



THE COSSACK HETMAN:  
IVAN MAZEPA IN HISTORY  
AND LEGEND FROM PETER  
TO PUSHKIN

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The people hate him, women loved him,  
the Church Anathemizes him,  
poets absolve him.  
Unless the world greatly alters,  
I fear the women and the poets  
will always have the last word.  
Viscount E. Melchoir de Vogüé, c. 1885.

IVAN MAZEPA (1639–1709) is one of the most important and controversial figures in Ukrainian Cossack history. More recognizable as “Mazeppa” with a double “p” to his western contemporaries and, later on, to Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, and other west European creators and connoisseurs of Romantic era literature, art, and music, this imposing, indeed, even legendary personality dominated the political and cultural landscape of his Ukrainian homeland for about twenty years. During that time, he reigned as Commander-in-Chief or “Hetman of the Zaporozhian Army”; he was ruler of the autonomous Cossack state in eastern or Left Bank Ukraine, which was organized along military

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lines.<sup>1</sup> Historians have dubbed this state “the Hetmanate” and to the end of Mazepa’s rule it exercised an important influence upon the more sovereign polities that surrounded it: the rapidly growing Tsardom of Muscovy, the still vast Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the numerous vassal Ottoman Turkish territories to its south, especially Moldavia and the Crimean Khanate.

For a long time, to outsiders, Hetman Mazepa seemed to be a loyal vassal of Moscow. But the Ukrainian Cossacks and their Hetmans were never known for their unflinching loyalty to the Russian Tsar. In the time of Peter the Great (r. 1689–1725), Mazepa deserted Moscow for the sake of an alliance with the Swedish King Charles XII (r. 1697–1718). After successfully deposing his enemy, the Polish king Augustus the Strong (1670–1733), and installing in his place his own protégé Stanisław Leszczyński (1677–1766), Charles XII invaded Russian territories during the course of this Great Northern War (1700–1721). Peter defeated Charles at the famous Battle of Poltava (1709), “one of the decisive battles of the Western world,” according to the distinguished military historian J. F. C. Fuller, and the Swedish king and Mazepa had to flee into exile in the Ottoman dominions to the south.<sup>2</sup> But the fact that Mazepa, who had for so long seemed to represent Muscovite interests in Ukraine, dared to revolt against the towering figure of Peter the Great, came to completely dominate historical debate about the Hetman, who, in his own time, had been well-known for other things, in particular, his political acumen, wide education, patronage of the arts, and international connections.<sup>3</sup> Among historians, Russophiles condemn him as a

1. For the general background, see Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, fourth ed., Toronto: U. of Toronto P., 2009, 160ff., and Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples*, second ed., Toronto: U. of Toronto P., 2010, 258–63. For synthetic treatments of Mazepa in English, see Clarence A. Manning, *Hetman of Ukraine: Ivan Mazepa*, New York: Bookman Associates, 1957, which is a somewhat romanticized account, and more briefly, L. R. Lewitter, “Mazeppa,” *History Today* 9, 1957, 590–96; Alexander Sydorenko, “Ivan Stepanovych Mazepa, c. 1632–1709,” in *Great Leaders, Great Tyrants? Contemporary Views of World Rulers Who Made History*, ed. Arnold Blumberg, Westport, CT-London: Greenwood, 1995, 184–90; and “Mazepa, Ivan,” in *Historical Dictionary of Ukraine*, second ed., eds Ivan Katchanovski, Zenon Kohut, et al., Lanham-Toronto-Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2013, 361–3.
2. J.F.C. Fuller, *Decisive Battles of the Western World*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1954–56, vol. 2, 161–86.
3. For a bibliography which lists most titles available on Mazepa in English, see Andrew Gregorovich, *Cossack Bibliography*, Toronto: Forum, 2008. For a more extensive bibliography of works in Slavic as well as western languages, see Olha Kovalevska, *Mazepiana: Materiialy do bibliohrafi (1688–2009)*, Kyiv: Tempora, 2009, which is indexed with an impressive 2039 entries. For historiographical accounts in Ukrainian, see Dmytro Doroshenko, “Mazepa v istorychnii literaturi i v zhytti,” in *Mazepa: Zbirnyk*, 2 vols., Warsaw: Ukrainskyi naukovyi instytut, 1938, I, 3–34, and Volodymyr Kravchenko, “Ivan

traitor to the Tsar, while Ukrainophiles praise his attempt at Ukrainian freedom. The debate has continued over the course of the last three centuries and still continues today. This article outlines the formative stages of that debate, while integrating politics and history into a single narrative. It additionally addresses the image of the Hetman in European literature, art, and music, and notes how historians influenced this very controversial personality and were affected by this portrayal. It may nonetheless be argued that poets and painters have had a more profound influence upon popular ideas about Mazepa, including those about historical “reality,” than the historians.

The denunciation of Mazepa as “traitor” to Russia and the Tsar goes back very far indeed, in fact to the time immediately before the Battle of Poltava. The tone and major motifs were set by the impetuous Tsar Peter himself who trusted Mazepa and felt personally betrayed by his defection. Peter at first refused to believe that the Cossack hetman had gone over to the Swedes, for the Ukrainian ruler had remained faithful to him throughout many dangers including the very serious revolt of the Don Cossack leader, Kondratii Bulavin (c.1660–1708). When Peter was finally convinced that Mazepa had switched sides, his fury knew no bounds. He ordered Mazepa’s capital at Baturyn razed to the ground and its inhabitants punished (in fact they were massacred) and he had the hetman deposed, hanged in effigy, and formally anathematized by the Russian-Orthodox Church. Throughout the history of the Russian Empire, this anathema was solemnly repeated in all Russian churches during the Lenten season and was repeated by at least one Orthodox church (the ultra-conservative Russian-Orthodox church in exile) as late as 1959. Because this curse (“ungrateful and wicked servant . . . insane Judas . . . deceiver Mazepa!”) has never been officially lifted, it still exercises an influence upon how some Russians, especially the more conservative and religious, and some Ukrainians view the controversial hetman.<sup>4</sup> Not content with these moves, in his general propaganda of that time, Peter even proclaimed that Mazepa wished to return Ukraine to the rule of Catholic Poland,

Mazepa v ukrainskii istorichnii literaturi XVIII-pershoi chetveti XIX st.” in *Mazepa e suo tempo: Storia Cultura Società/Mazepa and his Time: History Culture Society*, ed. Giovanna Siedona, Alessandria: Orso, 2004, 257–78. Also see the beautifully illustrated two-volume collection of articles on Mazepa titled *Hetman*, eds Olha Kovalevska *et al.*, Kyiv: Tempora, 2009, the second volume of which contains much information on historiography and historians as well as art and artists.

4. For an English translation of the full text of the liturgy cursing Mazepa, see Nadieszda Kisenko, “The Battle of Poltava in Imperial Liturgy,” in *Poltava: The Battle and the Myth*, ed. Serhii Plokhly, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2012, 226–69 (esp. 253).

which had lost ascendancy over this land some years before. He wanted, said Peter, to destroy Orthodoxy by restoring the Church Union with Rome.<sup>5</sup>

These themes were taken up by the first Russian and Ukrainian historians to examine the life and times of the “great” tsar, as he came to be called after his victory at Poltava. Ukrainian churchmen in Russian service were particularly assiduous in repeating them. Thus the prominent ecclesiastic Teofan Prokopovych (1681–1736), who was the most eloquent preacher of his day and who had earlier praised Mazepa in his flowery drama-panegyric titled *Vladimir*, later turned completely against him in his *Istoriia imperatora Petra Velykogo* (*History of the Emperor Peter the Great*).<sup>6</sup> In this latter work, which was an equally flowery panegyric to Mazepa’s nemesis, Peter the Great, Prokopovych wrote that “Mazepa was completely devoted to the [hated] Poles to the depth of his soul and just as filled with hatred for the Russians, but that no one could see this, because he always seemed to show them great respect, love, and good will.”<sup>7</sup> Prokopovych, perhaps over-anxious to prove his loyalty to Peter’s Muscovy, could not bring himself to admit that the Hetman had actually worked towards Ukrainian independence, but rather, echoing Peter, he explained: “[Mazepa], intending to unite once again [Ukraine or] Little Russia with Poland, and knowing how the inhabitants of this land disliked the Poles for introducing [the Church] Union among them, . . . displayed a false enthusiasm for Orthodoxy and built

5. Kisenko writes that “Peter’s arguments were primarily religious, not ethnic: in using them he was implicitly acknowledging that, rather than using the arguments of belonging to a single nation, he had to emphasize the bonds of shared faith,” see Kisenko, “Battle of Poltava,” 233. Also see Manning, *Hetman of Ukraine*, 186–7, a pro-Ukrainian source, and Sergei Solovev, *History of Russia*, vol. XXVIII, tr. Lindsey Hughes, Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International, 2007, 60, a Russian source, which differ in tone from each other. Additionally, see Serhii Pavlenko, *Ivan Mazepa*, Kyiv: Alternatyvy, 2003, 387.
6. Feofan Prokopovich [Teofan Prokopovych], “Vladimir: Tragedokomediiia,” in *Sochimeniia*, ed. I.P. Eremin, Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatelstvo Akademiia Nauk SSR, 1961, 149–206.
7. Teofan Prokopovych, *Istoriia imperatora Petra Velykogo ot rozhdeniia ego do Poltavskoi batalii* (1788) was not available to me in the original, but this and the following passage in this paragraph are quoted in full in the classic work (first published in 1822) by Dmytro Bantysh-Kamensky, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, Kyiv: Chas, 1993, 389, and are analyzed in great detail in Gary Marker, “Casting Mazepa’s Legacy: Pylyp Orlyk and Feofan Prokopovich,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 1–2, 2010, 110–33. Prokopovych delivered a flowery funeral oration for Peter. For excerpts from this and other of his works in English, see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *The Image of Peter the Great in Russian History and Thought*, New York-Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985, 10–17. Also see, Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, “Poltava: A Turning Point in the History of Preaching,” in *Poltava*, ed. Plokyh, 204–26 (esp. 215), where this author observed that Prokopovych’s “hatred directed at the Hetman seems to have no limits.”

stone churches, and supported various churches and monasteries with rich vessels and utensils. Deceiving the pious Little Russians, he escaped all suspicion of unfaithfulness.”<sup>8</sup>

Prokopovych was a sycophantic careerist who had migrated from Ukraine to Muscovy to attain high office. Opinion in the Hetmanate, where the well-educated and cosmopolitan Cossack ruler’s benefactions and patronage of the arts were very well-known, remained somewhat different. Unsurprisingly, the first Ukrainian historians living under Russian rule who addressed the Mazepa issue, and were in fact vitally interested in it, only dared to do so in the most careful and guarded terms. In the aftermath of Mazepa’s unsuccessful revolt, and the extensive Russian repressions which followed, the “Cossack chroniclers,” as they are known to history, especially Hryhory Hrabianka and Samiilo Velychko, seemed to be almost embarrassed to mention Mazepa’s name, though they both obviously sympathized with the autonomous strivings which the Hetman represented. Thus, Hrabianka accused him of having a certain “cunning.”<sup>9</sup> Velychko suggested that Mazepa had been “Machiavellian” and “betrayed” Peter, although allowing himself to criticize the Tsar for going back on his guarantees of respecting traditional Ukrainian rights and liberties given at the time of Poltava (when the Muscovite ruler was quite hard-pressed) and of admitting Mazepa’s eloquence and his “wisdom and ability in all business affairs.”<sup>10</sup>

This caution, hesitation, and ambivalence was, however, entirely missing outside the Russian Empire where there was no “reign of terror” and where the situation was completely different. Although early reports on Mazepa’s revolt in Germany, and especially in Saxony, were generally sympathetic to Peter and hostile to Mazepa (since Augustus the Strong was both Elector of Saxony and King of Poland-Lithuania), the further the writer was removed from the conflict, the more neutral the reports became. Thus in England or in Colonial

8. Bantysh-Kamensky, *Istoriia*, 389.

9. See *Litopys hadiatskoho polkovnyka Hryhoriia Hrabianky*, tr. into modern Ukrainian by R. H. Ivanchenko, Kyiv: Znannia, 1992, 166–75.

10. Samiilo Velychko, *Litopys*, tr. into modern Ukrainian by Valerii Shevchuk, Kyiv: Dnipro, 1991, vol. 2, 170, and quoted in part in Kravchenko, “Ivan Mazepa,” 265. Velychko’s chronicle, which was written shortly after Peter’s death, only goes to the year 1700 and thus is missing the chapters dealing with Poltava and most of the Great Northern War. It is a great puzzle to historians how he would have treated the matter of Mazepa’s defection to the Swedes and these chapters may have been removed from the manuscript specifically because of what he said about it.

American news reports on Mazepa were fairly neutral, even if not always very accurate.<sup>11</sup>

This phenomenon is most clearly revealed in the writings of one of the most prolific English journalists of the time, Daniel Defoe (1659?–1731), who was one of the first European observers to actually pen two complete books on the then sensational conflict between Charles XII and Peter the Great. In the second of these books, the one devoted primarily to Peter, Defoe directly addressed the issue of Mazepa's revolt, calling Mazepa a traitor to the Tsar albeit acknowledging that the Cossack chief was no simple general merely switching sides at a particularly dangerous moment; Defoe understood that the hetman ruled over a polity that was almost an allied kingdom and that Mazepa's power was much greater than that of King Augustus of Poland:

After the taking of this Town [of Baturyn] which was in sight of the whole Swedish Army, the River De[s]na only parting them, over which however, the Swedes had no bridge, I say, after this, the Russian General suppress'd entirely the Dissatisfaction of the Cossacks, having proclaim'd Mazeppa a Traytor, and caused him to be hang'd in Effigie, made the whole Body of Cossacks meet, and choose another Chief or General, which was done with the loud Acclamations of the People, so the Czar was in some degree even with the King of Sweden, for if he [that is, Charles] deposed one King [that is, Augustus], the Czar of Muscovy now deposed another, for tho Mazeppa was not a King in Title, he was equal to a King in Power, and in every way Equal if not superior to King Augustus in the divided Circumstances, in which his Power stood, even at the best of it.<sup>12</sup>

Defoe therefore compared the authority of the Hetman of the Zaporozhian Army (as Mazepa was formally titled at that time) with the King of Poland and ruler of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was still one of the great states of eastern Europe, despite its recent misfortunes.

11. Dmytro Doroshenko [Doroshenko], *Die Ukraine und Deutschland: Neun Jahrhunderte Deutsch-Ukrainischer Beziehungen*, Munich: Ukrainische Freie Universität, 1994, 36–8 [original: Leipzig, 1941]; T. Mackiw, "Mazepa in the Light of Contemporary English and American Sources," *Ukrainian Quarterly*, 4, 1959, 346–62; T. Mackiw, "Reports of Mazepa in Colonial America," *New Review* 1, Toronto, 1966, 14–21; Dmytro Nalyvaiko, *Ochyma zakhodu: Retseptsiia Ukrainy v zakhidnii levropi XI-XVIII st.*, Kyiv: Osnova, 1998, 368–419 [available at: <http://www.izbornyk.org.ua>, accessed 31 May 2012].
12. Daniel Defoe, *A True Authentick and Impartial History of the Life and Glorious Actions of the Czar of Muscovy: From his Birth to his Death*, London: A. Bettesworth et al., 1725, 207–8.

It was only a few years after Defoe published his books on Charles and Peter that another prominent writer turned to this same theme. The famous French *philosophe* Voltaire had spent some time in England in the 1720s, where he may have read or heard about some of Defoe's writings on Charles and Peter. Though Voltaire does not credit Defoe anywhere in his writings on either Charles or Peter, and we do not know to what extent, if any, he was influenced by the English writer, it is remarkable that he, too, penned a book on each of them, first on Charles in the early 1730s, then on Peter, some thirty years later. It is meanwhile significant that Voltaire was writing for the most part in France, for French opinion was sympathetic to Charles and hostile to Peter and Augustus. Thus, when Charles was defeated at Poltava and many pro-Swedish Polish and Ukrainian refugees were forced into exile, several of them ended up in France where the French *philosophe* interviewed or corresponded with some of them. Thus Voltaire's view of Mazepa and Cossack Ukraine differed considerably from that dominant in the Russian Empire and its dependencies. Of Mazepa, Voltaire wrote that he was "a courageous, enterprising man, tirelessly industrious although advanced in years," who under very difficult circumstances "remained faithful to his new ally," while Ukraine was a fertile land "located between Little Tatory [that is, the Crimea], Poland, and Muscovy," which

. . . has always aspired to be free [*L'Ukraine a toujours aspiré à être libre*]; but surrounded as she is by Muscovy, the states of the Grand Seignior [of Turkey], and Poland, she has been obliged to seek a protector, and consequently a master, in one of these three nations. First of all, she placed herself under the tutelage of Poland, which treated her too much like a dependency; then she gave herself to the Muscovite, who did his best to enslave her. To begin with, the Ukrainians enjoyed the privilege of electing a prince known as their general [. . . *un prince sous le nom de général*]; but they were soon stripped of that right and their general was appointed by the Court of Moscow.<sup>13</sup>

Voltaire then went on to describe a meeting between Peter and Mazepa in which a drunken Peter told the hetman that the Ukrainian Cossacks should be brought under tighter Muscovite control, which Mazepa resisted by saying that the Cossacks were too used to liberty to submit to this; whereupon Peter

13. Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII, roi de Suède*, in his *Oeuvres historiques*, ed. René Pomeau, Paris: Gallimard, 1957, 153. This translation is adapted from Voltaire, *Lion of the North: Charles XII of Sweden*, trans. M.F.O. Jenkins, Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1981, 121.

threatened to have Mazepa impaled. After this meeting, says Voltaire, Mazepa returned to Ukraine determined to break away from Moscow and establish an independent Ukrainian-Cossack state.<sup>14</sup>

In his second book treating of Ukraine, which was actually commissioned by Peter's daughter, the Tsarina Elizabeth (r. 1741–62), Voltaire was much more circumspect in his treatment of these themes, as I have argued elsewhere: He admitted that Mazepa was a "traitor" to the Tsar and gone was all talk of a Ukraine which always wanted to be free.<sup>15</sup> But in revisions to his earlier book on Charles done about this same time, Voltaire made no changes to his portrait of Mazepa or Ukraine's desire for freedom, and it was this book, not the one on Russia, which remained more popular with the European reading public. As a result, Voltaire's words, which, unlike the official Russian interpretation of Mazepa's motives, pointed to the political and not just the personal, were to have a lasting impact upon historians writing across the next three centuries, and they still have a certain resonance today.

But Mazepa as the elderly and experienced champion of Ukrainian liberty was not the only image that Voltaire gave the European public. He also laid a firm foundation for a second image, one which may, however, have had much less basis in fact: that of the youthful Mazepa as a romantic and tragic hero. In the same book on Charles XII, Voltaire tells the story of how, when Mazepa was a young page at the court of Jan II Kazimierz, the former king of Poland (r. 1648–68) in whose reign the Ukrainian Cossacks first shook themselves free of Polish rule, the future hetman suffered a most extraordinary indignity:

As a youth, he was caught having an affair with the wife of a Polish nobleman; the husband had him bound stark naked on the back of a wild horse and sent him off in that condition. The horse, which was from Ukraine, returned home, taking with it Mazepa, who was half-dead of exhaustion and hunger. Some peasants rescued him; he stayed among them for a long while and distinguished himself in several raids against the Tatars. His superior knowledge caused him to be greatly revered by the Cossacks, and his reputation, growing from day to day, obliged the Tsar to make him Prince of Ukraine.<sup>16</sup>

14. Ibid.

15. See T. Prymak, "Voltaire on Mazepa and Early Eighteenth Century Ukraine," *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* 2, 2012, 259–83.

16. Voltaire, *L'histoire de Charles XII*, ed. Pomeau, 153; Voltaire, *Lion*, 122.

Voltaire seems to have gotten this story from the Polish émigré Stanisław Poniatowski (1677–1766), who in turn had picked it up directly or indirectly from the memoirs of Jan Chryzostom Pasek (1636–1701), a Polish rival of Mazepa at the court of King Jan II, where Pasek served in a similar capacity as the young Mazepa.<sup>17</sup> Although there may have been a grain of truth to it, Pasek may have simply invented the story of Mazepa's humiliating ride in revenge for an insult or offence which he believed that the future hetman had delivered to him, for Mazepa had reported Pasek's participation in a potential revolt ("confederation") against the king. At any rate, the story of Mazepa's wild ride into Ukraine tied to the back of a frightened horse, like the story of Cossack Ukraine's try for freedom, was popularized by Voltaire's widely read book on Charles; it was to resurface in future accounts about the hetman, that is, in purely historical accounts and, eventually, in poetry and other art forms as well.

Voltaire had been kind to Mazepa in his biography of Charles XII, but, given his philosophical approach to history, which included some pacifist sympathies, he was at the same time quite critical of the young and warlike king for his ambitious military exploits and ultimate failure. This criticism was resented by some Swedes who generally admired their king: After all, the young monarch, it seemed, had almost all of central and northern Europe ranged against him, and it was not Sweden that had started the Great Northern War in 1700. In particular, Charles's former chaplain, J. A. Nordberg, who had accompanied the king through Poland and Ukraine, was quite piqued by Voltaire's rather glib judgments.<sup>18</sup> He soon took up his pen in defence of his former monarch and, in the 1740s, published a great four-volume biography of Charles, which was filled with numerous original documents and exposed many of Voltaire's errors. It is notable, however, that Nordberg never criticizes Voltaire's portrait of Mazepa. In fact, he seemed to be in complete accord with Voltaire's view of a Cossack Ukraine yearning for freedom from the Muscovite yoke. Nordberg only added a few new details to Voltaire's account. These were, however, quite important. They included that fact that, after Poltava, Mazepa had led Charles to safety in Moldavia and died there shortly afterwards from exhaustion. Nordberg also

17. Jan Chryzostom z Goslawic Pasek, *Pamiętniki*, ed. Jan Czubek, Cracow: PAU, 1929, 316–18; translated as Jan Chryzostom Pasek, *Memoirs of the Polish Baroque: The Writings of Jan Chryzostom Pasek, A squire of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania*, trans. Catherine S. Leach, Berkeley, CA: U. of California P., 1976, esp. 155–6. On Pasek more generally, see Czesław Miłosz, *History of Polish Literature*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: U. of California P., 1983, 145–7.

18. See J.A. Nordberg, *Histoire de Charles XII, roi de Suède*, 4 vols., La Haye: J-M Husson, 1742–48.

mentioned the election of Mazepa's close aide, Pylyp [Philip] Orlik (1672–1742), as Mazepa's successor as "hetman-in-exile" and his subsequent campaign against the Russians.<sup>19</sup>

Nordberg's general position was echoed, to a degree, in the greatest German language general encyclopedia of the time. That important work was edited by Johann Heinrich Zedler (1706–1751), who noted in his article on "Mazeppa" that after twenty-four long years in Russian service, the hetman, who was "a Polish nobleman born in Ukraine . . . [,] crossed over to the king of Sweden in hope of becoming a sovereign king of the Cossacks" ["*trat . . . , aus Hoffnung ein souverainer König über die Cosacken zu werden, . . . zu dem König von Schweden . . . über*"].<sup>20</sup>

In sum, the initial historians of Russia and Ukraine were either hostile toward Mazepa, usually concentrating upon the hetman's supposed character flaws (in the case of the former), or regarded him with muted ambivalence (in the case of the latter). By contrast, the first French and Swedish historians, and others influenced by them, were generally sympathetic, clearly seeing predominantly political rather than personal motives behind his actions.

The reticence of Ukrainian historians in the Russian Empire to openly discuss Mazepa's motives for revolting against Muscovite rule continued for some time. For example, in the 1730s, a Cossack chronicle called the *Korotkyi opys Malorosii* (*A Short Description of Little Russia*) was composed which had a considerable influence on later historians.<sup>21</sup> A patriotic work which described the Cossack wars against the Poles and the Ottomans, its author also devoted much attention to the Great Northern War. Nevertheless, his treatment of Mazepa was terse and straightforward, stating simply that "in 1708, Mazepa betrayed His Majesty, the All-Russian Ruler, and joined the Swedish king."<sup>22</sup> In later times, the *Korotkyi opys Malorosii* was better known than its immediate predecessors such as the chronicle of Hrabianka (upon which it was largely based) and eventually came to be used by other important historians.

Throughout most of the latter half of the eighteenth century, the trends set earlier by the Cossack chroniclers and the *Korotkyi opys Malorosii* continued and Mazepa was generally treated negatively. Indeed, in their eagerness to prove

19. Nordberg, *Histoire*, vol. 2, 319, 339–40.

20. "Mazeppa," *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 19, Halle-Leipzig: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1732–54 [reprint: Graz, 1961, cols. 2464–5].

21. *Korotkyi opys Malorosii*, ed. A. Bovhyria, Kyiv: Stylos, 2012, 102.

22. *Ibid.*, 102.

their loyalty to Russia, the Ukrainian chroniclers of that time, such as Petro Symonovsky (1717–1809), whose 1765 work was only published in the 1840s, and Vasyl Ruban (1742–1795), whose work was published in Saint Petersburg in 1777, even exaggerated Mazepa’s Polish connections, and, somewhat like Voltaire before them, claimed he was not really Ukrainian at all but really of Polish gentry (*szlachta*) origin.<sup>23</sup> According to a recent historian of these times, Volodymyr Kravchenko, this view went beyond what most Russian historians of that time who wrote on Ukraine said of the Hetman.<sup>24</sup> In fact, Petro Symonovsky even attacked Mazepa personally and repeated almost down to the letter Voltaire’s story about Peter’s insult to Mazepa and his threat to reduce the Ukrainian Cossacks to the status of common “German-style” infantry, and Mazepa’s negative reply to this and his determination thereafter to turn against Moscow.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Symonovsky also seemed to believe that there were many Russian traitors of that time who were far worse than Mazepa, and he pointed out Mazepa’s excellent training at the Polish court, even following Voltaire in repeating the story of his unsuccessful love affair and wild ride to Ukraine tied to the back of a frightened horse. By contrast, Russian historians of that time paid little attention to Ukraine, or, like the German immigrant Gerhard Müller (1705–1783), later the official historiographer of the empire, discussed the Cossacks primarily from an imperial Russian viewpoint. Müller’s main interest was, in fact, Siberia, and not Ukraine.<sup>26</sup>

23. Kravchenko, “Ivan Mazepa,” 267–8, 273. Vasyl Ruban, *Kratkaia letopis Maloi Rossii s 1506 po 1776 god s iziavlenniem nastoiashchego obraza tamoshnego Getmanov Generalnykh starshin polkovnikov i ierarkhov*, Saint Petersburg, 1777, is a bibliographical rarity that was unavailable to me for this writing; P.I. Symonovsky, *Kratkoe opisanie o Kozatskom Malorossiiskom narode i o voennykh ego delakh*, Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1844, 119–59, available at: <http://www.Izbornyk.org.ua/symon/sym04.htm#page121>, accessed 23 May 2012. On Symonovsky more generally, see P.M. Sas, “Symonovsky, Petro Ivanovych,” *Entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy*, [hereafter EIU] vol. IX, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 2012, 560; on Ruban’s parallel work, see I.Ia. Dzyra, “Kratkaia letopis Maloi Rossii . . .,” *EIU*, 305–6, who states that Ruban painted Mazepa “in the very darkest colours.”

24. Kravchenko, “Ivan Mazepa,” 267–8, 273.

25. See Symonovsky, *Kratkoe opisanie*, 119–59; see as well Kravchenko, “Ivan Mazepa,” 267–8.

26. For a taste of Müller’s writings on Ukraine, see G.F. Miller [Müller], *Istoricheskaia sochineniia o Malorossii i Malorossianakh*, Moscow: Universitetskaia tipografiia, 1846, 96, available at: <http://www.izbornyk.org.ua>, accessed 23 May 2012; see as well J.L. Black, *G.F. Müller and the Imperial Russian Academy of Sciences, 1725–1783*, Kingston-Montréal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1986. Müller divided the Cossacks into two groups: Little-Russian and Don Cossacks, the first giving rise to the Zaporozhian and Sloboda Cossacks, and the second others, including the Volga, Terek, and Siberian Cossacks. Doroshenko says that he “misplaced” (“verlegt”) the origin of the Cossacks in the fourteenth century, at the time that Lithuania acquired Kiev (see Doroshenko, *Die Ukraine und Deutschland*, 61).

The next important contribution to Mazepa scholarship came with Alexander Rigel'man (1720–1789), another Russified German, who had spent most of his life in the Russian military posted to Ukraine and southern Russia. He eventually married a Ukrainian woman (a relative of Hetman Ivan Skoropadsky [1646–1722], Peter's choice as successor to Mazepa after the latter's defection). In retirement, Rigel'man settled on the Left Bank, where he wrote a lengthy history of the country.<sup>27</sup> Although he was generally sympathetic to Ukrainians and frequently referred to their country as "Ukraine" and not Little Russia, and to its inhabitants as "Ukrainians" and not Little Russians, Rigel'man remained loyal to the Russian Empire and ended his book with a long panegyric to Catherine the Great, who was empress at the time that he was writing. Thus, while he added many details to previous accounts of Mazepa and the Great Northern War and expressly stated that Peter ordered that Mazepa's followers be shown no mercy, he nevertheless painted a negative picture of the allegedly cunning Hetman and his supposed treason. Rigel'man's book circulated in manuscript throughout the late eighteenth century and was finally printed by the Ukrainian antiquarian, Osyp Bodiansky (1808–1817), in the 1840s.

Rigel'man had written a fairly detailed history of Ukraine, but his view was still very much the imperial-Russian one, demonstrated not only by his general position, but also by the fact that he wrote a volume on the Russian-speaking Cossacks of the Don who had no direct connection with Ukraine or Ukrainians.<sup>28</sup> Circulating only in manuscript for about half a century, his work on Ukraine was completely unknown outside the empire.<sup>29</sup>

West-Europeans did, however, get a taste of what the Ukrainian Cossack writers such as Ruban were producing through a translation of a selection of his writings published in Germany by A. F. Büsching (1724–93) and through one much more detailed book published in French in 1788, titled *Annales de la*

27. I have used O.I. Rihelman [Alexander Rigel'man], *Litopysna opovid pro Malu Rosiiu ta ii narod i Kozakiv uzahali*, eds P. M. Sas and V.O. Shcherbak, Kyiv: Lybid, 1994, see esp. *ibid.*, 524–31. On Rigel'man, see Oleksander Ohloblyn, *Liudy staroi Ukrainy ta insbi pratsi*, Ostroh-New York: UIT, 2000, 203–5; and Dmytro Doroshenko, "Survey of Ukrainian Historiography," *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the US* 5–6, 1957, 95–7.

28. See A.I. Rigel'man, *Istoriia ili poviestvovanie o donsikh kozakakh, otkol' i kogda oni nachalo svoe imieiut, i v kakoe vremia i iz kakikh liudei na Donu poselilis', kakiiakh byli diela i chiem proslavilis' i proch.*, Moscow: Universitetskaiia tipografiia, 1846.

29. Doroshenko says that his work on Ukraine was prepared for publication before the author died, but for some reason did not appear until sixty years later; see as well P.M. Sas, "Rihelman, Oleksandr Ivanovych," *EIU*, IX, 217–8.

*Petite-Russie ou histoire des Cosaques-Saporogues*.<sup>30</sup> It was written by Jean-Benoit Scherer (1741–1824), an Alsatian pedagogue and diplomat in Russian and then French service who had lived in Saint Petersburg for several years; while there, Scherer had acquainted himself with various manuscript sources for Ukrainian history, including the *Korotkyi opys Malorosii*. In his book, Scherer rendered a deeply sympathetic account of Ukrainian history concentrating on the Cossack era. His treatment of Mazepa was fairly neutral on the surface but for the first time acquainted the West-European public of that time with a relatively accurate general outline of the Hetman's career: his election as Hetman in 1687, his warm reception in Moscow in 1689 when Peter overthrew his half-sister Sophia and began to rule in his own right, and his conflicts with other Ukrainian Cossack leaders such as Palii and Petryk. Scherer also recounted Mazepa's successful expeditions against the Turks and Tatars in the 1690s, and his various operations against the Swedes and their Polish allies, including the pro-Swedish Polish king Stanisław Leszczyński, during the initial years of the Great Northern War. The Alsatian historian then turned to Mazepa's secret contacts with Charles, the denunciation of his secret plans by General Judge Kochubei and Colonel Iskra (which was unsuccessful), and his open defection to the Swedes in 1708. Scherer made particular note of Charles's negligence at allowing the Russians to destroy Baturyn, where Mazepa had gathered a great deal of provisions and war material, ostensibly, he says, for the use of the Swedes; Scherer claimed that Peter's efforts to turn the Ukrainian populace against the Swedes were very successful and he noted the Battle of Poltava and the flight of Charles and Mazepa to Bender in Moldavia. He also mentioned Orlyk's election as Hetman-in-Exile and his expedition into Right-Bank Ukraine where, with the support of the Tatars, in Scherer's own words, "he gave the [pro-Russian part of the] Ukrainian Cossacks much trouble."<sup>31</sup>

Although the second volume of Scherer's book was written in a cursive, annalistic style, devoid of analysis, it did make use of Ukrainian sources, much of

30. J.B. Scherer, *Annales de la petite Russie ou histoire des Cosaques-Saporogues et des cosaques de l'Ukraine*, 2 vols, Paris: Cuchet, 1788. On both Büsching's translation of Ruban, and on Scherer, see D. Dorošenko [Dmytro Doroshenko], "Schererovy 'Annales de la Petite Russie' a jejich místo v ukrajinské historiografii," in *Sborník věnovaný Jaroslavu Bidlovi*, Prague: A. Bečková, 1928, 87–94. Also on Scherer, see Doroshenko, *Die Ukraine und Deutschland*, 62–8.

31. "Il inquiéta beaucoup les Cosaques de l'Ukraine" (Scherer, *Annales*, 186). A Ukrainian translation of this work also exists: Zhan Benua Sherer, *Litopys Malorosii abo istoriia Kozakiv-Zaporozhtsiv ta Kozakiv Ukrainy abo Malorosii*, trans. V.V. Kopitov, Kyiv: Ukrainskyy pysmennyk, 1994; see *ibid.*, 274, on this point.

it being a simple paraphrase of the *Korotkyi opys Malorosii*, and gave the west European public its first relatively comprehensive picture of Mazepa's entire career. Most significantly, Scherer even clearly outlined the grievances of Mazepa and the Ukrainians against the Tsar, outlining Muscovite contempt for Ukrainian rights. Scherer stated that the Ukrainian Cossacks were upset with Moscow, among other things, by a head tax that Peter introduced to their country which again violated the privileges given them earlier by Peter's father, Tsar Alexis. "This was," he concluded, "the powerful reason why Charles XII's negotiations [with Mazepa] succeeded."<sup>32</sup>

In this way, it is plain that Scherer's book, though it did conventionally speak of the Hetman's alleged betrayal, did not portray him entirely as a turncoat or traitor but also as a defender of traditional Ukrainian rights. Moreover, it was the first work published in a West-European language to give a general history of Ukraine, even if it largely ignored the pre-Cossack periods of Kievan Rus' and the Lithuanian ascendancy. Scherer's two-volume history of Ukraine was, in fact, destined to have a profound effect upon the future writing of history in Ukraine itself.

In the early nineteenth century, however, there existed a manuscript that was to have an incalculably greater influence upon Ukrainian history writing than either Scherer or Rigel'man ever could. This was the famous *Istoriia Rusov* (*History of the Ruthenians*), which was of unknown authorship and which circulated widely in manuscript among the gentry of Left Bank Ukraine throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Like Rigel'man's work, this manuscript too was finally printed by Bodiansky in the 1840s.

On the surface, the attitude of the author of the *Istoriia Rusov* to Mazepa seems to be somewhat mixed. He gives Mazepa a "Polish" origin and nowhere directly attacks Peter. But he may only have done this to placate the potential Russian censor, for in quotes from Voltaire and from ostensible proclamations by Mazepa and Charles he gives a highly positive, indeed idealistic, account of the hetman and his actions. Mazepa's learning, military exploits, and "profound wisdom" are all praised and the flexibility and sophistication of his foreign policy

32. Scherer, *Annales*, I, 206: "Ce fut le puissant motif qui fit réussir les négociations de Charles XII [avec Mazepa]."

33. See Georgii Konisky (pseud.), *Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii*, Moscow: Universitetskaiia tipografiia, 1846 [photoreprint Kyiv: Dzvyn, 1991]. A paraphrasing French translation of this work exists: Élie Borschak [Ilko Borshchak], *La légende historique de l'Ukraine: Istoriia Rusov*, Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1949.

is outlined.<sup>34</sup> The anonymous author quoted at length a speech to the Cossack army at the river Desna, which Mazepa is said to have made. This speech may indeed have reflected the Hetman's policy of that time, though, like the speeches placed in the mouths of the Greeks and Romans by ancient historians, its delivery was probably partly or even wholly invented by the author himself. According to the *Istoriia Rusov*, Mazepa said that, with the approach of the Swedes, Cossack Ukraine stood "between two abysses" and had to choose the lesser evil: the ever-victorious Swedes who would give Ukraine back to the Poles if it opposed them, and the autocratic Tsar and his Muscovites whose oppression, violence, and tortures humiliated Ukraine and violated traditional Ukrainian rights and freedoms.<sup>35</sup> Mazepa supposedly then stated that he had met with the Swedish king and in a written document the king had promised to restore Ukrainian "freedom and independence."<sup>36</sup>

In a similar proclamation supposedly made by Charles, the author of the *Istoriia Rusov* again stressed the "slavery" which the Muscovite tsar had brought to Ukraine and, by contrast, Swedish offers to "restore" the country's freedom.<sup>37</sup> The *Istoriia Rusov* then stated that the Swedes had behaved well in Ukraine while the Muscovites, especially Peter's general Aleksandr Menshikov (1673–1729), scourged the country and tortured its inhabitants, even women and children, who perished in great numbers at Baturyn. On a different level, the *Istoriia Rusov* related that while some Cossacks continued to serve the tsar, Mazepa's followers were reluctant to oppose them so as to avoid fighting with their former colleagues and co-religionists.

On a slightly different level, the *Istoriia Rusov* also contributed to the growth of the romantic legend about Mazepa. In his discussion of Voltaire's treatment of the hetman, the author of the *Istoriia Rusov* retold the story of Mazepa's unsuccessful love affair, his "wild ride," and his return to Ukraine where he eventually rose to become leader of the Cossacks.<sup>38</sup> This story was to shortly catch the imagination of writers and poets all over Europe.

Thus, in general, while there is a certain overlying equivocation in the attitude of the anonymous author of the *Istoriia Rusov*, he probably sympathized

34. *Istoriia Rusov*, text, 184ff.

35. *Istoriia Rusov*, text, 202–4. The speech is also available in English: George A. Perfecky, "Mazepa's Speech to his Countrymen," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 2, 1981, 66–72.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Istoriia Rusov*, text, 204–10.

38. *Istoriia Rusov*, text, 184.

considerably with the cause of Hetman Mazepa. At least one modern historian, Volodymyr Kravchenko, thinks that the author's true skill was to paint such a complex and contradictory portrait of Mazepa that he leads the reader to judge the hetman for himself, thus avoiding endorsing the official Russian view.<sup>39</sup> Other modern Ukrainian historians like Dmytro Doroshenko and Serhii Plokyh believe that if we read between the lines, we can clearly see that the author himself was a "Mazepist" at heart; in other words, he had a kind of "forbidden love" for the much-excoriated hetman.<sup>40</sup>

The next step in the development of the Mazepa legend occurred outside the Russian Empire and stood in stark contrast to the local concerns and patriotic tones displayed by the *Istoriia Rusov*. In 1796, a Hungarian historian of German ancestry, Johann Christian von Engel (1770–1814), a graduate of the pioneering Göttingen school of historians and a loyal subject of the Kingdom of Hungary, published his *Geschichte der Ukraine und der ukrainschen Cosaken*.<sup>41</sup> Engel's work was remarkable for its objective tone and judicious balancing of contradictory sources. In his treatment of Mazepa, an engraving of whom Engel placed as the frontispiece of his entire work, the Hungarian historian critically evaluated the Ukrainian, Polish, French, Swedish, and Russian sources available to him and clearly distinguished between what we would today call primary materials as against secondary (and later) literature. Omitting the story of the youthful Mazepa's unsuccessful love affair and "wild ride," Engel concentrated on politics. He concluded that Mazepa had revolted against Peter mostly for patriotic, not personal reasons. However, although he understood the farsightedness of the hetman's plans, he thought his execution of them untimely. With this in mind, Engel wrote:

If [in 1709], Mazepa had been able to act with his earlier vigor, if he had not been compelled to put off his revolt to 1708, when his ideas became ever more obvious, his enemies all the more active, the Russian troops in Ukraine more numerous, his partisans all weaker in spirit, then today perhaps we would have a Ukrainian Majesty on the throne from the House of Mazepa,

39. Kravchenko, "Ivan Mazepa," 271.

40. Doroshenko, "Mazepa v istorychnii literaturi i zhytti," 6; Serhii Plokyh, "Forbidden Love: Ivan Mazepa and the Author of the *History of the Rus*," in *Poltava*, ed. Plokyh, 553–68. See as well S. Plokyh, *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Age of Empires*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012, 41–2, 193–7.

41. Johann Christian von Engel, *Geschichte der Ukraine und der ukrainischen Cosaken wie auch der Königreiche Halitch und Wladimir*, Halle: Johann Jacob Gebauer, 1796.

a Great Swedish Empire in the North, and [the present Russian Empire would not exist and, the Russian General] Suvorov would not be occupying Warsaw in 1795.<sup>42</sup>

Although true to its time, Engel's history was devoid of reference to Ukrainian nationalism of an ethnic type, the author was obviously understanding of the "estate patriotism" and local loyalties of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Thus, while Engel excused Mazepa's action against Peter by reason of the Tsar's systematic violation of Ukrainian liberties, the hetman's ostensible "betrayal" of his predecessor, Hetman Samoilovych, whom, it was said, he had helped to overthrow, could only be attributed to personal ambition, and this was, thought Engel, a truly negative trait in his personality, as traditional Russian writing had stressed.<sup>43</sup> In the end, Engel could not really decide whether Mazepa was more of an ignoble "Judas" or a noble "Pompey," but the fact that he put his portrait forth as the frontispiece of his entire book indicated that he certainly saw him as a very important figure indeed.<sup>44</sup>

Shortly after Engel published his book on Ukraine, almost all of Europe, including Russia, became embroiled in the Napoleonic wars. In Ukraine, Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich Lobanov-Rostovskii (1758–1838) was put in charge of raising Cossack regiments for the Russian army and tried to give them a general Russian character.<sup>45</sup> Ukrainian sentiment was far from dead, however, and he was opposed by Ukrainian autonomists like D.P. Troshchynsky (1749–1829) and Vasyi Kapnist (1758–1823), who defended the Ukrainian character of the regiments. At this same time, a Ukrainian officer named Oleksa Martos (c. 1790–1842), who was posted to Moldavia in 1810, mused upon the fate of Mazepa in that very same land almost exactly a century previously. Martos, who later began work on his own general history of Ukraine, which was later lost, recalled that he thought that Mazepa had truly defended Ukrainian independence and freedom, but had failed, after which "the name of his country and its brave Cossacks"

42. Engel, *Geschichte*, 307, 321–2; see as well Doroshenko, "Mazepa v istorichnii literaturi i v zhytti," 7.

43. Engel, *Geschichte*, 321–2.

44. *Ibid.*, 321–2. On Engel more generally, see T. Prymak, "On the 200th Anniversary of the Publication of Johann Christian von Engel's *History of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Cossacks*," *Germano-Slavica* 2, 1998, 55–62.

45. Nataliia Polonska-Vasylenko, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, 2 vols., Munich: Ukrainske vydavnytstvo, 1972–76, II, 279–83.

disappeared from the list of recognized nations of the earth.<sup>46</sup> Still, according to Martos, Mazepa had been a patron of learning, a bibliophile, and a supporter of architecture and the arts. His name was cursed in the churches of Kiev every First Sunday of Great Lent together with that of the Russian rebel the Don Cossack Stenka Razin (1630–71), but what a difference between the two! The one a simple robber and the other “an enlightened, humane man, a talented military leader” and “the sovereign of a free, and therefore, fortunate people” [*povelitel volnogo sledovatelno shchastlivogo naroda*]. It may be concluded that it was a real misfortune for nineteenth-century Ukrainian historiography that Martos’s history, if it was even completed, was later lost.

As France and Russia clashed in several wars from the late 1790s onward, French interest in Ukraine increased and the possibility of anti-Russian uprisings in that country in the event of a French invasion was discussed in French government circles, in which reference was made to “the Cossack nation which is accustomed to liberty and must impatiently bear Russian slavery.”<sup>47</sup> Napoléon Bonaparte even commissioned one of his more scholarly officials, Charles Louis Lesur (1771–1849), to write a general history of the Cossacks for his personal use. In his two-volume history of the Cossacks, the second volume of which was largely devoted to Cossack Ukraine, Lesur, who unlike Engel could read neither the Slavic languages nor German, relied very heavily on Voltaire, Nordberg, and Scherer for his account of Mazepa’s revolt.<sup>48</sup> He repeated the stories of Mazepa’s ostensible Polish origins, his early love affair and “wild ride” to Ukraine, his rapid rise among the Cossacks, his reaction to Peter’s drunken threats, his secret agreement with Charles, and his defection to the Swedes in 1708. He also credited Mazepa with wide plans of alliance with the Turks and other anti-Russian elements such as the Don Cossacks and ascribed Charles’s escape to Bender in Moldavia to Mazepa. Lesur explained that Mazepa’s intimate knowledge of his

46. The fascinating judgments of Martos rendered here are quoted in full from his notes of the time in several accounts: Doroshenko, “Ukrainian Historiography,” 112; Kravchenko, “Ivan Mazepa,” 275–6; Plokyh, *The Cossack Myth*, 194; Plokyh, “Forbidden Love,” 554; and more briefly in Taras Koznarsky, “Obsessions with Mazepa,” in *Poltava*, ed. Plokyh, 569–616: 559–60.

47. See Ilko Borshchak, *Napoleon i Ukraina*, Lviv: n.p., 1937, who discovered in the French archives an important French project for an independent but pro-Napoleon Ukraine, and from whom the quote on “Russian slavery” (“l’esclavage de la Russie”) is taken (*ibid.*, 19); and T. Prymak, “Napoleon and Ukraine,” *Nashe zhyttia/Our Life* 2, New York, 1997, 14–17, which summarizes Borshchak’s nearly forgotten research for the English-speaking public.

48. Charles-Louis Lesur, *Histoire des Cosaques*, 2 vols., Paris: Nicolle, Fantin, et Arthus-Bertrand, 1814.

country and diplomatic skills brought the semi-independent Zaporozhian Cossacks over to the Swedish side. In general, Lesur drew a picture of an ambitious and proud, but educated and talented Mazepa, who nevertheless was willing to use intrigue and force to achieve his lofty goals; these came to include a Ukraine free of Russian rule. Napoleon was reading the page proofs of Lesur's unpublished history while he was still advancing on Moscow.<sup>49</sup>

The Napoleonic era also saw a real explosion of interest in Mazepa in western Europe generally. This interest, however, took on a different coloring than that in the east of the continent. It was clearly revealed in Lesur's Cossack history, but also came to be embodied in literature and elsewhere. The new trend had actually begun as early as 1764, when the French writer, André Constant Dorville (or d'Orville), published his *Memoires d'Azéma*, a novel which concentrated on Mazepa's youth and his early love affair in Poland.<sup>50</sup> But it was the Napoleonic era that really developed this theme. In 1812, the very year of the French Emperor's invasion of Russia, Heinrich Bertuch published a play titled *Alexei Petrowitsch: Ein romantisch-historisch Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen*.<sup>51</sup> In this fanciful play, which despite its title bore very little resemblance to historical reality, the author has Mazepa reluctantly stab to death his supposed friend, Peter's son Aleksei (1690–1718), to free Ukraine from the Russian yoke. This story, which obviously made some reference to the Ukrainian national theme, was not widely read across Europe and had no lasting influence.<sup>52</sup> Instead, the most influential portrayal of Mazepa in west European literature only came a few years later when Lord Byron (1788–1824) published his majestic *Mazeppa: A Poem* (1819), another truly literary rather than historical work, which did, however, proffer certain supposed historical facts and for that reason alone deserves inclusion in our analysis.<sup>53</sup>

49. Lesur, *Histoire*, vol.2, 81ff.; Borshchak, 79.

50. [André Constant Dorville], *Memoires d'Azéma*, Amsterdam: N.p., 1764.

51. Heinrich Bertuch, *Alexei Petrowitsch: Ein romantisch-historisch Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen*, Gotha: C. Stuedel, 1812.

52. See Hubert F. Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend in European Romanticism*, New York: Columbia UP, 1974, 9–19; Walter Smyrniw, "Hetman Ivan Mazepa in Life and Literature," available at: <http://www.uocc.ca/pdf/reflections/Mazepa%20%20Life>, 7–8, accessed 26 September 2013. Also see Thomas Grob, "Der Innere Orient: Mazeppas Ritt durch die Steppe als Passage zum Anderen Europas," *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 56, 2005, 33–86. Grob deals with the Image of Mazepa "as other" in the literatures of western Europe and takes the story right up to the present, but defines "literature" in a narrow sense, omitting discussion of historiography or biography.

53. Lord Byron, *Mazeppa: A Poem*, London: John Murray, 1819; reprinted many times including, most succinctly, in *Forum: A Ukrainian Review* 99, 26–30.

Byron's poem built upon Voltaire's story of Mazepa's "wild ride," only adding intensity and emotion to the French author's rather impersonal history. The poet gave Mazepa's lover a name, Theresa (after his own last great love, nineteen year old Teresa Guiccioli), and made her cuckolded husband a count some thirty years her senior (like the real life Count Guiccioli, whose vengeance Byron greatly feared), and he stressed the Asiatic and Turkish side of Ukraine and even of Theresa herself (Canto V), but he thereafter pretty much followed Voltaire's outline of what happened to Mazepa afterwards, including the exile from Poland and the rest, but he emphasized the pain, suffering, and confusion that the future Cossack leader endured during the long and dangerous ride to Ukraine:

For all behind was dark and drear,  
And all before was night and fear. (Canto XIV)<sup>54</sup>

According to Byron, at two points during the ride Mazepa came very close to death: the first time only to be revived by his steed crossing a river, and the second time, with the ravens approaching to feast on his flesh, only to fall into unconsciousness and awaken in bed attended by a solicitous Cossack maiden (Cantos VIII and XVIII).<sup>55</sup>

In spite of his general loyalty to Voltaire's narrative, which he quotes at length in the original French as an introduction to his poem, Byron must have read other historical sources for this Mazepa tale, for not only does he accurately relate the flight of Charles and Mazepa southward after the Battle of Poltava, hinting that Mazepa led the escape of the Swedish king to safety, but he also plainly refers to Mazepa as not only a Cossack "prince" but also as "Hetman" of Ukraine (Canto III), a title which is missing in Voltaire's *Charles XII* but is present in the works of Lesur and other better-informed authors.<sup>56</sup> Also, according to an old Polish legend, during his visit to Venice shortly before composing *Mazeppa*, Byron met the Polish romantic poet, Antoni Malczewski (1793–1826), who hailed from Ukraine, and almost certainly knew something of Mazepa from reading Pasek's story about him in the original Polish; he probably told the English poet about it.<sup>57</sup>

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. This point is often made in studies of Byron by Slavic authors: See, for example, the classic essay (first published in 1894) by Ivan Franko, "Lord Bairon," in his *Zibrannia tvoriv u p'iatdesiaty tomakh*, vol. 29, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1981, 283–92: 289; and further Mykola Zerov, *Leksii z istorii ukrainskoi literatury*, Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1977, 114, who uses the term "Polish legend" with regard to this story.

At any rate, Byron was plainly enthralled by the Mazepa story, containing, as it did, both an almost direct parallel to his own stormy life (for he, too, had been driven out of England by his scandalous sexual misadventures) and a tragic romance in an exotic “oriental” setting, often mentioning Turks and Tatars. Moreover, on a level which mixed exotic setting with current European politics, Byron opened the whole poem with a not-so-oblique reference to Napoleon’s unsuccessful invasion of Russia, which had just occurred. The poet compared Napoleon’s invasion to that of Charles but, understandably perhaps, thought the French invasion more epic than the Swedish (“a mightier host and haughtier name”).<sup>58</sup> Byron’s poem, which epitomized the bound but unbeaten Mazepa, ever struggling for but never quite attaining his personal freedom, immediately caught the attention of the European public and was widely influential across the continent, especially in France, thus beginning a new phase of the Mazepa legend in which the fine arts briefly replaced the practice of history as its most influential component.

As a result, other writers, as well as artists and musicians soon took up the theme. With regard to art, Byron’s example, which, of course, depended so heavily upon Voltaire’s story of the Hetman’s youthful escapades, was of paramount importance. In contrast to the histories treating Mazepa, Romantic suffering and exotic setting or dress marked most of these post-Enlightenment pictures, especially that of Louis Boulanger (1806–1867), while similar to some of the histories, the struggle for “liberty” now symbolized by the bound but unbeaten Mazepa was generally implied in all of them.<sup>59</sup> One of the first painters to portray Mazepa’s

58. Babinski, *passim*; Patricia Mainardi, *Husbands Wives and Lovers: Marriage and its Discontents in Nineteenth Century France*, New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2003, 185–7, emphasizes the autobiographical element in Byron’s poem. At this point, it should be mentioned that Byron’s “Mazeppa,” unlike many of his other works, was never translated into Ukrainian by any of the romantics and goes unmentioned in the writings and letters of his younger contemporary, the Ukrainian national poet, Taras Shevchenko (1814–61). A Ukrainian translation did appear, however, in Kharkiv in 1929, just before Stalin’s autocracy put an end to the Ukrainian renaissance of that time; the assault on Ukrainian nationalism made mention of this poem or, indeed, any talk of Ukrainian liberty, quite dangerous. New vistas opened up, however, with the onset of the Gorbachev reforms: See, for example, the article on “Bairon,” in the *Ukrainska literaturna entsyklopediia*, vol. I, Kyiv: URE, 1988, 113–4, which for the first time in many years was able to mention the Kharkiv translation. Quite apart from this, the Soviet regime always saw Byron as a “progressive” romantic poet who struggled for the liberation of oppressed peoples and enjoyed an unparalleled influence throughout Europe in his own time.

59. See Mainardi, 202–4, who as her main thesis argues (182) that “during the years of the Restoration [that is, the early Romantic era], . . . when the new bourgeois morality and laws on inheritance and divorce resulted in unprecedented prosecutions of adultery, there was an important, though heretofore unidentified theme that spoke to the issue of marriage and its

ride was Théodore Géricault (1791–1824), who like Byron had been involved in an adulterous affair and in 1823 completed his own “Mazeppa.” This grim painting, executed in dark blues and browns, and following an episode that Byron had added to Voltaire’s brief relation, shows a tortured Mazepa emerging from the river tied to the back of his horse. The struggling horse has some life in him yet, though this is unclear of its muscular rider, whose face is turned away from the observer and is thus hidden from view. Thereafter, in quick succession came over a dozen canvases devoted to this same theme, mostly by French artists, including Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863). Horace Vernet (1789–1863), who was interested in both Eastern Europe and the Middle East, actually painted several works devoted to Mazepa including “Mazeppa and the Horses” (1825), and “Mazeppa pursued by the Wolves” (1826). All of Vernet’s Mazepas seem younger, more sympathetic, and more innocent than Géricault’s and all of them were tied to the “wild ride”. In 1827, Boulanger produced his own interpretation of “The Punishment of Mazeppa,” a rather strange portrait showing a struggling Mazepa defying the count’s servants while the severe count himself and his entourage sit in judgment above him while he is being tied to the horse. In Boulanger’s picture, there is a clear struggle between youth and age, the dynamic and energetic lower group juxtaposed to the stilted and static upper group, but there is also a class division, the ragged lower figures representing servants, executioners, and Mazepa the offender, the upper figures representing the upper classes in various supposedly Polish robes of state. Eventually Polish artists, like Aleksander Orłowski (1777–1832), Juliusz Kossak (1824–1899), and Wacław Pawlitzak (1866–1905), as well as other European artists took up the same theme.

French depictions of Mazepa found an echo in French literature. Only one year after Boulanger exhibited his painting at the Paris Salon, Victor Hugo published his powerful poetic tribute to liberty titled “Mazeppa” in the collection called *Les orientales*.<sup>60</sup> Hugo dedicated his poem to Boulanger and quoted Byron, “Away!

discontents. This theme, a *cri de coeur* from the young Romantic generation, protested the plight of the unjustly punished lover in the person of Mazepa. While this theme does not, at first, seem related to marriage and adultery, it is nonetheless a prime example of how social concerns can be transmuted into high art.” See as well the beautifully illustrated article of Olha Kovalevska, “Romantychnyi heroi ieropeiskoho zhyvopysu,” in *Hetman* vol. 2, 218–33; the wide-ranging essay of Joseph-Marc Bailbé, “Mazeppa et les artistes romantiques,” *Annales de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines d’Aix* 40, 1966, 13–40; Chrystyna Marciuk, *Mazeppa: Ein Thema der französischen Romantik. Malerei und Graphik 1823–1827*, Munich: Profil Verlag, 1991; and Jan K. Ostrowski, “Mazeppa: Pomiędzy romantyczną legendą a polityką,” *Przegląd Wschodni* 2, 1992–3, 359–89.

60. I have used a critical edition: Victor Hugo, *Les orientales*, 2 vols. ed. Elizabeth Barineau, Paris, 1952.

Away!” on the title page of the “Mazeppa” section. But unlike Byron’s poem, Hugo’s contained practically nothing by way of narrative and did not hearken back to Voltaire’s *Histoire de Charles XII* or any other historical source that we have discussed, not even the Cossack history of Lesur. Mazepa’s background at the Polish court, his love affair, and all reference to Charles and Napoleon are missing from Hugo’s verse and the poem is but a series of images and impressions of Mazepa’s “wild ride.” Torn by the thorns of wild scrub and chased by beasts of prey, his body broken and bleeding, Mazepa passes through valleys and gorges, and over wide, burning, and unpeopled steppe. But all is not lost:

Eh bien! Ce condamné qui se hurle et qui se traîne,  
 Ce cadavre vivant, les tribus de l’Ukraine  
 Le feront prince un jour.  
 (Well, this condemned man who throws himself  
 And drags himself forward, the tribes of Ukraine  
 Will one day make a prince.)  
 [then he will “gird the cloak of the Hetmans of Old Ukraine.”]  
 Enfin le terme arrive . . . il court, il vole, il tombe,  
 Et se relève roi!  
 (Finally, the end comes: he runs, he flees, he falls,  
 And is raised up a king!)<sup>61</sup>

Although contemporary Western readers who knew little or nothing of Ukrainian history could and did see Hugo’s “Mazeppa” as a symbol of the tortured genius or struggling artist who eventually prevails, East-European readers, especially those familiar with history, could not be indifferent to the Ukrainian context, especially when reading the very last line, which had been earlier intimated in Defoe’s English account of the hetman, likening him to a powerful king. Eventually, that is, after the second half of the nineteenth century, Hugo’s “Mazeppa” became a metaphor for a suffering Ukraine struggling for its rebirth. This point became very explicit after 1917 and was actually argued, for example, by the veteran of 1917–1918, the very patriarch of Ukrainian “integral” nationalism, Dmytro Dontsov (1883–1973), in spite of the fact that, unlike Byron, Hugo nowhere quotes or refers to Voltaire or his remark that “Ukraine has always

61. *Ibid.*, 142–9 (esp. 147 and 149). In her discussion of the sources for *Les orientales*, the editor Barineau mentions several works dealing with the Middle East, but none about Ukraine (*ibid.*, xxii–xxiv). In her notes to “Mazeppa,” she only mentions Byron (*ibid.*, 143).

aspired to be free.”<sup>62</sup> The Ukrainian émigré encyclopedist of the Cold War period, Yevhen Onatsky, agreed, and added that if Hugo’s “Mazeppa” is interpreted as “man” carried onward by the “human spirit,” which is the wild horse (as the poem is most frequently interpreted), then Hugo most certainly saw the real Mazepa as called to great deeds indeed.<sup>63</sup>

Just as Voltaire had inspired Byron, Hugo, too, inspired others as a Romantic impulse and its vision of “liberty” reached its final crescendo. This was particularly true of Franz Liszt (1811–86), who had the idea of composing something on the Mazepa theme as early as 1826.<sup>64</sup> But after Hugo’s “Mazeppa” appeared in 1828, Liszt rewrote his “Mazeppa” piano piece, enlarging it in 1831, and published it in 1839 separately in the fullest and most complicated form for piano, dedicating it to Hugo, whom he personally knew. It was arranged for orchestra in 1850 and the so-called “Tatar March,” which ended this *Symphonic Poem, no. 6*, was added. This well-known masterpiece followed Hugo’s stormy verse quite closely, ending with the triumphant march of the revived Cossack “king.” Other important musical works devoted to Mazepa were to follow, and also dramas written especially for the stage, but not all of them were so closely tied to the ride, especially those composed in Russia.

In fact, at the same time that West-European writers and artists developed the Romantic Mazepa theme as a struggle for “freedom,” imperial Russian

62. See D. Donzow [Dmytro Dontsov], “Hugo’s ‘Mazeppa’ The Symbol of Ukraine,” *Ukrainian Review* 2, 1955, 6–16; more generally, see John Andrew Frey, *A Victor Hugo Encyclopedia*, Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1999, 169–71, 189–90. Hugo’s biographer, Jean-Marc Hovasse, when discussing *Les orientales* writes of Hugo that he always preferred liberty: “liberté des Grecs contre les Turcs, liberté des résistants contre les oppresseurs, liberté des romantiques contre les classiques” (see Jean-Marc Hovasse, *Victor Hugo*, 2 vols., Paris: Fayard, 2001, vol. 1, 379); Dontsov would have added explicitly: the liberty of the Ukrainians against the Russians.
63. Yevhen Onatsky, *Ukrainska mala entsyklopediia*, 4 vols., Buenos Aires: UAPTS, 1957–67, vol. 1, 290. Again, during the Soviet period, despite his high reputation as “the leader of progressive French romanticism,” a Ukrainian translation of Hugo’s poem was not generally available in Soviet Ukraine; in January 1992, it was published in the Kharkiv journal *Berezil*, exactly one month after the referendum ratifying Ukrainian independence.
64. John P. Pauls [John P. Sydoruk], “Musical Works based on the Legend of Mazepa,” *Ukrainian Review*, 4, 1964, 57–65: 59–60. Although Liszt visited Ukraine in 1847, and gave a concert in Kiev, where, among others, the historian Mykola Kostomarov (1817–85) heard him, and although he spent some time at an estate in Podolia, where he heard some Ukrainian folksongs and composed a few pieces based on them, his “Mazeppa,” according to Pauls, is “a hymn to the unconquered human spirit,” and not based on Ukrainian song. As to Russian musical works devoted to “Mazepa,” the most outstanding example was Tchaikovsky’s opera of that name (1883), which completely ignored the ride, concentrating rather on the elderly hetman and his politics. Tchaikovsky, it should be noted, was of partly Ukrainian origin and devoted his entire Second Symphony to Ukraine.

historiography produced its single most detailed study of Mazepa as an entirely negative character unconcerned with any kind of higher morals and dismissive of the idea of “freedom.” This study was written by Dmytro Bantysh-Kamensky (1788–1850), the scion of an old Moldavian boyar family that had moved to Russia in the first half of the eighteenth century as a consequence of Peter the Great’s unsuccessful invasion of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>65</sup> By his background and education, Bantysh-Kamensky was completely loyal to the Russian monarchy and had served it well in various diplomatic missions abroad, in particular at the Congress of Vienna and in the Balkans. But when he was about to be sent on a further mission to far away Naples, Bantysh-Kamensky balked at the proposition, retired from diplomacy, and accepted a position with Prince Repnin (1778–1845), the governor-general of Little Russia, who was a local patriot of sorts. Recognizing Bantysh-Kamensky’s scholarly talents, the prince engaged him to write a history of this land, which had been ignored in Nikolai Karamzin’s great history of the Russian state, and the result was a luxurious four-volume *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* (*History of Little Russia*) (1822), which was not completely insensitive to the patriotic feelings of the local gentry, which was descended from the old Ukrainian-Cossack officer class.<sup>66</sup>

In the absence in the Russian Empire of any other printed history of Ukraine, Bantysh-Kamensky’s work turned out to be an immediate success. It was quickly sold out and the author revised and expanded it and republished it twice more during his lifetime. Upon its first publication, many important state figures, including members of the imperial family, had sent the author letters of thanks. On 8 May 1822, Count V. P. Kochubei (1768–1834), a relative of Mazepa’s denouncer, informed the author that Tsar Alexander I had elevated him for this work to the rank of Active Councilor of State.<sup>67</sup>

All these honors bestowed upon Bantysh-Kamensky by Russian court circles were not undeserved, especially because of his loyalist and staunchly monarchist treatment of Peter and Mazepa, which seemed to be the climax of the entire history. Bantysh-Kamensky’s book was, in fact, simply filled with praise of the former and vilification of the latter. Indeed, in almost every way, he repeated

65. See esp. V.V. Kravchenko, “D.M. Bantysh-Kamensky,” *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, no. 4, 1990, 88–94, and no. 9, 1990, 72–80.

66. D. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, Moscow: Semen Selivanovskii, 1822 [the second edition was even dedicated to the ultra-Russian Tsar Nicholas I]; Kravchenko, “D.M. Bantysh-Kamensky.”

67. Kravchenko, “D.M. Bantysh-Kamensky”; see as well V.P. Kotsur and A.P. Kotsur, *Istoriobrafia istorii Ukrainy: Kurs lektsii*, Chernivtsi: Zoloti lytavry, 1999, 173–82.

many (though not all) of the old libels lodged against the Hetman since the time of Teofan Prokopovych, whose history of Peter the Great he quoted at length. The historian's virtue, however, was that he was the first to use the Russian state archives to give his narrative a documentary basis, and in view of this, was able to dispel (at least for his fellow historians) many previous undocumented or poorly documented legends such as the central ones about Mazepa's Polish and Catholic origins, his early love affair in Poland, and his "wild ride" to Ukraine, legends that were at the heart of the poetic and artistic treatments of Mazepa that were just then conquering western Europe.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, the Russian loyalist historian was also able to replace these compelling legends by discovering certain new, almost equally amazing facts about the hetman's personal life, in particular, his love affair with Motria Kochubei, the very young daughter of Vasyl Kochubei, which had been overlooked in the literature to that time. The father strongly objected to this affair and this objection seems to have been linked to his subsequent denunciation of Mazepa to Peter. Of course, Peter believed none of it and sent Kochubei back to Mazepa for punishment. At the Tsar's bidding, it seems, Mazepa had his old friend executed.<sup>69</sup> But Bantysh-Kamensky's most valuable discovery was the series of love letters that Mazepa sent to Motria. These passionate, though wise, letters threw much light on Mazepa's hitherto somewhat mysterious character and, shortly, were to have a profound effect upon Russian and Ukrainian views of the hetman, reflected most strongly in poetry and opera.<sup>70</sup>

In general, Bantysh-Kamensky discerned no patriotism in Mazepa's revolt against Peter, but rather described his motivation as being purely personal. He believed that Mazepa combined in his personality the negative characteristics of several of his predecessors as Hetman and that this combination was fatal. He summed up the matter thus:

68. A latter-day Ukrainian translation of his work is D.N. Bantysh-Kamenskii [Dmytro Bantysh-Kamensky], *Istoriia Maloi Rossii: Ot vodvorennia Slavian v sei stran do unichtozhennia hetmans'tva*, 3 parts in 1 vol., Kyiv: Chas, 1993; for the treatment of Mazepa, see *ibid.*, Part 3, 340.

69. *Ibid.*, 372–88.

70. *Ibid.*, 570–6. Mazepa's love letters to Motria are discussed in W. Moskovich, "Hetman Ivan Mazepa's Love Letters," *Mazepa e suo tempo*, 565–76; John Pauls, "The Tragedy of Motrya Kochubey," *Ukrainian Review* 3, 1965, 73–83; and Olena Tarasova, "Zhynti u zhytti Ivana Mazepy: Mif i realnist," *Dnipro* 9–10, 2001, 129–32. Kravchenko explains that Bantysh-Kamensky was not simply a "documentary historian," but also a writer who tried to make his work interesting as well "for the ladies" by including both Mazepa's love letters and also specimens of his hitherto neglected poetry (Kravchenko, "Ivan Mazepa," 273).

By nature, Mazepa was gifted with unusual intelligence and received an extraordinary education from the Jesuits. In addition to the Little Russian language, he knew Latin, German, and Polish. He had a gift with words and the art of persuasion; but this was accompanied by the cleverness and caution of [his predecessor, Hetman] Vyhovsky, and was united with the spite, vengeance, and avarice of [another predecessor, Hetman] Briukovetsky; he excelled [Hetman] Doroshenko in his love of glory, and all of these predecessors in his ingratitude.<sup>71</sup>

And worst of all, of course, Mazepa was simply a “traitor” (*izmennik*) to Russia and the Tsar, a label that Bantysh-Kamensky repeatedly used in his history. Moreover, Bantysh-Kamensky believed that Mazepa was even hated by his own people, writing that “the Little Russians did not like Mazepa. Although the traitor was surrounded by many subservient people, he could not rely upon either the army or the common folk [*narod*].”<sup>72</sup> Given this excoriating portrait of the old hetman, it is no wonder that Bantysh-Kamensky’s history, despite its very real local color, won the approval of the Tsars, both the ostensibly “liberal” Alexander I and the openly “reactionary” Nicholas I. To the present day, historians are divided as to whether to categorize it as an example of Ukrainian or Russian historiography.<sup>73</sup>

Of course, in the early nineteenth century, in addition to various Ukrainian and Russian views of Mazepa, there existed a third interpretation of his career: the Polish version, especially encountered among literate Poles who still in the nineteenth century made their homes in Ukraine and were dominant on the Right Bank right through to 1917. During the Romantic period, their outstanding

71. Bantysh-Kamensky, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, Part 3, 341. Also see Doroshenko, “Ivan Mazepa v istorychnii literaturi i v zhytti,” 7. Stephen Velychenko summarizes Bantysh-Kamensky’s position as follows: “Kamensky’s loyalism emerged with particular clarity in his account of Mazepa. He wrote that even if Mazepa’s complaints against Peter I’s Ukrainian policies were well founded, the Hetman had no right to turn against the monarch who had given him his glory and status. Kamensky claimed that Peter justly circumscribed the prerogatives of the Hetmans who, with the exception of Khmelnytsky, had all been traitors. He concluded that Mazepa had acted solely out of pride, and that the rights of *Malorossii* [Little Russia] and its army were untouched. [In a complete reversal of this, however,] he then justified the curtailment of Ukrainian autonomy after 1709 by claiming that Peter could be reproached only for using excessive cruelty to achieve his purpose” (Stephen Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process*, Edmonton: CIUS, 1992, 159).

72. Bantysh-Kamensky, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, Part 3, 390.

73. For example, Velychenko considers Bantysh-Kamensky’s history to be an example of Ukrainian historiography, while Kravchenko thinks it primarily Russian (Velychenko, *National History*, 159; Kravchenko, “Ivan Mazepa”).

historian was Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861), a prolific author who wrote extensively on all periods of Polish history, and on many other subjects besides. He had lived in Volhynia in western Ukraine briefly where he taught at the lyceum in Kremenets, but was less interested in Left Bank Ukraine and its Hetmanate, which had been outside the Polish orbit since 1648. Consequently, in his widely-read *Dzieje Polski potocznym sposobem opowiedziane* (Popular History of Poland), which discussed Poland's rival kings, Augustus the Strong and Stanisław Leszczyński, he barely mentioned Poltava and did not even bring up the matter of Mazepa's revolt.<sup>74</sup> Thus the subject of Mazepa, which, given its traditional Polish connections and obfuscations, still elicited considerable interest in Poland, once more fell to the poets rather than the historians.

One of the early representatives of these poets was Józef Bohdan Zaleski (1802–1886), born and raised in Kiev Province, who for health reasons spent much of his childhood living in a village with a family of Ukrainian country folk, and who came to be known as one of the central figures of the “Ukrainian School of Polish Literature,” as it was soon called. Partly under the influence of the prominent political and literary figure Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, whose career spanned the western hemisphere from Poland to America, and who was interested in Ukraine, even explaining to the uninitiated public the significance of the Ukrainian term *duma* (meditation) for certain historical songs, Zaleski composed a number of “dumas” (plural is *dumy* in Ukrainian) or “dumkas” (plural is *dumki* in Polish) on various Ukrainian historical themes, one of which was devoted to Mazepa.<sup>75</sup> This *dumka* about Mazepa first appeared in 1824 and, like Niemcewicz's work before it, contained several endnotes which were meant to document the historicity of the poem. In this way, his poem supposedly surpassed both Byron's and Hugo's in attention to historical detail.

Zaleski knew Jan Pasek's famous memoir and the story of Mazepa's ride, but unlike Byron and Hugo was thoroughly acquainted with the Ukrainian steppe,

74. See Joachim Lelewel, *Dzieje Polski potocznym sposobem opowiedziane*, in Joachim Lelewel, *Dzieła*, 10 vols., Warsaw: PWN, 1957–70, vol. 7. Lelewel also wrote a detailed *Dzieje Litwy i Rusi* (*History of Lithuania and Ukraine*), which forms volume X of his *Dzieła*, but only took it up to 1569, thus again omitting all treatment of Mazepa. Later on, however, Polish historians did pay more attention to Mazepa: See Zbigniew Anusik, “Fenomen Iwana Mazepy w historiografii polskiej XIX i XX wieku,” in *Mity i stereotypy w dziejach Polski i Ukrainy w XIX i XX wieku*, ed. A. Czeżewski and others, Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2012, 224–48.

75. I have used “Dumka Mazepy,” in *Poezye Józefa B. Zaleskiego*, 2 vols, Saint Petersburg: Wolff, 1851, vol. 1, 119–26. Also see Marian Ursel, *Romantyzm*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2000, 269–70.

folklore, and people. Zaleski believed that Mazepa shared what the poet thought to be their “wild” character and manners; in his view, the young Mazepa was a poet, loved Polish women but not Polish men, played the “Torban” (a Cossack stringed instrument), and thirsted for war.<sup>76</sup> At the approach of the rebellious Cossack Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky (1595–1657), he was tempted to desert the Poles, who had long mistreated the Cossacks, and the poem is a wide-ranging vision of his thoughts and feelings of that time. Two points are particularly stressed in the poem: Mazepa’s love for women and his great ambition. On the first, Zaleski writes of Mazepa:

Każda piękna dla mnie równa.  
 Kiedym zdrowy, choży, młody,  
 Czy szlachcianka, czy królewna,  
 Czyli żona wojewody,  
 Czy Rusinka czy Czerkieska  
 Wiśniowecka czy Sobieska.  
 (All beautiful girls are the same to me,  
 So long as healthy, handsome, and young I be.  
 Whether they be noble or royal,  
 Or the wife of a provincial governor,  
 Whether they be a Chercass or an Ukrainka,  
 A Vyshnevetska or a Sobieska.)<sup>77</sup>

Of the second, he writes:

Po co tutaj być mi paziem,  
 Gdy gdzieindziej będę kniazem?  
 (Why am I here a just a page,  
 When elsewhere, as prince,  
 I could mount the stage?)<sup>78</sup>

In Zaleski’s poem, the images flow over Ukraine, Poland, and even Lithuania, and the poet intimates that the young Mazepa has many adventures before him yet, for as he remarks in his explanatory notes, no one lived so long, loved so much, and experienced so many things as the Ukrainian Hetman, Ivan Mazepa!

76. Zaleski, *Poezye*, 124–5.

77. *Ibid.*, 120.

78. *Ibid.*, 121.

And throughout it all, Zaleski very much stresses Mazepa's desire to live what one might call "a free life in the old Cossack style." In this way, the Polish poet raises the banner of Ukrainian liberty without even mentioning Charles XII, Peter, or Poltava. This omission of any reference to Russia in the poem, certainly helped to get it past the imperial censors, but also eventually gave rise to a number of theories about Zaleski's real intent.<sup>79</sup> Even more than Byron's poem before him, Zaleski's *Dumka* on Mazepa was plainly a hymn to "Ukrainian liberty," although the poet had avoided direct discussion of the dangerous topic of Mazepa's revolt. In Zaleski's poetry, this revolt was generalized, or raised to a newer, more ethereal level. The next Romantic contribution to the Mazepa legend dealt with it quite differently.

Its author was the intrepid noble rebel Kondratii Ryleev (1795–1826), who later gained considerable fame because of his central role in the Saint Petersburg rebellion against the Tsar of December 1825 (the poet was eventually hanged for his part in the revolt). Ryleev, an ethnic Russian, had been a rebel from his youth and picked up certain modern ideas about liberty and revolution during his career in the Russian army of occupation in France after Napoleon's defeat. After his return to Russia, the poet spent a few years in Sloboda Ukraine (the territory just to the east of the former Hetmanate), where he learned to identify with the local population and married a Ukrainian girl. Eventually, he moved on to Saint Petersburg and pursued a literary career. Like Zaleski before him, Ryleev was strongly influenced by Niemcewicz, with whom he corresponded, as unlike most Russians, he could actually read Polish.<sup>80</sup> Ryleev's first major work, titled *Dumy* (Meditations), was a direct imitation of Niemcewicz's *Śpiewy historyczne* (*Historical Songs*). *Dumy*

79. Thus, according to Babinski, the main point of Zaleski's poem seems to be a once idyllic Polish-Cossack accord, lost after the revolt of the anti-Polish Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, which in the end only resulted in the expansion of Russian power (Babinski, *Mazepa Legend*, 92–4). This once-upon-a-time harmony was, in the opinion of the Ukrainian writer and critic Ivan Franko, an "unrealistic" view of Polish-Ukrainian relations, nothing more than "a wild fantasy [*fantazmahoriia*] seemingly written only under the influence of hashish" (Ivan Franko, "Iuzef Bohdan Zaleskyi," in Franko, *Zibrannia tvoriv u p'iatdesiaty tomakh*, vol. 27, Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1980, 23–32). On the other hand, Zerov does note that both Zaleski and the Ukrainian poet Shevchenko shared an equal aversion to tsarism (Zerov, *Lehtsii*, 119). Also see Miłosz, *History of Polish Literature*, 249; Miłosz criticizes Zaleski's "somewhat monotonous musicality," but admits that this poet whom many, including Mickiewicz, called a nightingale, "was perhaps the most graceful among the practitioners of this type."

80. There is a significant literature on Ryleev in English. See Babinski, *Mazepa Legend*, 95–108; Laverne K. Pauls and John P. Pauls, "Ryleev and Ukraine," *Ukrainian Review* 4, 1969, 33–40, and *Ukrainian Review* 1, 1970, 49–60; John P. Pauls, "'Voynarovsky' and 'Poltava,'" in John P. Pauls, *Pushkin's "Poltava"*, New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1962, 15–34; and Patrick O'Meara, *K.F. Ryleev: A Political Biography of the Decembrist*

consisted of a series of sketches of various Russian historical figures, mostly based on fables and anecdotes from Karamzin's history, the "duma" about the peasant hero, Ivan Susanin, being the best. This work was not enthusiastically received, Pushkin even thinking it contained "nothing national or Russian except for the name itself."<sup>81</sup> Although Ryleev's portrait of Susanin eventually inspired Glinka to compose his opera, "A Life for the Tsar," the poet's real contribution to Russian literature was his next major work, the narrative poem "Voinarovsky," which directly dealt with the theme of Ukrainian-Russian relations and appeared on the very eve of the Decembrist Rebellion of 1825.

In "Voinarovsky," Ryleev describes the sad fate of the exiled Cossack Colonel Andrii Voinarovsky (1680–1740), the nephew, follower, and once presumed heir of Hetman Mazepa who was found in the snowy wastes of Siberia by the German explorer and historian Gerhard Müller, whom we met earlier as official imperial historiographer.<sup>82</sup> In 1737, Müller was surveying Siberia for the Russian Academy of Sciences, when he came across the now elderly Voinarovsky, who told him his extraordinary tale. Ryleev used this tale as the content of his narrative poem which was brimming with biographical detail and historical and political significance: Voinarovsky's youth in Ukraine, his battles with the Tatars, his marriage to a Cossack girl who saved his life and was (quite fictionally) reunited with him in Siberia, and, of course, Mazepa's revolt against Peter and his subsequent defeat. This was followed by Voinarovsky's European exile and his capture in 1716 in Hamburg and extradition to Russia where he was finally exiled to Siberia. In Ryleev's poem, which was largely based on historical fact and contained notes and explanations like those of Niemcewicz and Zaleski, the Ukrainian struggle for liberty emerges quite clearly and Mazepa's character is drawn in some detail. In Ryleev's view, Mazepa was his nation's leader, the father of his people, and no traitor; rather the real traitor was Kochubei, who, in a part of the poem crossed out by the Russian censor, was guilty of "violating the law of sacred honour, [and] decided to sacrifice both Mazepa and the freedom of his native land for the sake of revenge."<sup>83</sup>

*Poet*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1984. On Glinka's opera, see Horst Schmidt, "K.F. Rylejew," in *Geschichte der klassischen russischen Literatur*, ed. Wolf Düwel, Berlin-Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1965, 185.

81. See Zbigniew Barański and others, *Literatura rosyjska*, Warsaw: PWN, 1970, vol. 1, 422; and L. A. Chereisky, *Pushkin i ego okruzhenia*, second ed., Leningrad: Nauka, 1988, 381–2.

82. I have used K.F. Ryleev, "Voinarovsky," in K.F. Ryleev, *Polnoe sobranie stikhotvoreniĭ*, Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1971, 185–223.

83. Pauls, *Pushkin's "Poltava"*, 21.

Nevertheless, Ryleev's portrait of Mazepa is nuanced and complex and the secret of his nature and ultimate plan remain incompletely revealed in the poem. Voinarovsky, clearly a Ukrainian patriot, and very close to the Hetman, did not really know if Mazepa simply held only the people of Ukraine close to his heart, or if, perhaps, he had some ulterior motive for his actions:

Ne znaiu ia, khotel li on  
 Spasty ot bed narod Ukrainy  
 Il v nei sebe vozdvignut tron—  
 Mne Hetman ne otkryl sei tainy.  
 (I do not know whether he wanted  
 To save Ukraine's people from misfortune,  
 Or to raise up a throne for himself.  
 The Hetman never revealed this secret to me.)<sup>84</sup>

But Voinarovsky, in Ryleev's verse, would have killed Mazepa himself if he had thought the Hetman would ever become an enemy of freedom (*kogda b on stal vragom svobody*). When word comes that in Baturyn the people are now blessing Peter and cursing the Hetman "as Judas," Mazepa only bowed his head and smiled bitterly. This was a poetic twist, indeed, considering the cruel fate of the inhabitants of that city.<sup>85</sup>

Ryleev's poem was well received by his compatriots and was seen by the Russian opposition as a general protest against oppression and autocracy. Even Pushkin praised it at first.<sup>86</sup> In Ukraine, however, this poem and another that Ryleev circulated, called "Nalyvaiko" (again on a Ukrainian theme, this time the revolt of the Cossacks against the Poles), attracted the special attention of the public. Immediately after "Voinarovsky" was published, the young scion of an old Ukrainian family, the future historian and ethnographer Mykola Markevych (1804–1860) wrote to Ryleev as follows and displayed his great concern for the survival of his nation under the conditions of Russian rule:

84. Ryleev, "Voinarovsky," 209–10. Barański and others, *Literatura rosyjska*, vol. 1, 423, compare Ryleev's reticent Mazepa with Mickiewicz's creation, *Konrad Wallenrod*, another noble rebel who had to rely on conspiracy and deception to attain a lofty objective. These authors think Ryleev identified with Mazepa since the poet and his fellow conspirators were also, in their view, "noble revolutionaries," who likewise were forced into conspiracy because of the great power of the state against which they enjoyed very little popular support.

85. Ryleev, "Voinarovsky," 209–10.

86. Chereisky, *Pushkin i ego okruzhenie*, 381–2.

I could not read “Voinarovsky” and “Nalyvaiko” with cold indifference. Accept from me and from all of my acquaintances and countrymen our thanks. . . . You can be sure that our thanks are sincere and that we feel the value of your works to the depth of our souls, these works which bring honour to you and to our ancestors. The memory of the actions of the great men among the Little Russians has still not passed away. In many hearts the old strength of feeling and devotion to [our] fatherland has not diminished. You will still find among us the living spirit of [Mazepa’s ultimate heir, Hetman] Polubotok.<sup>87</sup>

Ryleev replied to Markevych that he wrote what he thought and never expected such praise, which “. . . will always leave me in debt to your fatherland.”<sup>88</sup>

Ryleev’s portrait of Mazepa in “Voinarovsky” was obviously a powerful rejection of Bantysh-Kamensky and the official Russian interpretation of the Ukrainian struggle for national freedom. It directly addressed the juxtaposition of political liberty and treason that Byron had sidelined and that Zaleski had completely ignored, or rather, that those two poets had transferred onto a different plane. Also, by ignoring the “wild ride,” it restored the focus of Mazepa’s image from youthful romantic to elderly statesman. But the Decembrist Rebellion failed and Ryleev was hanged in 1826 as one its ringleaders. His writings were thereafter suppressed and only circulated in private and secretly. Consequently, in Russia throughout most of the nineteenth century, it was Aleksandr Pushkin’s interpretation of the great hetman that held sway, and his published interpretation was much more in accord with official views that saw Mazepa and his revolt in an entirely negative light.<sup>89</sup> In fact, Pushkin’s Mazepa was in part at least a conscious

87. Oleksander Ohloblyn, “Introduction,” in Kindrat Ryleev, *Voinarovsky: Istorychna poema*, trans. Sviatoslav Hordynsky, second ed., Cleveland, OH: Ukrainian Plast Seniors, 1970, 9. For some seventy years, Ryleev’s obvious sympathy for Ukrainian liberty was explained by Soviet scholars simply in terms of the general Russian fight against autocracy, and this sympathy for Ukrainian independence, so rare among the Russian intelligentsia, was explained by the Berlin Slavist Aleksander Brückner, *Geschichte der russischen Literatur*, second ed., Leipzig: C.F. Amelangs Verlag, 1909, 148, in the following manner: “Because [this new-style Russian revolutionary] found no liberation struggles in Russian history, he looked for them among the Cossacks in their fight against the Poles and glorified the early Russes, the Khmelnytskys, Nalyvaiko, [and] Voinarovsky.” [“Weil er in Russlands Geschichte keine Freiheitskämpfe fand, suchte er sie bei den Kosaken . . . und verherrlichte der erste Russe . . . , etc.”]

88. Ohloblyn’s “Introduction,” 9.

89. For accounts of Pushkin’s *Poltava* in English, see Babinski, *Mazeppa Legend*, 107–23; the various works of John P. Pauls cited above; John P. Pauls, “The Historicity of Pushkin’s ‘Poltava,’” *Ukrainian Quarterly*, 3, 1961, 230–46, and 4, 1961, 342–61; and Koznarsky,

reaction to Ryleev's poem, as Pushkin, upon further reflection and in the wake of the Decembrist defeat with its disastrous consequences for Russian culture, became more critical of "Voinarovsky" and its depiction of Mazepa. Also very important, it may also be that Pushkin painted Mazepa in especially black colours to reduce official suspicion of himself and to curry favour with the Tsar, as he too continued to be closely watched after the debacle of 1825.

Pushkin had been interested in the enigma of Mazepa for many years when in the summer of 1828, over the course of a few weeks time, he wrote his long poem about the Hetman. At first, he even titled the poem "Mazepa," a title that would have radiated tragedy, only later changing it to the more triumphant sounding "Poltava." This poem was a direct reaction against both Byron's "Mazeppa" and Ryleev's "Voinarovsky," which in different ways closely linked the Hetman to the idea of liberty and portrayed him with some sympathy. By contrast, Pushkin's Mazepa was an entirely negative character apparently motivated only by personal ambition and the lowest of desires. The poem, which was loosely divided into three separate parts—a narration, a dialogue, and another narration—was centred around the love affair of Mazepa and Motria Kochubei, with the impending revolt against Peter forming the background. Thus Pushkin, like Ryleev, ignored Mazepa's youthful ride, which, following Bantysh-Kamensky, he considered unhistorical, and concentrated rather upon an affair which had been well documented by that historian's study, which he cited in his explanatory notes, somewhat in the fashion of Niemcewicz, Zaleski, and Ryleev before him. He also consulted Voltaire and used Peter's published *Journal* and other Russian sources. He may also have consulted Lesur's history of the Cossacks, the second volume of which was later found in his library. The result was what he considered to be a "corrective" to Byron and Ryleev, an ostensibly more historically accurate, more "truthful" picture of the controversial hetman.<sup>90</sup>

But Pushkin was not above juggling the facts to make a point. Thus he transferred Mazepa's love affair with Motria (whom he called "Maria") from 1704 to somewhat later, just before the Battle of Poltava, and he bound the two together in a very unhistorical way. In doing this, he was able to link public revulsion for the love of an old man with a young maiden with Russian indignation at Mazepa's

"Obsessions with Mazepa," 581–9, give various Ukrainian views. William Edward Brown, *A History of Russian Literature of the Romantic Period*, vol. 3, Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1986, 84–94; and I. Ia. Zaslavsky, *Pushkin i Ukraina*, Kiev: Vyscha shkola, 1982, 100–5, give a Russian or Soviet view.

90. See Pauls, "Historicity," 230–46.

betrayal of his allegiance to Peter. Thus Mazepa is a “villain,” “traitor,” “Judas,” “a viper,” “an old hawk,” “a destroyer of tender innocence,” “cruel lover,” and such. Indeed, he even appears to be some kind of mysterious demon whose character and motivation no mortal could ever penetrate. In a great crescendo of vituperation against the Hetman, Pushkin writes that:

Not to many, perhaps, is it known  
 That his spirit is untamable,  
 That he is happy, openly or stealthily  
 To destroy his enemies;  
 That not one offence has he ever forgiven  
 Since the day he was born,  
 That farsighted criminal schemes  
 The haughty old man has contrived;  
 That he does not know sanctitude,  
 That he never has gratitude,  
 That he does not love anything in life,  
 That blood he is ready to shed like water,  
 That he despises liberty,  
 That there is no fatherland for him.<sup>91</sup>

Indeed, in “Poltava” the idea of liberty itself is almost mocked, preceded by a negative adjective: “bloody” freedom. As in Bantysh-Kamensky’s portrait and in a line that goes back to Voltaire, Pushkin also sees personal reasons for Mazepa’s revolt: an insult to his personal honour that Peter gave him by pulling his mustache in anger. Nevertheless, Pushkin also managed to explain the more serious goals of the revolt when Mazepa tells Maria of his secret plans:

No nezavisimoi derzhavoi  
 Ukraine byt uzhe pora:  
 I znamia volnosti krovavoi  
 Ia podymaiu na Petra  
 (For now is the time for an independent Ukrainian state.  
 I will raise up the bloody banner of freedom against Peter.)<sup>92</sup>

91. I have used A.S. Pushkin, “Poltava,” in A.S. Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiati tomakh*, vol. 3, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1975, 170–213: 177–8. This translation is from Pauls, “Historicity,” 241.

92. Pushkin, “Poltava,” 186; translation my own.

Maria seems to accept these plans.

Of course, Pushkin raises other obviously unhistorical libels against the hetman. Perhaps the most damning is where he forces Maria to choose between him, her lover, and Kuchubei, her father, whom Mazepa has mercilessly executed. By contrast, Peter only appears at the end of the poem, the haughty “genius” whose military talents led to the glorious victory over the Swedes at Poltava, while the massacres at Baturyn and elsewhere are ignored. It is primarily this ending, as Pushkin knew, pregnant with historical significance, which gives the poem its epic quality.<sup>93</sup>

Unlike Ryleev’s “Voinarovskiy” or Byron’s “Mazeppa,” Pushkin’s “Poltava” was not greeted kindly by the critics. The loose organization of the poem into three divergent parts, the somewhat unsuccessful mixing of the personal and the political, and, most of all, the “unbelievability” of the main characters all called forth much criticism. Throughout the nineteenth century, it was generally considered to be one of Pushkin’s weaker creations. Nevertheless, it has continued to be widely read up to the present and its negative image of Mazepa is seared into the minds of many Russians from their very youth. It is unfortunate that the next important Romantic-era historical work dealing with the subject, Nikolai G. Ustrialov’s multi-volume *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia Petra Velikago* (*History of the Reign of Peter the Great*), was cut short by the author’s untimely death and did not reach the Battle of Poltava, since that work, composed in the shadow of Pushkin’s “Poltava,” might have revealed something new about how a professional historian of that time reacted to the poem.<sup>94</sup> A few decades later, it should be noted, the poem did directly inspire Tchaikovsky to compose his opera titled *Mazepa*, which repeated Pushkin’s major themes and even quoted many of his lines, though it may have differed from the poem in certain other ways. Indeed, right through the Cold War, Russian and Soviet critics still defended “Poltava” as a work of Russia’s greatest poetic genius, while Ukrainian critics long saw it as one of the most influential, if unjust, damnations of their controversial hetman. Only in recent times has one western critic seen Pushkin’s “Mazepa” in a more nuanced light and interpreted Pushkin’s Maria, the historical Motria Kochubei, as the personification of an innocent and beautiful Ukraine trampled by foreign foes and forced to choose between difficult

93. Pushkin, “Poltava,” 207.

94. N.G. Ustrialov, *Istoriia tsarstvovaniia Petra velikago*, St. Petersburg: Tipografiia vtorago otdieleniia Sobstvennogo . . . etc, 6 vols, 1858–63.

alternatives.<sup>95</sup> It remains to be seen whether this unusual view will have any lasting influence.

The publication of Pushkin's "Poltava" did not bring to an end new interpretations of Mazepa in history and literature, but the central historical questions of his "liberty" or "treason" were already fully developed and subsequent authors, with the exceptions of the Poles Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849), an émigré, and Tadeusz Bułharyn (1789–1859), a Russified literary critic who wrote under the Russian name Faddei Bulgarin), belong to a different era, a time subsequent to the Romantic period. Indeed, while Słowacki's *Mazeppa* (1839) was a work of genius that in certain ways surpassed everything previously written on the hetman, it was an entirely fictional work that addressed neither the question of liberty nor the question of treason which were central to the historical debate; Bułharyn's *Mazepa* (1834) was a literary flop which had no influence upon subsequent interpretations of the hetman.<sup>96</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, two great historians, the Russian Sergei Solov'ev (1820–1879) and the Ukrainian Mykola Kostomarov (1817–1885), were both doing original research on Mazepa that had a lasting influence upon further views of the Hetman.<sup>97</sup> Kostomarov's discovery of Hetman Orlyk (1672–1742)'s letter to the Ukrainian cleric living in Russia, Stefan Iavorsky, which explained Mazepa's motivations and mindset, was particularly important. But in the end, Solov'ev, while viewing the Ukrainian Cossacks as an essentially destructive force, and labeling Mazepa's action as "treason," was otherwise extremely matter-of-fact in his narration and circumspect in his conclusions, and the elderly Kostomarov, beaten down by a lifetime of censorship, and striving to

95. I refer here to Virginia M. Burns, *Pushkin's "Poltava": A Literary Structuralist Interpretation*, Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2005. It might also be noted that earlier "Poltava" had been lavishly praised by the influential pioneer of American Russian Studies, Ernest J. Simmons, *Pushkin*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1937, 292–3, who opined that it was "hard, compact, metallic—heroic in the best sense of the word . . . [and] completely objective." For contrary views, see the various works of Pauls cited above, and also Yu. Boiko, "Pushkin, Aleksandr," *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, vol. 4, Toronto: U. of Toronto P., 1993, 282–3. On Tchaikovsky's *Mazepa*, see George Jellinek, *History Through the Opera Glass: From the Rise of Caesar to the Fall of Napoleon*, White Plains, NY: Pro/Am Music Resources, 1994, 239–40.

96. See for example *Julius Slowacki's Mazeppa: A Tragedy*, Ann Arbor, MI: Alumni Press, 1929; Bulgarin in Russian: F. Bulgarin, *Mazepa; Povesty*, Moscow: Kronos, 1994. On Słowacki, see in particular Babinski, *Mazeppa Legend*, 125–45, and Miłosz, *History of Polish Literature*, 236–7; on Bułharyn, see Smyrniw, "Hetman Ivan Mazepa," 12.

97. For the Solov'ev-Kostomarov debates on Ukrainian history, see Thomas M. Prymak, *Mykola Kostomarov: A Biography*, Toronto: U. of Toronto P., 1996, 89–90, 113–14, 152–5.

make the Ukrainian national movement acceptable to the authorities, wrote that Mazepa simply did not embody any Ukrainian national ideals.

Further reinterpretation of Mazepa only occurred slightly before, and in the aftermath of, the great revolution of 1917–21. That event forced a large number of Ukrainian intellectuals into exile, and they redeveloped the ideas of Voltaire, Scherer, and Lesur, mixing these with certain of the patriotic tones of the semi-fictional *Istoriia Rusov*, and then added the new data discovered by Solovev and Kostomarov, to create a positive image of the hetman which could not be expressed by historians in the Soviet Union, though certain minor Ukrainian writers of the 1920s temporarily managed to publish something positive about the controversial Ukrainian ruler. In general, however, only outside the USSR was the idea of Mazepa as national hero fully developed, in particular by the novelist Bohdan Lepky (1872–1941), who was a Ukrainian literature professor at Cracow University, and by the historians Ilko Borshchak writing in France, Borys Krupnytsky writing in Germany, and Mykola Andrusiak writing in Poland.<sup>98</sup>

However, in the Soviet Union from 1930 on, Stalin and his successors severely repressed all discussion of the question of Ukrainian national liberation under Mazepa and the old stereotypes promoted by Peter, Prokopovych, Bantysh-Kamensky, and Pushkin were simply codified and made mandatory. Thus, even in the Cold-War era Soviet-Ukrainian historical encyclopedia (actually published during a time of relative thaw), presented the old image of the hetman as an isolated, Polish-influenced “traitor,” who oppressed the common folk who labeled him as “accursed” in their folklore, concluding that “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists in the past and today try in every way to hush up Mazepa’s treasonous intentions to give Ukraine to the Poland of the gentry and against historical fact create around him the aura of a fighter for Ukraine’s freedom. . . . Ukrainian Soviet historians have fully exposed Mazepa’s treason in contrast to the bourgeois nationalist falsifiers.”<sup>99</sup>

98. On the literary figures, see Smyrniw, “Hetman Ivan Mazepa,” 13–15. As for the historians, to the list of which Fedir Umanets (1841–1908), Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866–1934), and Viacheslav Lypynsky (1882–1931) should be added, although there is no general survey of their contributions to Mazepa scholarship. On Borshchak, who was probably the most innovative with regard to Mazepa, see Iaroslav Dashkevych, *Postati*, Lviv: Piramida, 2007, 461–71; on Hrushevsky, see Arkadii Zhukovsky, “Hetman Ivan Mazepa v otsyntsi Mykhhaila Hrushevskoho,” *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 6, 1998, 134–45; and on Lypynsky, see Iury Tereshchenko, “Hetman Ivan Mazepa v otsyntsi Viacheslava Lypynskoho,” in his *Skarby istorychnykh tradytsii*, Kyiv: Tempora, 2011, 310–30.

99. V.A. Diadychenko, “Mazepa, Ivan Stepanovych,” *Radianska entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy*, vol. 3, Kyiv: URE, 1971, 67. Also see B. Krupnytsky, “Mazepa and Soviet Historiography,” *Ukrainian Review* 3, 49–53.

Meanwhile, as once in the time of Voltaire and Nordberg, and Hrabianka and Velychko, a contrary view could only be fully expressed abroad. Thus, in a Ukrainian émigré encyclopedia published at about this same time, it was noted that:

for over 250 years, Russian and Soviet historians have done everything to blacken the name of this great Ukrainian patriot and statesman. But in spite of some controversial evaluations of his character and certain of his actions, in Ukrainian historiography Mazepa's brilliant name remains in the Ukrainian national tradition as a symbol of a great patriot and statesman, and the era of his rule has been accurately called the time of the Mazepa Renaissance.<sup>100</sup>

This sharp divergence of opinion on Mazepa was only somewhat ameliorated in the 1980s and 1990s when Harvard-trained Ukrainian historian Orest Subtelny argued that in his own time, Mazepa was neither a terrible traitor to Russia, nor a great national hero, but rather a typical eighteenth-century autonomist who defended local aristocratic prerogatives against an especially harsh encroaching absolutism.<sup>101</sup> Shortly later, the USSR collapsed, censorship temporarily disappeared, previously restricted archives were opened, and a Russian historian, Tatiana Tairova-Iakovleva, argued that Mazepa remained loyal to Peter for as long as he could, only going over to the Swedes when all other options for Ukrainian autonomy had been exhausted. She further pointed out that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries love and marriage between older men and very young women (as for example in the case of the Ukrainian national hero praised by the Soviets, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, and his beautiful sixteen-year-old betrothed, Elena, whose supposed abduction was the spark that ignited the great Cossack insurrection against Poland) was quite common and caused no special

100. O. Ohloblyn, "Mazepa, Ivan," in *Entsyklopediia ukrainoznavstva*, vol. 4, Paris: Molode zhyttia, 1962, 1430–32. Ohloblyn, the paramount Ukrainian émigré historian of the Cold-War era, also authored the most authoritative biography of Mazepa for that time: O. Ohloblyn, *Hetman Ivan Mazepa ta ioho doba*, New York: NTSh, 1960. See also Liubomyr Vynar, *Kozatska Ukraina: Vybrani pratsi*, ed. V. Stepankov, Kyiv: NANU and UIT, 2003, 378–458.

101. See Orest Subtelny, "Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 2, 1978, 158–83; Orest Subtelny, *The Mazepists*, Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1981; *ibid.*, 178–205, is a translation of Orlyk's Letter to Iavorsky (1721); Orest Subtelny, *Domination of Eastern Europe: Native Nobilities and Foreign Absolutism 1500–1715*, Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 1986; and Orest Subtelny, "Porivnialnyi pidkhdid u doslidzhenni postati Mazepy," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 2, 1991, 125–9.

public consternation. Moreover, she continued, their love affair was completely platonic and so Pushkin's entire stereotype of the lecherous Mazepa was quite off-base.<sup>102</sup>

In summarizing the varied Enlightenment and early Romantic views of Mazepa, it is clear that the basic questions of liberty and betrayal were already posed by the first writers on the subject. Beginning with Tsar Peter and his subservient cleric, Teofan Prokopovych, Mazepa was labeled a perfidious traitor who for no good reason other than hatred for Muscovy and Orthodoxy tried to hand over his country to the Poles, who had been ascendant there so recently. Indeed, Mazepa's close identification with Poland dates from this earliest period and was to be a factor in Russian portrayals of him right through to the time of the loyalist Russian historian Bantysh-Kamensky. It resurfaced once again during the darkest period of the Soviet dictatorship.

But the opposite view of Mazepa as the apostle of Ukrainian "liberty" also dates from this earliest period and was most memorably expressed by Voltaire in his history of Charles XII. Voltaire too saw some personal motives for Mazepa's defection, but he carefully balanced these with Mazepa's purely political goals and thus the hetman emerges from his account as a statesman of some stature, one sincerely dedicated to Ukrainian liberty. The Swedish historian Nordberg agreed with most of this assessment and added further details. Later on, other historians like Scherer, Lesur, the author of the *Istoriia Rusov*, and finally the Ukrainian historians of the early twentieth century developed these themes even farther and began to address the question as more clearly one of "national," rather than purely "estate," liberty, and the freedom of the "Ukrainian" nation rather than simply the "Cossack" nation. It is notable, however, that all of these authors either published outside of the Russian Empire, or quietly and anonymously within it.

For within the empire, it remained hazardous to express such openly oppositional views. Thus the first Ukrainian chroniclers, and later on, loyalist historians like Rigel'man and even Bantysh-Kamensky, though they might have sympathized with the Ukrainians on some scores, remained adamant in their condemnation of Mazepa's "treason" when it came to politics. Such views were qualified somewhat by the great Ukrainian and Russian historians of the nineteenth century like

102. T.G. Iakovleva, "Mazepa-Hetman: V poistakh istoricheskoi ob'ektivnosti," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* 4, 2003 (available at: <http://vivovoco.rsl.ru/vv/papers/history/Mazepa.HTM>, accessed 3 January 2014), T.G. Iakovleva, *Mazepa*, Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2007; T.G. Iakovleva, *Ivan Mazepa i rossiiskaia imperiia: Istoriia "Predatelstva"*, Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2011.

Kostomarov and Solov'ev, but they were once again firmly ensconced in the public sphere by the Soviet dictatorship. Such views, it should be stressed, whether of Mazepa as traitor or Mazepa as would-be liberator, emphasized the elderly statesman, not the youthful lover.

The Napoleonic era changed this situation considerably. Inspired by Voltaire's story of Mazepa's "wild ride" (which did in fact have some loose documentary basis), Byron and his poetic and artistic heirs from Hugo to Delacroix, Zaleski, and Liszt all turned away from the elderly statesman to the youthful lover as the central image in Mazepa's struggle for freedom. But "liberty" itself, pure and simple, remained their catchword. It should be noted that all these authors and artists were English, French, or even Hungarian and Polish; not a single one was Russian or even Ukrainian. When Russian poets finally did take up Mazepa, either positively, like Ryleev, or negatively, like Pushkin, it was again the elderly hetman, not the youthful lover, who was depicted, and Pushkin definitely used Mazepa's reputation with the ladies for his own special purpose.

Throughout it all, of course, there was the occasional voice of moderation and reason, which balanced contradictory evidence and integrated both "liberty" and also "treason" into its tale. This was certainly true of the greatest or best-trained historians like Voltaire and von Engel, and later on, Kostomarov and Solovev. Even the poet Ryleev's picture of Mazepa contains considerable nuance. But the general polarity in views of Mazepa in both history and legend, as first established during the Enlightenment and early Romantic periods from Peter to Pushkin remained predominant up to our own times. Recent historiographical developments give us hope that this polarity is presently diminishing, but untoward political developments in Russia could very well resurface once again and the black and white themes of completely nefarious treason or untrammelled heroic liberty once again gain the upper hand.