

OD KIJOWA DO RZYMU

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Mystifying the Nation: *The History of the Rus'* and its French Models

The History of the Rus', a key text in the creation and dissemination of Ukrainian historical identity, began to circulate in St. Petersburg on the eve of the Decembrist Revolt of 1825. Among its admirers were some of the best-known Russian literary figures of the time, including Alexander Pushkin and Nikolai Gogol, as well as some of the empire's most prominent rebels. These included Kondratii Ryleev, a poet who was hanged for his role in the Decembrist Revolt, and Taras Shevchenko, another poet generally recognized as the father of the modern Ukrainian nation, who was exiled to the Caspian steppes for his role in a clandestine Ukrainian organization. On the surface the *History of the Rus'* is little more than a chronicle of the Ukrainian Cossacks. The narrative begins in the late Middle Ages and ends on the eve of the modern era. If one digs deeper, however, the manuscript is by no means what it appears to be.¹

¹ On the *History of the Rus'*, see: S. Kozak, *U źródeł romantyzmu i nowożytniej myśli społecznej na Ukrainie*, Wrocław 1978, pp. 70–135. For the latest literature on the subject, see Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Poema vil'noho narodu ("Istoriia Rusiv" ta ii mistse v ukraińskii istoriografii)*, Kharkiv 1996; N. Shlikhta, *Elementy richposplyts'koi ideolohii ta politychnoi rytoryky v Istorii Rusiv*, „Moloda natsiia: al'manakh” 1 (2000); I. Myshanych, *Istoriia Rusiv: istoriografia, problematyka, poetyka*, Kyiv 1999; I. Dzyra, *Istoriia Rusiv ta istoryko-literaturnyi protses pershoi polovyny XIX st.*, „Spetsial'ni istorychni dystypliny: pytannia teorii ta metodyky” 2(1998), 156ff.; idem, *Vplyv Litopysu Malorosii Zhana Benua Sherena v Istorii Rusiv*, „Problemy istorii Ukraïny XIX–pochatku XX st.” (2003), no. 6: 412–25. Cf. idem, *Kozats'ke litopysannia 30-kh–80-kh. rokiv XVIII stolittia: dzhereloznavchy ta istoriografichnyi aspekty*, Kyiv 2006, pp. 388–410.

The *History of the Rus'* is a tour de force of mystification whose author or authors remain concealed behind the name of an eighteenth-century Orthodox archbishop Heorhii Konysky. The author of the *History* used the story about the monastic origins of the manuscript and its editing by Archbishop Konysky not merely to cover his tracks but to authenticate the forgery and endow the manuscript with an authority that his own name could hardly provide. This was a relatively common practice in the early Romantic era, which was rich in forged historical and literary texts. The Napoleonic Wars left in their wake frightened rulers, shaken empires, and scores of historical mystifications intended to legitimize the existence of nations whose formation was jump-started by the French Revolution. In the context of growing tensions between imperial and national identities, the mystifications served as a means of renegotiating historical space dominated by empires. The old art of literary forgery became one of the few available ways to enhance the prestige of nations lacking states of their own in conflict with their much more established imperial competitors.

The *History of the Rus'* bears all the hallmarks of the national mystifications of the period and has been justly compared to such classic examples of that genre as James Macpherson's Ossianic poetry of the 1760s and the historical forgeries of Václav Hanka, which surfaced in Habsburg Bohemia in the early nineteenth century. The decision of the author of the *History* to write his work in the imperial language reflected not only the colonial status of Ukrainian culture in the Russian Empire but also general European practice in the production of national mystifications. Macpherson published his Ossianic poetry in English, claiming that it was a translation from the Gaelic. He produced the reverse "translation" into Gaelic only after the authenticity of his texts was challenged. Hanka published his "findings" both in the language of the "original" and in German "translation." In all three cases, the argument was addressed to the English-, German-, and Russian-speaking elites and readers in the core territory of the empire. The choice of language initially confused the imperial readership. Not only did Russian readers admire the *History* before its anti-Russian bias was pointed out, but Englishmen praised Ossianic poetry before they uncovered its Scottish message.²

² On the history of mystifications, along with the works cited in the introduction to this book, see: P. Baines, *The House of Forgery in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Burlington 1999; M. Russett, *Fictions and Fakes: Forging Romantic Authenticity, 1760–1845*, Cambridge 2006. For the impact of Macpherson's poetry on the rise of the Romantic movement, see: *The Reception of Ossian in Europe*, ed. H. Gaskill, Cardiff 2004. On the reception of Ossian in the Russian Empire, see: I. Levin, *Ossian v russkoi literature: konets XVIII-pervaia tret' XIX veka*, Leningrad 1980. On the function of historical forgeries in East Central Europe and Ukraine, see: H. Hrabovych, *Slidamy natsional'nykh mistyfikatsii*, "Krytyka (Kyiv)" 5, no. 6 (June 2001): 14–23.

The Scottish and Czech parallels are exceptionally productive for interpreting the meaning of the *History of the Rus'* because they help place the manuscript and the Cossack myth that it helped create and disseminate into the broader context of European mythmaking. Not less important has been establishing the links between the *History* and the eighteenth-century French historiography. Probably the first scholar to note the impact of French Enlightenment historical writing on Ukrainian historiography of the Cossack era was Mykhailo Hrushevsky. In a short essay published in Moscow in 1935, a year after his death, Hrushevsky stressed the importance of works by French authors such as Jean-Benoît Scherer on the formation of Ukrainian political and historical thought in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He also indicated parallels between the *History* and the *Annales*, treating them as examples of the anonymous author's borrowings from the work of Scherer. Jean-Benoît Scherer was not the only French author who influenced the way in which the *History of the Rus'* was written. Another influence came from Voltaire himself. The anonymous author cited Voltaire's *History of Charles XII* (1739) in his account of the Battle of Poltava (1709), its preconditions and aftermath.³

Voltaire had enormous influence on the development of French and European historiography. He helped develop social history, including accounts of customs, law, and the arts. He also was a skeptical writer who regarded fables as intentional misrepresentations, considered it important to examine historical sources critically, and tried to replace unsystematic methods of research with scientific ones. But the *History of Charles XII*, which was known to the anonymous author of the *History of the Rus'* either in its French original or in one of its Russian translations, was one of Voltaire's early historical works in which he had not yet completely divested himself of the influence of seventeenth-century humanist historiography. He considered history a form of belles lettres that should be cast in dramatic terms and presented in an impressive style, and in the *History of Charles XII* he used such features of humanist historiography as invented speeches and anecdotes. The anonymous author of the *History of the Rus'* not only knew that work but was also influenced by its method and style.⁴

³ M. Hrushevs'kyi, *Z istorychnoi fabulistyky kintsia XVIII st.*, [in:] *Akademiku N. Ia Maru. Iubileinyi sbornik*, Leningrad 1935, pp. 607–11; repr. In: *Ukrain'skyi istoryk*, New York and Toronto 1991–92: 125–29. See references to Voltaire in *Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii. Sochinenie Georgiia Koniskago, Arkhiepiskopa Beloruskago*, Moscow 1846, pp. 184, 200, 208.

⁴ See: Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles Xii, Roi de Suède* (multiple editions). For one of the early Russian translations of the book, see: Voltaire, *Istoriia i opisanie zhizni Karla XII, korolia Shvedskogo. Perevedena s nemetskogo iazyka [Petrom Pomerantsevym]*, St. Petersburg 1777. On Voltaire's historical views, see: J. H. Brumfitt, *Voltaire, Historian*, Westport, Conn., 1958, pp. 26–30, 129–64.

In his description of Ivan Mazepa's revolt against Peter I, the anonymous author declared himself in agreement with Voltaire's interpretation of the hetman's actions as guided by wounded honor. *The Czar, who began to be over-heated with wine, and had not, when sober, always the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him impaled*, wrote Voltaire, describing a legendary episode about Peter's clash with Mazepa during one of the tsar's drinking parties. *Mazeppa, on his return to the Ukraine, formed the design of a revolt*. The anonymous author found support for Voltaire's version of events in a local legend that placed the same episode at a dinner hosted by Peter's close associate Aleksandr Menshikov, whom the author considered a sworn enemy of Ukraine. According to this version, Peter slapped Mazepa in the face as a result of the conflict.

*Both these stories, taken together, show the same thing—that Mazepa had a most harmful intent, inspired by his own malice and vengeance, and not at all by national interests, which, naturally, ought in that case to have moved the troops and the people to support him, but instead the people fought the Swedes with all their might as enemies who had invaded their land in hostile fashion.*⁵

Like Voltaire, the anonymous author of the *History of the Rus'* had a taste for drama and loved anecdotes. He also mixed traditional methods of humanist historiography with an Enlightenment belief in science and laws directing human history. Moreover, he attacked fables and fabulists of the past. Not all of this was necessarily derived from Voltaire, as similar ideas and approaches are to be found in the works of other writers of the day. The historical works of Jean-Benoît Scherer have many features in common with those of Voltaire, and, as has been shown by Hrshevsky and others, Scherer's *Annales* had a most profound impact on the author of the *History of the Rus'*.

Jean-Benoît Scherer (1741–1824) was born in Strasbourg, received his degree in law from the University of Jena and taught at the University of Tübingen from 1808 to 1824. He spent a significant part of his life in the French diplomatic service, beginning his career at the embassy in Russia; he was later stationed in Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Berlin. He retired from the diplomatic service in 1780, having spent the previous five years in France. Most of his published works dealt with or were inspired by his experiences in the Russian Empire. In 1774 he published a study of the Primary Chronicle, and a work discussing Russian international trade appeared in 1778. Ten years later, Scherer published the *Annales de la Petite-Russie*,

⁵ Voltaire, *History of Charles the Twelfth, King of Sweden*, New York 1858, p. 127–128; *Istoriia Rusov*, p. 200.

ou Histoire des Cosaques-Saporogues et des Cosaques de l'Ukraine. A German version appeared in Leipzig in 1789. In 1792 Scherer returned to "Russian" subjects and published a multivolume collection of vignettes about Russian history and politics entitled *Anecdotes intéressantes et secrètes de la cour de Russie*.⁶

The *Annales de la Petite-Russie* consisted of two parts. The first was a geographic and historical description of Little Russia produced by Scherer himself. The second was a French translation of the *Brief Description of Little Russia*, the most popular compendium of Ukrainian history at the time. A version of the *Brief Description* was used by Vasyl Ruban and Oleksandr Bezborodko for their edition of the *Brief Chronicle of Little Russia* in 1777. But Scherer's second volume was not a translation of the Ruban-Bezborodko edition, or at least not only a translation of that edition. Scherer claimed to have obtained his manuscript from Kyiv. Indeed, there were parts of the text that found no parallel in any known version of the *Brief Description*. Either they were derived from other sources or they were inventions of the "publisher" himself, although he denied any "improvement" of the chronicle on his part.⁷

In 1948, Oleksander Ohloblyn devoted an article to the relationship between the two texts, noting a number of parallels between them. He came up with three possible reasons for their existence: Scherer's use of the *History* as one of his sources; the use of the *Annales* by the anonymous author of the *History*; or, finally, both authors' use of a source not known to posterity. Ohloblyn found the third hypothesis most promising. He suggested that the impulse for the writing of both the *History* and the *Annales* and their common source base came from the same place: the circle of Ukrainian autonomists in Novhorod-Siverskyi. New impetus for the study of relations between the *History* and the *Annales* has been recently provided by Ivan Dzyra. Dzyra knew Ohloblyn's article but took his cue from Mykhailo Hrushevsky. Following Hrushevsky, Dzyra argued that the anonymous author took more than mere data from Scherer.⁸

Indeed, there can be little doubt that many of the ideas expressed in Scherer's *Annales* made their way into the pages of the *History*. A good example of such an intertextual connection is the use of the term "nation" in Scherer's *Annales* (*peuple*) and

⁶ J.B. Scherer, *Annales de la Petite-Russie, ou Histoire des Cosaques-Saporogues et des Cosaques de l'Ukraine*, 2 vols., Paris 1788. On Scherer, see: L. Stieda, Scherer, *Johann Benedict*, [in:] *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 31, Leipzig 1890, p. 103f.

⁷ *Kratkaia letopis' Mal'ia Rosii s 1506 po 1776 god, s iziavlenniem Nastoiashchego obraza tamosbnego pravleniia i s priobshcheniem spiska prezhdie byushikh getmanov, general'nykh starshin, polkovnikov i ierarkhov*, St. Petersburg 1777).

⁸ O. Ohloblyn, *Annales de la Petite-Russie Sherera i Istoriia Rusov*, [in:] *Naukovyi zbirnyk Ukraïnskoho Vil'noho Universytetu*, Munich 1948, pp. 87–94; I. Dzyra, *Vplyv Litopysu Malorosii Zhana Benua Sherera v Istoriï Rusiv*.

in the *History* (*narod*). That term is central to Scherer's narrative. In the dedication of his work and in the introduction to it, he writes about the Cossacks as forming not one but two nations (*peuples*). He treats the Cossacks of the Hetmanate (whom he calls the Cossacks of Ukraine) and the Cossacks of the Zaporozhian Host beyond the Dnipro rapids not only as distinct groups but as separate nations. However, in volume 2, which was Scherer's retelling of the *Brief Description of Little Russia*, there is only one nation, and the whole story concerns its struggle for freedom. Scherer even adds a sentence to the *Brief Description's* account of the Treaty of Zboriv (1649), asserting that the Polish king agreed to recognize the Cossacks as a *peuple libre*. Scherer's *peuple* and the anonymous author's *narod* worked very well together in transforming the history of the Cossacks as a social estate into that of a nation. Of course, as we now know, the anonymous author did not borrow the national idea from Scherer alone. The eighteenth-century Cossack chronicles, as well as the nobiliary petitions of the early nineteenth century were full of references to *narod* and *natsiia*, but it was probably heartening to see them echoed in one of the anonymous author's French sources.⁹

Probably no less important than the borrowing of historical data and ideas was the stylistic influence of Scherer's narrative on the anonymous author. In the *Annales* one sees the emergence of some important elements of Romantic historiography. The French author is eager to call forth strong emotions and use the power of imagination to exert the strongest influence on the reader's feelings. Scherer's reworking of the dry factual narrative of the *Brief Description of Little Russia* may well have been an inspiration to the anonymous author of the *History*. Writing in an era when Romantic emphasis on emotion as the source of aesthetic experience was becoming a norm, the anonymous author unleashed his own historical imagination to produce an even more emotionally charged narrative than that of his model. One of the best examples of such a refashioning of a dry narrative taken from a Cossack chronicle is an episode that Alexander Pushkin included in his publication of excerpts from the *History* in 1836. This was the description of the Polish authorities' execution of the Cossack leader Ostrianytsia, which provided Nikolai Gogol with the historical data and emotional impulse for the description of the torture and execution of Ostap Bulba in his novel *Taras Bulba*.

The original text, which both Scherer and the author of the *History* knew from the *Brief Description of Little Russia*, reads as follows:

[The Poles] [...] *killed Ostrianytsia and Hunia in Warsaw, and they impaled Kyzym, the captain of Kyiv, along with his son, and quartered many eminent ones,*

⁹ J.B. Scherer, *Annales*, 2:38.

hanging others on hooks by the ribs; and from that time they deprived the Cossacks of great liberty and imposed onerous and fantastic taxes in unusual fashion, sold off churches and ecclesiastical images to Jews, and boiled Cossack children in vats, crushed women's breasts with pieces of wood, and the like.

Scherer used this text, adding a description of torture that is not to be found in the original. He also compared tortures invented by savages and those employed by “civilized nations”—a comparison not flattering to the latter.

[The Poles] [...] *were so perfidious as to kidnap Ostrianytsia and Hunia and so barbaric as to take their lives after the most horrific tortures. Captain Kasym of Kyiv died in the same way along with his son. Many other Cossacks fell victim to the cruelty of the Poles: some were broken on the wheel, while others were subjected to such tortures as would never enter the head of the most terrible savage but match the refined cruelty of enlightened nations. They were hung on long spikes with which their bodies were pierced between the ribs; others were quartered; and nothing could mollify the Poles or incline them to mercy. They even roasted children on gridirons and impaled others, lighting bonfires beneath them, and those whom they did not kill they turned into slaves. Even churches did not escape destruction: they were plundered, and chalices for the blessed sacrament were sold to Jews.*¹⁰

The author of the *History* further developed the theme of Ostrianytsia's execution, first by inventing a detailed account of his victory over the Poles and then by using his imagination to describe the horrors of the Polish retaliation:

Hetman Ostrianytsia, General Quartermaster Surmylo, and Colonels Nedryhailo, Boiun, and Ryndych were broken on the wheel, and, as their arms and legs were incessantly broken, their veins were stretched across the wheel until they expired. Colonels Haidarevsky, Butrym, Zapalii, and Quartermasters Kyzym and Suchevisky were pierced with iron spears and raised up alive on stakes; the regimental quartermasters Postylych, Harun, Sutyha, Podobai, Kharkevych, Chudak, and Churai and Captains Chupryna, Okolovych, Sokalsky, Myrovych, and Vorozhbyt were nailed to boards, covered with pitch, and slowly burned. Standard-Bearers Mohyliansky, Zahreba, Skrebylo, Okhtryka, Poturai, Burlii, and Zahnybida were torn to pieces with iron nails resembling bears' paws. Officers Mentiai, Dunaievsky, Skubrii, Hliansky, Zavezun, Kosyr, Hurtovy, Tumar, and Tuhai were quartered.

¹⁰ *Kratkoe opisanie Malorossii*, [in:] *Letopis' Samovidtsa po novootkrytym spiskam*, ed. O. Levitskii, Kyiv 1878, pp. 211–319, here 238. Cf. J.B. Scherer, *Annales*, 2 vols. (1788), 2:20–21.

The wives and children of those martyrs, on seeing the initial execution, filled the air with their shrieks and weeping, but they soon fell silent. Those women, according to the unbelievable brutality of that time, had their breasts cut off and were slaughtered to the last, and their breasts were used to beat the faces of the men who were still alive; the children who remained after their mothers, clinging to them and crawling on their corpses, were all roasted before the eyes of their fathers on gridirons beneath which coals were strewn and blown into flame with hats and brooms.

The principal body parts hacked off the Little Russian officials who had been tortured to death, such as heads, arms, and legs, were distributed throughout Little Russia and hung up on stakes in the towns. The Polish troops who occupied all of Little Russia in connection with this did to Little Russians whatever they wanted and could think up: all kinds of abuse, violence, plunder, and tyranny, surpassing all description and understanding. Among other things, they subjected the unfortunate Little Russians several times to the cruelties perpetrated in Warsaw; several times they boiled children in vats and burned them on coals before the eyes of their parents, subjecting the parents themselves to the cruelest tortures. Finally, having plundered all the godly Ruthenian churches, they leased them to the Jews, and church utensils, such as chalices, patens, vestments, and surplices were sold off and drunk away to those same Jews, who made themselves tableware and clothing of church silver, turning vestments and surplices into skirts for Jewesses, who boasted before Christians, showing off bodices and skirts on which traces of crosses that they had torn off were still to be seen.¹¹

The anti-Polish and anti-Jewish animus of the *Brief Description*; the civilizational discourse of Scherer's *Annales*—all these elements of earlier texts found their way into the *History* and were further elaborated by the rich imagination of its author, who not only inflated the descriptions of torture and execution but also came up with dozens of names for the victims of those horrendous acts of violence, making the story feel real. The images he presented filled generations of readers with hatred of Polish Catholics and Jews. Pushkin and Gogol were the best-known but by no means the only admirers of that episode of the *History*. The account taken from an old Cossack chronicle, retold by a French intellectual and embellished by a Ukrainian historian, appealed to their Russian patriotism, Orthodox upbringing, cultural sensitivities, and Romantic imagination in a way that the original story could not.

Although imagination was an important instrument in the employ of the author of the *History*, he used it not only to appeal to the emotions and sensibilities

¹¹ *Istoriia Rusov*, pp. 55–56.

of the Age of Romanticism but also in the service of reason—the mainstay of the fading Age of Enlightenment. Faced with a lack of historical sources, gaps in coverage of what he considered the most important periods of Cossack history, and contradictions in the sources his disposal, the anonymous author used both reason and imagination to reconstruct the history of his land and nation. Like Voltaire, Scherer and others who took their cues from humanist historiography, he was happy to make his characters deliver long speeches that allowed him to interpret the motives of his characters, addressing both the “how” and the “why” of their actions. Yet, like his French models, he also insisted that he was not inventing anything or adding to what he had found in old and trustworthy chronicles. His readers’ tastes were just as contradictory: they wanted an enthralling, emotionally charged account that was nevertheless based on authentic historical sources.

The demand for mystification was in the air, and the author of the *History* had only to satisfy it—taking care, of course, to cover his tracks. How did he do it? How did he fashion his cover story and establish the credentials of his manuscript to meet the conflicting demands of his French models and the expectations of his readers? So far we have examined the surface elements of that story—the parts related to Archbishop Konysky and Heorhii Poletyka. Let us now take a close look at its deeper layer, which concerns the creation of the manuscript. According to the anonymous author, it was written

[...] *from times of old at the cathedral monastery of Mahilioü by sagacious people who obtained requisite information by communicating with learned men at the Kyivan Academy and at various prominent Little Russian monasteries, especially those where Yurii Khmelnytsky, the former Little Russian hetman, had lived as a monk. There he left many notes and papers of his father, Hetman Zinovii Khmelnytsky, and the actual journals of national records and events, which he reviewed and corrected anew.*¹²

The anonymous author sought to establish the authenticity of the *History* by bringing in as part of the cover story not only Konysky and Poletyka but also Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky and his son Yurii (1641–85). His emphasis on Khmelnytsky was nothing new, since the hetman figured as the main character in all the Cossack chronicles. The *Articles of Bohdan Khmelnytsky*, which enumerated the rights and privileges granted to the Cossack officers by Moscow in the winter and spring of 1654, were the cornerstone of Cossack legal and historical identity in the Russian Empire. Bringing in Yurii Khmelnytsky was a different matter. The meek

¹² Ibidem, p. ii.

successor of a strong-willed father, he assumed and resigned the hetman's office at various times, often serving as an instrument of the Cossack elite and neighboring rulers. Despite his checkered political career, however, Yurii Khmelnytsky remained an important part of the Cossack officers' usable past. In manuscript collections of historical documents that were widely distributed in the Hetmanate in the second half of the eighteenth century, the *Articles of Yurii Khmelnytsky* as confirmed by the tsar's officials and the Cossack officers in 1659 often followed the "articles" of his father. They served to confirm the rights and privileges of the Hetmanate and its ruling estate in the Russian Empire.¹³

Seen from the Russian imperial viewpoint, the two Khmelnytskys were strikingly different: the father was treated as a benefactor of Russia, and his son as a traitor. But for the Cossack officers the two Khmelnytskys were linked by the evolution of the rights and privileges of their corporate estate, making both of them highly positive figures. The assertion in the foreword to the *History* that its alleged authors had access to the papers of the two Khmelnytskys bolstered its actual author's claim that the manuscript was authentic. Not surprisingly, there is a direct link between the author's introductory mention of Orthodox monasteries in which the papers of the Khmelnytskys were preserved and his subsequent discussion of the fate of Yurii Khmelnytsky in the main body of the work. Describing the events of 1663, he claims that Yurii

*[...] was ordained a monk in the monastery of Lubny, which was his last refuge. In order to remove himself from anything that might disturb him in such an illustrious monastery as that of Lubny, he concealed himself most secretly in the wilderness of Moshny, which is below the Kaniv monastery, in the forests and ravines, but even here ill luck did not cease to pursue him.*¹⁴

Apparently, the two monasteries that the author of the *History* had in mind when writing about the Khmelnytsky papers were those of Lubny and Kaniv. Why those two? The answer lies in the anonymous author's narrative strategy and his methods of reconstructing events with the aid of the limited source base at his disposal. He probably found information about Yurii Khmelnytsky's tonsure in the *Brief Description of Little Russia*, which is silent about where the younger

¹³ See: descriptions of Cossack documentary codices that included the *Articles of Yurii Khmelnytsky*, [in:] A. Bovhyria, *Kozatske istoriopyssannia v rukopysnii tradytsii XVIII stolittia. Spysky ta redaktsii tvoriv*, Kyiv 2010, pp. 44–45, 252, 256, 258, 260, 273, 274, 275, 282, 288, 290 291, 294, 297; O. Ohloblyn, *Liudy staroi Ukrainy*, pp. 128–36.

¹⁴ *Istoriia Rusov*, p. 156.

Khmelnysky took his monastic vows. However, this information follows an entry about the Muscovite army proceeding to the town of Lubny immediately after defeating Khmelnysky's forces. Scherer, who was the first to use his powers of reason and imagination in making sense of the *Brief Description's* cryptic account of Khmelnysky's tonsure, decided that after his defeat Yurii retreated to Lubny. He stated as much, while dropping the sentence about the Muscovite army's march there. Then came the anonymous author, who linked the story of Yurii's tonsure with Scherer's claim that he had retreated to Lubny by reaching the "logical" conclusion that the younger Khmelnysky became a monk in the Lubny monastery.¹⁵

That was not the end of the story. Since this was the only mention of the Lubny monastery in the entire *History*—a tenuous link to the Khmelnysky papers—the anonymous author decided to conflate the Lubny story with that of the Kaniv monastery, which he had represented earlier in the work as the monastery of the Cossack land. The Kaniv monastery first appears in the *History* in connection with the alleged funeral there of the Cossack leader Ivan Pidkova after his execution by the Polish authorities in Lviv in 1577. That information corresponds to the account of the *Brief Description*, from which it was taken by Scherer. But there the similarities end. After 1577 the Kaniv monastery disappears from the pages of the *Brief Description*, as it does from Scherer's *Annales*, but not from the *History*, whose author associates the monastery with the fate of Pidkova's successor, Hetman Shakh. According to the *History*, on the orders of the Polish king, Shakh *was dismissed from the hetmancy and sentenced to confinement in the Kaniv monastery for life; there he was voluntarily ordained a monk and ended his life peacefully in the monastic order*. The anonymous author also turned the Kaniv monastery into the venue where the Polish authorities arrested Hetman Ostrianytsia, whose execution is one of the emotional focal points of the work. It was probably difficult for him to imagine Yurii Khmelnysky becoming a monk in any other monastery than that of Kaniv. Needless to say, there is no surviving indication that Yurii Khmelnysky was a monk in any of the Orthodox monasteries in the vicinity of Kaniv or Lubny. It was a complete invention or, rather, a result of the anonymous author's historical "reconstruction," whose ultimate goal was to establish the authenticity and reliability of the *History* as a historical source.¹⁶

Our discussion of the ways in which the *History* was created provides an insight into the question of why it was so much admired not only by nineteenth-century poets and writers like Ryleev, Pushkin, Gogol, and Shevchenko but also by the generation of the 1960s, whose members helped bring about the Ukrainian

¹⁵ *Kratkoe opisanie Malorossii*, p. 216; J.B. Scherer, *Annales*, 2: 10.

¹⁶ *Istoriia Rusov*, pp. 30–31, 55, 156.

independence of 1991. They did not have far to go in search of anticolonial mythology, which they were eager to introduce into public discourse: some of it was already there, in the pages of the *History of the Rus*'.

The literary and historiographic ethos of the Enlightenment and Romanticism helps one understand why and how the anonymous author populated his work with heroes and villains, devoting page after page to feats of valor and descriptions of horrendous crimes. While the author's material was taken from the Cossack chronicles, his literary inspiration came from Voltaire and Scherer. If the sources did not provide enough material for the kind of history his French models inspired him to write, the anonymous author used his imagination to a degree unmatched either by his predecessors or by his followers. He created history as much as he recorded it. Drawing both on the Enlightenment and on early Romanticism, the author produced a narrative that not only promoted the ideas of freedom, patriotism, struggle against tyranny, and human and divine justice but also inspired the imagination of the reader, who wanted to hear the voice of the past and see history evolve before his and, increasingly, her eyes. One reason for the *History's* popularity was that it did not follow established trends but anticipated readers' changing tastes.