

# The Persistence of the Little Rossian Fatherland in the Russian Empire: The Evidence from *The History of the Rus' or of Little Rossia* (*Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii*)

Frank Sysyn

*Istoriia Rusov ili Maloj Rossii* (History of the Rus' or of Little Rossia), one of the most influential works in shaping the nineteenth century Ukrainian national movement, constitutes a transitional text between the histories of the Cossack Hetmanate and the academic histories and the statements on national identity of the modern age. Claimed in the preface to be based on Belarusian sources from the Mahilioŭ monastery as well as on documents of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'ky left by his son Iurii, the *Istoriia Rusov* is a history of Ukraine from the earliest times to 1762, with primary focus on the Khmel'nyts'kyi epoch. Attributed in the preface to the Belarusian Archbishop Heorhii Konys'kyi and said to have been used by the Ukrainian political leader Hryhorii Poletyka in preparation for the Legislative Commission of 1775, *Istoriia Rusov* to this day remains a work for which the authorship and time of composition is debated. First cited in 1819 and mentioned in the 1820s, *Istoriia Rusov* is most frequently seen as a work of the first decade of the nineteenth century, though whether it was composed or edited at that time is not certain.<sup>1</sup> Although its veracity as a historical source was soon questioned, its wide distribution in manuscript form and its popularity after its publication in 1846 ensured its place in shaping Ukrainian historical imagination.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of what increasingly came to be seen as a political tract revealed the degree to which it had been influenced by the thought of the Enlightenment and the age of the French Revolution.<sup>3</sup> Its insistence on the primacy of Little Rossia to rights to the name of Rus' and the claim of Kyiv to be the first seat of power among the Rus' as well as its disparagement of the Russians (usually called Moscovites) and their customs fired the imagination of the national movement of the nineteenth century and resulted in subsequent scholars labeling it a

---

1 V. Kravchenko, *Istoriia rusiv u suchasnykh interpretatsiiakh*, in: S. Plokyh and F. E. Sysyn (eds.), *Synopsis: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Zenon E. Kohut*, Edmonton-Toronto 2005, pp. 275–276. The article includes extensive bibliography on *Istoriia Rusov*, including Kravchenko's numerous writings on the topic and the classic work by M. Vozniak, *Psevdokonys'kyi i psevdo-Poletyka: "Istoriia Rusov" u literaturi i nautsi*, Lviv-Kyiv, n.d.

2 [Heorhii Konys'kyi], *Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii*. Sochinenie Georgiia Koniskogo, arkhiepiskopa Beloruskogo, Moskva 1846 (reprint Kyiv 1991).

3 B. Krupnyckyj, *Beiträge zur Ideologie. Die >Geschichte der Reussen> (Istoriija Rusow)*, Berlin 1945.

proto-national or proto-nationalist text.<sup>4</sup> Still its purpose in being written is not yet deciphered, and one recent scholar has even seen the text as in some way “pan-Rus’ian” and limited in its purpose to arguing for the rights of the Cossack *starshyna* to enter the ranks of the Russian nobility.<sup>5</sup>

*Istoriia Rusov* is located at the dividing line of early modern and modern Ukrainian political thought. In recent years considerable attention has been paid to the development of early modern Ukrainian political thought and its influence on the modern Ukrainian national movement.<sup>6</sup> If earlier scholars tended to see Ukrainians as a “non-historical nation” born out of the Romantic interest in language and diversity, more recent works have looked at the legacy inherited by the modern national movement. Indeed, it may be argued, that the Chlebowczyk model of non-historical Eastern European nations as cultural communities formed out of language communities, then turned into political communities does not correspond fully to the Ukrainian state.<sup>7</sup> In many ways the legacy of Ukrainian political entities of the early modern period provided the underlay for the Ukrainian national movement of the nineteenth century. In some ways, before the concept of a Ukrainian linguistic and cultural nation was disseminated, the concept of Ukraine as a country and, most important, as a fatherland had been established.

Arising in the seventeenth century, the Cossack Hetmanate broke away from what the politically active inhabitants of the Ukrainian lands had hitherto seen as their fatherland, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. After the Union of Lublin (1569) the designation *ojczyzna*, or fatherland evolved in the Commonwealth’s political discourse into the primary term for the state and land claiming its inhabitants’ loyalty.<sup>8</sup> Following the Khmel’nyts’kyi Uprising in the mid-seventeenth century, the new Ukrainian political elite began to use *ojczyzna* and its Ukrainian equivalent *otchyzna* for the new political entity and the Ukrainian territories that it claimed.<sup>9</sup> The concept of Ukraine, Little Russia, or Little Russian Ukraine, to cite the varied early modern nomenclature, as a fatherland pervaded late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Ukrainian political thought. Centring on the Cossack Hetmanate or “Little Russian Ukraine on Both Banks of the Dnipro”, the concept of the

4 For emphasis on the national emphasis in the text, see Oleksander Ohloblyn’s introduction to the Ukrainian translation, *Istoriia Rusiv*, trans. V. Davydenko, New York 1956, pp. v–xxix.

5 S. Plochy, Ukraine or Little Russia? Revisiting an Early Nineteenth-Century Debate, in: Canadian Slavonic Papers 48 Nos.3–4 (September–December 2006) pp. 335–353, especially pp. 351–352.

6 See the collected essays of Z. Kohut, *Korinnia identychnosti: Studii z rann’omodernoï ta modernoï ta modernoï istorii Ukraïny*, Kyiv 2004. An English-language volume, including additional essays, is forthcoming from CIUS Press.

7 J. Chlebowczyk, *On Small and Young Nations in Europe: Nation-Forming Processes in Ethnic Borderlands in East-Central Europe*, Wrocław 1980.

8 See E. Bem, Termin ‘ojczyzna’ w literaturze XVI i XVII wieku. Refleksje o języku, in: *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* 34 (1989) pp. 131–157.

9 Z. Kohut, Vid Hadiacha do Andrusova: osmyslennia “otchyzny” v ukraïns’kii politychnii kul’turi, in: *Hadiats’ka uniiia 1658*, Kyiv 2008 pp. 228–39.

fatherland emerged as a powerful focus of political loyalty.<sup>10</sup> Paradoxically the concept of the central Ukrainian territories as a fatherland reached its apogee after the Battle of Poltava (1709) had undermined the Hetmanate's autonomy and the declaration of the Russian Empire (1721) had challenged the Ukrainian concept of relations with Russia and the tsar. Serhii Plokyh has argued that the elevation of *otechestvo* in Russian political discourse to describe the new empire as a fatherland came about as a result of the propaganda war between Peter the First and Hetman Ivan Mazepa over the Ukrainian fatherland before and after the Battle of Poltava and that a central role was played in giving new significance to the concept of Russia and the Russian Empire as an *otechestvo* by the Ukrainian political adviser of the Petrine reign, Teofan Prokopovych.<sup>11</sup> Whatever the Ukrainian input in forming the concept of the Russian Empire as a fatherland, the concept took hold as a fundamental tool of Russian political discourse as Ingrid Schierle has demonstrated in her work on the later eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

The older Ukrainian tradition of the *otchyzna* and the newer Russian tradition of *otechestvo* may be presumed to have coexisted and influenced concepts of fatherland in eighteenth-century Ukraine. We do not have a systematic study of Ukrainian political concepts in this period. Among the major unresolved questions is that of continuity and discontinuity in Ukrainian political thought. Therefore it is uncertain as to whether the political concepts and terminology of the early eighteenth century remained vital and developed throughout the next hundred years or whether they were introduced into Ukrainian political thought with the interest in historical texts that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century. In the attention to Ukrainian historical writings in the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, culminating in the publication of numerous texts, the founders of the modern Ukrainian

---

10 See F. E. Sysyn, *Fatherland in Early Eighteenth-Century Ukrainian Political Culture*, in: G. Siedina (ed.), *Mazepa e il suo tempo. Storia, culture, società Mazepa and his Time. History, Culture, Society*, Alessandria 2004 pp. 39–53 and the slightly revised Ukrainian version: 'Otchyzna' u politychnii kul'turi Ukrainy pochatku XVIII stolittia, in: *Ukraina Moderna* 10 (2006), pp. 7–19 and S. Plokyh, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 334–338.

11 Serhii Plokyh has argued that Peter I first used the concept of *otechestvo* as fatherland in polemics with Ivan Mazepa and that at this time he wrote to the Ukrainians about "your" fatherland. He sees Teofan Prokopovych as first proclaiming Russia, the Empire, as a Fatherland and Peter as "father of the fatherland" after 1709, S. Plokyh, *The Two Russias of Teofan Prokopovyč*, in: Siedina, *Mazepa e il suo tempo*, pp. 333–366.

12 'Otečestvo' – Der russische Vaterlandsbegriff im 18. Jahrhundert, in: B. Pietrow-Ennker (ed.), *Kultur in der Geschichte Russlands: Räume, Medien, Identitäten, Lebenswelten*, Göttingen 2007 pp. 143–161. Although Schierle points out the importance of the Russian translation projects of the eighteenth century in forming Russian political vocabulary and mentions two of the prominent Ukrainian translators involved (Semen Desnyts'kyi and Ivan Tumans'kyi), she does not pose the question of whether the large numbers of Ukrainian intellectuals in eighteenth-century Russia influenced the evolution of Russian concepts such as *otechestvo*. She also labels *otchizna* a Polish loan word without considering that it probably came to Russian from Ukrainian (p. 147).

national movement had access to early modern political concepts. Although some works have appeared on the influence of these texts on the Ukrainian national awakeners, no extensive study on the influence of the historical works on the terminology and political thought of the Ukrainian activists of the early nineteenth century has been undertaken.<sup>13</sup>

Despite all its problems of dating and provenance, *Istoriia Rusov* represents an important link in establishing the degree of continuity in Ukrainian political thought. Only a systematic examination of eighteenth century texts could establish whether concepts of fatherland developed without major discontinuities throughout the century. Our more limited goal is to see how the concept of fatherland functioned in *Istoriia Rusov* and how its use of fatherland relates to the concept of fatherland that developed in seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Ukraine.

While most of the scholarship on *Istoriia Rusov* has emphasized the modern character of the ideas of the text and their dissonance with the text's conservative form, Nataliia Shlikhta has recently argued that the author of *Istoriia Rusov* was profoundly conservative and much of the thought in the text was within the framework of the noble culture and Sarmatianism of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.<sup>14</sup> In many ways this argument parallels Andrzej Walicki's discussion of how the thought of the "Gentry Commonwealth" underlay modern Polish concepts of nation and society.<sup>15</sup> While Shlikhta's article draws our attention to the need to examine the roots of the political thought of *Istoriia Rusov* in the political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that shaped the political culture of the Cossack Hetmanate, it does not deal with transformations and new cultural models that arose in the Hetmanate. The break with the concept that the Commonwealth was the fatherland and the application of the term fatherland to the Cossack Hetmanate was just such a transformation.

One of the major reasons for attention to earlier Ukrainian writing of the Hetmanate in examining the concept of fatherland in *Istoriia Rusov* is that documents in *Istoriia Rusov*, while often literary fabrications penned after their purported origin, originated in early modern Ukrainian political culture. Unfortunately, not only do we lack an author and time of composition for *Istoriia Rusov*, but we also lack an academic edition of the numerous manuscript copies and a close textual study that would establish where passages in the text originated. In this matter, *Istoriia Rusov* shares much with the early eighteenth-century Cossack chronicles. The two most

13 See F. E. Sysyn, *The Cossack Chronicles and the Development of Modern Ukrainian Culture and National Identity*, in: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 Nos. 3–4 (1990) pp. 393–423.

14 N. Shlikhta, *Elementy richpospolitoi ideologii ta politychnoi rytoryky Istoriï rusiv*, in: *Moloda natsiia*, 2000, Ch.1; <http://www.ukrhistory.narod.ru/texts/shlichhta-1.htm>.

15 A. Walicki, *The Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Polish Nationhood: Polish Political Thought from Noble Republicanism to Tadeusz Kościuszko*, Notre Dame, Ind. 1989 and ders., *Poland between East and West: The Controversies over Self-Definition and Modernization in Partitioned Poland* (The August Zaleski Lectures, Harvard University, 18–22 April, 1994), Cambridge, Mass. 1994.

important of these works, by Hryhorii Hrabianka and Samiilo Velychko, have long served as basic sources for the study of early eighteenth-century Ukrainian political thought. Coming down in numerous manuscripts, Hryhorii Hrabianka's *Diistvie* has never had an academic edition that would establish the text, much less study its components.<sup>16</sup>

Although the existence of the original of Samiilo Velychko's *Skazanyia*, albeit with parts missing, makes the editorial work on his history simpler, only the first part has been published in a satisfactory edition.<sup>17</sup> Little has been done to trace the origins of the numerous texts and documents incorporated into Velychko's work, thereby complicating any attempts to establish the time that terms and concepts in Velychko's text emerged. Scholars have focused attention on the purported letters of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, so replete with color and concepts that clearly arose in the form included in Velychko after the hetman's time.<sup>18</sup>

The gaps in study of documents in the Cossack chronicles affect the examination of the concept of fatherland in *Istoriia Rusov* because one of the most important texts ascribed to Khmel'nyts'kyi, the Bila Tsekva universal, appears in both the *Skazanyia* and *Istoriia Rusov*. The Bila Tserkva universal is a lengthy exposition of the historical and political reasons justifying the 1648 Uprising. With its numerous mentions of the Cossack Hetmanate as the fatherland, it is a cornerstone of the ideology of Velychko's work, above all of his interpretation of the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising. While its earliest known appearance is in the 1720s in the *Skazanyia*, the Bila Tserkva universal may have its origin in a manifesto issued by Khmel'nyts'kyi.<sup>19</sup> However with its elaborate discussion of the causes of the revolt and its use of political terms, geographic and ethno-national terminology that only arose well after the revolt, it must have been composed in this form long after 1648. The numerous uses *otchyzna* (fatherland) for "Little Russian Ukraine on both Banks of the Dnipro" were just such anachronisms since *otchyzna* in this sense of fatherland for Ukrainian lands and the geographic designation "Little Russian Ukraine," much less "on Both Banks of the Dnipro" were unknown in 1648. They rather re-

16 For the 1793 and 1854 editions as well as two manuscript facsimile, see H. Hrabianka, *The Great War of Bohdan Xmel'nye'kyj* (Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature: texts 9), Cambridge, MA 1990.

17 The full text appeared in *Letopis' sobytii v Iugo-Zapadnoi Rossii v XVII veke*, 4 vols. (Kyiv, 1848–1864). The first volume was edited in an edition more faithful to the original orthography as Samiila Velychka *Skazanyia o vojni kozackoj z poljakamy*, ed. Kateryna Lazarevs'ka *Monumenta Litterarum Ucrainicarum* 16, Kyiv 1926.

18 On the documents controversy, see M. Petrovs'kyi, *Psevdo-diariush Samiila Zorki*, in: *Zapysky Istorychno-filohichnoho viddilu VUAN* 17, Kyiv 1928, pp. 168–204.

19 The text in *Istoriia Rusov* varies in minor ways with that in Velychko's work and contains a different date (May 28, 1648 as opposed to June 1648), which is found in other copies of the text. For discussion of the sources to the universal, see S. Tomashivs'kyi, *Pershyi zazyvnyi lyst Khmel'nyts'kyi*, *Miscellanea*, in: *Zapysky Naukovoho tov. im. Shevchenka* 33–34, pp. 1–9. Tomashivs'kyi mentions the wide distribution of the Bila Tserkva universal, which was published as early as the 1790s.

flect Ukrainian political thought of the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

In including the Bila Tserkva universal, the author of *Istoriia Rusov* linked this fatherland to the Saint and Equal to the Apostles Prince Volodymyr, and used the examples of its addressees' ancestors, the Rus', in standing up for the integrity of the fatherland. In the Bila Tserkva universal, the integrity of the Little Russian Ukrainian fatherland stood alongside defense of the Orthodox faith and noble (presumably raising all Cossacks to noble status) honor as a reason for the sons of the fatherland to join the revolt. The opponent of the revolt, Ivan Barabash, is described as an enemy of the fatherland.<sup>20</sup> For Velychko, the possible author of the universal, this depiction of the fatherland reflected his own and his generation's political worldview.<sup>21</sup> The great revolt and the formation of the Cossack Hetmanate had been accompanied by the receding of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a fatherland for the inhabitants of central Ukraine and by the engendering of the new polity Ukraine, Little Rus'-Rossia, or Little Russian Ukraine as a fatherland that commanded loyalty from its inhabitants. Even when territories were lost they remained part of the ideal fatherland of "Little Russian Ukraine on Both Banks of the Dnipro."

One would be hard pressed to see the universal occupying as central a role in the political thought of *Istoriia Rusov* as it does of Velychko's work. Indeed the universal stands out from the writing on the Khmel'nyts'kyi period and even from the documents of Khmel'nyts'kyi in that it is in the Middle Ukrainian of the turn of the eighteenth century and not in the Russian that prevails elsewhere in *Istoriia Rusov*, even in documents attributed to Khmel'nyts'kyi.<sup>22</sup> Simply by including the universal the author-compiler of *Istoriia Rusov* propagated the early eighteenth-century concept of fatherland to his nineteenth-century readers. The question remains, however, of how the author-compiler of *Istoriia Rusov* envisaged the meaning fatherland in the changed political circumstances, intellectual climate, and political culture of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To what degree does the rest of his text coincide with the concept of a Ukrainian fatherland as the object of political loyalty?

The Russian-language *Istoriia Rusov* generally uses *otechestvo* rather than *otchyzna* for fatherland.<sup>23</sup> Writing long after the formation of the Russian Empire

20 *Istoriia Rusov*, pp. 68–74.

21 On the significance of the concept of fatherland for Velychko, see F. E. Sysyn, *Fatherland in Early Eighteenth-Century Ukrainian Political Culture*, in: Siedina, Mazepa e il suo tempo.

22 On the language of *Istoriia Rusov*, see I. Shevelov, *Istoriia Rusov ochyma movoznavtsia*, in: *Zbirnyk na poshanu prof. D-ra Oleksandra Ohloblyna*, ed. by V. Omelchenko, New York 1977, pp. 465–482.

23 *Otchyzna* also appears in a supposed text of the Zboriv Agreement in which the Russian text has considerable Ukrainian-Polish elements and which contains whole passages in Ukrainian. An article of the agreement asserts that "each nation/people has the right to defend its fatherland" (p. 95). One finds the use of *oichyzna* in a Ukrainian text of King Kazimierz the Great, in which fatherland may refer to the state resulting from the annexation of the Galician land and

and the Petrine declarations that the empire was an *otechestvo* as well as after the abolition of the Cossack Hetmanate, the author of *Istoriia Rusov* might be expected to reflect the new political reality in asserting what the fatherland was. This is not the case. Almost all uses of *otechestvo* refer to “Little Rossia”, in the text’s terminology, except for passages such as the Bila Tserkva universal, where “Ukraine” is used. Still in contrast to the *Skazanyia*, in which the terms “Ukraine”, “Little Rossia”, and “Little Rossian Ukraine” frequently appear alongside *otchyzna*, “Little Rossia” as an appositive of the word *otechestvo* occurs only once in *Istoriia Rusov*.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless the uses of *otechestvo* in close proximity to Little Rossia make clear that it is Little Rossia that is the fatherland meant throughout the text. Thus the author describes Khmel’nyts’kyi as entering Kyiv “to bring thankful prayers to God for the liberation of Little Rossia from the Polish yoke, and he arrived there on October 1, Sunday. The Little Rossian officials, the Cossack fellowship and the most distinguished citizenry, gathering in Kyiv on time, met the hetman outside the city with appropriate respect and manifested to him with most vivid emotions all their thankfulness for his incomparable feats and efforts for the benefit of the fatherland and then they recognized him and acclaimed him as father and liberator of the fatherland and the nation/people” (p. 84) The very introduction of the work as a history of Little Rossia identifies it as a search for “fatherland history” (p. I). Even more numerous are the uses of *otechestvo* when contextually it is clear that Little Rossia or at least the land of the Cossack hetmans is meant. (pp. 52, 60, 61, 62, 63, 84, 114, 174)

What then is the Little Rossia that is seen as the fatherland? The meaning of Little Rossia is not always uniform in the text. In the preface of the text, mention is made of ancient Rus’ or present day Little Rossia. “Little Rossia” is used as a geographic term for as early as the twelfth century and a border is asserted to have existed between Little and Great Rossia at that time. (p. 222)<sup>25</sup> In discussing the personal union of Poland and Lithuania in the fourteenth century, Little Rossia is described as having united under its old name of Rus’ together with Lithuania and Poland as an equal partner. Here Little Rossia constitutes the palatinates of Volhynia, Kyiv, Bratslav and Chernihiv, the first three of which were annexed by the

---

principalities to the Kingdom of Poland. (p. 9) as well as in a document of King Władysław Jagiello proclaiming the unity of the Ruthenian nation with the Polish and Lithuanian and its equal rights, in which the *oichyzna* is the common state or the king’s domain (p. 10). It is of interest that in these two cases when the Kingdom of Poland or the Commonwealth is meant, a Ukrainian transliteration of *ojczyzna* is employed.

24 There is a statement that Khmelnytsky went from the Polish king to visit his *otechestvo* Little Rossia. (p. 50)

25 See the discussion of a heresy spreading in eastern and northern Great Rossia but the heretic being arrested on the Little Rossian border (p. 222). The phrase the “principalities of Little Rossia” is used for the period of the Mongol conquest (p. 5). On the other hand the author maintains that under the old name Rus’ that Little Rossia is described as uniting with the Lithuanian Principality in the 14th century. (p. 7)

Kingdom of Poland from the Grand Duchy of Lithuanian during the Union of Lublin (1569) and the last of which was created after it was conquered by the Commonwealth from Muscovy during the Time of Troubles. Given his special interest in Siveria, the author adds Siveria to these four palatinates.<sup>26</sup> Little Rossia plays a significant part in discussions from the sixteenth century. (p. 55) What its borders were then in the mind of the author is difficult to determine. Early in the text the borders of Rus' are traced by listing the rivers and seas amidst which the Rus' or the Rusniaky dwelled. (p. 2)<sup>27</sup> This Rus' territory is then seen as divided between "Chermna Rus'" and "Belaia Rus'" and later it is said that when the Moscovite state came to be called Rossian it was called Great Rossia to distinguish it from "Chermnaia" and "Belaia" Rus', and then these two Rus' were called Malaia Rossiia. (p. 5) Thus in the discussion of early history, it is pointed out that *Galitsiia* (the term used in Hungarian claims to the Halych principality and after 1772 to describe the Austrian partition zone of the Commonwealth) was the southern part of Rus' or Little Rossia (p. 8). In contrast to this broad interpretation of Little Rossiia, discussion of the seventeenth century differentiates the Zaporozhian Sich from Little Rossia, in a way reminiscent of uses in Velychko, even including a statement by the Sich Cossacks that the Muscovite authorities were attempting to divide them from "our eternal fatherland Little Rossia" (p. 164) and an assertion that in 1638 the Poles had erected a fortress on the Little Rossian and Zaporozhian borders in order to prevent a union of these peoples/nations (*narody*) of one blood (p. 50).<sup>28</sup> Without the geographic determinants that are found so frequently in Velychko (such as Little Rossian Ukraine on Both Banks of the Dnipro) it is more difficult to delineate exactly what Little Rossia and the fatherland constituted in *Istoriia Rusov*, though it would seem that it was Little Rossia in the shrinking borders of the early modern period, so that when writing historically about the seventeenth and early eighteenth century it included both banks of the Dnipro, if not always the Sich. It would seem that this Little Rossia was more and more confined to the Left Bank Hetmanate for the eighteenth century. (pp. 246–247)

The political significance of the *otchestvo* in *Istoriia Rusov* was very similar to that of *otchyzna* in Velychko. The reader of *Istoriia Rusov* learns that one of the highest virtues was service to the fatherland. Thus Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nytsk'yi admonishes his son Iurii before the assembled Cossacks: "I instruct him to serve the fatherland faithfully and heartfully to take care of it like the irises of the eye, and to shed all one's blood for it, if it would be useful and salvatory for it" (p. 141) In his

26 Ohloblyn, Introduction, *Istoriia Rusiv*, pp. ix-x.

27 The territory is described as "from the Danube to the Dvina and from the Black Sea to the rivers Styr, Sluch, Berezhna and Dinets, and Siva". (p. 3) These borders would not seem to include Galicia, but a few sentences later the provincial designations of this territory encompass the Galician principality. Whether the Russian territories were included would depend on which Dvina is meant as well as what is encompassed by the Derevlianian principality later listed.

28 For similar differentiation of the Sich and the Hetmanate in Velychko, see Sysyn, *Fatherland*, p. 51.



speech before his death, Khmelnytsky proclaimed that he had devoted himself entirely to the fatherland (pp. 140); his son Iurii extolled his father's services to the fatherland (p. 150); and the Cossacks praised Bohdan for his feats for the fatherland (p. 140). In the *Istoriia*, it is said of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi that "he loved his fatherland and people/nation so that he always sacrificed his tranquillity, health and life itself without the slightest complaint." The eulogy for the hetman asserted that he so loved his fatherland and people/nation that he devoted his whole life to them. The author asserts that on his tomb poetry was inscribed saying: "From a son in the fatherland a father most worthy of it appeared" ("*Iz syna v otechestve dostoineishii emy iavilsia otets*", p. 142), thereby marking the changing relation of the Cossack leader to his fatherland.<sup>29</sup>

If service to the fatherland deserved praise, disservice and betrayal elicited opprobrium. The purported hetman Semen Perev"iazka is said to have been deprived of his title for his treason to the fatherland (p. 52). Indeed even Khmel'nyts'kyi had to answer to charges that he was a traitor to the fatherland who had sold out because of his negotiations with Muscovy. He answered that he only had behaved with honesty toward the Cossacks and their fatherland (p. 99). In contrast, his son Iurii is later charged as acting against the fatherland with Polish help, an act sealing his fate, without any countervailing argument made (p. 155).

The most common service to the *otchestvo* is the need to defend it. That need for defense of Little Russia repeats frequently in describing events from the late sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century (p. 62–63, 139, 203). Hetman Khmel'nyts'kyi calls on his supporters to be zealous for the fatherland and to think of their obligations to defending it and their own freedom (p. 84) and Cossacks are described as laying down their lives for the freedom of the fatherland in freeing themselves from Polish servitude (p. 99). In his moving speech on the reasons for his break with Peter, Hetman Ivan Mazepa emphasizes protection and defense of the fatherland as motivating his policies (p. 203). The obligation to defend the fatherland is strengthened when it coincides with the defense of the Orthodox faith. The struggles of the Cossacks of the late sixteenth century are seen as having incurred their suffering for the "fatherland and the Orthodox faith" (p. 38), while those supporting Khmel'nyts'kyi declare their willingness that "we are ready to die for the fatherland and the Orthodox faith" (p. 63).

As can be seen from the examples above, Little Rossiia as the fatherland in *Istoriia Rusov* constituted an object of political loyalty even before the Khmel'nyts'kyi uprising, that is before the period in which the term fatherland emerged as a political concept for Ukrainian territories and before the term Little Rossiia was in widespread usage. This projection of the Little Russian fatherland into the past, a feature that *Istoriia Rusov* shares with the *Skazanyia*, could serve to legitimize the Cossack revolts. The fatherland is portrayed as possessing its own rights and liberties in the

29 Serhii Plokhyy finds the first appellation of Khmel'nyts'kyi as "Father of the Fatherland" in 1693. See S. Plokhyy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*, p. 336.

sixteenth century, as when Hetman Nalyvaiko is described as being elected “by the rights and privileges of the fatherland” (p. 36). The depiction of Little Rossia's constituting a fatherland that already commanded political loyalty made it possible for the author of *Istoriia Rusov* to portray Władysław IV as giving the permission and therefore legitimacy for the Cossack uprising, described as a defense of the fatherland, but remarkably for a “fatherland” that is not the Commonwealth but implicitly Little Rossia (p. 60).

In *Istoriia Rusov* political allegiance to the fatherland could make it possible to espouse programs for its benefit even against monarchs who claimed suzerainty over it such as when Hetman Petro Doroshenko is described as calling for preserving the fatherland from all external encroachments (p. 167). In the *Istoriia Rusov* Mazepa describes his actions in 1708 as undertaken to avoid the tsar's plans fatal to the *otechestvo*. (p. 203) The rights to defend the fatherland (here using the historic *otchyzna*) are cast as an article in the Zboriv agreement, the settlement between Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi and the Commonwealth's authorities in 1649. The article not in the original Zboriv articles discusses the relationship of the Polish and Rus' nations/peoples (*narody*) and declares that the “the defense of fatherland is permitted to every nation/people” (p. 95).

There was one palpable difference between the *otchyzna* of Velychko and the *otechestvo* of *Istoriia Rusov*. Velychko wrote at a time when a Ukrainian polity, however truncated, existed. *Istoriia Rusov* was probably composed and certainly took its final form at a time when the polity had been extinguished. However vivid his depiction of Little Rossia as a fatherland may have been, was the author merely using a concept of a past age? While the preface describes Poletyka as undertaking a search for “fatherland history”, did this fatherland belong to the past or the present for the readers of *Istoriia Rusov*? It may be argued that whatever the author may have intended, the very presentation of Ukraine as a fatherland that commanded loyalty served to imbue Ukrainian sentiment and the conceptualization that Ukraine or Little Rossia was a country or land in its own right. But what clues does *Istoriia Rusov* give us for the question of the conceptualization of fatherland in his time?

While overwhelmingly the term fatherland is used in *Istoriia Rusov* for Ukraine (or Little Rossia in its terminology), the text also demonstrates that Ukrainians had possessed and could have other fatherlands. The early Slavs are described as having had an *otechestvo* with those who defended it best called Khazars (*kozary*) a term that was later changed to Cossacks (*kozaky*), that is the Ukrainians' ancestors (p. 2). The relationship of fatherland to political structures is best indicated in discussions of the relationship to the Polish crown and the Commonwealth. While Little Rossia emerges in the text as a fatherland at least from the sixteenth century, the role of the Kingdom of Poland and the Commonwealth as a fatherland for Ukrainians occurs not only in the documents of Polish rulers. The Ruthenian nation is seen in the preface as having had a common *otechestvo* with the Poles (p. II). Władysław IV is described as having patriotic thoughts for the Ruthenian nation and having tried to

preserve the common fatherland (*obshche otchestvo*) from ruin (p. 86). Hence the reader would see that there had been other concepts of the fatherland in the past.

More significant for the present were the mentions that Russia or the Russian Empire could be conceived of as a fatherland for the Ukrainians. Though they are relatively few in comparison to the use of *otchestvo* for Little Russia, they do indicate a contending vision of fatherland that had emanated from Russia from the reign of Peter the First. In the latter part of the text, in which the author frequently discusses the Great Russian and Little Russian forces as the “Russians”, he describes the Russians as acting in the interest of their monarch and *otchestvo* (p. 193).<sup>30</sup> In discussing the freeing of captives from the Tatars, the Christians were described as returning to their *otchestva*, Hungary, Poland and Russia (p. 188). Finally Peter is described as taking the title of “All-Russian Emperor and Father of the *otchestvo*” in 1721, with the Little Russian regiments taking an oath to him (p. 226) and Hetman Danylo Apostol is described at taking an oath to the sovereign and the *otchestvo*. (p. 233). These few mentions reflecting the emerging political realities of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries do not, however, outweigh the frequent use of *otchestvo* for Little Russia, a usage that is particularly abundant in the period of Ivan Mazepa. Yet they remind us that, even in *Istoriia Rusov*, the existence of another fatherland could be seen.

In sum, the reader of *Istoriia Rusov* received an image of Little Russia as a fatherland that was quite similar to that which had flourished in early eighteenth century Ukraine. The impact of this influential text’s portrayal of fatherland on its readers’ political conceptions and on the modern Ukrainian national movement remain important questions for subsequent research. What is certain however is that a hundred years after the proclamation of the Russian Empire as the *otchestvo*, one of the most widely read texts of early nineteenth-century Ukraine persisted in presenting Little Russia as an *otchestvo*.

---

30 In Aleksei Mikhailovich's gramota, supposedly granting Russian *dvorianin* status to all higher and lower Cossack officers who had taken part in the campaign taking Smolensk in 1655, the reason is for service “in our *otchestvo*,” presumably meaning the Smolensk region as the tsar’s patrimonial land (p. 125).