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## Writing in Ukraine and European Identity Before 1798

The model of Ukraine as culturally and politically located within the competing force fields of the ‘West’ and the ‘East’, commonplace in scholarly contexts as well as in journalism, is part of an ongoing discussion about the nature and depth of Ukraine’s connection to Europe.<sup>1</sup> This paper seeks to contribute to that discussion by inquiring into the function, in writing of various genres, of references and allusions to Europe up to the end of the eighteenth century. We examine instances of the topos of Europe – commonplace and automatic references to Europe, at the one extreme, deliberate arguments about it, at the other – in a selection of texts of different genres and from different chronological points in the tradition. Our goal is to see what role ideas of Europe, or indeed mentions of Europe, play in articulating the understanding of self projected by the ‘voices’ behind texts composed in different languages and at different times by spokespersons of different social, religious and ethnic groups on the territory that today constitutes Ukraine.

In 1798 Ivan Kotliarevs’kyi’s travesty of Virgil’s *Aeneid* in the Ukrainian vernacular ushered into Ukraine the conception of culture as national. From Kotliarevsky onward it is difficult to envisage the political and cultural development of Ukraine otherwise than as one of many instances of a process of nation-building that was emphatically European – inspired by the example of successful West European nation states and justified by Central European thought. Kotliarevs’kyi is celebrated in Ukrainian literary histories for dignifying the language of ordinary people by launching it as the vehicle for a new high culture. His accomplishment, however, also lay in initiating this high culture as part of the modern secular culture shared by educated people throughout Europe.

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In relation to the periods under examination in this article, see, e.g., Ihor Ševčenko, *Ukraine Between East and West: Essays on Cultural History to the Early Eighteenth Century* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1996) and the essays collected in Sante Gracotti, Omelan Pritsak et al. (eds.) *Ukraina XVII st. mizh zachodom ta skhodom Ievropy: materialy I-ho ukrains'ko-italiis'koho sympoziumu 13–16 bereznia 1994 r.* (Kyiv: ArtEk, 1996).

To be sure, Kotliarevs'kyi's *Eneida* was indebted to the pre-secular Baroque culture of the century and a half that preceded it;<sup>2</sup> but it also delineated the grid of a cultural nationalism seasoned with the values of reason, equality and freedom that would be generative for Ukrainian literature for the better part of the two succeeding centuries. This grid was also the common property of modern European cultures, both established and nascent, and possession of it identified the new Ukrainian literature as both modern and European.<sup>3</sup>

There were reactions: Romantic ethnographism and the more extreme populisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These, in turn, elicited their own counter-reactions, usually demonstratively cosmopolitan and inspired by stimuli originating elsewhere in Europe: the modern movement at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the avant-gardism of the 1910s and 1920s, and the aggressive Central Europeanism of groups of literati in the late 1980s and 1990s. Yet these reactions and counter-reactions were themselves dependent on the European cultural framework that had been embraced at the end of the eighteenth century. As scholarship on modern Ukrainian culture continues to remind us, the repertoire of ideas available to Ukrainian intellectuals; the systems of genres, critical judgments, and styles at the disposal of writers and other creative artists; and the horizons of expectations of the educated public, for all of their local specificity, were and continue to be part of a European cultural continuum.<sup>4</sup> Rather than revisit this fruitful, but well traversed modern field, the present study

<sup>2</sup> See M. T. Iatsenko, *Na rubezhi literaturnykh epoch: 'Eneida' Kotliarevs'koho i khudozhnii prohres v ukrains'kii literaturi* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> I have made this argument in detail in the article 'The Rhetoric and Politics of Kotliarevsky's *Eneida*', *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 10 (1985), No. 1, 9–24.

<sup>4</sup> Publications in modern literary studies over the decade 1997–2007 that foregrounded the relationship of Ukrainian literature to its European and broader context included the now classical text by Solomiia Pavlychko, *Dyskurs modernizmu v ukrains'kii literaturi* (Kyiv: Lybid', 1997); Tamara Hundorova's *Proivavleniia slova: Dyskursii rann'oho ukrains'koho modernizmu. Postmoderna interpretatsiia* (Lviv: Litopys, 1997), *Femina melancolica: Stat' i kul'tura v gendernii utopii Ol'hy Kobylians'koi* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002) and *Franko ne kameniar; Franko i kameniar* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006); and Vitaly Chernetsky, *Mapping Postcommunist Cultures: Russia and Ukraine in the Context of Globalization* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), as well as such specialised studies as Maksym Strikha, *Dante i ukrains'ka literatura: dosvid retseptsii na tli 'zapizniloho natsiietvorennia'* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2003), Iaroslava Pohrebennyk, *Nimets'komovnyi kontekst tvorchoosti Ol'hy Kobylians'koi* (Chernivtsi: Ruta, 2005) and Lidiia Stefanovs'ka, *Antonych: Antynomii* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006).

inquires about the ways in which writing in Ukraine invoked Europe prior to the Kotliarevs'kian revolution.

A substantial body of scholarship has demonstrated that it is plausible to speak of writing in the Ukrainian lands as participating in an intellectual continuum with the whole of Europe, including its West, from the middle of the thirteenth century onward, Christian Neoplatonism and mystical individualism marking the first station along this shared path.<sup>5</sup> Not insubstantial numbers of young members of Ukrainian and Belarusian elites from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth travelled in Central and Western Europe, completed their education in Italian or German universities and formed enduring associations with their Western counterparts, especially from the late fourteenth century onward. They entered into the orbit of humanist Renaissance and, later, Reformation thought and letters, and generated cognate literary cultures in their homelands.<sup>6</sup> The Counter-Reformation in the Commonwealth and the attendant struggle among Western and Oriental Catholics on the one hand, Orthodox on the other stimulated the flourishing of Jesuit schools and the Orthodox educational and cultural centres that emerged to compete with them. Both taught, in Latin, similar curricula designed to inculcate rhetorical skills and familiarity with the Classical authors in addition to informed belief according to the religious affiliation of the school. The literary output of seventeenth-century Ukraine, whether in Latin, Polish, Church Slavonic or Ruthenian, as well as its system of genres, of mythological reference, and of authority had much in common with those of the Commonwealth at large, as well as its neighbours to the West.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Iurii Peleshenko, *Ukrains'ka literatura pizn'oho seredn'ovichchia: Druha polovyna XIII–XV st. Dzhherela, systema zhanriv, dukhovni intentsii* (Kyiv: Foliant, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Volodymyr Lytvynov, *Rehensansnyi humanizm v Ukraini: Idei humanizmu epokhy vidrodzhennia v ukrains'kii filozofii XV–pochatku XVII stolittia* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 2000); see also V. M. Nichyk, V. D. Lytvynov and A. M. Stratii, *Humanistychni i reformatsiini ideii na Ukraini: XVI–XVII stolittia* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> The large body of literature dedicated to these topics during and after the decline of ideological strictures on humanities scholarship in the years preceding the fall of the USSR, and in independent Ukraine, includes V. M. Masliuk, *Latynomovni poetyky i rytoryky XVII–pershoi polovyny XVIII st. ta ikh rol' u rozvytku teorii literatury na Ukraini* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1983); D. V. Zatons'kyi and D. S. Nalyvaiko, 'Ukrains'ko-zakhidnoievropeis'ki literaturni vzaiemyny do XIX st.', in *Ukrains'ka literatura v zahal'no-slov'ians'komu i svitovomu literaturnomu konteksti*, Vol. 3 (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1988), 7–42; Oleksa Myshanych (ed.) *Ievropeis'ke vidrodzhennia ta ukrains'ka literatura XIV–XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993); V. L. Mykytas', *Davn'oukrains'ki studenty i profesory*

These connections to Europe, readily observed in retrospect by cultural historians, did not mean that an idea of Europe was of necessity actively present in the consciousness of cultural activists. Indeed, in the long period under examination the topos of Europe was invoked sparingly, while as a focus of identity Europe figured scarcely at all until the eighteenth century (in contrast to Christendom, Orthodoxy, Sarmatia, or various conceptions of Rus'). The following considers a range of occasions where the term 'Europe' appears and where, even in the absence of the toponym itself, a clear idea of Europe as an entity (as distinct from some of its parts) is used in argumentation. It is in the nature of literary topoi that they are capable of realisation at different levels of intensity: as mere conventional utterances, at the one end of the spectrum of possible instantiations, and as fully developed arguments, on the other.<sup>8</sup> I consider invocations of Europe as a conventional element of panegyric expressions, as a geographical place name, a geopolitical unit, a civilisational entity and, finally, a component of accounts of the genesis of peoples.

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(Kyiv: Abrys, 1994); A. O. Hurbyk et al., *Ukrains'ke suspil'stvo na zlami seredn'ovichchia i novoho chasu* (Kyiv: Natsional'na Akademiia Nauk Ukrainy, 2001); Hryhorii Syvokin', *Davni ukrains'ki poetyky*, 2nd ed. (Kharkiv: Akta, 2001); Jaroslav Isaievych, *Voluntary Brotherhood: Confraternities of Laymen in Early Modern Ukraine* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2005); Tetiana Shevchenko, *Iezuits'ke shkyl'nytstvo na ukrains'kykh zemliakh ostann'oi chverti XVI–seredyny XVII st.* (Lviv: Svichado, 2005) and an extensive survey of the literary culture of Ukraine from the Renaissance to the late Baroque by the novelist Valerii Shevchuk: *Muza roksolans'ka*, 2 vols. (Kyiv: Lybid', 2004–2005). The several studies of the world-view, culture and literature of the Baroque that were published in Ukraine from the last third of the 1980s include O. V. Myshanych (ed.), *Ukrains'ke literaturne barokko: Zbirnyk naukovykh prats'* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1987); O. H. Kostiuk et al. (eds.), *Ukrains'ke barokko ta ievropeis'kyi kontekst* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1991); Leonid Ushkalov, *Svit ukrains'koho Barokko: filolohichni etiuudy* (Kharkiv: Oko, 1994); Anatolii Makarov, *Svitlo ukrains'koho Baroko* (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1994) and his *Esei pro ukrains'ke baroko* (Kyiv: Fakt, 2006); and Rostyslav Radshevs'kyi, *Ivan Mazepa v sarmats'ko-roksolans'komu vymiri vysokoho baroko* (Kyiv: Prosvita, 2006). The renewed interest in the Baroque drew inspiration, in part, from the works of Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi (Tschizewskij), especially *Istoriia ukrains'koi literatury (vid pochatkiv do doby realizmu)* (New York: Ukrains'ka Vil'na Akademiia Nauk u SShA, 1956); his Prague studies of 1941–44 were republished as *Ukrains'kyi literaturnyi Barok: Narysy* (Kharkiv: Akta, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> On the argumentative functioning of topoi both as forms that structure arguments, and as common-places, see Heinrich F. Plett, 'Rhetorik der Gemeinplätze', in Thomas Schirren und Gert Ueding (eds.), *Topik und Rhetorik* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000), 223–236.

From the sixteenth century onward and, with increasing frequency, in the eighteenth, Europe figures in panegyric writing as part of the topos ‘all sing his praises’.<sup>9</sup> Praise is the greater if it is uttered by many; hence the hyperbole that attributes to the object of praise the admiration of ‘all Europe’. Thus in 1591 the author of heraldic verses celebrating the city of Lviv asserts that ‘its name is known throughout Europe by the Rus’ tribe’.<sup>10</sup> In the same year the anonymous author of a panegyric to be read to the Metropolitan of Kyiv and Halych by pupils of the Lviv Confraternity School had the prelate addressed as ‘lustrous sun, star of Europe, sole eye of Rus’’.<sup>11</sup> Filon Il’kovs’kyi, contributing a passage in praise of history and her muse Clío to Sofronii Pochas’kyi’s poem *Eucharisterion, or Gratitude ... to Petro Mohyla* (1632), made the claim that ‘He whose mind extends over the breadth of history / Will comprehend Europe, Asia and Africa /’.<sup>12</sup> Samiilo Velychko, author of an early-eighteenth-century chronicle, was especially partial to this topos, employing it to praise ‘the two peoples, Cossack-Ruthenian and Polish, glorious throughout Europe’ before chastising them for the mid-seventeenth-century discord between them.<sup>13</sup> Velychko ascribes to the chief hero of his chronicle, the hetman Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi, a missive exhorting all estates on both banks of the Dnieper to take up arms against the Poles: ‘And should we die in battle for our true faith, our glory and our chivalric courage will resonate through all European and other remote ends of the Earth.’<sup>14</sup>

A variant of this rhetorical usage adds a reference to Asia to the invocation of Europe. The figure may be regarded as merely an escalation of the topos ‘all sing his praises’ (the admiring community comprises the population not of one, but of two continents). Yet it may also be seen to contribute to a more substantive argument. It is consistent with the Sarmatian myth that considered the noble elite of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, irrespective of national affinity, to have

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius discusses this and other topoi of praise in his *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, 3rd ed. (Bern: Francke, 1961), 169.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Leopolis’, in Hans Rothe (ed.), Hans Rothe (ed.), *Die älteste ostslawische Kunstdichtung 1575–1647*, in 2 vols. (Giessen: Wilhelm Schmitz, 1976), I, 14. This and all other translations in this article are mine.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Prosphonema’, in *Die älteste ostslawische Kunstdichtung*, I, 15.

<sup>12</sup> V. I. Krekoten’ and M. M. Sulyma (eds.), *Ukrains’ka poeziia: Seredyna XVII st.* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1992), 184.

<sup>13</sup> Samiilo Velychko, *Litopys*, trans. Valerii Shevchuk, Vol. 1 (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1991), 61.

<sup>14</sup> Velychko, I, 80.

originated with the Sarmatians or Sauromatae referred to by Herodotus and other classical historians. The Sarmatians described as living on both sides of the river Tanais (Don), in ancient texts the conventional boundary between Europe and Asia.<sup>15</sup> The connection appears vividly in Velychko's appeal to the reader to join him in his censure of the Poles for their oppression of his people:

See, O free peoples of diverse nearby tribes and languages, what violence, contrary to law divine and natural, has been wreaked upon the free, noble Sauromatian Cossack-Ruthenian and Orthodox people, long celebrated for courage and bold warlike exploits not only in our own Europe, but also in distant Asian lands, by another people, also Sauromatian: the Poles, who always were brothers to the Cimbri, the Scythians and the Cossacks!<sup>16</sup>

A similar formulation is found in an analogous context, this time a speech ascribed to Khmel'nyts'kyi, in the considerably later historical treatise *The History of the Rus'*, of uncertain authorship and written at the end of the eighteenth century or even the beginning of the nineteenth: 'our feats and those of our ancestors, performed for the Poles in the defence of their kingdom and for the sake of its expansion, are famed in all Europe and Asia', and yet the Poles reciprocate with contempt and tyranny;<sup>17</sup> in a subsequent speech, Khmel'nyts'kyi again contrasts the praise that the Cossacks enjoy, 'not only in the European part of the world, but in distant Asian lands beyond the Black Sea',<sup>18</sup> with the injustices that they suffer at the hands of the Poles. In each case, the particular enmity evinced by the Poles, when weighed against the admiration of two continents, is offered as a justification for the Cossacks' taking extreme measures to obtain justice for themselves and the rest of the Rus' within the Commonwealth.

<sup>15</sup> For overviews of early geographical conceptions of Europe see Anthony Padgen, 'Conceptualising a Continent', in Padgen, *The Idea of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 33–54 and Kevin Wilson and Jan van der Dussen (eds.), *The History of the Idea of Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993). For a detailed discussion of a 'Kyivocentric' modification of the Sarmatian myth, see Natalia Iakovenko, 'Latyna na sluzhbi kyievo-rus'kii istorii ("Camoenae Borysthenides", 1620 rik)', in Iakovenko, *Paralel'nyi svit: doslidzhennia z istorii uiavlen' ta idei v Ukraini XVI–XVII st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002), 270–95. Footnote 42 of Iakovenko's study contains a guide to literature on the Sarmatian myth in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

<sup>16</sup> Velychko, I, 46.

<sup>17</sup> *Istoriia rusov ili Maloi Rossii*, trans. Ivan Drach as *Istoriia Rusiv* (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1991), 104.

<sup>18</sup> *Istoriia Rusiv*, 110–111.

Velychko wrote in Left-Bank Ukraine more than half a century after its severance from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and at a time when the main political issue for members of the Cossack elite was their evolving and uneasy relationship to the new suzerain, the Tsardom of Muscovy, which in 1721 became the Russian Empire. The Sarmatian myth, an element in Velychko's strategy of affirming the dignity of the Cossacks in the past, was doubtless not as central to his ideology as it was for Symon Pekalid (Simon Pekalides), author of the long Latin poem *On the War of the House of the Ostroz'ki* (1600). The poet was a client of the magnate Kostiantyn Ostroz'kyi, one of the Commonwealth's largest landowners. After establishing at the start of the poem the family's credentials as defenders of 'Rus', that extends over broad expanses' and identified its members as 'our pious leaders (and the glory of our Sarmatian lands)', Pekalid proceeds to invoke both continents in their praise:

Their tribe is studied in victories, it knows no defeats,  
Accustomed are its Penates to Asia no less than to Europe.<sup>19</sup>

While the Asia-as-well-as-Europe topos is suitable for suggesting the naturalness of the widest possible sphere of military action for the Ostroz'ki family, the description of the princely seat of Ostrih provides the poet with a fresh panegyric opportunity. Listing the nationalities represented in the town's population, he produces a medley of ancient and modern ethnonyms: Scythians (metonymically representative of the Tatars of the Crimea), Cimmerians, Jews, Cimbri, Germans, Dacians, Pannonians, Lithuanians and Prussians, as well, of course, as the Rus' majority – the people of Arctus, the 'northerners', so called because of the traditional identification of Sarmatia from the ancient geographers onward as a land of the North. While no doubt bearing a relationship to Ostrih's actual ethnic mix, the passage has a rhetorical purpose: to indicate through the device of amplification the plenitude and variety, cosmopolitanism, indeed universalism, proper to potentates as grand as the Ostroz'ki – and as magnanimous and tolerant: 'All are respected here,' the poem proclaims, having taken the trouble a few lines earlier to make clear that the 'Scythians' are practising Muslims.<sup>20</sup> The Ostroz'ki

<sup>19</sup> 'Pro ostroz'ku viinu pid P'iatkoiu proty nyzovykh chotyry knyhy, napysani bakalavrom mystetstv Symonom Pekalidom', in V. V. Iarenko (ed.), *Ukrains'ka poezija XVI stolittia* (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1987), 196.

<sup>20</sup> 'Pro ostroz'ku viinu', 201. For a reading of the poem and its innovativeness in placing the Ostroz'ki at the centre of a 'Rus', or, more precisely, "Ostroz'ki" patriotism', see Natalia Iakovenko, 'Shcho

rise above the divide between Christianity and Islam as they rise above the Babel that inhabits their city; they surpass these divisions as they surpass the division between Europe and Asia.

While the word 'Europe' is invoked relatively frequently for rhetorical purposes, the occasions when it is used to communicate simple contemporary geographical information, as distinct from meanings encoded in geographical symbolism, are few. In 1615 Martyn Pashkovs'kyi, enumerating in a long poem the hardships suffered by those who, captured by Tatars, serve as slaves in the Ottoman domains, titles two consecutive verse paragraphs 'On the Escape of Captives from Europe' and 'On the Escape of Captives from Asia Minor'. Escape is easier for the slaves held in the Empire's European part, for they at least do not need to cross the Hellespont.<sup>21</sup> Velychko refers to Cossack attacks on the Ottoman Empire directed not only against Sinope and Trebizond on the Asia Minor coast of the Black Sea, but also Akkerman, Varna and Izmail 'on this, the European, side'.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps symptomatic of the unimportance of the term 'Europe' for writing about real places is the sixteenth-century *Peregrination, or Way to Jerusalem* by Danylo Korsuns'kyi, a narrative of a pilgrim's journey from Korsun near the Dnieper to the Holy Land via the Aegean and Mediterranean islands. Densely peppered with the names of places and details of the distances between them, the *Peregrination* never once mentions Europe or Asia. The text communicates no sense of crossing a geographical, political or even religious border. The significant landmarks on Danylo's textual map of his journey are places sacred to Christendom: churches, islands bearing the memories (and relics) of saints, and, of course, the Holy Land itself.<sup>23</sup>

Not uncommon in historical and political texts, especially of the eighteenth century, is an idea of Europe as a space across which are shared certain political objectives and values, judgments concerning international affairs, or reactions

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za viinu opysuie Symon Pekalid u poemi "De bello Ostrogiano" (1600 rik)' in her *Paralel'nyi svit: doslidzhennia z istorii uiaвлен' ta idei v Ukraini XVI-XVII st.* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2002), 157-188, here 159.

<sup>21</sup> Martyn Pashkovs'kyi, 'Iz knyhy "Dii turets'ki i zmahannia kozats'ki z Tataramy"', Krakiv, 1615 roku', in V. V. Iaromenko (ed.), *Ukrains'ka poeziia XVII stolittia (persha polovyna)* (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1988), 66-85, here 82-83.

<sup>22</sup> Velychko, II, 195.

<sup>23</sup> Danylo Korsuns'kyi, 'Perehrynatsiia, ili put' do Ierusalyma', in *Ukrains'ka literatura XIV-XVI st.*, ed. V. L. Mykytas' (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1988), 63-74.



to external stimuli. In his ‘Triumphal Hymn of the Roxolanian Muses’ (1698), Pylyp Orlyk, later an adviser of the hetman Ivan Mazepa in his efforts to reverse the Cossacks’ acceptance of Muscovite suzerainty, lamented the situation where ‘the Thracian’ (the Ottoman armies) ‘ranges freely over Europe’ and anticipated the victory over them of the ‘Ruthenian Alcides’.<sup>24</sup> Hryhorii Hrabianka, author of a chronicle titled *The Great War of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi* (1710), describing the consequences of Batu Khan’s thirteenth-century victories over Poland, Lithuania and other states, represented ‘all Europe’ as propelled by these events into ‘no small state of fear’.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, but with reference to Turkish military successes in the middle of the fifteenth century, *The History of the Rus’* depicted the invader as ‘striking terror into all Europe’.<sup>26</sup> The author of the *History*, whose perception of international relations included the idea of ‘the system of balance of states’<sup>27</sup> which, he believed, was in its early stages when Khmel’nyts’kyi signed his treaty with Muscovy in 1654, is fond of the image of consensus among European state-ruling elites. Thus, he asserts that Khmel’nyts’kyi’s accord with the tsardom ‘caused concern in almost all the courts of Europe’;<sup>28</sup> he presents a fictional speech delivered jointly by the ambassadors of the Holy Roman Emperor and the Sultan, in which the two speculate on the possible consequences should the Polish kingdom, exhausted by the Khmel’nyts’kyi uprising, be swallowed up by Muscovy. In that event, ‘neighbouring states and all Europe, having observed this calmly, would witness to their shame a vast state elevated from nothing to a great height, causing detriment to many nations, and for some their downfall’.<sup>29</sup> Similar turns of phrase adorn the proclamation that the author has Ivan Mazepa deliver to his staff in 1708, persuading them of the correctness of his intent to sever the link to the tsar and to join Charles XII of Sweden in his war against Muscovy: the ‘always invincible’ Charles enjoys ‘the respect and fear of all Europe’; ‘the

<sup>24</sup> Pylyp Orlyk, ‘Triumphal’nyi himn roksolans’kykh muz’, in *Marsove pole: Heroichna poeziia na Ukraini: knyzhka druha, druha polovyna XVII–XIX stolit’* (Kyiv: Molod’, 1989), 169, 171.

<sup>25</sup> *Letopis’ gadiachskago polkovnyka Grigoriia Grabianki* (Kyiv, 1854), rpt. in Hryhorij Hrabjanka, *The Great War of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1990), 15 (306).

<sup>26</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 48.

<sup>27</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 169.

<sup>28</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 169.

<sup>29</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 186–187.

foremost nations of Europe, France and Germany,' have guaranteed 'our land' 'all former rights and privileges that are proper to a free nation'.<sup>30</sup> Charles on entering the Ukrainian lands is also represented as issuing a proclamation, in which he swears to return 'this Cossack, or Rus', land to its original state, ruling itself and dependent on no-one in the world' and, like Mazepa, affirms that these promises have been guaranteed 'by the foremost states of Europe'.<sup>31</sup> The victory of Peter I over Charles and Mazepa at the battle of Poltava in the following year, which blocked these designs, is judged in *The History of the Rus'* as having European significance and resonance in addition to its impact on the participating parties: 'the campaign of 1709 had great lessons to teach both warring monarchs and peoples, and this same year was epochal for the history of northern Europe and, indeed, all Europe'.<sup>32</sup> The battle itself 'decided the fates of Russia and Sweden, astonished Europe, and created a watershed in the politics of states and the fates of kings'.<sup>33</sup>

On occasion, the geopolitical reflections involving the idea of Europe overflow into civilisational judgments. The author of the *History*, by invoking Europe's collective wisdom and judgment, by treating its responses to events as normative, and by casting it in the role of a potential guarantor of a just political order (just from the perspective of the author, the Cossacks who are the subject of his narrative, and their descendants, the presumed readers), imparts to Europe a positive value and at the same time brings his subjects into its orbit. Injustice and barbarity, on the other hand, are labeled as less than European, thereby magnifying their baseness. Mazepa appeals to Europe; this, the text implies, is to his credit. Khmel'nyts'kyi is 'adept at the preeminent European languages, notably Latin and Greek'.<sup>34</sup> This, too, is praiseworthy. On the other hand, when the historian has Mazepa pass a negative civilisational judgment not only upon his adversary Peter I, but also on his ally, Charles XII, he makes sure that the reader understands how un-European they are:

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<sup>30</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 257–258.

<sup>31</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 266.

<sup>32</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 270.

<sup>33</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 272.

<sup>34</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 90.

The two warring monarchs are in a state of such fury at one another that the peoples subject to them are suffering, and will yet suffer, a measureless abyss of misery [...]. Both of them, through the arbitrariness of their rule and through their usurpation of unlimited powers, have likened themselves to the most ferocious of despots, the equal of whom it is unlikely that all Asia and Africa have spawned.<sup>35</sup>

Clearly, their Afro-Asiatic despotism brings them no glory, just as no honour accrues to Khmel'nyts'kyi's general esaul Bohun for the violence of his reprisal against a truce-breaking attack by the Poles: 'They were killed viciously and without mercy, like lowly beasts of prey, not as befits European soldiers.'<sup>36</sup>

The emphatic association of Europe with secular virtue, however, is rare and comes only toward the end of the period under discussion. *The History of the Rus'*, from which the examples adduced above have been drawn, was most probably composed at the same time as the first parts of Kotliarevs'kyi's *Eneida* and was undoubtedly directed at the same audience. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the world views enunciated in the two works are compatible with each other.

Earlier 'civilisational' invocations of Europe identify Europe with Christianity, not infrequently combining this identification with a demarcation from the Islamic world. An accomplished example of this strategy is a letter dated 1544 by Stanislav Orikhovs'kyi-Roksolan to King Sigismund, urging the monarch to set aside his treaty with Suleiman the Magnificent and commence warlike actions against the Ottomans. Orikhovs'kyi does not use the word 'Europe', but it is clear that he imagines the continent as a continuum of Christian states jointly threatened by a common enemy. The letter begins coolly, announcing itself rhetorically as the statesmanlike utterance of an experienced and rational observer of international affairs, as pragmatically aware as any Machiavelli of the reasons of state that must guide the ruler. Suleiman, too, is initially presented as a rational player in the game of international relations. The emotional temperature of the letter soon rises, however. The author alleges that Suleiman is driven by a desire to destroy Christian sacred places – altars and graves – and to 'dedicate the Sarmatian land to Mohammed'.<sup>37</sup> From ratiocination the author turns to

<sup>35</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 257.

<sup>36</sup> *Istoria Rusiv*, 151.

<sup>37</sup> Stanislav Orikhovs'kyi-Roksolan, 'Pro turets'ku zahrozu slovo druhe (do pol's'koho korolia Zyhis-munda)', in *Ukrains'ka literatura XIV–XVI st.*, 88–113, here 97.

invective, describing Suleiman as ‘not even an enemy (the word is too mild!), but a desecrator of the Faith’<sup>38</sup> who is not below employing ‘Asiatic slanders’<sup>39</sup> and ‘Muslim subterfuges’<sup>40</sup> to achieve his objectives. Conflicts within Europe are positively benign by contrast: the Germans ‘love you even when you defeat them’.<sup>41</sup> A century and a half later, Velychko, too, thinks of Europe as the proper bastion of Christianity, though one regrettably disunited: ‘European Christian monarchs, who believe in the triune God, and yet do not reside in the one mansion of the living God’ thereby give encouragement to the ‘Saracens’ who have ‘come to visit our Europe with large armies from the remotest Asian lands’ and have used their ‘infidel cunning’ to conquer Greece and other Christian states.<sup>42</sup>

Civilisational value judgments similar to these are inherent in a text type that has a long tradition in East Slavic writing: the tale of the ethnogenesis of the Slavs (or the nation to which the author belongs or for whom the narrative is intended), which is based on the Old Testament narrative of the geographical dispersion of human beings after the Flood. The Kyivan source text of this tradition, the chronicle titled *The Tale of Bygone Years*, tells the story without naming any of the continents. Herodotus’s reservations notwithstanding, the image of the world as divided into the three continents of Asia, Europe and Africa was conventional in Ancient Greek and Byzantine culture. It does not, however, figure in the *Tale’s* eleventh-century account, based on the Byzantine chronicle of Georgios Hamartolos, of the division of the world among the sons of Noah. Not continents, but cardinal directions are used to conceptualise the division: Shem receives the East, Ham the South, and Japheth the North and West. It is in Japheth’s part that the chronicle locates the Slavs, the Rus’, the Sarmatians and the Scythians – all important for later historically-based identity formation in the Ukrainian lands – alongside other peoples and places of Europe. However, Japheth’s patrimony includes non-European places like Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, Bithynia and Galatia, all in Asia Minor: the ‘Europeanisation’ of Japheth is the work of later interpreters of the story.

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<sup>38</sup> Orikhovs’kyi-Roksolan, 98.

<sup>39</sup> Orikhovs’kyi-Roksolan, 94.

<sup>40</sup> Orikhovs’kyi-Roksolan, 103.

<sup>41</sup> Orikhovs’kyi-Roksolan, 98.

<sup>42</sup> Velychko, II, 336.

Rather than locating Rus' in one of the original three divisions, the author of the *Tale* appears intent on projecting an image of Kyiv as a middle ground, readily accessible both to the three patrimonies as defined by the Bible, and to the contemporary cultural and political centres, Constantinople and Rome:

When the Polanians lived upon these hills [of Kyiv], the way from the Varangians to the Greeks was here, and from the Greeks to the Varangians [...]. From the [Varangian] Sea it is possible to reach even Rome, and from Rome to come by sea to Constantinople. [...] From Rus' it is possible to go along the Volga to the Bulgars and to Khwarezm, reaching the East and the patrimony of Shem, and along the Dvina to the Varangians, and from the Varangians to Rome, and thence to the tribe of Ham.<sup>43</sup>

Europe and the other continents are also absent from the famous narrative of the choice of a religion and the Christianization of the Rus' by the grand prince Volodimer in 988. Prior to making his choice Volodimer is lobbied, as it were, by representatives of different faiths and cultures: 'Bulgars of the Islamic faith', 'Khazarian Jews', 'Germans from Rome', and a philosopher sent by 'the Greeks'. Volodimer dispatches fact-finding missions to their respective homelands, but the account gives no geographical or directional information about these missions. Volodimer rejects Islam and Judaism because of their burdensome dietary prohibitions and aspects of their customs that, in the form described by the chronicler, the Rus' find distasteful. The representatives of Rome convey to the Grand Prince a message from the Pope, who has observed a certain affiliation with the Rus' ('your land is like our land, but your faith is not like our faith').<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, Western Christianity makes little impression upon Volodimer's emissaries, whereas the aesthetic force of the Greek liturgy with its musical, visual, dramatic and even olfactory dimension wins them over, as the Byzantine philosopher's more abstract promise of salvation in the afterlife had already persuaded Volodimer.

This story from the *Tale* narrates a civilisational choice: on behalf of Rus', Volodimer elects to enter an intellectual, emotional and aesthetic (in short, cultural) affiliation with the Eastern Roman Empire and Christianity in its Eastern form. The attitude toward the Church of Rome (and the European West) that

<sup>43</sup> *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, Vol. I, *Lavrent'evskaia letopis'*, 2nd ed. (Leningrad, 1926; rpt. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1962), col. 7.

<sup>44</sup> *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei*, I, col. 84–85.

is implicit in the narrative is neutral: not rejected outright, like the faiths of the Bulgars and the Khazars, Rome is nonetheless not chosen. It is tempting to observe analogies to this fall of preferences in the controversies surrounding initiatives in early modern and modern times to shift the balance between the Byzantine and the Western cultural orientation of the Ukrainian lands in favour of the latter: the attempted union of the Orthodox of the Commonwealth with the Church of Rome at Brest in 1596, the modernist movement at the turn of the twentieth century, and political efforts to select a ‘European path’ for the newly independent Ukrainian state after 1991.

The narrative of the Japhethic origin of the Rus’ was revisited in the context of seventeenth-century efforts by the Orthodox cultural elite of the Commonwealth, in response to the encroachments of Catholicism, to recover for itself the dignity of a Kyivan medieval heritage. The *Hustyn Chronicle*, compiled between 1623 and 1627, and the Kyiv Caves monastery’s much republished *Synopsis* (1674), prepared, as Oleksii Tolochko argues, on the basis not of the medieval chronicles but of Polish chronicles, notably those of Marcin Bielski and Maciej Strykowski,<sup>45</sup> superimpose the narrative of the origin of peoples over the three-continent model of universal geography. In keeping with the Sarmatian myth, these chronicles locate the early history of the peoples of interest to them in both Europe and Asia; in keeping with the growing orientation of the Orthodox high clergy, especially in Kyiv, toward the Orthodox monarchy to the north, they also foreground a narrative of the Muscovites as the inheritors of the patrimony of Meshech, the sixth son of Noah. The *Hustyn Chronicle* informs its reader that Japheth ‘received the western and northern countries, namely Europe and part of Asia’ and offers an account of ‘our Slavic people; from whom and where it came into being; and when it came to Europe and Sarmatia’. Following Bielski, the chronicler claims that ‘there are two Sarmatias: one Assyrian, the other, to which we belong, European’. The Rus’, alongside the other peoples of the Commonwealth, are listed as residing in European Sarmatia ‘where Christian

<sup>45</sup> Oleksii Tolochko, ‘“Rus” ochyma “Ukrainy”’: V poshuku samoidentyfikatsii ta kontynuitetu’, *Druhyi mizhnarodnyi konhres ukrainistiv, L’viv 22–28 serpnia 1994 r.: Dopovidi i povidomlennia: Istoriiia* (L’viv: Instytut ukrainoznavstva im. Krypiakevycha NAN Ukrainy ta Instytut istorychnykh doslidzhen’ L’vivs’koho universytetu im. I. Franka, 1994), Vol. II, 68–75.

peoples live [...] on this, western, side of the Don'. The Muscovites appear in both Assyrian and European Sarmatia.<sup>46</sup>

The *Synopsis* is somewhat more decisive on these matters, both geographically and ideologically: Japheth here is unequivocally the 'progenitor of all Christians, especially those that live in Europe',<sup>47</sup> his people 'surpassed all others in strength, wisdom and courage' and because of their glory (*slava*) came to be called 'Slavs'.<sup>48</sup> Sarmatia is now located clearly in Europe, though conceptualized still as divided into two parts: 'one Scythian, where the Scythians or Tatars live today, the other – where the Muscovites, the Rus', Poles, Lithuanians, Prussians and others live.'<sup>49</sup> The Muscovites, the *Synopsis* avers, are the descendants of Meshech, from whom they derive their name: 'And so from Meshech, the forefather of the Slav-Rus' people, and his progeny have come not only the great nation of the Muscovites, but also all Rus', or Rossia, and though in certain lands some words have changed, yet they speak the one Slavic language.'<sup>50</sup> The resulting account displays a high level of ideological expediency: within the context of a Kyiv and Left Bank Ukraine working through the beginnings of their absorption into the Muscovite tsardom, Muscovy and Rus' are presented as linked by descent and language, both are located on the European side of the divide between Europe and Asia, and Europe is attached to civilisational values – Christianity, as well as 'strength, wisdom and courage'.

A more sophisticated recruitment of the idea of Europe – this time as a whole modern, West European, early Enlightenment configuration of thought – is in evidence in the tragicomedy *Vladymyr* (1705) by Feofan Prokopovych, then a professor at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy and later one of the chief agents of modernisation in Muscovy and the Russian Empire under Peter I. The motif of choice of a faith is narrowed in *Vladymyr* to a dialogue between the prince and the Greek philosopher. Vladymyr is presented in a Lockean way as endowed naturally with reason; he seeks to 'know in detail the paragraphs' of the philosopher's position,

<sup>46</sup> 'Hustyns'kyi litopys', in V. I. Krekoten' (ed.), *Ukrains'ka literatura XVII st.* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1987), 146–166, here 147–153.

<sup>47</sup> 'Synopsis', in *Ukrains'ka literatura XVII st.*, 167–182, here 167.

<sup>48</sup> 'Synopsis', 168.

<sup>49</sup> 'Synopsis', 169.

<sup>50</sup> 'Synopsis', 171.

challenging the latter to ‘make the Christian faith convenient to belief’;<sup>51</sup> upon resolving to embrace the Christian faith, he manifests the virtue of tolerance: ‘What I have chosen, to others I commend; / I advise it only, but do not command.’<sup>52</sup> The philosopher, for his part, preaches a rational Christianity rather Deist in its conception. Biblical revelation, while not omitted from the account, takes second place to the derivation of faith from the observation of the order of Nature: ‘The planets have their paths, the waters know their shores, / The earth knows its seasons, [...]. / Seeing this, the philosophers said, “It is implausible / That this should be so without beginning and without proper direction. / Someone created this and, holding it, does not allow it / To fall [...]. / It is fitting to call Him God.”’<sup>53</sup> Prokopovych’s satire at the expense of the pagan priests – they are ignorant, interested only in the satisfaction of physical desires, and wish to prolong a regime of superstition because their comforts depend on it – resonates with seventeenth-century West European anticlericalism.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the sole intellectual position reflected in *Vladymyr* that is not part of the early Enlightenment mainstream is respect for the Classical authorities. The Kyiv Academy professor cannot help invoking ‘the ancient Hellenes’, and supports the biblical prophets with Plato and Epicurus.<sup>55</sup> Though Europe is never named in the drama, it thoroughly pervades the play’s thought-world; what is more, it does so in the special form of Western Enlightenment modernity.

What conclusions can be drawn from our discussion of invocations of Europe that are relevant to the consideration of human identities in the Ukrainian lands prior to the advent of the modern national project? In posing this question we bear in mind that the senses of self that reside in any individual are layered,

<sup>51</sup> Feofan Prokopovych, ‘Vladymyr’, in V. I. Krekoten’ (ed.), *Ukrains’ka literatura XVIII st.* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1983), 258–305, here 280.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Vladymyr’, 275.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Vladymyr’, 284–285. The passage, as T. Ie. Avtukhovych (‘Kyivs’kyi period tvorchosti Feofana Prokopovycha i barokko’, in *Ukrains’ke literaturne barokko: zbirnyk naukovykh prats’*, ed. O. V. Myshanych [Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1987], 178–192, here 186) has noted, is an example of the teleological proof of the existence of God. This, however, is a form of reasoning associated less with Descartes and Leibniz, as Avtukhovych suggests, than with the Ancients (whose authority Prokopovych acknowledges) and Aquinas.

<sup>54</sup> See S. J. Barnett, *Idol Temples and Crafty Priests: The Origins of Enlightenment Anticlericalism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

<sup>55</sup> ‘Vladymyr’, 284–285.



contingent, and mutable, and that the phenomenon called 'multiple identities' is a constitutive element of human experience. We bear in mind also the distinction between identities that, on the basis of observation, we can plausibly impute to others, and the identities that people themselves single out for attention.

As far as 'ascribed' identity is concerned, we can with reasonable confidence make the statement that the cultural world inhabited by our authors from the sixteenth century onward was, in many important respects, European: that is to say, it shared sufficient common ground with the cultural world of their intellectual counterparts in a large part of the European continent for these worlds to be mutually intelligible. Analogies in educational systems, leading to a shared competence in Latin; a common body of familiar texts; despite confessional differences, a shared Christian faith and a shared view of the parallel importance of the sacred and the profane – these coherences make it possible, without excessive distortion, to detect a Renaissance, a Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and a Baroque (with considerable local variation, to be sure) in the Commonwealth as much as in Western, Northern or Mediterranean Europe. They also justify considering the space across which these commonalities are observed to be sufficiently uniform to justify generalisations about it. That we call this space 'Europe' is a matter of tradition. In so far as our authors inhabit this space, we may deem them to possess, within their repertoire of identities, one that is 'European'. One of the textual manifestations of this identity is the invocation of Europe in writing, whether more or less automatically in habitual figures of speech, or in the context of panegyric or persuasive strategies, or in texts that explicitly reflect on Europe and Europeanness.

In very few instances, however, do the invocations of Europe that we have examined support the view that the author's European identity is ideologically chosen and deliberately cultivated. Prokopovych's *Vladymyr* and *The History of the Rus'* are exceptions, but in most instances the act of mentioning Europe serves the construction or defence of other identities that do have ideological significance for their authors. The adjacency and complementarity of Europe and Asia serves the Sarmatian ideology of the nobles of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; the same conjuncture of Europe and Asia serves the Cossack claim to historical dignity. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Europe has a role to play in the elaborate project of the Kyivan higher clergy to construct a

new politically productive identity linking the contemporary Moscow monarchy to medieval Kyiv Rus'.

By no means all elite projects have a clear use for an idea of Europe. Polemicists of all religious colours in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were shaped by European education and high culture. But the emphasis in their polemical writings on the policing of boundaries, on defending one's own positions and attacking the opponent's, left little room for emphasising the commonality of the cultural space that the adversaries in fact jointly inhabited. In the vigorous construction of exclusive religious identities, overarching ones could not afford to be given emphasis. For them, and for many of the educated, Europe was a lived reality, not an ideological project.