

“Rulers of the Fatherland”: the Hetmanate’s Cossack and Church Elite’s Concepts of the Nature, Representation, and Obligations of Authority (Up to the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century)¹

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Until the appearance of the works of Teofan Prokopovych, Ukrainian political thought had produced no texts that provided a basis for a doctrine of governance on a systemic level.² This, of course, did not mean that there were no opinions regarding what “just” rule should be like. These judgments and concepts are quite clearly recorded in watered down form—in panegyrics and political treatises on religious subjects, introductions to ecclesiastical publications, school poetry, Diet speeches, works of a historiographical nature, and so forth—starting from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, that is, basically, from the time when the Ukrainian cultural world, which had been closed to outside eyes until then, began its gradual “dehermitization.” What is more, texts from the 1620s–1640s already show the presence of three

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² The works of Teofan Prokopovych, which laid the theoretical foundation of Russian absolutism, include, primarily: *Slovo pokhval’noe v den’ rozhdestva blagorodneishago gosudaria tsarevicha i velikogo kniazia Petra Petrovicha* [A Word of Praise on the Birthday of the Most Noble Sovereign Tsarevich and Great Prince Petro Petrovich] (delivered in 1715, published in 1717); *Slovo o vlasti i chesti tsarskoi, iako ot samogo Boga v mire uchinena iest’* [A Word on Royal Power and Honor, Which Derives in the World from God Himself] (delivered and published in 1718); *Slovo v den’ sviatogo blagovernogo kniazia Aleksandra Nevskogo* [A Word on the Day of the Holy Blessed Prince Aleksandr Nevskii] (delivered in 1718, published in 1720); the treatise *Pravda voli monarshei* [The Right of the Monarch’s Will] (published in 1722); *Slovo na pokhvalu blazhennyia i vechnodostoinyia pamiati Petra Velikogo* [A Word of Praise on the Blessed and Eternally Memorable Peter the Great] (delivered and printed in 1725). For a republication of the sermons, see Feofan Prokopovich, *Sochineniia*, ed. I. P. Eremin (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961).

distinct currents in the interpretation of “just.” It is identified either with the traditional authority of princely dynasties of Rus’ descent, or with the supremacy of the Ruthenian Church and its hierarchs, or with the gentry democracy of the Commonwealth variety. It is telling that at the core of the “national” identity of Ukrainians of that period, as convincingly demonstrated by Serhii Plokyh, there were also three forms of self-identification that closely echoed the above-mentioned priorities in the perception of “just” rule, namely: the concept of a “Ruthenian nation,” based on the princely tradition of Kyivan Rus’; the Orthodox-ecclesiastical view of the “Ruthenian people” as a community of clerics and laity, regardless of their social estate; and, finally, a model of the “Ruthenian gentry nation” as the third, equal component of the “nation” of the Commonwealth of Two Nations.³

Without dwelling on detailed descriptions of each of the above versions of the perception of authority, allow me to note briefly that the first of them—the “princely” version (it is the earliest to appear in sources and is most likely the specifically “Ruthenian” product of the concepts of the nature of authority as such)—was derived from the dominance, traditional in Ukrainian society, of princely families, among which the Ostroz’kyi family held undisputed first place. Accordingly, the representatives of this dynasty were seen as the bearers of divine investiture, entrusted with the protection of Rus’. The right of the Princely House of the Ostroz’kyi Family to virtual power “over all of Rus’” (in the words of the panegyrists: *potestats potius Russiae*)—from Kyiv to Lviv—was regarded as indisputable, because it stemmed from 1) the sacralized origin of the House (Kyivan Rus’ was “sought,” “found,” and “built” as God’s promised land by Rus, the founder of the Ostroz’kyi family), 2) the cultural feat of Christianization (Prince Volodymyr, the imagined ancestor of the Ostroz’kyi family, gave Rus’ the gift of “light and law”), 3) the allegedly uninterrupted physical continuity of the House—

³ Serhii Plokyh, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (Oxford, 2001), 153–65.

from the “progenitor Rus,” Prince Volodymyr, and King Danylo Romanovych, to the present. It was precisely this kind of authority, associated with the transcendent, that was perceived as the guarantee of a higher justice, harmony, and peace inside the community.⁴

The second of the above-named versions of the perception of authority, which can be provisionally called “theocratic,” is documented in the works of the Kyivan clerical circle only as of the beginning of the 1620s. Its characteristic feature is emphasis on the guiding mission of the Orthodox Church in the life of the Ruthenian community—a Church that commands both rich and poor, the high-placed and the common folk, “the princes of this world” included, because, as Kyiv Metropolitan Petro Mohyla will write in the introduction to a 1637 Didactic Gospel: “the emperor’s and king’s status is very high, but [...] priestly rank takes precedence over the status of the highest placed of this world.”⁵ In seeking the origin of this assertion, which is rather unexpected from the standpoint of hitherto “submissive” Orthodoxy, I believe it is worth comparing the Kyivan “theocratic” formulations with the doctrine of the post-Trent Catholic Church, especially with the works of Roberto Bellarmino and Cesare Baronio: it is these two authors that are perhaps most frequently mentioned by the clerical intellectuals of the Kyiv-Mohyla circle.

As for the origins of the third version of the perception of “just” authority, which can be described in a generalized sense as the “Commonwealth” version, it was based on the commonplace idea in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth’s nobiliary ideology of government as a contract between a “free nation” and the ruler. In light of this idea, any authoritarian rule

⁴ For this system of views in greater detail, see: Natalia Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit. Doslidzhennia z istorii uiaвлен' ta idei v Ukraïni XVI–XVII st.* (Kyiv, 2002), 174–88, 231–57, 278–87.

⁵ The passage from Petro Mohyla’s introduction is quoted from Khvedir Titov, *Materiialy dlia istorii knyzhnoi spravy na Ukraïni v XVI–XVIII vv. Vsezbirka peredmov do ukrains'kykh starodrukiv* (Kyiv, 1924), 323. For more about the context and forms of political discourse in the Orthodox Church in the 1620s–1640s, see: I. Ševčenko, “The Many Worlds of Peter Mohyla,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 8, nos. 1–2 (June 1984): 9–44; Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 162–69, 237–46; Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit*, 311–24.

conducted without the consent and sanction of the “nation” (that is, the nobility) was regarded as “tyranny,” which cast the “yoke of slavery” (*jugum servitutis*) on the subjects.⁶ Comments that reflect this type of political culture are scattered throughout a wide variety of texts of Ruthenian origin from the end of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth centuries: from religious polemical treatises to dietine instructions, panegyrics, various protests, private letters, Diet speeches, and so forth. One of the most important results of this interpretation of power relations was undoubtedly the formulation of the idea of the supposedly contractual union of the “Ruthenian nation” with the Polish and Lithuanian nations in the 1569 Union of Lublin as the third, equal and self-sufficient member of the Commonwealth of Two Nations (in his Diet speech in 1641, Adam Kysil’ said the following regarding this: “Our ancestors, the Ruthenian Sarmatians, voluntarily came to your Graces’ ancestors, the Polish Sarmatians [...]; not to a religion, but with a religion, not to titles and honors, but with titles and honors—that is how we came to our common Fatherland.”⁷

Not everything from this briefly described legacy of concepts of “just” authority was adopted by the Cossack and Orthodox clerical milieu that after the wars and cataclysms of the mid-seventeenth century began its history from a blank page—with new ideological priorities and new heroes, and, last but not least, in a new state, whose structure and system of governance

⁶ For greater detail, see: Urszula Augustyniak, *Wazowie i “królowie rodacy.” Studium władzy królewskiej w Rzeczypospolitej XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1999), 45–66; E. Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1597-1652* (Warsaw, 1995).

⁷ “Przodkowie nasi *Sarmatae Rossi* do W. M., *ad Sarmatas Polonos, libere accesserunt (...) non ad religionem, sed cum religione*, nie do tytułów i honorów, ale z tytułami i honorami *accessimus* do tej spójnej Ojczyzny naszej.” Quoted from the publication of the speech in the addendum to the article: Frank E. Sysyn, “Regionalism and Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ukraine: The Nobility’s Grievances at the Diet of 1641,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 6, no. 2 (1982): 186, 189. For a discussion of the regional consciousness of the Ruthenian nation against the backdrop of a “contract”, see *ibid.*, 171–85. On the consolidation of the idea of a “Ruthenian gentry” as the third equal partner in the Commonwealth of Two Nations, see also Iakovenko, *Paralel’nyi svit*, 256–57, 294–95.

differed fundamentally from their preceding fatherland.⁸ In particular, the “princely” version of the concept of authority had fallen into decline by the beginning of the Khmel’nyts’kyi period, as a result of both the extinction of the Ostroz’kyi line and the fact that their heirs, the Zaslavs’ki princes, had become as of the mid-1620s the *de facto* protectors of the Uniate Church—that is, had moved away from the “true Rus” in the eyes of the Kyiv-Mohyla intellectuals (however, it is worth mentioning that Petro Mohyla’s entourage tried to bank on another set of “heirs of Rus”—the Chetvertens’kyi princes,⁹ but this attempt went nowhere as a consequence of Mohyla’s death and an overall change in the political situation). As for the “theocratic” version of the perception of authority, it became irrelevant following the subordination of the metropolitan of Kyiv to Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi, and subsequently, his successors (this is analyzed in detail in Serhii Plokyh’s monograph).¹⁰

In contrast to the first two, the third version of the concept of “just” authority, which was based on the political rhetoric of the “gentry nation” of the Commonwealth, demonstrated amazing staying power in lasting, *mutatis mutandis*, from the birth of Cossack intellectual activity at the beginning of the eighteenth century until the complete demise of the Hetmanate. The final replication of this view of authority was the *Istoriia Rusov* [The History of the Rus’ People], an anonymous chronicle from the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹¹ To a certain

⁸ On the modification of the concept of the “national” in the new political and social circumstances of this period, see: F. E. Sysyn, “Concepts of Nationhood in Ukrainian History Writing, 1620–1690,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10, nos. 3–4 (1986): 393–423.

⁹ This attempt is discussed in Natalia Iakovenko, “Kyiv pid shatrom Sventol’dychiv: mohylians’kyi panehiryk 1646 r. ‘Tentoria venienti’,” in idem, *Dzerkala identychnosti. Doslidzhennia z istorii uivlen’ ta idei v Ukraïni XVI–pochatku XVIII stolittia* (Kyiv, 2012).

¹⁰ Especially in the chapter “Hetmans and Metropolitans” in Plokyh, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 236–73.

¹¹ On this idea in the views of the eighteenth-century “Little Russian patriots” in greater detail, see Zenon Kohut, “Shliakets’ka demokratiia v chasy samoderzhavstva: politychni pohliady Hryhoriia Poletyky,” in idem, *Korinnia identychnosti. Studii z rann’omodernoï istorii Ukraïny* (Kyiv, 2004), 102–16. Original English version: Zenon E. Kohut, “A Gentry Democracy within an Autocracy: The Politics of Hryhorii Poletyka (1723/25–1784),” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, III–IV, 1979–1980, p. 507–519.

extent, this is the model that can serve as a kind of general framework for the reflections that will be examined in greater detail below. However, the Commonwealth nobiliary idea of democracy became overgrown in the Cossack polity by a very characteristic accumulation of details that lead us, as will be shown later, to a more archaic layer of concepts of the nature of authority, its obligations, and expected forms of representation. Thus we have before us a rather complicated balancing between, on the one hand, a clearly defined continuation of the Commonwealth ideal of political culture and a corresponding rhetoric of “golden liberties,” and, on the other hand, the emerging image of a new, purely Cossack formula of a “just” authority, which will be the subject of our discussion.

My observations are based on the reflections of the residents of the Hetmanate on authority and hetman rule, which are scattered throughout contemporary historiographic works, panegyrics, sermons, verses, letters, and so forth. Inasmuch as the “constructs” of the political thought of the time are recorded in these texts only indirectly, in analyzing them we must often resort to reconstructing the concepts of the *sacrum* that sanctions authority as such and the unwritten but known to the members of the given society limits of expression of the will of the “people” in the contrasting pair of people–rulers. Based on this evidence, I will attempt to show that despite its fragmentary and incomplete nature, it allows us to assume the existence of a certain systemization of the concepts of an “own”—that is, internal—rule in the Hetmanate against the backdrop of a rather amorphous concept of the scope of the powers of the tsar as the supreme ruler. In so doing, I am consciously leaving out of consideration the doctrine of the monarch’s divine right to unlimited absolute power formulated by Prokopovych—not only because this doctrine was only formalized in the post-Mazepa period, which is not under

discussion here, but also because in all likelihood it was never organically integrated into Ukrainian political thought.

“Division of powers” Between the Anointed Sovereign and the Hetman

It is worthwhile to begin by recalling those unalterable postulates in the concept of authority that were formulated by Christian doctrine on the basis of the famous passage in Paul to the Romans: “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.” (Romans 13:1-2). This dictum, as we know, became part of Christian teaching and transformed the obedience of subjects into a duty to God. The precedent from Sacred history, wherein the first Judaic kings Saul and David were chosen by God himself, who then ordered the prophet to anoint them to rule over “His heritage,” made the authority of the anointed sovereign an instrument of Providence to protect the God-given order.

The reflections of Ukrainian sermonizers and members of ecclesiastical circles on the nature of the authority of the anointed sovereign are based on these biblical postulates. For example, Ioanykii Galiatovs’kyi defines authority in the words of Apostle Paul (“there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist are ordained of God”); he formulates the virtue of obedience of “lesser people to rulers” and the obligations of the “rulers” before God

“for their servitors and subjects” according to the same parameters.¹² We encounter the same idea in the sermons of Antonii Radyvylovs’kyi, wherein the focus of attention is on the divinely ordained submission to the anointed sovereign, inasmuch as he “bears the image of God, bears the person of Christ” (compare, *inter alia*, the use in one of the sermons of the *exemplum* of the “noble Venetian senator” who refused to kneel before his son when the latter was elected prince until he was convinced that his son “bears the person of Christ”).¹³ According to Lazar Baranovych, the tsar is under the direct supervision of God: “God holds the tsar’s heart in his hand, / nor does he relinquish his hold on the apple of the tsar’s eye.”¹⁴ Having received authority from God, the anointed sovereign personifies divine presence on earth, and, consequently, is the guarantee of the well-being of his subjects:

When God is with us, what worries can we have?
As God seated you on the tsar’s throne,
So he will take care of your crown
And give counsel about everything, and counsel is not the betrayal,
Of God, but rather it is protection and defense.¹⁵

In secular eyes, the anointed ruler is also the bearer of divine sanction and an instrument of higher justice; what is more, these attributes are applied equally to both the former sovereign, the Catholic king, and to the current ruler, the Orthodox tsar. Here is a characteristic example from the *Hrabianka Chronicle*, which (it is worthwhile emphasizing) stands out for its especially harsh anti-Polish and anti-Catholic attacks. According to *Hrabianka*, Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi after the appropriate ceremonies in the act of signing the Treaty of Zboriv in 1649:

¹² From the work “Grikhy rozmaidii, vokrattsi napisannye.” Quoted from Ioanykii Galiatovs’kyi, *Kliuch rozuminnia*, ed. Inna Chepiha (Kyiv, 1985), 380–81.

¹³ Quoted from V. I. Krekoten’, *Opovidannia Antonii Radyvylovs’koho. Z istorii ukrains’koi novelistyky XVII st.* (Kyiv, 1983), 381.

¹⁴ Lazar Baranovych, *Truby sloves propovidnykh* (Kyiv, 1674). Quoted from: *Ukrains’ka poeziia. Seredyna XVII st.*, comp. V. I. Krekoten’ and M. M. Sulyma (Kyiv, 1992), 220.

¹⁵ Lazar Baranovych, “Plach o prestavlenii velikogo gosudaria Alekseia Mikhailovicha” (1676), in *ibid*, 227.

...will go to the King, sitting on his illustrious throne, and pay his obeisance, saying: “Not in this way, with this assembled host, did I should have welcomed Your Royal Majesty, which has happened more by chance than through my fault, for which let me be forgiven: but I confess I am not worthy of mercy, but it is characteristic of both God Himself and his vicar of Christ to be merciful toward the submissive: He does not scorn a contrite heart.” To this the Lithuanian deputy chancellor replied: “[...] The most illustrious King... with his mercy heals liked a physician, like the sun enlightens both good and bad, so the Monarch is best when he protects the citizens, forgives the meek and rebellious.¹⁶

In the described model of supreme authority as sanctioned by God through the act of consecration (anointment) in the coronation ritual, or in the Russian case, through the procedure of the crowning of the tsar, there was no place for uncrowned individuals.¹⁷ However, after the emergence of the Cossack state, in which Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi established his autocratic rule, there were recorded attempts (from the beginning of 1649, according to Serhii Plokhy’s observations) to give the hetmancy sacralized substance with the help of rhetorical, ideological, and diplomatic means, which transformed the hetman’s rule, secured “by the sword,” into authority bestowed by God.¹⁸ In Plokhy’s opinion, the main role in this was played by the church hierarchs, who consecrated the hetman’s regalia and honored Khmel’nyts’kyi’s name in church services, although a number of actions attributed to the higher clergy (for example, the “coronation” of the hetman) can be regarded as most likely the product of rumors.¹⁹ Alongside the ecclesiastical perception of the hetman, we also come across the secular image of the hetman in the concepts of divine election, evidenced by the addition to the hetman’s title of the formula

¹⁶ Hryhorij Hrabjanka’s “*The Great War of Bohdan Xmel’nyts’kyj*,” Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature. Texts, vol. 9, with an introduction by Yuri Lutsenko (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), 338.

¹⁷ For the procedural order of the coronation of Polish kings, see Stanislaw Kutrzeba, ed. “Ordo coronandi Regis Poloniae,” in *Archiwum Komisji Historycznej Akademii Umiejętności*, vol. 11 (Krakow, 1909), 133–216. See Boris A. Uspenskii, “Liturgicheskii status tsaria v Russkoi Tserkvi: priobshchenie Sv. Tainam (Istoriko-liturgicheskii etiud),” in *Kamen’ Kraezhg”l’n”: Rhetoric of the Medieval Slavic World. Essays Presented to Edward L. Keenan on His Sixtieth Birthday by His Colleagues and Students*, ed. N. Shields Kollman, D. Ostrowski, A. Pliguzov, and D. Rowland. Harvard Ukrainian Studies 19 (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 686–731.

¹⁸ Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 220–27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 227–35.

“by the grace of God.”²⁰ Finally, we have direct evidence of these processes in the famous celebratory welcome given Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi as he entered Kyiv at the beginning of January 1649, when, according to an eyewitness account described by Wojciech Miaskowski:

Effusus populus, tota plebs witała go w polu i Academia oracjami, akklamacjami, tamquam Moijsem, servatorem, liberatorem populi de servitute Lechica, et bono ominę Bohdan, od Boga dany, nazwany [The whole people, all the commoners came out of the city to greet him, and the Academy welcomed him with orations and exclamations as Moses, deliverer, savior, liberator of the nation from Polish bondage, auspiciously named Bohdan, the God-given one].²¹

The “good omen” (*bonum omen*) referred to in the above episode was interpreted in verses in the fall of 1649, which were appended to the Register of the Zaporozhian Host, as the blessing of the Holy Spirit (“It is no wonder, because the Holy Spirit makes Bohdan wise”), and the author of the verses explicitly equates the hetman’s power with that of the king:

The king is God’s anointed one, and Bohdan is given
By God, hence named Bohdan [the God-given one] (...)
Where King Casimir is the ruler in Poland,
In Rus’ there is Hetman Khmel’nyts’kyi Bohdan.²²

This “division of authority” between the hetman and the anointed ruler (Serhii Plokhyy calls this a “duumvirate” or, more precisely, the idea of it),” does not disappear even after the death of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi; we find references to most hetmancies as to acts of divine election.²³ Thus, according to the apocryphal correspondence of the hetmans with the Zaporozhian Host contained in the *Velychko Chronicle*, even the election to the hetmancy of Velychko’s hated Ivan Vyhovs’kyi is attributed to the “all-wise care of God,” and Petro

²⁰ For an analysis of such examples, see *ibid.*, 225–27.

²¹ *Jakuba Michałowskiego, wojskiego lubelskiego, a później kasztelana bieckiego, Księga pamiętnicza*, ed. Antoni Z. Helcel (Krakow, 1864), 377. For a commentary on this and other instances of a play on Khmel’nyts’kyi’s name Bohdan as “God-given” [*Boha dany*], see Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 221–22. English translation of the quotation: *ibid.*, 221.

²² *Ukrains’ka poeziia. Seredyna XVII st.*, 101–102. For commentary on these poems, also see Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 222–24.

²³ Plokhyy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 224.

Doroshenko, whose assessment by the author is very mixed, defines his post (“condition”) as given him by God (obviously, in Velychko’s words, because also in an apocryphal letter).²⁴ “Kish hetman by the grace of God” is the title that Ivan Briukhovets’kyi gives himself even before his election to the hetmancy²⁵; in the eyes of Lazar Baranovych, Ivan Samoilovych is the God-given hetman: the hierarch wishes that he should long wield the “hetman’s mace and [guide] the building of Orthodox Ruthenianism [pravoslavnorosiiskim] that has been entrusted to you by God, as by the sunlit sky.” Ivan Velychkovs’kyi addresses Samoilovych in his panegyric in similar fashion: “by the grace of God given you / you know how to establish peace in your beloved fatherland / (...) God in one Trinity gave you the one mace.”²⁶ The Chernihiv panegyrist Ivan Ornovs’kyi calls Ivan Mazepa a hetman “by the grace of heaven”; Prokopovych writes of Mazepa being entrusted with the “building of this fatherland... after the tsar from God” in his famous “tragicomedy” *Vladimir*, performed at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in honor of Mazepa’s visit to the school in 1705; and in an anonymous verse on the Poltava bell, cast in 1695, we read the following: “During the rule of Russian tsars Peter and John, / During the hetmancy of Mazepa, given by God.”²⁷

Finally, from the introduction dedicated to Samoilovych, contained in Ioanykii Galiatovs’kyi’s *Skarbnitsa potrebnaia i pozhitechnaia* (Kyiv, 1676), we can see how his contemporaries imagined the “mechanism of the division” of divine right to rule between the anointed tsar and the hetman:

²⁴ Samoilo Velichko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii v XVII veke*, vol. 1 (Kyiv, 1848), 310; *ibid.*, 2: 296.

²⁵ *Akty, odnosiaschiesia k istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii, sobrannye v izdannye Arkheograficheskoi komissiei* (hereinafter *Akty IuZR*), vol. 7 (1657–1663; 1668–1669) (St. Petersburg, 1872), 97.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁷ Feofan Prokopovich, *Sochineniia*, ed. I. P. Eremin (Moscow-Leningrad, 1961), 152; Velychkovs’kyi, *Tvory*, 169. For Ornovs’kyi, see *Mvza Roxolanska o Tryumfalney slawie y Fortunie, z Herbownych Znakow [...] P. Iana Mazepy Hetmana, Woysk Ich Carskiego Przeswietnego Maiestatv, Zaporoskich* (Chernihiv, 1688); quoted from *Roksolanski Parnas: polskojęzyczna poezja ukraińska od końca XVI do początku XVIII wieku*, Cz. 2: Antologia, edited by Rostysław Radyszewski (Kraków, 1998), 380.

...from whose [Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich—*N. Ia.*] scepter-bearing hand your Highness received the hetman's mace, ascending to the office of hetman at God's call and with God's elevation, according to the Apostle Paul, who said: "For no one accepts honor, but is named by God."²⁸

Thus the symbol of authority—the mace—is given to the hetman by the anointed ruler, but, essentially, his function appears to be that of an "intermediary," because the hetman has already been selected and designated by his "elevation" by God himself. But in that case how are the purely earthly powers divided, and what part of them belongs to the tsar and what part to the hetman? The texts that I have analyzed allow us to assume that there existed a marked difference between the concept of the scope of the tsar's functions among the Cossack *starshyna officers* and the views of tsarist authority held by the clerical intellectuals of the Kyiv-Mohyla circle. For the latter, whose knowledge of the tradition of interpreting supreme authority had a Byzantine literary foundation—for example, knowledge of the *Nomocanon*, wherein the emperor is the orderer and patron of the Church (on the eve of the Khmel'nyts'kyi period, the Kyivan Cave Monastery Press published the *Nomocanon* three times: in 1620, 1624, and 1629), or through such reading matter as the famous exhortations of Deacon Agapetus addressed to Emperor Justinian, published for the first time in a Slavic language by this press in 1628—the person of the tsar was associated primarily with divine authority ("vested with authority, like God"), called upon to mediate between God and the people.²⁹ On the other hand, the figure of the tsar was "brought down to earth," as it were, by the "cultural" duties with which he was charged: he had to be educated, moral, filled with concern for good customs and the eradication of injustice, and so forth. These subtleties of the anointed sovereign's ruling functions drew the attention of the

²⁸ Galiatovs'kyi, *Kliuch rozuminnia*, 348.

²⁹ Iakym Zapasko and Iaroslav Isaievych, *Pam'iatky knyzhkovoho mystetstva: kataloh starodrukiv, vydanykh na Ukraïni*, vol. 1 (1574–1700) (Lviv, 1981), nos. 133, 140, 168, 188. For a detailed analysis of the exhortations of Deacon Agapetus with an overview of literature concerning the Latin-language and Slavic translations, see Ihor Ševčenko, "Ljubomudrějšij Kŷr" Agapit Diakon: On a Kiev Edition of a Byzantine *Mirror of Princes*," in idem, *Byzantium and the Slavs in Letters and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 497–526. This includes a facsimile of the Kyivan literary monument: 527–557.

Ukrainian ecclesiastical community throughout the seventeenth century. It is impossible not to recall that the first Ukrainian translation of the so-called *Testament* of Emperor Basil I the Macedonian, a Byzantine literary monument from the end of the ninth century, which stresses precisely these aspects of the *ars regnandi* (art of ruling), was made by Damian Nalyvaiko and published by the Ostrih Press in 1607, while the first and second Moscow editions (ca. 1661–1663 and 1680) were prepared, with the accuracy of the translation checked, by graduates of the Kyiv-Mohyla College Iepyfanii Slavynets'kyi and Symeon Polots'kyi.³⁰ The *Testament* (the Ostrih edition) was used by Petro Mohyla as evidenced by his handwritten notes in the book.³¹ In the opinion of Giovanna Brogi Bercoff, this same literary monument is quoted by Dmytrii Tuptalo in the introduction to his *Litopisets'* (admittedly, from Baronio) as being in accordance with his concept of the ideal ruler.³²

Both incarnations of the tsar (as a sacred being through whom the heavenly protection of the territory and its subjects is realized and as a person endowed with the highest Christian virtues) are present in the Ukrainian texts of church authors of the second half of the seventeenth century. “Like the sun, his throne shone for God and for our needs,” wrote Lazar Baranovych in 1676 in the mournful panegyric on the death of Aleksei Mikhailovich.³³ This solar symbol gives rise to characteristics that attest to the anointed ruler's zealotry in serving God and protecting

³⁰ In the collection of instructive texts entitled *Likarstvo na ospalyi umysl cholovichyi* under the title “Testament... Vasylia tsesara kgretskogo... do syna svoego, iuzh koronovanogo, L'va Filozofa” (for a description of this publication, see Zapasko and Isaievych, *Pam'iatky knyzhkovoho mystetstva*, no. 70). For other Ukrainian translations of the “Testament,” see Vladimir N. Peretts, ““Testament tsaria Vasiliia' v ukrainskikh perevodakh,”” *Sbornik otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovestnosti Akademii nauk* 101, no. 2 (1926): 50–72 (contains a copy of the first chapter of the “Testament” from the Ostrih edition, 50–54). Lev N. Pushkarev, *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia mysl' Rossii. Vtoraia polovina XVII veka* (Moscow, 1982), 172. The author mentions the Kyivan Cave Monastery Press publications of the “Testament” of 1636 and 1648 (p. 171), but this is a misunderstanding, because the Kyivan Cave Monastery Press did not publish these books at that time.

³¹ This copy is contained in the department of manuscripts of the V. I. Vernads'kyi National Library of Ukraine, under the identification code Kyr. 795.

³² G. Brogi Bercoff, “The Letopisec of Dimitrij Tuptalo, the Metropolitan of Rostov, in the Context of Western European Culture,” *Ricerche slavistiche* 39–40, no. 1 (1992–1993): 298, 325.

³³ *Ukrains'ka poeziia. Seredyna XVII st.*, 225.

the highest justice on earth: he shines “in truth, like the sun”; he has “built and beautified churches” and has “himself served God excellently”; he is the bearer of “many riches, which he generously lavished on everybody”; he is “wise, good, devout”; he “looks kindly, like a father, upon his subjects”; he is respectful in his attitude toward the clergy and compassionate to the lame and downtrodden; he models his conduct on his Christ-loving ancestors (“being equal to Saint Volodymyr, Tsar Constantine, Princes Hlib and Borys”).³⁴

Baranovych’s array of the tsar’s virtues encompasses, as we can see, the customary canon of the “professional ethics” of a Christian ruler, established by numerous “mirrors for princes”—from Deacon Agapetus to the relevant seventeenth-century treatises, in which piety, wisdom, magnanimity, kindness, mercy (*pietas, prudentia, magnanimitas, clementia, misericordia*), and so forth appear in various combinations. On the other hand, it is no use looking in texts of the panegyric genre, even if written by church intellectuals, for such an abundance of a tsar’s virtues, and especially “cultural” duties: the authors confine themselves to the polite mention of the tsar as “most illustrious and pious.” A telling example from this standpoint is the *Kroinika o Rusi* [Chronicle of Rus’] by the hegumen of St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Monastery Feodosii Sofonovych, written at the beginning of the 1670s. Thus, while the author reserves at least some elements of “professional ethics” for the Polish kings (for example, Władysław IV is described as “good-hearted” and Jan Casimir as “merciful”), he is obviously at a loss about what to do with Aleksei Mikhailovich, confining himself to consistently adding the epithet “Orthodox” to all mentions of the tsar.³⁵

The figure of the tsar is drawn even more schematically in the texts of secular authors. For example, in Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi’s diplomatic correspondence, he appears as an

³⁴ Ibid., 224–28.

³⁵ Feodosii Sofonovych, *Khronika z litopystsiv starodavnykh*, ed. Iurii Mytsyk and Volodymyr Kravchenko (Kyiv, 1992), 228, 230, 231, 236.

abstraction of a “pious tsar,” who is called upon to protect the threatened Orthodox faith.³⁶ After the Pereiaslav Treaty, the allegory of the “wings of protection” of the Orthodox tsar over the Zaporozhian Host and all of “Little Rus” entered into circulation. In analyzing the divergent interpretations of the metaphor of the “wings” by the Ukrainian and Russian sides, Serhii Plokhy calls the metaphor “solemn rhetoric,” but does not discuss the rhetorical model that was the foundation of the different nuance in the Ukrainian understanding of this generality.³⁷ But there is no doubt that this was a matter of the conventional patron–client topos, that is, a model of the authority–subordination relationships that were ubiquitous in the social practices of the Commonwealth: we find the rhetoric of patronage (“roof” and “wings” of the patron’s protection, the familial metaphor of the “father–children” relationship between the patron and his clients, the antithesis “patronage–allegiance”) in countless texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When we take this into account, the semantics of the fact that the residents of the Hetmanate usually qualify the act of placing their polity under the suzerainty of the Russian tsar as a move “under the protection,” and not as subordination, become much clearer, even though in personal situations the Cossack *starshyna* call themselves “subjects” of the tsar. The passage in the *Eyewitness Chronicle*, which states that “the Cossacks... swore an oath of eternal subjugation allegiance (*poddanstvo*) to his tsarist majesty,” is rather an exception, because the concept of subjugation itself was subject to harsh condemnation.³⁸ For example, the loyal Hrabianka often identifies it with a “yoke of labor,” namely slavery, and Samiilo Velychko, in the apocryphal letter that the Zaporozhians allegedly wrote to Hetman Ivan Samoilovych on 4 April 1684, calls the intention attributed to Samoilovych “to make [Ukraine] subject” to the tsar a crime, which will destroy forever: “...the glory and dignity of the military... which every good and virtuous

³⁶ These nuances are analyzed in Plokhy, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 306–18.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 319–29.

³⁸ *Litopys Samovydtisia*, ed. Iaroslav Dzyra (Kyiv, 1971), 67.

ancestor of Ukrainians and fine fellows of the Zaporozhian Host, and our whole fatherland of Little Russian Ukraine [*Malaia Ukraina Malorosiiskaia*] does not want to allow.³⁹

On the other hand, protection in contrast to subjugation was perceived as the free choice of ruler—with contractually established mutual obligations of the patron–monarch and Host–servitor.⁴⁰ Perhaps the best illustration of this are the arguments in Pylyp Orlyk’s famous letter to Stefan Iavors’kyi of 1721: having finally decided to switch to the side of Charles XII, Ivan Mazepa allegedly ordered Orlyk to:

...write a letter to His Tsarist Excellency [expressing] gratefulness for his protection [...] In conclusion, to declare that we had acquiesced voluntarily to the sovereignty of His Tsarist Majesty for the sake of the unified Eastern Orthodox faith. Being a free people, we now wish freely to withdraw, expressing gratitude for the Tsar’s protection [...] Under the protection of the Swedish king, we will look forward to our complete liberation.⁴¹

Mazepa’s motivation (in Orlyk’s interpretation) is the same as the motivation that Samiilo Velychko attributes to the iconic leader Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi: in 1652, the latter supposedly proposed peace to the king, “and if it should be otherwise, he would have to apply to another neighboring monarch for defense and protection.”⁴² The cautious warning was not heeded: the hetman’s envoys returned from the king “with nothing,” and that in Velychko’s concept of authority–subordination opened the path to a legitimate change of patron.

The most important thing for us in the subjugation-protection antithesis is that the first was associated with the exercise of direct authority over the territory and its population, and the second, with patronage, which did not envisage such authority, inasmuch as it belonged to the

³⁹ Velichko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1: 541.

⁴⁰ For more on the idea of a contract as a political concept of the Hetmanate, see Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s-1830s* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1988), 59–64.

⁴¹ Quoted from the republished letter in the addenda to Orest Subtelny, *The Mazepists. Ukrainian Separatism in the Early Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1981), 201–202.

⁴² Velichko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1: 120.

“servant” of the patron based on the old feudal tradition of *rex in regno suo imperator est* [the king is emperor in his own realm]. In this system of concepts, the ruling function of the anointed sovereign was confined to protection (“wings of protection”) and joint defensive operations (“alliance”), and, according to Velychko, it was these two concepts that Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi invoked in explaining his choice in 1654: “to be in alliance with and under the protection of the divinely powerful Orthodox monarch.”⁴³ It remains to recall that this perception of tsarist authority was fundamentally different from the concepts of it in contemporary Russia, where, according to researchers, it represented not only a higher sacred value (we also see replicas of this, derived from the Christian teaching about “worldly powers,” in Ukraine), but also the omnipresent and all-pervading authority of the “earthly god,” who has power of life and death over his subjects on the same basis as God.”⁴⁴

The powers of the real ruler of Ukraine, the hetman, in the eyes of his subjects also owed, as already noted, to divine election, but this deification was, as it were, of a “formal” nature: the hetman was regarded as God-given only to the extent that in principle “there is no authority except from God.” Nor can it be ruled out that the hetman acquired a certain amount of *sacrum* as the partner of the “God-crowned” tsar. For example, we come across this nuance in Stefan Iavors’kyi’s panegyric in honor of Ivan Mazepa: according to the Iavors’kyi formula, Mazepa is enlightened by the “ray of sunlight... of Russian autocrats” (“*słoneczny promień... Jedynowładców Rosskich*”).⁴⁵ At the same time, the right of the hetman to the fullness of real authority over the territory and population of the Hetmanate was not in any doubt, and in these

⁴³ Ibid., 172.

⁴⁴ Compare, *inter alia*, the thorough analysis in Pavel V. Lukin, *Narodonye predstavleniia o gosudarstvennoi vlasti v Rossii XVII veka* (Moscow, 2000).

⁴⁵ *Echo głosu wołającego na puszcze* (Kyiv, 1689). Quoted from G. Brogi Berkoff, “Z zagadnień różnic kulturowych na ziemiach wschodniosłowiańskich na przykładzie trójjęzycznych dzieł Stefana Jaworskiego,” in *Barok w Polsce i w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. Drogi przemian i osnowy kultur*, ed. Janusz Pelc, Krzysztof Mrowcewicz, Marek Prejs (Warsaw, 2000), 72.

collisions he was described with the help of definitions of the sovereign ruler. Here are two consonant examples, from panegyrics to Ivan Samoilovych (1687) and his successor, Ivan Mazepa (1688):

Szlachetnej młodzi grono więc wspaniałe,
Bo ma patrona i fundusze całe.
Któż wždy jest JANEM, onego mianuje,
W Rusi panuje?⁴⁶
A gdy pod mądrym rządem Twej buławy
Rossijski naród tej się dopnie sławy...⁴⁷

[The circle of noble youth is so great,
Because it has a patron and all funds.
Who is JAN by name,
[He] rules in Rus’?
And where under the wise rule of Your mace
the Ruthenian people will gain glory...]

However, sovereign authority was associated not only with rights but also with obligations; they were symbolized by the virtues envisaged by the above-mentioned “professional ethics” of the anointed ruler. We come across combinations of such virtues time after time in the characterizations of hetmans provided by their contemporaries. Setting aside “valor” and “courage” (*virtus* and *fortitudo*) as obvious attributes of every military leader, I will deal with the hetman’s “wisdom” (*prudentia*) and “magnanimity” (*magnanimitas*), traits that closely echo the Commonwealth political tradition of what was expected of royal rule.⁴⁸ Both qualities (the first was identified with “justice” and the second, with “nobility of soul”) anticipated serving the public good as values that the ruler must place higher than his private interests. Accusations against heedless hetmans—not “builders and protectors,” but “monsters of the fatherland,” who take one action or another “for the sake of their own private interests and

⁴⁶Paweł Baranecki, “Trybut jaśnie wielmożnemu Jmci Panu Ianowi Samojłowiczowi (Kyiv, 1687),” in *Roksolański Parnas*, 2: 321

⁴⁷ Jan Ornowski, “Muza roksolańska o tryjumfalnej sławie i fortunie z herbowych znaków jaśnie wielmożnego Jmci Pana P. Jana Mazepy... (Chernihiv, 1688),” in *Roksolański Parnas*, 2: 380.

⁴⁸ For a survey of political texts, see Augustyniak, *Wazowie i “królowie rodacy,”* 53–55.

ambitions, and not for the public good,” “for their private interests,” “with considerable damage to the fatherland...for their own love of power, private and insatiable desires,” “themselves choosing to live in riches, while not taking care of the host and of human misery,” “only those private interests lead them astray, so that they chase after the hetmancy,” and so forth—are a semantic cliché repeated so often that it hardly seems possible to doubt that the most widespread view of the hetman was primarily as the protector of the “public good.”⁴⁹ The characteristic nuances in the oath that Ivan Mazepa allegedly swore before Pylyp Orlyk just before switching to Charles XII’s side indicate the same perception of the hetman’s role:

I swear before God that it is not for my own private gain, nor for higher honors, nor for greater wealth, nor for any other reasons that I act. But I do so for all of you who are under my rule and command, for your wives and children, for the common welfare of our fatherland, poor unfortunate Ukraine, for the entire Zaporozhian Host and the Little Russian people, for the elevation and expansion of the Host’s rights and privileges so that, with the aid of God, neither you, nor your wives and children nor the fatherland together with the Zaporozhian Host might perish because of Moscow or the Swedes.⁵⁰

In addition to devotion to the public good, other actions and traits befitting a ruler’s “professional ethics” were expected of the hetman. In particular, he had to demonstrate “piety” (*pietas*), that is, he had to respect the men of the Church, build churches, and spread Christian “teachings” among his subjects. It is in this guise that Ivan Samoilovych appears in Ivan Velychovs’kyi’s panegyric:

That [mace—*N. Ia.*] led [you] to build churches
And decorate them with icons.
That [mace] causes you to love scholars,
And be a special patron of the sciences,
From which stem the glory, adornment, and support
Of our beloved fatherland and forthcoming joy.⁵¹

The ruler had to be “generous”: this trait is an element of the already mentioned

⁴⁹ Velichko, *Letopis' sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 2: 225, 296, 469, and others; Hryhorij Hrabjanka’s “The Great War of Bohdan Xmel’nyč’ky,” 318 passim; quoted from Viktor Horobets’, *Elita kozats’koï Ukraïny v poshukakh politychnoi lehitymatsii: stosunky z Moskvoiu ta Varshavoiu* (Kyiv, 2001), 356.

magnanimitas (magnanimity)—in the sense of being open to the difficulties and needs of every subject (we will deal later with “generosity” toward the troops, a virtue of a different order). An example of praise of such “generosity” was the panegyric of the “magister of grammar” of the Kyiv-Mohyla College Pavlo Baranets’kyi’s “*Tribute to his excellency Mr. Jan Samojłowicz (Trybut jaśnie wielmożnemu jmci Panu Janowi Samojłowiczowi)*” (1687):

Ile przeszłych wieków, ile przydzie,
 Na szczodrocie wždy Ianowej nie zydzie,
 Aby złoty wiek i dobroć odmienił,
 Sławę przemienił.
 Doznali tego nietylko rossyjscy,
 Ale mieszkańcy świadomi azyjscy,
 Jak dobrotliwy jesteś w łaskawości,
 Z własnej miłości.⁵²

[How many centuries in the past, how many in the future,
 [he] would not already have lived on great generosity
 That to change the golden age and welfare,
 To change the glory.
 Not only the Rutheniens,
 But Asian residents are aware,
 How great your kindness is,
 Without being forced]

Finally, a good Christian ruler had to have such traits as *liberalitas* and *simplicitas* (“liberality” and “simplicity”) in his way of life and attitude to his subjects, as well as openness to *consilium*, that is, to counsel. And we find these traits in reflections about Ivan Samoilovych, although in a negative sense:

At first you were a good master to all,
 Then you start behaving in a proud way,
 You began to rule single-handedly,
 You forgot that you were elected because of love
 And named our senior lord,
 You no longer needed any counsel,
 And you thought that you had come down from heaven...
 And you held everybody for nothing

And they were degraded to footstools.⁵⁰

A similar example of being “spoiled by power” of the initially “humane” and later “proud” Samoilovych is depicted in the *Eyewitness Chronicle* (it is worth adding that this contrast has a rhetorical derivation: “pride” (*superbia*) is the antithesis of “humility” (*humilitas*) and “generosity” (*liberalitas*):

That priest’s son was at first very humble and kind toward people, but when he grew rich, he became very proud not only toward the Cossacks but also toward the clerical estate. When the Cossack officers came to him, they had to stand, nobody sat... the clergy, too, no matter how eminent, had to stand with an uncovered head. And in church, he never walked to receive the Gifts, but the priest brought them to him, and his sons did the same.⁵¹

I should add in passing that the “standing before the hetman” described in the *Eyewitness Chronicle* is most likely an allusion to the popular work by Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, which was often used as a literary model: according to Suetonius, one of the cruelest Roman emperors, Caligula, forced the senators to stand in his presence and even wait on him at table (Suetonius, *De Vita*, IV, 26.2). The “imperial” parallel in the depiction of Samoilovych’s crimes here is rather telling from the standpoint of the perception of the status of the hetman’s authority. Closer to reality is the passage about bringing the Holy Gifts to the hetman and his sons. It cannot be ruled out that this was an echo of reports of solemn liturgies celebrated by Eastern hierarchs in which Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi and his sons participated. One of them (in Chyhyryn, on 8 November 1650) is mentioned by the Muscovite monk Arsenii Sukhanov. According to him, following a prayer at the pulpit, Metropolitans Joasaph of Corinth and Gabriel of Nazareth came away from the altar through the royal doors to the hetman and the hetman’s

⁵⁰ Anonymous poem on the occasion of stripping of Samoilovych of the hetmancy in 1687, cited in Velichko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 3:16–17.

⁵¹ *Litopys Samovydtisia*, 144–45.

son (Tymish?) and then placing their omophorions on their heads, they read prayers.⁵²

On the whole, as we can see from the cited examples, in applying the array of virtues of the “crowned” ruler to the ruling hetman, the inhabitants of the Hetmanate essentially equated the *ars regnandi* of the two. This meant that, on the one hand, they recognized the hetman’s right to the fullness of ruling powers, and, on the other hand, they limited these powers with a certain “level of expectations” from government as such. After all, for practically every virtue from the stereotypical canon, it is possible to find not only praise but also a negative parallel, and it is these opposites of “good–bad” hetmans that represent a concentrated cross-section of concepts about “just” rule.

The Hetman and the “People”

Describing the “election” of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi at the Zaporozhian Sich on the eve of the uprising, Samiilo Velychko uses the following expression: “Then immediately, with one voice and one heart, the whole host named and decreed Khmel’nyts’kyi to be their hetman.”⁵³

The formula “with one voice and one heart” is a direct analogue of the famous *unanimio consensu* (“by unanimous consent”), the principle that was one of the chief doctrines of the political system of the Commonwealth. “Unanimity” was associated with the concept of the “equality” (*aequalitas*) of the noble nation; besides symbolic connotations, this also had purely technical parameters—the election of the king *viritim*, that is, with the votes of all the nobles

⁵² *Vossoedinenie Ukrainy s Rossiei. Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1954), 187. In Stepan Velychenko’s opinion, what is described here can be identified with the consecration of the hetman, but Serhii Plokyh, disagreeing with Velychenko, is more careful in judging Sukhanov’s testimony; he believes that if there was a consecration, it would have taken place earlier (Plokyh, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine*, 232).

⁵³ Velichko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1:51.

present at the election in person, and the approval of Diet decisions not by a majority of the vote but by means of *zgody wspólnej*, that is, unanimously.⁵⁴

Velychko also contains frequent invocations of the “nation” as sovereign, to whom belongs the *summa potestas* in the state, which is also congruent with the Commonwealth doctrine of authority, and in another apocryphal letter from the Zaporozhians to Ivan Vyhovs’kyi, praising his election to the hetmancy “by the will of the people,” which the Zaporozhians ostensibly approved, although they did not take part in the election, is further reinforced by the trite topos of Commonwealth gentry democracy: “The voice of the people is the voice of God” (*vox populi—vox Dei*).⁵⁵

Thus, at first glance, what we have before us is the Cossack version of the nobiliary concepts of the “sovereignty of the people,” where the place of the “noble nation” has been taken by a new political force—Cossackdom (it is telling that there is no single image of the “Cossack nation” as yet: in Velychko, the “core” and “honor” of Cossackdom is the Zaporozhian Sich; in the *Hrabianka* and *Eyewitness Chronicles*, it is the *starshyna* of the town Cossacks; in the *Dvorets’kyi Chronicle*, it is the “full Council” of the Zaporozhian and town Cossacks; and so forth, although this variation in concepts does not change the model of “people’s rule” as such).⁵⁶ However, when we examine this model more closely, we will find that the similarity of Cossack and Commonwealth “democracies” is more the product of a common rhetorical canon for describing these concepts than a similarity in their substance.

It is worth beginning with the above-mentioned “unanimous consent” in the election of the hetman and in deciding other matters, inasmuch as this is precisely what is identified in

⁵⁴ Opaliński, *Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej w latach 1587–1652*, 93–95.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 30–31, 60, and others; Velychko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1:310.

⁵⁶ This chronicle from the end of the 1670s, most likely authored by Vasyl’ and Ivan Dvorets’kyi, has been published by Ivan Mytsyk, see *idem.*, “Letopisets’ Dvoret’skikh—pamiatnik ukrainskogo letopisaniia XVII v.,” in *Letopisi i khroniki. Sbornik statei*, ed. V. I. Buganov (Moscow, 1984), 219–34.

historiography with the “democratic principles of the military-political system” of Cossackdom, developed at the Zaporozhian Sich, which Mykhailo Hrushevs’kyi called the “Ukrainian plebeian republic.”⁵⁷ However, even the first known description of the Sich Council in 1594, written by an eyewitness, the Austrian diplomat Erich Lassota von Steblau, shows not so much “direct democracy” organized on the principles of “unanimous consent,” as the archaic military community, whose “electoral” conduct echoes the customs of ancient Germans described as far back as by Caesar: there, dissenters were regarded as “deserters and traitors” and were killed (Caes. *B.G.*, 6: 23), while here they were threatened with drowning if they failed to show submission to the community.⁵⁸ The same portrayal of the Cossack council appears in much later works: for example, the “black” (that is, general) council (*chorna rada*) of 1663 described in the *Eyewitness Chronicle*, where “many notable Cossacks were killed by the common masses (*chern*) in a slaughter that lasted three days.”⁵⁹

As for the dependence of the “unanimously elected” hetmans on the “nation” that had given them power, it, too, was very far from the democratic practices on the Commonwealth model. In that model, speaking against the king was regarded as a regular feature of public life based on the principle of a nobleman’s “free voice” (*libera vox*), but the person of the king acquired a sacred dimension from the moment of his anointment and coronation and was respected as inviolable.⁶⁰ In contrast, the hetman, although his functions after the creation of the Hetmanate were virtually identical to the functions of a sovereign ruler, was viewed as a figure

⁵⁷ See P. M. Sas, *Politychna kul'tura ukrains'koho suspil'stva (kinets' XVI–persha polovyna XVII st.)* (Kyiv, 1998), 109-11; V. Shcherbak, *Ukrains'ke kozatstvo: formuvannia social'noho stanu. Druha polovyna XV—seredyna XVII st.* (Kyiv, 2000), 57-60; *Istoriia ukrains'koho kozatstva. Narysy u dvokh tomakh*, ed. V. A. Smolii (Kyiv, 2006), 1:161-63; M. Hrushevs'kyi, “Baida-Vyshnevets'kyi v poezii i istorii,” in *Zapysky Ukrains'koho Naukovoho tovarystva v Kyievi*, bk. 3 (1909): 139.

⁵⁸ See this episode in the published fragments of Lassota’s diary: Erikh Liasota iz Stebleva, “Shchodennyk,” *Zhovten* 10 (1984): 104.

⁵⁹ *Litopys Samovydtisia*, 91.

⁶⁰ Augustyniak, *Wazowie i “królowie rodacy,”* 70–71.

whom the “nation,” that is, the Zaporozhian Host, had the right to remove from power, and even punish with death for “ruinous rule in our fatherland.” In one of Velychko’s regular apocryphal letters, the Sich Cossacks expressed their complaints against Iurii Khmel’nyts’kyi in literally such terms and threatened him:

...in the center of Chyhyryn... to throw you out as a worthless leech [...] and if you do not leave Chyhyryn, we will soon come to you and not only bring down the walls of your house, for being a rapist and wrecker of our fatherland, but also not leave your soul to live.⁶¹

According to Velychko, similar threats were allegedly addressed to Ivan Samoilovych in 1678:

Know for certain that soon there will befall you what you don’t expect, because you will pay for the blood of our brothers with your blood or that of your children; for the loss of many of our brothers, ruin will befall your home suddenly; [...] and because through your fault our Little Russian fatherland on this side [*sehobochnaia; Right Bank Ukraine*] has become empty, your rising house will become empty, and there will be nothing living in your dwellings.⁶²

Without Velychko’s grandiloquence but with a similar subtext of guilt–deserved punishment, other Cossack chroniclers wrote of the killing of “bad” leaders by the host. For example, one such notable “bad” figure in the narratives about the beginning of the war in 1648 was Cherkasy colonel Barabash, who, according to legend, kept secret the privilege granted by Władysław IV to the Zaporozhian Host: he was executed in the spring of 1648 together with several other officers who did not support the uprising.⁶³ The author of the *Eyewitness Chronicle* describes the death of Barabash with impassive neutrality: “And the troops that were sailing in boats on the Dnipro, [...] the [Cossack] officers that were with them, and the German infantry,

⁶¹ Velychko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1:32–35.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 471.

⁶³ For a comparison of the testimonies see Valerii A. Smolii and Valerii S. Stepankov, *Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi. Sotsial’no-politychnyi portret* (Kyiv, 1993), 80–81.

which was in boats, they killed and threw into the Dniro.”⁶⁴ Under Hrabianka’s pen, this episode acquires a “patriotic” motivation: Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi allegedly addressed the registered Cossacks, headed by Barabash, through an envoy and reminded them that they, like the rebels, “were born of one mother, Ukraine,” and they, “listened and all six thousand of them rose up with one heart and one mind,” killed Barabash, “and drowned all the officers and Polish commanders with their banners in the Dniro.”⁶⁵ Velychko, for his part, “legitimized” the event with the will of the “nation”: according to him, Khmel’nyts’kyi, having written Barabash a warning letter in the name of the Zaporozhian Host, accused him of not caring “about our Ukrainian people” and concludes that he should “command sheep or pigs, not people”; a few months later, Barabash met a deserved death: he was “killed” and his allies were “slaughtered and thrown into the bowels of the Dniro.”⁶⁶

We find similar judgmental overtones in the mentions of yet another death of a “bad” hetman—Ivan Briukhovets’kyi, torn to pieces by a Cossack mob in June 1668. This event gets a brief mention in the *Eyewitness Chronicle*: “The *holota* (common Cossacks) arbitrarily killed and tortured Briukhovets’kyi in the field and they killed many noted Cossacks and Zaporozhians.”⁶⁷ Hrabianka accompanies this episode with a short moral on the inevitability of God’s retribution: “him the common Cossacks (*chern’*) beat to death without mercy. Thus God avenged the innocent blood of Somko and others on Briukhovets’kyi.”⁶⁸ Velychko, too, “put the onus” on God’s vengeance: “...began tearing and beating him, and beat him to death..., and leaving his dead and naked body, they returned to their camp. [...] And thus it was measured

⁶⁴ *Litopys Samovydtisia*, 49–50.

⁶⁵ Hryhorij Hrabjanka’s “*The Great War of Bohdan Xmel’nyts’kyi*,” 320.

⁶⁶ Velychko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1:32–33 (Khmel’nyts’kyi’s letter); *ibid.*, 1:61 (Barabash death).

⁶⁷ *Litopys Samovydtisia*, 105.

⁶⁸ Hryhorij Hrabjanka’s “*The Great War of Bohdan Xmel’nyts’kyi*,” 397.

back again to him, Briukhovets'kyi, for shedding the blood of [Iakym] Somko and Onykii [Sylych] his own blood had to be shed by his people and his life taken.”⁶⁹

It seems to be an important detail that not only is there no condemnation in any of the cited descriptions of either the direct threats to the “heedless ruler,” or of his physical destruction, but, on the contrary, they are represented as something completely legitimate—determined either by the requirements of the public good, or the just retribution for innocently shed blood. From this standpoint, the above-mentioned “divine election” of hetmans proves to be a very ambivalent phenomenon. This is because, on the one hand, in electing a hetman, the “nation” (Zaporozhian Host) is merely implementing God’s will, which has already “designated” a candidate, while, on the other hand, this same “nation” has the right to execute the chosen one, and this is perceived as a legitimate action, tantamount to carrying out God’s judgment. It can be cautiously assumed that this ambivalence was rooted in the archaic concept of the nature and functions of authority as the realization of the collective will of a given community of fighting men, under the firm protection of “their” deity (as time went by, a Christian deity, of course). The bearer of authority in this kind of collective had to be perceived, above all, as authorized by the community (thus, also, its deity!) to execute concrete functions, and, if he neglected to do so, as someone who had profaned the will of the deity and had to be expelled from the community. The idea that the tie between the collective (army) and a higher force was imagined as almost literally direct is suggested by two known statements from the times of the Cossack war, both recorded from the lips of rank-and-file Cossacks and not the *starshyna*, “spoiled” by familiarity with literary convention, which makes these observations especially credible. The first of these statements is the testimony of a captured Cossack, who in his interrogation in July 1648 repeated the rumors spread among the rebels alleging that Władysław IV had not died but had fled to the

⁶⁹ Velichko, *Letopis' sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 2:163–64.

Cossack Host. In our camp, said the captive, there are three permanently standing tents: one for God, the second for the king, and the third for the hetman.⁷⁰ The second statement is recorded in the testimony of a registered Cossack: describing one of the Cossack “black” councils in 1651, the captive attributes to the common Cossacks (*chern’*) present at the council the telling paired formula “God and the Host want it so”:

Co czerń między się rozebrawszy krzyknęli: “Panie Hetmanie! Bóg i Wojsko tak chce, abyśmy się żadnym sposobem z Królem nie jednali, bo na tośmy się odważyli i na ptośmy tu przyszli,... tedy my przy dostojeństwie twojem wszytcy ginąć będziemy, i albo wszytcy zginiemy, albo wszytkich Lachów wygubimy.”⁷¹

[That the *chern’*, having worked it out, shouted: “Lord Hetman! God and the Host want it so, that we not unite with the King in any way, because we dared this and decided [...] then we will all die with your grace, and either we will all die, or we will kill all the Poles]

Finally, a characteristic parallel to the concept of the army as an integral unit whose collective will is equal to the highest verdict is a sentence from Jan Poczobut Odlanicki’s soldier’s diary. He describes the execution in 1662—in the name of the army—of the Lithuanian field hetman Wincenty Gosiewski: “I tak zatrzymawszy lektykę rozkazali wysiąść z wozu, powiadając krótką a straszną oracyją, że całego wojska jest wola taka, abyś już więcej W.M. nie żył [And so stopping the litter, they ordered him to get off, [and] delivered a brief and terrible declaration that it is the will of the whole army that W.M. no longer should live].”⁷² It is important that the formula used by Poczobut “the will of the whole army” was, apparently, an established cliché, because the author of the diary did not personally witness the scene he described.

⁷⁰ From a letter from Wojciech Miaskowski dated 4 August 1648: Karol Szajnocha, *Dwa lata dziejów naszych, 1646, 1648. Opowiadanie i źródła*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1900), no. 35.

⁷¹ In a letter from the king’s secretary Wojciech Bieczyński sent from the camp outside Sokal dated 8 June 1651 in *Ojczyście spominki w pismach do dziejów dawnej Polski*, ed. Ambroży Grabowski, vol. 2 (Krakow, 1845): 72.

⁷² Jan Władysław Poczobut Odlanicki, *Pamiętnik, 1640–1684*, ed. Andrzej Rachuba (Warsaw, 1987), 176.

Given this kind of perception of authority—as tantamount to the will of the armed collective—it is logical to expect that the forms of its direct, as it were, obvious representation should coincide primarily with purely soldierly values. Their canon is not difficult to recreate from countless relevant statements, from ancient authors to seventeenth-century texts: the leader has to be willing to fight, just in the distribution of the spoils of war, generous and accessible to his soldiers, and attentive to the “eye appeal” of his army—its weapons, attire, and banners. Before citing examples from works produced within the Cossack milieu, let me underscore a telling detail of a more general nature, namely: the authors depict the virtues of “professional ethics” of the hetmans and the virtues of the military canon asymmetrically—the first are usually only declared, with no specific evidence provided, while the latter are always described as completely specific, emotionally convincing images or “facts.” A good example of this rhetorical technique is Velychko’s visual metaphor, which emotionally emphasizes the “non-combative nature” of Ivan Samoilovych, which is absurd from the standpoint of the expected “bellicosity” of the hetmans: “He loves to rule as hetman but does not want to climb out from his soft feather bed, like a rat, and take up arms in defense of the fatherland from the Crimean wolves; were not our hetmans and leaders of the Zaporozhian Host on this side of the Dnipro such [men] from long ago and up to now?”⁷³

Not clearly articulated but decisive in the competition of the contenders for the favor of the Zaporozhian Host was the postulate that a “good” hetman is one “whom the whole host loves.”⁷⁴ Samiilo Velychko’s emphasis on “evidence” of a just distribution of the spoils of war, gestures of munificence toward the host and its external splendor, acquired as a result of a “successful” hetmancy, show that this “love” was rooted in the ancient link between the well-

⁷³ Velychko, *Letopis' sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 2:391.

⁷⁴ Compare the use of this topos in political practices: Horobets', *Elita kozats'koi Ukraïny*, 353 passim.

being of the military collective and the success (“happiness”) and generosity of the leader.⁷⁵ Given the asymmetrical nature of the above description, it is telling that episodes that reflect this type of concept are always reinforced by Velychko with “exact” figures. For example, the narrative in which Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi is presented as a “good” hetman who distributes the spoils of war taken from the opponent—that is, let me repeat, the inalienable collective property of the whole army, which should be amassed and fairly shared: “He chose for himself from among one and a half thousand Tatars that had been taken alive the best 500 men and eleven princes and other of their leaders, and the rest of the Tatar prisoners he gave to his host.”⁷⁶

And here are two parallel episodes of the leader’s gestures of “gratitude” to his army: the hero of the first is Khmel’nyts’kyi, and of the second, Mazepa (allow me to note in passing that the parallelization of these two figures in this context is clearly significant, inasmuch as it identifies “good” hetmans; thus Velychko includes Mazepa, who was already anathemized at the time of the writing of this chronicle, in this group). After the first victorious engagement with the Crown units, Khmel’nyts’kyi sends the Zaporozhian Sich: “A reciprocal gift: for one banner [korohva], four good banners; for one horse-tail standard, two horse-tail standards; for one mace, two precious [vyshmeniti] maces; for one kettledrum, three large kettledrums; for three cannon, six top-quality cannon; for the army’s good work, a thousand ‘beaten’ thalers [bytyi taler] for the host, and 300 thalers for the holy Church and its servants.”⁷⁷ Ivan Mazepa does the same, sending the Sich after his election: “A gift for all Sich *kurins* of 100 gold coins each, a pitcher of alcohol and 10 barrels of various kinds of meal for each *kurin* [...] He also gave each *otaman* personally crimson cloth, and to the *kish* otaman he gave two and three times as much in woolen cloth and

⁷⁵ On the topos of military “success” (*fortuna belli*) as a material measure of a successful war in greater detail, see Iakovenko, *Paralel’nyi svit*, 192-208.

⁷⁶ Velychko, *Letopis’ sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii*, 1:166.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

various fabrics, and also his *starshyna*.”⁷⁸

A clear illustration of Cossack axiology in Samiilo Velychko’s text is the description of the “beautiful” troops after “successful” battles at Zhovti Vody and at Korsun in the spring of 1648:

Khmel’nyts’kyi’s whole host, Cossack and Tatar, was able to afford horses, armor for horses [*rondy*], harness and armor, quivers, swords, and other weapons, money [*denhy*] also and simple and rich cloth... [...] so that when after the two above-mentioned battles that host mounted their horses and started out on campaign with Khmel’nyts’kyi, when [you] saw what they looked like from the side or from above, you could say that these were fields seeded with Dutch or Italian poppies and in bloom.⁷⁹

There is no doubt that we should view Hryhorii Hrabianka’s famous eulogy for Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi in the context of military expectations that the hetman’s authority was that of the “supreme leader.” It is worth quoting in its entirety:

A man worthy of the name hetman: boldly he was ready to take on any misfortunes, even more diligent was he amidst these very misfortunes; whereby no toils tired his body, and his good spirit could not be subdued by adversaries. He endured cold and heat equally. He ate and drank what nature demanded and was not overcome by sleep at night or during the day. When he lacked time due to affairs and military matters, he rested only a little, and then not on expensive beds, but on such beddings as a military man ought. Even amid the military din, he slept calmly, in no way concerned. His dress did not stand out at all against the others, only the gear and his horses were somewhat better. He was often seen covered with a military cloak, as he rested among the guards. He went first into battle and was the last to leave it.⁸⁰

As has already been noted by researchers, Hrabianka’s eulogy is an almost literal translation of the description of Hannibal in Titus Livy’s *History* (*Ab urbe condita*, 21.4)—with only the passages of praise used, because the praise is followed by a list of the leader’s vices

⁷⁸ Ibid., 3: 59.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1: 72.

⁸⁰ Quoted from: Frank E. Sysyn, “‘A Man Worthy of the Name Hetman’: The Fashioning of Khmelnytsky as a Hero in the Hrabianka Chronicle,” in Amelia M. Glaser, ed., *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Competing Literary Legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack Uprising* (Palo Alto, 2015), 45; Hryhorij Hrabjanka’s “*The Great War of Bohdan Xmel’nyts’kyi*,” 375.

(cruelty, perfidy, blasphemy, etc.), which, according to Livy, were equal to his virtues, and so this section was omitted.⁸¹ The introduction by the Cossack historian into his work of this passage from Livy, whose work gives more than ample scope for modeling the image of an ideal ruler, politician, and patriot, is not, in my opinion, accidental. Of all possible models, Hrabianka, a typical product of the Cossack class, with ties from a young age to the Zaporozhian Host, was most drawn to the “leadership” version—the ideal of the chief, the best member of the military collective, who is raised above the “people” only by the weight of his obligations.

In summing up, we can say that the similarity between the two models of “democracy”—gentry and Cossack—is as superficial as the similarities between the Russian and Ukrainian versions of respect for the God-given authority of the anointed ruler described above. In both cases, the two sides use the same rhetorical clichés, but when the contexts are compared more carefully, it becomes obvious that different meanings are hidden behind the customary vocabulary. In light of this duality, the Cossack *politia* emerges as filled with unsolvable contradictions. This is because in it “just” authority means, above all, the collective will of the Host, where God’s laws are inextricably interwoven with the archaic laws of Cossack brotherhood, although this authority is described with ready-made formulas that were developed by very different social practices and social orders. Consequently, each of the two models—Russian or Commonwealth—appears as a two-faced Janus: on the obverse, reverence for the *sacrum* of the anointed tsar; on the reverse, its virtual rejection; on the obverse, slogans of Commonwealth democracy; on the reverse, the military democracy of a closed military collective; on the obverse, invocations to “beloved motherland our Ukraine” as a territorial entity; on the reverse, the Zaporozhian Host, taken out of the spatial-territorial framework. In

⁸¹ Marko Antonovych, “Kharakterystyka B. Khmel’nyts’koho u Hrabianky i Livii,” *Ukraïns’kyi istoryk*, 32 (1995), 165-66; Frank E. Sysyn, “Recovering the Ancient and Recent Past: The Shaping of Memory and Identity in Early Modern Ukraine,” *Eighteen-Century Studies* 35, no. 1(2001): 82–84.

conclusion it remains to add that each of these “faces of Janus” had, *mutatis mutandis*, its continuation (or second birth?) in the nation-building that was of such concern in the Romantic age.

Translated from the Ukrainian by Marta Skorupsky