political and state meaning, and was common to all citizens of the Lithuanian State (Lithuanians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Jews); whereas the second one had a national character, and served to jointly denote Belarusians and Ukrainians. Moreover, there was no name that meant only Belarusians and distinguished them from other ethnic groups. Even if there was a separate name to denote only Belarusians, it would not mean that they had the consciousness of a national community separate from others<sup>25</sup>.

In this regard, as I. Chakvin rightly notes, the name Lithuanian appeared for Belarusians primarily in the sense of a political name (definition of state citizenship). In a sense, it reflected the broadest level of consolidation of the entire Belarusian people, as well as its integration with the Lithuanians, who also used this definition. The state-territorial name of Lithuania covered in the 14-17 centuries almost all the lands of Belarus. However, it was most durable and persistent among the Belarusians living in the border lands with Lithuania, Ukraine, Russia, as well as in the areas of mixed Balto-Slavic population. Starting from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, representatives of privileged feudal circles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania also considered themselves Lithuanians<sup>26</sup>.

As for the ethnical name «Belarusian», M. Korduba points out that it first appeared in Western Rus' in 1596 (to denote the literary language under the influence of the Moscow nomenclature) in the Polish edition of «The Sermon of St. Cyril» by Stefan Zizani, where the preface mentions that this book was published «also in Belarusian». In ancient times, Belarusians did not call themselves or their country Belarus. M. Korduba emphasizes that «the origin of this name is still unclear»<sup>27</sup>. He disagrees with the version of H. Ilyinskyi, which was supported by J. Stankiewicz, that this name was formed by Poles on the basis of geographical names that contain the element «biel» («white» in Belarusian) (Biela, Bielsk, Bielowiezha, etc.), because geographical names derived from the element «biel» («white»), are widespread throughout the Slavic region: in the Great Russian territory (White Sea (Beloie More), Belozersk, Beloberezhie, etc.), in all ethnographic Ukrainian lands, and also in Polish lands. In particular, the scientist notes that list of such names in the «Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland» spreads over several dozen pages. In addition, the western part of the Belarusian territory bordering Poland, which contains the geographical names quoted by H. Ilyinskyi, was known in Poland as Black Russia, while the name of Belarus referred more to the south-eastern part of the ethnographically Belarusian lands, the center of which was Mogilev. In the West in the 15 century, the name of White Russia denoted, as a rule, the north-eastern regions, and almost always was applied to the Great Russian lands and the territories of the Moscow princes<sup>28</sup>. Instead, in the Moscow State in the 16 – first half of the 17 century the name Belarus or Little Russia was applied to the Russian lands that were part of the Lithuanian-Polish State, which at that time meant both Belarusian and Ukrainian lands. It was only from the time of Bohdan Khmelnytsky's uprising that these two concepts began to be distinguished there. Thus, M. Korduba claims that the name Belarus was primarily geographical and not national<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>26</sup> Чаквін І. Походження білорусів... С. 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень... С. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. С. 19.

The historian puts forward the version that the term «Belarusian» was coined in the office of the Moscow princes to denote the business and literary language used in the Russian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian state in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The term was adopted without any reservations whether this language can really be identified with Belarusian in the modern sense of the word, that is, whether the old Moscow conditional term really corresponds to the existing national one. At the time, when both the names «Little Rus'» and «White (Bela) Rus'» were used in the Moscow region for the political definition of the Rus' lands that remained within the Polish-Lithuanian state, only the name «Belarusian» was used by the Muscovites regarding the literary language spoken there. In other words, it was a specific Moscow term; neither Ukrainians, nor Poles, nor, in the end, Belarusians themselves used this term to denote this language. Instead they called it «Russian» while Church Slavonic was known as «Slavic». Since the term was used by Moscow scribes quite conditionally, they did not delve into whether the letter, say, comes from Vilnius or, for example, Podillia, or has linguistic features closer to the Belarusian dialect, or Ukrainian, everything that came from «southwestern lands and was written in Cyrillic, not Church Slavonic, was called «Belarusian script»<sup>30</sup>. Therefore, M. Korduba claimed, both of these concepts (Belarusian and national) for the period of the 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries cannot be identified a priori.

As I. Chakvin rightly points out, the fact that other «Russian» lands (Ukraine) of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania passed away in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Poland, while the Belarusian regions remained part of the «Lithuanian» part of the Commonwealth, played a role in the stable preservation of the names Rus' and Russians in the lands of Belarus. It is probable that the different color (White, Black, Red) and other differential (Big, Small) names of Rus', which existed since ancient times, also reflected a certain semantic difference in the ethnic and ethnographic heterogeneity of the general concept of «Rus'». In addition, different groups of the population at that time perceived their ethnicity in different ways<sup>31</sup>.

According to M. Korduba, another proof of the existence of a common Ukrainian-Belarusian nation in the 15-17 centuries is the Western Russian script. The historian claims that even its superficial knowledge convinces that the literary language of that time, which was formed on the basis of the Church Slavonic language, absorbed elements of the dialects of both vernaculars, Ukrainian and Belarusian, as well as a significant number of Polonisms. Over time, due to the proximity of the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages («in those days much larger than today»), the «Russian language» was formed with sounds common to the Belarusian and North Ukrainian dialects, avoiding the brighter features of the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages. Such literary language was easily understood by both Ukrainians and Belarusians. The authors of such writing were authors of both Ukrainian and Belarusian origin. Therefore, these two facts, says the historian, give solid grounds to consider this writing to be «the common good of both peoples»<sup>32</sup>. The author of the article also reminded that such well-known linguists as P. Zhytetskyi and M. Vozniak both shared the statement<sup>33</sup>.

In a number of his works, M. Korduba emphasizes that the key event in the history of the Eastern Slavs of that time, which contributed to the split of the once united Rus into

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<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>31</sup> Чаквін І. Походження білорусів... С. 11.

<sup>32</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень... С. 20.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

two separate parts was the Lithuanian peaceful occupation, resulting in a border between the populations of the single state, which led to alienation. «On both sides of the border separate worldviews and psyches are formed», the historian wrote<sup>34</sup>. However, M. Korduba emphasizes, even then, and even in the time of B. Khmelnytsky, the population of Ukrainian and Belarusian lands was still one common ethnic entity<sup>35</sup>. It was based on the structure of political relations, common historical past and traditions, religious and church life and cultural influences<sup>36</sup>. M. Korduba's thesis that the Lithuanian era was crucial for the national differentiation between Ukraine (and Belarus), which were under the influence of the West, and Muscovy (present-day Russia) (which was influenced by the Tatar East) was praised in I. Lysiak-Rudnytskyi's article «Formation of Ukrainian people and nation»<sup>37</sup>.

Therefore, M. Korduba could not possibly agree with the statements of J. Stankiewicz about the «huge difference» between the political life of Belarusians and Ukrainians in the Lithuanian period, and that historical Lithuania from a political point of view was actually the Belarusian State<sup>38</sup>. According to the historian, both O. Shakhmatov and K. Kadlets spoke about the Russian, relatively Western-Russian character, and hence the Belarusian-Ukrainian character of the Lithuanian state, referring primarily to cultural relations. As for political relations, «Dr. Stankiewicz is very wrong if he believes that the centralization initiated by Witold, which undoubtedly eliminated the remnants of Ukrainian statehood, concerned only Volyn, Chernihiv, Kyiv and Podillia regions»<sup>39</sup>. It began with Belarus, in particular with the liquidation in 1392 of the Trotsky principality, and then the Briansk, Vitebsk, and others. In the new Lithuanian state, the indigenous Lithuanian families certainly had the advantage, who, having accepted Catholicism, took a privileged position in relation to Ukrainian and Belarusian nobility. This led to the opposition of the Russian elite against Witold, uniting it around Svydrygail, and when under Kazimir Jagiellonchik the indigenous Lithuanian Catholic families became even stronger, Belarusian and Ukrainian political forces began to seek support in Moscow. «In this regard, it would be very interesting to hear from Dr. Stankiewicz, on what exactly the Belarusian character of the Lithuanian state, which, according to him, is a dogma for Belarusian historiography, was based, and how it showed itself»<sup>40</sup>.

In the mentioned publication, J. Stankiewicz expressed another contradictory thesis, as if by the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Belarusian culture undoubtedly dominated the culture of the Ukrainian people. M. Korduba responds with the following arguments. First, the period from the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was a time of decline of literary creativity and any intellectual movement throughout Lithuanian, White and Ukrainian Russia. The so-called Lithuanian-Russian chronicles with their stereotyped and primitive way of narration, pale and poor style, in terms of literary value cannot be compared with the ancient Russian chronicles of the princely period. The same decline is observed in architecture, painting, and goldsmith crafts. The intellectual movement came to life only in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and is concentrated in so-called cultural centers. In ethnographically Ukrainian lands these

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<sup>34</sup> Кордуба М. Найважніший момент... С. 544.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. С. 545.

<sup>37</sup> Лисяк-Рудницький І. Формування українського народу... С. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень... С. 21.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. С. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

include: Milianovychi (near Kovel), Lviv, Ostrog, and Kyiv. Two cultural centers appeared on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border: in Zabludov and Slutsk, and one in the center of the Belarusian lands in Vilno. Therefore, there can be no question of any «undeniable dominance» of Belarusian culture over Ukrainian. The cultural life of the whole of Rus' at that time was integral, common, as a product of the joint efforts of both ethnic groups, Ukrainian and Belarusian! The whole intellectual movement of that time took place according to their common understanding and their harmonious interaction<sup>41</sup>. M. Korduba backs up his words with concrete historical facts, which testify to the active exchange of cultural values in the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands through joint congresses, actions, conferences. Therefore, «we have no right to talk about any distinction of a separate Belarusian culture or even more so its opposition to the Ukrainian one»<sup>42</sup>.

The absence of a separate Belarusian nation in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, according to M. Korduba, is also proved by the events of B. Khmelnytsky's national liberation war (note that M. Korduba was an excellent specialist in this period of Ukrainian history, being the author of a number of works on the problems of Khmelnytsky liberation movement and leadership). He denies J. Stankiewicz's position on the alleged hostile attitude of Belarus towards the Cossacks. Despite B. Khmelnytsky's official alliance with Moscow, there were constant quarrels between the Cossack army operating in Belarus and squads of Moscow troops caused by completely opposite goals. The Cossacks believed that Belarus should be included in the autonomous Ukraine as a common homeland, and Moscow sought to seize it under the direct rule of the tsar<sup>43</sup>. A good example of existing at that time feelings of the national community of Belarusian intellectual circles with the Ukrainian ones, and at the same time the separation from Moscow, which already then was claiming the exclusive representation of ancient Russia and the legacy of Vladimir the Great, he cites an interesting story where a Vilno merchant I. Liskevich presented to Moscow ambassadors an anthem in honor of B. Khmelnytsky and Vyhovsky, composed in Vilno, which glorified Khmelnytsky as a defender of the Orthodox religion, the head and leader of the entire Russian people<sup>44</sup>.

M. Korduba agrees with J. Stankiewicz that in the 11-13 centuries «there was no national unity of Belarusians with Ukrainians or with Russians», because in ancient princely Rus' a common Rus' people national feeling had not yet been formed, and therefore there was no common Rus' nation. Rus' of the princely period formed only a common cultural sphere<sup>45</sup>. In one of his other works «Die Einstellung der Ukrainischen Nation» we read the following: «a common state, a common faith and a common literary language become powerful foundations on which one common all-Russian, though not a nation in the full sense of the word, but rather certain cultural sphere is built». The natural evolution of the East Slavic tribes on the territory of the future Kyiv State could have led to their transformation into «separate nationalities», but the creation of a Russian state prevented this process. According to M. Korduba, the spread of Christianity and, as a result, the centralization it brought, further stifled the process of ethnic separation<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. C. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. C. 24.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. C. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. C. 26.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>46</sup> Korduba M. Die Einstellung der Ukrainischen... S. 25.

Therefore, it seems completely illogical, «when the existence of a separate Belarusian nation is deduced from those princely times. The Polotsk principality, to which Stankiewicz refers, was the same political appanage without any national character as any other land in Russia of that time». Moreover, it did not cover a major part of the Belarusian lands, as Smolensk region formed a very separate appanage, remaining in close contact with the Kiev Principality; part of the Belarusian lands belonged to Siversk and Turovo-Pinsk appanages, and Minsk region had been torn away from Polotsk by Volodymyr Monomakh<sup>47</sup>. Such considerations of M. Korduba were very close to modern discussions about the ethno-national character of Kievan Rus. As S. Plokhii notes, as far as Belarus is concerned, local historians are looking for the sources of the modern Belarusian nation in the history of the Kryvychi tribes and the Polotsk principality. They have the same grounds for this as Ukrainian historians who look for the sources of their state in the conglomerate of principalities located on the territory of Ukraine, but still no «all-Belarusian» identity then, apparently, existed even in its initial form. The history of the Polotsk principality, like the histories of other Russian principalities – Kyiv, Chernihiv, Pereiaslav or Suzdal, is very convenient to start a modern national narrative, but as a starting point in search of sources of modern national identities, it is not very suitable<sup>48</sup>. Denying the concept of all-Russian nationality, Ukrainian and Belarusian scholars have reasonably questioned the level of ethnic homogeneity of the Kievan Rus State and its ability to create one nationality from different ethnic and tribal strata<sup>49</sup>.

So, M. Korduba in a number of his works on certain aspects of the ethnogenesis of Belarusians, Ukrainians and Russians, does not look for nations where they do not yet exist, in particular, in the Proto-Slavic or Kievan Rus' period. Separation of southwestern lands together with their subsequent inclusion into the Lithuanian state in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century contributed to the consolidation of Russian tribes into a separate ethnic group different from the Great Russians, and the creation of initially Ukrainian-Belarusian, and later separate Ukrainian and Belarusian nations<sup>50</sup>. In addition, the historian claimed that the Grand Duchy of Moscow was the successor of the Mongol world and Byzantium, whereas Ukrainian and Belarusian lands, which came under the influence of Lithuanian-Polish cultural and intellectual circles, were under the influence of Western Europe and experienced all Western European civilizational processes<sup>51</sup>. The Union of Lublin in 1569 separated the Ukrainian lands from the Lithuanian State and thus weakened their then close ties with the Belarusian lands<sup>52</sup>. But the consequences of changes caused by this act will be felt only in a few decades<sup>53</sup> (the author means changes in the national identity of Ukrainians and Belarusians).

The second such important moment, according to M. Korduba, was the separation of the Hetmanate (Kyiv and the Left Bank of Ukraine) from the Polish-Lithuanian State (1648) and their connection with Moscow (1654, 1667). This part of Ukraine became in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the center of the political and cultural movement of Ukrainians, while in the lands that remained under Poland, national life was

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<sup>47</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень... С. 26.

<sup>48</sup> Плохій С. Походження слов'янських націй... С. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. С. 51.

<sup>50</sup> Кордуба М. Найважливіший момент... С. 539.

<sup>51</sup> Korduba M. VII-e Congres international des sciences historiques. Resumes of present communications at the Congress. Warsaw, 1933. Vol. 2. P. 208.

<sup>52</sup> Кордуба М. Кілька зауважень... С. 28.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. С. 29.

declining. At that time, the main centers of cultural life of Belarusians, especially Vilno, still remained part of the Polish-Lithuanian State. This resulted in further differentiation of both ethnic groups (Ukrainians and Belarusians), which eventually led to their division into two separate nationalities. Therefore, M. Korduba concludes, J. Stankiewicz's statements about the genesis of the Belarusian people before the Lithuanian occupation (not to mention the prehistoric era) do not withstand scientific criticism<sup>54</sup>.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> centuries a number of new studies have emerged in this sphere. Some of them were focused on determining the origins of the peculiarities of culture, language, and self-consciousness of Belarusians. The other aimed at clarifying the ethnic, socio-economic and political processes that led to the formation of the Belarusian nation. Another layer of research on the problem concerned the older stages of East Slavic and All-Slavic ethnogenesis. In 2015, the work of the famous medievalist Serhiy Plokhiiy «Origin of Slavic Nations: Pre-modern identities in Ukraine, Russia and Belarus» appeared as a sample of sound scientific research, with modern methodology, solid categorical apparatus and a clear vision of the problem<sup>55</sup>. Based on the analysis of a sufficient number of professional studies, as well as a number of sources, S. Plokhiiy claims that the Belarusian national project was based on the Russian identity, which had previously developed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but failed to create a separate identity in early modern times<sup>56</sup>. According to the majority of modern historians, the Mongol invasion is a crossroads where Russian history has gone its own way, while the history of Ukraine and Belarus has gone its own way. The main factor in the removal and further distancing and alienation was that from the middle of the 13th century northeastern Russia submitted to the Mongols, and the rest of the Russian territories, having remained under Mongol supremacy for much less time, came under the rule of Lithuanian princes and Polish kings. The political history of Ukrainian and Belarusian lands in the 13-14 centuries is a process of coexistence and competition of several large and small principalities that emerged on the ruins of Kievan Rus<sup>57</sup>.

Modern scientific works have made it possible to identify the ethnic features that from ancient times to the present bring Belarusians closer to all other Slavic peoples, especially Russians and Ukrainians. Further research on the ethnogenesis of the East Slavic peoples will expand the thoroughness of solving the outlined aspects of the ethnic history of the Belarusians. The modern programs for building national projects in Ukraine and Belarus, in their turn, should not deny the common features, periods and pages of the past, but, upon rethinking them, creatively interweave them both in the present-day life as well as in the outline of world history.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> Плохій С. Походження слов'янських націй...; Алексієвець Л., Секо Я. *Плохій С. Походження слов'янських націй. Домодерні ідентичності в Україні, Росії та Білорусі*. Київ: Критика, 2015. 430 с. // *Україна-Європа-Світ. Міжнародний збірник наукових праць*. Серія: Історія, міжнародні відносини. 2015. Вип. 15. С. 332.

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**Ірина Федорів**

(Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет імені Володимира Гнатюка, Тернопіль, Україна)

e-mail: feirol@i.ua

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1344-8053>

**Питання етногенезу білоруського народу у науковій концепції Мирона Кордуби**

Метою статті є висвітлення наукових поглядів видатного українського історика, історіографа, бібліографа, громадсько-політичного діяча – Мирона Кордуби (1876-1947 рр.) щодо походження білоруського народу у контексті сучасного історіографічного дискурсу. В українській і зарубіжній історіографії дискусія про спільну українсько-білоруську народність у ранньомодерний період виникла у 1930-х рр. Приводом до неї стала стаття М. Кордуби «Найважливіший момент в історії України (Україна у складі Литовської держави)».

До уваги взяті ключові праці вченого з проблем націєтворення східних слов'ян: «Одне з найважливіших питань історії України», «Geneza narodowości ukraińskiej», «В обороні історичної правди», а також маловідоме в українській історіографії дослідження «Кілька зауважень щодо походження білоруської народності (на полях статті д-ра Яна Станкевича)», на основі котрих подано схему етногенезу білоруського народу у трактуванні М. Кордуби. Мова йде про час виникнення білоруського народу, його мови, літератури, культури; аналіз етнонімів Біла Русь, «литвини», «білоруський», роль Київської держави та Литовсько-польської доби для етнічного й політичного життя білорусів.

Особливе місце у роботі займає дискусія, котра виникла між М. Кордубою та білоруським мовознавцем й істориком Я. Станкевичем з приводу часу виникнення білоруського народу. М. Кордуба наголошував, що відокремлення білоруської народності від українсько-білоруської національної спільноти могло відбутися не раніше, як у другій половині XVII ст. Приводом до цього стало перебування головних осередків культурного життя білорусів, передусім Вільно, у складі Польсько-литовської держави, відрив від неї Гетьманщини (Києва і Лівобережної України) (1648) та їх зв'язок з Московською державою (1654, 1667), а також Люблінська унія 1569 р., що від'єднала українські землі від Великого Князівства Литовського і цим послабила їх тогочасний тісний зв'язок із білоруськими землями. Натомість Я. Станкевич говорив про генезис окремої білоруської народності від часу, що передував литовській окупації, виводячи його із праісторичної доби.

Подальші наукові дослідження з проблем етногенезу східних слов'ян розширюватимуть ґрунтовність розв'язання окреслених у статті аспектів з етнічної історії білорусів.

**Ключові слова:** Мирон Кордуба, походження білоруського народу, литвини, Литовсько-польська доба, домодерні ідентичності