"Mylost' Bozhiia, Ukraynu...svobodyvshaia..." and Ukrainian Literature after (and before) Poltava: The Missing Link
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"Mylost´ Bozhiia, Ukraynu…svobodyvshaia…" and Ukrainian Literature after (and before) Poltava: The Missing Link

George G. Grabowicz

The Ukrainian school drama lengthily (as was then the custom) entitled "Милость Божія Украину от неудоб носимих обид лядских чрез Богдана Зиновія Хмельницкаго преславного войск запорозких гетмана, свободившая, и дарованными ему над ляхами победами возвеличившая, на незабвенную толиких его щедрот память репрезентованная в школах кіевских 1728 лета" (God's Grace which has freed Ukraine from Polish Bondage through Bohdan Zynovii Khmel´nyts´kyi, the most glorious Hetman of the Zaporozhian Host, and which has elevated him through the victories over the Poles that were vouchsafed to him is hereby represented in living memory of His beneficence in the Kyivan schools in the year 1728) has occupied its niche in the canon of eighteenth-century Ukrainian literature ever since its (relatively late) discovery by Mykhailo Maksymovych and publication (in fragments) in 1857—on the two hundredth anniversary of the death of the same Bohdan Khmel´nyts´kyi.[1] According to genre and customary practice the title has since then (beginning with Maksymovych's first comments in his 1857 publication) been elided to "Mylost´ Bozhiia" (God's Grace), thus obscuring the "Ukraynu" that follows and the verb forms ("svobodyvshaia" and "vozvelychyvshaia") that come still further. (It should be noted, for example, that while Heorhii Konys´kyi's "Voskresenye mertvykh" (Resurrection of the Dead) of 1746 does convey in its short title the focus and meaning of the play, Mytrofan Dovhalevs´kyi's "Komycheskoe deistvie" (A Comic Play) of 1736 hardly suggests by the short title alone that the play deals with Christ's nativity and above all its eschatological message.) In the case of "Mylost´ Bozhiia," this conventional and altogether "natural" elision of the name (of long to short title) can serve as a metaphor and synecdoche for the much larger and much more fraught conceptual elision, or indeed blind spot, that has come to exist around this work—and its larger role and significance—in both Ukrainian literary historiography and in Ukrainian historiography as such. In light of this, a new and closer reading

of this text can help recontextualize our sense of Ukrainian society in the near aftermath of the debacle of Poltava and reorient our understanding of the continuities and discontinuities of Ukrainian intellectual history.

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The critical attention devoted to "Mylost´ Bozhiia" (hereafter MB) in the century and a half since its publication—not to say almost three centuries since its writing and first performance—has been moderate as to volume, but basically constricted as to the issues perceived and addressed. As is often the case, the first formulation of the questions to be asked of the work was destined to become a kind of primary imprinting, channeling the various subsequent readings and the very assessment of the work. For Maksymovych, who was clearly enthusiastic about the work and its merits, the main issue was that of authorship—which he, quite wrongheadedly, ascribed to Feofan Prokopovych (largely based on the fact that the manuscript was found in two different manuscript collections of the latter's works, following his "Vladimir."[2] The incongruity of ascribing to Peter's principal ideologue a work that in its overall pathos and in various particulars was in manifest opposition to that Petrine legacy and ideology was soon articulated (by Osyp Bodians´kyi himself and later by N. Petrov)—although the argument (understandably so, given the exigencies of the Russian imperial discourse) was couched not in terms of ideological opposition to imperial design, but in terms of less sensitive, although equally persuasive, stylistic and also biographical reasons. While still not definitively resolved, the question of authorship by general consensus clearly does not devolve on Prokopovych, but falls on other candidates possibly such as Feofan Trofymovych or Innokentii Nerunovych, both then teachers of poetics and rhetoric at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy where the work was first performed. (Hordyns´kyi persuasively dismisses the probable authorship of the former, and has nothing to say of the latter.)[3]

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The issue that was raised by Antonovych and Drahomanov in their publication (the formulation by all indication being Drahomanov's) related to the ideology (or "point of view") of the work—that is, given the "historical songs" context of the larger work in which it was published; thus the claim that "Различие... между драмой и народними песнями состоит в более козацко-религіозном чем народно-экономической точке зрения" (The difference...between the drama and the folk songs rests on the greater Cossack-and-religious perspective than on the popular and economic one).[4] While pointing in the right direc-

tion (that is, seeking to identify the guiding ethos or "center" of the work), the argument still fragments the larger issue of ideology into its class components and avoids a closer look at the play's actual semiotics, rhetoric, and above all symbolic thrust. The notion that the work is defined by its religious/generic form and convention has remained a topos to this day.[5]

Parallel to this—and equally established in the critical reception—is the line of reasoning that sees MB as a work exemplifying Cossack-Ukrainian patriotism. As was forcefully argued by Serhii Iefremov at the beginning of the last century, "Всю драму прошиває червоною ниткою козаколюбний настрій та український патріотизм, що тоді й виявлявся саме в симпатіях до козацького ладу" (Like a red thread running through the entire drama is empathy for the Cossacks and a sense of Ukrainian patriotism—which at the time precisely expressed itself in sympathy for the Cossack order); he goes on to examine, however, not the obviously central issue that that implies—not the Cossacophilism as such, but the core issue of the nature of this "patriotism," and specifically "*Ukrainian* patriotism," its structure and articulation—but veers off into decidedly secondary matters, such as the work's loyalism ("*obrusytel´stvo*"), its appeals to class solidarity (between the Cossack *starshyna* and the rank and file), and so on.[6] As much as this topos of patriotism has remained central in discussions of or comments on the drama, its examination, for the most part, has not progressed much further than Iefremov's generalization.

A major exception here is the monograph-length study by Iaroslav Hordyns´kyi that reviews the earlier critical reception and thoroughly and perceptively discusses the language of the work, its salient formal and typological features, with particular attention to comparative moments, the work's literary and literary-theoretical models, its possible relation to the Ukrainian *dumy*, and so on.[7] To this day it remains the clear critical high point—even though it stems from the early twentieth century and is separated from us by even a few more years than the events of the play (1648) from its first viewers (1728). Particularly valuable is Hordyns´kyi's situating of the work in its broader generic context—not only that of Polish literature, and of school drama, and the Cossack chronicles, but of European literature as such, and specifically, too, his detailed examination of the drama's reliance on Samuel Twardowski's epic poem *Wojna domowa* (Civil War; 1681). And yet for all the breadth of perspective and the sobriety of his approach—and indeed despite observations that clearly seem to point him on the right track, especially the justified claim that MB stands quite apart from all earlier and later Ukrainian school dramas[8]—Hordyns´kyi consistently misses the core point. This apparent puzzle, of why the altogether obvious remains obscured, is itself deserving of attention.

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The central problem that MB has presented to most critics—that is, a putative split between its Cossack (and historical and secular) and its religious (and allegorical and generic, school drama/propaedeutic) perspectives—may be seen as immanent, as inhering in its very structure. (For Hordyns´kyi this is the work's central problem, indeed aporia, as he argues at length.)[9] Given MB's brevity one can quickly recapitulate the plot and proceed to test this proposition. Thus, in act 1, scene 1, Khmel´nyts´kyi laments the present state of Cossackdom under Polish oppression ("долю козацькую оплакует") and considers his course ("і новие совіти в ум пріемлет"; literally: takes new council to his mind), and concludes with the well-established apocryphal topos (noted earlier in *Wojna domowa* and attributed to Władysław's words to Khmel´nyts´kyi):

> Когда шабля при нас єсть: не зовсім пропала
> Многоіменитая оная похвала…
> Не отобрали єще ляхи нам остатка
> Жив Бог і не умерла козацькая матка. (307)[10]
>
> When we have sabers by our side, our much
> Renowned glory is not lost…
> The Poles have hardly managed to take all:
> God is alive—as is our Cossack mother.

A chorus consisting of the Muse and Apollo appears and foretells defeat for the Poles. Act 2, scene 1 again shows Khmel´nyts´kyi, this time persuading the Cossacks in a long speech to join him in the struggle and either die or free Ukraine; thus:

> А мні далеко лучше видиться і главу
> Свою положить, ніж би козацьку славу
> І Україну з крайнім студом потеряти
> Іли неблагодарним врагом голдовати (308)
>
> And I can much more see laying down
> My head than losing Cossack glory
> And with utmost shame Ukraine herself
> Or paying homage to a thankless enemy

The camp commander (*koshovyi*) of the Cossacks seconds him in this, saying:

Відаєм, яко всім нам Україна-мати,
Кто ж не похощет руку помощі подати
Погибающей матці, був би той твердіший
Над камень, над льва був би таковий лютіший!
...
Будем себе і матку нашу боронити,
Аще нам і умерти, будем ляхов бити! (310–11)

We know full well that Ukraine is mother to us all
And he who would not lend a helping hand
To save a dying mother would be more stony
Than stone itself, would be more feral than a wild lion.
...
Ourselves we will defend and we'll defend our mother
Even unto death, and we will smite the Poles.

In scene 2 of act 2 the Cossacks come up to Khmel´nyts´kyi and report the onset of battle (the Barabash episode—that is, the coming over of the "registered Cossacks" to Khmel´nyts´kyi's side); he urges them on. In act 3, scene 1, Ukraine (Ukraïna) is shown addressing God and the audience in a prayer to aid Khmel´nyts´kyi, to allow him like Moses to lead her out of captivity:

...помощ ниспошли, владико,
Іже древле з Мойсеєм милость сотворивий,
І тім ізраїлскоє плем'я свободивий
От роботи Єгипта, провед по пустині
Столбом сугубим: ти сам, ти тожде і нині
І Богдану моєму яви неізмірну
Благодать твою! Буди вождю правовірну
Столп кріпості, от лиця врагов заступая
І правовірних єго воєв защищая... (313)

Send down Thine aid O Lord
As once Thou didst vouchsafe to Moses
When Thou didst free the Israelite tribe
From Egypt's yoke and led it through the desert
With a pillar of fire. So also now, Thyself,
Do Thou reveal to my Bohdan Thy boundless Grace.
Be Thou a Pillar of strength to my true General,
Defend him and his faithful warriors from the enemy...

In scene 2 of act 3 a personified "Vist´" (News or Tidings or even History herself) appears, and after her invocation,

> Не плач, о Україно, престани тужити,
> Печаль твою на радость время преложити:
> Призрі на тя з небесе вишняго зіниця,
> Поборствует по тебі Божія десниця! (314)

> Weep no more, Ukraine, cease your lamentation,
> 'Tis time to change your woe to jubilation:
> The eye of the Lord has looked down upon you from on high
> And His mighty right hand is at your side!

she recounts the events of the various successful battles against the Poles. Ukraine replies with gratitude and a Chorus confirms that it was indeed God's Providence that brought about these events. Act 4, scene 1 (another act with only one scene) shows Khmel´nyts´kyi's triumphal entrance into Kyiv: he himself gives praise to God and then is met by the "Dity ukraïns´kiï" (Ukrainian children) who praise his deeds and also a "Pysar" (Scribe) who does the same; Khmel´nyts´kyi replies in a longer speech that it is indeed God's doing, not man's:

> Радості сеї не я і не добродітель,
> Кая моя вина, то творець і содітель
> Наш; благодареніє єму возсилайте,
> Єго дивную ко нам милость величайте[.] (319)

> Of this our joy I'm not the author, it is not
> My doing; it is all the work of
> Our Creator. Address your gratitude to Him,
> And praise His wondrous Grace.

In act 5, scene 1, Ukraine appears rejoicing in victory and God's Grace. In scene 2 she is joined by "Smotriniie" (God's Providence) and by a chorus. God's Providence instructs Ukraine as to the meaning of this beneficence and foretells her a safe and secure future under the scepter of the Russian monarchy and on the solid foundation ("kamen´," or rock-Petrus-Peter) of the Petrine State. When in the course of this it becomes apparent that that rock (Peter I) is mortal ("Смерть разві єдиная позняя сокрушить") and Ukraine expresses fear for her future, she is reassured ("Стой не бойся, за камень первий сокрушенний, / Камень другий, не менший будет положенний"), and God's Providence launches into a prognosis of the beneficent coming reign of Peter II and of

Hetman Danylo Apostol. Ukraine replies with gratitude, and a Chorus sings the praises of Khmel´nyts´kyi and his deeds in impeccable Sapphic strophes. A brief epilogue in prose, with a surfeit of Church Slavonicisms, explains what it is that the viewer has just seen.

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Even from a synoptic recapitulation it would appear that the kind of radical disjunction that Hordyns´kyi argued at length and earlier critics intuited is not really in evidence: while acts 1, 2, and 3 (with the exception of the final chorus) stress the military events and the circumstances, the oppression leading up to the war and then the conduct of the successful war, and the latter two acts explore its larger meaning, especially within the Divine plan, an opposition between the two is hardly rigorous or insurmountable. Khmel´nyts´kyi's role is not confined, as Hordyns´kyi seems to suggest, only to the first three acts, and indeed he appears not only in act 4 where he confirms the deeper sense of what has occurred, but even—albeit in projected form—in act 5, where the chorus apotheosizes his role and legacy-ordained-from-high. In fact, a disjunction could be inferred only if he were, as Hordyns´kyi assumes, the centerpiece, the Center, of the play. But he is not.

As the play makes clear, that Center is Ukraine (*Ukraïna*), and indeed not just in and of herself, not as yet another country (Poland, Russia—indeed Malorossiia, in which guise she is indeed mentioned once), but precisely in her quality as transformed-by-God's-Grace; Ukraine-under-God's-Providence. The structures—dramatic, rhetoric, and symbolic especially—that project this are various, but they coalesce persuasively and unmistakably. And this is highlighted by the fact, as Hordyns´kyi notes, that MB is the only Ukrainian school drama to so project Ukraine as an incarnate presence—no other school drama does so.[11] In and of itself this emphasis on *Ukraïna* and on such extensions of her as "ukraïns´ki dity" (as if emphasizing that this is no fluke, but a structure) is surely remarkable, and basically unexpected, and pushes back our understanding of the timeline of this collective self-designation—especially when taken not strictly within the Cossack milieu—by decades, if not a whole century.

One crucial moment here is that somewhat paradoxically, given the Jesuit school drama's mission to propagate faith and doctrine, but quite in keeping with its openness to new forms and dramatic innovation as such, MB does not in fact strictly distinguish between the secular and the religious; in fact it basically projects a kind of synthesis of the two where Ukraine, the struggle for her liberation, her future existence and so on, are bathed as it were in God's grace, raised to a higher, sanctified level. Within this frame even administrative or economic injunctions (as in Khmel´nyts´kyi's speech at the end of act 4

enjoining brotherhood, equality, military preparedness, and so on) are cast not as secular desiderata, but as higher, sanctified virtues. For its part, the religious component or perspective is basically shorn of its metaphysics and abstractness and reduced to or rather focused all but exclusively on Ukraine, her righteous cause, and the special place she has in God's plans. The single passage that would appear to focus matters on a "religious" level—that is, in terms of universal, transnational and supraethnic, indeed ethical considerations—namely the final Chorus of act 4 (titled "Boh skorbiashchykh utishaiet" (God comforts the grieving), which describes God's infinite mercy to all the lowly and afflicted, also has notes (echoing earlier locutions and the topos of Ukraine-as-orphan) that make it Ukraine-specific, in such lines as "За безмірную милості пучину, / Призрів на бідну звище сиротину..." (Because of His boundless mercy/ He noticed from above the poor orphan).

In short, the "perspective" of MB reflects a fusion, indeed a synthesis of both the Cossack ethos and rhetoric (constituting in large measure, as Hordyns´kyi argued, echoes of the Cossack Chronicles and the Ukrainian translation of *Wojna domowa*) and at the same time the ethos and rhetoric of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy and its adaptation of school drama conventions to the exigencies of the day. A particularly telling moment here is the final speech by God's Providence as to the future strategy that Ukraine will have to follow to defend herself from new enemies:

...оруж'єм не можна острим воєвати,
Язиком много начнуть на тебе щекати,
Аки грубу в народіх тебе поносяще,
Аки наук чуждую тебе обносяще.
Но Бог, тя во воїнском іскустві і штуці
Прославивий, прославить той же і в науці.
І сіє колегіум чрез Петра Могилу
Основав, произведет в толикую силу,
Что от него вітії красноглаголіві,
Тонкії філософи, богоглаголіві
Богослови, сильнії і ділом і словом
Проповідники, стадо пасущі Христово,
Пастиріє премудрі, святі, преподобні,
Древним оним церковним світилам подобні,
І інни ізрядній мужіє ізийдуть,
К тому начатки сії совершенство приймуть.
Тако ти, мир ли будеш, іли брань іміти,
Над врагом твоїм главу будеш возносити. (322–23)

One cannot always fight but with sharp weapons,
For they will then malign you with sharp tongues

And slander you as crude among the nations,
And rough and foreign to all schooling.
But the Lord who hath elevated you in all the martial
Arts will also raise you up in learning.
For having founded through Petro Mohyla
This College he will provide it with such force that
Eloquent spokesmen and subtle philosophers,
Divines in search of God and preachers
Strong in word and deed, and wise
And holy pastors who will tend Christ's flock
And mirror the exemplars of the Church
Will spring along with other peerless men
From its appointed womb and thus fulfill
Its mission. And so in peace or war against
Your enemy you'll proudly hold your head.

This conceptualization of Ukraine's future as depending on ranks of philosophers and scholars, and preachers and men of faultless moral character, clearly projects a new stage of collective identity and the tasks facing it. While drawing its strength from military victory and the valor of the Cossack class, it clearly looks beyond it. In a symbolic sense it echoes in literary and intellectual form the political and voluntarist vision of some one hundred years earlier, when in 1620 Hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachnyi enrolled the Zaporozhian Host in the Kyiv (Bohoiavlens´ke) confraternity.

What shapes this new vision, and is, as already noted, the core presence in the play, is a Ukraine conceived not only in the popular mode and particularly in terms of the Cossack ethos as a common Great Mother (echoing, as we shall see, such Orthodox polemical projections as the grieving Mother Church, for example, in Meletii Smotryts´kyi's *Thrēnos* of 1609)—which itself is already a major stage in crystallizing collective identity—but also as a new value endowed with transcendent validity, in short Ukraine blessed and illuminated by God's grace. This Providentialist understanding of Ukraine is empowered by both the Cossack military victories of the Khmel´nyts´kyi era, and the historical memory of his triumphal entry into Kyiv in 1648, his blessing by the patriarch of Jerusalem, the existence of the Hetmanate in Left-Bank Ukraine, and so on, and a sense of a historical crossroads and ongoing profound pressures, but also the fact that a new clerical and intellectual establishment was in place to articulate this vision—and to do so in literary form that meets the requirements of genre and esthetics. While the requisite formal analysis must be left for another occasion, it can be noted that MB's verse form and diction reflect a sophisticated poetics—based, of course, on the Polish models of the day. And while its poetic skill is not, as the general consensus has it, on the level of Prokopovych's *Vladimir*, it offers by way of recompense a surprisingly new and

coherent vision of society and identity, of a Ukraine that has quite discernible modern features.

At the heart of this, I would argue, is a deft conflation of historical time—in fact a vision basically transcending historical time and projecting a higher, almost mythical essence. For in fact the time of MB is twofold, although with no dramatic or narrative concession to that fact, nor an acknowledgement that such a conflation is occurring. On the one hand, the events of MB (of its first four acts) are those leading up to 1648, the Khmel´nychchyna and the liberation of Ukraine from Polish rule, culminating in the hetman's triumphal entry into Kyiv. At the same time, the time of MB, as projected in act 5, is the future that is being foretold in 1728—almost twenty years after Poltava and three years after Peter I's death, with the subsequent accession to the throne of Peter II and the accompanying great hopes in Ukraine for a new era and for the successful hetmancy of Danylo Apostol. And in this perspective, what occurred earlier is simply deleted: the debacle of Poltava is elided from the narrative, as is any mention of any intervening historical events: the devastating period of internal strife called the Ruin (*ruïna*) and Mazepa—in fact, all historical events. All of that is deleted, presumably as a degradation and an obscene betrayal of the hopes generated by 1648. In effect, time and history are suspended, and everything occurring between Khmel´nyts´kyi's triumphs in 1648 and the renewal of hope in 1728 is bracketed out.

And yet an allusion to what is not said explicitly is implied, and implicitly understood. When Ukraine says in her speech at the beginning of act 5, rejoicing at the triumphs of Khmel´nyts´kyi, that her relief transcends the ability of rhetoric or history to describe it,

> О, ниже риторскими усти ісказанной
> Ниже історическьким пером описанной
> Фортину моєй! Се бо Бог мні пособствуяй,
> Ізлія на мя своєй благодаті струя,
> Совлек з мене остроє рубище печалі,
> В ризу мя веселія одія; престали
> Бурнії свіріпіти на мя аквіліоне,
> Тишайшії явились ко мні алціоне:
> Преч лютая от мене зима отступила,
> А благоприятная весна наступила... (320)
>
> For neither uttered by the lips of Rhetoric
> Or written by the pen of History
> Is this, my Fortune! For God Himself
> Hath shed on me His Grace, and taken from
> My shoulders that cloak of misery and clothed

Me in the garments of salvation.
For wrathful Aquilon hath been replaced
By mild Favonius. Fierce Winter hath receded
And blessed Spring is near...

one can hardly doubt that the clothing of grief that she has just shed with God's grace, and the fierce winter that she has just left behind, and so on, refer more to the period of oppression and persecution following the failure at Poltava than to the period preceding Khmel´nyts´kyi's victory. The latter is historically distant and largely a topos of memory; the former, the period between Poltava and the present (that is, 1728), is immediate, indeed so immediate that it still must be addressed gingerly and with circumlocution. In fact that recent period is so dark that it defies the power of the rhetorician's lips and the historian's pen; it is suggested instead by the power of hope in a reversal of fortune. In a word, the defeat of the recent past is countered and reversed by a divinely ordained victory in the more distant past. At the same time it is most revealing that while nothing is said about that long "winter," there is also no attempt to curry favor by denouncing Mazepa and those who sided with him, as Prokopovych was very quick to do in his "Epinikion" (1709). Moreover, the requisite avowal of loyalty to Peter I and his legacy is also basically kept to a minimum, occupying seven lines of the speech of God's Providence, while the attention devoted to the hopes placed on Peter II and Danylo Apostol is easily twice as long. Part of the logic of this reversal, however, is that the great bulk of its hope is placed on one's own resources—the already cited prospect of nurturing one's own elite (which forms the bulk of that same speech), of establishing solidarity between the various levels of Ukrainian society, specifically among the Cossacks (cf. Khmel´nyts´kyi's speech in act 4, scene 1) and then the concluding statement of Ukraine herself and the encomium for Khmel´nyts´kyi (act 5, scene 2, 323–24). And above all the rekindling of hope is predicated on a transcending of history, of breaking free of its all too obvious fetters—precisely with God's grace. It is a true and sublime *deus ex machina*—a divine intervention that overthrows the logic of oppression, subjugation, and defeat and effects the Gospel promise that the last will be first.

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The deeper meaning here, and the true measure of MB and the ground that it breaks, consists of the way it fits into—and indeed supplies a "missing link" for—the continuum of Ukrainian literature seen from the perspective of an ideal or transtemporal order like the one envisioned by T. S. Eliot (cf. his *Tradition and the Individual Talent*). According to this notion (discussed by various other critics and scholars as well) the order that some literary works

project is not always chronological or causal, but it can be deeply indicative of overarching values and patterns that are revealed by newly discovered works or new interpretations of works; as Eliot puts it, "the past [can be] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past."[12] In this regard MB is particularly revealing. For while for all practical purposes it lay mute between its staging in 1728 and its publication in 1857, it can now speak to us in a very eloquent way about essential moments and patterns in the longue durée of Ukrainian literature and the formation of modern Ukrainian national consciousness. This is precisely the core content here: the articulation of collective identity, and with it of collective aspirations. These may leave distinct intertextual traces in later works, but above and beyond that they also express profound, underlying collective feelings, attitudes, and indeed convictions that will necessarily surface again. The present exposition of this will be somewhat sketchy; a more detailed analysis is a task for the future.

In a retrospective sense, looking back onto the seventeenth century, MB sheds light on, and provides clear thematic and rhetorical continuation of, at least two major works of early modern Ukrainian literature. The first is Meletii Smotryts´kyi's *Thrēnos* (published in Polish in Vilnius in 1610—and which, most significantly, marks the *terminus a quo* from which the large and ramified polemical literature, be it from the Orthodox or Uniate side, let alone the Roman Catholic, is conducted all but exclusively in Polish; this does not, of course, make it any less Ukrainian). *Thrēnos* is a watershed work, in which the Ukrainian-Ruthenian Orthodox Church, presented precisely in the potent archetype of the grieving mother and widow, laments over the apostasy of her sons, as scores upon scores of noble families—the very enumeration of the prominent names can still astound us as to the enormity of the cultural loss, the hemorrhaging of a society—and with it virtually the entire higher clergy, in effect the entire elite, abandon their native society and culture and aligns themselves with "the enemy." While modern historiography may now rightly question the degree to which this realignment is a "betrayal" of one's nation, the enormity of the shift and the attendant loss of the creative potential of the future Ukrainian nation is unquestionable. And if the process of Ukrainian nation formation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was, as is generally conceded, enormously difficult and extended, and if its present political future is still cloudy, one (and not necessarily "primordialist") inference that can be drawn is that neither the betrayals during the longue durée nor the defeats at the hands of the enemies were imaginary.

What is also clear is that Smotryts´kyi's powerful metaphor of the grieving mother becomes in a relatively short time, particularly with the intensification of the Polish-Ukrainian confrontation and then the Khmel´nyts´kyi uprising, the operant metaphor, indeed *the* paradigm, for the Ukrainian side, for Ukraine

as such. In fact, to the extent that church and religious culture *are* the nation, that identification was quite apparent in Smotryts´kyi as well.[13]

The second major work that throws light on and foreshadows MB, and is in turn highlighted by it, is Kasiian Sakovych's "Virshi na zhalosnyi pohreb zatsnoho rytsera Petra Konashevycha Sahaidachnoho..." (Verses on the Sorrowful Burial of the Noble Knight Petro Konashevych Sahaidachnyi; 1622), in which the eulogy and panegyric for the deceased hetman—the very one who united, at least symbolically, the Cossacks with the church—becomes a vehicle for programmatically expressing the rights of the Cossacks, especially by virtue of their military service and valor, to honor, dignity, social status, and indeed all the privileges—and obligations—attending to the Renaissance notions of *virtu*.[14] It is also a watershed text in which a conscious, Western, specifically Renaissance set of values is proposed, in sophisticated literary form, as a cultural and ethical model not just for the Cossacks but implicitly for Ukrainian society as well; by its very articulation it is also a recapitulation of the linkage that Sahaidachnyi intended between the Cossack and the religious/civil side. Not least of all it expresses an urgent claim to status and legitimacy, which was also the underlying question in Ukrainian political life throughout this period. The way in which these values and claims are repeated in MB is altogether obvious: it is ambient in the work, but is also specifically, and repeatedly and intertextually stressed; for example, in Khmel´nyts´kyi's speech in act 2, scene 1:

Відаєте-бо всі, і не токмо ви сами,
Но і весь світ гораздо відає зо вами,
Яко вірности в нас ляхи дознавали много,
Колико отвратили от голов їх злого,
Когда за них на брані перси виставляли,
Когда кров проливали і голови клали,
...
Когда ми їх от татар і турков преділи
З непристанним опаством всегда боронили,
А они за нами, як за муром стояли... (308–9)

For we all know full well and all
The world knows well how loyally
We served the Poles, how much disaster
We averted with our breasts
How much we spilled our blood
How oft we laid down our heads...
...

When we in constant danger faced
The Turks and Tatars, and the Poles
Stood behind us as behind a wall...

It is altogether fitting that the argument of serving as the *antemurale Christianitatis*, so often invoked by the Polish side, is now invoked against it.

In the eighteenth century, echoes of MB are apparent in the seminal "Razhovor Velykorossiy s Malorossiieiu" (Conversation between Great and Little Russia) of Semen Divovych (1762). In a sense this can be postulated in a "default mode": to the extent that MB articulates (as so many critics have intuited and as Hordyns´kyi has shown) various topoi and arguments of the various Cossack chronicles (the Samovydets, Hryhorii Hrabianka's, and Samiilo Velychko's),[15] and since the "Razhovor" is a programmatic work that recapitulates these various chronicles in its effort to make the legal and historical case for the Cossack establishment's legitimacy and rights vis-à-vis the Russian crown, the overlap will be significant, and couched above all in the predominant role that is ascribed to Khmel´nyts´kyi. The differences are also significant, however, and they stem from the loyalism and proceduralism and Cossack "establishmentarianism" of the later text: the opening to and focus on other sectors of Ukrainian society that we see in MB is not so significant in "Razhovor."

By this same token echoes of MB can be seen in the work that culminates the tradition of the Cossack chronicles and serves as the key moment of textual and conceptual transition between the early modern and the modern stages of Ukrainian national consciousness–building—that is, *Istoriia Rusov* (History of the Rus´). There is also a central paradox here: *Istoriia Rusov* programmatically rejects the terms "Ukraïna" and "ukraynskie" as something borrowed from the Polish discourse, as indeed imposed by that discourse;[16] one can detect here, of course, a whole century of the workings of a new Russocentric terminology and historiography. And yet the fundamental values and perspectives remain unchanged and in some respects appear to be deepened. In short, what is a particular characteristic of *Istoriia Rusov*, apart from its reliance on the traditions of the European Enlightenment, on notions of a social contract, of the rights of all men for self-determination and self-rule, of standards of civilized behaviors and of human rights, and so on, is the profound commitment to one's own country, Ukraine (here called Malorosia). Not only is that reflected in various historical moments and guises, and not only is it dramatized in numerous rhetorical variants (the various invented speeches that constitute the ideology of the work), it is also profoundly encoded in the ambient sense of Ukraine's/Malorosia's righteousness, the justice of her cause, and the total commitment of her leaders to that cause—extending even to a willingness to suffer and be martyrs in order to further it (for example, Severyn Nalyvaiko, Pavlo Polubotok, and others). This ambient, at times explicit elevation of Ukraine/

Malorosia to a higher transcendant status—which in and through that status is also meant to confirm and deepen the reader's patriotism—is perhaps the central structure of *Istoriia Rusov* and clearly underlies the great impact that work has had on modern Ukrainian national consciousness, particularly in the formative decades of the 1820s to 1840s.[17]

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The work, in fact a whole oeuvre, that resonates with MB and forms a remarkably powerful bond across more than a century, and indeed unambiguously projects MB as the missing link that has been posited here, is the poetry of Taras Shevchenko, beginning with his first *Kobzar* of 1840, but culminating in the major protopolitical poems of the so-called "Try lita" (Three Years) period (1843–45), especially such works as "Rozryta mohyla" (The Open Grave), "Chyhryne, Chyhryne," "Velykyi l´okh" (The Great Crypt), and its pendant "Stoït´ v seli Subotovi" (There Stands in the Village of Subotiv), "Poslaniie" (The Epistle), and so on, as well as various later poems such as "Irzhavets´" or "Son (Hory moï vysokiï) (A Dream [My High Mountains])," and others. The issues that are subtended here are many and this is an area of my past and ongoing research, but for our purposes here I will be very brief.

The central common moment, which Shevchenko indeed picks up from the tradition of the Cossack chronicles and *Istoriia Rusov*, but which is also fundamentally adumbrated both by the popular/oral traditions (especially the *dumy*) and the whole reservoir of Romantic values and conventions, is of Ukraine as a special, indeed numinous,[18] entity that gives ultimate meaning to the poet's task and contains the deep and concealed truth of the collective identity of his people. For Shevchenko Ukraine is numinous, it is of the sphere of the sacred, by virtue of its past heroism, but above all by reason of its past and present suffering. Even before focusing on that his very early poetry (for example, "Perebendia") projected a world totally different, *set apart*, not part of this world (cf. also his lines in "Poslanie," "не ма на світі України / Немає другого Дніпра" [There is no other Ukraine in the world / There is no other Dnieper]), unique in its emotional hold on the poet and his audience and totalizing; see also the poem "Prychynna" (The Bewitched Girl). A further step in defining the nature of this land and the poet's sublime task of speaking for it is the Russian-language poem "Trizna." But in the mature poetry of the "Try lita" period that message is laid bare: Ukraine is the land marked by martyrdom and suffering in the past (the names of Nalyvaiko and Polubotok again come up) and utter oppression and degradation in the present; its former glory has been turned into utter decline; echoing the biblical prophets he sees himself as a Jeremiah lamenting a great ruin—a widowed mother, one that is characteristically despised by her very children. But in that very desolation lies

its promise of renewal and rebirth, as he says with great forcefulness in "Stoït´ v seli Subotovi," the ruin that is the Ukraine bequeathed by Khmel´nyts´kyi now reduced to the empty and desolate church wherein he was buried will be resurrected:

Церков-домовина
Розвалиться... І з-під неї
Встане Україна.
І розвіє тьму неволі,
Світ правди засвітить,
І помоляться на волі
Невольничі діти!..

The Church that is the Tomb
Will soon come crashing down...
And from beneath it
Ukraine will rise
And dispel the murk of slavery
And shine forth the light of justice
And the children of slaves
Will pray in freedom.

The providentialist cast of MB is now repeated—typologically, without any inference of direct intertextuality—with the powerful voice of Shevchenko and amplified by all the historical and cultural experience of the intervening years and by a new intellectual milieu: the Kyivan Society of Sts. Cyril and Methodius of which he was a member and which in the brief period of its existence (1846–47, before forceful suppression by imperial authorities) laid the foundations of modern Ukrainian national consciousness. At the core of that consciousness was a belief in a future Ukraine restored, indeed resurrected—by Divine Providence—from its erstwhile fallen state, its utter slavery, to a normal and free society, a republic in a family of Slavic nations. The founding text of the Cyrillo-Methodians was Kostomarov's reworking, in the "Zakon Bozhyi" (God's Law; later more generally known as the "Knyhy buttia ukraïns´koho narodu" [Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People; 1846–47] of Adam Mickiewicz's *Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego* [Books of the Polish Nation and the Polish Pilgrimage; 1832]). But the antecedent prophetic-resurrectionist vision is that of Shevchenko's "Try lita" poetry, which clearly had a shattering impact on the fellow members-"conspirators" of the Cyrillo-Methodian society. And before that, in the very structures of collective memory and experience, was the providentialist vision of MB.

The deep and to this day largely obscured paradigm of Ukraine as both

fallen and degraded and yet endowed with a divine promise of resurrection, of Ukraine as a *sacrum* and a product of secular religiosity, is still to be fully examined—especially in the context of the shaping of national consciousness in the nineteenth century. As one approaches the task one is obliged to consider much earlier and up to now hardly recognized sources. How many of those Ukrainians who now sing "Боже великий єдиний нам Україну храни" (O Great and One God Preserve Our Ukraine), a hymn composed in 1885 to the words of Oleksandr Konys´kyi and the music of Mykola Lysenko, and clearly inspired also by the aura of Shevchenko, a hymn that for many years was the national anthem of Ukrainians before there was a Ukrainian state, realize that its roots go back to the early eighteenth century, and indeed earlier still?

Notes

1. Cf. Mykhailo Maksymovych, "Vospominanie o Bogdane Khmelnitskom," *Russkaia Beseda*, bk. 1 (1857). The full text was published a year later by Osyp Bodians´kyi in the *Chtenia v obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh*, bk. 1 (1858): 79–100 and was republished in V. Antonovych's and M. Drahomanov's *Istoricheskiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (Kyiv, 1874), 141–66, and then in Maksymovych's *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (Kyiv, 1876), 486–509.
2. Maksymovych, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 508–9.
3. Iaroslav Hordyns´kyi, "'Mylost´ Bozhiia,' ukraïns´ka drama 1728 r.," pt. 1, *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 136–37 (1925): 8–9.
4. Antonovych and Drahomanov, *Istoricheskiia piesni malorusskago naroda*, 165.
5. See Paulina Lewin, *Ukrainian Drama and Theater in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 2008), 54, where this claim, however, is given schematically, i.e., "automatically," on the basis of the title, and with no closer reference to the text of the play.
6. Serhii Iefremov, *Istoriia ukraïns´koho pys´menstva*, 2 vols. (Kyiv, 1924), 1:205–6.
7. Iaroslav Hordyns´kyi, "'Mylost´ Bozhiia,' ukraïns´ka drama 1728 r.," pts. 1 and 2, *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 136–37 (1925): 1–42; 146 (1927): 1–32.
8. Hordyns´kyi, "'Mylost´ Bozhiia,'" pt. 2, 19.
9. Ibid., esp. pt. 1, 17–37.
10. *Ukraïns´ka literatura XVIII st.: poetychni tvory, dramatychni tvory, prozovi tvory* (Kyiv, 1983), 307–24. All subsequent page references are to this edition.
11. Hordyns´kyi, "'Mylost´ Bozhiia,'" pt. 2, 19–20.
12. "Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities." T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and

the Individual Talent," in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (New York, 1921).

13. David Frick, *Meletij Smotryc´kyj* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995).
14. See my "Do ideolohiï Renesansu v ukraïns´kii literaturi: 'Virshi na zhalosnyi pohreb zatsnoho rytsera Petra Konashevycha Sahaidachnoho,'" in Hryhorii Hrabovych, *Do istoriï ukraïns´koï literatury: Doslidzhennia, eseï, polemika* (Kyiv, 2003), 255–68.
15. Hordyns´kyi, "'Mylost´ Bozhiia,'" pt. 2, 1–8.
16. Facsimile edition of *Istoriia Rusov* (Kyiv, 1991; orig. Moscow, 1846), iii–iv.
17. See esp. Volodymyr Kravchenko, "'Istoriia Rusiv' ta ïï mistse v ukraïns´kii istoriohrafiï," in *Narysy z ukraïns´koï istoriohrafiï epokhy natsional´noho Vidrodzhennia: druha polovyna XVIII–seredyna XIX st.*, 128–200 (Kharkiv, 1996).
18. Here, "numinous" is used in the manner of Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige: über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (1917).