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The Russian Monarchy: Symbols, Ceremonies, Traditions and Legitimacy, 18th -20th Centuries

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Abstract

The Russian monarchy re-emerged as pride of modern Russian Federation, after a gap of around seven decades. The paper primarily concentrates on the period of Russian rulers from Peter the Great to Nicholas- II, the last Romanov. Why did I start with Peter-I? It is mainly due to the period of Peter witnessed the transformation of Russian state into a ‘European political entity’ from the so called ‘Asian’ or Eastern. Finally, the Russian state relieved from the shadows of ‘Tatar Yoke’ or Western European political powers started to see Russian monarchs as one among ‘us’ than ‘others.’ Russian emperors also used or even created various symbols, ceremonies and traditions for legitimizing their rule.

Keywords: Russian Monarchy, Symbols, Traditions, Ceremonies.

Rus Monarşisi: Semboller, Törenler, Gelenekler ve Meşruiyet, 18-20.Yüzyıllar

Öz

Rus monarşisi, yaklaşık yetmiş yıllık bir aradan sonra modern Rusya Federasyonu'nun gururu olarak yeniden ortaya çıktı. Makale öncelikle Büyük Petro'dan son Romanov II. Nicholas'a kadar Rus hükümdarlarının dönemine odaklanmaktadır. Neden I.Petro ile başladım? Bunun başlıca nedeni, Petro'nun Rus devletinin sözde “Asyalı” ya da Doğudan “Avrupa siyasi varlığına” dönüşmesine tanıklık ettiği dönemdir. Son olarak, Rus devleti “Tatar Yoke” nin gölgesinden kurtuldu veya Batı Avrupa siyasi güçleri, Rus hükümdarlarını “diğerlerinden” çok “bizden” biri olarak görmeye başladı. Rus imparatorları da kendi yönetimlerini meşrulaştırmak için çeşitli semboller, törenler ve gelenekleri kullandı ve hatta yarattı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rus Monarşisi, Semboller, Gelenekler, Törenler.

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Introduction

The Russian monarchy re-emerged as pride of modern Russian Federation, after a gap of around seven decades.¹ The Soviet Union recognized only Ivan the terrible and Peter the Great. Every other tsars were regarded as cruel or exploiters. Is this perception really true? Who were tsars? What was the nature of Russian monarchy? How did Russian monarchs legitimize their rule? How did Russian monarchy differ from other European autocracies? What kinds of symbols and ceremonies were used by the Russian monarchs to legitimize their position? What kind of relationship was existed between Russian monarchs and their peasants? This paper tries to find answer for these questions.

The paper primarily concentrates on the period of Russian rulers from Peter the Great to Nicholas- II, the last Romanov. Why did I start with Peter-I? It is mainly due to the period of Peter witnessed the transformation of Russian state into a 'European political entity' from the so called 'Asian' or Eastern. Finally, the Russian state relieved from the shadows of 'Tatar Yoke' or Western European political powers started to see Russian monarchs as one among 'us' than 'others.'

The Russian state was ruled by two royal dynasties since 10th century: the Scandinavian Riurikovichs and the more 'native' Romanovs. Riuriks derived their legitimacy from the so called 'Varangian' warlords who were invited by the local Slavic tribes to rule over them. However, Romanovs never had any similar claim. Romanovs were one of the prominent *boyar*² families which were closer to the earlier royal dynasty. Romanovs were selected by people's assembly. Or, in other words, Romanov's power originated from people not from god. Then, how did Romanovs separate themselves from the people who they supposed to rule? Romanovs cleverly did it through the invention of new myths, ceremonies and traditions which were copied or adopted from other European dynasties. In contrary to their Western European counterparts, each Russian ruler also invented their own traditions which broke in line with their predecessors. After Peter – II, Romanovs ceased to become a true Russian dynasty. Instead, it became Romanov-Gottorp dynasty³. Romanovs from Paul – I onwards had nothing to do with Russian at all. They were all progenies of Western royal families who ruled Russia in the name of the Romanovs.

Who were Romanovs?

The first Romanov, Michael Fedorovich, came into power in 1613 after the confusing period of 'Time of Troubles' which started after the end of the Riurikovich dynasty. Michael enjoyed the support of both clergy and *boyar council* or *Duma*. *Boyars*, the noblemen of Russia, played a major role in the politics. They and their provincial counterparts (smaller gentries) also actively participated in war with tsar. It is clear that *boyars* never had any provincial strongholds⁴ but they had their own serfs and estates in rural areas. It worked mainly as a source of income. The term *boyar* went into disuse by 18th century when Peter-I started the transformation of Russian elites. However, 90% of Russia population was serfs.⁵ They were bonded to both state and nobles. The percentage of peasants was more or less same until the Bolshevik Revolution. Russian peasants were also regarded as 'authentic Russians,'

¹ See Lindsey Hughes, *The Romanovs: Ruling Russia, 1613 – 1917*, Hambledon Continuum, London & New York 2008, pp: 237 – 248.

² Roughly Russian equivalent of Western nobles.

³ The descendants of Anna (Peter- I's daughter) and Karl Friedrich of Holstein – Gottorp.

⁴ Such as English noblemen. For example Duke of Edinburgh or Duke of Suffolk.

⁵ See Lindsey Hughes, *The Romanovs: Ruling Russia, 1613 – 1917*, p: 119.

who were not polluted by westernization. It is also perceived that peasants' loss of trust over *tsar batiushka* led to the destruction of the Russian monarchy.

Michael Romanov's period (1613 – 1645) still regarded as one of the crucial in Russian history. Although we have very limited information on his period, we can conclude that he was able to get recognition for his dynasty from both inside and outside of Russia. His successors were capable enough to consolidate their position and even expanded their territory to multiple folds until the disintegration of their dynasty in 1917 with another Michael, Michael Alexandrovich⁶.

Rule of Succession

The Romanovs never had any proper succession law. The succession laws changed at the whims of rulers. There was no agreement between rulers or other prominent members of the Russian society on this issue. That's why, confusion and uncertainty always prevailed in the Russian rule of succession. It also brought totally non – Russian origin such as Catherine - II⁷ into power. The Romanovs were also different in their self-perception. On, the one hand, rulers such as Peter – I and Catherine – II tried to resemble their western counterparts. On, the other hand, later Romanovs tried to emulate pre – Petrine Russian virtues. However, Russian rulers and nobilities were heavily westernized by nineteenth century. This feature also distinguished them from Russian peasants and other lower classes. Orthodoxy still remained as religion of both Russian upper and lower classes and a marker of Russian royalty.

Russian monarchy lacked clear law of succession. It is primarily due to the lack of influence of feudal and Roman legal traditions over Russia. Instead, Russian rulers followed the less sophisticated “representational culture” which incorporated the ceremonies of Baroque and 18th century conceptions of the rule of the enlightened monarch. Each Russian ruler broke with the previous reign and tried to bring order to Russian state. Through that Russian rulers emphasized renewal and change instead of dynastic continuity.⁸ In contrast to Russian tsars, the ruling monarchs of Europe had their own dynastic laws which were regulated by the jurists who were trained in Roman legal traditions and state laws. For example, *Hohenzollern* and other German ruling houses followed the principle of primogeniture of succession which clearly marked the senior male as heir.

It is clearly mentioned in the testament of Frederick the Great: “I command all of my relatives, if need be, to sacrifice their personal interests for the benefit of the welfare of the Fatherland and advantages of the state.”⁹ Instead, Russian rulers found their legitimacy through conquest and coercion. We can also see that the role of *Zemskii Sobors* in the selection of Fedor Ivanovich, Boris Godunov and Michael Fedorovich. It repeated again during the selection of Peter Alekseevich in 1682 (future Peter the Great).

Peter- I decreed the right of reigning monarch to decide his own successor. It was not necessarily to be his eldest son and not even a man. Peter gave importance to utility. Peter's decree produced an era of empresses in Russian history. It also raised non – Russian origin such as Catherine – II into power. However, we can see that Peter restricted his choice among the members of the imperial family. Peter - I became a model for all following Romanovs. Ruler's charisma was also a product of the Petrine legacy. Lavish ceremonies and celebrations

⁶ Younger brother of Nicholas – II. Nicholas – II abdicated in favor of him. So some scholars regarded Michael as the last Romanov.

⁷ Originally Sophie Fredericke Auguste of Anhalt – Zerbst, wife of Peter III.

⁸ Richard Wortman, “The representation of dynasty and “fundamental laws” in the evolution of Russian Monarchy,” *Kritika*, Vol.13, No.2, Spring 2012, p.266.

⁹ Ibid.268.

which were part of the coronation justified ruler's absolute power. It also projected new rulers as redeemers of the nation from the misrule of previous rulers.¹⁰

Catherine-II introduced new legal code for Russia in 1767. So, she was depicted in painting as an emanation of Minerva, and successor to classical goddesses such as Numa and Solon.¹¹ Still, Russia lacked a fundamental law of succession. If we follow the definition of French enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu, Russian state of Catherine's time was more despotic than monarchical. Catherine – II also regarded herself as progenitor in her decree.

Paul – I's law of succession promoted primogeniture in the position of reigning monarch's right. Paul's law modeled on "the Austrian system" which preferred men over women in the line of succession. Paul's law of succession also stated two other important things: First, the ruling emperor is also the head of imperial family. Thus, every member of family should get permission from him and empress before getting married. Second, it denied unequal or morganatic marriages for the members of royal family.¹² Later, Alexander – I, the successor of Paul made a small change in his father's law without changing substance. Alexander-I's decree accepted morganatic marriages at the expense of loss of imperial titles and rights for their progenies.¹³

Tsar Nicholas time witnessed the further codification of Russian laws under the direction of Mikhail Speranskii.¹⁴ The new law (the *Digest of Laws* or *Svod zakonov*) reaffirmed Paul- I's law of succession. Nicholas stated that, "My Imperial Father, of Blessed Memory, for the first time established the succession on firm bases of law and published the Statute on the Imperial Family, which he, so to say, consecrated at the altar of the Assumption Cathedral."¹⁵ He also reminded his audience about Alexander-I's decree on the marriage of his brother Konstantin. Nicholas further added that, "The tsar considered it necessary to bring together all these fundamental laws, published long ago and known to all, in one place."¹⁶

Even though the Russian monarchy copied a lot from their German counterparts for creating these laws there were some fundamental differences existed between the two. In the Russian case, these legal codes were not just acts which legalized dynasty but decrees from throne which reassured the supremacy of the dynasty. Nicholas's law also ensured the legality of autocracy by bringing the rules governing the imperial family with the laws of the Russian state.

Symbols, Ceremonies and Traditions

Eric Hobsbawm remarked about the invention of new traditions by stating that which "where possible ... attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past."¹⁷ Russian monarchs also invented new traditions which may justify their position. In contrary to their Western counterparts, there were no distinction between "body-mortal" and "body politic," in Russian monarchy. Russian monarchs were regarded as super human beings who were clearly stood above their subjects. Each Russian monarch was associated with symbols from classical or mythological origins. For example, If Catherine – II was Minerva, Alexander – I and

¹⁰ Ibid.276.

¹¹ See Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in the Russian Monarchy* (Abridged), Princeton University Press, Princeton 2006, pp: 52 – 62.

¹² Richard Wortman, *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule: Collected Articles*, Academic Studies Press, Boston 2013, p.49.

¹³ Ibid.51.

¹⁴ Well known Russian statesman of early 19th century also known as father of the Russian Liberalism.

¹⁵ Richard Wortman, *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule: Collected Articles*, p.56.

¹⁶ Ibid.56.

¹⁷ Ibid.137, 138.

Alexander – III were angel and *bogaytri* respectively. Russian monarch's super human nature was symbolized through various statues and other symbols. Richard Wortman describes this process as "scenarios of power."¹⁸

Russian monarchs believed that their right to rule derived from god who clearly makes them above their own nobles and other subjects. Again, lavish adoption of symbols from foreign sources reassured their position over others. According to Wortman, borrowing was not simply a Russian phenomenon. However, in the case of Russia, borrowing itself became an attribute of power.¹⁹ For example, Russian monarchs were hardly 'Russian' till the end of 19th century. Ivan the terrible was proud of his Viking ancestry, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich copied Byzantine ceremonies for his coronation and for his son Peter the Great, Western Rome was an ideal. Thus, he changed his title into *imperator* on the basis of Roman model. These models changed only when monarchs faced staunch opposition or resistance. For example, both Nicholas – I and Alexander – III depended on Russian sources for motivation instead of Western.

Russian monarchs shared one tradition in common. In contrast, to their Western counterparts, Russian monarchs jealously guarded their autocratic powers. In short, they were not ready to give any political concession to their people. It was unthinkable for most of them for losing their prerogatives. Even, in the final days of the Empire, Nicholas – II liked to treat state council (*Duma*) as his own creation instead of an independent law making body. Or, in other words, he forced councilors to believe that their right originated from him. Nicholas – II liked to treat *Duma* more like its pre – Petrine counterpart even though his subjects moved far ahead of their 17th century forefathers.

Russian Monarchy and Peasants

Russian peasants were always regarded as the true representatives of 'Russian nation'. Their lack of westernization and conservative nature made them ideal support base for the Russian monarchs.²⁰ The arm of the state, army was primarily made of peasants. Russian monarchs regarded Russian population was not fit for any political activities similar to their Western counterparts. The nature of Russian peasant was characterized as service and loyalty to tsars and their unwavering belief in Russian Orthodox Church. Even, Peter the Great wanted only to transform the appearances of upper classes and was not very strict with the lower classes of provinces and rural areas. After his tour to England, Peter reached in a conclusion that the political reforms of England were not applicable in Russia, primarily due to the nature of people. I also agree with the Peter's argument.

Russian monarchs continued to trust their peasants well into early 20th century even after some peasant revolts. Monarchs expected the support of their peasants against the recalcitrant elements of the cities. Nicholas – I also invented a new tradition for promoting the bond between the Russian monarchs and their subjects. His triple bow to his subjects during his coronation ceremony marked the beginning of a new tradition. His successors also followed the same. Later, this was regarded as an 'old Russian tradition.'²¹ Alexander II abolished serfdom and calculated that it may divert rural tensions.

Russian Monarchy and Russification

¹⁸ Ibid.139.

¹⁹ Ibid.140.

²⁰ L. G. Zakharova and L.I. Tiutiunnik, eds., 1857–1861: *perepiska Imperatora Aleksandra II s Velikim Kniazem Konstantinom Nikolaevichem i dnevnik Velikogo Kniazia Konstantina Nikolaevicha* Moscow: TERRA, 1994, pp. 65-66.

²¹ Richard Wortman, *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule: Collected Articles*, p.143.

The 19th century witnessed the expansion of Russian Empire into Caucasus and Central Asia. Russian Empire also annexed parts of Poland and Finland into its territory. The presence of large number of clearly different and hostile people in their Empire forced monarchs to depend more on their 'Russianness' to legitimize their rule. The promotion of Russian Orthodoxy and Russification of newly conquered regions were two methods adopted for that. For example, Warsaw itself saw presence of around 20 Russian Orthodox Churches which were built on the model of traditional Byzantine – Moscow style. It reminded rebellious Poles about the superiority of Russian Tsar and their land at his mercy. Similarly, non – Russian cities such as Riga and Tashkent also witnessed the construction of new Orthodox Churches.²²

The Russian state also promoted Russian language and Russian settlement in the newly conquered regions. Russifications of elites were widely encouraged in non – Russian regions. Ukrainian was regarded as a dialect of Russian. The non – Russian elites were supposed to imitate the styles of Europeanized Russian elites. In 1892, the eminent explorer- geographer Petr Semenov described Russian mission in east as "part of the great colonizing movement of the European race"²³ comparable to the colonization activities of the other European powers such as Spain, France and England. Similarly, newly appointed Governor – General of Trans-Caspia, A.N Kuropatkin rearranged a reception committee for him in Ashkabad due to the lack of Russians in it.²⁴

Become Western

If Peter the Great's models were absolutist monarchs of Western Europe then the Later Romanovs were influenced by the Pre – Petrine rulers of 17th century Russia. For example, Nicholas-II adored Alexei Mikhailovich of 17th century. For Peter change was inevitable since his Western exposure made him to believe that Russian elites were still culturally backward and unsophisticated. 'Catching up with the West' was keyword for Peter. I believe that to an extent wars in the western front with Sweden and Poland forced Peter to promote a radical transformation of his state.

During their European tour, Peter and his embassies clearly noticed that the major difference between them and their western counterparts in the way they behaved and in the way they dressed. Thus, Peter promoted 'German dresses' in favor of Russian tunic for his officers. He also preferred shaved faces over traditional bearded look of Russians. Russian noble women were forced out of seclusion and encouraged to imitate Western Fashions. Peter also promoted Western sciences and invited western experts to train Russians in various fields. The changes were also visible in architecture and sculpture too. The Baroque style and themes became popular in highly conservative Moscow.

Peter's successors also followed the same tradition. They all learnt French, German and later English. Post – Petrine Russian princesses' upbringing were not very different from their western counterparts. Catherine – II were heavily influenced by the enlightenment era of France. Catherine was close to French philosophes such as Voltaire, Diderot and Montesquieu. She had a more humanitarian approach towards her subjects. However, Catherine also believed in the autocratic power of Russian rulers, it had a more humane face than the brutal ways of Peter.

²² Ibid.272 & 273.

²³ Ibid.275.

²⁴ Ibid.274.

Alexander – I also had his grandmother’s (Catherine – II) temperament and style.²⁵ However, his father Paul – I and younger brother Nicholas – I had more stern and militaristic ways. Both of them enjoyed ‘Prussian style’ military parades than anything else. Nicholas – I was disciplinarian and had close bonding with the soldiers. Or, in other words, for him duty to Fatherland was important than anything else. Alexander – II was relatively soft in his temperament.

Return to Rus

Alexander – II’s murder was real shock to the Romanovs. It reflected in the behavior of the Later Romanovs. We can see that Catherine – II’s “Charter to the Nobility” freed nobles from the tsars.²⁶ Or, in other words, nobles were no more Tsar’s slaves. Noble’s right over their land became hereditary and at the same time the noble estate westernized to an extent through the western liberal education. These modernization efforts inaugurated by Peter in early 18th century started to backfire in the 19th century. Russian monarchs were not ready to make any political compromises as envisaged by their westernized young nobles. The same class also led Decembrist coup of 1825 and created further troubles in later decades. Moreover, annexation of Poland and Finland awarded a large number of Jews, Poles and Finns to the Russian Empire. These new groups were politically active than the ordinary Russian peasants and towns people. Again, they were not sharing anything in common with the oppressive Russian Tsar.

Later Romanovs especially Alexander – III and Nicholas – II countered the above mentioned problems with the help of the so called ‘true Russian people’ primarily peasants and soldiers. Later Romanovs were also influenced by the ideas of Slavophiles who opposed the mindless westernization of the Russian Empire. Moreover, Alexander – III’s huge thick built with rough manly features made him most Russian of Russians. Besides his uncouth ways, straightforwardness and ruthlessness reminded Russians to him of *bogaytri* of Russian folk saga. He appeared with full beard (first Russian ruler since 17th century) and new Russian style uniforms and large Russian jackboots. He openly criticized westernization and confirmed his spiritual union with the Russian people.²⁷

Nicholas II also followed his father’s footsteps. He imagined himself as a pre – Petrine autocratic Tsar who ruled over his people with full authority. He strongly believed in god and even considered his right to rule derived from god which made him above everyone else including Orthodox Church. Nicholas reassured the pre eminence of Russians in the Empire. Nicholas – II insisted that the *Duma* created for the strengthening of the Russian state, so it should be Russian in spirit too.²⁸ Or, in other words, Tsar questioned the validity of non – Russians to make laws regards to Russian matters in a Russian State. Nicholas – II also doubted the role of non – Russian ethnicities such as Jews, Poles and Finns in the anti – monarchical activities. In 1905, Nicholas wrote to his mother that “nine – tenths of the troublemakers are Jews.”²⁹ Nicholas – II also regarded the bonding between him and his peasants were more spiritual than the attraction of opposites.

²⁵ See M.M Safonov, *Problema reform v pravitel’svennoi politike Rossi na rubezhe XVIII i XIX vv*, Leningrad: Nauka, 1988, pp : 43, 128.

²⁶ See Lindsey Hughes, *The Romanovs: Ruling Russia, 1613 – 1917*, p: 118.

²⁷ Richard Wortman, “The representation of dynasty and “fundamental laws” in the evolution of Russian Monarchy,” *Kritika*, Vol.13, No.2, Spring 2012, p.298.

²⁸ Richard Wortman, *Russian Monarchy: Representation and Rule: Collected Articles*, p.277.

²⁹ Ibid.211.

Russian Imperial Family and Empresses

Russian Empresses were always regarded as true model for the imperial family and other higher classes. They were the first women of the Empire and mothers of future Emperors. Proper behavior and etiquette expected from them and their children. Traditionally, Russian Tsars married from their own noble families. However, this tradition changed after the transformation period of Peter the Great. Then onwards, Russian royals started to marry with the royal families of Western Europe especially with the houses of various German Principalities.

Foreign Princesses were usually young and timid and were considered not fit for raising future emperors. Usually, robust peasant women from rural areas nursed the young Romanovs. Besides, young princes were kept away from their mothers due to suspicion. For example, Paul – I was under the tutelage of Empress Elizabeth, his grandmother. Similarly, both Alexander – I and Konstantin were under the guidance of Empress Catherine – II, their grandmother. One of the reasons for this inhuman activity was due to the uncertainty and suspicion as part of Peter’s law of succession. It created rift between ruling emperor and his first – born son.

Paul’s law of succession changed this scenario. It guaranteed the succession of eldest male heir. Hence, in the nineteenth century Russian empresses had a better relation with their children. Sanctity of family and high role of parent were the key words in the 19th century Europe. There were apt models such as Queen Louise and King Frederick William III of Prussia, Emperor Franz Joseph, and Queen Victoria of England. German princesses brought these family values based on high morals into Russia. Russian Emperors imitated the middle class life of their western counterparts. For example, Nicholas-I even built an English style Cottage for his extended family where he led the life of an English country gentleman.

Due to their protestant upbringing, German princesses were also active in Russia with various services. Empress Alexandra, the consort of Nicholas – II, was an ideal example for that. Moreover newlywed princesses converted into Orthodox Christianity and tried their best to emulate Russian values.

The extended imperial family also played a major role in the nineteenth century Russia. Nicholas – I’s coronation ceremony projected the unity of royal family especially between emperor and his brothers. Grand Dukes also played a major role in the administration of their state. The other major development of 19th century was the strong bonding and trust between the ruling emperor and his heir. For example, Alexander – II stood with his father Nicholas – I on the time of the Decembrist coup. This family unity continued under Later Romanovs. Under Nicholas – II, his uncles played a major role in the running of the state. From my point of view, Paul’s law of succession and imperial family’s treatment of Empire as their patrimony helped the further bonding between the various members of the family. We can see similar practices in various kingdoms of the oil rich Middle Eastern states.

Moscow or St.Petersburg

The city of Moscow had a major role in the formation of modern Russian identity. The Russian Empire developed from the small principality of *Moskva*, later it became Capital for the Russian Tsars. It continued for long time until Peter the Great shifted his capital to further north on the shores of River Neva. The new city was called St.Petersburg. It represented ‘New Russia’, which was thoroughly European in appearance and taste. Due to Peter’s pressure citizens of the new capital imitated foreigners. However, coronation of new emperor still took place in Moscow. All emperors since Peter the Great preferred to live in St. Petersburg but Moscow remained as true Russian in spirit.

Slavophiles such as Constantine Aksakov declared, “Moscow is the true capital of Russia” and “St. Petersburg is only residence of the emperor.” Or, in other words, Russia’s soul lies in Moscow and St. Petersburg is totally an alien space. Emperor Alexander II’s murder on daylight reassured this belief. Peter’s dream project became a nightmare for Later Romanovs. They even tried to ‘Muscovising St. Petersburg’ through the construction of Russian model Churches in the city. Later developments show us that it was not fully successful.

Conclusion

The end of the Communist rule revived the legacy of the Romanovs of Russia. Russian monarchs including Peter – I was regarded as cruel in contemporary western standards. Thus, Western scholars argued that Russian rulers inherited these ‘non – European’ characters from their Tatar overlords. However, the study of the Russian monarchy of the 18th and 19th century rightly placed it in European political geography. The Russian monarchs regarded themselves as Europeans and wanted to treat them as such. Again, the Russian Romanovs were very active in contemporary marriage politics of Europe. I consider, the Russian Romanovs as a European dynasty with its own special characteristics. At the same time, Russian monarchs had influences from East, primarily due to the geographic position of their state.

It is true that the Russian monarchs adopted lots of traditions from the German principalities. They were also influenced by the traditions of the French Kingdom. Compared to the principalities of the Western Europe, the Russian monarchical traditions were weaker, so borrowing was inevitable. However, the Russian monarchs kept their own unique traditions; unlimited power was prime among it. It made the Russian monarchy inflexible in comparison with their western counterparts. Again, in the Russian system personality of emperor was much more important. The Russian Emperor was ideally a commander who led their armies into war. He was also super human and demi-god. Personalities such as Nicholas – II found it hard to rise up to this expectation. Various myths, ceremonies and traditions justified the superiority of tsar over his subjects. Another important thing that all of them were pious Orthodox Christians and were loyal to the cause of Russia even though by blood most of them were far more German than Russian. Russian Romanovs remained as one of the major dynasties of their time until their destruction in the second decade of the twentieth century.

Romanovs and their rich imperial traditions inspire Russians even today. I strongly believe that the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin is highly inspired by the autocratic traditions and foreign policies of the Russian Romanovs.

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