

WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UKRAINIAN BAROQUE

AN ASPECT OF CULTURAL INFLUENCES AT THE TIME OF
HETMAN IVAN MAZEPA

OLEKSANDER OHLOBLYN

Ukrainian Baroque architecture of Mazepa's period has been extensively studied. Although outstanding monographs are lacking, numerous works by such Ukrainian scholars as H. Pavlučkyj, K. Šyročkyj, F. Ernst, D. Antonovyč, V. Zaloziečkyj, and V. Sičynškyj have established the main features of this architecture, have shown both Ukrainian and European origins of it, and have made some studies of individual monuments. The place of this "Cossack-Hetman" architecture in the history of art, together with its genesis and development, has been clearly defined. Hence a kind of scholarly canon has been set up, and all further work in this field conforms carefully to it, only elaborating details of the main outline. Practically no attempt has been made to return again to the source material, in part because almost all the monuments of the Ukrainian Baroque period have been destroyed, and little interest is shown in new methods of research into what has become familiar.

However, the latest researches into the times of Mazepa have raised many new problems in the fields of history and culture, and especially in architecture. The modern historian of that period is now attracted not only to further exploration of the different trends within the Ukrainian culture, but primarily to the elucidation of the reciprocal cultural influences between Western Europe and the Ukraine. This new interest has not, as yet, led to any special comparative studies and has been somewhat hampered by the inaccessibility of the sources. The following pages represent an attempt to make some small contribution to this most interesting subject by indicating some aspects of it which would repay further study.

First of all, it is necessary to define more precisely what is meant by the "times of Hetman Mazepa" and when they actually begin. Modern Ukrainian historians have rejected the view of M.

Kostomarov who placed the period of Mazepa's predecessor, Hetman Ivan Samojlovyč (1672-1687) in the epoch of "Ruin," although towards the end of it he noticed some signs of recovery. The most recent studies in the field of late seventeenth century Ukrainian economics, industry, law (especially government law) and culture (especially architecture) provide sufficient evidence for believing that the period of those achievements usually associated with the name of Hetman Mazepa, actually began much earlier, in the second half of Samojlovyč's rule, in the 1680's.

It was then that the ravaging wars in the Ukraine between Muscovy, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire came to an end. This was followed by a revival of the traditional trade relations between the Ukraine and the Baltic lands, the growth of industry, the population of the lands of the Hetman State (largely through an influx of settlers from the right-bank Ukraine) and a general stabilization of economic and social conditions. At the same time the powers of the Hetman State became more firmly established, and the tendency to create a "Cossack aristocracy" coupled with definite monarchist and dynastic views among the ruling class, became quite evident.

As was to be expected, the development of culture and art at that period reflected these social and political changes. In the opinion of V. Modzalevskyj, Hetman Samojlovyč "is one of the first initiators of new ideas in our art."¹ The most important fact, however, was that Samojlovyč was not alone in this. Modzalevskyj and several other scholars mention several facts which show that this Hetman in his approach to culture and art had the support of such prominent government and church leaders as Černyhiv Colonel (later Quatermaster General) Vasyl Dunin-Borkovskýj, the Archbishop of Černyhiv, Lazar Baranovyč² and the Prior of the Mharškyj Monastyr in Lubni, Makarij Rusynovyč.³ We can also assume

1. V. Modzalevskyj, "Buduvannja cerkviv v Lubenškomu Mharškomu monystiri v r.r. 1682-1701," *Naše Mynule*, III, 1918, p. 52.

2. V. Zalozieckyj, "Die Barockarchitektur Osteuropas mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ukraine," *Abhandlungen des Ukrainischen Wissenschaftlichen Instituts in Berlin*, II, 1929, p. 83.

3. Modzalevskyj, *op. cit.* p. 52.

that among them was one of the Hetman's closest assistants and advisers, the General Osaul, Ivan Mazepa, the future Hetman.

It would also be misleading to think that the cultural flowering of the age of Mazepa came to an end in 1708-1709. It survived not only the Poltava disaster and the death of its patron, but also all the ravages of the Muscovite occupation of the Ukraine after the battle of Poltava. In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, during the times of the Hetmans Ivan Skoropadśkyj (1708-1722) and Pavlo Polubotok (1722-1724), the Ukraine lived on the heritage of Mazepa's age.

The two greatest and finest examples of Ukrainian Baroque architecture were the famous Kiev Cathedrals of St. Nicholas (of the Pustynno Mykolaïvśkyj Monastyr) or the so-called "Great Nicholas," and the Cathedral of the Epiphany, both of which were built on the initiative and under the sponsorship and guidance of Hetman Ivan Mazepa.⁴ They are most representative of the Ukrainian Baroque of the Hetman era and give it a definite stamp of artistic originality. They were built in the same city, the capital of the Ukraine, at the same time (first half of the 1690's), according to an identical architectural plan, and both met the same end—destruction in the 1930's by Soviet vandals.

The problem as to who was their architect is still being debated today, most scholars ascribing them to the Moscow architect of unknown origin, Osip Dmitrievič Starcev. In support of this they cite Mazepa's letter of May 22, 1693, to the Tzars Ivan and Peter which says that "a Muscovite stone-mason, Osip Dmitriev, has been commissioned to build two stone churches in Kiev, one of the Monastery of the Epiphany, the other in the Pustynny Monastyr of St. Nicholas, the worker of miracles."⁵ In a letter of October 12th, of the same year, the Tsars notified Mazepa that they ordered Osip Starcev to return from Moscow to the Ukraine and place himself at the Hetman's disposal.⁶

4. M. Voznjak, "Benderśka komisija po smerti Mazepy," *Mazepa*, Zbirnyk I, (Warsaw, 1938), p. 130.

5. M. Andrusjak, "Hetman Ivan Mazepa jak kulturnyj dijač," *Mazepa*, Zbirnyk II, (Warsaw, 1939), p. 78.

6. *Ibid.* p. 78.

It is impossible to ascertain whether Osip Dimitrievič Starcev was a Russian and a native of Moscow, or whether he was a Ukrainian from Kiev (perhaps originally Osyp Starčenko), who only worked in Moscow and was therefore called a Muscovite. It is equally uncertain whether he was the real creator of the two Kiev Cathedrals.⁷ D. Antonovyč has admitted the possibility that someone else, not Starcev, was their architect.⁸ V. Zaloziečkyj considered Starcev the builder (Erbauer) of the Kiev churches, but emphasized that "he was not the creator of this architectural conception (Bauidee)."⁹ The studies of Professors D. Antonovyč and V. Zaloziečkyj are of particular importance, since they established that the two Kiev churches "were undoubtedly patterned on the Mharškyj Monastyr,"¹⁰ or rather the Spaso-Preobraženškyj Cathedral of that monastery, which according to Zaloziečkyj, "occupies an outstanding place in Ukrainian architecture."¹¹ The Mharškyj Monastyr Cathedral was built by the architect Ivan Baptysta, who was thus the creator of a new Baroque style in church architecture in the Ukraine "which caused a complete revolution in style (Stilumschwung) in the Ukrainian Baroque architecture."¹²

The person of Ivan Baptysta is therefore of great interest. Unfortunately, very little is known about him and no Ukrainian literature on the period sheds any light on that question, not even the documentary historical study of the churches of the Mharškyj Monastyr in the seventeenth century by V. Modzalevškyj.¹³ All we know is that sometime at the end of the 1670's or at the beginning of the 1680's Ivan Baptysta worked in Vilno and that from there on the invitation of the Černyhiv Colonel, the well-known patron of the arts, Vasył Dunin-Borkovškyj, he went to Černyhiv to re-

7. *Ibid.* p. 78.

8. D. Antonovyč, *Škoročenyj kurs ukraїnškoho mystectva*, (Prague, 1923), quoted in *Mazeпа*, II, p. 78.

9. Zaloziečkyj, *op. cit.* p. 102.

10. *Ibid.* p. 101-102.

11. *Ibid.* p. 97.

12. *Ibid.* p. 96.

13. Modzalevškyj, pp. 49-80.

build the Cathedral of the Černyhiv Troičkyj Monastyr.¹⁴ It is possible that Ivan Baptisty was invited to Černyhiv on the recommendation of either the Černyhiv Archbishop, Lazar Baranovyč who knew Vilno well or of the prior Dmytro Tuptalo, who was at that time on a preaching tour in Vilno and Byelorussia.

It is a most significant fact that the Western European Baroque came to the Ukraine from Vilno. This was not accidental, since Vilno has been described by Paul Weber as "the city of the Baroque."¹⁵ Vilno also transmitted to the Ukraine other cultural influences from Western Europe, such as the art of engraving. One of the most outstanding engravers of Mazepa's period, Leontij Tarasevyč, a pupil of the well-known brothers Kilians in Augsburg (1680's), worked first in Vilno, going later to Černyhiv (1688) and Kiev (1703).¹⁶ Ivan (Inokentij) Ščyrskyj, another famous Ukrainian etcher of the same period, also moved from Vilno to Černyhiv (1683) and Kiev (1691).¹⁷ The cultural intercourse between Vilno and the left-bank Ukraine was very lively during the first half of Mazepa's rule (up till 1700). It was in Vilno, too, that Pylyp Orlyk, the future Hetman of the Ukraine, published his panegyric, *Alcides Rossiyski, triumfalnym laurem ukoronowany*, in honor of Hetman Mazepa, on the occasion of the latter's victories over the Turks. It is also worthy of note that Hetman Mazepa donated "an altar (probably a silver one) to a church in Vilno," supposedly at the cost of 10,000 gold coins (zlotys).¹⁸ The role of cultural mediator which Vilno played during the periods of Hetmans Samojlovyč and Mazepa was only a continuation of a relationship of long standing.

It can be assumed that Ivan Baptisty had given satisfaction by his works in Černyhiv, since in 1684 Dunin-Borkovskýj recommended him as an experienced architect to Hetman Samojlovyč who was at that time looking all over the Ukraine and Byelorussia for someone to build the Cathedral at Mharskýj Monastyr.

14. *Ibid.* p. 53.

15. P. Weber, *Wilna, eine vergessene Kunststätte*, (Wilna, 1917), p. 33.

16. V. Sičynskyj, "Gravjurny Mazepy," *Mazepa*, I. p. 136.

17. *Ibid.* p. 136.

18. *Mazepa*, I. p. 130-131.

Samojlovyč accepted this recommendation and in the same year (1684) he entrusted Ivan Baptysta with the projected building.¹⁹ Professor Zaloziečkyj emphasizes that "the Baroque style (Gestaltung) of the Mharśkyj Monastyr is undoubtedly the result of Ivan Baptysta's designing,"²⁰ and that there exists "a great similarity between the general outline (Grundrissposition) of the Trinity Church in Černyhiv and the Church of Mharśkyj Monastyr."²¹ We know from Samojlovyč's letter to the Prior of Mhar, Makarij Rusynovyč, dated January 12th, 1684, that Ivan Baptysta showed to the Hetman in Baturyn the "outline of a Černyhiv church,"²² as a model for the future construction, although neither Modzalevśkyj nor Zaloziečkyj thought that Baptysta was the builder of the Černyhiv prototype.²³ This plan, with a few changes, was approved by Hetman Samojlovyč and *ihumen* Rusynovyč.²⁴

The building of the Mharśkyj Cathedral was started in the spring of 1684 and on April 23 the foundation stone was laid amid celebrations attended by the Hetman's sons, Semen and Jakiv Samojlovyč, and by many high dignitaries of state and church. The Hetman himself paid great attention to the progress of this edifice and assisted it with money and supplies. The building was finally completed after the election of the new Hetman, Ivan Mazepa (1687-1709). The exact date of its completion is unknown; Zaloziečkyj suggests that it was 1701²⁵ and M. Andrusjak thinks that it was even later than 1701.²⁶ Another and more probable estimate comes from V. Sičynśkyj, who suggests 1687-1688.²⁷ The Chronicle of the Mharśkyj Monastyr has the following entry for the year 1687: "On the 27th day of October the stone construction of the (Mhar) church was finished . . . all remaining work was peacefully com-

19 Modzalevśkyj, p. 54.

20. Zaloziečkyj, p. 97.

21. *Ibid.* p. 97, n. 2.

22 Modzalevśkyj, pp. 54, 71-72.

23. *Ibid.* p. 54. Also: Zaloziečkyj, p. 97.

24. Modzalevśkyj, pp. 54, 56-57.

25. Zaloziečkyj, p. 97.

26. *Mazepa*, II, p. 77.

27 V. Sičynśkyj, *Ivan Mazepa* (Philadelphia, 1951), p. 36.

pleted in the winter of 1687.”²⁸ Therefore, there can be little doubt that the construction of the Cathedral was fully accomplished before 1692 when it received the remains of St. Athanasius Patellarius, the Patriarch of Constantinople who died (1654) and had been buried in the Mharśkyj Monastery.²⁹

In the summer of 1688 a new work of construction was started at Mhar; this time a stone gate and the wooden Church of St. Michael were built, again under the direction of Ivan Baptysta. Although the date of completion of these two buildings is unknown, it can be assumed that their erection did not take a long time.³⁰ The last work of Baptysta in Mharśkyj Monastery was the building of the Refectory together with a church erected in place of an earlier church which had been destroyed by fire on June 24, 1695. From the chronicle we learn that “the master of stone building, Ivan Baptysta, a German, died” in 1700 before the Refectory was finished.³¹

It is, of course, impossible to prove that Ivan Baptysta was the architect of the Kiev cathedrals. Yet this is not unlikely; we would say it is very probable. It is obvious that Ivan Baptysta was in the service of, and at the disposal of, the Hetman.³² Although nothing is known of his whereabouts at the time the two Kiev cathedrals were constructed, his presence at Mhar was not required at that time. It is also very unlikely that Hetman Mazepa would not have consulted Baptysta on the plan of the proposed building. The most important fact, however, is that both Kiev cathedrals were modelled on Baptysta's Mharśkyj Monastery Church. What is even more interesting is that they were not exact copies of the Cathedral at Mhar, but

28. “Otryvki yz letopisi Mgarskogo monasty:ja (1682-1775),” *Kievskaja Starina*, 1889.

29. Ep. Sylvester (Hajevśkyj), “Sv. Afanazij,” *Pravoslavnyj Kalendar na rik 1949*, (Stuttgart, 1949), p. 81.

30. Modzalevśkyj, p. 65. Although the times were not very favorable for construction, it is unlikely that the building of a small church could have taken so long. According to Modzalevśkyj, the painting of the church was begun in 1689.

31. Modzalevśkyj, p. 67.

32. Such was the custom even during the rule of Hetman Samojlovych. On August 23, 1684, for instance, the Hetman commanded that Ivan Baptysta be sent immediately to Baturyn, since he was needed to supervise the erection of the church at Hluchiv. (Modzalevśkyj, p. 75).

showed some new details, which were more "Baroque" in style.³³ They show, therefore, a development of those architectural concepts which first manifested themselves in Baptysta's Mharśkyj Cathedral. Not only have they no Muscovite traces, but their entire composition and artistic beauty reflect the individuality of Ivan Baptysta. Even if he were not the actual builder of the two Kiev cathedrals, he was certainly their creator. More specific studies are needed, however, before the problem of the authorship of the Kiev masterpieces can be solved. This is all the more difficult since neither of the buildings exists today.

Professor Zaloziećkyj pointed out the similarity between the Mharśkyj Cathedral and some Baroque churches in Vilno, especially the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in the suburb of Antokol, which was built in 1668-1684 on orders of the Lithuanian Hetman, Michael Pac.³⁴ According to Zaloziećkyj this type of Baroque church architecture which he describes as "der Typus einer barocken langgestreckten Zentralkuppelanlage," was modelled on the famous Roman basilicas of Il Gesu (1584) and San Ignazio (1621-1623), and was introduced into the Ukraine by Ivan Baptysta by way of Vilno.³⁵

It is difficult to establish either the ethnic origin or the full name of Ivan Baptysta. The documents cited by Modzalevśkyj refer to him as "a German," or "of German descent."³⁶ Yet this must not be taken literally. It is not impossible that he was mistaken for a German, perhaps because he came to Vilno from Germany or because he came from Northern Italy (possibly Milan) which was then under German or rather Austrian rule. Some Italian architects of the eighteenth century who worked in the Ukraine, such as Meretini in Lviv, are even today sometimes described as Germans. What is important, however, is that Ivan Baptysta brought with him not the German but the Italian Baroque, although modified by various influences in Vilno.

33. Zaloziećkyj, p. 102.

34. Zaloziećkyj, p. 98, also P. Weber, *op. cit.* pp. 62-67.

35. Zaloziećkyj, p. 97.

36. Modzalevśkyj, pp. 53, 67.

Among the architects of the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Vilno were two Italians, Giovanni Galli and Pietro Peretti, both from Milan.³⁷ It is not impossible that Ivan Baptysta and Giovanni Galli were the same person.

The participation of Italian architects and artists in the development of Ukrainian architecture had a long history. Petrus Italus from Lugano built the Assumption Church in Lviv in 1559. Another Italian, Petrus Crassovski Italus built the Chapel of the Three Saints in Lviv in 1578. The Italian architect Paolo Dominici, from Rome and therefore called Paolo Romano, built in 1580 the famous Kornjakt house in Lviv and was also the creator of the new Assumption Church in Lviv.³⁸ In Kiev an Italian, Sebastiano Bracci, rebuilt the Uspenskyj Sobor in Podol in 1613.³⁹ These were only a few of the many Italian artists who worked in the Ukraine at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries.

It is also known that some Italian *maestros* were attached to the court of Hetman Mazepa. The French diplomat, Jean Baluze, who visited Baturyn in 1704, wrote that Hetman Mazepa "spoke in Italian with several Italian artists who live in his residence."⁴⁰ It is most likely that these artists were architects, and we also know that Mazepa, an accomplished linguist, spoke in German to his German physicians. Although all this happened after the death of Ivan Baptysta, it is likely that these Italians at Baturyn were his pupils.

The defeat of the combined forces of Charles XII of Sweden and Mazepa at Poltava in 1709, for some time interrupted the development of art, especially ecclesiastical architecture in the Ukraine. The destruction of Baturyn and the plunder of the city's churches by the Muscovites⁴¹ did not augur a bright future for the Italian artists in the Cossack land then occupied by Muscovite armies, and

37. P. Weber, pp. 67, 125.

38. W. Losinski, *Sztuka lwowska w XVI i XVII w.* (Lwow, 1901). D. Antonovyč, *Chto buv budivnyčym Bratskoi cerkvy u Lvovi*, (Prague, 1925).

39. Zaloziečkyj, p. 85.

40. I. Borščak, "Mazepa, ljudyna i istoryčnyj dijač," *Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im. Ševčenka*, CLII, 1933, pp. 29-30.

41. A. Lazarevskij, *Opisanie staroj Malorossii*, II, (Kiev, 1893), p. 257.

they were forced to leave the Ukraine for Western Europe. It is very likely that some of them stayed for a time in Lviv on their way back to Germany and Italy. In this connection it is interesting to note that the movement westwards, apart from the actual exodus of Mazepa's followers, did not include foreigners only. Young Mykola Chanenko, for instance, the future Ukrainian statesman, writer and author of the well-known diary, was forced to continue his studies at Lviv.⁴²

In the early 1720's two Italian architects, the brothers Giovanni Battista (or Johann Baptist) and Sebastiano Allio (or de Alio) appeared in Upper Austria and later in Bavaria. In the years 1720-1722 they worked on the reconstruction and Baroque ornamentation of the Benedictine Abbey Niederalteich on the Danube in Lower Bavaria. Their pupil was the Austrian architect Franz Joseph Holzinger who in 1722-1724 helped to ornament the famous Benedictine Abbey at Metten in Lower Bavaria, and later became the architect of many churches in Lower Bavaria and Upper Austria.

The churches built by Giovanni Battista and Sebastiano Allio have been preserved and, apart from small peculiarities dictated by different local traditions, they are very reminiscent of the Mharśkyj Cathedral and its Vilno prototypes.⁴³ They are the works of the same school, perhaps even creations of the same family of architects (Giovanni Galli—Ivan Baptysta—Giovanni Battista and Sebastiano Allio).

The historians of Ukrainian art agree that the Baroque of the age of Mazepa reflects a synthesis of the Western Baroque with the local traditional style of the older Ukrainian stone churches and the contemporary wooden church architecture. The Ukrainian Baroque embraces the pre-Mongolian churches in Kiev and Černyhiv, reconstructed during Mazepa's time, as well as newly built churches like Mharśkyj Cathedral or the two cathedrals in Kiev.

However, one cannot agree with Modzalevśkyj's contention that the Baroque style was "alien to the traditional national trends of

42. See my *Chanenky*, (Kiel, 1949), pp. 2, 4.

43 *Zaloziećkyj*, pp. 98-99.

Ukrainian architecture.”⁴⁴ Zaloziečkyj’s appraisal of the role of the Baroque in Ukrainian art is more acceptable. Commenting on the conclusions reached by Ernst and D. Antonovyč, he wrote that “the Baroque buildings in the Ukraine did not represent imported foreign forms, but were assimilated by the old Byzantine architecture in the Ukraine on the basis of common historical archetypes.”⁴⁵ While fully agreeing with this opinion, it is yet impossible to leave the problem of cultural influences there. Is it not rather short-sighted to regard these cultural influences only in terms of borrowings and prototypes?

A study of what one might call “epitypes” also seems necessary, since the Ukrainian Baroque was not self-contained, nor did it spend itself in the Ukraine alone. “The Ukraine,” according to Zaloziečkyj, “played (at that time) the main, if not the decisive part in the Europeanization of Eastern Europe.”⁴⁶ After receiving Western influences, Ukrainian art and architecture passed them on. If “the cultural development of the Ukraine is to be regarded as a component element in the all-European culture,”⁴⁷ then surely the later influences of the Ukrainian Baroque should be sought in Western Europe to which they contributed their Ukrainian share of what was but the common European heritage.

44. Modzalevškyj, p. 52.

45. Zaloziečkyj, pp. 99-100.

46. *Ibid.* p. 116.

47. D. Čyževsky, *Kulturno istoryčni epochy*, (Augsburg, 1948), p. 9.