



Rediscovering Zaporozhians

Memory, Loyalties, and Politics in Late Imperial
Kuban, 1880–1914

Oleksandr Polianichev

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

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Thesis Abstract

Rediscovering Zaporozhians examines the cultural imagination of intellectual, administrative, and military elites of the largely Ukrainian-speaking Cossack colonial settler community on the North Caucasus, the Kuban host, who in the final decades of the nineteenth century came to celebrate themselves as the heirs and successors of the Zaporozhian Sich. Drawing together findings from nine archives, materials from contemporary periodicals, administrative and personal correspondence, and ego-documents, the dissertation traces the emergence and development of the idea of Kuban as a living relic of Zaporozhia during the late imperial period. Inventing the ancient past for themselves, the Cossack elites pursued different goals at once. They sought to secure the Cossack privileged estate status in the changing world of *fin-de-siècle*, to negotiate more autonomy in local affairs, to lend the Cossack community organic coherence and enhance its morale, to reaffirm the Cossacks' loyalty to the ruling dynasty. Finally yet importantly, the notion of the Cossacks' Zaporozhian origin shaped and maintained the symbolic boundaries of their cultural peculiarities. The dissertation looks at a wide array of examples of using the past—commemorations, monuments, regalia, rhetoric and other culturally charged entities—to show how the Zaporozhian myth came into being and what political implications it entailed. Following these processes against the background of political developments in the Russian Empire, this work weaves them into the general fabric of the imperial ideology of the epoch. In doing so, it probes the limits of allowable in the dealing of the central authorities with cultural differences on the imperial periphery.

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Notes and terms

In the text of the thesis, I follow the Romanization system proposed by the Library of Congress to render the names of persons and places in Russian and Ukrainian, with certain simplifications. I do not use ligatures (superscript arcs above letters). Initial iotated vowels are written with “y” instead of “i.” The apostrophe symbol for the soft sign “ь” is omitted for the name *Kuban* (not *Kuban’*).

In a study that tends to escape the national paradigm by stressing ambiguities and uncertainties of group belonging, rendering of personal names is a problem that has no generally accepted or recommended solution. For many of those people, whose names are given on the pages below, the use of one or another rendition of name was not as much a sign of his or her “identity” as a choice that depended on the circumstances of use. An official, public name could differ from a private one, by which a person signed his or her private correspondence. Even when the former barely resembled the latter, they could be treated as different registers of the same name. In the cases when several variants are found in sources, I use both of them, separated by a slash, at the first mention. Such practice helps to avoid oversimplifying the multifaceted nature of personal identifications. The exception is made for those well-known figures, whose names are commonly known by their either Russian or Ukrainian equivalent.

Likewise, the names of geographical entities belonging to the Russian Empire appear here in both forms, yet on a less regular basis. In the cases when the place names figure merely as a part of the imperial administrative system, only the Russian spelling is given (hence, *Tiflis*, not *Tbilisi*). Finally, I have chosen a compromise version in using two most frequently mentioned toponyms: *Zaporozhia* represents the neutral, Latinized form of *Zaporozh’e/Zaporizhzhia*, so too does *Chernomoria*, which is the author’s coinage (instead of *Chornomoriia/Chernomoriia*). At the same time, *Sich* (not *Sech*) reflects the Ukrainian pronunciation of the word, which is encountered even in Russian-language texts of the imperial time—just like the cultural phenomenon it designated always contained the reference to its Ukrainian/Little Russian origin.

Abbreviations

<i>AKAK</i>	<i>Akty Kavkazskoi arkhograficheskoi komissii</i>
<i>ESAYa</i>	<i>Epistoliarna spadshchyna akademika D. I. Yavornyts'koho</i>
<i>GAKK</i>	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Krasnodarskogo kraia
<i>GARF</i>	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii
<i>GUKV</i>	Glavnoe upravlenie kazach'ikh voisk
<i>IRVIO</i>	Imperatorskoe russkoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo
<i>ITAUK</i>	<i>Izvestiia Tavricheskoi arkhivnoi uchenoi komissii</i>
<i>KKV</i>	<i>Kubanskii kazachii vestnik</i>
<i>KOV</i>	<i>Kubanskie oblastnye vedomosti</i>
<i>OR GRM</i>	Otdel rukopisei Gosudarstvennogo Russkogo muzeia
<i>OR GTG</i>	Otdel rukopisei Gosudarstvennoi Tret'iakovskoi gallerei
<i>OR RGB</i>	Otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi gosudarstvennoi biblioteki
<i>PSZ</i>	<i>Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii</i>
<i>RGALI</i>	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva
<i>RGIA</i>	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv
<i>RGVIA</i>	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv
<i>VMAiViVS</i>	Voенно-istoricheskii muzei artillerii, inzhenernykh voisk i voisk svyazi

Introduction

On the summer day of June 6, 1888, a forty-four year old Ilya Repin, the most renowned painter of the Russian Empire, arrived with his son Yurii to a remote town located on the very south of the lowland part of the empire, in the steppe territory adjacent to the Caucasus Mountains. The town, called Ekaterinodar, was completely unknown to him and hardly possessed anything worthy of attention in terms of its architecture or landscape. Yet it made a great impression on him. On the day of his arrival, Repin enthusiastically described his feelings in a letter to a friend:

Ekaterinodar is all drowned in greenery: cherry orchards, wealthy mansions, houses, material prosperity have good effect on the Zaporozhian descendants. They are very good-natured, hospitable, and soft by nature. Now we go with Yura to stanitsa Pashkovskaia. Yesterday the host authorities received me very kindly and provided me with all sorts of open letters in case of distrust from the part of the steppe Cossacks.¹

Repin stayed in the settlement (or, according to the local terminology, *stanitsa*) he wrote about for nine days, doing a work of particular kind. For over a decade, Repin had been labouring on what would later become the major masterpiece of his life—the painting *Zaporozhian Cossacks are Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan*, dedicated to the Cossacks of Zaporozhia, a legendary military community that existed on the lower Dnieper from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. His trip to this region, the Kuban oblast or, simply, Kuban, was more of a research expedition than a mere quest for artistic inspiration. Repin came to Kuban in search of the genuine descendants of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, to whom their ancestors, as he believed, passed down their physical traits. Bodies of the Kuban Cossacks, thus, were supposed to serve him as models for the heroes of his painting. It was a field anthropological study of a sort. Looking there for Zaporozhian traits—Zaporozhian noses, eyes, moustaches and other facial characteristics—Repin was just one of the many contemporaries that imagined, attended,

¹ A. K. Lebedev, G. K. Burova, eds., *I. E. Repin i V. V. Stasov. Perepiska*, vol. 2, 1877-1894 (Moscow, Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1949), 134.

and discovered Kuban as a living relic of Zaporozhia, a captivating historical phenomenon that by that time had become a powerful cultural myth. Repin himself made a major contribution to this myth. His painting *Zaporozhian Cossacks*, finished in 1891, became his most popular and widely reproduced work already after its release.² Moreover, it was Tsar Alexander III who immediately purchased it for an unprecedented sum of 35,000 rubles.³

There was a good reason for Repin and many others to look for Zaporozhia in Kuban. In the mid-sixteenth century on the lower Dnieper, in what is today's Ukraine, Zaporozhia, or the Zaporozhian Sich, a major Cossack military encampment emerged, positioned beyond the almost impassable river rapids, at different locations at different times, most often on islands, and in otherwise inaccessible places in some other cases. From the late sixteenth century, Zaporozhia, as a considerable military power, played a crucial part in political, religious, and cultural affairs of the Ruthenian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.⁴ In 1648, it became the core of the grand-scale rebellion, which led to the emergence of the independent Cossack polity, commonly known in the historiography as the Hetmanate. After it became a suzerainty of Muscovy in 1654, the Hetmanate entered into the era of protracted social and political turmoil and ended up in the late eighteenth century as a territory, fully incorporated into the administrative system of the Russian Empire, without any degree of autonomy or a special status. The existence of the Zaporozhian Sich lasted until 1775, when it was demolished by the regular imperial troops by order of Catherine II. While many of the rank-and-file Cossacks were enserfed (and the Cossack officer stratum was incorporated into the imperial nobility), two distinct Cossack formations that claimed Zaporozhian ancestry continued their existence. The first one was the large group of the Cossacks who fled to the Ottoman-ruled lands in the mouth of the Danube. In contrast to them, according to the designs of the Catherine II's favorite,

² I. S. Zil'bershtein, "Repin v rabote nad 'Zaporozhtsami,'" in *Repin*, vol. 2, eds. I. E. Grabar', I. S. Zil'bershtein (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1949), 57; On Repin's fascination with Cossacks and, in the broad sense, Ukraine, see Thomas M. Prymak, "A Painter from Ukraine: Ilya Repin," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue canadienne des slavistes* 50, no. 1-2 (2013): 19-43.

³ "How he had admired 'The Cossacks'!!", boasted Repin about the emperor's impressions in his letter to M. V. Vorob'iova in 1891. See V. G. Chernukha, *Aleksandr Tretii: vospominaniya, dnevniki, pis'ma* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo "Pushkinskogo fonda," 2001), 225.

⁴ On the influence of the Cossacks, see: Serhii Plokhly, *The Cossacks and Religion in Early Modern Ukraine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Serhii Plokhly, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); N. Yakovenko, *Narys istorii seredniovichnoi ta ranniomodernoï Ukrainy*, 3rd ed. (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006).

Grigorii Potemkin, and in view of the war with the Ottomans, yet another Cossack group was created. They bore the name of the Black Sea Cossacks, consisting of the former Zaporozhians and many of those volunteers, who joined them in the course of war. In 1792, Catherine II granted the Black Sea host the land in the Taman peninsula and the adjacent lands that later came to be generally known as Chernomoria. In 1860, as a part of the imperial plan to assimilate this region, inhabited by Ukrainian-speaking people of Cossack estate, the authorities merged it with a part of the Russian-speaking Line Cossack host to create the Kuban Cossack host. For over a half of the nineteenth century, the Black Sea/Kuban Cossacks were engaged in the Russian Empire's protracted war in the Caucasus, growing into the second largest Cossack host of the state, being outnumbered only by the Don Cossacks (but, as many acknowledged, surpassing them in military efficacy).

From the early nineteenth century, in the territory of Ukraine/Little Russia, the core of which was the former Hetmanate, educated elites increasingly conceptualized the imagery of Zaporozhia and its Cossacks as the foundation of the local culture and the sense of local uniqueness. There, the Cossack epoch had passed away, but it left an everlasting imprint, upon which the idea of Ukraine was built upon. Ukrainian national activists made use of this imagery with particular zeal, although those with much less articulated political leanings, loyal to the empire, but strongly attached to the local specificity, likewise addressed the image of the Sich and heroic Cossackdom. This cultural phenomenon presents historians with a great deal of irony. While the myth of Zaporozhia became instrumental for forging a Ukrainian/Little Russian self-image, and longing for the bygone Zaporozhian times was characteristic for people of different walks of life, the institutional offspring of Zaporozhia, the Kuban Cossack host, continued to exist in the North Caucasus steppe as a living relic of the era that had been long gone.

Although the fundamental role of the myth of Zaporozhia for the formation of the Ukrainian/Little Russian self-image is well known (but has not been comprehensively studied yet), its significance for Kuban has not been subject to analysis so far. More importantly, the mutual influence of the Little Russian myth of Zaporozhia and the Kuban rendition of it, their entangled history and capacity to define and shape themselves through each other, especially when taken within a broad imperial context, has not drawn the attention of scholars.

This dissertation examines the Zaporozhian myth as a cultural foundation of the Kuban Cossack host or, more precisely, the former Black Sea Cossack part of it. It looks at how the Ukrainian-speaking Black Sea Cossack elites—officer stratum, educated society, and local authorities—exploited the myth of their Zaporozhian pedigree to reiterate the deep historicity of the host, which was, in fact, a mere product of imperial social engineering in a North Caucasus colony. In doing so, they sought to secure the legal and social status of the Cossacks as a privileged estate and their rights to lands that they perceived as being threatened by exogenous influences and encroachments from the outside. Addressing the past and, consequently, the issue of their origin, they also addressed the question of the cultural peculiarities of the Black Sea Cossacks, ostensibly rooted in the Zaporozhian Sich. Language, songs, manners and customs, or even political traditions “inherited” by the Black Sea/Kuban Cossacks from Zaporozhia and transferred from Ukraine to Chernomoria, came to be seen as a legacy worthy to be preserved, maintained, and used. All in all, this process of using the past for the needs of the present led to the rise of the sense of local Black Sea Cossack particularism, bound with the notions of Cossack traditions and Little Russian specificity.

The dissertation analyses how local elites used the Zaporozhian imagery, describing, commemorating, and mapping it, portraying it in *belles lettres*, rendering in songs, experiencing it emotionally, depicting Zaporozhian ancestors in sculpture, laying claims on Zaporozhian legacy and, last but not least, employing it in administrative practices. This process surfaced in the 1880s, became increasingly pervasive in the next two decades, and gained momentum in the 1910s. Running parallel to similar cultural processes in Ukraine, the Kuban educated elites rediscovered the Zaporozhian past as their own and came to recognize the Zaporozhian Cossacks in themselves. Those, who addressed the Zaporozhian imagery, from Ukrainian nationalists to devoted imperial loyalists, from once-exiled or imprisoned socialists to ultra-conservative defenders of the old regime, invested meanings in it each in their own way, treated it differently, and used it to various ends. Surprising as it may be, those individuals often collaborated in joint initiatives. As a result, various constituents of the Zaporozhian myth, elaborated by different contributors, proved quite harmonious and mutually reinforcing.

In studying the myth, I pay particular attention to language expressions insofar as what matters for the dissertation’s purposes is not only what was said, but also how it was said. Such an approach implicates the existence of what may be called the idiom of

Zaporozhianness, a discursive way of framing the Ukrainian-speaking Cossack area by virtue of its inhabitants' ostensibly shared genealogy, traced back to the Zaporozhian Sich. Thus, the major assertion of the dissertation is that this idiom was a means of maintaining the symbolical distinctiveness of Chernomoria and the Black Sea Cossacks at the level of cultural representations, long after the government abolished it as an administrative unit and a separate host respectively. The notion of the Zaporozhian origin fed this distinctiveness and prevented it from fading away, resulting in the failure of the assimilationist designs of the authorities launched in the early 1860s.

Although focused on a remote locale on the periphery of the imperial domains and far from the culturally developed imperial centers, this research aims to contribute to the broader historiography, scholarship, and the ongoing debates concerning the long-discussed themes of the history of the Russian Empire and Ukraine. It offers a glimpse of how the imagined map of Little Russia/Ukraine was constructed by the people who lived on what was supposed to be its eastern end; what were the foundations of the cultural process that might be called, if to oversimplify, the making of Little Russia and Great Russia in Kuban, and what were its limitations? It puts imperial attitudes towards the Ukrainian-speaking population in a new perspective, probing the limits of what was allowable in the imperial bureaucracy's dealing with the so-called "Ukrainian question," that is, the ways imperial officials treated Ukrainian/Little Russian cultural and political developments. The dissertation shows the surprising softness of the restrictions regarding the Ukrainophile initiatives in Kuban in the late 1880s-1910s, whereas the harsh assimilationist project of the 1860s-1870s was more radical than elsewhere in Ukraine.

The dissertation also sheds new light on the problem of interrelations between what has been called the Ukrainian and all-Russian national projects. Whereas many scholars who study nineteenth-century Ukraine are inclined to present it as a field of contest, where different incompatible national projects competed with each other, this research takes on a different approach with regard to the situation in late imperial Kuban. In Kuban, such projects, which in their pure, clear-cut form, preoccupied the minds of a handful of activists, could be seen not as contradictory or mutually exclusive universes of meanings, but rather as the poles of a wide gradient of cultural diversity. Those who called themselves "conscious" Ukrainians, as well as their ardent ideological adversaries, the Russian nationalists, constituted absolute minorities, outside of which existed an endless

spectrum of sympathies, loyalties, and affinities, which counteracted with each other. Therefore, they could be described not only by the metaphors of contest (beyond doubt, appropriate in many instances), but also by the metaphors of reconciliation and negotiation. Various parties, be they officials on the ground, state servants, men of letters, political activists and many other, were often ready to make mutual concessions in order to benefit from mutual collaboration and agreed to meet each other halfway. What follows from this standpoint is that the differences between the mentioned designations did not necessarily exist. It allows a relieving of the tension between the concepts of “Ukraine” and “Little Russia” as well as the adjectives deriving from them, which the majority of the individuals that figure in the dissertation used interchangeably.

As far as the involvement of the Black Sea Cossacks in the colonization of the North Caucasus is concerned, the dissertation deals with another challenging theme that has been neglected so far. The texts that the Cossack educated elites produced while affecting the question of their participation in the warfare with the Mountaineers employed the Zaporozhian myth as the justification for their waging war. Therefore, the Ukraining-speaking population of the Kuban region appeared as a colonizing agent at the time, when, as some would argue, Little Russia was in certain respects an area of application of colonial practices.

The major ambition of the research is to contribute to the rapidly developing scholarship that escapes the confines of national paradigm and which takes root in the nineteenth-century set of ideas, administrative practices, and political aspirations that affected social reality much less than the language of social sciences, designed to describe and analyze it. Many of the figures who appear in the following chapters remained aloof from the ostensibly omnipresent installment of nationhood by the state from above. This is particularly valid in cases of rank-and-file Cossacks, but also holds true for the educated elites as well. Nationhood, thus, is merely an ideal outcome to which a range of intellectuals, to whom the dissertation is devoted, aspired to arrive at. To what extent they succeeded in attaining their objectives is one of the questions that I problematize here rather than answer.

* * *

The introductory chapter is concerned with the issues of theoretical importance that underlie the approaches I use for the analysis of the dissertation's subject matter. In the first chapter, I provide a general overview of the history of the Black Sea host from its emergence to the 1880s. I show how the imperial attitude toward the host changed over time. The purposeful policy of peopling this periphery by Ukrainian Cossacks in the first half of the nineteenth century was followed by a radical turnaround of this policy in the early 1860s. At this time, the imperial authorities launched an assimilation project aimed at the Russification of the Black Sea constituent of the newly created Kuban host and, in turn, at the de-Cossackization of the Kuban host as such. The counter-reforms that began in the early 1880s reversed much of the previous attitudes and, although the policy of bringing Black Sea Cossacks closer to the Line Cossacks remained in force, the imperial authorities no longer encroached on ethnographic peculiarities of the former Black Sea Cossacks. This was because of the belief in the capacity of Cossack traditions to nurture their martial spirit as a vital conservative force. I see the visit of Alexander III to Ekaterinodar in 1888 as a demonstration of these tendencies.

In the second chapter, I follow the mid-1880s discussions about the centenary of the Black Sea Cossacks' colonization of Taman as the point of departure for my research. These discussions prompted the Black Sea Cossack elites to reflect upon the place of Chernomoria within the Kuban host and to contemplate their origin. The fruits of these discussions were the initiatives of erecting the monument to Catherine II in Ekaterinodar and the monument to the Zaporozhian ancestors in Taman, but both of them did not come to fruition in the 1890s because of the local administration's indecisiveness. I also analyze the celebration of the Kuban host's bicentenary in 1896 as a manifestation of the growing influence of the Zaporozhian myth. Despite the fact that the Kuban host was supposed to celebrate the bicentennial of a Line Cossack regiment, the Zaporozhian symbolism heavily infiltrated the celebrations.

Chapter Three is dedicated to the revolution of 1905-07 and its repercussions for the Kuban host. The refusal of several Cossack units to carry out police service, the mutiny of the 2nd Urupskii regiment, and the radical terrorism that engulfed the Kuban oblast only added to the determination of the authorities to exert more effort to secure the loyalty of the Cossacks to the throne. In doing so, the authorities appealed to the Cossack "primordial" traditions and the glory of their ancestors as a resource ensuring their loyalty

and mobilizing them to actively resist the revolutionary movement. At the same time, the year of 1906 saw the emergence of the Rada, an assembly of deputies from all over the oblast, the task of which to delineate the vacant lands of the host so that the most land-hungry settlements would receive additional land allotments. I present the Rada as an example of the use of the Zaporozhian myth for pressing political needs and also as a theatrical event, the composition of which represented a mental map of the region, with Chernomoria detached from other parts of the oblast.

Chapter Four looks at the solemn unveiling of the monument to the Zaporozhian ancestors in Taman in 1911 as a celebration of the Zaporozhian lineage of the Kuban host. I show that by that moment the vision of the Kuban host as the successor of Zaporozhia became an established fact, recognized by the authorities in Ekaterinodar, Tiflis, and St. Petersburg.

Finally, the fifth chapter deals with various commemorative projects concerning the Zaporozhian Sich, first elaborated by members of the Imperial Russian Society for Military History but related to the Kuban host as the heir of the Sich. I argue that the initiative to commemorate Zaporozhia belonged to this society, which entrusted the implementation of its plans to the Kuban administration, but the latter took on this task with enormous zeal, causing the leadership of the society to temper its enthusiasm. I also show that the former Line Cossack elites found themselves excluded from the Zaporozhian self-image of the Kuban host, which led them to initiate their own commemorative project, the monument to the Line Cossack ancestors.

0.1. Chronological Framework

In its broadest sense, the chronological framework of this work stretches from 1792 to 1914. The first date marks the beginning of the colonization of Kuban by the Black Sea Cossacks, and the second one refers to the beginning of the First World War. In so doing, the period under consideration constitutes what could be called the Kuban region's own "long nineteenth century," which embraced the whole experience of the Cossacks' existence in Kuban as a military estate in the imperial service. However, the developments

preceding 1860, the date of the establishment of the Kuban Cossack host, are outlined rather sketchily and are considered here only where their analysis can help elucidate the key questions of this work. The first chapter therefore serves as an extended introduction and does not aim to be a detailed study of the Kuban historical processes over the seven decades. The work is mostly concentrated on the period after 1860, and especially—on the late 1880s–early 1910s. Historians of the Russian Empire increasingly use the term “late imperial Russia” to designate the post-emancipation era. As Wayne Dowler rightly noted, this notion is a tricky one since it does not possess the extent of cohesion that many authors endow it with. As a matter of fact, “the rapid pace of economic, social, and even political change after 1881 or 1890 renders generalizations about the economy, society, or politics in late Imperial Russia largely meaningless.”⁵ The drastic and uneven evolution of the Kuban region, one of the testing grounds of the imperial social experiments, which underwent substantial changes over a span of more than a half-century, stands out even against the background of the empire’s heartland. This research does not seek to present the historical developments in Kuban during the chosen period as uniform. Nevertheless, the cultural inquiry of the Zaporozhian myth as a foundation of the local Ukrainian/Little Russian particularism is only feasible when put into a larger context and a broader chronological perspective.

0.2. Scale of Research

In terms of scope, this research is a local history with imperial entanglements. The underlying premise of the phenomenon under scrutiny is that it can be understood only within a network of cultural influences that encompassed a vast space. Cities as distant as St. Petersburg, Odesa/Odessa, Katerynoslav/Ekaterinoslav, and others were the nodes of intersections of the channels through which ideas and images circulated. In Kuban, the Zaporozhian myth did not emerge on its own, within a locked space, but was shaped to a considerable extent by influences, emanating from the outside and reinterpreted on the ground. In its turn, it influenced cultural developments elsewhere in the empire. Thus, it was a mutually enriching exchange or, in a sense, a cross-fertilization of ideas.

⁵ Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012), 17.

The notion of “local” here requires some clarification, as no geographical framework of historical research can be regarded as natural and self-obvious. Alexei Miller has called for caution in choosing a region as the most suitable scale of research. According to him, if historians increasingly reject writing histories within national paradigm and often turn instead to region as a more secure and reliable unit of analysis, this tendency as well as the overestimation of the regional history’s capacity to remedy the deficiencies of the national narrative, is in many ways no less misleading. The essentialized nature of nations and/or states, Miller notes, is typical for regions in the same way. Indeed, if the nation-states are the random products of the outcomes of wars, political fortune, imagination (which is often backed by military and economic power), and so on, so too are the regions.⁶

As a matter of fact, this imaginary constituent, which has been erroneously attributed exclusively to nation-states in a great deal of scholarship, was introduced by the scholar in charge of the “imagination” concept, Benedict Anderson, as applied to all modes of representing and organizing any space larger than tiny localities. As he put it, “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.”⁷

Such an insight is not a recent theoretical discovery. Past societies confronted this problem empirically every time they faced the need to demarcate borders and fill them with legal content. At times, seemingly harmless disputes over the nature and boundaries of historical regions within a certain state, together with efforts to achieve their accurate and unambiguous delineation, led to an outbreak of mass violence. As Kelleen M. Guy convincingly shows, it was the case in the ostensibly well-established Western European region of Champagne, where in 1911 local winegrowers rose in revolt resulting from the controversy over which lands constituted the genuine Champagne area and which were outside of it. For them, it was a quite down-to-earth matter, since belonging to Champagne entitled them to release their sparkling wine under the world-celebrated brand.⁸

⁶ Alexei Miller, “The History of the Russian Empire: In Search for Scope and Paradigm,” in *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism: Essays in the Methodology of Historical Research* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2008), 10–20.

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

⁸ Kelleen M. Guy, *When Champagne Became French: Wine and the Making of a National Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

This critical vantage point, however, leaves room for using imagination as a well-founded basis for choosing an appropriate scale. In this research, Kuban, an administrative unit that by the eve of the twentieth century boasted only forty years of its existence, is presented as a region in the making. The dissertation concentrates on a particular area, colonized by the Black Sea Cossacks in 1792–93. The very fact of its colonization brings it to the research agenda.

In geographical terms, this territory can be roughly outlined as follows: in the south, the territory of the Cossack settlements was circumscribed by the Kuban, the river that later would give its name to the Kuban oblast. Beginning near the Mount Elbrus, it flows into the Sea of Azov, the western limit of the colonized territory, separating the hilly and mountainous part of its surroundings from the steppe lowlands, although the steppe comes out to the south of it. To the north, the colonized area reached the natural border of the Eia river, while the east its borders were not defined by any geographical barriers, but neighbored with yet another area of Cossack colonization—that of the Line Cossacks. From the outset, the incorporation of these lands went hand in hand with its ideological mapping, which is the subject of the first chapter. The area had different centers of cultural, political, or, more precisely, military gravitation. Taman, one of the few pre-Cossack settlements, known to the imperial authorities, was conceived of as a center of a nameless territory, which was given a name of Fanagoria that invoked an image of the ancient Greek colony. With the imperial Greek project fading away, the authorities turned instead to another designation, Tmutorokan, which referred to the medieval Rus' past. Gradually, the region came to prominence as Chernomoria, the land of the Black Sea Cossacks, and their main fortified settlement, Ekaterinodar/Katerynodar, overshadowed Taman as the main town of the area. In 1860, Chernomoria, merged with the territory of the Line Cossacks, ceased to exist administratively. There is some ground to believe that in the micro-world of everyday encounters, it became less tangible, too. But on symbolical level, having no precise borders, it—or rather the notion of it—persisted, becoming ever more pronounced with the passing of time, as long as the myth of Zaporozhia gave it meaning. The symbolical, culturally reproduced boundary of former Chernomoria, marked an elusive, vague space on the basis of two criteria: the spoken language and the Zaporozhian pedigree.

The dissertation proceeds from an unusual premise. While most of the contemporary works on borderlands aim to disprove the once conventional understanding of boundaries as stable, fixed, hardly penetrable, etc. and show instead their blurred and fluid nature, or even lay stress on the impossibility of borders as such, this research sets the opposite task. Stemming from the precondition that there was no real, personally experienced, impassable boundary between Ukrainian speakers and Russian speakers, that they switched sides on the regular basis, it argues that there was something behind—culture, imagination, and shared views of past, that maintained the idea of Chernomoria and served as a guideline for individuals of different walks of life.

Some important early works written in the genre of local history influenced my approach towards the problematics of the research. In his pioneering book, Peter Sahlins has convincingly shown that “states do not simply impose their values and boundaries on local society.” According to him, it was local societies that could participate in elaborating the boundaries out of their local needs and thus helping to consolidate the heartland’s sense of community. Moreover, just like the villagers of Cerdanya and propertied elites of Piugcerda, analyzed by Sahlins, the Black Sea and, later, Kuban Cossacks framed their local interests in broader terms—not in terms of nationhood, but rather in terms of local particularism and their service to the empire.⁹

Sahlins’ book was followed by other influential works that demonstrated the capacity of the regional perspective to be a seminal ground for revision of well-established approaches to nationhood and refuted the up-to-down model of state, which imposed values from above. Caroline Ford’s study of the popular religiosity in French Brittany has demonstrated that its local community was much more instrumental in the development of the local sense of place in comparison with the Paris efforts to impose the sense of French nationhood from above.¹⁰

In a similar vein, books by Alon Confino and Celia Applegate investigated the role of the *Heimat* idea as a foothold of the German nationhood on the ground. For them, *heimats* were the mediators between attachment to local places and participation in national community. When elites of local communities participated in the German

⁹ Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 8, 165.

¹⁰ Caroline C. Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

nationhood, they did it by adapting the regional distinctiveness to the demands of the state, but not by mechanically internalizing the images, descending from the center.¹¹

Such conclusions, of course, are not generalizable and cannot be automatically applied to the nineteenth-century Russian Empire. Catherine Evtuhov attempted to present an internal Great Russian region of the empire, the Nizhnii Novgorod gubernia, as one that possessed a degree of articulated distinctiveness, which differentiated it from other Great Russian regions. In her opinion, there was a “provincial idea” of Nizhnii Novgorod that was identical to that of *heimat*.¹²

The question that she has left unanswered is to what extent this thesis can hold true for the rest of the imperial, especially “Great Russian” administrative units. Without a sufficient body of scholarship that would cover other provinces as well, a fortiori, we cannot think of the Russian Empire as an aggregation of *heimats*, imbued with their own sense of uniqueness. Rather, it would mean attributing to the local educated societies the level of territorial self-reflexivity they could hardly have had. Meanwhile, other existing works in the genre of local history render the notion of the “idea of province” rather intangible and misleading, as a study of the gentry of the Tver gubernia exemplifies. In this work, Mary W. Cavender shows that the nobles of the Tver province evolved loyalties focused firstly on their estates and families and then on the empire on the whole, while identification with the province was fairly ambiguous and not quite obvious.¹³

The question of territoriality is deeply connected to the question of agency, since the dissertation concentrates on some local actors and overlooks some other. Among those omitted here are *inogorodnie* (outsiders), a disadvantaged legal category of migrants from inner gubernias—those “ordinary” Great Russian and Little Russian speakers, who came to Kuban in great numbers in search for a better life, but found themselves deprived of important property and social rights from the 1880s onwards. They figure in this research not as participants in the local cultural developments, but rather as the ones against whom

¹¹ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). For the general review of the potential of the regional history, see Celia Applegate, “A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999).

¹² Catherine Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province: Economy, Society, and Civilization in Nineteenth-Century Nizhnii Novgorod* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 228.

¹³ Mary W. Cavender, *Nests of the Gentry: Family, Estate, and Local Loyalties in Provincial Russia* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 200.

those developments were directed. One may be struck by the absence of women. This is the history of men that relies on the sources left by men, since masculinity and a sense of being a Cossack go hand in hand with each other. The histories of these groups, the Cossacks' own subalterns, are yet to be written. Though concentrating on the Cossacks, this research brings them to the fore not as the only actors. Rather, it suggests viewing the Black Sea/Kuban Cossackdom as a sort of resource, to which various individuals and interest groups, including the Cossacks themselves, addressed. Except for the Cossacks' educated elites, normally of officer ranks, there were intellectuals, civil servants, political activists of non-Cossack estate, who could be Kuban natives or newcomers, who could live in Ekaterinodar or elsewhere in the empire, being one way or another involved in local events. There were also authorities from St. Petersburg and Tiflis, to which the civil and military administration of Ekaterinodar was directly subordinated. The voices of rank-and-file Cossack are rarely heard in the thesis, but in some cases, they are. In what follows, I will examine the question of how to approach the phenomenon of Cossacks.

0.3. Cossacks as an Intellectual Problem

In the mid-1840s, the German traveler Moritz Wagner had a remarkable conversation in Ekaterinodar with some Black Sea Cossack officers, whose trust he won while spending his time with them and drinking glasses of vodka to their health. What they discussed was the question of the Cossacks' origin. Wagner had read some studies on that matter before he came to Chernomoria and shared his learned knowledge with his companions. This knowledge, however, nearly led to a conflict. A renowned philologist, Julius Klaproth, as Wagner assured the officers, had affirmed that the word "Cossack" was, in fact, a borrowing from the Tatar language, where it meant nothing more than a robber. Such unpleasant etymological note provoked anger on the part of the Cossacks. Thus, he hastened to ease them by saying that a great Russian historian, by whom he meant Karamzin, debunked this offensive hypothesis and defended their honorable name by proving that "Cossack" meant a volunteer, partisan, dare-devil, and that "it was only applied to bold soldiers who bled and died for freedom, country, and religion." The

Cossack were pleased and went on by drinking brandy, resenting Klaproth, and giving Karamzin hearty cheers.¹⁴

Wagner believed that even the Cossack upper classes had quite a vague understanding of where their name come from and what it meant. What they knew was that it signified something valiant, honest, and brave. The word “Cossack,” which comes in English from Ukrainian *kozak*, and has a slightly different Russian equivalent *kazak*, was indeed a loanword from Turkic languages, where, as it has been well established, it signified “a free, independent person, an adventurer, a tramp.”¹⁵

The first Cossack communities, which appeared in the sixteenth century along such rivers as the Dnieper, Don, Terek, and Yaik, fully complied with these meanings. They were bands of freebooters, formed from social groups as diverse as runaway serfs and adventurous nobles, whose way of life consisted of forays into either neighboring or more distant territories, be it Muscovy, the Ottoman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or Caucasus mountaineers’ communities. The Cossack communities were independent, horizontally organized, and open to all newcomers regardless of their origin. These communities elected their elders through the assemblies and managed their own affairs at the assemblies as well. In the seventeenth century, with the expansion of Muscovy, they were absorbed into the tsars’ domains. In the eighteen century, the Cossack hosts refashioned themselves as military communities in the service of the empire, fully dependent on the tsars’ will.

By the time of the breakdown of the tsarist regime, eleven Cossack hosts populated the imperial fringes from the Black Sea steppes to the Pacific coast. These late imperial Cossack communities shared almost no similarities with the original freebooters of the early modern era. Moreover, not all of these hosts existed before the nineteenth century. What room, then, was secured for the Cossacks within the imperial social order? How did the former freebooters survive by the end of empire, modern enough to tolerate, not to mention to encourage, the relics of the pre-modern epoch? The whole irony of their case was that the existence of the Cossacks in the late imperial time could hardly be named as a survival. Rather, it was, to a considerable extent, a surprisingly modern phenomenon that owed much to imperial social creativity. In this sense, the Cossackdom had a remarkably

¹⁴ Moritz Wagner, *Travels in Persia, Georgia and Koordistan; with Sketches of the Cossacks and the Caucasus*, vol. 1 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1856), 159–60.

¹⁵ M. Fasmer, *Etimologicheskii slovar’ russkogo yazyka* (Moscow: Progress, 1967) 2:158.

close parallel with another example of imperial social engineering. In his famous study, Nicholas Dirks showed that the system of Indian castes was not “an unchanged survival of ancient India,” but a largely modern innovation, introduced by the colonial British authorities in order to categorize and manage the unfamiliar social reality.¹⁶

To a certain degree, the Russian empire followed a similar pattern. It invented the category of *soslovie* (estate) as a way of organizing the diversity of its population into an easily manageable system. Those groups that eluded clear-cut social definition were conveniently subsumed under estate classification. The authorities appropriated pre-existed traditions and recast them in a new manner, endowing them with particular rights and responsibilities.¹⁷ Thus, diverse and heterogeneous social groups became legal categories, among which were the Cossacks and plenty of the so-called *inorodtsy* (literally, “of alien origin”), i.e. colonized imperial people, lumped together into legally defined groups and provided with artificial traditions. In the words of Vladimir Bobrovnikov, echoing those of Dirks, they were “constructed in the course of the colonial conquest.”¹⁸

Cossack hosts, with their various collective experiences, conditions of life, and personal backgrounds, were first ascribed to the *soslovie* category in Mikhail Speranskii’s *Code of Laws* in 1832, but their status was elaborated in detail some years later. At first, it was done so for the Don Cossacks in 1835, and for the rest of the hosts—in the subsequent decade. In its homogenizing endeavor, the state institutionally determined their unique condition from above, cementing fluid Cossack relationships into the static and thereby relatively easily governable construct. The Cossacks were not governed by common imperial law, but were subdued to the regulations of military code, developed by central authorities. Henceforth, the Cossacks turned into a privileged part of the population of the Russian Empire, a specific military caste, which possessed peculiar rights and obliged to execute specific military duties.¹⁹

¹⁶ Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 5.

¹⁷ Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: The Russian Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 101–4.

¹⁸ Vladimir Bobrovnikov, “Chto vyshlo iz proektov sozdaniia v Rossii inorotsev?,” in *Poniatiia o Rossii: K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, eds. A. Miller, D. Sdvizhkov and I. Shirle, vol. 2 (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 280. For *soslovie*, see Gregory L. Freeze, “The *Soslovie* (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (1986): 11–36. For *inorodtsy*, see: John W. Slocum, “Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of “Aliens” in Imperial Russia,” *Russian Review* 57, no. 2 (1998): 173–90.

¹⁹ Robert H. McNeal, *Tsar and Cossack, 1855-1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 6–7.

While the relationship between the Cossacks and the state were determined through the concept of estate, it allowed authorities to officially avoid the intricate problem of determining the social nature of the Cossacks in terms of nationality (*narodnost*), which gained currency in the 1830s. However, the question of whether there was something besides the estate principle, and, if so, what was it, preoccupied the minds of many. Some went as far as to regard the Cossacks as a separate, fourth component of the normally tripartite all-Russian nationhood. In his *The Geography of the Russian Empire*, the famous educator Ivan Pavlovskii listed the Cossacks as one of the most important nations (*narody*) of Russia, along with the Great Russians, Little Russians, and Belarusians. For him, their peculiarity was apparent, but it could not be easily catalogued. As he explained in his survey, “the Cossacks share with the Russians only two common features: faith and language; in all other respects of their folk way of life they differ drastically from the latter, such as by physiognomy, mores, clothes, housings etc.”²⁰

Others, while placing the Cossacks in the same row, attached greater importance to such a taxonomy in political terms. The reputed ethnographer Sergei Maksimov contrasted the Belarusians who, as he claimed, were averse to the idea of their separateness and national exclusivity, with the Little Russians, the Cossacks of all names, and the Siberians, whom he suspected to be close to those ideas.²¹ Finally, the notion of the Cossacks as a full-fledged member of the all-Russian family was shared by a small, but conspicuous group of the “Cossack nationalists” (at least, such was their self-designation), which were active on the Don in the early 1910s.²²

Such views did not belong to the mainstream. Moreover, (Great) Russian intelligentsia increasingly viewed the Cossacks as a kind of epitome of all the things Russian. This notable, mostly of literary origin, delusion had a long-lasting career and, indeed, affected the imperial policy towards the Cossacks in the reigns of Alexander III and Nicholas II, but it reveals more about the intelligentsia’s idiosyncratic beliefs rather than tells something about the Cossacks themselves.²³

²⁰ I. Ya Pavlovskii, *Geografiia Rossiiskoi imperii. Chast' I* (Derpt: Tipografiia Shiunmanna, 1843), 93.

²¹ L. E. Gorizontov, “‘Bol’shaia russkaia natsiia’ v imperskoi i regional’noi strategii samoderzhavii,” in *Prostranstvo vlasti: Istoricheskii opyt Rossii i vyzovy sovremennosti*, eds. B. V. Anan’ich and Barzilov S. I. (Moscow: Moskovskii obshchestvennyi nauchnyi fond, 2001), 144–45.

²² Boris Kornienko, *Pravyi Don: Kazaki i ideologiia natsionalizma (1909-1914)* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2013), 194.

²³ Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature: A Study in Cultural Mythology* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

In the last decades, a number of scholars tried their hand in explaining the peculiar nature of the Cossacks in terms familiar to social sciences, taking the Don Cossack host as a model. Since the 1980s, when it became possible to discuss openly the Cossack-related themes, Russian historiography has adopted the term “subethnos” that came into the academic fashion largely due to the influence of the leading Soviet anthropologist Yulian Bromlei. Despite, or, more likely, thanks to its vagueness, this concept has come into general use among the post-Soviet researchers. It contained the notion of “ethnos” as a reference point, having the “less than ethnos” connotation.²⁴

Some scholars attempted to understand the question from more sophisticated vantage point. Peter Holquist argued that only in the course of the Civil War the Don Cossacks came to understand themselves as a sort of separate ethnos, detached from the Russian one, albeit associated with it. The reason for this transformation was the collapse of the social system of the Russian Empire, due to which the very estate categorization died out. It shattered the foundations of the Cossacks existence as an estate, since the Russian imperial order was “the one universally recognized structure that gave form to Cossack identity.” Some attempts to formulate the idea of Cossack separateness as either ethnic or national group were undertaken in earlier decades as well, but they were scant. Even during the Civil War, as Holquist stressed, being Cossack meant to participate in the Cossack political allegiance rather than to be of Cossack descent.²⁵

If Holquist uses the term *ethnos* with regard to the Don Cossacks’ point of arrival, another historian of the Don Cossack host, Shane O’Rourke, prefers speaking about the *nation*. While agreeing that the collapse of the empire indeed was the turning point in the Don Cossacks’ understanding of themselves, forcing them to resort to the idea of nationhood, he nevertheless believes that long before these events threw the Cossacks into the arms of the nation, they had already constituted a tightly knit community with the firmly secured boundaries. O’Rourke asserts that the Don Cossacks had existed as a distinct group for centuries. As a matter of fact, the post-1917 dramatic developments became for the Cossacks the period of transition “from a separate but subordinate community to a nation.” Yet the nature of this separateness is unclear. O’Rourke generally avoids using clear-cut definitions, but tends to present the Cossacks as an “ethnic group,”

²⁴ Yu. V. Bromlei, *Ocherki teorii etnosa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 84.

²⁵ Peter Holquist, “From Estate to Ethnos: The Changing Nature of Cossack Identity in the Twentieth Century,” in *Russia at a Crossroads: History, Memory and Political Practice*, ed. Nurit Schleifman (London, Portland, OR.: Frank Cass, 1998), 92, 98.

capable of being compared with the Finns or the Latvians. Their distinctiveness was built on a historical memory about their former statehood, their rootedness in the Don lands, their local institutions and traditions of self-administration, and a powerful sense of cohesiveness, based on some specific kinds of Cossack social relations. All that, in the opinion of O'Rourke, "gave them an existence in their own right." However, he applied the term "nation" to the pre-1917 Don Cossack community as well, noting that the absence of nationally minded intellectuals was an important feature that distinguished the Don Cossacks from other European nations in the making. "Ironically, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been full of intelligentsias looking for a nation," while "the Cossacks were unusual in being a nation in search of an intelligentsia."²⁶

Brian Boeck, the author of the most comprehensive and sophisticated study of the Don Cossacks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, advocates for the use of the term *ethnos* for the Don host of the eighteenth century as well. In the late seventeenth century, as he established, the Don Cossack community stopped accepting newcomers to its structure, closing the boundaries of the Cossack corporative body. Eventually this led to the emergence of the self-contained, closed in on itself community.²⁷ For some reason, Boeck applies these conclusions to the Kuban Cossack host. In an article devoted to the Kuban Cossacks, he states that "prior to the revolution the Cossacks had clear conceptions of group identity (drawing important distinctions between themselves and their Russian, Ukrainian, and Caucasian neighbors) and zealously guarded the boundaries of their communities against non-Cossacks." However, by claiming this he does not go into any details.²⁸

Thomas Barrett's book about the Terek Cossacks seems to be the only study that shows the irrelevance of these concepts with regard to the Cossack communities. Barrett points out that the Terek Cossacks' identifications were "locally grounded" and were shaped by a very limited set of social interactions, in which they were involved. The Cossacks rarely participated in war campaigns en masse and "looked more to their

²⁶ Shane O'Rourke, "From Region to Nation: The Don Cossacks 1870-1920," in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, eds. Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen and A. V. Remnev (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 221-22, 234; Shane O'Rourke, *Warriors and Peasants: The Don Cossacks in Late Imperial Russia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 101, 172.

²⁷ Brian J. Boeck, *Imperial Boundaries: Cossack Communities and Empire-Building in the Age of Peter the Great* (Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 208-21.

²⁸ Brian J. Boeck, "From the Verge of Extinction to Ethnic Distinction: Cossack Identity and Ethnicity in the Kuban' Region, 1991-2002," *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2004): 617.

regiments—or their villages, or their part of their villages, even—for a sense of identity.” They had some sense of belonging to the empire’s Cossackdom, but did not think much about what this belonging actually meant. Barrett cites the words by a contemporary observer that “in most cases they call themselves simply ‘Cossacks’ not understanding the significance of the word.” For Barrett, generalizing conclusions about the Terek Cossacks’ identities would be futile, since “the frontier identities of the Terek Cossacks were as diverse as the people themselves and many, no doubt, combined identities.”²⁹

If such inconsistencies in using definitions could easily be explained by the difficulties confronting the language of social sciences with its fixation on the “national/ethnic identities”, some important questions can still be asked. The first one deals with the over-representation of the Don Cossacks in the history of Cossackdom. Studying this particular Cossack community, historians tend, albeit implicitly, to extrapolate their conclusions to others. It results in the regular omission of the modifier “Don” from the Cossacks’ title, for which reason it is not always clear how broadly the Cossack distinctiveness should be interpreted. If, according to the suggested models, the Cossacks came to see themselves as an estate or nation, it is far from clear, which Cossack hosts matured to such degree. Apparently, minor Cossack hosts created by the authorities in the nineteenth century almost from scratch, like those of Ussuri, Amur, or Semirech’e, could not claim any sort of ethnicity or nationhood for themselves. Yet, even the majority of those hosts that boasted their historical authenticity were in fact mere aggregations of irregular military units of various origin. The Kuban host was not an exception as it consisted of the Black Sea host and several Line Cossack regiments. While the former was made up of not only the Zaporozhian Cossacks and those non-Zaporozhians, who joined them in the 1780s, tens of thousands of people similar in their status to state peasants were administratively resettled to Chernomoria at different times in the first half of the nineteenth century. As all of them were assigned to the Kuban host, it was not as closed as the Don host was, at least at that time. Could such uneven agglomerates of people brought together by the state interest be regarded as either “ethnic” or “national,” whatever content they were filled with? In the next paragraph, I will show why these concepts cannot help to grasp the human social diversity they aim to explain.

²⁹ Thomas M. Barrett, *At the Edge of Empire: The Terek Cossacks and the North Caucasus Frontier, 1700-1860* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 188–90.

0.4. Indifference to Nation

Rogers Brubaker famously warned against conflating the category of practice, be it either “ethnicity” or “nation”, with the category of analysis. The way of thinking about “ethnic groups and nations as real entities, as communities, as substantial, enduring, internally homogenous and externally bounded collectivities,” so conventional to the social sciences, he argues, leads to the major misconception in scholarship, which he refers to as the social ontology of “groupism.”³⁰ He did not intend to imply, of course, that these terms should be discarded from the conceptual apparatus of humanities. Rather, Brubaker called for ultimate caution in their use:

Ethnicity, race, and nation should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals—as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded, and enduring “groups” encourages us to do—but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race, and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events. It means thinking of ethnicization, racialization, and nationalization as political, social, cultural, and psychological processes. And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the “group” as an entity but groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable.³¹

The conceptual apparatus of the social sciences is entrenched in the political experience of the twentieth-century Europe, which ostensibly ended up as a commonwealth of nation states. Unavoidable and progressive mass nationalization underlies modern societies and is the reason for them being modern. According to this nationalism-cum-modernization template, the advent of nationalism was inevitable as far as societies succeeded in their development. Thus, different societies were advancing, at varying speeds and with varying success, toward the national state of mind. This narrative conflates the arrival point, i.e. national state, with the point of departure, which already contains the preassigned vector of movement towards the nation. Such vantage point on

³⁰ Rogers Brubaker, “Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism,” in *The State of the Nation*, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 292.

³¹ Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 11.

the history of Europe leaves little room for those who could be not involved in the orbit of nationhood. The omission of people with no “national awareness,” thus, is not an oversight of the contemporary scholarship. It stems from the presumption inherent in the social sciences as such. As James Bjork put it,

The virtual absence of such [nationally indifferent] groups in European historiography is not just a “gap,” an unfortunate lacuna in historians’ research agendas. It reflects, rather, a fundamental difficulty in imagining individuals and groups who operate outside of a definite national context, actors whose nationality might provide a useful external perspective for exploring not only the internal engines of nationalization but also the limits of such processes. Part of the challenge of exploring the phenomenon of national indifference, of course, is envisioning whether and where the residents of modern societies could plausibly escape the omnipresence of the nation.³²

The underlying premise of the dissertation proceeds from the assumption that neither “nation” nor “ethnos” should be the measure with which every society should be approached, especially when these societies stubbornly resisted being analyzed, described, or explained with the help of these criteria. In other words, one should not keep looking for the “nation” or “ethnos” if one experiences insurmountable difficulties in finding them. The Kuban Cossacks I argue are but one case of the social phenomena where these concepts do not work at all.

On the contrary, taking the category of national indifference as a measure of analysis would be much more instrumental in understanding the cultural, social, and political developments in late imperial Kuban.³³ Only recently have historians begun studying national indifference as a phenomenon worthy of detailed investigation and demonstrating that societies, indeed, could evolve the other way around. Historians of the Habsburg monarchy, the classic model of supranational empire, were the first to address the issue of non-nationals.

This growing body of scholarship convincingly shows that national ambiguity was a much more pervasive phenomenon than it was previously believed. In his in-depth analysis of the local politics in the Bohemian town of Budweis/Budejovice, Jeremy King

³² James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 6.

³³ Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (2010): 93–119.

has demonstrated that the majority of its population did not fall exclusively into the categories of either “the Czechs” or “the Germans,” composing instead a society that comfortably existed somewhere in-between, being overwhelmingly bilingual and choosing one nationally-framed side or another depending on circumstances and transient preferences.³⁴

Two path-breaking books by Peter Judson and Tara Zahra show how unsuccessful were the efforts of national activists in the Habsburg monarchy to win the sympathies of the local population for the national cause. Zahra’s study, devoted to the nationalist struggle in Bohemia to take control of children’s education by establishing schools, orphanages, and organizing the welfare system, demonstrates the reluctance of largely bilingual commoners to enroll themselves in the exclusive, monolingual national communities.³⁵

Judson’s book, which concentrates on such regions as South Bohemia, South Styria, and South Tyrol, focuses on a wide range of topics, all of which testify to the unwillingness of the local people to participate in nationalist undertakings. Judson puts into question the very concepts of *frontier* or *border* as the ideological tools employed by national activists “as part of a larger strategy to normalize national identities and to eradicate both bilingualism and the alternative loyalties that it represented.” Contrary to the nationalists’ claims, the inhabitants of such areas rarely viewed the territories they lived in as borderlands that separated nations and “did not automatically translate division in language use into divisions of self-identification or even of loyalty.” Developing his argument, Judson suggests that the notion of language frontier, too, should be treated with care since the majority of people who were supposedly divided by language, were in fact bilinguals and easily switched languages depending on situation and their own interests. Remarkably, it was newcomers to these regions, nationally-minded intellectuals, who saw themselves as spokespersons of “real” local interests, “authentic rural insiders with a natural right to set the local agenda.”³⁶

³⁴ Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848–1948* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).

³⁵ Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

³⁶ Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3, 5–6, 99.

The criticisms against the borderland paradigm are true for not just “weak,” unmarked borders, but for “strong” borders as well. Even the ostensibly firm, stable and long-existing “natural” state borders like that between Saxony and Bohemia, which existed since mid-fifteenth century, as it appears on closer examination, were no less transparent than the shifting language frontiers described by Judson. This is evident from the Caitlin Murdock’s study of the German and Czech nationalists’ struggle with the national ambiguity of the local population on both sides of the Saxon-Bohemian border.³⁷

Yet another important study demonstrates that national unawareness of masses was not unique to the Habsburg monarchy. By the example of Upper Silesia, James E. Bjork demonstrated that in the German empire there were large numbers of people who continued to think in non-national categories well into the twentieth century. Besides, his work makes it evident that national indifference was characteristic for Central European highly industrialized and modernized regions as well. Proceeding from his analysis of the local electoral politics, census data, and the results of the plebiscite of 1921, he shows that due to the influence of the Catholic elites, which partially resulted in and partially was reinforced by the nationalists parties’ lack of success in rallying people around national cause, a large part of the population of Upper Silesia were ambivalent about their national status.³⁸

All these works show that the experience of collective existence was not necessarily framed in national or ethnic terms. Moreover, they demonstrate that nationalization of the masses met with serious difficulties even in the regions with powerful nationalist movements. In Chernomoria, where the Ukrainian national movement was incomparably weaker, nationalization had much less chance to gain a stronghold. Just as it was elsewhere, Ukrainian nationalists lamented the lack of national awareness in Chernomoria, and it was all the more obvious given that their activities took place clandestinely, in drastically different conditions. On the other hand, we may conclude that the problems Ukrainian activists faced were not peculiar for Ukrainian national movement only and that, contrary to the claims of contemporary Kuban researchers of this issue, its weakness was not determined by some unnatural character of

³⁷ Caitlin E. Murdock, *Changing Places: Society, Culture, and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands, 1870–1946* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

³⁸ Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole*.

Ukrainian nationhood in Chernomoria and the former Black Sea Cossacks' "voluntary convergence with the Russian people."³⁹

There are some works touching on the problem of national unawareness on the territory of contemporary Ukraine, although they do not deal with it directly. In one of a few monographs written in the genre of local history and dedicated to the borderland area between Ukraine and Russia, Donbass, its author, Hiroaki Kuromiya, admitted that he had commenced to analyze this region in terms of nations and nationalism suggested by Ernest Gellner, but instead found "nonnations" and "nonnationalism." However, he did not make these categories instrumental for his research and proceeded to use more convenient and well-developed framework of references based on national terminology with its clear and non-problematic use of the designations the "Ukrainians" and the "Russians." Moreover, he openly juxtaposed them as adverse communities who lived separately in cities and villages and expressed their mutual hostility by means of physical violence.⁴⁰ Kate Brown puts into the focus of her study nationally indifferent Ukrainian and Polish speakers, who lived in the territory of the former Volyn gubernia. She points out that the lack of understanding of how to categorize these communities along the ethnic lines caused many difficulties for the Soviet authorities.⁴¹ A recent study by Andriy Zayarnyuk, which is devoted to Ukrainian speaking peasants of Austrian Galicia, sheds light on national indifference in the region of the Habsburg monarchy where the Ukrainian national movement had much more power in comparison with the Romanov Empire. Zayarnyuk argues that even "by the end of the nineteenth century, the national activists did not succeed in imposing the Ukrainian identity among the masses of villagers." Educated elites, in their turn, often had multiple loyalties and did not see themselves as belonging to an exclusive national community. According to him, it was only in interwar Poland that "the possibility of avoiding the tenets of the national projects came to a close."⁴²

The weakness of the Ukrainian national movement in Chernomoria does not mean, by extension, that the state-led, Russifying nationalization took the upper hand. In

³⁹ Yu. Vasil'ev, *Ukrainskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie i ukrainizatsiia na Kubani v 1917–1932 gg.* (Krasnodar: Kuban'kino, 2010).

⁴⁰ Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas: A Ukrainian–Russian Borderland, 1870s–1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 5, 43.

⁴¹ Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁴² Andriy Zayarnyuk, *Framing the Ukrainian Peasantry in Habsburg Galicia, 1846–1914* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2013), 380, 385.

Chernomoria, as in the Little Russian gubernias, the state did not possess enough resources to instill into the villagers' consciousness a sense of being Russian nationals. Neither had it elaborated a clear strategy of how to implement it. A number of historians stress that the small number of imperial bureaucracy made it an unlikely candidate to enact an effective policy of nationhood. Its weakness determined its eventual failure to, as Stephen Velychenko puts it, "nationalize the Russians, and to russify the non-Russians."⁴³ According to Alfred Rieber, peasants' encounters with the state representatives were so rare that there were minimal possibilities to intervene into their everyday life. "The state fixed the amount of taxes and the number of recruits that the peasants apportioned and gathered for it. It punished disobedience and rebellion. Beyond that the state had little to do with the peasants in ordinary times; it was a kind of absentee government."⁴⁴ Moreover, the bureaucracy did not carry out any definite, efficient, and assertive policies when it came to nationality issues. Alexei Miller stresses that the imperial policy toward the Little Russians did not contain an affirmative agenda and rested instead on restrictive measures. In other words, the tsarist bureaucracy knew what to forbid, but had very weak ideas about what to allow, support, and promote. The state did not develop a consistent policy with regard to the Little Russians until the collapse of the empire in 1917. All this does not allow us to regard the imperial apparatus as an effective actor in the nationalization of the masses.⁴⁵ This is particularly true in the case of the Kuban oblast, where the state was utterly underrepresented and the Cossack administration itself ran much of the affairs normally carried out by the state. Even in the 1860s, when the imperial administration of the Caucasus directed their efforts to assimilate the Ukrainian-speaking Black Sea Cossack host, they did not achieve their goal. The renaming of the Black Sea host to the Kuban host, the administrative abolition of Chernomoria, and the establishment of the lineage for the host were symbolical steps that had no serious effect on the cultural allegiances of the local people. This corresponds to the conclusions reached by Mikhail Dolbilov, namely that in their implementation of the Russification policy, nationalist-

⁴³ Stephen Velychenko, "The Size of the Imperial Russian Bureaucracy and Army in Comparative Perspective," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 49, no. 3 (2001): 362.

⁴⁴ Alfred J. Rieber, "The Sedimentary Society," in *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow and James L. West (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 345.

⁴⁵ Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2003), 242, 256.

mindful bureaucrats' of the 1860s preferred "spectacular signs of the Russian presence" and mental mapping over concrete assimilationist and integrationist practices.⁴⁶

Cossack educated elites, those, who left behind the sources that allow us to take a glimpse of their views, had parallel attachments to the empire, to Cossackdom, to their region and their host, to their Little Russian distinctiveness, but none of these loyalties was national. Alon Rachamimov suggested that a situation, when "a myriad of collective identifications might be simultaneously attractive to an individual, while not presupposing that these were fundamentally different from—or conflictual with—one another," was far more normal than historians today are accustomed to thinking. He specified that such identifications do not necessarily belong to different categories (one religious and one national), or possess different strengths (one cultural identification stronger and one weaker), and an individual need not necessarily be worried that different notions of collectivity would impinge upon one another.⁴⁷

We can make some cautious comparisons with other social groups that existed within the state order that did not demand them to be national. In his research on the national ambiguity of Bohemian nobles, Eagle Glassheim argues that a major part of the large Bohemian landowners, who opposed Habsburg centralism and referred to the ancient historic rights of the Bohemian crown, did so not out of a concern for the national self-determination of the Czech people, but rather "sought to increase their power by strengthening the institutions, local and provincial, in which they retained the most influence."⁴⁸ Likewise, Cossacks elites were preoccupied with retaining their privileges and referred to their Zaporozhian origin not out of national concern, but in order to secure the status of the host.

As officers who owed everything to their service of the empire, they somewhat resembled Habsburg militaries who defined themselves through their military service and boasted their national neutrality. István Deák found the absence of national commitment

⁴⁶ Mikhail Dolbilov, "Russian Nationalism and the Nineteenth-Century Policy of Russification in the Russian Empire's Western Region," in *Imperiology: From Empirical Knowledge to Discussing the Russian Empire*, ed. Kimitaka Matsuzato (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center at Hokkaido University, 2007), 150, 158.

⁴⁷ Alon Rachamimov, "Collective Identifications and Austro-Hungarian Jews: Avigor Hameiri," in *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. Laurence Cole and Daniel L. Unowsky (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 183–84.

⁴⁸ Eagle Glassheim, *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 23.

among the representatives of the higher military ranks significant enough to put it into the title of his book otherwise devoted to different range of problems. According to him, officers of the Dual Monarchy were resistant to the advances of nationalism and “an enormous number of Joint Army officers had, for all intents and purposes, no nationality.”⁴⁹

Historians of the Russian empire did focus on national indifference and they have long come to realize the need of this approach. As early as 1985, Alfred Rieber called on historians to hear “the voices of inarticulate,” those who associated not with the nation, but first and foremost with *soslovie* or certain regions.⁵⁰ Andreas Kappeler also came close to putting the feasibility of the nation-related conceptual apparatus into question. He wondered: “Are elites and commoners, townspeople and peasants members of the same nation? Or do they have any national consciousness at all?”⁵¹ This dissertation makes a step toward filling this lacuna.

0.5. The Cossack Myth

This work aims to challenge and revise two interrelated conventional wisdoms of the historiography of Ukraine. The first one is the established view on the social and cultural roles of the Cossack myth in Ukraine, as well as its ways of use and modes of functioning. Contemporary scholarship of the nineteenth-century Ukraine has been heavily focused on the advancement of Ukrainian national activism, which may be explained partially by the

⁴⁹ István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 184. Deák was not the first scholar who drew attention to the non-national character of Habsburg militaries. As early as 1929, Oszkár Jászi stated that Habsburg army’s officers “constituted something like an anational caste.” See Oszkár Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 144. However, Deák does not presume that such a posture stemmed from officer’s non-national background. On the contrary, it was cultivated from above, while ordinary soldiers brought their national consciousness with them while entering into the ranks of the imperial army and did not get out of it during the period of their service since they had “too little time to shed an ethnic identity for a supranational one.” See Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*, 4. What is more, he insists on the uniqueness of the case of the Habsburg monarchy’s officer corps and contrasts it to the Russian imperial army, which, although multiethnic, was “dominated by the Russian nationality and Eastern Orthodoxy” (*ibid.*, 5).

⁵⁰ Rieber, “The Sedimentary Society,” 346.

⁵¹ Andreas Kappeler, *‘Great Russians’ and ‘Little Russians’: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Perceptions in Historical Perspective* (The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies: University of Washington, 2003), 18.

academic fashion of the recent decades and partially by the historical narrative and the intellectual tradition that this scholarship has inherited, draws on, and is rooted in. It has been rightly argued that the Cossack myth was crucial in shaping Ukrainian national aspirations, cultural peculiarities, and political claims. Over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ukrainian nationalists resorted to the bright romanticist mythology of the Zaporozhian Sich and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the Cossack Hetmanate as an immense repository of ideas and images that they utilized for nation-building. National activists regarded the Hetmanate polity and the Zaporozhian military organization as precedents of the Ukrainian statehood, abolished by Catherine II in the late eighteenth century, and therefore were confident that the social and political fabric of the revived Ukraine must be framed by the Cossack legacy.⁵²

What is missing in this interpretation of the Cossack myth's role is the existence of various renditions of this myth made by those who addressed the Cossack past from the non-nationalist perspective—Little Russian literati, intellectuals, gentry, civil servants etc. By the end of the nineteenth century, they, for various reasons, remained aloof from or insufficiently close to the increasingly prevalent, but not yet predominant, current of Ukrainian nationalism. Furthermore, the Ukrainian Cossack myth engaged many Great Russian men of letters and art, thinkers with democratic sympathies, and mere amateurs of antiquity.⁵³

A notable exception from the tendency to neglect the non-nationalist uses of the Cossack imagery and an excellent piece of scholarship in its own right is Serhii Plokhy's work *The Cossack Myth*, although even this does not completely fill the existing historiographical gap. In his book, Plokhy traces the origins of the educated society's fascination with Cossack history, which, as he shows, lie in a literary hoax made in the early nineteenth century—*The History of the Rus' (Istoriia Rusov)*. As a result of the

⁵² In spite of its importance, the role of the Cossack myth for the Ukrainian national movement has not become a special object of research. The only two survey articles on this topic were written several decades ago, see O. W. Gerus, "Manifestations of the Cossack Idea in Modern Ukrainian History: The Cossack Legacy and its Impact," *Ukrains'kyi istoryk*, 1-2 (1986): 22–39; Frank Sysyn, "The Reemergence of the Ukrainian Nation and Cossack Mythology," *Social Research* 58, no. 4 (1991): 845–64.

⁵³ Oleh Gerus stops briefly on this point and gives the well-known examples of Herten, Gogol, and Repin without going into further detail: Gerus, "Manifestations of the Cossack Idea in Modern Ukrainian History," 32. Likewise, Hiroaki Kuromiya writes that "the Cossack heritage was at the core of Ukrainian national consciousness" and was seen by the central authorities as providing "separatist aspirations." Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas*, 37–38.

Romanticist mood of the day, this text left a lasting imprint on the image of Little Russia in the imperial historical imagination. By scrutinizing the milieu of landed gentry in which *The History of the Rus'* was written, Ploky comes to the important conclusion that, quite contrary to the established view, its author(s) pursued the goal of securing the status of Little Russian nobility within the confines of the empire rather than endeavoring to undermine its foundations by a sort of a nationalist manifesto. Ploky elegantly escapes from the national paradigm and places his research into a broader imperial context, outside of which our understanding of *History* is “difficult, if not impossible.” However, while he examines the incipient stage of the myth, its ramifications over the rest of the century are yet to be studied.⁵⁴

During the first half of the nineteenth century, poets and writers as diverse as Kondratii Ryleev, Aleksandr Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, and Taras Shevchenko drew inspiration from *The History of the Rus'*. It was the latter two whose readings and interpretations of the text left the most profound imprint on images of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, the Sich, and on representations of the past of entire Ukraine. Scholars are generally unanimous in asserting that Shevchenko and Gogol approached the Cossacks theme from opposite angles, pursuing virtually antagonistic goals. In his poetry, Shevchenko created the vision of the Sich as the epitome of the ever-present Ukrainian will to self-assert itself. The Cossacks defended Ukraine from the foreign encroachments, fought for nationhood and social freedom, and embodied the ideal of universal fraternity. Cossackness, as seen by Shevchenko, was not something detached from Ukraine. On the contrary, it was deeply woven into the fabric of the Ukrainian life. Throughout his poems, Shevchenko mourned the disappearance of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Eradicated by Catherine II, the Sich perished, leaving Ukraine defenseless against the malicious empire. The Ukraine of his days was an “orphan,” a “widow,” subjected to imperial coercion.

Unlike Shevchenko, Nikolai Gogol/Mykola Hohol never expressed any commitment to the national sentiment so meaningful for Shevchenko. Neither did he speak out about his personal identification at all, famously confessing once that he did not know himself what kind of “soul” he had: a Little Russian/Ukrainian (*khokhlatskaia*) one or Russian. Born into a noble Little Russian family, he came into prominence as an author

⁵⁴ Serhii Ploky, *The Cossack Myth: History and Nationhood in the Age of Empires* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 357. Ploky briefly addresses this problem in other works: Serhii Ploky, *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the Past* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 168–81.

of stories, peopled by vivid Little Russian characters and set in Cossack-era Ukraine. Under the influence of *The History of Rus*, Gogol tried his hand at writing a multi-volume history of Ukraine, but failed to accomplish the task because it seemed to him unrealizable. In its stead, he found another outlet for his love of the Ukraine's past and authored a historical novel dedicated to the Sich and its campaign against the Poles. Named after its main hero, Taras Bulba, the novel became the first and foremost portrayal of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, bringing them into the literary existence. As Gogol vacillated between his multiple loyalties, *Taras Bulba* followed his lead. The original, philo-Ukrainian novel, published in 1835 was substantially revised in 1842. In this second edition, Gogol's heroes made a dramatic evolution from the Cossacks, who fought for themselves and against the Poles, to the ardent fighters for the Russian cause. Gogol flavored the text with emotional expressions like the "Russian might," "Russian faith," "Russian soul," "Russian character," "Russian sense," and, especially, "Russian land," which were repeatedly invoked throughout the text, turning the Zaporozhian Cossacks into the champions of all things Russian. Indeed, the very name of their homeland, Ukraine, figures in the text much less frequently, giving way to "south Russia." The second edition of *Taras Bulba*, thus, ushered in the emergence of the radically new imagery, where the Sich and its Cossacks finally transformed from the alien, treacherous, savage brigands to the defenders of Rus'—its religion, its state, and its nationality.⁵⁵

Whereas scholars generally agree that from the point of view of their literary myths, Gogol and Shevchenko pursued opposite interests and articulated radically different political stands, actual readings of or listenings to their texts by imperial subjects did not necessarily imply accepting Gogol's or Shevchenko's ideological precepts. Consciously or not, readers easily passed over politically charged precepts and meanings, and instead grasped vivid images, thrilling stories, and interpreted them in their own way.⁵⁶ For that matter, admiring Shevchenko's poems did not always led to an

⁵⁵ Saera Yoon, "Transformation of a Ukrainian Cossack into a Russian Warrior: Gogol's 1842 'Taras Bulba,'" *The Slavic and East European Journal* 49, no. 3 (2005): 430–444; Edyta M. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 266–313; Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature: A Study in Cultural Mythology* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 39–60; Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* (Montreal, Que.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 105–16.

⁵⁶ D. Rebekkini, "Kak krest'iane chitali Gogolia: Popytka rekonstruktsii retseptsii," *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, no. 49 (2001): 508–25.

embracement of the ideal of free, democratic, self-sufficient Ukraine. Likewise, one's fascination with Gogol's Cossack stories did not mean one's commitment to the all-Russian cause. Dmitrii Evarnitskii/Dmytro Yavornyts'kyi, the patriarch of studying Zaporozhian antiquities and one of the principal contributors to the modern Cossack myth, whose views were close enough to those of Ukrainian nationalists (but also differed enough for not considering him as such), confessed that his love to the Zaporozhians arose in his early years. According to Yavornyts'kyi, his father read him aloud *Taras Bulba* when he was six years old, which made him cry over the fate of the main hero of the novel. This childhood impression was so strong that it predetermined Yavornyts'kyi's interests at a mature age.⁵⁷

Yevhen Chykalenko, a key figure of the Ukrainian national movement, had a similar experience. "*Taras Bulba* influenced me so much," he wrote in the memoirs, "that I was spending whole days thinking on nothing else but the Zaporozhians in red *zhupans* with locks of hair on their heads. In the evenings I could not fall asleep for long and all the time I dreamt about how to find—just like Columbus—a new land and to establish the Zaporozhian Sich there, or to encompass by a grand 'Chinese' wall the ancient Zaporozhia, which I read about earlier in our textbook but paid no attention to it."⁵⁸ In the case of Chykalenko, the Gogol's Cossacks led him not to the study of the largely forgotten past, but to thoughts about its resurrection. "I was painful that father Vasyl is indifferent to my dreams about renewing the Cossack Ukraine, with hetmans, with the Zaporozhian host, etc., while these dreams brought me to crying with tears over the fate of Ukraine."⁵⁹

At the same time, most of the imperial loyalists read Gogol according to his own intentions, taking for granted the Cossacks' (pro-)Russian affinities. In the long run, the mythologized image of the Sich developed by him brought the imperial educated elites toward the recognition of the Zaporozhian Cossacks as valiant fighters for the Russian cause. Due to this ideological framework, the Kuban/Black Sea Cossack officer stratum, *starshina*, had the opportunity to openly expose their Zaporozhian lineage and to use the Zaporozhian myth while dealing with the authorities as a proof of their loyalty. Fed by literary representations and cultural imagination, attitudes toward Zaporozhia as a cradle of either freedom-loving and democratic Ukraine or loyalist, Orthodox, and conservative

⁵⁷ D. I. Evarnitskii, *Istoriia zaporozhskikh kazakov*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia N. N. Skorokhodova, 1892), vi.

⁵⁸ Yevhen Chykalenko, *Spohady (1861-1907)* (Kiev: Tempora, 2011), 65.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

Little/South Russia were closely correlated with imperial policy toward this territory and its population. In the next section, I look at this policy as a general background for analyzing developments in Kuban.

0.6. Ambiguities of Little Russia

The intricacies of the status of Ukraine within the imperial framework have been studied relatively well, although the scholarship on this issue has been largely concentrated on a quite narrow set of problems. Most historians tend to focus their research on the imperial apparatus' prohibitive measures with regard to the Ukrainian language, culture, educational and political associations of different kinds, and other realms that confronted imperial oppression. Although such excessive attention to the repressive policy of the state is, indeed, reasonable in many respects and owes its predominance to the actual harshness of the imperial attitudes to various processes in Little Russia, it nevertheless reduces our understanding of the Little Russian/Ukrainian experience under the rule of the Romanovs to the narrative of the Ukrainian people's permanent suffering under the imperial rule. What looms large in his perspective is the underlying premise that the empire strove to persecute and stamp out all the things Ukrainian due to their very nature.

The pioneering book *The Ukrainian Question* by Alexei Miller was the first research that portrayed the nineteenth-century imperial bureaucracy, both local and central, as a conglomerate of hesitant actors, whose administrative efforts to deal with the Ukrainian question were rather tentative and uncertain. Even when they were able to reach a consensus over the issue of what kind of action should be taken with regard to Ukrainian peculiarities, the consensus was never irrevocable. There were always discrepancies over how long should one or another measure last, just as there were always attempts to revise, soften, or even revoke it. Nevertheless, Miller argues that however inconsistent that policy was, most of the authorities did not doubt that, in the long run, the Ukrainian/Little Russian distinctiveness was doomed to be dissolved. Such an outcome was especially desirable in terms of language, which, as authorities expected and hoped, would be completely substituted by the literary Russian language. Controversies aroused only over the question of whether the making of Little Russians into the full-fledged Russians should occur forcibly or evolve on its own without the direct intervention of the state. For

Miller, it was a state-driven—but backed by the educated society—nationalist agenda modelled on the nationalizing policies of France and the British Empire.⁶⁰ However, by the early twentieth century, as Miller argued, even the most convinced Russian nationalists recognized the acceptability of the existence of the Ukrainian language and culture as ethnographic peculiarities.⁶¹

If Miller considers the Little Russian solution—the readiness of the authorities to admit the distinctiveness of Little Russia on the ethnographic level—as the most realistic outcome for the government, unable to assimilate Little Russians because of the inefficacy of the imperial system, other scholars see this solution as a shaky and infeasible tactical deal. Olga Andriewsky has argued that the Little Russian idea, which allowed room for the existence of a culturally distinct “Ukrainian” identification within the framework of the tripartite all-Russian people, was doomed because it did not match the needs of the Russian state, church, and dynasty in from the viewpoint of the Russian elites. A sort of tolerance for Ukrainian “particularism” evident in the 1830s and 1840s could not last long given the general unfavourable conditions, the most important of which were the disappearance of the Ukrainian elites, the introduction of the policy of “official nationality,” the eagerness of the Ukrainian national activists to identify themselves with peasants and to break with gentry patriotism. In the end, it led to the impossibility of the “Little Russian solution,” since the Russian authorities and educated public widely associated all things Little Russian with parochialism and uncultivated, plebeian culture.⁶²

Andreas Kappeler noted that there was no uniform attitude of the tsarist regime toward each of the “nationalities” inhabiting the imperial space. At any given moment of the Romanov Empire’s existence, the policy of St. Petersburg was to apply different approaches to different groups of peoples on the basis of a set of criteria. Kappeler suggested differentiating between three schematic types of criteria, according to which the imperial center directed its policies towards the empire’s peoples: political, social, and cultural. Depending on the criterion chosen, the attitudes towards Ukrainians varied greatly. Ordinary villagers were considered as ignorant *khokhly*, those who chose the path

⁶⁰ Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2003).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁶² Olga Andriewsky, “The Russian-Ukrainian Discourse and the Failure of the ‘Little Russian Solution,’ 1782-1917,” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600-1945)*, eds. Mark von Hagen, Andreas Kappeler, Zenon Kohut, Frank Sysyn (Edmonton and Toronto: CIUS Press, 2003), 182–214.

of social advancement and embraced Russian culture were treated as *malorossy* (Little Russians), and those participated in the elaboration of a self-sufficient Ukrainian culture and were involved in establishment of national associations were regarded as *mazepintsy*, i.e. the followers of Hetman Ivan Mazepa.⁶³

Faith Hillis, who studied “the Little Russian idea” as an ideological project, presents it as an intellectual product of right-bank Ukraine’s educated elites. According to Hillis, they saw the southwestern gubernias of the Russian Empire as the cradle of the Russian civilization and the land where the East Slavic virtues and heroism found its ultimate expression. This intellectual tradition rested on illiberal values, was bound up with anti-Jewish and anti-Polish attitudes, and flourished until the late 1900s-early 1910s. One of her most important conclusions is that until the early twentieth century, advocates of the Little Russian idea and Ukrainophiles did not necessarily differ much in their views and often were the same people, belonging to the same intellectual circles. According to Hillis, the clear line of demarcation between the dedicated exponents of the Little Russian idea and their no less devoted Ukrainian-minded counterparts came into existence relatively late. She argues that the Little Russian idea as an illiberal Russian nationalistic political project of the right-bank conservative intellectuals and the modern Ukrainian national idea both had a common breeding ground. It was the anti-Polish, Ukrainophile milieu that was formed in Kiev in the 1840s and existed without major internal tensions for several decades until it was split into the rival two groups, the point of bifurcation being 1876, when Alexander II issued the so-called Ems decree restricting the public use of the Ukrainian culture. Before that, the future leaders of both movements belonged to the same intellectual circles and jointly worked on the same cultural enterprises, focused on local history and ethnography.⁶⁴

It was only in 1909 that the distinctiveness of the Little Russian/Ukrainian culture came to be considered dangerous for the stability of the Romanov Empire. Hillis refers to an attempt by one of the Kiev Little Russian activists to initiate the prohibition of every sort of Ukrainian cultural and educational organizations, which prompted the prime minister, Petr Stolypin, to ban Ukrainian associations in 1910. Even though Stolypin’s

⁶³ Andreas Kappeler, “Mazepintsy, Malorossy, Khokhly: Ukrainians in the Ethnic Hierarchy of the Russian Empire,” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity*, 162–81.

⁶⁴ Faith Hillis, “Ukrainophile Activism and Imperial Governance in Russia’s Southwestern Borderlands,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 2 (2012): 301–326.

order met with discontent on the part of imperial-loyal society and was subsequently withdrawn by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it signaled a lessening of tolerance toward the peculiarities of Ukraine/Little Russia in the increasingly intolerant climate of the Stolypin era.⁶⁵ Following these developments, most of right-wing supporters of the Little Russian cause broke up with the idea of a separate Little Russian culture as long as it came to be associated exclusively with Ukrainian nationalism, which violated the foundations of the empire and disturbed Russian national coherence. All in all, in Hillis' interpretation the Little Russian solution failed as it did not find its place between Ukrainian and Russian nationalisms.

Rather similarly, the authors of the detailed study of the historical semantics of the term "Little Russian" (*maloross*) have traced the origins of the noticeable semantic conflict between the concepts deriving from the words "Ukraine" and "Little Russia" back to the early 1860s. Before that time, the terms' usage was not a subject of controversies and all of them could be used interchangeably by the proponents of different views on the nature of the Little Russian/Ukrainian distinctiveness. The turning point occurred in the era of the Great Reforms. As Ukrainophiles increased their efforts to promote the Ukrainian culture so that it would achieve a full-fledged status within the imperial hierarchy, their opponents looked at these developments with growing suspicion and discontent, fearing that it would lead to the dissociation of the all-Russian unity. In the end, both sides came to endow the words "Ukraine" and "Little Russia" and their derivatives with stable meanings that referred to mutually conflicting political ideals. After the revolution of 1905, "Ukraine" eventually became the banner of the Ukrainian national activists, while "Little Russia" was eagerly appropriated by the adherents of the all-Russian idea. The authors recast the later relationships of the names in terms of "battle" and call *maloross* a "combative" concept.⁶⁶

Andreas Kappeler, too, stressed that those individuals with Little Russian allegiances, whom the Ukrainian national activists treated with disdain, retained a powerful sense of local patriotism and devotedness to local traditions, combining it with the loyalty to the emperor and the commitment to Russian culture. Kappeler argued that

⁶⁵ Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Cornell University Press, 2013), 237–38.

⁶⁶ A. Kotenko, O. Martyniuk, and A. Miller, "Maloross," in *Poniatia o Rossii: K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda*, eds. A. Miller, D. Sdvizhkov and I. Shirle (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2012), 2:393.

although with the rise of nationalism the identifications with Little Russia or Ukraine came into conflict, various degrees of mixed identities continued to exist in the minds of many.⁶⁷ Kappeler considers “Little Russianness” a situational phenomenon that existed as long as there was the imperial framework for it. When it ceased to exist in 1917, numerous (although, evidently, not all) Little Russians easily abandoned this name and embraced the new ‘Ukrainian’ official designation.⁶⁸

The ambivalence of the notion of “Little Russianness,” which referred both to the all-Russian political unity and to the distinctiveness of Ukraine’s political experience, to the East Slavic ethnic coherence and to the local undoubted cultural differences, led to profound discrepancies in the understanding of the relationships between Little Russia and Great Russia as well as its place within the Russian Empire. In the opinion of Kimitaka Matsuzato, the former lands of the Hetmanate, governed in the first half of the nineteenth century as a separate Little Russian governor-generalship, were recognized by the imperial center as the core part of the empire, along with the former territories of the Muscovite State and the Volga-Ural region. The ostensible absence of ethno-confessional contradictions, the prominence of Little Russian notables in St. Petersburg, the kinship ties of Little Russian governors-general with the local elites, the officialdom’s reluctance to use repressions, and the importance of the “Cossack tradition” to the imperial military demands—such peculiarities of the former Cossack lands, according to Matsuzato, testify to the core character of Left-Bank Ukraine, which was merely confirmed in 1856 with the abolition of the Little Russian governor-generalship and the inclusion of its three gubernias into the ranks of “inner” provinces of the empire.⁶⁹

Administrative ways of thinking notwithstanding, in practice things were perceived differently. Analyzing the travelogues made by Great Russian intellectuals traveling to Left-Bank Ukraine, Leonid Gorizontov shows the extent of the estrangement

⁶⁷ Andreas Kappeler, *‘Great Russians’ and ‘Little Russians’: Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Perceptions in Historical Perspective* (The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies: University of Washington, 2003), 33.

⁶⁸ Kappeler, “Mazepintsy, Malorossy, Khokhly,” 174–75.

⁶⁹ Kimitaka Matsuzato, “Yadro ili periferiia imperii? General-gubernatorstvo i malorossiiskaia identichnost’,” *Ab Imperio*, no. 2 (2002): 605–616; Matsuzato, “General-gubernatorstva v Rossiiskoi imperii: ot etnicheskogo k prostranstvennomu podkhodu,” in *Novaia imperskaia istoriia postsovetского prostranstva*, ed. I. Gerasimov et al. (Kazan: Tsentr Issledovaniia Natsionalisma i Imperii, 2004), 432–33; Matsuzato, “Intra-Bureaucratic Debate on the Institution of Russian Governors-General in the mid-Nineteenth Century,” in *Asiatic Russia: Imperial Power in Regional and International Contexts*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (Routledge, 2012), 85.

felt by them as they found themselves in a Little Russian environment. Although officially this territory was recognized as truly Russian, the personal experience of visiting it could instill serious doubts over the accuracy of the official view.⁷⁰ Thus, Little Russia/Ukraine was simultaneously familiar and exotic, close yet unknown, “ours” but alien. Imperial policy toward Kuban and the Kuban Cossacks’ idea of their own place within the empire only fully reflected this ambivalence, but local Cossack specificity and the peculiarities of the place only added to this confused mixture of views, ideas, and perceptions.

0.7. Outline of Cultural Perspective

As myths, imagery, and symbols lie at the core of this study, it employs cultural perspective to analyze their functioning and impact on historical developments in Kuban and beyond. A range of works written in the genre of cultural history heavily influenced my approach to dealing with objects, events, and actions of symbolical value. Above all, it drew inspiration from the edited volume that paved the ground for historians studying cultural imagination, *The Invention of Tradition* by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. This work, the title of which became a proverbial concept in its own right, demonstrated the close link between longing for a genuine past and authentic traditions on the one hand, and modernity on the other. Quite often, changes of social order pushed late-nineteenth-century societies to invent ostensibly ancient traditions and construct the remote past for themselves to take hold of in the dynamic circumstances. Ironically, the fulfillment of these goals was only possible in circumstances of modernity and by means of it.⁷¹ As I show in my work, in recasting the Kuban Cossacks as Zaporozhian ones the Kuban Cossack elites were driven by similar considerations and anxieties. At the same time, my conclusions differs from the main premise of this book—that nationalism was the key driving force of the inventions of traditions all over Europe. Kuban “inventors” normally did not formulate their goals in terms of nationhood. Even when they did, it was nothing

⁷⁰ Leonid Gorizontov, “The ‘Great Circle’ of Interior Russia: Representations of the Imperial Center in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, eds. Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen and A. V. Remnev (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 74–76; Gorizontov, “‘Bol’shaia russkaia natsiia’ v imperskoi i regional’noi strategii samoderzhavii,” in *Prostranstvo vlasti: Istoricheskii opyt Rossii i vyzovy sovremennosti*, eds. B. V. Anan’ich and S. I. Barzilov (Moscow: Moskovskii obshchestvennyi nauchnyi fond, 2001), 140, 145.

⁷¹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 [1984]).

more than a fashion and an endeavor to use the vocabulary coterminous with the language of the epoch.

By the same token, my work was influenced in a technical respect, but diverges in its argument, from a detailed empirical-based work by Patrice Dabrowski on commemorations in Habsburg Galicia organized by Polish intellectual and political elites in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century to reinvent the Polish nation. Dabrowski, elaborating upon the notion of the “invention of tradition,” looks at monuments, ethnographic exhibitions, pieces of art, celebrations of meaningful historical events as “history lessons” that the authors of these initiatives taught to broad masses, evoking the image of Poland as ancient, stable, and having a future.⁷² Whether or not Polish commoners interpreted the meaning of these “history lessons” in accordance with the intentions of their authors, in the Kuban oblast at least, as I show, the interpretation of local holidays on the ground was often a self-sustained process. Ideas embedded in celebrations’ symbolism refracted in the minds of people to a great extent, and the way people understood commemorative initiatives quite often ran counter to the design of the organizers.

Several other works written by scholars who study the Habsburg Monarchy, the empire that is believed to have been fundamentally different in its treatment of culturally diverse population from the Romanov Empire, not only significantly enriched my theoretical approach, but also proved unexpectedly concordant with my findings. The authors of two collections of essays, *Staging the Past*, edited by Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, and *The Limits of Loyalty*, edited by Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, concentrated on the mutually reinforcing relationships between local particularism and local allegiances on the one hand, and loyalty to the empire and the ruling dynasty, on the other. Focusing on cultural objects, commemorative undertakings, and public events, these volumes, each in its own way, reveal their far-reaching political implications—reasserting their loyalty, various local interest groups bargained a better deal for themselves. This worked the other way around, too—Habsburg authorities maintained imperial rule over

⁷² Patrice M. Dabrowski, *Commemorations and the Shaping of Modern Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

multifarious regions and different social groups, tolerating their cultural diversity as long as it was loyal.⁷³

The book by Daniel Unowsky, one of the authors of the first volume and the co-editor of the second one, is an important extension of these ideas. Dedicated to the image of Francis Joseph II as the cornerstone in the imperial hierarchy of loyalties, this study is no less concerned with local agency. Unowsky looks at the Kaiser's inspection tours to imperial provinces as a form of negotiated relationship between local communities (or those who spoke on their behalf), the emperor, and the state, which the former used to advance their own agenda and secure their interests.⁷⁴

The dissertation relies heavily on *Scenarios of Power*, the groundbreaking work by Richard Wortman, which provided many insights into the realm of imperial imagination—the way the Romanov monarchy asserted its power across the imperial space. Wortman's work demonstrated the profound importance of the semiotics of rule—from large-scale celebrations, pompous court ceremonies and emperor's tours to provinces, to the visual appearance of the emperor's body, where every detail had its own meaning. He studied the self-image of the Romanovs and their view of the imperial diversity they ruled over, arguing that symbolical practices of the dynasty not so much reflected as shaped actual relations of power and subordination within the state.⁷⁵

Although my research largely deals with the use of symbols to conservative or, more precisely, reactionary ends, it also drew inspiration from works concerned with revolutionary symbolism. Lynn Hunt's book on the French revolutions' employment of new revolutionary images, rituals, and rhetoric as vehicles of power, mass mobilization, and "reconstitution of society and political space" influenced my approach to a significant extent.⁷⁶ Even more important was Boris Kolonitskii's in-depth study of the role symbols played in the Russian revolution of 1917, manifesting the radical break with the past and the introduction of the new order. Kolonitskii has demonstrated how a broad

⁷³ Maria Bucur and Nancy Wingfield, eds., *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2001); Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, eds., *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).

⁷⁴ Daniel Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848–1916* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005).

⁷⁵ Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in the Russian Monarchy*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995 and 1999).

⁷⁶ Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1984).

array of symbolically-charged entities—banners, songs, elements of military uniform, honors, place names, and holidays—expressed collective loyalties and values, fostered revolutionary changes and structured the new reality out of the chaos of the ongoing social turmoil, while he also underscores the power of military symbolism.⁷⁷

Yet another book by Boris Kolonitskii on images of the Romanov dynasty in the years of the Great War drew my attention to the emotional aspect of power relations.⁷⁸ Similarly to the case of members of the imperial family, who required from subjects of the empire not merely subordination and loyalty, but sincere and heartfelt love, in the post-1905 period in Kuban love, a deep emotional attachment of Cossacks to the chief of the host, became an important part of the local conservative discourse.



⁷⁷ B. Kolonitskii, *Simvoly vlasti i bor'ba za vlast'. K izycheniiu politicheskoi kul'tury rossiiskoi revoliutsii 1917 goda*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg: Liki Rossii, 2012).

⁷⁸ B. Kolonitskii, *Tragicheskaia erotika: Obraz imperatorskoi sem'i v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2010).

1. Chapter 1: The Afterlife of Zaporozhia in an Imperial Colony: Making and Unmaking of Chernomoria

In 1837, the exiled Decembrist Nikolai Lorer, a nobleman who served as a soldier in the Caucasus, was amazed to see a beautiful panorama of the area surrounding Taman, a small, backwater Cossack town. “A wonderful view worthy of a painter’s brush appeared before me: under my feet, in the shadow, I could see a small settlement of Taman, to the right was our camp with the dull noise and blue smoke that rose in different places. Further was the blue-black Sea of Azov that lied as a huge mass, fringed by the coastal line of the Crimean peninsula. Kerch gleamed in the sun, and the museum stood out on the Mount of Mithridates, like an Athenian temple. What is there is Europe, what is here is Asia, although geographers mercilessly border them somewhere at the boundaries of Persia, on the Aras River and so on.”⁷⁹

Full of impressions, Lorer thought he knew more than the learned geographers did due to his personal experience: he observed the line of division from within, standing on it and grasping it through his own gaze, while the creators of continental maps lacked of such a required expertise. Ironically, he was merely deluding himself, echoing the received wisdom of the day, for generations of thinkers before him had agreed that the invisible line separating two continents went through precisely this stretch of water.⁸⁰ Lorer was not the only one who acknowledged the liminality of Taman, located on the steppe shore of the Kerch strait that separated the Sea of Azov from the Black Sea. Accompanying Emperor Alexander I in his trip to the Southern Russia, the future author of the multi-volume official history of the war of 1812, Aleksandr Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, mirrored this view while standing on the Crimean side in 1818. He called Kerch “the extremity of Europe” and was excited by the realization that “on the opposite

⁷⁹ N. I. Lorer, “Zapiski moego vremeni. Vospominanie o proshlom,” in *Memuary dekabristov*, ed. A. S. Nemzer (Moscow: Pravda, 1988), 463.

⁸⁰ Mark Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space,” *Slavic Review* no. 1, 50 (1991): 1–17.

bank there was already Asia.” “Oh, my God!” exclaimed the tsar’s companion in his mind, staring at far away Taman, “Where has the fate brought me?”⁸¹

Both Europe behind Kerch and Asia behind Taman were relatively new imperial acquisitions. Generally referred to simply as Tataria, these lands belonged to the Crimean Khanate until 1783, when the Russian Empire incorporated them. Before that point, nobody challenged their belonging to “East,” but soon afterwards, the imperial authorities made serious efforts to impose new, “European” identity over them. These efforts were more successful in the case of Crimea, which became a piece of the Western world, filled with remnants of Greek antiquity. At the same time, the image of the continental part remained rather ambivalent and elusive. For Nikolai Lorer, too, these lands seemed wilder than Crimea, more enigmatic, and more unexplored. Some years later after his first visit to Taman, he settled there to improve his health. Now that Lorer had more time to survey the neighboring area more thoroughly, he left the description of his leisure: “Waiting for new work I lived peacefully in Taman, and with the advent of spring I indulged in my most-liked walks in the surroundings. Like new Columbus, not far from Taman I discovered two large mounds, erected, according to the legend, by Suvorov when he subdued these lands from the Turks. In less than a mile from Phanagoria I found a fountain, dug by the Turks as well . . .”⁸²

What Lorer meant by “work” (*trudy*) was his participation in the war actions against the mountain people of the Caucasus, which had already been waged for two decades. What he was engaged in was imperialism, which brought this war into existence. What, then, made him, a skilled soldier tired of serenity, a worker hired by the empire, feel as Columbus, a discoverer in the land that was anything but an uncharted desert? One of the foundational principles of imperialism, *terra nullius*, allowed presenting a colonized land as a virgin landscape, which required its imperial pioneers and cultivators. According to this principle, pre-existing relationships in the land were ignored, the old image of the

⁸¹ A. Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, “Iz vospominanii,” *Russkaia starina* 7 (1897), 92–93. In 1820, Alexander Puskin, too, realized the moment of transcending two different realms, called his crossing of the strait by ship as the travel from Asia to Europe: A. S. Pushkin, “Otryvok iz pis’ma k D.,” in *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Glavnoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1962), 7:280. For similar impressions see also G. Gerakov, *Putevye zapiski po mnogim Rossiiskim guberniiam* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo vospitatel'nogo doma, 1828), 118; Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Russia, Tartary, and Turkey* (Aberdeen: G. Clark and Son, 1848), 98.

⁸² Lorer, “Zapiski moego vremeni,” 494.

territory was subject to erasing, and a new image of it was to be construed over the former one. All it provided the ideological rationale for the imperial domination.⁸³

Taman and the vast adjacent territory to the north of the Kuban River was an illustrative example of this practice. Starting from the late eighteenth century, the authorities of the Russian Empire made efforts to find a proper vision of and for the new imperial acquisition, inventing it from scratch. This chapter provides an outline of the evolution of the imperial perception of this territory over one hundred years: from the 1790s, the start of the colonization process, to the late 1880s, when the local community came to reflect upon the centenary of its colonial presence there.

1.1. From Ancient Greece to Old Rus: Changing Notions of Place

Tataria disappeared at the time when it became the most southern province of the Russian Empire. Administrative changes entailed ideological reconfiguration of space. That is why the newly incorporated lands underwent radical transformation. From that time on, according to the dream of Catherine II and Grigorii Potemkin, enlightened civilization had to spring up on the ruins of the barbaric world. This project, which matured in the ambitious mind of Potemkin, implied making those lands “Greek,” just as they were in the antic epoch, when Greek littoral colonies appeared on the Black Sea coast. Imagining the antic idyll on the seashore, Potemkin envisaged the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the restoration of ancient Orthodox Constantinople, and bringing to its throne the new emperor, Catherine’s grandson Constantine.⁸⁴

Renaming the Tatar towns, “Sevastopol,” “Eupathoria,” “Theodosia,” and “Pantikapeum” emerged in what was now called Taurida, the former Crimean Khanate. Aleksandr Samoilov, Potemkin’s close associate, nephew and biographer, wrote that by eliminating the Tatar names and introducing the Greek ones, the imperial leadership sought to “shake off and exterminate the memory about the barbarians,” making the first step towards the “cleansing of Europe from the Mohammedans and the conquest of

⁸³ Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: The Russian Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 94.

⁸⁴ A. Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla. Literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII – pervoi treti XIX veka* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001), 31–64.

Istanbul.”⁸⁵ The Taman peninsula became a part of the Tavricheskaia gubernia. The new fortress also received its Greek name, Phanagoria, which extended to the adjacent territories as well. After the death of Potemkin, the original impulse of the Greek euphoria faded, and the Greek project proved failure. In some towns as Kerch, local “Hellenization” continued due to the enterprise of the local elites, and the view of the Mount of Mithridates with a pseudo-antique temple on its top, resembled a Peloponnese landscape. Konstantin Pobedonostsev, who accompanied the heir of the throne in his travel across Russia in 1864, noted that he had seen a similar view only on engravings depicting Athens and Greek towns.⁸⁶ However, many travelers described this pseudo-Greek landscape as a mirage that disappeared while being approached.

Unexpectedly, in the next year after Potemkin died, in 1792, the Russian Empire gained a new powerful means to justify its presence in former Tataria. Imperial soldiers found in Taman a marble stone with an inscription in the old-Rus’ language, which meant that the semi-mysterious medieval town of Tmutarakan was located in that very place. Until that moment, the location of the Tmutarakan principality, known from old Rus’ chronicles, had remained unclear to the extent that the word *tmutarakan* assumed in the Russian language the meaning of an endlessly remote and unknown place. From that moment on, this finding allowed the ruling dynasty claiming the rights on the region by right of historical succession as long as the Russian emperors derived their origin from the Rurikides. The discovery was so suspiciously timely in political terms that many began to doubt its authenticity. However, the Taman stone became a crucial part of the discourse of dominance concerned with the imperial power in the North Caucasus region.⁸⁷ As the geographer Evdokim Ziablovskii wrote in his early-nineteenth-century overview of the lands of the Russian Empire, by the annexation of this territory, the empire “made not an acquisition, but returned its former patrimony.”⁸⁸ Historians, in turn, retroactively used the knowledge of equivalence between Taman and Tmutarakan to justify military campaigns

⁸⁵ Cit. from D. Sen’, “Voobrazhenie regiona kak kolonizatsiia: Kuban’-Chernomoriia-Kuban’ (praktiki Rossiiskoi imperii v Krymu i na Severo-Zapadnom Kavkaze v kontse XVIII – seredine XIX vv.)” in *Istoriiko-geograficheskie issledovaniia v Ukraini: Zbirnyk naukovykh prats’* 10 (2007): 329.

⁸⁶ K. P. Pobedonostsev, *Pis'ma o puteshestvii Gosudaria Naslednika Tsesarevicha po Rossii ot Peterburga do Kryma* (Moscow: Tipografiia Gracheva i komp., 1864), 561, 562.

⁸⁷ M. Maiofis, “Tmutarakanskii kamen’ v kul'turnom stroitel'stve kontsa XVIII – nachala XIX veka,” *Filosofskii vek: al'manakh* 10 (1999): 132–139; Brian J. Boeck, “Stone of Contention: Medieval Tmutarakan’ as a Measure of Soviet Archeology in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Ruthenica* 4 (2005): 33.

⁸⁸ E. Ziablovskii, *Zemleopisanie Rossiiskoi imperii dlia vsekh sostoianii* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia F. Drekhlera, 1810), 5:425.

that had taken place long before the discovery of the stone. Prince Petr Dolgorukov referred to this idea while writing about the campaign of the Russian Empire's war with the Ottoman Empire, when the Russian army seized Taman in 1771: "Taman (ancient Tmutarakan), the dominion of one of St. Vladimir's sons, for the first time after many centuries heard the sound of the Russian weaponry and fell to the banners of St. Vladimir's descendants."⁸⁹ The "Tmutarakan argument" was a part of the general ideologeme of returning Russia's possessions, taken away by its rivals centuries ago. As such, it had a long tradition of usage as the rationale for war. As early as the mid-sixteenth century, Ivan the Terrible justified the conquest of Astrakhan by the fact that its previous name was Tmutarakan, and therefore the "Russian rulers had possessed it from the time immemorial since the days of the Great Prince Rurik."⁹⁰ In the same manner, in the late eighteenth century, the Tmutarakan argument proved useful to substantiate another territorial acquisition.

The discovery of the stone significantly contributed to the change in the image of the region. The Greek perspective had to retreat before the native medieval Russian one. In 1802, the imperial authorities renamed the Phanagorian *uezd* (district) of the Tavricheskaia gubernia into the Tmutarakanskii *uezd*.⁹¹ In the official parlance of the local Black Sea Cossack administration, the name Tmutarakan came into use as well. In 1804, the Host stated that, according to the emperor's decree, the region was now to be called Tmutarakan (*Tmu Tarakanom*).⁹² There is little evidence that the new name was really entrenched in the administrative practice, but the official statement on the status of the Black Sea host, made in 1807, still called the territory of the host the Tmutarakanskii (*Tmu-Tarakanskii*) district of the Tavricheskaia gubernia.⁹³

Despite of its remoteness, in the early nineteenth century, Taman became a site of an unusual commemorative project. Nikolai Lvov, a gifted polymath and architect, visited the peninsula in 1803 on his way to the Caucasus, where he expected to improve his

⁸⁹ P. V. Dolgorukov, *Skazaniia o rode kniazei Dolgorukovykh* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Eduarda Kratsa, 1840), 194.

⁹⁰ A. S. Usachev, *Stepennaia kniga i drevnerusskaia knizhnost' vremeni mitropolita Makariia* (St. Petersburg: Al'ians-Arkheo, 2009), 552.

⁹¹ A. Avramenko, "Kuban' kak istoriko-geograficheskii region," *Rehional'na istoriia Ukrainy* 4 (2010): 50; PSZ I, 27, 20449.

⁹² B. F. Frolov, "Administrativno-territorial'nye preobrazovaniia v Chernomorii nachala XIX veka," in *Osvoenie Kubani kazachestvom: voprosy istorii i kul'tury* (Krasnodar: Tipografiia administratsii Krasnodarskogo kraia, 2002), 97.

⁹³ E. Felitsin, "Statisticheskie svedeniia o byvshem Chernomorskom voiske," *KOV*, 31 October 1887, 3.

health with mineral water therapy. The purpose of his stay in Taman was the composition of the first monument in the imperial South. The monument that he designed represented a conglomeration of antiquities symbolizing the deep historicity of Taman, inhabited by different people for thousands of years. The Tmutarakan stone, which stood for the medieval Rus' period, was the major component of the monument. Above it, Lvov envisaged to mount the symbols of the Greek epoch: the torso of an unknown statue on its very top, the clad in armor and chlamys, and a stone with a Greek inscription underneath. Below it stood two Genoese column capitals, which symbolized another era. Finally, two Tatar helmets were the reminders of the most recent epoch. They were the only objects of the non-local origin, allegedly brought by Lvov himself. In addition, Lvov planned to place a stone with a commemorative inscription at the bottom of the monument.⁹⁴



Fig. 1. Lvov's monument in Taman. Source: A. Olenin. *Pis'mo k grafu A. I. Musinu-Pushkinu o kamne tmutarakanskom, naidennom na ostrove Tamane v 1792 godu* (St. Petersburg: Meditsinskaia tipografiia, 1806).

⁹⁴ A. Olenin, *Pis'mo k grafu A. I. Musinu-Pushkinu o kamne tmutarakanskom, naidennom na ostrove Tamane v 1792 godu* (St. Petersburg: Meditsinskaia tipografiia, 1806), 29-30.

The place, in which the architect conceived to construct his monument, hardly could claim to be in the spotlight. Ill populated and not easily reachable, Taman drew attention of occasional wanderers, lured by the exoticism of the locale and its Cossack dwellers. Lvov died some months after he visited Taman, but the monument did not outlive its creator for long. Some scholars, as Oleksii Tolochko, have questioned the fact that it existed in reality and not as a mere project.⁹⁵ Many of those, who visited Taman in the early nineteenth century, described ancient artifacts, kept at the local church without proper care, which Lvov evidently planned to use as the building blocks for his monument.⁹⁶ The monument did not survive, and the idea of the “Tmutarakan” land in the lower reaches of the Kuban was doomed as well. In 1820, after the beginning of the Caucasus war, the Tmutarakanskii uezd was subordinated to the commander of the Separate Georgian Corps (later that year renamed to the Separate Caucasian Corps) in view of the military necessity. With the exclusion of the region from the Tavricheskaia gubernia, it ceased to be a part of Europe administratively, having become the northern part of the Caucasus. The region only became known as the Land of the Black Sea Cossack host, or simply the Black Sea land, *Chernomoria*.⁹⁷

1.2. Chernomoria and the Question of Zaporozhian Succession

Subject to imperial experiments were not only visions of the land, but also people. Along with the annexation of the Crimean Khanate, Catherine II directed her efforts against the Khanate’s old rival and partner—the Zaporozhian Sich. After the liquidation of Zaporozhia in 1775, the empress did not stop on the physical elimination of the Sich as the stronghold of the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the narrow sense and as the military community in the broad. Considering this step insufficient, she demanded to banish the very name “Zaporozhians” to prevent their possible restoration in the future and obliterate the memory about them in the future generations, therefore striving to make the

⁹⁵ A. P. Tolochko, “Tmutarokanskii bolvan,” *Ruthenica* 7 (2008): 198.

⁹⁶ G. Gerakov, *Putevye zapiski po mnogim Rossiiskim guberniiam* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskogo vospitatel’nogo doma, 1828), 116; P. P. Svin’in, “Obozrenie puteshestviia izdatelia Otechestvennykh zapisok v 1825 godu otnositel’no arkheologii,” *Otechestvennye zapiski* 71 (1826): 453; “Dnevnik russkogo ofitsera, sluzhivshago na Kavkaze,” RGALI, f. 1337, op. 1, d. 331, ll. 41 ob., 42.

⁹⁷ PSZ 1, 27, 28225.

phenomenon of Sich unthinkable through the language means. The absence of the signifier, as she hoped, would lead to the disappearance of the phenomenon it signified. In the very beginning of the manifesto “On the abolition of the Zaporozhian Sich and joining it to the New Russia gubernia,” issued on August 3, 1775, Catherine II forbade the use of its name and its derivatives. “The Zaporozhian Sich has already been completely destroyed,” declared the empress, “and the very name of the Zaporozhian Cossacks should be effaced in the future time as well.”⁹⁸ Following the supreme order, officials of the Novorossiiskaia gubernia ensured its implementation on the ground. In a special directive, the gubernia’s vice-governor emphasized that “the local land is no longer called Zaporozhia, but Slavianskaia and Khersonskaia provinces.” Likewise, he forbade dwellers of this territory to refer to Zaporozhia when they pointed to their residence or provenance. They were also not allowed to say or write “from former Zaporozhia” or “former Zaporozhians.” He prescribed to call “that place” (the ‘Sich,’ as he explained in brackets, violating his own directive) in written and oral form exclusively as “Pokrovskoe,” after the name of the village founded on the spot of the destroyed Sich.⁹⁹

Catherine II never changed this imperative during her life. In 1787, in view of the war with the Ottoman Empire, she gave her approval for the creation of a new Cossack host, partially composed from the Cossacks of the dissolved Sich under the patronage of her lover and the ruler of the newly acquired southern territories, Grigorii Potemkin. In contrast to those “unfaithful” Zaporozhian Cossacks, who escaped to the Ottoman-controlled territories, the new Cossack formation in the service of the Russian Empire received the name “the Host of the Faithful Cossacks” (*voisko vernykh kazakov*).¹⁰⁰ For Potemkin and many of his contemporaries, as well as for the senior Cossack officers, the new host was a mere restoration of the former Sich in a new form after nearly a decade of suspension of its activity. In his correspondence with Catherine II, he continued to call the host “the faithful Zaporozhians” or simply “the Zaporozhians.”¹⁰¹ Potemkin’s insistence in using the tabooed term in the violation of her manifesto made her irritated. In a response letter to Potemkin, the empress rejected applying the name “Zaporozhians” to the new

⁹⁸ PSZ, I, 20, 14354.

⁹⁹ V. Bednov, “Materialy dlia istorii kolonizatsii byvshikh Zaporozhskikh vladenii,” *Letopis’ Ekaterinoslavskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii* 9 (1913): 191–92.

¹⁰⁰ G. Potemkin to Catherine II, 25 December 1787, in *Ekaterina Vtoraia i G. A. Potemkin. Lichnaia perepiska (1769–1791)*, ed. V. S. Lopatin (Moscow: Nauka, 1996), 258.

¹⁰¹ G. Potemkin to Catherine II, 11 January 1788, in *Ibid.*, 262; G. Potemkin to Catherine II, 5 February 1788, in *Ibid.*, 265; G. Potemkin to Catherine II, 15 February 1788, in *Ibid.*, 269.

Cossack formation. “It is praiseworthy that the faithful Zaporozhians serve faithfully, but try to replace gradually the name of the Zaporozhians with another, because the Sich, destroyed by the manifesto, has not left behind a pleasant sounding for our ears. It should not awaken the dream among the uninformed people that it is necessary to restore either the Sich or its name.”¹⁰² Potemkin, indeed, found another name. In 1790, he renamed the Faithful Cossacks to the Black Sea Cossacks. The new name referred to the Cossacks’ victories on the Black Sea, achieved in the course of the war. As such, this name was supposed to efface the memory about the Zaporozhian times by introducing the new historical reference point, associated with new heroic deeds.

In 1792, the Russian Empire launched a project of mass resettlement that, in the long run, proved one of its most successful colonial undertakings. On June 30 of that year, in St. Petersburg, Catherine II handed the Black Sea Cossack delegation, headed by Host Judge (*voiskovoi suid’ia*) Anton Holovaty, a charter granting the Black Sea Cossack host the lands of the Taman peninsula and adjacent territories, stretching from the river Eia on the north to the river Kuban on the south. This territory passed to the Cossacks “in the eternal possession,” so that the Cossacks received exclusive control over the land for husbandry and water for fisheries.¹⁰³ On August 25, 1792, a large flotilla with the first group of Black Sea Cossack settlers under the command of Colonel Savva Bilyi landed in Taman. The second part of the Cossacks, headed by the ataman of the host, Zakharii Chepiha, reached the host’s territory by land in October.¹⁰⁴ If the receiving in collective and eternal possession of the vast territory with access to the sea, relatively mild climate, and fertile soil was highly beneficial for the Cossacks, especially for the Cossack senior officers, it was equally beneficial for the imperial authorities. Settling the Cossacks close to the North Caucasus, they wanted to make use of the Cossacks’ military skills to police the borderland with the mountain people.

Although much of those who joined the ranks of the Black Sea Cossacks at the initial stage of its creation were, indeed, the people that previously belonged to the Zaporozhian host, they were only a part of the new host’s general composition. Apart from them, the Black Sea host included many of those who did not have any connection to

¹⁰² Catherine II to G. Potemkin, 22 February 1787, in *Ibid.*, 270.

¹⁰³ PSZ, I, 23, 17055.

¹⁰⁴ B. Frolov, “Pereselenie kazakov Chernomorskogo voiska na Kuban,” *Donets’kyi visnyk Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 18 (2007): 244–255.

the Sich. It were fugitives, outlaws, runaway serfs, adventurers, impoverished people, war volunteers, who joined the former Zaporozhians in the course of the military actions against the Ottomans or afterwards and who had enough reasons to seek a new life in a new place. Historians have somewhat different opinions about the proportion of the former Zaporozhian Cossacks in the Black Sea Cossack host. Even those scholars, who made a serious attempt to calculate the precise percentage of the former Zaporozhians basing on the same source, the census of 1794, came up with different results. Boris Frolov argues that Cossacks from Zaporozhia constituted nearly 43 per cent of the total, while according to calculation made by Aleksei Malukalo, Zaporozhian Cossacks made up approximately 49,4 percent of the total men population.¹⁰⁵ As Frolov writes, those who registered themselves in the census as the “former Zaporozhians,” not necessarily had actual relation to Zaporozhia and might well have been pretending to be them for the sake of securing the Cossack status for themselves. One way or another, Cossacks of Zaporozhian background could represent at best about half of the total composition of the Black Sea host at the incipient stage, and those settlers who joined the host in subsequent decades only decreased the initial proportion of the Zaporozhians.

Zaporozhian prevailed, however, among the narrow social group of senior officers, so-called *starshina*, constituting absolute majority of the host’s officer stratum.¹⁰⁶ This fact ensured the façade of continuity of the Black Sea Cossack host with the Sich, and a number of decisions made by the Cossack elites in the process of the establishment of the host and the organization of its life reflected the idea of the host as the continuation of Zaporozhia. In so doing, the leadership of the host made several demonstrative steps toward the reestablishment of the system of Zaporozhian administrative titles. Most notably, from the late 1788, Zakharii Chepiha succeeded in restoring the title of “Kosh Ataman” (*koshovyi otaman/koshevoi ataman*), which was a clear reference to the Zaporozhian tradition.¹⁰⁷ The Zaporozhian word “Kosh,” however, which was the official term for the administration of the host from the very beginning, was substituted by the

¹⁰⁵ Frolov, “Pereselenie kazakov Chernomorskogo voiska na Kuban,” 253; A. N. Manuilov, *Obychnoe pravo kubanskikh kazakov* (St. Petersburg: Aleteiia, 2007), 56. The census itself has been published: N. Maleeva, O. Mirshnichenko, L. Puras, eds., *Pervaia perepis’ kazakov-pereselentsev na Kuban’ v kontse XVIII veka* (Krasnodar: Diapazon-V, 2006).

¹⁰⁶ Manuilov, *Obychnoe pravo kubanskikh kazakov*, 56.

¹⁰⁷ B. Frolov, “Pravovoi status atamanov Chernomorskogo kazach’ego voiska v kontse XVIII v.,” in *Dvoriane Severnogo Kavkaza v istoriko-kul’turnom i ekonomicheskom razvitii regiona* (Krasnodar: Dvorianskoe sobranie Kubani, 2002).

term “Host Government” (*voiskovoe pravitel'stvo*) as early as 1794, and the initiators of this change were not the central authorities, but the Black Sea command.¹⁰⁸ In 1797, the newly appointed ataman of the Black Sea host, Timofei Kotliarevskii, petitioned Paul I for the restoration of this title, complaining that his predecessors, “for uncertain reason,” changed the ancient title of the administration. In addition, he asked to restore the title of Kosh Ataman, which the emperor had not approved shortly before. Zaporozhian atamans, Kotliarevskii argued, had been using this title from ancient times, and hence it would be of great use for atamans of the Black Sea host, since “by recalling the old times” to atamans, this title would “incite them to achieve [the deeds equal to] the great deeds of their ancestors.”¹⁰⁹

This attempt did not come to fruition, but Kotliarevskii had more luck with another initiative aimed at establishing the symbolic continuity with Zaporozhia. During his stay in the capital in 1798, Kotliarevskii learned about a relatively small collection of artifacts kept in the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in St. Petersburg, which formerly belonged to the sacristy of the Sich's main church. Having enlisted support of the Holy Synod, he managed to transfer the artifacts to Chernomoria, justifying it by the argument that it “belonged” to the Black Sea host as a heritage of Zaporozhia and, thus, had to be “returned” to the host.¹¹⁰ The quick success of this effort made Kotliarevskii enthusiastic about a more ambitious idea—to “return” the rest of the sacred artifacts from the Sich's church. Moreover, Archimandrite Theophan, the head of the newly constructed Black Sea Cossack monastery, Ekaterino-Lebiazhskaia Hermitage, suggested the ataman to obtain also the sacristy and the library of the recently abolished Kiev Mezhyhiria Monastery, the major religious center of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who contributed substantial funds to its development.¹¹¹ In so doing, the Black Sea host became the gatherer of all religious treasures related to Zaporozhia. Kotliarevskii requested the Holy Synod for its approval of his plan. Claiming the host's right to Mezhyhiria relics, he wrote that the Black Sea host was “composed from the Zaporozhian host, which, during the existence of the Sich, was

¹⁰⁸ V. Kotricheva, B. Frolov, “Administrativno-territorial'noe ustroistvo Chernomorii v kontse XVIII veka,” in V. Chumachenko, ed., *Vtorye Kubanskii literaturno-istoricheski chteniia* (Krasnodar, 2000): 72–77.

¹⁰⁹ T. Kotliarevskii to Paul I, 1 December 1797, in P. Korolenko, *Chernomortsy* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Departamenta Udelov, 1874), appendix 5, 52.

¹¹⁰ T. Kotliarevskii to Metropolitan Gavriil of New Russia, 14 March 1799, in *Sbornik materialov po istorii Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska*, ed. I. Dmitrenko (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdel'nogo korpusa zhandarmov, 1898) 4: doc. 308, p. 360.

¹¹¹ Archimandrite Theophan to T. Kotliarevskii, 23 July 1798, in *Ibid.*, doc. 364, p. 348.

the contributor to that monastery . . .”¹¹² To collect any possible information about the relics and to bring to the host whatever remained of them, Kotliarevskii commissioned to Little Russia an officer of the host. The mission, which became for the officer a truly detective experience, proved largely successful: he was able to transfer to Chernomoria a substantial collection of artifacts from churches from all over Ukraine.¹¹³

The Black Sea Cossack toponymics was yet another demonstration of Zaporozhian continuity. Cossack colonizers called their settlements *kurins* (*kureni*)—the Zaporozhian term for Cossack barracks in the Sich. Moreover, the names of those kurins reproduced the names of the Zaporozhian ones. Thus, almost all of the total number of forty of Black Sea Cossack settlements had, in effect, Zaporozhian names, with the exception of two, Ekaterininskii and Berezanskii, named after Catherine II and the island of Berezan, where the Black Sea Cossacks achieved their greatest victory over the Ottomans.¹¹⁴

1.3. Ekaterinodar, Chernomoria’s Capital

Catherine II’s name appeared in the host’s toponymics not only in the name of Ekaterininskii kurin. It formed the basis of the name of the host’s administrative center, *Ekaterinodar*, which literally meant “the gift of Catherine.”¹¹⁵ This choice manifested the idea of the Cossacks’ gratitude to the empress, who brought the Black Sea host into existence, granted the Cossacks their lands, and saved their glory from decay. For the host, having the headquarter town named after the empress was a privilege, which, apart from Ekaterinodar, could boast only one town in the Russian Empire—Ekaterinoslav, the administrative center of the New Russia gubernia, which was supposed to become the empire’s third capital, after St. Petersburg and Moscow. But contemporaries did not

¹¹² T. Kotliarevskii to the Holy Synod, 17 September 1798, in *Ibid.*, doc. 366, p. 349.

¹¹³ T. Kotliarevskii to M. Gulik, 21 October 1798, in *Ibid.*, doc. 354, p. 336; For the full report on his findings see S. Belyi to T. Kotliarevskii, June 1799, in *Ibid.*, doc. 388, p. 368; A. Slutskii “Sud’ba biblioteki Mezhygorskogo monastyria na Kubani,” *Donets’kyi visnyk Naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 8 (2005): 100–117.

¹¹⁴ For the list of the names see “Poriadok obshchei pol’zy,” in Korolenko, *Chernomortsy*, appendix XXVII, 33; On Ekaterininskii (later, Ekaterinovskii) and Berezanskii kurins, see B. Frolov, “Poriadok obshchei pol’zy’: opyt istoricheskogo kommentariia,” *Golos minuvshhego. Kubanskii istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 1-2 (2001): 27–30.

¹¹⁵ According to the toponymist Sergei Nikitin, it might have been coined on the model of the personal name *Bozhedar* (which is the loan translation from the Greek *Theodor*). Thus, the name of the empress substituted the name of the God: S. A. Nikitin, “Formirovanie sovremennoi kontseptsii toponima v Rossii v XVIII – nach. XX v.,” in *Imenoslov. Istoricheskaia semantika imeni*. Vyp. 2 (Moscow: Indrik, 2007), 343.

consider that Ekaterinodar honored Catherine II by its name. The litterateur Pavel Sumarokov, who visited Chernomoria in 1803, was struck by the discrepancy between Ekaterinodar's eminent name and its deplorable state. Marshiness of the terrain, large quantities of dirt, and unhealthy climatic conditions that fostered incidence of malaria made such a negative impression on him that he called Ekaterinodar "the tomb of humanity." For Sumarokov, there was nothing respectful for Catherine's memory to be associated with this kind of place. "What a pity that the town breathing deadly poison bears so honorable name," as he lamented in his travelogue.¹¹⁶ General Vasilii Perovskii, who came to Ekaterinodar in 1828, left a no less harsh opinion. "Among all gifts of Catherine, Ekaterinodar, of course, is the most infamous one. It is difficult to describe: this is neither a town nor village, there are few houses but many streets, along which nobody walks along now, because both walking and riding are impossible—the dirt reaches horses' bellies."¹¹⁷

However, the meaning of Catherine II's symbolic connection to Ekaterinodar could be comprehended otherwise: it were not the Cossacks who disgraced the memory of the empress by ugliness of their town, but Catherine II herself was to blame for her cheerless gift. The German explorer Moritz Wagner, who visited Ekaterinodar in the 1840s, considered it the muddiest town he had ever visited and called the entire Chernomoria "one of the dreariest regions I ever beheld." As Moritz wrote, "these descendants of the Saporogi [Zaporozhians] must be far from grateful to Catherine for having been presented with this territory."¹¹⁸

Mud, unhealthy climate, and overall backwardness were, indeed, the most common characteristics of Ekaterinodar in travelogues of the nineteenth century. Virtually no travel account omitted this peculiarity of the place. The British traveler and writer Edward Daniel Clarke, who visited Chernomoria at the beginning of the nineteenth century, characterized Ekaterinodar as quite a dull place to stay. It "makes a very extraordinary appearance. It has no resemblance to a town; but is rather a grove of forests of oaks, in which a number of straggling cottages, widely separated, are concealed, not only from all

¹¹⁶ P. I. Sumarokov, *Dosugi krymskogo sud'i ili vtoroe putesthestvie v Tavridu*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Imperatorskaia tipografiia, 1803), 158.

¹¹⁷ I. I. Zakhar'in, "Druzhba Zhukovskogo s Perovskim," *Vestnik Evropy* 4 (1901): 536.

¹¹⁸ Moritz Wagner, *Travels in Persia, Georgia and Koordistan: With Sketches of the Cossacks and the Caucasus*, vol. 1 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1856), 106.

general observation, but even from the view of each other.” The overall atmosphere, with its “pestiferous” air, the “unwholesome” water, and pervasive fevers displeased him even more, so that he was convinced enough to say that Ekaterinodar “is never likely to become a desirable place of residence.” For him, Chernomoria was an unstable colony that was doomed to decay. And, indeed, he traced analogies with the colonial settlements of the American frontier, saying that “it still possessed all the appearance of a colony newly transported to the wildernesses of America, maintaining a struggle with inhospitable natives, impenetrable woods, and an unwholesome climate.”¹¹⁹

The officer Nikolai Simanovskii, who visited Chernomoria in 1837, was no less annoyed by what he saw. “Ekaterinodar is a town only in name, and, honestly, is not match for some villages,” he wrote. “Dogs here are much more numerous than people. In a word, in Chernomoria there are much more cattle than people. At the slightest rain, it is scary to go out of the room for you would be drown in the mud. I have never seen the mud like this. There is even a good thing that it dries very quickly, otherwise it would be impossible to move, because sometimes it reaches the belly of the horse.”¹²⁰

An author of another travelogue characterized Ekaterinodar of 1867 as a big settlement with the population of 20,000 people and beautiful houses with gardens. This beauty, however, ended just beyond the gates of the houses. The author emphatically introduced the reader with the townscape: “But the streets... To give an idea about them, we will say that they are made of pure black soil to a considerable depth. The mud is literally bottomless.”¹²¹ The mud remained a major problem for Ekaterinodar even in the early twentieth century. Among the town inhabitants, there was a local legend about a Cossack who was mired in mud together with his horse so deep that one woman, herself bogged down in the mud, pricked her foot by the tip of the Cossack’s spear.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Russia, Tartary, and Turkey* (Aberdeen: G. Clark and Son, 1848), 18–19.

¹²⁰ N. V. Simanovskii, “Dnevnik. 2 apreliia - 3 oktiabria 1837 g., Kavkaz,” *Zvezda*, no. 9 (1999): 189.

¹²¹ I. Kretovich, “Don, Kavkaz i Krym (Iz putevykh vospominanii), chast’ II,” *Vestnik Evropy* 6 (1868): 767; For similar arguments, see I. Debu, *O Kavkazskoi linii i prisoedinennom k nei Chernomorskom voiske* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Karla Kraiia, 1829), 422.

¹²² *KOV*, 4 June 1911, 4. Similar legends were widespread in other southern towns of the Russian Empire as well. The German traveler Johann Georg Kohl recounted about a caricature seen by him in Odessa, called “The use of the Odessa street police.” It portrayed a woman mired in mud so deep that she put her foot on something hard, which proved to be a head of a mounted policeman, completely hidden in the mire along with the horse he was sitting on: Johann Georg Kohl, *Russia. St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkoff, Riga, Odessa, the German Provinces on the Baltic, the Steppes, the Crimea, and the Interior of the Empire* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1842), 419.

1.4. Colonization and War

Harsh environmental conditions in Chernomoria, the abundance of marshy terrain, stagnant water with rotting reeds that produced unhealthy evaporation and served as an incubator for mosquitoes bringing in various deceases—all it, aggravated by economic hardship the Cossacks faced in the new territory and the necessity to participate in never-ending military campaigns, resulted to high mortality among the ranks of the newcomers. In this respect, men were more vulnerable category of people than women. According to early estimates, during the first decades after the resettlements, from 1794 to 1817, 18,644 men were born in the land of the Black Sea host, while 23,716 died, as opposed to 17,698 and 17,028 women respectively.¹²³ In 1817–1820, the situation slightly improved, with natural increase constituting 5,200, but in subsequent decade, the population of the host continued to decrease. In 1822, the death rate far exceeded birth rate, and the same situation was in 1826 and during the period from 1828 to 1831.¹²⁴

Devastated and unsustainable, the host was becoming anything but a reliable agent in securing the empire's southern fortified line. To counter this tendency, imperial authorities sought ways to replenish the amount of population of the region. In the course of the first half of the nineteenth century, they repeatedly resorted to the plans of mass resettlement that envisaged a wider colonization of Chernomoria. During this period, they launched three major waves of colonization, which significantly changed the demographic situation in the land of the Black Sea Cossack host. The first project, suggested by Ataman Fedor Bursak in 1807 and endorsed by the governor of the Kherson gubernia, Duke de Richelieu and the minister of interior, Aleksei Kurakin, envisaged resettling to Chernomoria twenty five thousand men with their families, drawn from the Poltava and Chernihiv gubernias of Little Russia.¹²⁵ The number of settlers exceeded the actual number of Cossacks in Chernomoria. Remarkably, if Bursak only requested to replenish the population by state peasants "from internal Russian gubernias," it was de Richelieu who proposed to recruit settlers from Little Russia. Moreover, according to his plan, the

¹²³ Debu, *O Kavkazskoi linii*, 409–10.

¹²⁴ V. M. Kabuzan, *Ukraintsy v mire. Dinamika chislennosti i rasseleniia. 20-e gody XVIII veka–1989 god* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006), 143.

¹²⁵ I. Bentkovskii, "Zaselenie Chernomorii s 1792 po 1825 god," in *Pamiatnaia knizhka Kubanskoi oblasti* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1881), 56–57.

settlers were supposed to be drawn from a specific legal category—the non-military estate of Little Russian Cossacks. This category, invented in the early nineteenth century, encompassed individuals who were able to prove their descent from officially registered eighteenth-century Ukrainian Cossacks.¹²⁶ In effect, those “Cossacks” conducted peasant way of life and differed little from state peasants, but authorities saw their ostensibly inborn and hereditary Cossackness as a proof of their genetic military proficiency. In his report to Alexander I, Kurakin, who had previously served as governor general of Little Russia in the years 1802-1807, referred to the Little Russian Cossacks’ inborn ability to fight as if they—not their ancestors—participated in military actions of the previous century. As Kurakin noted, “these people will be particularly useful because they led this way of life in the past” and thus would be able to adapt more easily to the conditions of military service on the Kuban border.¹²⁷

In the end, approximately 41.6 thousand of Little Russian Cossacks were resettled to Chernomoria during the period from 1809 to 1811, whereas 78.4% of them came from the Poltava gubernia and 21.6%, from the Chernihiv gubernia.¹²⁸ As this amount of settlers proved insufficient, imperial authorities undertook two other mass resettlements in the subsequent decades. In 1820, the minister of interior, Viktor Kochubei, a scion of a noble Ukrainian Cossack family, approved the plan of resettlement based on the previous one.¹²⁹ From 1821 to 1825, 48.4 thousand of Little Russian Cossacks were relocated to Chernomoria, with the percentage of Cossacks from the Poltava gubernia only slightly higher than those from the Chernihiv gubernia. In 1848–1849, according to the plan proposed as early as 1831 by yet another descendant of Ukrainian Cossack gentry, Count Ivan Paskevich, the commander-in-chief of the imperial troops in the Caucasus, about 14.4 thousand impoverished “volunteers” came to Chernomoria from the Poltava, Chernihiv, and Kharkiv gubernias, of which 2.8 thousand died soon afterwards of cholera.

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The behavior of imperial officialdom with regard to the colonization of Chernomoria in this period was indicative in many respects. Settling the region by Little

¹²⁶ On this social category, see N. S[torozhenko], “K istorii malorossiiskikh kozakov v kontse XVIII i v nachale XIX vv.,” *Kievskaiia starina* 4 (1897): 124–56; *Ibid.* 6 (1897): 460–83; *Ibid.* 10 (1897): 115–31; *Ibid.* 11 (1897): 143–56; *Ibid.* 12 (1897): 332–50.

¹²⁷ PSZ, I, 30, 22902.

¹²⁸ Kabuzan, *Ukraintsy v mire*, 141.

¹²⁹ Bentkovskii, “Zaselenie Chernomorii,” 78.

¹³⁰ Kabuzan, *Ukraintsy v mire*, 144, 145.

Russian Cossacks, who were supposed to secure the empire's borders and participate in the Caucasus war, the empire intentionally "filled" the territory of Chernomoria exclusively with the Little Russians in hope that the Cossack pedigree of the newcomers would guarantee their morale and readiness to fight. The very fact that a new Ukrainian-speaking region emerged on the North Caucasus due to these colonial efforts, apparently, did not cause much concern to the imperial authorities. This behavior neatly falls within the broad historiographical understanding of the nature of Russian imperial politics during the first half of the nineteenth century as preoccupied with political loyalty rather than with the questions of ethnicity, language, or religion. The imperial bureaucracy operated with categories of social classes and estates and was far from embracing the ethnocentric way of thinking.¹³¹ It also fit into the general picture of the imperial attitudes toward Ukraine, according to which both central officialdom and educated public generally did not perceive Ukraine as a source of potential threat and, as a rule, did not suspect Little Russians of separatism (which, of course, can be partially explained by the significant number of representatives of Little Russian elites among top imperial officials).¹³²

Cossacks' involvement in military actions against mountain people was the primary reason of why imperial administrators took care of the demographic situation in the region. In the late 1810s, these actions drastically intensified, turning into what became known as the Caucasus war of the Russian Empire, that is, the imperial encroachment into the mountainous territory of the North Caucasus. Warfare, not local cultural development, was the main and only concern of the Black Sea Cossack command and its superiors. At the same time, elements of Zaporozhian symbolism almost disappeared. Imperial authorities directed their efforts on restructuring and standardizing of Cossack hosts. In 1827, Nicholas I appointed the heir of the throne, Grand Prince Aleksandr Nikolaevich, Ataman of all the Cossack hosts, emphasizing by this particular bond of the Cossacks with the ruling dynasty. Along with that, the old title of Host Ataman changed into *Nakaznoi* (literally, "appointed") Ataman.¹³³ *The Regulation on the Black Sea Cossack host*, introduced in 1842, substituted the old term for settlements,

¹³¹ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multi-Ethnic History* (London: Routledge, 2013), 104.

¹³² Paul Bushkovitch, "The Ukraine in Russian Culture 1790–1860: The Evidence of the Journals," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 39, no. 3 (1991): 347–50; David Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750–1850* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1985).

¹³³ Korolenko, *Chernomortsy*, 190.

kurins, for another, *stanitsas* (*stanitsy*), which was a loan word from the Don Cossack lexicon.¹³⁴ The most distinctive physical traits of the Black Sea Cossacks, which many of them inherited from the Zaporozhian tradition, forelocks, long moustaches, and exotic Zaporozhian dress, gave their way to another fashion—beards and Caucasus attires.

Rare examples of Black Sea Cossack literature highlighted the Zaporozhian origin of the host, but they were rather the fruits of cultural influence coming from Ukrainophile milieus that emerged in cultural centers of the empire, such as Kiev, Kharkiv, or St. Petersburg. The play *The Black Sea Cossack life* (*Chernomors'kyi pobyt*), written in 1836 by Yakiv/Yakov Kukharenko, the single most active intellectual of Chernomoria of these years, referred to the theme of Zaporozhian roots of the Black Sea Cossacks in the context of the Cossacks' engagement in the war actions. War, for him, was the only guarantee of the Cossacks' existence as a coherent community that gave meaning to their life. Frontier life was inconceivable without the routine of going beyond the frontier to wage war with enemies. As the main character of the play told his fiancée before setting out for the frontier, "It is not the last farewell, it will be often. This is what the frontier is for." Kukharenko portrayed the raids of the Cossacks on the lands of mountaineers beyond the Kuban River as a mere continuation of Zaporozhian traditions of warfare. As the same Cossack went on, "What would have happened if we would not have been going to war? We would have dispersed from the old Sich like red mice. That is all." Zaporozhia disappeared, he continued, but its glory remained. "This is this glory that we have to maintain."¹³⁵ War, of course, was the only means for this. The activity of Kukharenko, a close friend of Taras Shevchenko and familiar with many prominent Ukrainophiles of that time, was an example of imperialist and colonialist Ukrainian literature, even though it was permeated by a sense of dislike toward Great Russians.¹³⁶

Kukharenko's play was first published only in 1861 and first staged in Ekaterinodar as late as 1898, and it could hardly had any impact on the Cossack society. As a top-ranking military official, however, he had more opportunities to propagate the idea of the Zaporozhian succession. In September 1846, during his service as the staff-

¹³⁴ *Polozhenie o Chernomorskom kazach'em voiske* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Departamenta voennykh poselenii, 1842), 6.

¹³⁵ Ya. Kukharenko, "Chornomors'kyi pobyt," *Osnova* 11–12 (1861): 10–11.

¹³⁶ On him, see V. Orel, *Ataman Kukharenko i ego druz'ia* (Krasnodar: Timpani, 1994); A. Fedina, "Ukraina v zhizni pervogo Kubanskogo pisatel'ia Ya. G. Kukharenko," *Kuban'-Ukraina: Voprosy istoriko-kul'turnogo vzaimodeistviia* (Krasnodar, 2006): 121–28.

officer of the Eiskii military district, Kukharenko wrote a proclamation, addressed to all stanitsas of the district, in which he informed about the local communities about the release of the new edition of the first historical work dedicated to the last Zaporozhian Sich, written by the Odessa-based historian Apollon Skal'kovskii. Urging every stanitsa administration to purchase a copy of the book, so that every Cossack could read it or listen to those who would read it aloud, Kukharenko laid stress on the need to know and remember the glorious deeds of the Black Sea Cossacks' ancestors. "Courageous comradery [*tovarystvo*; Kukharenko used the Zaporozhian term for Cossack community]! Who would be most pleased to know about the life and deeds of the former glorious Zaporozhian host, from whose blood we are born and whose weapon, protecting the Cossack honor and fame, has been thundering with victories on land, on water, and beyond water for over two centuries: at the walls of Sinop, Trabzon, and Istanbul? Who can be more proud of their glory and brave deeds, which we maintain to this day, serving to the great Sovereign? We, the Cossacks, the descendants of the Zaporozhians!"¹³⁷ Kukharenko's call to "remember the times of our ancestors, immortal through their glory" sounded out of the ordinary and was, in a sense, ahead of its time. At the same time, Skal'kovskii's book did enjoy certain success in Chernomoria—at least, according to the author himself.

Skal'kovskii claimed that the Black Sea host was the most grateful reader of the first edition of his book, which was sold almost entirely in two years, and the half of sales stock was purchased by the host. It, he wrote, "embraced the book as the genuine history of their ancestors," whereas among the "zealous subscribers" were plenty of ordinary Cossacks. The approval of the Zaporozhian descendants, assured Skal'kovskii, was the most veritable praise for him. In the introduction to the second edition, the historian boasted about the letter he had received from the Ataman of the host, Lieutenant General Nikolai Zavadovskii, in which the latter claimed that the book "brought the readers in Chernomoria much pleasure by reminding them about their meritorious ancestors and received overall approval and praise in all respects."¹³⁸ We cannot verify the reliability of Skal'kovskii's claims, but may assume that he was in contact with the local authorities

¹³⁷ L. Mel'nikov, "Ya. G. Kukharenko i T. G. Shevchenko v ikh vzaimnykh otnosheniakh," *Izvestiia OLIKO* 6 (1913): 38–39.

¹³⁸ A. Skal'kovskii, *Istoriia novoi Sechi ili poslednego Kosha Zaporozhskogo* (Odessa: Gorodskaia tipografiia, 1846), 11.

and the spread of his book was possible not so because of the popular initiative, but rather because of the involvement of the administration in this process. Besides, Skal'kovskii's personal fascination with the image of Chernomoria as the continuation of Zaporozhia, to the study of which he dedicated his life, inspired him to popularize not only his book, but also his own personality. Skal'kovskii expected that the Black Sea Cossacks would venerate him as the one who disclosed to them their own history. One historian, who visited Ekaterinodar in 1847, saw the portraits of Skal'kovskii in the office of Ataman Rashpil', with a caption around the picture, made in an old-style fashion:

“A. A. Skal'kovskii, the chronicler of the glorious Lower Zaporozhian host.”

Skal'kovskii, as the author wrote, sent his portraits on his own initiative and simply “flooded Chernomoria with them,” which was “a strange way of establishing one's own name.”¹³⁹ It was not the Black Sea host that discovered Skal'kovskii's book, but Skal'kovskii who discovered Chernomoria.

1.5. Experiments in the Colony: The North Caucasus as a Testing Ground for Russianness

In 1852, Kukharenko, an ardent Ukrainophile and admirer of Zaporozhia, was appointed acting Ataman of the Black Sea host, reaching the peak of his administrative career. Holding this position until 1855, he became the last representative of local Cossack nobility to be in charge of the host. Major General Grigorii Filipson, who substituted him on his position, was an officer of the regular army and owed his appointment to Caucasus Viceroy Nikolai Murav'ev. For the period of time during and after the Crimean War, in which the Black Sea Cossacks—most notably, Cossack infantry, *plastuns*—featured prominently, the old imperial pattern of thinking remained in force. Imperial authorities were elaborating a plan that envisaged resettling to the North Caucasus the Azov Cossack host—yet another, small in number, branch of Zaporozhia, composed in 1831 from the Cossacks that came from the Ottoman lands. According to this plan, the Azov Cossacks were supposed to join the Black Sea host, accomplishing by this the reunification of two branches of the Sich. In his opinion on this issue, Filipson considered the planned

¹³⁹ V. D. Dabizh, *Nikolai Nikiforovich Murzakevich. Avtobiografiia* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. S. Balasheva, 1889), 203.

resettlement as mutually beneficial for both hosts. Since the Azov Cossacks “originate from the same Zaporozhia, speak the same language, and have the same mores,” he wrote, they would only reinforce the military skills of each other. Filipson anticipated that the new Cossack settlers would regain the naval prowess of their grand-grandparents (who, as he stressed, organized successful sea campaigns from Zaporozhia to Trabzon), reemerging as a new highly skilled fleet at the eastern shores of the Black Sea.¹⁴⁰ The same year, the new Caucasus Viceroy, Prince Aleksandr Bariatinskii, expressed similar opinion, calling the planned unification beneficial for the reason that both hosts were “of the same tribe.”¹⁴¹

However, in the next few years, the social, demographic, and administrative situation of the North Caucasus went through dramatic changes that radically altered the life of the Black Sea host. As the war in the Caucasus was coming to the close, Bariatinskii, whom Alexander II gave power to run whatever reforms he considered necessary, put an end to the autonomous existence of the Black Sea Cossack host.¹⁴² In early 1860, he abolished Chernomoria as a separate administrative unit and established instead the Kuban oblast—the new region that comprised a much larger area, in which the internal territorial division was eventually redrawn so that the borders of Chernomoria fully disappeared within the new administrative system.¹⁴³ The same year, he united the Black Sea host with six brigades of the largely Russian-speaking Caucasus Line Cossack host under the new name of the Kuban Cossack host.¹⁴⁴

This was just a part of a large-scale reorganization of the system of imperial rule in the Caucasus, developed by Bariatinskii, Chief of Staff of the Caucasus troops Dmitrii Miliutin, and the commander of the North Caucasus troops, Nikolai Evdokimov. According to the project, designed by the Caucasus authorities and approved by War Minister Nikolai Sukhozanet and the emperor himself, the foothills of the North-West Caucasus were to be completely “freed” from the local population in order to be settled

¹⁴⁰ “Zapiska general-maiora Filipsona o zemle natukhaitsev,” 4 October 1856, *AKAK*, 12: doc. 600, p. 702.

¹⁴¹ “Predpolozhenie o zaniatiiakh i deistviakh voisk Otdel’nogo Kavkazskogo Korpusa na zimu s 1856 na 1857 god i v techenie 1857 goda,” *AKAK*, 12: doc. 546, p. 618.

¹⁴² For the “carte blanche,” see “Ukaz Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva namestniku Kavkazskomu,” 20 February 1860, *AKAK*, 12: doc. 37, p. 58.

¹⁴³ A. Bariatinskii to the Chair of the Caucasus Committee, 27 January 1860, *RGIA*, f. 1286, op. 10, d. 40, l. 1; *PSZ*, II, 35421; “Prikaz kn. Bariatinskogo po Kavkazskoi linii,” 3 May 1860, *AKAK*, 12: doc. 577, p. 662.

¹⁴⁴ “Prikaz kn. Bariatinskogo po Kavkazskoi armii,” 13 October 1860, *AKAK*, 12: doc. 741, p. 866; *PSZ*, II, 36327.

with Russian colonists. As Peter Holquist has shown, Miliutin and his like-minded colleagues, who adhered to the scientific pathos of statistical knowledge and its ostensible capacity to describe and categorize human diversity, introduced the metaphor of “element” as the unit of social fragmentation. As followed from this logic, “elements” could be useful or harmful, and mountain “elements” neatly fit into the second category. Holquist sees the expulsion of native Caucasus peoples to the Ottoman Empire as the first massive social experiment of population politics of the Russian Empire, influenced by similar colonial technics of other European empires in their overseas colonies. In order to make the North Caucasus “Russian,” the authorities wanted to introduce the “Russian element” into the already “vacant” territories (during the expulsion, more than 400,000 of the mountaineers were forced to leave their settlements, many of whom died during migration).¹⁴⁵ In effect, those who represented the essential “Russian element,” were the Black Sea and the Caucasus Line Cossacks, a substantial part of whom were to be resettled beyond the river of Kuban. However, very soon the authorities discovered that those whom they saw as exemplary “Russians,” were in fact an “element” not only alien, but also overtly hostile to the “Russians.”

Evdokimov’s order to the Cossacks to resettle to the lands beyond the Kuban caused grievances over the whole Chernomoria. In February 1861, assemblies of two Cossack settlements petitioned the local authorities to abandon the resettlement plan.¹⁴⁶ Several months later, a huge number of the Black Sea Cossack representatives from all over the region convoked a general meeting to elaborate the plan of actions. In the view of the Black Sea host officers, the measures undertaken by the new administration represented a single set of policies intended to destroy the host in every sense. An appeal, proclaimed by esaul Holovatyi on May 1, characterized the resettlement as a consistent continuation and just another stage of the process that started a year ago with the merger of the two hosts. Intending to mobilize general resistance, Holovatyi portrayed the host as an organic, coherent, and self-sufficient community, whose historical authenticity gave it the inalienable right for autonomous existence, all the more so that its very existence was

¹⁴⁵ Peter Holquist, “To Count, to Extract, To Exterminate: Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, eds. R. G. Suny and T. Martin (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 111–44.

¹⁴⁶ Report of the stanitsa administration of Staro-Shcherbinovskaia to A. Bariatinkii, 28 February 1861, AKAK, 12: doc. 750, pp. 872-874; P. Korolenko, “Pereselenie kazakov za Kuban. Russkaia kolonizatsiia na Zapadnom Kavkaze,” *Kubanskii sbornik* 16 (Ekaterinodar: 1911), 327–28.

legislatively guaranteed by Catherine II and confirmed by all successive rulers. Consequently, the creation of the Kuban host was that deleterious factor, which undermined the essence of the host in its core. “This merger strongly shattered the whole construction of our narod, our host, which rests on such a firm foundation as the four charters, granted by the subsequent Tsars . . .” Chernomoria, colonized (that is, created) just seventy years ago, appeared in his portrayal as an undoubted reality, the very nature of which was bound with its Cossack population by the bonds of deep emotional affection. “The pride, with which we look at our motherland, our land, our water, cannot be weakened,” asserted Holovaty. The Line Cossacks, joined to the Black Sea host, were so alien an implant that the healthy organism of the host was not able to digest it without being ruined. As he put it, “the merger of us with the *narod* of other language, other custom, other mores, the *narod* of other belief, kills in us the self-consciousness of our own dignity to such an extent that we have not realized yet whether we will be able to share our merits, bathed in the pure, undiluted blood of the Black Sea Cossacks, with our own [posterity]” The organicist rhetoric, which reached an extremum with the metaphor of purity of blood and the implied notion of genetic heredity, was no less pronounced with regard to the question of previous experiments with population politics, in which the government had involved the host. Thus, Holovaty contraposed the “merger” of 1860 with the waves of resettlement of Little Russians to Chernomoria. Unlike the Line host, introduction of the Little Russian population was beneficial, for they were the people of the same stock, “our kindred brethren [*odnoplementsy*] from the Chernihiv and Poltava gubernias, who easily settled down on the healthy roots of our basis.” In contrast to them, the Line Cossacks were “the people that has nothing of their own, the people that has no roots of their own,” the people who “are ready to abandon [everything] today to find tomorrow [what they need elsewhere],” and “only an accident forced us to merge in a lonely fate” with the Line host. Now and because of them, Holovaty warned, “we are losing the entire basis, the faithful Black Sea host.”¹⁴⁷

These views found their reflection in the official statement of the Black Sea host’s assembly. Several days later, upon the arrival of Evdokimov, who came to Ekaterinodar to restore order but was met with outspoken aversion and overt distrust, the Black Sea Cossack deputies handled him a memorandum, in which they agreed to comply with the

¹⁴⁷ “[Vozzvanie esaula Golovatogo],” 1 May 1861, in Korolenko, “Pereselenie kazakov,” 493–95.

resettlement project only on their own terms. Although seemingly courteous on the surface, the tone of the petition, signed by 93 representatives, was recalcitrant. Apart from manifesting their unwillingness to resettle, the petitioners insisted on complete revocation of the reform of 1860, requiring “to detach the six brigades of the former Caucasus Line host from the Black Sea host and to return to the Black Sea Cossacks the name of the Black Sea host, deserved by the ancestors and dear to us, both because all the charters and regalia were given under this name and because it was in the Black Sea waters that the Host gained its fame and its name, and settled on this sea’s shore, but mainly for the major reason that those six brigades that are joined to us are dominated by different schisms, while all of us are of the Orthodox faith.”¹⁴⁸ Such an expression of disloyalty made a strong effect on both the local and central authorities. Governor-General of Tiflis, Prince Grigol/Grigorii Orbeliani, who acted as the chief administrator of the Caucasus because of Bariatinskii’s illness, found it “audacious to such an extent” that he deemed it necessary to forward the memorandum to Bariatinskii. Miliutin called the stanitsas’ resolutions “audacious,” and the memorandum, “filled with even more audacious conditions, which they dared to request from their superiors. Alexander II, in turn, called it “inappropriate and even audacious.”¹⁴⁹ At the same time, the protest had tremendous effect. Not willing to exacerbate the situation, Evdokimov gave up the plan of forceful resettlement.¹⁵⁰ What is more, the emperor himself came to Ekaterinodar to calm down the situation.¹⁵¹

Correspondence of the bureaucrats reveals that the officialdom interpreted the Black Sea Cossacks’ disobedience of 1861 in terms of their ethnic origin—namely, rebelliousness, ostensibly inherent to the Little Russians. In June 1861, Bariatinskii composed a detailed letter to Dmitrii Miliutin, who by that time had become the acting war minister, where he explained the reasons of the Cossacks’ disobedience. Bariatinskii put the blame on the nobility of Chernomoria, Chernomorskie *pany*, as he accentuated by using the Ukrainian/Polish term, which instigated the rank-and-file Cossacks to the turmoil. “They dared to defiantly express their distrust of my orders, demanded the governmental guarantees, the decree of tsar, and return of the name of the Black Sea

¹⁴⁸ “Dokladnaia zapiska dvorian Chernomorskogo kozach’ego voiska,” *AKAK*, 12: doc. 766, pp. 891–92.

¹⁴⁹ G. Orbeliani to N. Evdokimov, 12 May 1861, *Ibid.*, doc. 770, p. 895; D. Miliutin to N. Evdokimov, 24 June 1861, *AKAK*, 12: doc. 786, p. 914; the emperor’s rescript to N. Evdokimov, 24 June 1861, *Ibid.*, doc. 788, p. 915.

¹⁵⁰ In his memoirs, Miliutin wrote that Evdokimov was “scared”: L. G. Zakharova, ed., *Vospominaniia general-fel’dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1860-1862* (Moscow: Trite, 1999), 127

¹⁵¹ Korolenko, “Pereselenie kazakov,” 356–63.

Cossacks, while appealing to some preposterous national pride of the name granted to them less than 70 years ago.” Bariatinskii confessed that he forebode the troubles on the part of the Black Sea Cossacks in general—precisely because of their Little Russian origin. “Since my arrival to the Caucasus as Commander-in-Chief, I looked at the Black Sea Cossacks with somewhat unwitting distrust. That is why I felt especially obliged to merge them in a single whole, as soon as possible, with our beautiful Russian element on the Caucasus.”¹⁵² Such personal testimony sheds light on the strategies of the local authorities with regard to Chernomoria. What matters more is his readiness to see the Little Russian origin of the Cossacks as the key to the explanation of what happened. Moreover, he made it clear of how “little” was the “Russian” constituent of the Black Sea Cossacks’ “Little Russianness” by directly contrasting them with the “Russian element” and, accordingly, exempting them from the “Russian” community altogether.

Bariatinskii’s letter to the war minister, Nikolai Sukhozanet, allows us to understand his intentions even better. Bariatinskii shared his views on the issue of why the separate existence of the Black Sea Cossacks was detrimental to the empire. “In the former Black Sea host,” the Viceroy wrote, “which consists of the Little Russians and keeps the traditions of the Zaporozhian Sich, this separateness takes the form of nationality [*natsional’nosti*] and is expressed by their dislike of outsiders, whom the Cossacks unfriendly call the Muscovites [*Moskaliami*].” The unification with the Russian speakers was thus a natural solution to the problem. “The merger of the former Black Sea host with the Caucasus [Line host] may counteract this occurrence, particularly harmful at the moment, but it is necessary that this merger would not be merely administrative in its nature, but would penetrate their whole way of life.” The loyalty of the Black Sea Cossack nobility was of particular concern to Bariatinskii. In his view, the gentry sought “popularity among the Cossacks by evincing the spirit of opposition under the pretext of [the defense of] the nationality and historical memory.”¹⁵³

Nikolai Evdokimov surpassed Bariatinskii in his disgust of the Black Sea Cossacks. While organizing the resettlement of the Cossacks beyond the Kuban, Evdokimov wrote to Miliutin, “it turned out that Chernomoria required special government measures. The majority of the local gentry, following and keeping the

¹⁵² A. Bariatinskii to D. Miliutin, June 14, 1861, OR RGB, f. 169, k. 157, ed. khr. 36, l. 11 ob.

¹⁵³ A. Bariatinskii to N. Sukhozanet, 2 April 1861, AKAK, 12: doc. 764, pp. 887, 890.

precepts of the former Little Russian Hetman Mazepa, is trying to maintain the spirit of a separate nationality [*natsional'nosti*] among the mass of ordinary people, oppressed by the gentry. It is angry with the merger with six brigades of the Caucasus Cossacks only because it fears of the introduction of foreign ideas as well as changes of the old order, which strengthened the spirit of hatred towards the Muscovites [*moskalian*] in Chernomoria and the gentry's right to harass the Cossacks with impunity. It is only now that I learned what Chernomoria is. I am convinced that it is an ulcer on the body of the Russian land, which can be cured only by being totally merged with the Caucasian [Line] Cossacks and through the decrease of the gentry."¹⁵⁴ This utterly eloquent letter shared some key ideas present in the letters by Bariatinskii to both Miliutin and Sukhozanet. Such were the claims about the Black Sea Cossacks' separateness, conveyed by the concept *natsional'nost'*; the alleged hatred for the *Moskali* and the very choice of this word; putting the blame on the nobility and the use of the words *pany* and *panstvo*, while hesitantly absolving the ordinary Cossacks. However, Evdokimov's rhetoric went much further in its alarmist accusations, which can be explained by the extent of personal responsibility of Evdokimov, his key role in launching the process of resettlement, and his failure in achieving any results already at its incipient stage. The rhetoric was self-defensive and dangerous in a sense that it called for action on part of the central government. Calling the Black Sea Cossacks followers of Mazepa implicitly meant charging them with treason, while using the epithet from medical practice by comparing Chernomoria with an ulcer on the healthy body of the Russian land implied healing procedures, more severe than the merger of two Cossack hosts.¹⁵⁵

Bariatinskii proposed Miliutin to take decisive steps to prevent the rise of autonomist sentiments in Chernomoria. Curiously, he accused the person, whom they put in charge of the resettlement project to advocate imperial interests, Yakov Kukharenko (the host's undisputed moral authority), of nurturing plans of reversing the advancement of Russification. He portrayed Kukharenko as seeking the protection of others, plotting domestic intrigues, and rallying his supporters on the Caucasus, on the Don, and even in

¹⁵⁴ N. Evdokimov to D. Miliutin, 27 June 1861, OR RGB, f. 169, k. 63, ed. khr. 38, ll. 3 ob, 4. A part of the letter has already been published in the comments to the Miliutin's memoirs, although the editors made some mistakes, the most significant being a misreading of the word "mass" [*v masse*] as "thought" [*v mysli*] in the abovementioned phrase—the phrase Evdokimov used in some of his other letters as well. Several scholars, who claim to have consulted with the archival document, repeat all the errors in their articles: Zakharova, *Vospominaniia*, 493.

¹⁵⁵ N. Evdokimov to D. Miliutin, June 27, 1861, OR RGB, f. 169, k. 63, ed. khr. 38, ll. 3 ob, 4.

St. Petersburg to establish the position of ataman, which would be in charge of the (former) Black Sea Cossacks. No wonder, assured Bariatinskii, that Kukharenko endeavored to get this position for himself. To avoid it, Bariatinskii recommended summoning of Kukharenko to St. Petersburg in order to distance him from the influence on local matters and appointing assistant commander of the troops of the Kuban oblast, General Nikolai Ivanov for the position of *nakaznoi* ataman. Thus, “the idea of the host’s unification would remain irreversible.”¹⁵⁶

Major-General Nikolai Ivanov, appointed in August 1861 (he had previously served as civil governor of the Kutaisi gubernia), fully shared the views of his Caucasus superiors. In a range of confidential letters to Evdokimov, he assessed the situation within the host, basing on the experience he had already had during his stay in Ekaterinodar. What he saw in Chernomoria upon his arrival, was a sort of separatism, evident in the general local sentiment and expressed in such signs as proclamations announcing the death of Chernomoria, which some Cossacks hanged on houses in the nighttime.¹⁵⁷ Observing the everyday life in Chernomoria, Ivanov reported that he had come to conclusion that the mental state of the local Cossacks was not caused by the resettlement project. Instead, “it has been in the making for a long time by an artificial concentration of the population on itself.” Such separateness of the Cossack inhabitants of Chernomoria, he claimed, was maintained in the minds of ordinary people by the Black Sea Cossack gentry who had a strong influence over the local way of life and benefited from the situation when “a Black Sea Cossack would call a Russian ‘*moskal*’ in the hostile sense, when they [Black Sea Cossacks] would not turn to the *moskal* for support in genuine sorrow and would not share with them their joy.” Otherwise, Ivanov wrote, the Cossacks would realize that nobles [*panstvo*] deceived them and had been enriching themselves at the Cossacks’ expense. Although young Cossacks, implicated in the recent events, “were subject to the legitimate justice for their improper actions, and especially for their thoughts [*sic!*],” the real culprits were the leaders of the host, who formed from the Black Sea Cossacks a caste “without any guarantees [of loyalty],” the caste that was “of grave concern” for the empire.

¹⁵⁶ A. Bariatinskii to D. Miliutin, June 14, 1861, OR RGB, f. 169, k. 157, ed. khr. 36, ll. 12 ob, 13.

¹⁵⁷ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 15 August 1861, in Korolenko, “Pereselenie kazakov,” 554.

Although clear in its message, Ivanov's logics was full of contradictions. Contrasting rank-and-file Cossacks with cunning *panstvo*, he nevertheless admitted that Cossack "hostile" attitudes did not emerge out of thin air, inculcated by the nobles, but lasted from the Zaporozhian era. The gentry, Ivanov wrote, "know how to flatter the authorities and how to speak about what their own people wanted, who by their duplicity nurture in the Black Sea Cossacks the fruitful hostility, which they have been harboring from the times of Zaporozhia." Moreover, underscoring naivety of ordinary Cossacks, he repeatedly referred to their support for the gentry. The Cossack nobles had such a strong influence that "people follow them, as their elders, without looking around." For Ivanov, the Black Sea Cossack particularism amounted to "paralysis," while what he saw as dynamics and movement forward was assimilation. The Black Sea Cossack officers did not allow the local "society" "to change and to assume the form of a good people [*prinimat' formy dobrogo naroda*]," assured the ataman. This was the premise he proceeded from: Ivanov argued for drastic transformation of Chernomoria by the complete demolition of the social and cultural foundations of the Cossacks' life. In the course of this transformation, the host would be created anew. "By half-measures, by sticking to the old routine, without financial expenditures, we cannot re-create [*peresozdat'*] the Black Sea Cossacks." If the drastic measures would not be adopted, the Cossacks "would remain what they are, progressively developing their dislike toward the native Russians. We need to act!"¹⁵⁸

Evdokimov had already been acquainted with Ivanov's plans for action, as the latter had specified them earlier. One of them was a proposal to transfer the headquarters of the Kuban Cossack host from Ekaterinodar to stanitsa Ust'-Labinskaia, a settlement belonging to the Line host. Unlike the capital of Chernomoria, the capital of the new host could by no means be retained in territory of the Black Sea Cossacks. The formal reason was the lack of appropriate edifices suitable to serve as administrative buildings. Still, opting for Ust'-Labinskaia, Ivanov was driven by considerations of yet another nature, all the more so that in Ust'-Labinskaia there were no administrative buildings at all (he proposed to build them from scratch). As he confessed, "apart from countless conveniences, [the transferring of the administration] would have an enormous moral military significance on the Cossacks. Only then, and not in any other case, can the truly

¹⁵⁸ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 25 August 1861, *ibid.*, 556–57.

Cossack, Line principles triumph in the Kuban host, while old ingrained prejudices of the Black Sea Cossacks with all their implications would perish forever.” In the North Caucasus, the “true” Cossack was the Line Cossack and the other way around, simply for the reason of his being “Russian,” while the Black Sea Cossack “principles” were the outdated phenomenon, which had to be dissolved under the new influence.¹⁵⁹

Ivanov saw particular need in changing not only the system of the host’s main administration (it goes without saying that in the new administrative center, officials were supposed to be recruited from the Line Cossacks or Russian career officers), but the system of military administration as well. According to his plan, commanders of the former Black Sea Cossack cavalry regiments and infantry battalions were to be appointed from the regular army or the Line host. The Black Sea Cossack officers were to be banned from serving within the territory of Chernomoria, but they could be provided with the freedom of serving outside of it.¹⁶⁰ Ivanov’s suggestions were quite inconsistent as to the question of career perspectives of the Black Sea Cossack military elite, for in the next letter to Evdokimov, written just in two days, he refuted the possibility of their service within the host altogether. “In strict hands, ordinary Black Sea Cossacks can be good, obedient, and brave servants, not inferior to others,” wrote Ivanov, employing his characteristic rhetoric of siding with “ordinary” people, “but their officers, both high- and low-ranking, are not suitable for military service, are unable and cannot be commanders. Moreover, they do not wish to command if they find no substantial benefits.”¹⁶¹ By the same token, he put into doubt their ability to serve as the heads of the Kuban districts. The officers made the host “the independent caste and there is nothing good.”¹⁶² Ivanov did not rule out the possibility of their service in these positions, although stressed the lack of competent personnel: “In Chernomoria, one can find three decent persons easier than six.”¹⁶³ Nevertheless, in a rather usual manner, he stated that in charge of the districts should be the “good people, from the outside.”¹⁶⁴

Apparently, Ivanov’s proposal seemed too bold to his superiors to be taken into action in full, but Evdokimov shared some of his suggestions, finding them necessary for

¹⁵⁹ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 15 August 1861, *ibid.*, 555.

¹⁶⁰ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 25 August 1861, *ibid.*, 558.

¹⁶¹ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 27 August 1861, *ibid.*, 559.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 21 August 1861, *ibid.*, 556.

¹⁶⁴ N. Ivanov to N. Evdokimov, 25 August 1861, *ibid.*, 558.

the transformation of the host. In his letter to Orbeliani, he insisted on the need of the substitution of the majority of positions in the internal administration of former Chernomoria with non-Cossack career officers “or even” Line Cossack officers in order to “eradicate the harmful way of thinking and the ingrained insularity” of the Black Sea Cossacks.¹⁶⁵

The general line of social engineering continued after Ivanov’s dismissal in 1863. Feliks Sumarokov-El’ston, who followed him in the position of head of the Kuban oblast (the title of *nakaznoi* ataman was abolished for a short period), adhered to the same set of nationalistic policies.¹⁶⁶ Having proclaimed the introduction of general education as one of the major goals of his administration, Sumarokov-El’ston initiated a number of measures aimed at creating a system of schools and public libraries throughout the Kuban oblast. In so doing, he ordered to establish eighteen libraries in different districts and units, assigning one hundred rubles for each at his personal expense and obliging Cossacks of officer ranks to retain one percent of their salary for budgets of the libraries.¹⁶⁷ In 1863, he announced the plan to establish primary schools in every stanitsa of the oblast within one year, to “elevate the Cossacks in moral and economic respects.”¹⁶⁸ The initiative proved successful: if in 1863 settlements of the oblast had 47 schools with 1427 pupils, in 1867 there were 209 schools, and the number of schoolchildren increased to 6319.¹⁶⁹ While contemporaries praised Sumarokov-El’ston’s achievements in the field of education, the logic behind his efforts was the struggle with Little Russian particularism. He regarded former Chernomoria as a laboratory of radical Russification. In his letter to Dmitrii Miliutin, he boasted that “the Russian element penetrated the heart of Chernomoria and will swallow it insensibly. To this end, I established schools in all the settlements to inculcate a new generation the Russian language. My course of action has been constantly based on the awareness of the need of not only to not isolate the Black Sea Cossacks, but, instead, to introduce fresh, new elements to their closed environment—it cannot be done in Little Russia . . .”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ N. Evdokimov to G. Orbeliani, 11 August 1861, *AKAK*, 12: doc. 797, p. 924.

¹⁶⁶ For the abolition of the title of ataman see: “Prikazy po Kavkazskoi armii,” *KVV*, 13 February 1865, 25.

¹⁶⁷ I. Belous, “Budut ili ne budut u nas v voiske obshchestvennye biblioteki?” *KVV*, 13 March 1865, 44; “Prikaz po Kubanskomu kazach’emu voisku ot 7/8 dekabria 1865 goda,” *KVV*, 11 December 1865, 193.

¹⁶⁸ I. Belous, “Eshche o stanichnykh shkolakh,” *KVV*, 23 January 1865, 15; Sviashchennik T. Stepanov, “Neskol’ko slov o Kanelovskom stanichnom uchilishche,” *KVV*, 17 April 1865, 40.

¹⁶⁹ “Doklad kantseliarii nakaznogo atamana,” *KVV*, 26 August 1867, 129.

¹⁷⁰ F. Sumarokov-El’ston to D. Miliutin, 10 March 1865, *OR RGB*, f. 169, k. 75, ed. khr. 79, l. 2.

Like other administrators before him, Sumarokov-El'ston saw this imperial colony as a space for bold experiments, unthinkable in internal gubernias. However, the difficulties he met disappointed him. A year later, he assessed the achieved results rather critically. In a letter to Miliutin, he complained that in this "new region," the "diverse elements were introduced hastily, and the indigenous Cossack population, merged under the common 'Kuban' name, does not still have even the common organic conditions. My three-year-long efforts, of course, smoothed the sharp facets of this once formidable question, but it is just a preparatory work, beyond which I, with all my desire, cannot go. Is the merger possible when all things live and operate on different principles? The clergy, officers, society, administration, and military service in two parts of the Kuban host differ from each other much more sharply than the Caucasus [differs] from the rest of Russia."¹⁷¹

* * *

The confidential correspondence of the authorities in charge of the Kuban oblast reflected the major shift in the governmental policies dealing with cultural and social diversity of the territories of the North Caucasus. Prior to 1861, or 1860 as the earliest, the military and civil bureaucrats framed the Black Sea Cossack host in ethnic terms, but did not generally consider their Little Russian origin as the source of potential difficulties. On the contrary, they saw it as an advantageous resource, effective for using for military purposes. The events of 1861 occurred in a dramatic period of the imperial reforms, when newcomers to the administrative scene and veteran bureaucrats alike were in constant search for new social strategies, new ideologies for the state, and new experiential foundations of the imperial politics, based on ostensibly real, scientific knowledge. Officials and the ruling dynasty grew increasingly more nationalistic, even though they lacked a substantial understanding of what was the nature of the nation with which they were so preoccupied.¹⁷² It was a perfect moment for the escalation of nationalist sentiment

¹⁷¹ F. Sumarokov-El'ston to D. Miliutin, 23 January 1866, OR RGB, f. 169, k. 75, ed. khr. 79, l. 24.

¹⁷² Mikhail Dolbilov has convincingly shown the importance of the role the nationalist sentiment played in the 1861 emancipation reform, being a driving force behind the aspirations of the group of reform's architects. Nikolai Miliutin and his like-minded associates came to see the peasantry as an inherently primordial, organic Russian mass, rooted in the soil. The newly emerged nationalist sentiment anticipated the more overt nationalist policy unleashed after the Polish uprising of 1863, when this sentiment clearly became a political instrument: Mikhail Dolbilov, "The Emancipation Reform of 1861 in Russia and the Nationalism of the Imperial Bureaucracy," in *The Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories*

on the part of the authorities, whose notion of state-forming nationhood was drastically challenged by those whom they had seen—or had claimed to have seen—as a pillar of this nationhood. From this time onwards, Little Russian origin of the Black Sea Cossacks came to be seen as the explanation of the past, ongoing, and future problems, which the government faced and could face afterwards. However, this vision did not entrench at once, and the former habits of thinking persisted for a while. What was even more remarkable, new and old ideological patterns could coexist and overlap not only in the same time, but also in the minds of the same person. In either 1861 or 1862, Dmitrii Miliutin found it permissible to speak about the consolidation of Little Russian presence in Chernomoria. In his note on the project of the colonization of the North-West Caucasus, composed in 1861, he maintained that “those settlers, summoned to Chernomoria, should necessarily be Little Russians, as people, akin to the Black Sea Cossacks in origin, language, and mores.”¹⁷³ This, however, was an odd exception, inconsistent with the new views and political agendas of the Caucasus administration.

The reaction of the imperial authorities on the disobedience of the Black Sea Cossack elites demonstrates a remarkable phenomenon of the new era, which was also brought about by nationalistic or even populist ideas on the part of imperial bureaucrats. Relying on local elites was no longer effective. In subsequent years, the tsarist officialdom would feel the necessity to contrapose gentry and people, giving preference to the latter, in other regions of the empire, as it was with Polish gentry after the uprising of 1863. The events of 1861 in Chernomoria precipitated yet another major development of 1863. It was the so-called Valuev circular, which restricted the sphere of use of the Ukrainian language and launched the struggle of the authorities with what they saw as expressions of Ukrainian separatism.¹⁷⁴ Several years before the “Ukrainian question” became the subject of acute concern of civil administrators in Kiev and St. Petersburg, it became the major source of irritation for military administrators in the North Caucasus. There was one person, however, who participated in both developments. Dmitrii Miliutin, who fostered

in Slavic Eurasia, ed. Tadayuki Hayashi (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center at Hokkaido University, 2003), 205–35.

¹⁷³ “Zapiska, sostavlennaia Voennym Ministrom Miliutinym,” 3 May 1862, in Korolenko, “Pereselenie kazakov,” 564.

¹⁷⁴ Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question: The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2003); Johannes Remy, “The Valuev Circular and Censorship of Ukrainian Publications in the Russian Empire (1863-1876): Intention and Practice,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 49, no. 1/2 (2007): 87–110.

the adoption of the circular in June 1862, had already had at that point the experience of dealing with Little Russians' disloyalty in Chernomoria, which must have seriously affected his attitude toward Little Russians in general.

Miliutin's memoirs show his overt contempt for Little Russians. Giving his opinion about the Caucasus Cossack hosts on the eve of the reforms, he highly appraised the Line Cossacks (their manners, way of life, appearance, military skills), but noted that the Black Sea Cossacks were no match for them simply because they "remained the same genuine ukes [*istymi kokhlami*] like it were their ancestors on the Dnieper."¹⁷⁵ In another volume of the memoirs, Miliutin characterized the merger of the Line and Black Sea hosts in similar terms. "[T]he main stumbling block was the merger of two so different elements as the Line and Black Sea Cossacks: they were almost two different people [*naroda*] that did not resemble each other in ethnographical sense, in military organization and, most importantly, in spirit and mores. The Black Sea Cossacks were always known for their uke [*khokhlatskim*] stubbornness and conservatism, they always resented any changes in their specific life."¹⁷⁶ Stubborn in one respect, according to Miliutin, they were naïve and malleable in another, when it came to easiness with which the Black Sea Cossack elites incited masses to resist the government and hate "moskali."¹⁷⁷

That this was the empire's first major encounter with Ukrainian disloyalty was a point made by one of the few historians who touched upon this issue, Arnol'd Zisserman. He rendered the dissatisfaction of the Cossacks with the designs of the authorities in terms of two different epochs. On the one hand it was as an expression of Ukrainophilia of the Black Sea Cossacks, especially of their intellectual class, which clearly belonged to the nineteenth century. On the other, it was a demonstration of their desire to secure their old privileges, substantial autonomy, and particularism, which referred to the early modern Cossack concepts.¹⁷⁸

No matter how firm the intentions and aspirations of the architects of the reforms in the Kuban oblast might have been, Cossack elites of Chernomoria did not necessarily

¹⁷⁵ G. Khristiani, ed., *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina*, t. I, kn. 1, 2, 3 (Tomsk: Tipografiia Voennoi akaedmi, 1919), 295.

¹⁷⁶ L. Zakharova, ed., *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1856–1860* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 288.

¹⁷⁷ L. Zakharova, ed., *Vospominaniia general-fel'dmarshala grafa Dmitriia Alekseevicha Miliutina, 1860–1862* (Moscow: Studiia TRITE, 1999), 127.

¹⁷⁸ A. L. Zisserman, "Fel'dmarshal kniaz' A. I. Bariatinskii," *Russkii arkhiv* 6 (1889): 269.

interpret them right. More likely, many members of the Black Sea Cossack nobility only gradually came to understand the changes as assimilationist, while at the initial phases they saw the changes as the ones that broadened the space of possibilities for their particularistic agenda. For example, Aleksandr/Oleksandr Kukharenko, the son of Yakov Kukharenko, preoccupied himself with introducing Ukrainian language in primary education in the early 1860s, the time that was anything but conducive for that sort of activity. In 1863, in the midst of the Russification campaign in the oblast, he asked his friend, a St. Petersburg-based Ukrainophile priest and church writer, Stepan Opatovych/Opatovich to send him ecclesiastical books, which he would spread in local schools. “Here, in Chernomoria, schools are being opened in every settlement [Kukharenko used the word “kurin” instead of “stanitsa”]. It would be very good if studies would first be established in our language,” because “there are no primers in Ukrainian here.”¹⁷⁹ Kukharenko referred to the developments in elementary education brought about to eliminate the Little Russian distinctiveness of Chernomoria. He hardly wanted to undermine the local language policy from within, using the mechanism of its implementation to serve diametrically opposite purposes. Rather, he was not aware of the Russification strategy that underlined the proliferation of the primary schools in the lands of the former Black Sea host. Apparently, Kukharenko not only considered the Ukrainian language as a means of spreading religion and education, but also the other way around—by seeing education and religion as a means of spreading the Ukrainian language. His expectations did not come true, and the subsequent years made it clear that the Kuban oblast entered a new era, with no room for “anachronisms” and cultural distinctions.

1.6. Effacing Chernomoria: The Kuban Oblast during the Great Reforms

Some of the great changes, planned in the early 1860s, did not come to fruition. The administration of the new host remained in Ekaterinodar because of the lack of sums required for building the new administrative center.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the Staff of the troops of

¹⁷⁹ A. I. Fedina, “Pis'mo A. Ya. Kukharenko k S. I. Opatovichu,” in A. I. Slutskii, ed., *Knizhnoe delo na Severnom Kavkaze: Istorii i sovremennost'* (Krasnodar: 2004), 401–3.

¹⁸⁰ A. Malukalo, *Kubanskoe kazach'e voisko v 1860–1914 gg.* (Krasnodar: Kuban'kino, 2003), available at www.cossackdom.com/book/bookkuban1.html (retrieved 20 November 2016).

the Kuban oblast, the administrative body, initially established in Stavropol, was transferred to Ekaterinodar instead. The local newspaper *Kubanskije voiskovyje vedomosti* (Kuban host newspaper), established in 1863, proudly announced that the locals, who in late 1864 were afraid that local governmental bodies would move out of the town, welcomed this change as a “supernatural, miraculous phenomenon.”¹⁸¹

The central imperial authorities, however, had much more far-reaching plans of reforms that were intended to affect every aspect of Cossacks’ life. These changes, which were in accordance with the general mood of the reformist era, were directed to the profound reorganization of the system of administration of Cossack territories in order to transform the Cossack military caste into more open, easily governable, economically effective, and modern communities of imperial subjects. The development of “citizenship” (*grazhdanstvennosti*) among the masses of Cossacks, the key term in the lexicon of the new governmental politics, was the ultimate goal of Dmitrii Miliutin, the war minister from 1861 to 1881. Bringing Cossacks closer to non-Cossack peasant population of the empire, making them “citizens” rather than warriors, envisaged elimination of a great deal of their estate privileges and blurring the borders of Cossack particularism.¹⁸² It also implied the Cossacks’ imminent face-to-face encounter with non-Cossack emancipated masses. The reforms that Miliutin planned to implement in Cossack territories, included the introduction of private ownership on land instead of the collective one, the granting of the right to leave the Cossack estate, the making of military service non-mandatory, and the abolition of restrictions for newcomers to obtain property and settle in Cossack lands.¹⁸³

In 1867, Ekaterinodar became a civic town, open for non-Cossack newcomers, and all its Cossack residents were required either to exist from the Cossack estate, if they wanted to remain in the town, or to move to specially designated stanitsas. In 1868, the State Council issued the law that allowed individuals who did not belong to the Cossack estate to settle and acquire property in Cossack territories,¹⁸⁴ which opened up the possibility for residents of internal gubernias suffering from land shortage to come to the

¹⁸¹ “Voiskovaia letopis’,” *KVV*, 6 March 1865, 40; “Tsirkuliar Inspektorskogo departamenta Voennogo ministerstva,” *KVV*, 15 May 1865, 73.

¹⁸² The notion of “citizenship” did not refer to any legal definitions. Rather, it was understood as a moral bond between an imperial subject and the state, epithomized by the emperor.

¹⁸³ A. Volvenko, “D. A. Miliutin i kazachestvo,” *Bylye gody* 40, no. 2 (2016): 404.

¹⁸⁴ PSZ, II, 43, 45785.

Kuban oblast in large numbers. In the years from 1871 to 1880, 175.3 thousand of non-Cossack newcomers (so-called “*inogorodnie*”) moved to the region. During the next decade, from 1881 to 1890, the flow of newcomers only increased, amounting to 284.3 thousand. Although the amount of *inogorodnie* decreased in subsequent years, it remained stable at a high level until the beginning of the Great War. In total, 974.6 thousand migrants from internal gubernias came to the Kuban oblast up to 1915.¹⁸⁵ Regulations of local administration, adopted in 1870, allowed *inogorodnie* participating, on pair with Cossacks, in stanitsa conventions that addressed local affairs. Another group that obtained the right to participate in conventions were young Cossacks. The participation of these groups in this form of local self-government undermined the traditional authority of Cossack elders.¹⁸⁶ In 1869, the administration of the oblast launched the process of demarcation of the host lands, which eventually allowed transferring land to private ownership and enabled Cossacks to have a delineated share of land (*pai*) in their use.¹⁸⁷

In 1874, fourteen years after the merger of the Black Sea host with the six brigades of the Line host, Kuban as the new imperial creation confronted the dramatic alternation of the local historical narrative. The representation of Chernomoria, with its rebellious Zaporozhian spirit, gave its way to the idea of loyal, civilized, and Russified Kuban. Along with it, the idea of continuity between the Zaporozhian and the Black Sea hosts was challenged by a new foundation myth of the Kuban Cossacks’ genealogy, suggested by the central officials. In an attempt to introduce a new imagery for the Kuban host, high-ranking military functionaries put the Zaporozhian narrative in the background while bringing to the fore a new concept of the Kuban Cossacks’ lineage. No public debates or historical disputes preceded this shift; neither did they cause it. Being a subject of the imperial military system in almost all respects, with its vertical discipline of subordination, the Kuban host received its new official genealogy through the order from above. The mechanism of implementing it was the principle of seniority (*starshinstvo*), according to which the Cossack hosts, the Kuban included, deduced its origin from a certain date in the past, prescribed by the War Ministry. It was a notable and distinguishing feature for the Cossack communities to have the moment of their origin determined with an accuracy of up to a year, officially approved on the highest level, and

¹⁸⁵ V. M. Kabuzan, *Ukraintsy v mire. Dinamika chislennosti i rasseleniia. 20-e gody XVIII veka-1989 god* (Moscow: Nauka, 2006), 504.

¹⁸⁶ Manuilov, *Obychnoe pravo Kubanskikh kazakov*, 114–21.

¹⁸⁷ PSZ, II, 44, 46996.

certified in law. The imperial authorities fixed the precise date of every host's establishment and arrogated themselves the right to be the supreme arbiter in the issues of historical memory by setting up the seniority system.

We know little about the motives that guided the imperial officials in their date choice and all the participants of the decision-making process related to the assignment of seniority to the Kuban Cossack host. What we know is that on March 28, 1874, Alexander II issued a decree that determined seniority for two Caucasus Cossack hosts. The Terek host received the year 1577, while the Kuban host received a much more recent foundation year, 1696, taken conditionally as the year of the first mention of the Khoper Cossacks (the ancestors of the Khoper regiment, a unit that constituted a part of the Line Cossack brigades joined to the Black Sea host in 1860). This decision heralded the priority of the Line Cossack constituent of the Kuban host, with the date of 1696 referring to the Khoper Cossacks' participation in the capture of Azov. At the same time, the emperor's decree designated 1788 as the year of seniority for all of the regiments formed from the Cossacks of former Chernomoria, stating that it was the year when the Cossacks of the "former Zaporozhian host were allowed to settle in Chernomoria."¹⁸⁸ In doing so, the decree acknowledged the Zaporozhian origin of the former Black Sea Cossacks, but put a particular emphasis on the rupture in the continuity, significant enough for not treating them as the direct Zaporozhian successors. Thus, the role of the Khoper Cossacks was determinant of the history of the entire Kuban host in general. In the contest for seniority, the Line Cossacks took the upper hand over the Black Sea Cossacks.

The Cossack seniority system was modeled on the practice of determining seniority for imperial army regiments. Every regiment had the precise date of its creation, which allowed ranking the regiments according to the time of their serving for the Russian Empire, allocating the regiments' position for the military parades, and celebrating the regiments' fetes. The durability of the military units' combat service was particularly meaningful for the state, which attached great importance to military symbolism. Celebrations of centennial and bicentennial anniversaries throughout the nineteenth century, as military command believed, evoked the feeling of pride for fighting in ranks of victorious military units and fueled the wish to maintain this historical continuity by future heroic exploits.

¹⁸⁸ PSZ, II, 49, 53325.

As the principle of seniority for Cossack hosts was modeled after this pattern, the oldest host's regiment determined the overall age of the host. At the same time, one should not underestimate the distinction between the significance of seniority for Cossack regiments and the regular army. For regular imperial regiments, seniority was a symbolic tradition of the imperial army system, which did not affect larger segments of society. Unlike it, for Cossack hosts the year of seniority marked the moment of origin for entire Cossack communities, some of which, like the Don and Kuban hosts, consisted of hundreds of thousands people. Hence, its meaning went far beyond the limits of narrow military symbolism and determined the beginnings of the Cossack communities' history.

To whom belonged the idea of changing the history of Kuban? As it follows from the preamble of the decree, its initiator was the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus Army and the Viceroy of the Caucasus, Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich, the youngest brother of Alexander II. Mikhail Nikolaevich, who assumed office in December 1862, came to rule over the territories that were about to be finally subdued to the empire. In early 1865, the next year after the Russian army completed the conquest of the North Caucasus, he issued the decree, which commissioned to elect the officers among all the Caucasus regiments and battalions that participated in the war to write the histories of the military actions of their respective units. The task of these histories was to "save for the posterity the stories of the feats performed by military units and individuals during the sixty-year long continuous war with the highlanders, which should be as much complete and detailed as possible."¹⁸⁹ In addition, Mikhail Nikolaevich urged the persons concerned to supplement the archival work with their personal memories, eyewitness accounts, and stories of different kind. This initiative envisaged the compilation of the fullest comprehensive historical synthesis embracing all events of the Caucasus war. These efforts, which implied obtaining the most complete knowledge about the war by looking at it through the eyes of the widest possible range of people, faced certain difficulties on the part of those who took upon this task. The officers-turned-historians did not possess the required skills of history writing. Still, for some of them it was an important experience and impetus for the further work within the field of regimental history.

¹⁸⁹ O. Matveev, "Velikii Kniaz' Mikhail Nikolaevich na zavershaiushchem etape Kavkazskoi voiny," *Bylye gody* 13, no. 3 (2009): 27.



Fig. 2. Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich dressed in the attire of Zaporozhian ataman of the second half of the 17th century at the costume ball in the Winter Palace, February 1903. Source: *Al'bom kostiumirovannogo bala v Zimnem dvortse v fevrale 1903 g.* (St. Petersburg: Ekspeditsiia zagotovleniia gosudarstvennykh bumag, 1904), xii.

In May 1867, Mikhail Nikolaevich made a trip to the Kuban oblast, during which he stopped over in several stanitsas founded by the Koper Cossacks, who at that moment composed the 16th and 17th Kuban regiments of the 4th brigade. The local newspaper gave an interesting detail of his stay in stanitsa Nevinnomysskaia. According to a testimony of a participant of the solemn reception of the viceroy, Mikhail Nikolaevich proposed a toast for the health of the 4th brigade, “the oldest unit of the Kuban host,” which emerged on the river Koper in 1716 from to repel the raids of the Tatars.¹⁹⁰ The author of the article was Major General Ivan Kravtsov, the commander of the 4th brigade in the years 1861-1870, and the future author of the first historical work on the Koper Cossacks.¹⁹¹ Most likely, it was Kravtsov who informed the viceroy about the primacy of

¹⁹⁰ Koperskii kazak I. K., “O poseshchenii Ego Imperatorskim Vysochestvom, Glavnokomanduiushchim Kavkazskoi armiei, 4-i brigady Kubanskogo voiska,” *KOV*, 10 June 1867, 89.

¹⁹¹ V. A. Kolesnikov, “Istoriografiia Koperskogo polka,” *Kubanskii sbornik* 22 (2006), available at <http://www.gipanis.ru/?level=288&type=page&lid=282> (retrieved 19 November 2016).

his regiment. The decree that followed seven years later was likely to have been built upon this idea.

This date stood apart among the official dates of origin of other hosts. In the imperial hierarchy of seniority, which had been gradually established by 1917, the Kuban host occupied the ninth place among eleven Cossack hosts that existed in the Russian Empire. It followed the Don (1570), Orenburg (1574), Terek (1577), Siberian (1582), Ural (1591), Zabaikalian (1655), Ussuri (1655), and Amur (1655) Cossack hosts, being ahead of only the Astrakhan (1750) and Semirechian (1852) hosts.¹⁹² Such a rank was hardly honorable for the former Black Sea Cossack elites that were accustomed to seeing their host—the second largest Cossack community of the empire—as equal to, if not older than, the Don host. The exceptionality of the year of Kuban Cossacks' seniority misled such an experienced specialist as Lieutenant General Nikolai Maslakovets, a leading General Staff's expert in Cossack affairs and advisor on issues relating to the Cossack estate. In one of his expert works, he wrote that “in the official spheres, the sixteenth century is considered to be the epoch of the formation of the first Cossack hosts in Russia.” As Maslakovets further explained, “1570 is considered the beginning of the Don host's formation, for the Kuban host seniority is assumed to be counted from 1596, the Ural host celebrated its tercentenary, counting it from 1591, etc.”¹⁹³ This mistake certainly shows that even the most experienced imperial specialists on Cossack issues treated the Kuban host as a normal, natural community, equal in age to the earliest Cossack communities.

Comparing the date of seniority of the Kuban host with those of other hosts shows that the imperial authorities sought to search the earliest possible dates as the years of seniority. In order to push the origins of a certain host back in time, they often disregarded continuity, as they did in the case of the Siberian Cossack host (as such, it emerged only in the early nineteenth century), or connection with territory, as they did it in the case of the Amur and Ussuri Cossacks (established on the Amur and Ussuri rivers in the mid-nineteenth century). In any case, no clear rules for determining the dates of seniority ever existed. When in 1914 the military historian Georgii Gabaev authored a survey to examine the foundations of this symbolical practice, he concluded that the military tradition had not elaborated the precise algorithm for assigning seniority to imperial regiments and Cossack

¹⁹² T. V. Tabolina, ed., *Rossiiskoe kazachestvo: Nauchno-spavochnoe izdanie* (Moscow: Institut etnologii i antropologii RAN, 2003), 22.

¹⁹³ N. A. Maslakovets, “Po voprosu o razrabotke osnovanii dlia sostavleniia istorii kazach'ikh voisk,” RGVIA, f. 400, op. 25, d. 174, l. 31 ob.

hosts. According to him, there was a “complete confusion” in regard of the principles of determining seniority. While some military units succeeded in receiving seniority after their ancient ancestors, sometimes semi-mythical, other units were not able to receive seniority from a certain year even though at that time they already existed in the same form under the same name. As it was for cavalry, artillery, and infantry, no rules existed for Cossacks at all, and there was a “wide variety of combinations of seniority assignment.”¹⁹⁴ Installing the historical narrative of the Khoper Cossacks as the basis of the host’s lineage was a consequence of the reformist efforts to displace the Zaporozhian narrative to the margins and invent a new foundation myth for the Kuban host.

* * *

By the end of the 1860s, the idea of the Kuban oblast as a melting pot for formerly distinct communities became firmly entrenched in the official discourse. Authors of *Kubanskie voiskovye vedomosti*, the periodical that aimed at shaping the new vision of the region, celebrated the obliteration of differences as an accomplished fact. In 1868, describing the solemn blessing of the banners granted to the Kuban host’s units by Alexander II for their participation in the conquest of the Caucasus, the newspaper gave a characteristic of the new citizens that gathered in Ekaterinodar. “Elders and youngsters, summoned from stanitsas of [various] districts, different regiments and brigades, merged into one family; among them and their sisters, wives and mothers there are no more Line and Black Sea Cossacks, they all are Kuban Cossacks. This is a joyful and long desired fact!”¹⁹⁵

The same, the newspaper assured, was all the more true in Transkubania, the main arena of the imperial social and demographic experiment. With the mountaineers expelled or exterminated, and with representatives of various Cossack hosts settled there in a jumble with army soldiers, it became an ideal place for effacing the cultural distinctions. “In the Psekupskii regiment,” wrote an author of *Kubanskie voiskovye vedomosti* in 1867, “one can hardly see the imprint of nationality that previously was so distinct when one looked at a Black Sea or Line Cossack. The same military department, the same dexterity

¹⁹⁴ G. S. Gabaev, *O starshinstve voiskovykh chastei i khronikakh grenaderskikh i pekhotnykh polkov* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Nikolaevskoi voennoi akademii, 1914), 5–7.

¹⁹⁵ “G. Ekaterinodar,” *KVV*, 25 May 1868, 91.

of mounting the horse, the same skillfulness in fancy riding; all it is merged so neatly that one cannot make a distinction who is the Black Sea Cossack, who is the Line Cossack, who is a settler from Orenburg, whereas Russian settlers, *muzhiks*, are not the last ones among them.”¹⁹⁶

Reporting about the immediate success of the merger, these remarks sought to affect the social reality rather than describe it. Memoirs of Kuban Cossacks who grew up in the reformist time testify to the persistence of cultural differences well into the 1870s. Not only adults retained their pre-1860 names and cultural allegiances, but also children were raised in the environment that maintained the lines of distinction that officially did not exist. In 1907, Kirill Zhivilo, a famous public figure, recalled his childhood experience as a host choir singer in Ekaterinodar in 1864. This was the year when some Line Cossack children became members of the choir for the first time. Black Sea Cossack boys, who all spoke Little Russian, mocked the newcomers and laughed at their language, whereas children from both Chernomoria and Linia called each other by abusive terms.¹⁹⁷

Another intellectual, Leonid Sokolov, an ultra-conservative Cossack monarchist, left memoirs about his early years in Ekaterinodar in the 1870s. As he wrote, students of the host gymnasium tended to divide themselves into the groups of the Line and Black Sea Cossacks, arguing over who was the most courageous and belligerent, and who had more heroes, until it came to fight. Black Sea Cossack children, Sokolov claimed, felt pride when the most illustrious general of the host, Pavel Babych, led Cossack parades. When Line Cossack children acknowledged Babych’s undisputed excellence, Black Sea Cossack children celebrated their “speaking in the modern way, and ‘national’ victory (Black Sea Cossacks were Little Russians and Line Cossacks, Great Russians).”¹⁹⁸ Sokolov reflected upon his childhood in terms of early-twentieth-century nationalism, and his Black Sea Cossack pride was a dominant sentiment of the time when he wrote it (see chapter 5), but his memoirs still suggest that beneath the surface of official rhetoric, the results of the merger were not apparent.

¹⁹⁶ Anton Rzhondkovskii, “Iz-za Kubani,” *KVV*, 25 March 1867, 48.

¹⁹⁷ K. Zhivilo, “Moi vospominaniia iz prebyvaniia v voiskovom pevcheskom khore,” *KOV*, 18 August 1907, 2.

¹⁹⁸ L. Tmutaraknskii, “Babych Pavel Denisovich, General Leitenant Kubanskogo kazach’ego voiska. 1801-1883 g. (Bibliograficheskii ocherk),” *Kubanskii sbornik* 19 (1914), 752.

1.7. Chernomoria Resurfaces: Alexander III's Visit to Ekaterinodar in 1888

Late at night in 1893, Ivan Akinfiev, a plant scientist who studied at the Ekaterinodar religious school from 1863 to 1869, was travelling on a train to Kuban. When his train entered the territory of the oblast, making a stop at the station of Tikhoretskaia, a person sitting nearby initiated a short dialog:

“Were not you sleeping?”

“No, all the time I was thinking about Chernomoria, which used to be here.”

“Oh! –It has long been gone here; now the times are different.”¹⁹⁹

This night encounter is a telling testimony to the changing character of the region. A newcomer to the oblast, Akinfiev arrived three years after Chernomoria was officially abolished, and the next six years that he spent there were the years of the most intensive dismantling of the remnants of Chernomoria's administrative foundation. Nevertheless, despite of the dominant political endeavor, he discovered this region precisely as “Chernomoria” rather than “Kuban.” On the other hand, his casual acquaintance in the train knew the place he lived in as Kuban, while the notion of Chernomoria was for him an outdated reality. There were, however, changes on their way. The new political conditions triggered processes that, during the next decades, would make the idea of Chernomoria meaningful again. What is more, by 1893, reorganization of political space in the empire had already brought some fruits.

The conservative turn in the imperial politics that occurred in 1881, after the murder of Alexander II, dramatically reversed many of the processes that had been going on in the Kuban oblast since 1860. Counter-reforms, which characterized the rule of Tsar Alexander III, became a hallmark of local governance in Kuban as well. As Dmitrii Miliutin resigned from the office of War Minister, Petr Vannovskii, a staunch opponent of his “enlightened” principles, came to substitute him in this position. In 1882, the emperor appointed Prince Aleksandr Dondukov-Korsakov as the chief administrator of the Caucasus, who led the new governmental politics in the Caucasus and orchestrated the

¹⁹⁹ I. Ya. Akinfiev, *Puteshestvie po yugu Rossii i Severnomu Kavkazu* (Ekaterinoslav: Tipo-litografiia gubernskogo pravleniia, 1893), 18–19.

reversal of Miliutin's reforms in the Caucasus Cossack hosts. In terms of his views on the problem of Cossackdom, Dondukov-Korsakov was an ideal candidature for this office. During his service as the chief of staff of the Don Cossack host in 1859-63, Dondukov-Korsakov found himself in a center of a scandal. His report to Miliutin, in which he protested against the ongoing reforms and defended traditional rights and privileges of the Don Cossacks, led to his resignation.²⁰⁰ In 1882, Dondukov-Korsakov took office to undo Miliutin's innovations. Alexander III asked him "to support and preserve the Cossackdom as a special estate."²⁰¹ The program of administrative changes, which Dondukov-Korsakov proposed in 1883, aimed at elevating the martial spirit of the Cossacks, which was undermined by Miliutin's project "to abolish the Cossack estate as an anachronism and to integrate it into the state in accordance with the general principles, elaborated for other estates."²⁰²

Dondukov-Korsakov's efforts led to a substantial reconfiguration of the hierarchies of power. While the *nakaznoi* ataman of the Kuban host, who was also the head of the Kuban oblast, increased his authority, the War Ministry assumed control over the Kuban oblast in most of respects, including a great deal of civil matters, which formerly belonged to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior. The new legislation on local self-governance of Cossack stanitsas restored the role of Cossack elders and excluded *inogorodnie* from participation in assemblies and from influence on local affairs. Dondukov-Korsakov assumed the title of *nakaznoi* ataman of the Caucasus Cossack hosts—a symbolic gesture that, at the same time, made the chief administrator of the Caucasus the immediate superior of the Cossack authorities.²⁰³ In 1887, Dondukov-Korsakov determined to close the Kuban host gymnasium in Ekaterinodar and abolish all scholarships that covered the study of talented Cossacks in universities. The formal reason was financial, but the real motive for this decision was to prevent the corrupting influence of civil education from affecting the Cossack military spirit.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ A. Volvenko, "Kazakomanstvo. Donskoi sluchai (1860-e gg.). Chast' I," *Russkaia starina* 13, no. 1 (2015): 19–37; For Dondukov-Korsakov's biography, see Firouzeh Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 96–98.

²⁰¹ A. Dondukov-Korsakov, *Vsepoddanneishaia zapiska Komanduiushchego voiskami Kavkazskogo voennogo okruga i Voiskovogo Nakaznogo Atamana Kavkazskikh kazach'ikh voisk po upravleniiu okrugom s 1882 po 1890 god* (Tiflis, 1890), 1.

²⁰² Dondukov-Korsakov, *Vsepoddanneishaia zapiska*, 51.

²⁰³ "Vysochaishie prikazy po voennomu vedomstvu," *Russkii invalid*, 22 January 1885, 1.

²⁰⁴ M. Ponochevnyi, "Ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska k voprosy ob otkrytii vnov' Kubanskoi voiskovoi gimnazii," *KOV*, 3 November 1906, 1-2; "Ob'iasnitel'naia zapiska (prodolzhenie)," *KOV*, 4 November 1906, 1–2.

Summing up Dondukov-Korsakov's activities, War Minister Vannovskii announced in the end of 1891 that the recent changes would correct the faults of the legacy of the Great Reforms, which left behind the "tendencies, extrinsic to the Cossack estate." Among them were the lack of respect for elders, breach of discipline, improper preparation for military service etc., all of which had been either extraordinary or unknown in the past. From this point of view, the counter-reforms only restored the Cossacks' primordial state of being, for they were directed to "preserve and strengthen ancient traditions," as well as "good morality," piety, respect for elders and other qualities, "inherent to the Cossacks from the time immemorial."²⁰⁵

One of those ostensibly ancient traditions, "restored" in the 1880s, which Vannovski might have meant, was the so-called host circle (*voiskovoi krug*), the regular parade of Cossacks in Ekaterinodar and its most important ceremonial part, regalia processions. The initiator of the "restoration" of this tradition was Dondukov-Korsakov, who attended the arsenal building that hosted the regalia of the Kuban host (banners, maces, and other gifts, granted to the host by monarchs) during his visit to Ekaterinodar in 1882. Familiar with Don Cossack traditions, Dondukov-Korsakov proposed to "restore" the "previously existing" tradition of host circles, which "was already being forgotten," following the example of the Don Cossacks. Organizing regalia processions on the regular basis, to his mind, would help the Cossacks "to maintain the memory about the valiant deeds of their glorious ancestors."²⁰⁶ In effect, the Kuban host had never convened "host circles," which was a typically Don Cossack name of the ceremony. Neither had it been organizing regalia processions as a regular practice. But from this time onwards, the host circle became an important event, held several times a year. Interestingly, similarities of this tradition with its Don Cossack analogue did not escape attention of a Don representative that witnessed a host circle in Ekaterinodar in 1890. "The outward appearance of the solemnity differed little from the ceremonial of the celebration of this Cossack practice in the Don Host. It was only the uniform of generals and Cossack troops

²⁰⁵ "Prikaz po kazach'im i irreguliarnym voiskam №37 ot 10 dekabria 1891 goda," *KOV*, 11 January 1892, 1.

²⁰⁶ "Prebyvanie v Kubanskoï oblasti Glavnonachal'stviushchego Grazhdanskoïu chast'iu na Kavkaze i Komanduiushchego voiskami General Ad'iutanta Kniazia Dondukova-Korsakova," *KOV*, 6 March 1882, 2.

that reminded me that the host circle was being held not in Novocherkassk [the Don Cossack capital].”²⁰⁷

In his search for traditions to restore and maintain, Dondukov-Korsakov relied on Cossack past, ancient and authentic, and this circumstance led to the emergence of a new ideological climate, favorable for promoting historical imagery. “Chernomoria” and Little Russian origin of the Black Sea Cossacks, the themes that had been forbidden in public use since 1861, returned into public discourse. Along with them, yet another theme, the idea of Zaporozhian origin of the host, began gradually establishing itself as an important foundation myth of the host. Dondukov-Korsakov did not object to this development. As early as 1862, he called the “former” Black Sea host the only Cossack community, except of the Don host, that had “its own history,” while rest of the Cossack hosts of the empire did not.²⁰⁸ From 1869 to 1878, he served as Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia Governor-General, providing moderate yet important support for Ukrainophile activities.²⁰⁹

No other event of the 1880s could better capture the shift in the governmental policy with regard to the Kuban oblast than the trip of Emperor Alexander III to the Caucasus in 1888, during which he made a three-day visit to Ekaterinodar. The visit of the monarch, on the one hand, burdened the local authorities with a difficult and responsible task of representing the Kuban Cossack host to the emperor, his family, and the high-ranking officials from his retinue. On another hand, it gave the members of the royal escort a chance to reflect on the meanings of the ceremonial spectacle they witnessed in Ekaterinodar. Just as the reformers of the 1860s, the participants of the emperor’s tour discovered in Ekaterinodar the relics of ancient Zaporozhia. Unlike the reformers, however, they saw it not as an obsolete anachronism fraught with separatist danger, but rather as a vivid and authentic remnant of the past, full of healthy traditions.

The official account of the emperor’s visit, the composition of which Dondukov-Korsakov commissioned to the military historian Vasilii Potto, portrayed the capital of the host as the last refuge of Zaporozhia. “Ekaterinodar is the last memorial to the Zaporozhian Sich; the coveted, alluring Sich from where freedom and Cossackdom spread

²⁰⁷ “Ekaterinodar, 5 fevralia 1890 goda,” *Donskoe pole*, 8 February 1890, 2.

²⁰⁸ A. Karasev, “Zapiska kniazia A. M. Dondukova-Korsakova o Zemle Voiska Donskogo,” *Russkii arkhiv* 12 (1896), 574.

²⁰⁹ Miller, *Ukrainian Question*, 185.

across entire Ukraine.”²¹⁰ Potto depicted the colonization of Kuban as if it was merely the transference of Zaporozhia to a new location. “The remnants of Zaporozhia, the last Cossacks of the Sich,” he wrote, were gathered by the call of the Empress on the new place because the “pacified Dnieper” did not need them anymore. Yet even there they continued to live according to the ancient custom. Those Cossacks, Potto wrote, bore no similarities to other Cossacks, who lived along the Terek River. They differed from them in all aspects, with their bald heads with forelocks, long moustaches, and bright colorful dress.²¹¹ Although these exotic Cossacks no longer lived in Ekaterinodar, the town was permeated by memory about them. Its hundred-year old oaks still “remembered the Zaporozhians with their forelocks.”²¹²

The author of another account, Vasilii Krivenko, an associate of Minister of the Imperial Court Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, speculated about the origin of the Kuban host without mentioning the Khoster Cossacks. Instead, he wrote that “the core of the Kuban host consists from the descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians, who in 1792 moved from New Russia to Taman and its ‘surroundings.’” Explaining the shift in the name of the region from Taman to Kuban, he ironized: “The modest term ‘surroundings,’ which the Cossacks solicited for themselves as a gift, implied the territory thirty times greater than the territory of the Taman peninsula.”²¹³ For Krivenko, the view of the Kuban host as the successor of Zaporozhia was a clue for explaining the festive events. For example, he viewed the host circle as a direct continuation of the Zaporozhian tradition of convening Cossack gatherings (*rada*). Describing the solemn procession of the Cossacks and clergy toward each other from opposite ends of the street, he interpreted it as the movement of nationality and Orthodoxy for mutual rapprochement. As he argued, the Zaporozhian, Black Sea, and Kuban Cossacks died for the holy cross and Orthodox faith. The Sich, as “our only knightly order,” incessantly struggled with both Muslim and Catholic faiths, while its offspring continued the struggle with the “crescent” on the Caucasus. The Cossacks defended Orthodoxy, which in turn protected their nationality

²¹⁰ V. A. Potto, *Tsarskaia sem'ia na Kavkaze, 18 sentiabria – 14 oktiabria 1888 goda* (Tbilisi: Tipografiia Okruzhnogo shtaba Kavkazskogo voennogo okruga, 1889), 65.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 68.

²¹³ V. S. Krivenko, *Poezdka na Yug Rossii v 1888 godu* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1891), 17.

(*natsional'nost'*).²¹⁴ In Krivenko's interpretation, the scene he witnessed was a perfect epitome of Uvarov's triad "Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality."

Potto's impressions resonated with those of Krivenko. He recalled that the view of the procession of the Kuban Cossacks who marched along the street, bearing the regalia of the host, "breathed with hoary antiquity." To convey his feelings to the reader, he cited lines of a famous verse by the poet Aleksei Tolstoi, the grandson of the last Ukrainian hetman Kirill Razumovskii and an admirer of Zaporozhia:

And we imagine: through the transparent fog
Palei and Sagaidachnyi are riding again.²¹⁵

For Potto, the figure of the Kuban ataman, Lieutenant-General Georgii Leonov, a native of the Don dressed in the Circassian attire, who was riding on horseback rising a silver mace above his head, conjured up the images of Semen Palii, a legendary Cossack colonel of late sixteenth-early eighteenth centuries, and Ivan Skoropads'kyi, the hetman of Ukraine in the years 1708-1722. There clearly were no references to Zaporozhia in this event, but Potto's imagination created the image of the Sich out of nothing.

In the second extended edition of Krivenko's work, issued in 1893, he elaborated the theme of the Kuban "Zaporozhianness" in greater detail. He added to the previous text his suggestions about reforming the administrative system of the Northern Caucasus for the sake of easier and more rational governing from Tiflis. According to his plan, the Terek, Kuban, and Dagestan oblasts as well as the Stavropol gubernia were to constitute a separate North Caucasus Governorate General. For the purposes of the proposed reorganization, Krivenko emphasized the need of returning the Caucasus Cossacks their "old," "celebrated" names. "Without a moment's doubt," as Krivenko assured, "many would be pleased with the naming of the Caucasus Cossack hosts by the names, one of which resounded in the midst of the Caucasus war, while another was blessed by Orthodox Christians and hated by infidels." According to him, the most appropriate name for the Terek host would be its early-nineteenth-century name, the "Line host." Following this logic, the most appropriate name for the Kuban Cossacks should have been the "Black Sea host", since it was roughly contemporaneous with the name of the Line host, and ceased to exist along with the name of the Black Sea host. Yet Krivenko's idea was even

²¹⁴ Ibid., 21.

²¹⁵ Potto, *Tsarskaia sem'ia na Kavkaze*, 77. The verse is given in A. K. Tolstoi, "Ty znaesh krai," in idem, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow: Pravda, 1969) 4: 57–58.

more radical. He proposed to assign the Kuban Cossacks the name “Zaporozhians.” The way he gave reason to his proposal was somewhat reminiscent of pardoning a former misguided mutineer who atoned for his minor sin by his further great deeds: “One hundred years have passed since the time of the abolition of the Sich. The descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians proved their devotion to Russia and the Tsar by the long, bloody struggle. Is not it the time to give them back their old name of Zaporozhians?”²¹⁶

As for a high-ranking imperial official, Krivenko went far beyond the conventional imagery. At the same time, he had in mind considerations that had nothing to do with Ukrainophile sympathies. Despite of his Ukrainian-sounding surname, he was not of Little Russian origin. Born in Dagestan, he spent several years in Ukrainian town of Poltava at a young age, where he studied in the prestigious Peter’s Poltava Cadet Corps. This experience gave him some insight into Little Russia, but he viewed it from a centralist imperial perspective. While working in the ministry, he opposed the use of the Little Russian language in print and argued against staging of Little Russian plays in theatres, although he argued against their prohibition for their “innocent” nature (since the management of theatres was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Imperial Court, his opinion was of great importance).²¹⁷ Rather than Little Russian local pride, Krivenko’s ideas reflected a new fashion—the imperial appropriation of the Zaporozhian afterlife and mobilization of the Zaporozhian imagery in the service of Orthodoxy and Russian nationality.

The scenario the Kuban administration designed for celebrating the arrival of Alexander III had no direct references to the Zaporozhian origin of the host. Neither the Kuban authorities, headed by the Don Cossack Georgii Leonov, were committed to it, nor did the admirers of good old Chernomoria play the first violin in the polyphonic orchestra of the Kuban Cossack identifications. However, it was precisely the emperor’s visit of 1888, when the elements of the Zaporozhian imagery first penetrated the local self-image, and Alexander III and his family witnessed it immediately after their arrival. The delegation of the Kuban host representatives led by Lieutenant-General Ivan Popko, the

²¹⁶ V. S. Krivenko, *Ocherki Kavkaza* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1893), 66.

²¹⁷ V. S. Krivenko, *V doroge i na meste* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1899), 135. For the biography of Krivenko see: S. I. Grigor’ev, S. V. Kulikov, “V. S. Krivenko i ministerstvo dvora: Zabytyi memuarist v kontekste istorii zabytogo vedomstva,” in V. S. Krivenko, *V ministerstve dvora. Vospominaniia* (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2006), 22–38.

marshal of the nobility of the Stavropol, Terek, and Kuban oblasts, a renowned intellectual with Ukrainophile sympathies and an imperial-loyal military commander, met the tsar near with bread and salt. This traditional gesture of welcome was at the same time a brief symbolical introduction to the history of the Kuban Cossacks. The surface of the gilded silver dish presented by Popko and made specifically for that occasion, depicted scenes from the history of the Kuban host. The pictures portrayed a Zaporozhian *rada*, an episode of ataman elections, and figures of the Kuban Cossack infantry and cavalry in clothing and with weapons of different epochs. In the center of the dish was the state coat of arms with banners of the Kuban host on each side.²¹⁸

The choice of the images for the dish was particularly remarkable, given that the scenes of *rada*'s gathering and ataman's elections referred to the proto-democratic foundations of functioning of the Zaporozhian community. A clue for understanding the hidden meaning of the dish was another gift, which the Kuban host presented to the heir of the throne, Tsesarevich Nikolai Aleksandrovich—the book *The Kuban Cossack Host, 1696–1888*, written by two leading Kuban historians, Fedor Shcherbina and Evgenii Felitsin specifically for the future tsar. Shcherbina, a talented statistician and historian (who would later rise to prominence as the region's undisputedly most famous scholar), was the author of the largest, narrative part of the book, devoted considerable attention to the description of the Zaporozhian Sich, presenting it as the main, though not the only, source of the Kuban Cossacks' history. While telling about Zaporozhia, Shcherbina repeatedly emphasized the role of the Cossack *rada* and elections of Cossack atamans for the social life of the Sich.²¹⁹ A left-wing intellectual, Shcherbina sought the restoration of local self-governance by ordinary Cossacks.²²⁰ The idea was to inspire the heir of the throne to “restore” democratic institutes as far as they existed in the past. Later in the 1920s, Shcherbina expressed his confidence that his idea succeeded, at least partially. He believed that when Nicholas II sanctioned the establishment of the so-called Rada, a quasi-parliamentary convention in Ekaterinodar in 1906 (see chapter 5), the emperor was

²¹⁸ I. Dmitrenko, *Prebyvanie Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv Gosudaria Imperatora Aleksandra Aleksandrovicha i Gosudaryni Imperatritsy Marii Fedorovny s Avgusteishimi det'mi, naslednikom Tsesarevichem Nikolaem Aleksandrovichem i Velikim Kniazem Georgiem Aleksandrovichem v Kubanskom kazach'em voiske v sentiabre mesiatse 1888 goda* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdel'nogo korpusa zhandarmov, 1898), 19–20.

²¹⁹ E. D. Felitsin, F. A. Shcherbina, *Kubanskoe kazach'e voisko. 1696–1888* (Voronezh: Tipografiia V. I. Isaeva, 1888), 17–20.

²²⁰ F. Shcherbina, “Fakty kazach'ei ideologii i tvorchestva,” in *Kazachestvo: Mysli sovremennikov o proshlom, nastoiashchem i budushchem kazachestva* (Paris: Izdanie “Kazach'ego soiuza,” 1928), 360.

guided by the ideas learned from Shcherbina's book. The historian assured that one of the tutors of Nikolai Aleksandrovich gave him the task to write an essay on Shcherbina's book, which he read and enjoyed.²²¹

If these references to the Zaporozhian experience were smuggled into the ceremony, its official rhetoric centered on the image of Kuban as an Orthodox Russian land. In his welcoming speech to the emperor, proclaimed at the Ekaterinodar cathedral, bishop of Stavropol and Ekaterinodar Vladimir presented the region as an integral part of the Holy Russian land, which had been "Holy Russian" since the adoption of Christianity by Prince Vladimir and the emergence of the Tmutarakan principality. Later, Tmutarakan fell under "barbaric" invasions, but the Orthodox warriors rescued it, and the first who "shed their blood" for this land were the Don Cossacks and "their branches." The Black Sea Cossacks transferred their "indomitable courage" and "devotedness to the Tsar and Fatherland" from the Dnieper banks to Chernomoria.²²² The bishop's speech clearly reflected the idea of the Don Cossacks as the pioneers of colonization (and, apparently, implying the Khoper Cossacks as one of its "branches"), with the Black Sea host being a latecomer to the territory. But Vladimir made no special mention of the Khoper Cossacks, and devoted more time in the speech to the "Dnieper Cossacks" than to the Don Cossacks.

The entertainment program designed for the visit of the emperor gave insight into the way the organizers of the reception conveyed a sense of cultural distinctiveness of the host through the means of visual and acoustic representation. The organizers prepared for the emperor's family a range of entertaining events: the family dinner, the dances in the public garden rotunda, and the folk festival followed by the firework on the central square, beautifully embellished with illumination. Musical accompaniment complemented the program. The repertoire of the host choir and the orchestra included various compositions of the empire-wide significance. However, apart from them the choir and the orchestra performed several Ukrainian-language compositions for the emperor's family joy.²²³

The responsibility for the inclusion of Little Russian elements into the scenario of the celebration lied not only on the Kuban administration, but also on its superiors in Tiflis. For example, the schedule of entertainments included a performance of a Little

²²¹ Ibid., 348.

²²² *Prebyvanie Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv v gorode Ekaterinodare* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1888), 5.

²²³ "Programma Voiskovogo pevcheskogo khora," GARF, f. 677, op. 1, d. 84, l 9.

Russian theatrical troupe. Such event was not present in the initial draft of the program, made in Ekaterinodar. It was added later in Tiflis, in the process of elaboration of the schedule by the acting director of the Chancellery of the Chief Administrator of the Caucasus, Dondukov-Korsakov. The note, made by the acting director, “if there will be any,” demonstrates his purposeful intention to make Little Russian theatre performance part of the representation of the region.²²⁴ Five years before, in 1883, Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia Governor-General Aleksandr Drentel’n banned performances of Little Russian troupes in the territory under his jurisdiction, considering the use of the Ukrainian language in public as a politically seditious activity.²²⁵ In Kuban, the Caucasus authorities invited Little Russian troupes to perform for the emperor, his family, and his suite. Kuban had to appear before the eyes of the tsar with its avowed Little Russian distinctiveness. This “Little Russianness” was devoted to the throne, entirely loyal, and therefore innocuous.

Alexander III left the Caucasus from the port of Batum on the steamship “Moscow,” accompanied and guarded by the newly built Black Sea fleet gunboats, which in their own fashion were part of the Cossack scenario that was arranged for the emperor. Set afloat in 1887, the ships bore the names of representatives of different Cossack hosts: Ural, Terek, Kuban, Black Sea, and Zaporozhian (*Uralets, Terets, Kubanets, Chernomorets, and Zaporozhets*).²²⁶ Along with the *Donets* (the Don Cossack), which did not participate in the escort for some reasons, the six warships symbolized and glorified the selected Cossack communities, and their names were supposed to resound in the naval battles.²²⁷ The deliberately chosen names constituted a system in which three of them represented different hosts, the Ural, Terek, and Don hosts, while another three designated the same host in its historical development. In so doing, the gunboats represented a sort of family tree of the Kuban Cossacks, which included the Zaporozhian and Black Sea Cossacks, but did not comprise the Khoper and Line Cossacks, since there were no presumable *Lineets* or *Khoperets* accompanying them. The name of Zaporozhian Cossacks was put at the service of the Russian Empire on the ship’s freeboard, and the

²²⁴ “Marshrut, sostavlennyi i. d. Direktora kantseliarii Glavnonachal’stvuiushchego grazhdanskoiu chast’iu na Kavkaze,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 4967, l. 225; “Marshrut putestviiia Ikh Imperatorskikh Velichestv po Kavkazskomu kraiu,” GARF, f. 677, op. 1, d. 84, l. 75.

²²⁵ M. K. Sadovs’kyi, *Moi teatral’ni zhadky, 1881–1917* (Kharkiv, Kiev: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1930), 12.

²²⁶ “Order pokhoda 14 oktiabria 1888,” GARF, f. 677, op. 1, d. 84, l. 44.

²²⁷ L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armiiia i flot v XIX veke* (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), 528.

image of the Zaporozhians struggling for Rus' was adopted and internalized by the imperial imagination in the same way.²²⁸

1.8. Conclusion

From the end of the eighteenth century to the 1870s, the steppe territory north of the Caucasus Mountains was a space for imperial experiments. Having been a domain of the Crimean Chanate prior to 1783, it became a colony of the Russian Empire afterwards. Seeing it as a vacant land, imperial authorities sought to fill it with a new content, which was symbols and meanings and, more significantly, hundreds of thousands of colonists. The empire exercised with symbolic geography in just the same bold way as with population politics. As the initial attempts of the authorities to integrate it into the European part of the empire—first as Greek Fanagoria and later as Rus' Tmutarakan—failed, this territory came to be seen as an Asian part, the North Caucasus. During the first half of the nineteenth century, this region became a sort of an “outlet” for the descendants of the Cossacks of Zaporozhia and Hetmanate, whom the imperial government brought there together for military purposes. At a certain point in the mid-nineteenth century, authorities and military command launched a plan of resettlement of a part of this Cossack population to the foothills of the Caucasus to advance the colonization and eliminate the local mountainous peoples, making the North Caucasus ethnically Russian. The unwillingness of the Cossacks to resettle was interpreted by the initiators of the resettlement as a symptom of the Cossacks' rebellious Zaporozhian spirit. This Zaporozhian spirit was a product of imperial imagination and fear rather than an actual basis of the local self-image, since both Cossack elites and Cossack stanitsa communities never referred to their ostensibly Zaporozhian origin. Nevertheless, in view of the imperial administration, Ukrainian-speaking Cossacks turned from potential Russifiers into the “element,” which was supposedly hostile to all the things Russian. The Russification campaign, as an integral part of the Great Reforms, was most active until the early 1880s. The counter-reforms of Alexander III, despite or, rather, because of their profound

²²⁸ One of the KOV's authors explained the names of these ships by the gratitude of the Black Sea fleet's mariners to the Kuban plastuns for their participation in the Crimean War. See I. Dmitrenko, “Soobshchenie sotnika grafa Podgorichani-Petrovicha o plastunakh,” *KOV*, 10 March 1893, 1.

nationalistic impulse, were accompanied by the search for traditional, conservative foundations of the Cossack life. The myth about the Zaporozhian Cossacks as defenders of Orthodoxy and throne reemerged again, allowing room for emphasizing the cultural peculiarities of the former Black Sea Cossacks. The next chapter analyzes how the discussions about the centenary of the Black Sea Cossack colonization led the elites of former Chernomoria to make sense of their past and, thus, rethink their present.



2. Chapter 2: Anniversary that did not Exist: Commemorations and Discussions about the Past

The last decades of the nineteenth century saw a surge of historical anniversaries of various kinds and on different occasions. In the opinion of literati, history ceased to be a mere accomplished fact. The intellectual fashion of the new epoch made the experience of the past much more relevant to the needs of the present. Instead of being the time that had vanished, it became the time that one way or another persisted in the contemporaneity—as a remembrance, as a guidance, or as a key to the explanation and understanding of everything. As such, the past came to be more actively engaged in political developments of the day. First and foremost, the realm of the past became not only known or even remembered. Interest groups, the educated society and the imperial officialdom alike, competed in asserting their versions of the past and celebrating them.

In the early 1880s, a part of Black Sea Cossack educated elites became increasingly concerned with the commemorative significance of the forthcoming years, which would mark a centenary of the Black Sea host's emergence. As it turned out, however, the changing context of the day turned the approaching anniversary into a tangle of uncertainties and ambiguities. The questions multiplied. What exactly to celebrate as the centenary: the formation of the host, its resettlement to Kuban, or something else? What year from a wide row of memorable dates to single out for the celebration? How to regard the jubilee in view of the actual unification of the Black Sea host and the Line host? Who was supposed to celebrate it: the former Black Sea Cossacks or the Kuban host in general? If the former, then, would the existence of the separate collective agent of memory mean that the Kuban host remained divided? If the latter, would it mean that the memory of the Black Sea Cossacks determined the memory of the Kuban host? Addressing these questions was a formidable challenge and, at the same time, a major occasion for the host's representatives to reflect on the fundamental issues regarding to the social and cultural nature of their region. In the years to come, efforts to disentangle this puzzle would have a lasting effect on the local culture and politics, triggering a number of

processes that continued for decades and stopped short only with the Great War and the subsequent collapse of the Russian Empire.

2.1. The Centenary of Something

The first public call in the press, urging the local public to prepare properly for the anniversary, was authored by Vasiliï Shcherbina, the teacher at the Ekaterinodar religious secondary school and a member of the Kuban Statistical Committee. Shcherbina pointed out that while different Cossack groups of Black Sea Cossack origin occasionally reflected on and spoke about the oncoming jubilee, all of the circumstances related to the jubilee seemed too vague. The possible dates ranged as widely as from 1883, the centenary of the factual organization of the Black Sea host from the former Zaporozhian Cossacks, to 1888, the anniversary of the official formation of the host, or to 1892, the settlement of the Black Sea Cossacks on the shores of the Kuban River. Vasiliï Shcherbina called for the genuine, sincere celebration, which would be something more than a mere official festivity. Shcherbina was afraid that due to the Cossack “intrinsic immobility and insularity,” anniversary would be confined to a formal ceremonial—the anxiety betraying his confidence that there should certainly be some celebrations, organized by the authorities. To take full advantage of the occasion, he suggested that “the best representatives of the former Black Sea host” organize a committee that would take upon itself the task of elaborating the project of the anniversary.²²⁹

The committee was not established, but the discussions apparently went on, albeit in the way Shcherbina had been afraid of—relaxed and unhurried. It took nearly a year before one of those “best representatives” disclosed the plans for the future celebrations in front of the Ekaterinodar public at large. The host’s circle on May 6, 1885, the birthday of Tsesarevich Nikolai Aleksandrovich, which not only gathered the local townsfolk, but brought together the whole Kuban administration and a considerable Cossack audience, became a good opportunity for the solemn announcement of the prospect of the forthcoming anniversary. The 69-year-old officer Vasiliï Varenik/Vasyl’ Varenyk, a venerable public figure and eloquent orator, especially famous for his speeches at most of

²²⁹ V. A. Shcherbina, “K voprosu o vremeni stoletnego yubileia Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska,” *KOV*, 7 April 1884, 3.

the host's festive events, called on those present to use the occasion of the "state-wide celebration" to think about a very local matter: "the time, when our host originated."²³⁰ Although the Kuban host, argued Varenik, emerged in 1860, it was the day of the Black Sea host's emergence that was the starting point of the local history. As the Sich had "fallen under the blows of historical fates," the host arrived to the former Tmutarakan principality, which had been Russian in the bygone times, to protect it from the mountainous tribes. Since the host fulfilled its task, having played the most crucial role in the conquest of the West Caucasus, and the contemporaneous generation of Kuban Cossacks "rested on their laurels," the takeover of the Kuban lands by the Black Sea Cossacks had "the inalienable historical right to be perpetuated." Varenik suggested yet another event, different from that proposed by Shcherbina, as the milestone in the initial history of the Black Sea Cossacks—the granting of the Charter by Catherine II. To commemorate the event, Varenik put forward the idea of erecting the monument to the empress, whom he called "our life-bringer [*zhiznedatel'nitsa*]." Beside Catherine II, the monument, as envisaged by Varenik, would also portray Prince and "Great Hetman" Grigorii Potemkin and "those, who carried out the Highest designs of creating the host": *kosh ataman Zakharii Chepiha* and host judge Anton Holovatyi. "By looking at the monument," explained Varenik, "our descendants would draw courage and valiance that our ancestors were distinguished in for the whole past century!"²³¹

The idea of constructing the monument met full approval of the administration, but failed in another respect. Inactive, sluggish authorities and the no less hesitant Black Sea Cossack initiators of the project took more or less decisive actions only by the end of 1889, when the anniversary loomed on the horizon—the story that will be covered in another section below. Meanwhile, the Cossack educated public at large remained aloof from the progress of the case. Only in late June of 1887, the official newspaper, *Kubanskie oblastnye vedomosti* (Kuban oblast newspaper, hereinafter *KOV*), passingly informed that the next Friday, July 3, would mark the centenary of the decree that "revived the glorious

²³⁰ On Varenik, see M. O. P., "Po povodu prestoiashchego yubileia 50 letnego sluzheniia v ofiterskikh chinakh voiskovogo starshiny Vasiliia Stepanovicha Varenika," *KOV*, 10 October 1887, 3; Kazak, "Polkovnik V. S. Varenik," *Donskoe pole*, 8 February 1890, 3; I. Dmitrenko, "Pokhorony general-maiora Vasiliia Stepanovicha Varenika," *KOV*, 13 March 1893, 1.

²³¹ "Slovo, skazannoe 6-go maia 1885 g. voiskovym starshinoiu Vasiliem Varenikom v g. Ekaterinodare, v voiskovom krugu, v prisutstvii nakaznogo atamana Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska," *KOV*, 27 September 1886, 3.

Zaporozhian host” and provided it with a territory between the Buh and the Dniester.²³² Yet another publication, dedicated to the fiftieth jubilee of Varenik’s service in officer ranks, reminded the audience—with a four-month delay—about the recent centennial of the creation of the Black Sea host. Its author, Mikhail Ponochevnyi, “considering himself a member of our great Black Sea Cossack family” wrote the article to remind “his dear native Ukraine [Kuban]” about “the great significance of the current time.” He draw attention of his readers that every year up to 1892, in effect, would be memorable in historical sense, being a one hundredth anniversary of a certain foundational event in history of the host.²³³

In 1891, a Kuban correspondent wrote an article to a Don newspaper, where he struggled with the same kind of questions as his no less concerned colleagues half a decade before. While all, from various hosts and hosts’ divisions to private societies and individuals, as the author argued, celebrated their jubilees and erected commemorative monuments, the question of the Kuban host’s anniversary remained open. Unaware of the monument initiative, he wondered how the Kuban host would commemorate the memory of Chepiha and Holovaty. As long as zemstvos and noble assemblies, the institutions that usually were in charge of such cultural projects throughout the empire, did not exist in Kuban, the author considered the local administration the only official body that was able to tackle the problem. “Do we have the right to trouble the authoritative power with the issues that do not fall in their area of responsibility?,” he questioned, failing to anticipate those substantial changes that in a short time would make the local administration the key actor in the memory politics of the Kuban host.²³⁴

Even though the Don newspaper was an unlikely forum to be noticed by those Kuban readers that were potentially willing to contribute to the discussion, the correspondent launched a discussion over the issue of celebration in the Kuban press. An anonymous correspondent of *KOV* responded with an article that cast doubt on the Kuban Cossacks’ intellectual readiness to face their own centennial. “Have we understood, what kind of hundred of years it is; what our grandfathers, fathers [*didy i bat’ky*], and we ourselves have done; what were you, Black Sea Cossack, and what you have become?” The author asserted that the Kuban society knew little about its region, its history, and the

²³² *KOV*, 27 June 1887, 2.

²³³ M. O. P., “Po povodu prestoiashchego yubileia 50 letnego sluzheniia v ofiterskikh chinakh voiskovogo starshiny Vasiliia Stepanovicha Varenika,” *KOV*, 10 October 1887, 3.

²³⁴ Kubanets, “Stoletnii yubilei,” *Donskoe pole*, 11 February 1891, 2.

way of life of the former generations. Before setting out to celebrate, “everyone,” as he wrote, “must find out what kind of event is waiting for us in 1892.” To do this, as large part of the Kuban Cossacks as possible needed to share their personal knowledge and family histories, which would reveal the real, experienced meaning of the expired century. The editors of *KOV*, he hoped, would only be glad to provide the platform for this purpose.²³⁵

Much to his surprise, the editors were not. In a footnote to the article, the newspaper’s editor-in-chief warned that, according to the clarification by the War Ministry, the seniority of the Kuban host dates back to 1696. Therefore, the only jubilee to be celebrated would take place on 1896. This is the first evidence of the fundamental change in the historical narrative that occurred in the run-up to the celebration of either Black Sea or Kuban Cossack host’s centenary jubilee. As can be concluded, the central authorities interfered in the process of preparation of the host’s anniversary somewhere in preceding years, most probably—due to their becoming aware of the monument initiative. From that time on, any serious controversies over the question of the host’s origin ceased. The host, as its representatives were told, had its officially sanctioned history. And it started, according to the ministry’s unambiguous directive, not in 1783, 1788, 1792, or whenever it did, but in 1696. The real meaning of the anniversary, even its very date, was yet to be defined.²³⁶

The same correspondent, having been corrected by the editor, hastened to correct himself, too. The very name of his previous article, he now stated, was wrong: he said to have meant not “the centenary anniversary of the Kuban Cossack host,” but simply “the centenary anniversary,” since there would not be any centennial for the Kuban host to celebrate. Moreover, as he continued, the Black Sea host could not celebrate its centenary anniversary as well, since there were no Black Sea host any longer and for the last thirty years one could speak only about “the former” Black Sea host, non-existent since 1860. As the circumstances changed, the author (who signed his second article as “the same Black Sea Cossack (former, of course)”) quickly adapted to the new rules and spoke about the new genealogy as an almost obvious, established fact. And yet his actual unfamiliarity with the newly determined origin made itself felt in quite a curious way. Erroneously

²³⁵ Chernomorets po ottsu, lineets po materi, “Stoletnii yubilei Kubanskogo kazach’ego voiska,” *KOV*, 25 May 1891, 1.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

deepening the new age of the host for an extra century, he proudly explained that the Kuban host was going to celebrate its “tercentennial” jubilee. What did the date of 1792 mean, and was it meaningful for the Kuban host? He answered positively and argued that there indeed was an anniversary—that of the granting of land and privileges by Catherine II to the major part of those who later became the Kuban Cossacks. Many, the author assured, erroneously considered 1892 as the holiday of the Black Sea Cossacks only, while the Line Cossacks erroneously distanced themselves from it. It was a wrong attitude: “there could be neither Black Sea nor Line Cossack holidays, but only Kuban ones,” and the forthcoming holiday belonged to the whole Kuban host, since Catherine II’s charter was the guarantee of the Kuban Cossacks’ existence.²³⁷

The holiday took place in precisely the way envisaged in the article. Modest in scope and ambivalent in its meaning, it was the anniversary of the Charter rather than Chernomoria as such. On June 30, the Kuban Cossacks gathered at the square of the former Ekaterinodar fortress, the most historically rich space of the town, to take part in the solemn consecration of the new church built on the place of the former Resurrection Cathedral (the main cathedral of the host, constructed from the wood in 1800 and disassembled in 1879). Apart from the traditional parade and procession with regalia, the main event of the day was the memorial service for Catherine II and the atamans of the Black Sea host. It was followed by the public reading of the Charter—the founding document of the Kuban host, which was still believed to have brought the host into life, continuing to protect it from all sorts of encroachments.²³⁸

2.2. Catherine II and her Zaporozhians: The Main Monument of Ekaterinodar

Ironically enough, even if the War Ministry clarification rendered meaningless the centennial of the Black Sea Cossacks, the construction of the centerpiece of the envisaged celebrations, the monument to the creators of the Black Sea host, was set into motion thanks to the sanction of the government. The project of the monument was taken out of its commemorative context, in which it was born. Ironically, the sanction came from the

²³⁷ Tot zhe chernomoretz, “Eshche o stoletnem yubilee,” *KOV*, 1 June 1891, 1.

²³⁸ “Ekaterinodar,” *KOV*, 4 July 1892, 1.

same ministry. During the visit of Alexander III to Ekaterinodar in 1888, the Black Sea Cossack elites took advantage of the occasion to inform the central authorities about the Vasilii Varenik's idea to erect the monument to Catherine II and the founding fathers of the host. The deputation of the Cossack nobles reported about the "desire of the host" to War Minister Petr Vannovskii, who accompanied the tsar in his tour, while awarding Vannovskii a Cossack saber.²³⁹ By the end of the next year, the Cossacks had managed to find a person who readily took upon himself the task of designing the symbol of the Kuban Cossacks' intricate cultural memory. It was a St. Petersburg-based artist Mikhail Mikeshin. Given his role in the cultural developments in turn-of-the-century Kuban, it is worth taking a closer look at his background.

Born into a family of a Belarusian landowner, Mikeshin went to St. Petersburg to study art due to the scholarship provided by a Smolensk nobleman. In the capital, he gained imperial-scale prominence as the author of the Millennium of Russia, the monument built in 1862 in Velikii Novgorod in honor of the millennium anniversary of the reign of the Rurikids, the first Russian ruling dynasty. As the imperial authorities celebrated the legendary arrival of the Varangian Prince Rurik to Novgorod in 862 as the incipience of the Russian history, the monument's idea executed by Mikeshin was to embody the complicate historical experience of the country in one sculptural composition. He represented the millenarian depth of the Russian both state- and nationhood in more than one hundred figures who were considered as the key political, military, religious, and cultural actors of the thousand-year time period.²⁴⁰ Generously rewarded for his masterwork by Alexander II with a life pension of 1,200 rubles annually and the hereditary estate in the Mariupol district, which encompassed 1,000 desiatinas of land,²⁴¹ Mikeshin became the empire's chief designer of monuments, who in subsequent decades would execute the construction of many other monuments for the glory of the Empire.

Mikeshin was also the author of the main imperial monument to Catherine II, built in 1873 in St. Petersburg in front of the Aleksandrinskii theatre, which made him the most appropriate candidate the Kuban elites could ever find. Quite understandably, later this

²³⁹ L. Verbitskii to P. Korolenko, 28 September 1889, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 8.

²⁴⁰ On the symbolical value of the monument see Olga Maiorova, *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 61–71; Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, vol. 2 (Princeton University Press, 2000), 80–84, 125–28.

²⁴¹ M. Mikeshin to D. Miliutin, 5 December 1889, OR RGB, f. 169, k. 68, ed. khr. 66.

monument served Mikeshin as the model for the Ekaterinodar memorial. However, there was another good reason for the Host to entrust the creation of the monument to Mikeshin. The artist designed the famous monument to the Ukrainian hetman Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi in Kiev, unveiled in 1888.²⁴² This dynamic and spectacular image of the leader of the Ukrainian Cossacks might have made an impression on the Kuban Cossack elites. Giving his opinion about Mikeshin, one of the initiators of the project, Colonel Lev Verbitskii, the former major of Ekaterinodar (and the only Cossack officer who held this position throughout the imperial time), wrote to Prokofii Korolenko, the mediator between the Host and the artist, that “all the Kuban Cossacks would be very happy if the constructor of the monument would be Mr. Mikeshin, to whom the glorious city of Kiev owes its monument to hetman Bogdan Khmel'nitskii.”²⁴³ As a famous figure, during his productive lifetime Mikeshin exhibited political views that may seem inconsistent from the nationalist vantage point. Being a friend of Taras Shevchenko after the latter returned from the exile, Mikeshin illustrated two editions of Shevchenko's *Kobzar* and, after the poet's death in 1861, became one of the founding members of the St. Petersburg circle, which organized annual meetings to pay him tribute (the so-called *rokovyny*). Sympathizing with Ukrainophiles, but also attaching particular importance to his Belarusian origin and calling himself “Belarusian,” Mikeshin nevertheless was, above all, an adherent of the idea of the all-Russian unity.²⁴⁴ Apart from the Russian language, he wrote his letters to his Ukrainophile friends both in Ukrainian and Belarusian languages, making the spelling of names dependent on the choice of language. For example, it is evident from his correspondence with the historian Dmitrii Evarnitskii/Dmytro Yavornyts'kyi, in which he called himself in a Belarusian manner Mikhas' Mikesha and his correspondent, Zmytro.²⁴⁵

We know little about the circumstances surrounding the initial stage of Mikeshin's work on his new project. What remains unknown is whether Mikeshin offered his services to the Host on his own initiative, or Kuban Cossack representatives were the first to have

²⁴² Faith Hillis, “Ukrainophile Activism and Imperial Governance in Russia's Southwestern Borderlands,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 2 (2012): 314–21; Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (Cornell University Press, 2013), 81–85.

²⁴³ L. Verbitskii to P. Korolenko, 28 September 1889, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, ll. 8-9.

²⁴⁴ For his usage of the term “belarus,” see M. Mikeshin to N. Rerikh, 26 February 1895, OR GTG, f. 44, op. 1, ed. khr. 1004, l. 2.

²⁴⁵ See, for example M. Mikeshin to D. Evarnitskii, 29 September 1890, RGALI, f. 1335, op. 1, ed. khr. 233, l. 12.

established contact with him.²⁴⁶ The personal correspondence of Mikeshin that would shed light on this question has not been preserved. Still, we do know the circle of the persons involved in the project from the very beginning, under the guidance of whom Mikeshin began his work. The single most important contact person for Mikeshin was Lieutenant General Prokofii Grigor'evich Korolenko, who was married into the family of the former ataman of the Black Sea host, Grigorii Rashpil'.²⁴⁷ During Mikeshin's work on the project of the monument, they frequently met, so that he called Korolenko one of his most genuine friends.²⁴⁸ Korolenko gave Mikeshin instructions that he, in turn, received from notable members of the Kuban elite of Black Sea Cossack origin. Apart from Lev Verbitskii, it was Vasili Varenik, the actual author of the project, who continued to follow the implementation of his brainchild. Another participant was Pavel Bursak, a grandson of the former ataman of the Black Sea Cossack host Fedor Bursak.

Mikeshin enthusiastically set to work, plunging into the Kuban affairs with sincere messianic belief that he was the one who was destined to help the Kuban Cossacks with honoring the memory about their Zaporozhian forefathers. On January 10, 1890, he wrote to the ataman of the Kuban host, Grigorii Leonov, that his work on the monument would be a particular pleasure for him since the fate chose him as a “perpetuator” (*uvekovechivatel'*) of the memory of the Empress, and his monument would be “the epic of the glory to the foundress of the Kuban Cossacks and their glorious town, and of the glory of the Cossackdom itself.” The monument, he added, would perpetuate “all the historical valor of the Cossacks”—Zaporozhian, Black Sea, and Kuban ones.²⁴⁹

Mikeshin also sought advice from the leading historian of the Zaporozhian Sich, Dmitrii Evarnitskii/Dmytro Yavornyts'kyi. As follows from the latter's memoirs, written later in the Soviet time, Mikeshin came to Evarnitskii with a proposal to write a history of the Kuban Cossack Host in episodic scenes, which he would represent on the monument

²⁴⁶ Some scholars argue that Mikeshin contacted the Host through the GUKV, but this claim appears to be unsubstantiated. See O. A. Krivdina, “Pamiatniki imperatritse Ekaterine II v Vil'no (1904) i Ekaterinodare (1907),” in *Stranitsy istorii otechestvennogo iskusstva: Presnovskie chteniia — IV. K 115-letiiu Russkogo muzeia* (St. Petersburg: Palace Editions, 2013), 91.

²⁴⁷ M. E. Bul'mering, “Vospominaniia,” *Arkhiv Doma russkogo zarubezh'ia imeni Aleksandra Solzhenitsyna*, p. 16, available at http://www.rp-net.ru/book/archival_materials/Bulmering.doc (retrieved 20 November 2016); see also “Stareishie generaly Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska,” *KOV*, 20 September 1896, 2.

²⁴⁸ As he wrote in one of his letters in early 1895, Korolenko visited him three times during his recent illness—the rare kind of kindness that stood in sharp contrast to most of Mikeshin's other friends: M. Mikeshin to N. Rerikh, 26 February 1895, OR GTG, f. 44, op. 1, ed. khr. 1002, l. 1 ob.

²⁴⁹ M. Mikeshin to G. Leonov, 10 January 1890, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, ll. 14 ob, 15.

to Catherine II. “I kept rejecting such an offer for a very long time, referring to the lack of free time and unfamiliarity with the history of the Kuban host, but he almost forced me to fulfill his desire,” wrote Evarnitskii.²⁵⁰ It is unclear what scenes he had in mind, but it is safe to assume that the postures of the figures, their historical appearance, and the presence of some other components of the statuesque composition, such as the Zaporozhian regalia, owed their existence to Evarnitskii. However, Mikeshin was not very keen to share his envisioned accolades and acclaim for his work with his consultant, who was far more sophisticated in historical matters. Yakov Malama, the ataman of the Kuban host, later told Evarnitskii that Mikeshin had demanded 2,000 rubles from the Host as the reward for making this “historical” work, without mentioning Evarnitskii’s role on the project.²⁵¹ Eventually, Mikeshin’s ambition put an end to their collaboration altogether. In his letter to Mikeshin in June 1894, Evarnitskii put into question the historical accuracy of a statuesque scene, in which Catherine granted the charter to Holovatyi and Chepiha. The latter, he wrote, never was in St. Petersburg and never met the empress.²⁵² Whatever the relationship between the artist and the historian had been prior to that moment, this remark became a final straw. According to the testimony of their mutual friend, Petr/Petro Babkin, the Ukrainophile from St. Petersburg, in March 1895 Mikeshin told him that he knew history better than Evarnitskii.²⁵³

Mikeshin waited for the approval of the project by the central authorities before commencing work on it. In December 1892, the Host informed him that the petition to construct the monument reached the GUKV.²⁵⁴ Alexander III appreciated the contribution of the Zaporozhians to the Russian state-building; just a year before he had bought the famous painting by Il’ya Repin “The Zaporozhians write a letter to the Turkish sultan” for an enormous sum of 35,000 rubles.²⁵⁵ On March 23, 1893, the emperor endorsed the new project, giving the supreme sanction for the construction of the monumental statues of the Zaporozhian Cossacks.²⁵⁶ Mikeshin stated that he treated the monument “not only in the all-nation sense, but also from the vantage point of local people’s ideals, hoping that by

²⁵⁰ D. Evarnitskii, “[The memories about M. Mikeshin],” RGALI, f. 1335, op. 1, ed. khr. 233, ll. 34, 35.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 35, 36.

²⁵² D. Evarnitskii to M. Mikeshin, 17 June 1894, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 92 ob.

²⁵³ P. I. Babkin to D. Yavornyts’kyi, 15 May 1895, *ESAYa*, 5:39

²⁵⁴ Khoroshenko, *Ekaterinodar*, 55.

²⁵⁵ As acknowledged by Repin himself. See, for example: I. Repin to D. Evarnitskii, 6 January 1892, OR GTG, f. 93, op. 1, ed. khr. 15, l. 1.

²⁵⁶ GUKV to KOP, 31 May 1893, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 50.

making the concession to people's beliefs, highly evaluating the local people's heroes and beneficiaries of the region, and expressing honor to simple and straightforward historical epos" he would "kindle the grateful patriotic enthusiasm to the sacred person of His Majesty the Sovereign Emperor in the hearts of the multimillion tribe of South Russians all over their living area from the Carpathians to the Caspian Sea, everywhere where the Little Russian speech is heard."²⁵⁷ The latter passage reveals that Mikeshin viewed his project as the memorial of great importance not only for the Kuban Cossacks, but for the Ukrainians/Little Russians in general, whose territory, according to his imagination, was as stretched as the geographic limits allowed it physically. In doing so, Mikeshin dedicated his work to Ukraine, which exceeded the size of Russian-ruled Little Russia, while praising at the same time the imperial order.

Mikeshin sincerely believed that his monument would cause a storm of positive emotions among the Cossacks. In December 1893 he boasted to Evarnitskii: "I have composed the monument to the former Zaporozhians, nowadays the Kuban Cossacks, which is so good that they weep when they see it. Let the Tsar approve it and we will take off for Kuban, to Ekaterinodar with Ataman Malama, so that's' it!"²⁵⁸ Meanwhile, to draw attention to his project, Mikeshin composed a brochure, where he described the concept of the monument and its historical background. On the first glance, the idea of the monument was completely in line with ideas expressed and represented by other memorials to imperial rulers:

The grateful memory of the Great Tsaritsa and Her Companion, the brightest Prince Potemkin-Tavricheskii, as of the great persons, who graced the Zaporozhians and the Kuban Cossacks, is light and bright in the breast of every Cossack of the Kuban host, which is why the monument to Empress Catherine should respond to the people's perceptions of their benefactors. Looking at such monument, distant descendants of the contemporary Cossacks will remember that they owe their well-being to the autocratic word of the Great Tsaritsa, who brought their ancestors for the new life, and that it was Prince Potemkin who was their prime patron to the Tsaritsa.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ M. Mikeshin, "[The Description of the Project]," OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 157.

²⁵⁸ M. Mikeshin to D. Evarnitskii, 21 December 1893, RGALI, f. 1335, op. 1, ed. khr. 233, l. 16. As we saw, Alexander III approved the monument in March. The Kuban Host sent Mikeshin a letter about the Tsar's decision in June, but he appears to have not receive it: OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 32.

²⁵⁹ M. O. Mikeshin, *Opisanie proekta pamiatnyka imperatritse Ekaterine II* (St. Petersburg, 1896), 4–5.

The second part of the brochure represented a historical narrative that outlined the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks with an obvious aim of rehabilitating their image. Mikeshin tried to relieve the tension between the annihilation of Zaporozhia in 1775 and its restoration in 1787. He used the classical archetype of fault and repentance in his explaining of Potemkin's inconsistent politics. The "strong repentance" pushed Potemkin to create the Black Sea host, for which he became the Cossacks' "revered father" (*bogotvorimyi bat'ko*). The Zaporozhians, too, proved their loyalty by their heroic deeds in the Russo-Turkish war, and Potemkin "simply fell in love with them." While the intimate, mutual love of Potemkin and Zaporozhians was restored, the history of the Sich remained incredibly tragic. Lamenting the fate of the Zaporozhians, Mikeshin exclaimed that the "deeply tragic fate of the destruction of the Zaporozhian Host could hardly be compared with anything in the Russian history at all!"²⁶⁰ His monument was the tribute to this intense and ambivalent memory of Zaporozhia.

Apart from the figures of Catherine II, Potemkin, and Cossack chieftains, Mikeshin placed on the monument the most important objects related to the history and symbolic representation of the host, such as the banners and regalia, "granted by the Empress to the new region and its faithful host," the list of the victories won by the Black Sea and Kuban Cossacks during their centennial history, and—last but not least—the legendary charter granted by the Empress to the Black Sea Cossacks on June 30, 1792. The gigantic charter occupied the central place on the monument and, along with the statues of historical figures, was one of the monument's most important elements. It was supposed to contain the full text of the real document, from the beginning to the end, made as a "golden convex font." The text, which every literate would be able to read easily, proclaimed the awarding by Catherine II the territory of Taman to the Black Sea Cossacks for "eternal holding." This document, reproduced on an enormous scale—not in a fragile piece of paper but in bronze—was supposed to be an invulnerable guarantee of the Cossacks' further existence on this land as a privileged estate, which no one would be able to put into question. It was the time of radical social changes in the oblast, when the Cossacks were becoming the minority in Kuban due to the peasant migration from other gubernias, when the Cossacks' material conditions deteriorated, and when many doubted the feasibility of the further existence of the Cossack estate as such. At this time, Catherine the Great, made

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

in bronze together with her charter, would have been the real patroness of the host, reminding everybody that this land was in “eternal holding” of the Cossacks, no one else.

Finally, Mikeshin dared to add two other figures to the monument because, as he noted, “these [abovementioned] figures and objects would not fully characterize the idea of the monument.” It was a blind *kobzar*, a Ukrainian itinerant bard, with a guide boy. As he explained his decision,

The full historical account of the Kuban host does not yet exist, and if the memory of the Tsaritsa still lives among the Cossacks, it should be explained by the oral transmission, from generation to generation, of the stories about the bygone old days mainly by the folk singers, the “Kobzars”, who in simple-naive and sometimes dramatic form transmitted through their songs the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks’ struggle for the Faith and the Throne.²⁶¹

The kobzar composition stood out among the other figures of the eminent personalities and, thus, looked quite unusual. A nameless musician was honored to share the same pedestal with the greatest Empress in the Russian history, her all-mighty favorite, and the founding fathers of the Black Sea host. How could it be, then, that this unknown person joined the company of the imperial rulers and the representatives of the local elites? What is most curious here is that he did have the name. The key to understanding of the Mikeshin’s undisclosed intention lies in the events of 1861, when he was completing the monument to the “Millennium of Russia.”

On February 26, Taras Shevchenko, Mikeshin’s friend, died. To perpetuate the memory of his friend, Mikeshin decided to include his statue to the pantheon of the monument’s heroes. This decision was not only the tribute to the memory of the poet, but was a result of the overall trend of the nascent populism, closely connected with the peasant emancipation, and the figure of the poet was an ideal expression of this sentiment. The same year, Mikeshin clandestinely added the figure of Shevchenko to a new brief

²⁶¹ Ibid., 6. Curiously, in his catalogue of the imperial monuments of the Caucasus, its author, Vasilii Potto, explained the presence of the *kobzar* in a similar way. According to him, this kobzar “in his naive simple-minded or highly poetic epics and songs keeps for the future generations of descendants all the stages of the great struggle fought by the Ukrainian and Zaporozhian Cossacks for the Orthodox faith through the centuries.” He also argued that Mikeshin’s decision was caused by his feeling that “this character is increasingly rare”, and there would not be any other chance to perpetuate the kobzar in monumental sculpture. See V. A. Potto, *Pamiatniki vremen utverzhdeniia russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze*, vol. 2 (Tiflis: Tipografiiia Shtaba Kavkazskogo voennogo okruga, 1909), 10.

description of the monument, without any permission of the authorities. As if neutralizing the possible negative reaction, he placed there the figure of Gogol, much more acceptable for the imperial pantheon.²⁶² This trick did not go unnoticed. The Main Administration of the Means of Communication and Public Buildings, which was in charge of the construction of the monument, ordered to exclude both figures.²⁶³ Unwilling to accept the order, Mikeshin dared to write a letter directly to Alexander II. In his letter of November 1861, he attempted to persuade Alexander II that Shevchenko was the Little Russia's most popular folk poet, Little Russia was an important part of the empire, and therefore Shevchenko deserved to be included in the imperial pantheon of glory. "With regard to the reproduction of beautiful people's word, Shevchenko did for Little Russia more than any of our poets. Already during his lifetime, he became so popular thanks to his songs that not only among the educated circles, but there hardly is any village in Little Russia, where his songs are not song and his name is not known." Mikeshin substantiated his arguments by referring to the benefits the inclusion of Shevchenko would bring for the all-Russian unity. The presence of the Little Russian poet would not undermine the all-Russian idea; on the contrary, it would only allow subordinating the representation of Little Russia to the wider imperial whole. As he argued, "by including him, I wanted to state that we, the Russians, also consider Little Russia our Fatherland, and we consider every remarkable phenomenon in the field of its literature a common historical course of development of our entire Fatherland."²⁶⁴ The tsar did not approve Shevchenko, but permitted Gogol to stay, which was the gesture full of symbolism: loyal to the empire, Gogol was far more convenient figure as a symbol of the Ukraine's belonging to Russia than Shevchenko.

As Mikeshin did not give up his idea to mold the Shevchenko's figure, he concluded that there might be more secure ways to do this. When he worked on the model of the monument to Khmel'nitskii in Kiev, he intended to place at the pedestal of the monument a statue of the kobzar whose portrait features were strikingly similar to that of Shevchenko. He did not realize this intention, for the authorities ruled out to remove all the additional figures, such as the figures of the Pole and the Jew, whose presence, some feared, could evoke the feelings of national hatred.²⁶⁵ Having failed several times,

²⁶² "Opisanie pamiatnika tysiacheletiiu Rossii," *Mesiatseslov na 1862 god. Prilozhenie* ([1861]), 73.

²⁶³ N. Otto, I. Kupriianov, *Biograficheskie ocherki lits, izobrazhennykh na pamiatnike tysiacheletiiia Rossii, vozdvignutom v g. Novgorode* (Novgorod: Tipografiia M. Sukhova, 1862), 323.

²⁶⁴ O. M. Dobovol'skii, *Mikeshin* (Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyi Klub, 2003), 187.

²⁶⁵ Faith Hillis, "Ukrainophile Activism and Imperial Governance," 316.

Mikeshin did not miss the next chance. Among the collection of his letters, there is a mysterious letter by Mikeshin, written on May 17, 1893. He addressed it to a person named Fedot Leont'evich, a friend of Shevchenko.²⁶⁶

Soon I will go there [to Ekaterinodar] at the invitation of all the surviving Zaporozhians that live there, who are now called the Kuban Cossacks, to design and build there for them the monument to the emp[ress] Cat[herine], who graced them, to their resurrector, the Cossack Hryts'ko Nechosa (i.e. Prince Grigorii Potemkin of Taurida), and their Zaporozhian chieftains: Holovatyi, Chepiha, and Bilyi.²⁶⁷ There I also intend to place self-willingly the Ukrainian Kobzar—Taras with a guide boy. In so doing, I intend to perpetuate finally and forever with the God's help the memory of our unforgettable friend—and by this to pay my tribute to your beautiful and glorious Motherland.²⁶⁸

Characteristically, Mikeshin decided not to divulge his unauthorized intention, at least at this stage. While the public at large was supposed to remain ignorant, only those who were privy to the plan could know the personality behind the figure of the kobzar. This fact does not allow us to consider the figure of the kobzar as the first monument to Shevchenko in a narrow sense, but it was the only imperial-era monument embodying his image. It goes without saying that the coexistence of Shevchenko's and Catherine's images would be the best way to commemorate the poet. Ironically, the kobzar on the monument, "thoughtful and undistracted," as Mikeshin wrote in his brochure, "sings the glory of the Tsarina."²⁶⁹ In a sense, it was a clumsy assistance: the bronze Shevchenko glorified the person whom the real Shevchenko despised more than the other Russian monarchs. Near the statue of the kobzar, Mikeshin would produce the text of the song in Ukrainian, attributed to Anton Holovatyi and widely considered the unofficial hymn of the Kuban host. In it, the Black Sea Cossacks expressed gratitude to Catherine II for the land she granted them: "Let us end grievances / It is time to stop / We have finally received

²⁶⁶ The only person, who meets these criteria, is Fedot Leont'evich Tkachenko, Shevchenko's friend at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, but as of 1893 he had been dead for eight years. Mikeshin wrote that he learned about Fedot Leont'evich from Petr Stebnitskii, the head of the St. Petersburg "Hromada," as about an owner of Shevchenko's paintings and manuscripts. It gives us a hint: Mikeshin misinterpreted the Stebnitskii's words and wrote a letter to the dead man. He did not send the letter, and we owe our knowledge about the kobzar's person to this curious mistake.

²⁶⁷ What is noteworthy, Mikeshin used Ukrainian spelling of their surnames.

²⁶⁸ M. Mikeshin to F. L. [Tkachenko], 17 May 1893, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 27.

²⁶⁹ Mikeshin, *Opisanie proekta*, 7.

from the Tsarina / The reward for our service.” Amazingly, Mikeshin substituted the word “Taman” with “Kuban” in the lines “Let us thank the Tsarina, let us pray to the God / That she showed us the road to Taman.” This substitution performed an important shift in the imaginative geography of the region. If in the end of the eighteenth century it was common to imagine the lands to the north of the Kuban River as subordinate to the Taman peninsula, by the end of the nineteenth century such word usage seemed too odd and unfamiliar for contemporaries.²⁷⁰

Fourteen years later, when the construction of the monument was already finished, the figures of the kobzar and the guide boy sitting beside him caused confusion on the part of the new head of the region, for whom the idea of portraying ordinary, nameless people on the pedestal seemed extraordinary. In March 1907, Ataman Nikolai Mikhailov sent an alarming letter to Chief of Staff of the Caucasus military district Georgii Berkhman, in which he expressed his concern about the forthcoming unveiling of the monument. Apart from the high expenses of the ceremony (he was angry that the canvas designed to cover the whole memorial would cost 890 rubles and wondered what to do with it afterwards), for him there was another embarrassing circumstance, related to the consecration of the monument. During the ceremony of unveiling, the local priest was supposed to consecrate the monument, sprinkling holy water on all of its statues. This, Mikhailov wrote, “appears to be inappropriate [*ne ladnym*],” given that along with Catherine II, Grigorii Potemkin, and Anton Holovatyi there also were the kobzar and his guide boy: “Is it acceptable to sprinkle holy water on them?”²⁷¹ Berhman resourcefully bypassed the problem by replying that the consecration ceremony would affect not the bronze monument, but the “whole idea that it embodies”—the “sacred memories that connect the Kuban Cossacks with the person of Catherine the Great.”²⁷²

Boris Eduards—the sculptor who undertook the construction of the monument after Mikeshin’s death in 1896—did not pursue the aim of making the statue of kobzar resembling Shevchenko and hardly could be aware about the intention of Mikeshin. However, the kobzar he created, nevertheless, expressed the same feelings of sorrow and grief that the poetry by Shevchenko evoked. One of the dwellers of Ekaterinodar of that time, Mykhailo Teliha, recalled in his memoirs written in the late 1920s his childhood

²⁷⁰ Mikeshin confessed that he did it “for greater clarity”: Mikeshin, “Opisanie proekta,” OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 160.

²⁷¹ N. Mikhailov to G. Berkhman, 28 March 1907, GAKK, f. 318, op. 2, d. 3166, l. 35 ob.

²⁷² G. Berkhman to N. Mikhailov, 16 April 1907, *ibid.*, l. 38 ob.

impressions of the kobzar's figure. "The kobzar whom I saw almost every day (the monument stood not far from my school) had such a face and a posture that it seemed to me that his entire being, although lifeless, was shrouded by heavy and unspeakable sadness."²⁷³

Mikeshin and the Kuban administration failed to realize their plans in time, and there were plenty of reasons for this. One of the reasons was the enormous budget for the monument. Mikeshin requested the amount of 150,000 rubles, which was an exceptional sum of money. Considering the fact that all these costs were to be paid from the Host's budget, and not on donations of the Cossacks, the financial aspect of the project was a heavy burden for the Host. Even if the Kuban authorities declared their readiness to pay that price for their commemorative project, they tried to negotiate a better deal for themselves. Meanwhile, the cost of the construction works only grew up. Inefficiency and slowness of the decision-making process was yet another impediment. The bureaucratic machine functioned heavily; officials did not hurry to answer the letters, leaving them untouched for a long time. When in 1892 the War Ministry organized the general revision of the Kuban oblast, it was struck by the results of the inspection. The inspection found out that the Kuban administrative board organized work in a chaotic manner, carelessly and slowly. The commission found 14493 cases that the Host kept unresolved, storing many of them for years. These cases included governmental and judicial demands, and even emperor's decrees, which the Kuban authorities had not carried out.²⁷⁴ This atmosphere, which Mikeshin faced, embarrassed him to the extent that in 1894 he was even nurturing an idea of abandoning the construction of the monument and, in one of his letters to Malama, called it "ill-fated."²⁷⁵

Contemporaries of Malama's governance, as a rule, agreed that he was one of the most enterprising administrators of the region. Among his supporters were left-leaning public figures and Ukrainophile activists. For instance, one of the most active participants of the local Ukrainian nationalist movement, Stepan Erastov, characterized Malama "not so liberal as decent."²⁷⁶ The famous public figure Vladimir Skidan wrote in his memoirs

²⁷³ M. Teliha, "Yak ya stav svidomym ukraintsem," *Pam'iatky Ukrainy: Istorii ta kul'tura* 3–4 (2005): 91.

²⁷⁴ Narbut, "Otchet o rezul'tatakh revizii Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska po grazhdanskoi chasti," GARF, f. 601, op. 1, d. 429 ch. 1, l. 6, 6 ob.

²⁷⁵ M. Mikeshin to Ya. Malama, 23 June 1894, 8 September 1895, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 93.

²⁷⁶ S. Erastov, "Spohady," *Pam'iatky Ukrainy: Istorii ta Kul'tura* 3 (2006): xi.

that Malama tended “to do much for the oblast,” but “bureaucracy and internal politics persistently hampered the realization of his good aspirations.”²⁷⁷ At the same time, Mikeshin’s high-ranking Kuban correspondents blamed Malama personally for the failures in the work of the administration. General Korolenko wrote that Malama was “silly and sly.”²⁷⁸ Malama’s junior assistant, Erast Zborovskii, was even more hostile. Complaining that the idea to build the monument was “almost the only enterprise that the Host has undertaken,” he put the blame on the administration, in which he served himself, and on Malama in particular. Zborovskii’s letter to Mikeshin was quite outspoken as he attacked Malama: “I will tell you frankly, M[ikhail] O[sipovich], that our administrative board is a cesspool of a sort one can rarely find elsewhere. It is the truth even though I belong to this institution too, to my great regret.” One of the reasons for this situation, according to Zborovskii, was nepotism: “Our Ataman is a complete goof [*chistaia mamalyga*]. He has surrounded himself with his relatives who do what they want to do, while he is laying in wakeless sleep. Even if he wakes up, he still understands nothing, but strongly advocates his kin.”²⁷⁹ In another letter, Zborovskii repeated the insults. In January 1896, Malama’s assistant complained: “What can I do with this stupid beef [*glupoi teliatinnoi*]? I cannot serve with him anymore and cannot wait to escape from this damned mud.” Dissatisfaction with Malama brought the two correspondents closer, and Zborovskii invited Mikeshin to his home in case he comes to Ekaterinodar: “I cannot vouch for pickles, but you will find here a good Cossack borsch and other Cossack food [*i vse take druhe nashe kozats’ke*].”²⁸⁰

In January 1896, Mikeshin died before he had a chance to commence the construction of the monument, the main work of the last years of his life. His friend, the singer and conductor Dmitrii Agrenev-Slavianskii, who had visited Mikeshin a month before his death, assumed that the circumstances related to his work on the monument became the reason of his untimely demise. As Slavianskii recalled, during his visit to Mikeshin, the first thing he noted in his apartment was the model of the monument to Catherine II, placed in the middle of the room, which “impressed” him. Slavianskii believed that “what Mikeshin “was creating with such passionate love, what he was working on all day, and often all night, might have been the reason of his untimely death.”

²⁷⁷ V. A. Skidan, “Iz moei biografii,” OR RGB f. 458, k. 10, d. 23, l. 7.

²⁷⁸ P. Korolenko to M. Mikeshin, 19 September 1893, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 43.

²⁷⁹ E. Zborovskii to M. Mikeshin, 8 September 1895, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 204.

²⁸⁰ E. Zborovskii to M. Mikeshin, 6 January 1896, OR GRM, f. 64, ed. khr. 91, l. 230 ob.

According to Slavianskii, Mikeshin's activities reflected the complexity of his loyalties: he sang "Belarussian songs," worked on illustrations for Shevchenko's poetry, and continued working on the monument to the empress.²⁸¹ Another friend of Mikeshin also wrote that because of the artist's work on the model of the monument, he ignored summer vacations and never left St. Petersburg so as not to interrupt his working process.²⁸²

It was due to the efforts of Mikeshin's family that the construction of the monument eventually came to fruition. His wife and son repeatedly contacted the Host, urging it to fulfill its commitment and not to abandon the realization of the project. In March 1896, Mikeshin's widow addressed Malama with a request to continue and carry through the work of her late husband, whereas the cost estimate of the project rose to 180,000 rubles.²⁸³ Already in August, the widow and the son managed to introduce the model of the monument to the imperial couple in the Grand Peterhof Palace, in the presence of War Minister Petr Vannovskii, the head of the GUKV, Vladimir Bunakov, and Minister of the Emperor's Court Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov.²⁸⁴ The Host confirmed its commitment to have the monument in Ekaterinodar. In September 1896, during the celebration of the bicentenary of the Kuban Cossack host, the authorities laid the foundation of the monument, symbolically marking by this its anticipated presence in the town. Soon thereafter, the Kuban administration established a special commission for the construction of the monument, which from that time on run all the affairs related to the project.²⁸⁵ In the autumn of 1901, the monument appeared in Ekaterinodar, albeit in its miniature version—the authorities installed the bronze model made by Mikeshin in the Ataman's residence.²⁸⁶

In the end, the Host entrusted the construction works to the Odessa-based sculptor Boris Eduards, who offered his serviced in February 1901.²⁸⁷ The Kuban administration solemnly unveiled the monument on May 6, 1907.²⁸⁸ In fact, the unveiling became a mere formality, because the monument had been accomplished for a rather long time prior to that moment. According to Evgenii Khoroshenko, the bronze part of the monument was

²⁸¹ E. Baumgarten, "O poslednikh dniakh zhizni M. O. Mikeshina," *KOV*, 6 February 1896, 3.

²⁸² A. M. Umanskii, "Pamiati Mikeshina," *Istoricheskii vestnik* (February 1897): 644.

²⁸³ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 21 March 1896, 2.

²⁸⁴ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 20 August 1896, 3.

²⁸⁵ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 6 November 1896, 4.

²⁸⁶ "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 3 October 1901, 1.

²⁸⁷ "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 24 February 1901, 2.

²⁸⁸ "Letopis'," *KOV*, 8 May 1907, 1.

delivered to Ekaterinodar and placed on the pedestal in early 1904.²⁸⁹ We cannot check this statement, for Khoroshenko does not support this claim with a reference. More likely, the monument was a work in progress until some point in 1906 and was finished no later than November 1906. On this month, a local newspaper informed that Yakov Malama, at that time the military assistant of the Caucasus viceroy, was about to come to Ekaterinodar to “hand over” the monument to the Kuban host.²⁹⁰ The delay with the unveiling resulted from the revolutionary situation of 1905-6, during which the inauguration of the monument would appear completely inappropriate. The opposition forces, indeed, assessed the significance of the monument in their own way. For them, the monument, which came at such a high price for the local budget, was a symbol of the regime they were fighting against. In July 1906, a correspondent of *KOV* witnessed a conversation of a group of leftist people who, standing at the bottom of the monument, criticized it for being a waste of money for nothing.²⁹¹ The monument became not only a subject for criticism, but a target for attacks on the part of more radical individuals. In October 1905, Mikhail Babych, the senior assistant of the head of the oblast and the chair of the commission for the construction of the monument, asked Ataman Dmitrii Odintsov for assigning guards for the monument because of repeated attempts to damage it.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Khoroshenko, *Ekaterinodar*, 74.

²⁹⁰ “Priezd Malama,” *Novaia Zaria*, 14 November 1906, 3.

²⁹¹ “Letopis’,” *KOV*, 6 July 1906, 1.

²⁹² M. Babych to D. Odintsov, 13 October 1905, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 8878, l. 9.



Fig. 3. The Monument to Catherine II. Source: <http://www.myeaterinodar.ru/ekaterinodar/cards/ekaterinodar-ekaterinodar-ekaterininskiiy-skver/> (retrieved 10 September 2016)

The monument to Catherine II became one of the most important sights of Ekaterinodar. It was located in the very center of the town, in front of the Ataman's palace, and surrounded by a beautiful public garden. The garden, kept by the administration in perfect state, with its various types of plants, flowerbeds, walkways, and illuminated by electric lamps, became an attractive and popular place for promenade.²⁹³ The monument had no lack of visitors. Among the latter were organized groups of schoolchildren, guided by their teachers, for whom the monument was supposed to be of particular, edifying importance. The high attendance does not imply, though, the successful dissemination of memory in the townspace. On the contrary, many onlookers and passersby did not understand the idea of the sculptural composition, as conceived by Mikeshin and the Black Sea Cossack elite in the 1890s. Even schoolteachers, giving tours to their pupils, often had a vague understanding of what the monument represented. In a trip report, narrating about an excursion of schoolchildren of the two-class school of stanitsa Umanskaia to cultural and historical sights of the oblast, its author (most probably, their teacher) gave a description of children's impressions from the monument

²⁹³ "Pamiatnik Ekaterine II," *KOV*, 28 May 1905, 2; "Voiskovoi skver," *KOV*, 30 April 1908, 2.

to Catherine II. They spent nearly fifteen minutes at the monument and took a particular interest in the figure of kobzar, “singing the prowess of the Zaporozhians and the grace of the Empress Catherine the Great,” and many of the pupils copied out the text of the kobzar’s song. The teacher, however, was not able to identify the statue of the guide boy, having mistaken him for the “Cossack Hryts’ko Nechosa” (i.e. Grigorii Potemkin).²⁹⁴

According to another observation, published in 1913 by the archpriest Petr Rutkevich, two teachers failed to explain their schoolchildren the meaning of the Cossack statues. The teachers were able to explain the question “what does she (the empress) hold in her hands?” but were not able to answer the rest of the questions, in particular those concerned with the Cossack chieftains: “which [of the Cossacks] is Bilyi, Holovatyi and Chepiha?” and “why does he (Chepiha) cross himself?” The archpriest contrasted the teachers’ ignorance with the good old times when people, he assured, knew about their own history thanks to the kobzars (just like the one on the monument, he wrote), who disseminated historical knowledge through their songs. To make the idea of the monument and the information about its figures clear for pedagogical personnel of the oblast, he proposed to write a special brochure and circulate it among the schools of Kuban.²⁹⁵

People may not have known the names of the Cossack chieftains, commemorated by the statues on the monument’s pedestal. They also may not heard anything about their deeds. But looking at the monument, passersby could not overlook the most remarkable peculiarity—the ethnic features of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. The very fact of the portrayal of Zaporozhian bodies in monumental sculpture had no precedents neither in the Russian Empire nor in Habsburg Galicia, where the idea about the Zaporozhian origin of the Ukrainian people had found fertile ground. As demonstrated by Serhy Yekelchuk, by the end of the nineteenth century Zaporozhian forelocks, moustaches, and wide trousers (*sharovary*), as the main iconographic attributes of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, had become a highly important symbolical resource used by the Ukrainophiles seeking to invent a specific, ostensibly authentic visual appearance of Ukrainians/Little Russians, different from that of (Great) Russians.²⁹⁶ Demonstrating the distinctiveness of the Black Sea Cossacks’ ancestors, the authors of the monument to Catherine II pursued a similar

²⁹⁴ “Ekskursiia uchenikov 5 otdeleniia Umanskogo 2-klassnogo uchilishcha v Novyi Afon,” *KOV*, 3 September 1908, 2.

²⁹⁵ Protoierei Rutkevich, “Nashi ekskursanty,” *KKV*, 1 June 1913, 3.

²⁹⁶ Serhy Yekelchuk, “Motifs from the Ukrainian National Revival in the Nineteenth Century,” *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 7, no. 2 (1993): 31–59.

goal. With the help of these statues, they manifested the particularism of Chernomoria and its Cossacks. Such was a description, given by Vasilii Potto in his overview of the Caucasian monuments: the figures of the Zaporozhian leaders represented “three characteristic types of Zaporozhians in their ancient dress, with their forelocks on the heads and long Little Russian moustaches down.”²⁹⁷ *KOV* gave a similar description, stating that at the bottom of the monument were the figures of Potemkin and “the Little Russians in their typical dress.”²⁹⁸ This physical peculiarity was essential for the Kuban elites. When a special Kuban commission examined the model of the monument, created by Boris Eduards, it found out that the model portrayed the Zaporozhian chieftains without their distinctive features: forelocks and moustaches. To correct this misunderstanding, the commission instructed Eduards “to substitute the hairpieces on the heads of the atamans Holovatyi and Chepiha with forelocks [*oseledtsy*], so that they were not braided, but twisted. Besides, make Holovatyi with ‘Little Russian moustaches’ . . .”²⁹⁹

The monument to Catherine II and the founding fathers of the Black Sea/Kuban host embodied cultural imagery of the Kuban elites of the last decade of the nineteenth century. By taking the decision to build the monument, the representatives of the host demonstrated the Zaporozhian lineage of the Kuban Cossacks, but they did it too late: it had been nearly fifteen years overdue. In this case, just as it was in the case of Alexander III’s visit to Ekaterinodar, outsiders proved greater adherents of the Zaporozhian myth if compared to the Kuban Cossack society itself. Mikeshin believed that the Host was not doing enough to honor the memory of its Zaporozhian ancestors. In this regard, his mission was akin to “awakening” the host from inertia. The next section looks at another initiative by Mikeshin related to the Kuban host, which was even more indicative in this regard than the project of the monument.

²⁹⁷ Potto, *Pamiatniki vremen utverzhdeniia russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze* 2: 9.

²⁹⁸ “Dnevnik,” *KOV*, 6 September 1895, 3.

²⁹⁹ O. Mysechko, “Do uchasti odesyiv v ustanovlenni pam’iatnykiv pereselennia chornomors’kykh kozakiv na Kuban’,” *Chornomors’ka mynyvshyna* 6 (2011): 153.

2.3. Bringing Zaporozhian Regalia “Back”

As already noted, from the very outset, Mikeshin saw his involvement in the monument project as something more important than a job. A great admirer of Shevchenko, Mikeshin was fascinated with the main heroes of his poetry, the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Zaporozhia had long been gone, but partially, as Mikeshin believed, survived in Kuban. Mikeshin’s major ambition was to awake the Kuban host’s dormant spirit of the Sich. Sometime in 1889 or early 1890, at the same time when Mikeshin became involved in the project, he came up with another idea that dealt with the host’s Zaporozhian past. Just as it was with the case of the monument, this initiative owed much to Dmitrii Evarnitskii’s participation in it. In 1889, Evarnitskii published an article, in which he informed the public about previously unknown collections of the Zaporozhian insignia in St. Petersburg, which he revealed while he was living in the capital.³⁰⁰ Those insignia represented the banners belonging to the Zaporozhian Sich and stored in the Transfiguration Cathedral. Mikeshin, who, apparently, had read the article (as he wrote in one of his letters to Evarnitskii, “You have pointed it [the banners] to me!”³⁰¹), became obsessed with an idea of transferring those insignia from St. Petersburg to what he thought to be their most proper place, Ekaterinodar.

As follows from his letter to Evarnitskii from February 5, 1890, Mikeshin shared the idea with Evarnitskii, who endorsed it and decided to give it publicity, and then with General Korolenko. The latter, as seen from the same letter, urged to postpone the initiative, fearing that it would have a deleterious effect on some other plans of the Kuban Cossack elites. “I hasten to write you,” wrote Mikeshin, “that I have informed General P. G. Korolenko in written form about my idea about the Zaporozhian insignia, which you revealed. I have just received his answer with an urgent and extra-insistent appeal not to disclose this idea in the press at the moment. He is the most ardent patriot of his Cossackdom and he finds the current moment extremely dangerous for other interests. We must trust him, he is fully aware of the political situation and the vital interests of his

³⁰⁰ D. I. Evarnitskii, “Gde devalis’ zaporozhskie voiskovye kleynody?” *Istoricheskii vestnik* no. 11, 38 (1889): 394-403. The scholar republished the article the same year. See Evarnitskii, *Ocherki po istorii zaporozhskikh kozakov i Novorossiiskogo kraia* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia I. N. Skorokhodova, 1889), 112-22.

³⁰¹ M. Mikeshin to D. Evarnitskii, 27 January 1894, RGALI, f. 1335, op. 1, ed. khr. 233, l. 23.

region . . .”³⁰² Irrespective of what Korolenko had in mind (shortly before, he—on behalf of the host—petitioned the authorities for the approval to establish the host’s cadet corps in Ekaterinodar and to allow the host to have its own gentry assembly³⁰³), Mikeshin talked Evarnitskii out of informing the matter to the editors of the St. Petersburg newspaper *Novoe vremia*.

Mikeshin did not return to this issue over the course of the next few years. Finally, in early 1894, he decided to trigger the plan he had been plotting. In January, Mikeshin met with the chief administrator of the Caucasus, Sergei Sheremetev, and enlisted the support for the case of the Zaporozhian regalia. Mikeshin asked Sheremetev to petition the Emperor to allow transferring the banners kept in the Transfiguration Cathedral to the Host Cathedral in Ekaterinodar, arguing that “there was no reason for them to be kept there [in St. Petersburg]” and that “the heroic and faithful Kuban Cossacks deserved such a gift by their innumerable selfless deeds in protecting our borderland from incessant raids of the predatory and warlike mountaineers.” Sheremetev promised to intercede for Mikeshin and to present his project to the emperor through the war minister.³⁰⁴ The artist had a good reason for addressing a bureaucrat of such a high rank. He boasted of having a long-standing friendship with Sheremetev, being confident in his ability to take advantage from the personal ties with him. Moreover, Mikeshin believed to be able to make use of these ties for the benefit of his friends. For instance, he boastfully wrote Evarnitskii that, as far as he had known Sheremetev from his “youth days,” he could find Evarnitskii a job somewhere in Tiflis, where Mikeshin himself was going to get the position of the director of the Tiflis branch of the Emperor’s Academy of Arts (which Sheremetev supposedly agreed to establish specifically at the request by Mikeshin).³⁰⁵

Quite remarkably, the Kuban administration, on whose behalf and to whose advantage Mikeshin claimed to be acting, was the last to have learned about this initiative. It was only after his meeting with Sheremetev that Mikeshin informed Yakov Malama about his initiative. In his characteristic manner, he bragged to Evarnitskii: “The news about it has caused the biggest sensation in Kuban.” In its endorsement of the case, the

³⁰² M. Mikeshin to D. Evarnitskii, 5 February 1890, RGALI, f. 1335, op. 1, ed. khr. 233, l. 1, 1 ob.

³⁰³ L. Verbitsky to P. G. Korolenko, 28 December 1889, OR GRM, f. 64, op. 1, ed. khr. 91, l. 8 ob.;

P. P. Korolenko, “Zapiska ob otkrytii v Kubanskom voiske dvorianskikh deputatskikh sobranii,” *KOV*, 10 December 1894, 1-2.

³⁰⁴ E. Zborovskii to F. Gershel’man, 3 February 1894, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6397, ll. 2, 2 ob.

³⁰⁵ M. Mikeshin to D. Evarnitskii, 26 April 1894, RGALI, f. 1335, op. 1, ed. khr. 233, l. 27.

leadership of the host, however, was guided by considerations other than those that inspired Mikeshin. Unlike the latter's Zaporozhian sentiment and the wish to restore the Kuban host's succession from Zaporozhia, the administration pursued pragmatic interests. The Zaporozhian insignia, if placed in the main cathedral of the host, would provide protection for the cathedral against the attempts by non-Cossack priesthood to assume control of it. As Mikeshin wrote, "I received a letter from Ataman Malama that the Synodal clergy (i.e. not military one) decided to take the Cathedral away from the Kuban host and to make it ordinary, not military... Malama has written me that only placing the Zaporozhian banners there would secure it for the Host!" Mikeshin wanted to find all artefacts that could be considered as insignia and transfer them to Kuban. "Tell me, my friend," he asked Evarnitskii, "where else the Muscovites keep the Zaporozhian insignia and relics, and I will try to obtain [*vyskresti*] them for Kuban, too."³⁰⁶

At this point, the Kuban administration joined Mikeshin's initiative. In March 1894, Yakov Malama composed his own petition to Sheremetev. In it, the head of the host underscored the Zaporozhian lineage of the Kuban Cossacks. "The banners," he wrote, "should serve as the precious memorials for the Kuban Cossacks as the descendants of the Zaporozhians."³⁰⁷ After the meeting with Sheremetev, Mikeshin firmly believed that the request would meet the approval of the authorities in the very near future, literally—in several days. Contrary to his expectations, the progress of the case was much slower than Mikeshin had hoped. Instead of quickly going through the short chain of the authorities (the chief administrator of the Caucasus, the war minister, and the emperor), the case did not bypass the GUKV, which requested the Host to provide as much details about the banners as possible. To proceed with the case, the GUKV wanted to know when and under what circumstances the banners were placed in the Transfiguration Cathedral and when they were granted to the Zaporozhian Cossacks.³⁰⁸ The Host officials searched in the local archives but were not able to find any relevant information about the banners. It turned out that there were no Zaporozhian documents in Kuban at all, and the earliest documents held in the archives of Ekaterinodar dated back to 1788.³⁰⁹ The chief archivist, Prokofii Petrovich Korolenko, proposed to search in the archives of Odessa, which, as he believed, might contain the collections of documents that belonged to the leading historian

³⁰⁶ M. Mikeshin to D. Evarnitskii, 27 January 1894, *ibid.*, l. 23.

³⁰⁷ Ya. Malama to S. Sheremetev, 6 March 1894, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6397, l. 4, 4 ob.

³⁰⁸ GUKV to F. Gershel'man, 1 March 1894, *Ibid.*, ll. 7, 7 ob.

³⁰⁹ P. Korolenko to F. Gershel'man, 13 April 1894, *Ibid.*, l. 8.

of Zaporozhia of the mid-19th century, Apollon Skal'kovskii. The Odessa authorities conducted their own investigation upon the Kuban request and informed the Host that the earliest documents kept in the Odessa archives dated back only to 1803.³¹⁰

Meanwhile, the Kuban officials, who failed to collect any information about the banners, turned to the author of the initiative, asking Mikeshin to provide all the available information about the St. Petersburg banners, including their historical background. Mikeshin did not expect that his initiative would cause such a clerical fuss. Weighed down by this obligation, he complained to Nikolai Rerikh in July 1894: “I don't know what got into me to submit to Adjutant General Sheremetev, the chief of all the Caucasus, the petition about the transference of all the Zaporozhian standards that are kept here in the Savior Transfiguration Cathedral . . . to the Ekaterinodar Host Cathedral. . . The turmoil has been launched: inquires and references are flying around the whole south—where, what, and how can one find something related to Zaporozhia?! And they send me all this burden, all this correspondence of Kuban with Odessa, Kherson, Nikolaev, and so on and so forth, so that I fussed here about the returning of all the things Zaporozhian to Kuban. They have not sent me the money, but this is a matter of great importance for Kuban. . .”³¹¹

Hurried by the Host, Mikeshin was compelled to try on the role of historian.³¹² In August 1894, he composed a historical article based on the research by Evarnitskii. There he cited Evarnitskii's conclusions, informing the Host that the Zaporozhian insignia initially belonged to those Zaporozhian Cossacks, who lived in the Ottoman-controlled territories from 1709 to 1728. In 1728, after they swore allegiance to Russia, those Cossacks handed over their insignia to the imperial army. Mikeshin made claim not only to the banners of the Transfiguration Cathedral. He also pointed to other Zaporozhian artifacts kept in the Hermitage and the Museum of Artillery in St. Petersburg, with the latter having in its collections two cannons that belonged to the hetmans Ivan Mazepa and Kirill Razumovskii. Mikeshin argued that there were no known decrees by the imperial rulers that would justify the transfer of Zaporozhian insignia to the cathedral and the museums, as well as their storage there, insisting thus that there were no legal foundations

³¹⁰ The Chancellery of the Odessa mayor to the Staff of the Odessa Military district, 14 June 1894, *Ibid.*, l. 30.

³¹¹ M. Mikeshin to N. Rerikh, 12 July 1894, OR GTG, f. 44, op. 1. d. 997, l. 1.

³¹² See the letters by the Kuban officials: F. Gershel'man to M. Mikeshin, 4 June 1894, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6397, l. 10 ob; Ya. Malama to M. Mikeshin, 24 August 1894, OR GRM, f. 64, op. 1, d. 91, l. 100.

to keep the insignia in St. Petersburg further on. On the contrary, as he contended, “It would be the most rightful thing to bring these items, which were so unjustly and godlessly, even sacrilegiously stolen from the Zaporozhians, back to the direct descendants of those Zaporozhians, who constitute to this day the faithful Kuban host, which so selflessly served to Russia on its belligerent borderland.”³¹³

As it was earlier that year, Mikeshin hoped to solve the problem by himself, by appealing directly to the supreme authorities. He addressed the chief of the GUKV, Vasilii Bunakov, who read the article and showed no criticism about the idea of transferring the insignia from the cathedral and the Hermitage. Bunakov, in Mikeshin’s own words, was “very satisfied with the content of the article” and “expressed complete sympathy” with this undertaking. According to Mikeshin, his arguments seemed Bunakov absolutely convincing and he acknowledged that Mikeshin “fully demonstrated in his note the groundlessness of the presence of these items in the Russian capital.”³¹⁴ Bunakov opposed only the proposal for transferring the cannons, because of their being artillery objects and not insignia per se. The consent given by Sheremetev and Bunakov virtually guaranteed the successful solving of the case by the war minister. However, the case did not go forward. The usual red tape might have been one of the reasons that delayed the advancement of the case for a certain time. Yet there was even more important factor for it. With the death of Mikeshin in January 1896, the process of transferring the insignia to Ekaterinodar lost the most fervent advocate of the case. Within the next year, two other key supporters of the initiative died: Sheremetev in December 1896 and Bunakov in January 1897. The new chief of the GUKV, Pavel Shcherbov-Nefedovich, was not inclined to endorse the case.

Finally, in 1902, War Minister Aleksei Kuropatkin dismissed the request on the ground of the conclusions, made by the new leadership of the GUKV. In sharp contrast to Bunakov’s benevolent attitude, the revised opinion by the GUKV concluded that there were no reasons of moving the insignia from the Saint Transfiguration Cathedral and the Hermitage to Ekaterinodar. It insisted that the insignia (referred to as “the trophies”, as if the Russian Empire obtained them as a result of a military victory) could not be considered as a heritage of the Kuban host because they never belonged to the ancestors of the Kuban Cossacks. Since the actual owners of the banners--as Mikeshin pointed it in his

³¹³ M. Mikeshin, “O zaporozhskikh kleinodakh,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6397, l. 19.

³¹⁴ M. Mikeshin to F. Gershel’man, 30 August 1894, Ibid., ll. 13, 13 ob.

article—were not the Zaporozhian Cossacks that settled in Kuban at the end of the eighteenth century, but the Cossack that refused to join Russia and settled in the Ottomans-controlled territory, the Kuban host had no legal reason to lay claim to the insignia.³¹⁵

The conclusion by GUKV reveals an important aspect of the official attitude toward the Kuban host's claims to the Zaporozhian legacy. In principle, St. Petersburg did not deny the claim of the Kuban Cossacks to being the direct descendants of the Zaporozhians. In doing so, the central authorities implicitly accepted the rules of the game, imposed by the Host (or, more correctly, by Mikeshin, who acted on its behalf), that Kuban was entitled to the legacy of the Sich and to the Zaporozhian symbols of power. The question of the regalia here was rather a matter of loyalty. As long as the banners belonged precisely to the rival “faithless” post-Zaporozhian Cossack community, in contrast to which Potemkin established the “faithful” Black Sea host, the use and veneration of its symbols of power would be everything but an appropriate behavior of the loyal subjects of the empire.

In subsequent decades, the Zaporozhian regalia in St. Petersburg drew attention of Ukrainian national activists, who attempted to gain control over the most valuable and essential heritage of Zaporozhia. As they saw the Zaporozhian Sich as the precedent of the Ukrainian statehood, they thought of the insignia as of the national treasure. After the February revolution, the Ukrainian polity repeatedly tried to transfer the insignia to Kiev. In March 1918, Mykhailo Kovenko, a head of the Council of Free Cossacks, demanded that the chief of the Ukrainian delegation in negotiations with Russia make every effort to bring all the ancient Cossack insignia and other antiquities that are stored in Russian archives and museums back to Kiev. He anticipated the building of the museum for that purpose, which would store all the Zaporozhian regalia.³¹⁶ In later times, an adventurous story appeared in émigré circles, according to which in 1917 a group of neo-Cossack activists led by Ivan Poltavets-Ostrianytsia, the future adjutant of Hetman Pavel Skoropadskii, seized the Zaporozhian regalia and weapons from a certain “Historical museum” (apparently, the Museum of Artillery) in Petrograd in order to bring them to

³¹⁵ M. Babych to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 22 December 1910, GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 108, l. 9 ob.

³¹⁶ V. Lobodaev, *Revoliutsiina stykhiia. Vil' nokozats'kyi rukh v Ukraini 1917–1918 rr.* (Kiev: Tempora, 2010), 220.

Ukraine.³¹⁷ More likely, it was a fantasy, which underscored the importance of the Zaporozhian insignia for the Ukrainian national imagination. The Kuban Host was the first to openly lay claim on the insignia in 1894. Having failed in 1902, it raised this issue again eight years later, as a part of a larger cultural policy. This story is discussed in Chapter 5.

2.4. The Taman Initiative: The Monument to the Zaporozhian Ancestors

Ekaterinodar, as the administrative center, was the most obvious place to commemorate the centenary of the Black Sea host's resettlement to the Kuban region, and discussions about the anniversary—its date(s), the form of the celebrations and, most importantly, its meaning as such—involved notable public figures. At the same time, commemorative projects were not confined solely to the host's capital. A major initiative of celebrating the jubilee of the Black Sea Cossack colonization came from, and subsequently was held in, a seemingly unlikely place, far remote from the Cossack headquarters and decision-making bodies, but by its very origin epitomizing the deep historicity of the whole region. It was Taman or, officially, stanitsa Tamanskaia, where another idea was born. With the passage of time, that idea evolved into the Kuban host's second major commemorative project, by time but not by importance.

On March 6, 1894, the stanitsa assembly, chaired by stanitsa's ataman Vladimir Tolstopiat, among other local affairs discussed two issues that were directly concerned with the centenary jubilee. One was the forthcoming anniversary of the Intercession Church, the first church to have been built in Chernomoria. Another was the recent anniversary of the arrival of the first group of the Black Sea Cossack colonizers in 1792, whose ships landed on the new land in the vicinity of the stanitsa—the anniversary that went unnoticed in 1892. To commemorate these events, the assembly decreed to petition the administration for the permission of launching the Kuban-wide subscription in order to

³¹⁷ Ibid., 114.

collect funds for erecting a monument in Taman. The assembly made the first contribution to the budget of the project in the amount of 500 rubles.³¹⁸

In view of its peripheral and seemingly popular character, the origins of this idea, which soon was supported by the authorities in Ekaterinodar and eventually became a matter of great importance for the host's administration and the whole region, require more nuanced examination. At the first glance, it may seem that the idea, emerged among a Cossack community of a distant settlement, might be a grassroots-level initiative, which was brought into life by the shared desire of the descendants of the first Black Sea Cossack colonizers to commemorate their ancestors. But was it in fact an evidence of the authentic collective memory, a cultural expression of the collective sense of the past?

This question cannot be properly answered without taking into consideration the micro-context of socio-economical developments in stanitsa Tamanskaia and the peculiarities of the settlement's governance of that time. Travelers who visited Taman in the early 1890s, expressed excited feelings about the profound changes in stanitsa's appearance and local life, brought about by the recently elected head of administration, ataman Vladimir Tolstopiat. A young, 32-year old, enterprising person, Tolstopiat was a rare exception among the cohort of lower-rank administrators, who ran affairs of Kuban's stanitsas. During the first years of his tenure, the ataman initiated reforms to the local life, bringing various innovations to the public space of the stanitsa. Smoothing of road surfaces, setting up street lights on the main and side streets, planting the streets with trees, constructing accurate painted bridges across ditches—all it were energetic steps, undertaken by Tolstopiat, who had the everyday habit of getting around stanitsa's neighborhoods by bicycle in search for issues that required improvement. Under the ataman's supervision, the sand area near the Intersection Church was planted with four thousand trees to prevent the sands of getting into the settlement, while the square in front of the church was flattened out for the future boulevard. In 1894-95, Taman could boast a marketplace with the covered canopy, the market for the sale of livestock with a veterinary cabin and a watchman, a paved roadway at the pier and other evidences of nontrivial approach of Tolstopiat to his administrative duties.³¹⁹

³¹⁸ K. P. Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam* (Ekaterinodar: Elektro-tipografiia tovarishchestva "Pechatnik," 1911), 37.

³¹⁹ Bes-Arabets, "Taman'," *KOV*, 27 October 1893, 3; Zaezzhii, "St. Tamanskaia," *KOV*, 22 February 1895, 2.

A traveler from Odesa/Odessa noted with particular delight Tolstopiat's attention to details. Not only stanitsa's houses were marked with numbers, but every building had a copper sign with lithographic pictures indicating fire tools that the owner was obliged to provide to the fire brigade in case of necessity. Every house now had a flag pole for solemn occasions. To complement the overall picture, elegant lampposts with wooden plates portraying the imperial coat of arms and indicating the number of residents were put at the entrances to the stanitsa.³²⁰ Another visitor to Tamanskaia, the geographer and meteorologist Leonid Apostolov, was so impressed by the improvements in the settlement that he recommended everyone to visit Tamanskaia to "witness first-hand what can the energy of one person do at negligible cost."³²¹ Apparently, for Vladimir Tolstopiat, the idea of the monument was yet another one in a row of improvements of the stanitsa's public space, which was related to the overall beautification of Tamanskaia and Tolstopiat's local pride of it.

Particularity of Taman is better seen against the background of other stanitsas that also celebrated the centenary in 1894. Local press reported only about two celebrations, held in Chernomoria, despite the fact that several dozens of settlements had the jubilee. Indifference to the anniversary of the colonization was a general rule that knew just a few solitary exceptions. Moreover, this rule held true for the whole host and not for Chernomoria proper. In April 1894, a correspondent to the official newspaper bewailed that no celebrations were in preparation in stanitsa Vorovskoleskaia, founded by the Don Cossacks in the same year of 1794—a sort of indifference, which he called an "unforgivable sleep."³²²

One of the exceptions was stanitsa Starominskaia, the administration of which scheduled the celebrations to coincide with the coronation day of Nicholas II and, to commemorate the centenary of the settlement, allocated funds for creation of the icon of St. Catherine in honor of Catherine II. According to a witness, a local priest told the crowd about "the life and useful activities of the Zaporozhian Cossacks for the benefit of the fatherland" during the sermon.³²³

³²⁰ G. Kh., "Neskol'ko slov o Tamani," *KOV*, 1 June 1894, 3; G. Kh., "Neskol'ko slov o Tamani," *KOV*, 4 June 1894, 3.

³²¹ L. Apostolov, "Otchet o poezdke po Kubanskoi oblasti letom 1895 goda (okonchanie)," *KOV*, 19 September 1895, 2.

³²² Ivan Tupikin, "V st. Vorovskoleskoi," *KOV*, April 6, 1894, 3.

³²³ Odin iz prisutstvovavshykh, "St. Starominskaia," *KOV*, June 15, 1894, 4.

Another celebration, on a randomly taken day of July 1, was held in stanitsa Staroshcherbinovskaia. The occasion of the fest, characterized by the reporter as “very modest” and “ineptly organized,” did not cause great enthusiasm among the inhabitants, whom the same reporter reproached for “the impoverishment of the Cossack spirit and weak sympathy for their local, Cossack holiday.” The official part of the program of celebrations included a requiem for the founders of the stanitsa at the cemetery, a religious procession around the church, a prayer service, and a march of a Cossack *sotnia*. The unofficial one, which seems to have been more attractive for the local dwellers, included a dinner with two 40-liter barrels of vodka and beer with dried fish and bread as the treat. Whereas everyone hurried to grab a portion of drink and eat for himself, the dinner soon turned into a turmoil. After the dinner ended, it left behind several dozens of drunk Cossacks lying on the square. Reportedly, during the fest nobody ever mentioned the occasion of the celebrations. The rural society was making the first steps in learning to celebrate historical jubilees, as it was demanded by the new cultural fashion. All this, as the witness explained, was caused by “the lack of habit to the celebrations of this kind.”³²⁴

Compared to the rest of Chernomoria, the Taman initiative was the sole serious claim for an ambitious commemorative undertaking, even if it was more an expression of ambitions of a particular person. Tolstopiat, however, lost control over the matter. In the next year, the community of the stanitsa, dissatisfied with the excessive presence of the new politics in their regular life, did not reelect him as ataman. Nevertheless, by that time the monument initiative was not the prerogative of Taman and its inhabitants.³²⁵

Soon after the stanitsa assembly passed its resolution, the Host took the project under its auspice. Just in a month, the administration petitioned the GUKV for permission. Central authorities replied with approval in December 1895, notifying about the sanction by the emperor and war minister’s directive to open the subscription for fund-raising. It took the Host two more years to compose the draft containing historical background of the monument’s project and the text of the appeal to be promulgated within the oblast. Both were approved by the Tiflis administration in 1897. As can be seen, the case of the monument progressed smoothly at every level of the bureaucratic pyramid. Authorities

³²⁴ I. Krikun, “Stoletie stanitsy Staroshcherbinovskoi,” *KOV*, 23 July 1894, 2.

³²⁵ Zaezzhii, “St. Tamanskaia” 2.

had no objections, and the only impediment that hampered its progress was the traditional slowness of the bureaucratic machine's work.³²⁶

During the whole stage of gaining official permissions from Tiflis and St. Petersburg, neither Kuban officialdom nor the local educated society were giving publicity to the Taman initiative. *KOV*, the only public forum available for general audience, kept a mysterious silence about the progress of the case. The only article dedicated to the monument appeared in the press in September 1897. Authored by Mikhail Ponochevnyi, a teacher of the Mariinskoe women's school and a notable representative of the Ekaterinodar intellectual community, it bore the eloquent title "The past is the basis of the future." As a descendant of a noble Black Sea Cossack family and a grand-grandson of the founder of Temriuk, the major settlement of the Taman peninsula, Ponochevnyi had a personal interest in the Taman undertaking. Informing the public about the project and the forthcoming announce of fundraising campaign, Ponochevnyi praised the initiative as an exceptional tribute to the memory of Zaporozhia, born in an unlikely milieu—in the Cossack community wholly indifferent to the ancestral memory. A "miserable number" of the Cossacks, he wrote, "ever heard about the sacred place where their ancestor, the kosh father with a forelock [*chubatyi*], put his firm Zaporozhian foot in Kuban for the first time" and restored the Russian power in the "primordially" Russian region, formerly ruled by yet another hero "with a forelock", Prince Sviatoslav. Ponochevnyi "felt ashamed of the contemporaries," yet putting the blame not on the Cossacks, but on the contemporaneous culture and intellectual fashion, impervious to the memory about the past. He rebuked "intelligentsia," of which he was himself a part, for "the supercilious disregard for the past" and for seeing any "reverence for tradition" as an "undignified behavior," in short—for establishing and maintaining what we might call the dominant rationalistic discourse.

Although no idea about the appearance of the monument was yet formulated, Ponochevnyi saw the future monument as a manifestation of patriotic self-consciousness and Russian nationalism. The nationalism as he saw it, however, was uneven, diverse phenomenon, based on local particularities. He advocated for "the need to preserve our national ego, with all its ethnographic, historical, and cultural particularities, with all

³²⁶ Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam*, 38–39.

traditions that distinguished it from among a multitude of other groups of the greater whole.”

Ponochevnyi, an admirer of Shevchenko and a participant of the poet’s anniversaries in Ekaterinodar, called to follow the words of “the great bard of Ukraine”—to not neglect your own, but to learn from others. The others’ brightest example to follow the lead of was the monument to Mickiewicz in Poland, for which the Poles generously offered financial donations. He hoped, or wanted to hope, that the Kuban fundraising campaign would prove an eventual success.³²⁷

In October 1898, the Host issued the call for donations, urging the Kuban Cossacks to make feasible contributions for commemorating “the first day of the Cossacks’ arrival to the land bestowed on them by the Empress.” The author of the text, the senior assistant of the chief of staff, Andrei Kiiashko, exhorted the Cossacks to be proud of belonging to the generation that proved as fortunate as to get the chance to perpetuate the foundational events of the history of the host. What is more—the participation in fundraising campaign was in itself a chance to enter into history. Those who would demonstrate their memory (and will prove their sincerity financially) would themselves be remembered by the generations to come. As Kiiashko wrote, “our descendants will be forever grateful to us for our gratitude.”³²⁸

Apart from the financial aspect, the Host engaged in the elaboration of the design of the monument. Instead of entrusting it to a special commission or a sculptor, not yet appointed, the authorities decided to seek advise of a rather narrow circle of people, who were asked to share their views on the idea and the appearance of the monument. In 1897, Malama sent out ten letters to Kuban Cossack officers. The selection criterion is not quite clear, for they mostly had different occupation, position, and military rank. Still, what all of them shared was their belonging to noble Black Sea Cossack families: Bursak, Tolstopiat, Mazan, Kukharenko, Skakun, Babych etc. In doing so, Malama rendered the Taman monument initiative as an internal Black Sea Cossack matter, an expression of

³²⁷ M. O. Ponochevnyi, “Proshloe — osnova budushchego,” *KOV*, 9 December 1897, 2–3; for the Ponochevnyi’s story of his family, see: M. O. Ponochevnyi, “K voprosu ob osnovateliakh gor. Temriuka,” *KOV*, 20 January 1901, 2; for his participation at Shevchenko’s anniversary, see: “Pominki T. G. Shevchenka v gor. Ekaterinodare,” *KOV*, 7 March 1901, 2.

³²⁸ A. Kiiashko, *Vozzvanie o podpiske na pamiatnik, predlozhennyi k postanovkev stanutse Tamanskoi, Kubanskogo kazach’ego voiska, Prikaz po Kubanskomu kazach’emu voisku №109 ot 28 oktiabria 1898*, 2.

memory of Chernomoria proper, unrelated to the rest of the host. However, while not so many persons were invited to take part in creating what would become the Chernomoria's single most important tribute to the Black Sea Cossack forefathers, even less accepted the invitation.³²⁹

Malama received only two response letters with suggestions about the prospective appearance of the monument. The letters were authored by Ivan Mazan, the ataman of the Ekaterinodarskii district, and Petr Kosolap, a teacher at the Mariinskoe women's school and one of the few talented local painters. The visions they offered shared a common, exceptionally unconventional feature, which particularly stood out against the background of the conventional tradition of monument building of the day. Both of them put forward the idea of erecting the monument that would portray not an eminent historical personality, but an ordinary, nameless person, a typical rank-and-file Cossack. For the imperial notion of hierarchically structured society, where the masses were guided by, and obedient to, great leaders, the appearance of the monument portraying a commoner, an unknown person, was virtually inconceivable. Mazan came up with the idea that the monument in Taman should depict the figure of Zaporozhian Cossack with the uncovered head, holding the signs of royal favor: bread, salt, and the Catherine's charter laying on the silver dish. Every detail of the quadrangular pedestal expressed the idea of colonial takeover. According to the Mazan's design, it might contain the song about the granting of the land to the Black Sea Cossacks on the front side, the plan of the land and the precise date of the Cossacks' arrival to it on the lateral sides, and the bas-relief depicting the sea shore with the Cossack boats that were approaching it on the backside.³³⁰

As a professional artist, Petr Kosolap envisioned the project quite in a similar way, but with a greater attention to the details: "Put on the pedestal only one figure in full growth (made from bronze), which would portray a typical Zaporozhian Cossack in full armour of that time, coming out of the boat," he wrote to Malama. The figure would hold a banner in one hand, while keeping another on the chest and by this expressing his gratitude to the God. As if following the footsteps of Mikeshin, Kosolap suggested to place a bandura in the boat, which was a "constant companion of the Cossacks and served them as consolation in sorrow, joy, and fun." The decoration of the pedestal, to which Kosolap suggested to give the shape of the island of Fanagoria, had to epitomize the idea

³²⁹ GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9563, l. 15.

³³⁰ I. Mazan to Ya. Malama, 17 November 1897, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6936, ll. 24, 24 ob.

of the deep historicity of the land, referring to two layers of its past. The first one, a broken ancient column in the Corinthian style at the bottom of the pedestal, symbolized the Greek foretime. The inscription “Taman” on the front side of the pedestal, made in an ancient Slavic font (with the date of the Cossacks' arrival underneath), apparently, alluded to the medieval times of Tmutarakan. Yet another element, the Catherine II’s charter, had to be placed at the side of the pedestal. Finally, a broken Turkish banner and a Turkish cannon would represent the Cossacks' exploits during the sieges and captures of the Ottoman fortresses. In the end, this latter project was chosen as the more appropriate.³³¹

The decision of building a monument to a rank-and-file Cossack was not only a progressive innovation in the realm of cultural memory on the empire-wide scale. As it turned out, it mattered also in terms of the monument’s budget, considerably reducing its cost. The owner of a workshop in Baku, to whom the Kuban authorities decided to entrust the works of the monument in December 1901, estimated that the exact copy of the portrait of a certain personality, made by the best artist would cost 5,000 rubles. At the same time, the face that would bear no precise portrait resemblance to any historical figure would cost half as much.³³²

In pursuit of the lower cost, the administration determined to construct it from concrete instead of bronze—a decision that hardly corresponded to the idea of “perpetuation.” Boris Eduards, to whom the Host proposed to take up the construction works as late as October 1903, refused to consider the possibility of taking concrete as the construction material. According to the Eduards’ explanation, if the host was going to build the monument for the future generations, it had to stand for centuries, while concrete, due to its fragility, would by no means remain for long. As opposed to the previous budget, Eduards’ sum was almost ten times as higher, amounting to more than 24 thousand rubles.³³³

However reasonable the argumentation of Eduards was, such a cost, and the whole project as such, turned out to be unrealistic for a simple, but crucial reason—the sum gathered during the fund-raising campaign, amounted to 712 rubles.³³⁴ The administration

³³¹ P. Kosolap to Ya. Malama, 12 December 1897, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6936, ll. 26-27.

³³² N. S. Fandeev to KOP, 25 December 1901, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6936, ll. 52, 52 ob.

³³³ Ob”iasnitel’naia zapiska o smete pamiatnika, n.d., GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9563, l. 10.

³³⁴ M. Babych to Ataman of the Caucasus Cossack hosts (copy), 21 February 1909, RGVIA, f. 330, op. 53, d. 2167, l. 2.

of the host had expected mass enthusiasm from the part of the Cossack population, but, at this time and in this situation, the latter reacted with indifference to the whole undertaking. Several years would pass before the Host, headed by other administrators, would take on this issue again, sixteen years after the anniversary, to which its initiators dedicated the idea of the monument. Revisited in different context and under different circumstances, the new project bore not so much in common with the original one. At least, if it comes not about its form, but its purpose.

2.5. Celebrating the Origin: Bicentenary of the Kuban Host

The contradictions between the Kuban Cossacks' official lineage, determined in 1874, and the growing influence of the local Zaporozhian imagery, came to the fore in 1896, when the Kuban host celebrated its bicentenary. All the cultural initiatives of the recent years, as the monument to Catherine II, the Taman monument, and the claims for the Zaporozhian regalia testified to the insignificance of the official genealogy and rendered the idea of the forthcoming anniversary meaningless already in advance of the celebrations. Furthermore, the discussions about the place and role of the Zaporozhian and the Khoper Cossacks in the history of Kuban and the Kuban host gained in complexity as it turned out that the question about the origins of the Khoper Cossacks was far from clear.

Back in 1891, the renowned Ekaterinodar intellectual Evgenii Felitsin made public a historical work by late Ivan Kravtsov, the historian responsible for the 1874 decree determining the new date of seniority for the Kuban host. This work, published posthumously with the permission by Kravtsov's family, offered a drastically new insight into the question of where the Khoper Cossacks came from. "The Khoper Cossacks," unambiguously wrote Kravtsov, "come from the Little Russian Cossacks, from those glorious Zaporozhians, who, a long time ago, in the fourteenth century, formed from themselves a military order—the Christian fraternity . . ." Kravtsov magnified the greatness of the Sich in every aspect, arguing that they called themselves "knights" and were recognized as such by others, that they did not recognize any other authority except of their own, and that their atamans were highly educated persons, who "draw the light of science from ancient Kiev and knew ancient classic literature virtually better than its contemporary admirers." There were, thus, two branches of the Zaporozhian Cossacks,

absorbed into the host at different times. The Black Sea Cossack were the youngest part, while the Khoper Cossacks were the “primordial [*iznachal'nye*] Zaporozhians,” the oldest Cossack formation in Russia that emerged “long before” the “indigenous Great Russians” came to the Don River to establish there the Don host.³³⁵ To make the Little Russian origin of the Khoper Cossacks more evident, Kravtsov used the Ukrainian language every time he “reproduced” fictional speech of the Khoper Cossacks of the late eighteenth century.³³⁶

Putting forward this hypothesis, Kravtsov did not corroborate his claims with any substantial evidence. Nevertheless, his theory might have sounded quite attractive to some of the local intellectuals, for it relieved the tension between the official seniority and the idea of the Zaporozhian origin of the Kuban host. One of them was the publisher of Kravtsov’s work, Evgenii Felitsin. In 1895, he published his own reflections on this question, in which he cast into doubt Kravtsov’s claims about the ancient origin of the Khoper Cossacks as absolutely unfounded. At the same time, Felitsin called the theory about their Little Russian roots such a “strong argument . . . that there is, of course, no possibility to refute it, which is why we have to acknowledge [it] as a fact.”³³⁷

The idea of the Khoper Cossacks as an offspring of Zaporozhia did not have any impact on the local historiography. Apparently, most of the Kuban historians simply ignored it as a groundless speculation. Still, it raised a controversy over the history of the Khoper Cossacks. The administration of the host and the Kuban Cossack elites remained largely confused about what event and what vision of the host they were going to celebrate. In November 1894, the Host commissioned the local historian Ivan Dmitrenko to conduct research work in the archives of St. Petersburg and Moscow “to determine for certain the origin of the Khoper regiment and seniority of the Kuban host.”³³⁸ Following his research mission, Dmitrenko prepared a high-quality three-volume collection of documents, which covered the early history of the Khoper Cossacks, the history of the

³³⁵ I. Kravtsov, “Stareishie v Kubanskom kazach'em voiske ‘Khoperskie kazaki’,” *KOV*, 5 January 1891, 1–2.

³³⁶ I. Kravtsov, “Stareishie v Kubanskom kazach'em voiske ‘Khoperskie kazaki’ (prodolzhenie),” *KOV*, 19 January 1891, 2.

³³⁷ E. Felitsin, “K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii khoperskikh kazakov i sformirovaniy iz nikh polka,” *KOV*, 19 February 1895, 2.

³³⁸ “Khronika,” *KOV*, 26 November 1894, 2.

Black Sea host, and the history of the Caucasus line, but did not contain his own interpretations and analysis.³³⁹

In April 1896, while the Host was in the process of active preparation for the jubilee, another concise historical work, entitled *The Memorial of the Kuban Cossack host (Pamiatka Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska)* and dedicated to the history of the Kuban Cossacks, challenged the celebrated lineage. Its author, the Cossack officer Vitalii Chervinskii, who came from the hereditary nobility of the Kiev gubernia, aimed at explicating its readers the “real” history of the Kuban Cossack host.³⁴⁰ As an advertisement in *KOV* proclaimed, everyone who would read it would be able to answer the questions of “where the host came from, what it did, and what the host is at the present time.”³⁴¹ Among the three questions, the first one was of the greatest importance. Chervinskii began his narrative from the sixteenth century, the time of the emergence of the Zaporozhian Sich, “the source, from which the Kuban host began.” The Sich, which waged wars with the Poles and the Turks, for centuries secured the borders of Russia and became an important contributor to the Russian military history, being the “breeding ground that brought up some essential elements of the Russian power.” Its abolition was not a consequence of a defeat in a fair battle. The author stressed that the “ruthless destruction” of the Sich was the result of Potemkin’s “immense ambitiousness” and “immeasurable avarice.” The invincible host was deceitfully devastated by the imperial troops, in whom the Cossacks did not see any threat, mistaking them for the benevolent messengers of the Mother Tsarina. Chervinskii repeatedly traced the line of contingency between the Zaporozhians and the Kuban Cossacks. He stressed that “the community that existed for such a long time could not disappear. Zaporozhia could not cease to exist without leaving the offspring and followers.” Indeed, Zaporozhia had the “immediate successor,” the Kuban Cossack host. It held true not only in regard of the institutional succession, but also in regard of the moral qualities: “The spirit of unity and brotherly love of the destroyed Zaporozhia” did not die and was inherited by the Kuban Cossacks. The

³³⁹ I. I. Dmitrenko, *Sbornik istoricheskikh materialov po istorii Kubanskogo kazach'ego voiska*. 3 vols. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Shtaba Otdel'nogo Korpusa Zhandarmov, 1896). The work was generously financed by the Host, which allocated 1500 rubles for its publication: “Dnevnik,” *KOV*, 4 September 1896, 2.

³⁴⁰ For Chervinskii’s biography, see O. V. Matveev, “Vse sluchai voennykh sobytii uruptsev v svezhei pamiati... (K istoriografii 1-go Lineinogo generala Vel’iaminova polka),” *Voprosy kazach'ei istorii i kul'tury* 3 (2004): 53.

³⁴¹ “Dnevnik,” *KOV*, 14 April 1896, 2.

Zaporozhian host died in order to be reborn, though under another name.³⁴² The message of the book clearly contradicted the spirit of the holiday. Nevertheless, *KOV* recommended stanitsa communities and schools to organize public readings of Cherniavskii's brochure on the jubilee day.³⁴³

From the very outset, the meaning of the bicentenary of the Kuban host was pregnant with contradictions and ambiguities, being a means of expression of rival, inconsistent, and not clearly articulated visions of the Kuban host's past. When in 1895 the Host embarked on the elaboration of the program of the forthcoming jubilee, it faced predictable difficulties related to the proper representation of the host's history. The commission for the celebration of the anniversary, composed from the local military elite of highest officer ranks, first convened in July 1895 to consider the projects of the celebration. The chair of the commission, Lieutenant-General Vasilii Perepelovskii, was the ideal candidature for the post from the point of view of his personal background. The oldest general of the host, Perepelovskii started his military career precisely in the Khoperskii regiment more than sixty years before, in 1834. Yet the composition of the commission was rather mixed, so that representatives of every part of the host could contribute to the elaboration of the scenario of the holiday. Of the two other members of the highest—lieutenant general—rank, one, Grigorii Rubashevskii, came from the Black Sea host, while another, Stefan Venerovskii, was a native Line Cossack, albeit living in Chernomoria, in stanitsa Umanskaia, from 1878. Among the major generals, two started their career in the Line host, one in the Black Sea host, and another one in the regular army. Three colonels belonged to the Black Sea Cossack elite, one to the Line Cossacks, and two began military service in the regular army.³⁴⁴ The commission also included two historical consultants, Prokofii Korolenko and Ivan Dmitrenko, who both were patriots of Chernomoria.³⁴⁵ The significant number of representatives of Black Sea Cossack officers

³⁴² V. Chervinskii, *Pamiatka Kubanskago kazach'iago voiska* (St. Petesrburg: Tipografiia Chichinadze, 1896), 5-9.

³⁴³ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 17 August 1896, 2.

³⁴⁴ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 3 August 1895, 3; "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 4 August 1895, 3; "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 6 August 1895, 3; on Perepelovskii, see M., "General-leitenant V. G. Perepelovskii," *KOV*, 25 February 1898, 2; on Rubashevskii, see B. Borchevskii, "General-leitenant v otstavke Grigorii Grigor'evich Rubashevskii," *KOV*, 5 January 1914, 1; on Venerovskii, see his memoirs: S. A. Venerovskii, *Memuary i vospominaniia generala ot kavalerii Stefana Aleksandrovicha Venerovskogo* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. D. Smirnova, 1908).

³⁴⁵ In 1897, in a letter to the editor of the historical journal *Kievskaiia starina*, Dmitrenko characterized himself as a "Zaporozhian, Kubanian, a genuine Cossack, a collector of everything related to dear Zaporozhia": A. Slutskii, "Kubanskaia tema v ukrainskoi periodike: bibliograficheskii aspekt,"

and intellectuals can explain the significance of Zaporozhian, Little Russian, or Black Sea Cossack elements in the scenario of the celebrations.

The scenario implied three days of festivities, scheduled for September 1896. The information campaign in the press that paved the ground for the celebrations by acquainting the public with different aspects of the history of the host, started several months in advance. In early April, whereas many people remained completely ignorant of the reasons of the upcoming celebration, *KOV* published Miliutin's decree of 1874, which determined the date of seniority for each regiment of the host and for the host at large. The broad audience, thus, was supposed to learn the meaning of the date.³⁴⁶ The actual event that served as the point of reference for the designation of the Kuban host's seniority, the capture of Azov (because of the participation of the Khoper Cossacks in the seizure of Azov and the first written record of their name associated with it), received its own share of attention on the part of the Kuban authorities. In July 1896, when major celebrations of this military victory were underway in the Oblast of the Don Host, in Azov, Yakov Malama sent a telegram to the mayor of Azov to congratulate the Don host and highlight the importance of this date for the Kuban host. Malama stated that the Kuban Cossacks were "mindful [*pamiatuiut*] of the bicentenary of the capture of Azov as the beginning of the existence of the Kuban host [determined] by the Khoper regiment." Although the text of the greeting clearly concerned the Khoper Cossacks, the response telegram by the mayor inverted its message, congratulating the Kuban Cossacks with "the day of remembrance of the participation of the ancestors of the Kuban Cossacks, the valiant Little Russian and Zaporozhian Cossacks, in the conquest of this town."³⁴⁷ Thus, even in this rare case when the Kuban administration openly acknowledged the Kuban host as the successor of the Khoper—not Zaporozhian—Cossacks (not least because it addressed the message to representatives of the Don host, the Khoper Cossacks' "ancestral" community), this acknowledgement fell on deaf ears. For outsiders, the Kuban Cossacks remained essentially "Little Russian" and "Zaporozhian."

The celebrations of the bicentenary started in the morning of September 8, with the military parade and regalia procession in front of the recently built Resurrection cathedral.

Donets'kyi visnyk naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka 12 (2006): 124-36. On Korolenko, see V. K. Chumachenko, "Neutomimyi i uporny rabotnik (P. P. Korolenko)," *Kuban': Problemy kul'tury i informatizatsii*, no. 2 (2001): 9-12.

³⁴⁶ "Iz istorii Kubanskogo voiska i oblasti," *KOV*, 9 April 1896, 4.

³⁴⁷ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 25 July 1896, 2; "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 27 July 1896, 2.

The centerpiece of the celebration, and arguably the most symbolically loaded moment of the day, was the ceremony of the solemn awarding of the jubilee charter of Nicholas II to the Kuban host. This act underscored the unity of the monarch and his loyal Cossacks, albeit the actual role of the emperor was confined to merely signing the ceremonial document, prepared in Ekaterinodar in advance. In March of that year, Yakov Malama entrusted the task of elaborating the concept of the charter to Vladimir Skidan, a renowned local intellectual with Ukrainophile sympathies and left-wing views.³⁴⁸ Skidan's draft, rich with images and details, served as a guide for the battle painter Adolf Sharleman', who drew the picture of the charter. The top side of the charter contained the coat of arms of the Russian Empire, surrounded by different scenes mostly related to the history of the host. The scenes included the capture of Azov, as the founding event for the host according to idea of the anniversary, a Cossack watchtower, images of plastuns, a scene of river crossing, a scene of clashing with mountaineers, a scene of hand-to-hand fighting, and a view of the mount of Elbrus. On the left side, the central element was the emperor's monogram encircled by the Kuban regalia granted by the Russian rulers, mostly by Catherine II. Near the regalia—as their honorary guardian—stood a figure of a Kuban Cossack in the form of His Imperial Majesty's Own Convoy, as the most elite military unit composed from the Kuban Cossacks. Finally, the right side contained the coat of arms of the Kuban oblast with two other scenes below it: the scene of seeing off the Cossacks to war, and the scene of Cossacks' marching out to a military campaign. Still below it, as the description of the charter points out, were military uniforms of the Kuban Cossacks of different epochs, “starting from the times of Catherine II (a Zaporozhian Cossack).”³⁴⁹

The scenes and figures painted on the charter were supposed to be the most recognizable images of the hosts' history. Remarkably, the selection of scenes, with the sole exception of the one that portrayed the capture of Azov, represented the relatively recent period, the Caucasus War. This was a choice of compromise, which allowed emphasizing the historical experience, common for the entire host, as well as its crucial role for the imperial conquest of the Caucasus. The choice of Elbrus, not the steppe, as the representation of Kuban landscape can be explained by the same considerations. The

³⁴⁸ V. Skidan to Ya. Malama, 18 March 1896, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6701, ll. 129-130.

³⁴⁹ “Eskiz risunka k gramote,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6701, ll. 322-323 ob. On the figure of a Zaporozhian Cossack see also “Ornamenty Vysochaishe darovannoi Kubanskomu voisku gramoty,” *KOV*, 8 September 1896, 2.

highest peak of the Caucasus, located on the border between the Kuban and the Terek oblasts, served to stress the military achievements of the Kuban Cossacks in the Caucasus War and made it clear of how far the borders of the oblast stretched as a consequence of the colonization of the Caucasus. Still, the overall coherence of the charter's design was somewhat undermined by the Cossacks's historical costumes, which demonstrated, even though unwittingly, the fragility of the Khoper genealogy of the host. The Zaporozhian dress, presented as the oldest uniform of the host, stood for the primacy of the Zaporozhian lineage. The approval of this figure by the War Ministry and Nicholas II can be seen as a proof of the acceptance of the Zaporozhian imagery for the imperial discourse of the 1890s.

The costumes of the past did not appear at the celebration only on the charter's pictures. They also became a physical reality of the holiday. Desires to see the bright past of the host "restored," at least during the anniversary celebrations, appeared in the local press in the run-up to the fete. One correspondent of *KOV* proposed the idea of "restoration of old traditions," by which he meant the reconstruction of authentic historical atmosphere of the jubilee. To commemorate the past in a dignified manner, he suggested that the participants of the festive church service—a necessary part of every Kuban holiday—be dressed in attires "of the times of the event that is being celebrated." Moreover, he suggested that the organizers would held the celebration itself in "the environment and the customs of the past." Repeatedly stressing the need to imitate and reconstruct the past, the author of the article had quite a vague understanding of what event the Kuban host was going to celebrate and what time the reconstructed historical paraphernalia should refer to. It were not the Khoper Cossacks and not the period around 1696 that he proposed to simulate, but the Zaporozhian Cossacks of the seventeenth century. To this end, he proposed to use the vestments and vessels of the Zaporozhian era kept in the Ekaterino-Lebiazhskii hermitage, the oldest monastery of Chernomoria.³⁵⁰

In effect, these thoughts overlapped with the intentions of the organizers, since the genuine ancestors from the olden times indeed appeared during the celebrations as a group of Cossacks dressed in historical attires. In October 1895, the organizing committee put forward a proposal of arranging a historical mini-reconstruction. The plan envisaged that "a certain number of the sentries and honor guards might be dressed up in costumes of

³⁵⁰ "K 200-letnemu yubileiu voiska," *KOV*, 16 April 1896, 4.

bygone times.”³⁵¹ In charge of making the costumes was pod’esaul Konstantin Strinskii who consulted special books and archival documents in search of descriptions of costumes for the sake of historical accuracy. Ultimately, seven samples of clothing were prepared. Only two of them belonged to the Khoper Cossacks, representing the uniform of the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the uniform of 1845. Other models represented the Black Sea Cossacks: two *plastun* forms of the mid-nineteenth century, the form of 1842, the form of early nineteenth century and, finally yet importantly, the exotic Zaporozhian costume.³⁵² In one of his letters, written in 1913, Strinskii himself called the latter form to have been the form of a Black Sea Cossack of the end of the eighteenth century. Contemporaries, however, invariably called it “Zaporozhian.” In the official inventory of historical Cossack costumes, made by the organizers of the anniversary, the attire was called “Zaporozhian” as well. It consisted of a light blue cloth *caftan*, a dark green cashmere *zhupan*, red flannel wide trousers (*sharovary*), a grey cap with a simple hood and tassel, and yellow morocco boots.³⁵³ The brightness of colors inevitably attracted the attention of passersby. During the celebration, the old-aged Cossacks dressed in the historical clothing formed the honor guard standing at the front of the building in the town’s garden that hosted the festive dinner. The Cossacks of the Khoper regiment stood on one side of the entrance, while the Black Sea Cossacks stood on another side, representing the line of division between these two historical parts of the host. Characteristically, the organizers did not prepare any form of any other Line Cossack units.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ “Doklad po vyrobotke programmy prazdnovaniia yubileia,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6701, l. 54.

³⁵² B. Frolov, “Istoriia odnoi fotografii,” *Kubanskii novosti*, 23 August, 2002.

³⁵³ “Opis’ istoricheskim kazach’im kostiumam,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6701a, l. 346.

³⁵⁴ “Prazdnovanie Kubantsami svoego 200-letnego yubileia. II,” *KOV*, 14 September 1896, 2. The KOV also called this form “Zaporozhian.”



Fig. 4. The Kuban Cossacks dressed in historical attires during the host's bicentennial anniversary, 1896. The Cossack in Zaporozhian attire stands in the center of the photo, being the central figure of the whole image. Source: KGIAMZ, Krasnodar.

The organizers ensured that the hall of the building, one of the most important venues of the holiday, would be adequately decorated for the solemn occasion. On the right wall of the hall, they put the portrait of Nicholas II in the uniform of His Imperial Majesty's Own Convoy, stressing the particular affection of the emperor for the Kuban Cossacks. On the left wall, they placed a big painting that depicted Catherine II granting her charter and the regalia to the Black Sea Cossacks. On the wall in front of the entrance, the organizers placed a large coat of arms with a ribbon containing the date of the host's seniority and the monograms of Peter I, Catherine II, and Nicholas II. If the mention of Peter I referred to the fact that the host came to existence (according to the official genealogy) under his rule, the mention of Catherine II referred to the establishment of the Black Sea host—the act that the organizing committee could not fail to mention. Along the wall cornice, the decorators wrote various Cossack proverbs, predominantly in the Ukrainian language (eight in Ukrainian and four in Russian). The selection of the proverbs was so rambling, and their meanings were so incoherent, that there could hardly be any other purpose of placing them except of representing the ethnographic peculiarities of the region. Ironically, the meaning of some proverbs run counter to the festive mood of the day, for they ridiculed the miseries of the Cossack life: “Look what Cossacks have come

to—they have neither bread, nor tobacco” (*Dozhylisia kozaky – ni khliba, ni tabaky*), “Though life is sorry [literally, “dog’s life”], we have a Cossack glory” (*Khot’ zhyzn’ sobach’ia, zato slava kazach’ia*).³⁵⁵ The vernacular Cossack humor diluted grandiloquence of the solemnity, making it remarkably folkish and democratic.

Although it was a specifically Cossack holiday, the civic authorities of Ekaterinodar, the seat of the Host and the oblast administration, but a profoundly burgher town, made their own contribution to the anniversary. In July 1896, at the extraordinary meeting of the town council, the town major announced the decision to mark the anniversary in honor of the Cossacks to whom Ekaterinodar owed its existence. It was not the Kuban host at large, and obviously not the Khoper Cossacks as the heroes of the occasion, but the Black Sea host. As the mayor proclaimed, “the town community inherited Ekaterinodar from the former Black Sea Cossack host, the Cossacks of which were the first Russian settlers in the completely wild territory along the Kuban River, and who not only fought with the enemies of the fatherland, but also struggled with obstacles put by the nature itself.” Members of the council proposed different ways of commemorating the founders of Ekaterinodar: to build an educational establishment, to build a dormitory for the men’s gymnasium “for the descendants of the Cossacks who conquered this land,” to illuminate, at the expense of the town, the monument to Catherine II. There were also suggestions to rename several streets, the names of which seemed meaningless to the council deputies, including the main street of Ekaterinodar, Krasnaia. The deputies proposed to assign it the names *Chernomorskaia* (the Black Sea Cossack street), *Voiskovaia* (the Host street), or *Kubanskaia* (the Kuban street). The project that won most votes, proposed by the mayor himself, was the idea to erect a commemorative obelisk.³⁵⁶

This monument, which costed the town’s budget 5,000 rubles, was unveiled only in May 1897. Two tables on opposite sides of the obelisk represented two different lineages of the Kuban Host. The inscription on the eastern side of the obelisk expressed gratitude to “the glorious and brave Cossacks of the Caucasus Line host and the Khoper Cossacks,” who “earned a resonant and glorious martial name.” The inscription on the western side, in turn, emphasized the merits of the “descendants of the glorious

³⁵⁵ “Prigotovleniia k prazdnovaniiu,” *KOV*, 4 September 1896, 2.

³⁵⁶ “K predstoiashchemu yubileiu,” *KOV*, 9 July 1896, 3; “Kak zhe nazvat’?” *KOV*, 26 July 1896, 2; “Gorodskoi pamiatnik-obelisk,” *KOV*, 11 May 1897, 2.

Zaporozhians, the brave Cossacks of the Black Sea host, who achieved triumphant glory in the centuries-long struggle with the enemies of the Fatherland and defended the borders of Russia that were entrusted to them.”³⁵⁷

The obelisk in Ekaterinodar was not the only monument dedicated to the anniversary that emerged in Kuban. Various settlements of the oblast decided to erect memorable columns to mark the event, whereas all of them belonged to the Labinskii district, which suggests a certain administrative instruction, given by the district ataman.³⁵⁸ The most ambitious project emerged in stanitsa Nikolaevskaia, the assembly of which agreed to construct a grand column on a hill on the church square, with benches for the public and decorative trees around it. The authors of the initiative planned to put a cast-iron statue of a Cossack on the top of the column, which was supposed to be the most spectacular part of the monument. However, as no one was able to find out where to get such a statue and did not know how much it would cost, only a ten-meter high stone quadrangular column, surrounded by a wooden fence, appeared in the settlement.³⁵⁹

Not being the formal guests of honor of the anniversary, the Zaporozhian and Black Sea Cossacks turned out to be its no less important part. Most of those who expressed themselves with regard to the holiday, paying by this a tribute to the memory of ancestors, referred to Zaporozhia as the cradle of the Kuban Cossacks. A month before the celebrations, one correspondent to *KOV* outlined his vision of the upcoming bicentennial anniversary of the host’s, as he called it, “so to say, official existence.” As he anticipated, on the day of the bicentenary “old people will drink a shot [*po chartsi*], as their ancestors, inhabitants of the Sich, did before, celebrating their victories over the Muslims [*busurmanom*] or the Poles [*liakhom*].”³⁶⁰ Others saw the anniversary as the Zaporozhian holiday in a similar vein. The Ataman of the Orenburg Cossack host sent a greeting telegram to the Kuban administration, in which he wished that “the holiday would more closely unite the family of the Kuban Cossacks by their recalling on this day of the battle feats of the valiant knights of Zaporozhia and their descendants—the brave Black Sea Cossacks, who gained unfading glory together with their brothers, Line Cossacks.”³⁶¹ The

³⁵⁷ Potto, *Pamiatniki vremen utverzhdeniia russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze*, 2:5.

³⁵⁸ “Poluchennye telegrammy,” *KOV*, 19 September 1896, 2–3.

³⁵⁹ “Dnevnik,” *KOV*, 8 September 1896, 2; L., “Korrespondentsii. St. Nikolaevskaia,” *KOV*, 26 January 1897; U. S., “Korrespondentsii. St. Nikolaevskaia,” *KOV*, 10 July 1898, 3.

³⁶⁰ Obyvatel’, “Koe-chto (K predstoiashchemu yubileiu),” *KOV*, 20 August 1896, 3.

³⁶¹ “Poluchennye telegrammy,” *KOV*, 13 September 1896, 2.

Drandskii Orthodox monastery (the Kutaisi gubernia) presented the Host with an icon with a memorable inscription “In memory of the 200th anniversary of the Kuban and the Black Sea Cossack host.”³⁶² Vitalii Chervinskii published in *KOV* a brief report about the celebrations of the anniversary in the camp of the 1st Urupskii regiment, which was stationing near Mezhibozh, in Podolia. According to him, the command of the regiment hung the portraits of Nicholas II and Peter I to commemorate the day. Chervinskii explained the presence of the latter by the fact that “it is during his reign, so to speak, that the Kuban Cossacks started their service, represented by their predecessors—the Zaporozhian and Ukrainian Cossacks.”³⁶³

The celebrations in the camp of the Khover regiment near stanitsa Batalpashinskaia stood in striking contrast to the somewhat unconventional spirit of the main festivities in Ekaterinodar. In its festive speech, the military command of the unit strongly accentuated the primacy of the regiment within the host, asserting that the Khover Cossacks “laid the foundation” of the Kuban host and constituted “the core” of the host. No other part of the host, according to the speaker, was equal to the Khover Cossacks in terms of rootedness in the past, because they they were the only unit of the Kuban host that existed already in the late seventeenth century.³⁶⁴

Among the local Ukrainophile intellectuals, there were also those who fervently opposed the anniversary, considering the official Kuban genealogy, along with the idea of the Khover Cossacks’ superiority, as an offence to the Black Sea Cossacks’ dignity. The much-respected local ethnographer Mytrofan Dykariv/Mitrofan Dikarev, a radical Ukrainian nationalist, was so upset about the celebration of the Khover lineage of the Kuban Cossacks that for the time of the festivities he went away from the Kuban oblast in order to calm himself. In a letter to the Ukrainian historian Oleksandr Lazarevs’kyi he wrote: “You begin your letter by mentioning the bicentennial anniversary of the Black Sea Cossacks, but such words always seem an unforgivable mistake to the local Muscovites. Today we know only the Kuban Cossacks, not the Black Sea Cossacks. The Kuban Cossacks rose in rebellion when they were merged with the Line and Khover Cossacks. Then the name of the Black Sea Cossacks was abolished together with their

³⁶² “Prazdnovanie Kubantsami svoego 200-letnego yubileia,” *KOV*, 19 September 1896, 2.

³⁶³ V. Ch., “Prazdnovanie yubileia dvukhvekovogo sluzheniia Kubanskogo kazach’ego voiska 1-m Urupskim polkom,” *KOV*, 21 September 1896, 2.

³⁶⁴ Khoverets, “Iz lageria Kholderskikh kazakov pod st. Batalpashinskoi,” *KOV*, 13 June 1897, 3.

history That is why we, Ukrainians, should not consider the holiday, which was invented for disgracing our name and our history, as ours.”³⁶⁵ Dikarev expressed the same feelings in his letter to the leading Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevs’kyi, with whom he corresponded for a long time. In his letter of March 5, 1896, he wrote:

A short time ago, in 1887, we celebrated the centenary of the Black Sea host. Now the authorities order us to celebrate this year the bicentenary of the “host,” namely, the Khoper Line regiment, which nobody ever considered the “host” (it seems to be the same glorious regiment that raped the women and girls of the Dukhobors by order of Governor Chekvaidze). The goal here is the same that was in the 1860s—to erase the name of the Black Sea host. On the occasion of this outrage Mr. Bihgai, as he announced in the newspaper, publishes a compilation of the Black Sea and Line songs?!³⁶⁶

In his next letter to Hrushevs’kyi, written later that month, Dikarev continued to blame the Kuban authorities and personally Bihdai:

I heard that the draft of the Tsar’s charter is under preparation here. In this draft, the seniority is recognized not for the Black Sea host, as it is acknowledged in the Catherine’s *The Laws on the Rights of the Cossack Hosts*, but for the Khoper regiments The draft has been written by the Host Staff, which is now headed by General Gershel’man (who is of the Jewish origin). There should be published a jubilee literary compilation. The Bihdai’s songs are now being published at the Host’s expense in Moscow And none of them will ever think that they are celebrating the spit in their eyes.³⁶⁷

While the celebration of the Kuban host’s anniversary was a result of a compromise achieved by the leadership of the host and educated elites, from the point of view of a part of Ukrainian national activists there was no room for compromises when it came to the sense of Zaporozhian pride. For this reason, they were ready to blame any initiative that they saw as an unacceptable collaboration with enemies of the Ukrainian national cause. Yet contrary to Dikarev’s allegations, the activity of the person, whom Dikarev virtually accused for treason in his letters, Yakym Bihdai/Akim Bigdaev,

³⁶⁵ Cited in: V. A. Burbela, V. K. Chumachenko, “Voprosy identichnosti kubantsev i problemy regional’nogo knigovedeniia v pis’makh M. A. Dikareva k A. M. Lazarevskomu”, *Dikarevskie chteniia* 10 (2004): 18–19.

³⁶⁶ Valerii Starikov, “Lysty Mytrofana ta Uliany Dykarevykh do Mykhaila Hrushevs’koho,” *Ukrains’kyi arkhheografichnyi shchorichnyk* 10/11 (2006): 485.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 486.

exemplifies another attitude of Ukrainophiles toward the anniversary—joining the celebrations to undermine them from within. The next section is concerned with one of the most interesting cultural projects brought about by the 1896 bicentenary and prepared by Bihdai—the collection of Kuban Cossack songs, which became a highlight of the anniversary.

2.6. Cossack Songs for the Cossacks

By the end of the century, the local Cossack elites, local intellectuals, and local press had become increasingly concerned about what they saw as the fading-away of the Cossack folklore tradition as the repository of the local living memory about the ancient past. This tradition, which had existed from the times immemorial, as everybody agreed, was seriously disrupted over the course of the last years. The reason for it was a strong urban influence coming from cities and towns of central gubernias, along with labor migrants and fabric workers who brought with them their vulgar songs and stories. The new, exogenous urban lore diluted and destroyed the pristine authentic traditions of the Cossacks. At least, many believed so. Cossack songs, as one correspondent of *KOV* warned, maintained military and regimental traditions and morale, because the Cossacks went to fight with songs. In fact, as the same author complained, the Cossacks came to prefer singing “something contemporary.” It was not their own fault, but rather a characteristic feature of the deplorable reality. In the Kuban countryside, nobody paid attention to teaching traditional songs in school classes of stanitsas, and old Cossacks did not teach these songs to young generations. Left on their own, singers could not learn songs anywhere but on “street.”³⁶⁸

The Kuban educated society came to recognize the pressing need of recording the local folklore as soon as possible before it would die out completely, but the task was hampered by impediments caused by the bearers of the oral tradition themselves. For instance, Dikarev, by far the most experienced ethnographer of the region, lamented the unwillingness of the Black Sea Cossacks to share with him, with *KOV*, or with the

³⁶⁸ Khorunzhii Prasolov, “Kazaki pesenniki,” *KOV*, 21 January 1896, 3.

members of the Kuban statistical committee any “ethnographic data.”³⁶⁹ Against this intellectual background of general disillusion with the Cossacks’ indifference to their own folklore and fears about the irreversible extinction of the old oral tradition, a new initiative had to “slow down the further spread of fabric-pub motifs.”³⁷⁰ Akim Bihdai, the Ekaterinodar justice of the peace and an active Ukrainophile activist, addressed the Kuban administration with the proposal to prepare and publish a multi-volume collection of Kuban Cossack native songs on the occasion of the anniversary—an enormous task that he pledged to accomplish on his own. Bihdai told later that he arrived at the idea to publish the collection of songs after he “learned about the date of the host’s jubilee,” considering the compilation of traditional songs the best way to commemorate the Cossacks’ ancestors. Yakov Malama and the committee for the celebration welcomed the initiative, particularly as Bihdai, according to his own claim, by that moment had already had the collection of Black Sea Cossack songs. Malama only expressed the desire that Bihdai would prepare a collection of songs of the Line Cossacks as well, because they “constituted the larger half of the host [*sic!*].”³⁷¹

In the end, by the time the celebrations began, Bihdai had published four volumes of songs, of which one volume was dedicated to Line Cossack songs, while other three contained exclusively Black Sea Cossack songs.³⁷² Even though the Line Cossacks found themselves underrepresented in this musical and ethnographic representation of the host on the day of their own jubilee, the publication of the volume with Line Cossack songs might not have taken place if the Host had not intervened in the process of publication. In August 1896, less than a month before the celebrations, Bihdai informed the Host that he was not able to publish the volume with “Khoper songs” in time because of the need to make additional corrections in the volume. To make the publication possible, the Host assigned Bihdai two hundred rubles for his travel to Moscow, where the volume was being prepared for publication, to make corrections on the spot.³⁷³

Apart from underrepresenting the Line Cossacks in his project, Bihdai’s collection was illustrative in yet another respect. It drew a line of division within the Kuban host,

³⁶⁹ M. Dikarev, “Maslianitsa,” *KOV*, 7 February 1895, 2–3.

³⁷⁰ O. T., “K yubileiu,” *KOV*, 18 April 1896, 3.

³⁷¹ A. Bigdai, “Doklad chlena komiteta A. D. Bigdaeva na obshchem sobranii chlenov Kubanskogo oblastnogo statisticheskogo komiteta,” *KOV*, 19 December 1898, 1.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ A. Bigdaev to the Host Staff, 13 August 1896, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6926, l. 67 ob.

splitting it into two parts, Chernomoria and Linia, each being ethnographically covered by a separate series of volumes. This separate treatment of the Black Sea and the Line Cossacks only added to the idea of the still existing, profound fracture between the two historical parts of the Kuban host, which fully contradicted to the official meaning of the celebration. But it was not the only—and not the main—dubious quality of Bihdai’s collection, as the official point of view might suggest. As for the official publication, issued on the occasion of its anniversary, Bihdai’s publication could hardly be considered compliant with censorship demands. To begin with, Bihdai chose for his publication not the standard Russian alphabet, the only possible way to print Ukrainian-language texts from the time of the Valuev circular of 1863, but in the modern Ukrainian alphabet, so-called *kulyshivka*, prevalent in the Habsburg monarchy but banned from public use in the Romanov Empire.

Furthermore, the songs that Bihdai included to the collection had nothing in common with the idea of promoting imperial patriotism or cultivating loyalty to the dynasty. On the contrary, at the closer look, the whole selection of the songs exhibited a strikingly anti-imperial stance. The overarching motif of the songs was the hardship, caused for the Zaporozhians by the Russian rule, the readiness of the Cossacks to flee to the Ottoman Empire in search for the better conditions of life, and a sense of hatred toward the Great Russians. One of the songs told the unfortunate story of the Sich, devastated by the Russian army. While the authorities sent the ataman of the Cossacks to prison, the rest of the Cossacks escaped to the Turks, having vowed to struggle against Russia:

The ataman did not beware of the blue sea,
So he has been in jail in Petersburg for six years
already.

They destroyed Zaporozhia, took out the regalia,
Caused to the Zaporozhians a great deal of suffering.
Forty thousands were registered to live under the
Turks,

Ne vsterihsia pan koshovery od synioho moria,
To vzhe zh yomu v Peterburzi shostyi hod
nevolia.

Zruinovaly Zaporizhzhia, zabraly kleiny,
Narobyly zaporozhtsiam velyki skorboty.
Pidpysano sorok tysiach pid turchynom zhyty,
Prysiahal y turchynovi ta i moskalia byty.

[They] swore allegiance to the Turks and to fight the Muscovites.³⁷⁴

Another song depicted the miseries of those Cossacks who remained under the reign of the Moscow tsar. Rather than a peaceful coexistence, it was an unbearable ordeal:

Zaporozhia was glorious in every respect,	Slavne bulo Zaporizhzhia vsima storonamy,
It was glorious, and now it is not possible to live under the Muscovites. ³⁷⁵	Slavne bulo a teper ne mozhna prozhyt' ta za moskaliamy.

One could learn from this collection about the tragic life of the Zaporozhians under the tsardom: the Cossacks served the tsar, risked their lives for foreign interests, far away from their home, which was called “Ukraine,” and often died there. A song about a fate of such Cossack narrated:

Oh, he went to Muscovy and perished there,	Oi poikhav v Moskovshchynu ta tam i zahynuv.
He left forever his native Ukraine. ³⁷⁶	Svoiu ridnu Ukrainu na viky pokynuv.

Indeed, given the experience the Zaporozhians had in the Russian empire, emigration to the Ottomans would seem the most reasonable option. Yet another song of the collection ended with the words:

It will be good for the Zaporozhians	Bude dobre zaporozhtsiam
To live under the Turks.	I pid turkom zhyty.

The compiler purposely pointed out that the last couplet was supposed to be sung “vigorously, eagerly, with zeal,” as if the fervor of the tune reflected the momentousness of the message.³⁷⁷

In strong contrast to the official image of Catherine II, established in Kuban, several songs blamed her personally for the annihilation of Zaporozhia. According one of the songs, having devastated the Sich, the empress transformed the entire Ukrainian landscape, the idyllic space of the steppe, into a wasteland:

³⁷⁴ A. Bihdai, *Pesni Kubanskikh kozakov. Vyp. 2. Pisni chornomorski* (Moscow: Litografiia V. Grosse, 1896), 7.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

And Empress Catherine did it wrong, Ravaging the wide steppe and the joyful land. ³⁷⁸	A tsarytsia Katyryna ne harazd vchynyla, Step shyrokyi, krai veselyi, ta i zanapastyla.
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The ambition of the collection was to present to the readers the true, authentic, and unadulterated voice of the people. Capturing the genuine historical memory of the Black Sea Cossacks, it aspired to convey the memory to the widest possible audience so that the Cossacks unfamiliar with the published songs were able to reproduce them orally in their settlements, singing them as their own. Curiously, a minor percentage of the Kuban readers could have heard these songs ever before. In effect, the great bulk of the songs were not recorded in Chernomoria and had no direct relation to the Black Sea Cossacks—the fact Bihdai did not dare to disclose openly. With all this, Bihdai did not completely conceal this circumstance, since he conscientiously mentioned the real source the songs came from, accompanying each of them by the note “from Myk. Lysenko.” Mykola Lysenko, the prominent Ukrainian composer, famous for his usage of Ukrainian folk motifs in his musical compositions, and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian national movement, was the real supplier of ostensibly “Black Sea Cossack” songs for Bihdai. This collection, thus, was a forgery of a sort. Pretending to be the real and native—albeit mostly forgotten—folklore of the Black Sea/Kuban Cossacks, those songs were of uncertain origin, recorded far beyond the Kuban oblast. This circumstance did not escape attention of reviewers. In the review published in the journal *Kievskaiia starina*, its author expressed his surprise over the fact that the songs that were supposed to represent the richness of the Kuban Cossack oral tradition had nothing to do with Kuban. Nevertheless, he found a positive aspect in the fact of their publication, stating that it “increased the number of Little Russian songs, that were recorded and put to music” and would help Cossack choirs “to keep Little Russian songs in memory and increase their reserve.”³⁷⁹ Yet Lysenko and those Ekaterinodar Ukrainian national activists who made the publication of his songs possible pursued more ambitious goal—to introduce the “truly Ukrainian” historical memory into the minds of the descendants of the Sich.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁷⁹ N. Sh., “[Review of] *Pesni Kubanskikh kazakov*,” *Kievskaiia starina* 7 (1897): 42–43.

To what extent did they succeed? Stepan Erastov, the coordinator of the Ukrainian nationalist activists in Kuban, wrote in his memoirs that soon after its publication, Bihdai's song collection drew attention of St. Petersburg officials and Malama, as personally responsible for the publication, narrowly escaped dismissal.³⁸⁰ No sources have been found so far to corroborate this claim. Moreover, many evidences suggest that the fate of the collection was more successful. During the celebrations, at the festive dinner, honorary guests of the fete listened to Little Russian songs from Bihdai's collection, whereas one of them mourned the destruction of the Sich.³⁸¹ Later, in 1898, Bihdai recalled the attention that his work had enjoyed. For example, Malama's order to the Kuban host and several circulars of the Trustee of the Caucasus educational district announced the release of the collection. Every unit of the Kuban host, except of one regiment, ordered several exemplars of the collection and subscribed to the forthcoming issues, whereas schools and stanitsa communities subscribed as well (the level of subscription reflected the division between Chernomoria and Linia, since Cossack communities of the Eiskii, Tamanskii, and Ekaterinodarskii districts subscribed in full, while those of the Kavkazskii and Maikopskii districts subscribed partially, and no one subscribed for the collection in the Batalpashinskii district). Beyond Kuban, the Ataman of the Terek Cossack host recommended the collection for all parts of the host.³⁸²

What is more, Bihdai's collection received accolades from members of the ruling dynasty and top imperial officials. On October 16, 1896, at the train station in Novorossiisk, Bihdai managed to present his collection to the Empress Mariia Fedorovna. To hand over the gift, he was allowed to enter the empress' coach, which was ready for departure. The empress expressed her joy over the fact of its publication and her gratitude to Bihdai.³⁸³ Evidently, the local authorities did not discern a danger in the collection of the songs and were pleased with it to such an extent that Yakov Malama sent it as a gift to the heir of the throne, Grand Prince Georgii Aleksandrovich.³⁸⁴ In response, Georgii Aleksandrovich expressed his gratitude for the songs. The war minister expressed his gratitude as well.³⁸⁵ In February 1898, Bihdai released the second edition of the songs,

³⁸⁰ S. Erastov, "Spohady," *Pam'iatky Ukrainy: Istoriia ta kul'tura* 3 (2006): xii.

³⁸¹ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 8 September 1896, 2.

³⁸² A. Bigdai, "Doklad chlena komiteta A. D. Bigdaeva (prodolzhenie)," *KOV*, 20 December 1898, 1.

³⁸³ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 20 October 1896, 3.

³⁸⁴ Ya. Malama to Georgii Aleksandrovich, 14 October 1896, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 6701, l. 214.

³⁸⁵ "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 20 November 1896, 2; "Dnevnik," *KOV*, 23 November 1896, 2.

endorsed by the scientific committee of the Main Staff. Once again, Malama recommended it to stanitsas of the oblast and all institutions.³⁸⁶

The unusual fate of the collection, which was published in the forbidden alphabet and which aimed at awakening of a sense of Ukrainian national feeling among the Ukrainian-speaking Cossacks of the host, demonstrates the loopholes in the imperial bureaucratic mechanism of dealing with cultural differences on the peripheries of the Russian Empire. The publication, virtually impossible in Ukraine/Little Russia proper, not only became a highly important event in Kuban, endorsed by the local authorities, but also received appreciation from the members of the Romanov family and imperial military government. It elucidates the specific place the Cossacks had come to occupy in the imperial hierarchy of loyalty. The pillars of the imperial order, and not a potential source of danger anymore, they could enjoy considerably more freedoms with respect to their cultural peculiarities.

2.7. Conclusion

In early January 1897, the New Year's editorial of *KOV* summed up the developments in the oblast of the past year. Calling the anniversary the year's single most important event, the newspaper compared it to a test for the maturity of the host. "Bicentenary! How not to be worried! After all, every jubilee is, at the same time, a revision. Take stock and make a check!" The results of the "revision" seemed *KOV* not quite impressive. In terms of cultural activities and initiatives, the Kuban host remained rather passive. All that the Kuban society was able to achieve appeared negligible against the backdrop of what was going on elsewhere in Europe. Even in Galicia or Bohemia, each of which would freely fit into any of the districts of the territorially enormous Kuban oblast, the editorial wrote, there were incomparably more interesting and valuable activities. Several historical works, Bihdai's multi-volume collection of songs, and the monuments that were still a work in progress—such were the modest achievements of the host. "We are still asleep," summarized the author the state of the art in Kuban. "Too much work to do, too few doers."³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ "Ob"iavleniia," *KOV*, 25 February 1898, 1.

³⁸⁷ O. Teplyi, "Staryi god," *KOV*, 1 January 1897, 1.

KOV underestimated the importance of the changes that took place in the oblast over the course of the 1890s. The discussions about the upcoming anniversary, which started in the mid-1880s and brought about significant changes to the self-image of local Cossacks elites, had a lasting impact on further developments in the oblast over the next decades. The image of the host as the successor of the Khoper Cossacks proved unsustainable and, by the moment the Kuban host celebrated its Khoper lineage, the idea of this very lineage had already been outdated. Within the host, in the Kuban oblast, and beyond it, contemporaries of the celebrations had a vague understanding of the meaning of the anniversary. The historian Vasilii Potto, who composed a comprehensive two-volume catalogue of the imperial monuments in the Caucasus on demand of the War Ministry, saw the need to note in his work that “the Khoper Cossacks appeared in Kuban proper only in 1825 and were incorporated in the Kuban host only as one of its constituent parts; the real root of it was the old Zaporozhian Sich.”³⁸⁸ Ironically, the first celebration of the Khoper origin of the Kuban Host turned out to be the last public manifestation of it. It was pregnant with Zaporozhian imagery, and after some time this imagery would overthrow it.



³⁸⁸ Potto, *Pamiatniki vremen utverzhdeniia russkogo vladychestva na Kavkaze* 2: 1; For the War Ministry as the initiator of the cataloguing the Caucasus monuments, see *KOV*, 9 March 1905, 1.

3. Chapter 3: Between Mutiny and Loyalty: The Revolution of 1905 and its Aftermath

The outbreak of the revolution, which swept over the Russian Empire in early 1905, did not bring such radical social upheaval to the Kuban oblast as it did to other, more industrially advanced parts of the empire. Having largely bypassed the rural countryside, the most significant revolutionary developments took place in the towns, with their non-Cossack population and a relatively high proportion of intelligentsia, artisans, and factory workers. The latter, however, did not constitute a significant percentage of the townsfolk. Flour and oil mills, tanneries, soap and tobacco factories, and small iron foundries were the only enterprises in the region that represented the industrial labor force. The total number of people employed in local industry amounted to slightly over than 17500 (of whom nearly 1900 worked in Ekaterinodar).³⁸⁹

Yet the ideas of social emancipation and political freedom found their way into Kuban, where the scale of collective action loomed large as well. Processions carrying red banners and singing popular revolutionary songs gradually became a visible, and unseen before, feature of the Kuban urban centers. Revolutionary demonstrations in Eisk, Temriuk, Armavir (which until 1914 had the official status of village), Maikop, and Ekaterinodar caused much concern among the local police and bureaucracy. With no plan of action that would have been tested out in such extraordinary situations, the authorities were making decisions on the move, gradually elaborating their view of what was going on. One thing was certain: their familiar world no longer existed. While many were accustomed to think of the Kuban Cossacks as the bulwark of the regime, Ekaterinodar, the Cossack capital, was being destabilized.

The first encounter of the local administration with the mass revolutionary sentiment attested to its unpreparedness to confront an organized, numerous, and discontented mob. Much to the surprise of not only officials, but of many town dwellers as

³⁸⁹ *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie na Kubani v 1905–1907 gg.* (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1956), 5.

well, the funeral ceremony of a teacher of the Kuban teachers' seminary in the very beginning of March turned into a large demonstration of unprecedented scale. It signaled if not the coming of the era of mass politics, then at least the unforeseen emergence of political consciousness among the townsfolk. The teacher Ivan Rotar, who belonged to the cohort of the Ukrainian activists that moved to Kuban in the early 1900s and was one of the leaders and founders of the Ekaterinodar branch of the RUP. At the same time, he was equally notable figure among more nationally neutral or Russian-leaning individuals with social-democratic allegiances. Although the administration of the seminary, which organized the funeral, did not intend to use it to political ends, Rotar's associates seized the opportunity to openly manifest their liberationist claims. Funeral wreaths with red ribbons and seditious speeches made during the burial caught the police off-guard. Some details drew the attention of the police more than other. As follows from its reports, the police was particularly concerned by the opening public speech "in the Ukrainian dialect" (*ukrainskom narechii*), made by Havrylo/Gavriil Dobroskok, and by the red ribbon with an inscription "in the Little Russian language" (*malorossiiskom yazyke*), signed by certain "RUP comrades from abroad."

While admitting that the demonstration was prepared in advance, the reports also emphasized the spontaneity of the crowd. On the procession's way from the seminary's church to the cemetery, the crowd grew to nearly one thousand people.³⁹⁰ At that point, the way the police behaved to halt the rally far too soft if compared to the later violent practices. The police was confused and did not take any decisive action regarding the event. Even such a biased witness as Stepan Erastov recalled that the chief of Ekaterinodar police, Vasiliï Chernik, in quite a benevolently way urged the mob to disperse and go home, paternalistically calling the students that gathered at the funeral "the children." The demonstrators were not yet seen as the dangerous "internal enemies," even though this term gained a foothold after a short while.³⁹¹ Although police brought under investigation many notable members of the Ekaterinodar educated society, Dobroskok included, nobody was sentenced to imprisonment.³⁹²

³⁹⁰ Prosecutor of the Novocheerkassk Trial Chamber to the 1st Department of the Ministry of Justice, 16 March 1905, GARF, f. 124, op. 43, d. 1456, 4; Obvinitel'nyi akt (kopiia), GARF, f. 124, op. 43, d. 1456, 9, 9 ob.

³⁹¹ S. Erastov, "Spohady," *Pam'iatky Ukrainy: Istorii ta kul'tura* 3 (2006): xxvi.

³⁹² GAKK, f. 583, op. 1, d. 336.

A correspondent to the official newspaper described the astonishment of uninitiated witnesses of the funeral, who had been amazed to hear the collective singing of the revolutionary song “Dubinushka” during the burial. Even if the police records do not support his claim that the protesters were singing it simultaneously with the choristers singing the ritual chanting “Memory eternal”, the overall picture of the events had to be nothing but striking. Prior to that, neither the church nor the local cemetery had been used as a stage for making political statements. Whether an old woman really said that after what had happened the cemetery would need to be blessed, or it was just the correspondent’s fiction, her words might well have been said in reality.³⁹³

In October 1905, mass demonstrations in Ekaterinodar turned violent for the first time and entailed the direct intervention of the authorities. Disturbances began on October 4 and 5, the last date being the host’s holiday dedicated to the name day of Tsarevich Aleksei. On the holiday’s eve, the gathered mob, which comprised a sizeable number of lower army ranks, broke the shops’ windows on the central street and came into clash with the Cossacks, resulting in several injured and one death. The head of the oblast reacted by forbidding the town inhabitants to gather in crowds and by obliging them to disband upon demand by the police.³⁹⁴

Addressed to the revolutionaries, this order, apparently, was not meant for the loyalist gatherings, since the conservative-minded part of the population, too, organized a rally to win the town space for themselves. With the imperial flags and an orchestra, the monarchist demonstration marched along the central streets of Ekaterinodar and ended up in front of the ataman’s residence, assuring their loyalty to the throne.³⁹⁵ In terms of the number of participants, the loyalist rally was no less impressive than the liberationist marches, at the very least. A left-wing witness of the events confessed that the scale of this demonstration was far greater than the scale of the revolutionary rallies of those days. “Masses,” he recalled, “willingly followed the monarchists.”³⁹⁶

The October Manifesto, issued on October 17 (coincidentally, on the very next day after the monarchist demonstration), brought even more confusion to the emotional

³⁹³ Prikhozhanin, “Na gorodskom kladbishche,” *KOV*, 28 April 1905, 2.

³⁹⁴ “Letopis’ oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 4 October 1905, 1.

³⁹⁵ “Letopis’ oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 19 October 1905, 3.

³⁹⁶ P. Pavliukov, “Oktiabr’skie dni v Ekaterinodare,” in *1905 god na Severnom Kavkaze* (Rostov-on-Don, Krasnodar: Sevkavkniga, 1926), 141–47.

atmosphere of Ekaterinodar. The granting of political rights and freedoms to the empire's subjects by Nicholas II became a stumbling block for the strategies, goals, and expectations of the opposing camps. The manifesto shook the familiar coordinate system for a short while, making the reference points less apparent and disorienting those involved in political action. The meaning of the manifesto was fuzzy, it could be interpreted in different ways, and thus it was an act open to interpretation. An editorial of *KOV* expressed the hope that such notions as "red" and "black hundred" would become the things of the past.³⁹⁷ On October 18, both monarchists and their left-wing opponents came out to the streets, forming two rallies. Members of both rallies were excited, but neither camp had a clear agenda. According to the official newspaper, they even reached an agreement that under the new conditions of freedom for all there was no reason to be at odds with each other. However credence can be given to this account, the conflict between the two parties began with renewed vigor and ended with the throwing of stones.³⁹⁸ The monarchists-led mob, fueled by agitators, poured its anger on the town dwellers of Jewish origin. The culmination of what became the first anti-Jewish pogrom in the Kuban oblast was the looting and subsequent arson of the house of the local doctor Aleksandr Rokhlin, followed by the splash of marauding and violence toward the Jews in the next two days.³⁹⁹

Strike movement in Kuban was not as strong as it was in more industrially developed areas of the empire, but general strikes, which broke out in Moscow in the autumn, found its way to Kuban and had serious implications for the social, economic, and political life of the region. Post and telegraph employees organized a strike that lasted for weeks, paralyzing the local communication network.⁴⁰⁰ It was followed by the railroad strike, the consequences of which affected the everyday life even greater, so far as the halting of the transport connection led to the substantial rise of prices.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁷ "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 2 November 1905, 1.

³⁹⁸ "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 21 October 1905, 2; See also the memoirs of a left-wing activist Petr Gudima about these events: *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie na Kubani v 1905–1907 gg.*, 123.

³⁹⁹ V. N. Markov, "Antisemitizm na Kubani: Ekaterinodarskii pogrom 1905 g.," *Sotsial'nye nauki i sotsial'nye tekhnologii v Rossii 2* (2007). For the official report for the public, see: V. E. Chernik, "Ofitsial'noe soobshchenie," *KOV*, 29 October 1905, 1.

⁴⁰⁰ "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 18 November 1905, 1–2.

⁴⁰¹ "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 20 December 1905, 1.

3.1. The Cossacks as Revolutionaries

The political and social commotion that engulfed Ekaterinodar became an enormous challenge for the local imperial administration. And yet the very fact of the involvement of workers, students, artisans, sellers, and other segments of the urban population in the revolutionary movement came as no surprise for the Cossack authorities. The latter saw the townsfolk as a specific social environment, inherently susceptible to social-democratic agitation, and sometimes as a breeding ground for different subversive ideas and influences. The unrest of urban residents throughout the empire was said to be a natural outcome of their living conditions, stemming from their alleged break with traditional family and religious values. In the view of the Cossack administration, the urban dwellers stood in sharp contrast to the Cossack estate. Always loyal, always obedient, Cossack units were the most reliable remedy against the revolution. A correspondent to the official newspaper described the Cossacks' willingness to serve the tsar and to suppress the unrest as fervent to the irrational extent. From nearly 800 Cossacks mobilized to the 13th plastun (infantry) battalion, more than 550 were the sole breadwinners of their families, who had left at home their infirm elderly parents, wives and children. Even so, the faithfulness of the Cossacks to the tsar was stronger, as the correspondent assured, than their family ties. However, the administration soon faced with a chain of events that deeply shocked its confidence in the Cossacks as one of the main pillars of the tsarist order.⁴⁰²

It turned out that the Cossacks, too, were able to rebel. At the beginning of December 1905, several plastun units, recruited from the Cossacks of the third turn, who had been sent to suppress popular revolts in different areas of the Caucasus military district, refused to carry out the orders of their commanders. The 14th plastun battalion, dispatched to the Elisavetpol gubernia in the South Caucasus to calm down a fierce conflict between the Armenians and Tatars (the then official term for the Azeris), refused to go further after they had almost reached their destination. Almost at the same time, the 17th plastun battalion disobeyed the order to quell a revolt in Baku. While stationing in the port town of Novorossiisk, it refused to embark on a steamship. Simultaneously, the

⁴⁰² Omega, "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 24 November 1905, 2; See also: V. P. Kolesnikov, "Trevozhnyi nabat," *KOV*, 16 November 1905, 2.

15th plastun battalion, sent to the same destination, mutinied on its way to Novorossiisk.⁴⁰³

The obstacles and reported reasons for mutiny varied for each battalion. If the 14th plastun battalion rebelled upon reaching the destination, the 15th and 17th battalions rebelled at the very begging of their trip. In their statement, the Cossacks of the 14th battalion claimed that the immediate reason for their disobedience was the instruction, given by their commander, who ordered the Cossacks to disperse among different settlements. Those, who would station in Armenian settlements, would have to shoot at the Tatars, defending the Armenians. Those, who would stay in Tatar settlements, would have to do the opposite. The Cossacks understood these words as the indication that they would have to be killing each other, inciting, in addition, hatred of both warring sides.⁴⁰⁴

The Cossacks of the 15th and 17th battalions objected to the very idea of being sent by sea. Still, all shared the same conviction that they were not obliged to carry out police functions and participate in waging war with other subjects of the same state. There was yet another, matter-of-fact reason for mutiny. The plastun battalions were composed from the Cossacks, whose economic condition was relatively poor, and who could not afford maintaining horses and were not required to purchase them upon mobilization. Having completed their actual military service at the age of 25, they (aged 29 to 33 years) ran households and supported their families. As the Cossacks of the 14th battalion complained further on, most of them had 4 to 7 children and a wife, who had been left without their protection.⁴⁰⁵

These acts of military insubordination, unprecedented and unforeseen, overwhelmed the Cossack administration and provoked a bitter anger of the emperor himself. After the acting ataman, Dmitrii Odintsov, sent a report to the war minister, informing him about the plastuns' revolt, he received a telegram from Nicholas II. "I could not expect," wrote Nicholas II, "that propaganda was able to affect the plastuns. Declare to the plastuns of the 14th, 15th, and 17th battalions that they disgraced

⁴⁰³ G. Korol'kov, "Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v voiskakh Kavkazskogo voennogo okruga," in 1905. *Materialy i dokumenty. Armia v pervoi revoliutsii*, ed. M. N. Pokrovskii (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1927), 353, 357. On the 17th battalion, see also *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie na Kubani v 1905–1907 gg.*, 194–95. On the 15th battalion, see *Ibid.*, 197–200.

⁴⁰⁴ A. L. Sidorov, ed., *Vysshyi pod'em revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg. Noiabr'-dekabr' 1905 goda*. Vol. 2 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1955), 407–9.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 409.

themselves in my eyes.”⁴⁰⁶ Such an irritated reaction of the tsar was not just a stigma of infamy, brought upon the three plastun units. Naturally, in the eyes of the military bureaucracy, these units hurt the honor of the whole host.

With all that, the local authorities found themselves not prepared to respond adequately to this situation. As no battalion commander proved able to restrain the Cossacks from the self-willed dismissal, no representative of the local administration had the idea of what to do with the armed mutineers, who peaceably—but in an excited condition—went back to their gathering points. In stanitsa Slavianskaia, where the Cossacks of the 15th battalion declared a firm desire to disperse and go home, the district ataman had no other choice but to dismiss them officially, providing the Cossacks with written notifications that he gave them his own consent.⁴⁰⁷ In stanitsa Umanskaia, the base of the 17th plastun battalion, the Cossacks were disarmed, but eventually forgiven and given back their rifles after their demonstrative repentance.⁴⁰⁸

The reluctance of the plastun battalions to quell the social disturbances in the South Caucasus was not, however, the main difficulty the Kuban Cossack Host faced at the height of the revolution. Although the plastuns, in open defiance of their officers, violated the chain of command and committed a serious breach of military discipline, they did not resort to any violence and did not turn against their superiors. In contrast to them, another Cossack unit did precisely that. In mid-December 1906, the 2nd Urupskii regiment, which stationed in Ekaterinodar and was composed from the second-turn Cossacks of the Maikop district, organized the largest uprising in Kuban in the years of the revolution (and, moreover, in the history of the Kuban host). The revolutionary climate of the capital town and, especially, the heated atmosphere of the days, with its news about insurrections that were spreading across various urban centers of the empire—from cities as distant as Moscow and Nizhnii Novgorod to those as close as Rostov-on-Don and Novorossiisk—affected the mood of the Cossacks, hitherto dutifully performing their police functions. The Cossacks, having chosen the leaders from among themselves, put forward a number of demands and, after the commander of the regiment and Odintsov refused to satisfy them, went to stanitsa Giaginskaia—with weaponry, regimental treasury, and the banner.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 412–13.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., 407.

⁴⁰⁸ Korol'kov, “Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v voiskakh Kavkazskogo voennogo okruga,” 357.

For a while, from late December to early February, Giaginskaia became the center of resistance, ungovernable by the Kuban authorities.⁴⁰⁹

The authorities had no choice but to anxiously witness the rebellion's success in winning support of the part of the local population. Especially indicative was the enthusiastic reception of the regiment by the town community of Maikop. The persecutor of the Ekaterinodar district court informed his superiors in Novocherkassk that when the 2nd Urupskii regiment came to Maikop for the purpose of agitation (by threatening the chief of police, the Cossacks obtained the official permission to publish hundreds of leaflets, explaining the motives of their insurrection), more than twenty thousands of town dwellers, with church banners and a local priest, jubilantly welcomed the arrival of the regiment. "In fact," he reported with dismay, "the power in the town passed to the Cossacks."⁴¹⁰

In his order to the Kuban host, Odintsov presented the struggle with the 2nd Urupskii regiment as the necessary, common cause of the whole host. He suggested that all the stanitsas should convoke the Cossack assemblies to issue resolutions that would make judgments about the offense and shame, caused by the regiment to the Kuban host. He suggested that the Kuban Cossacks themselves punish the traitors. "Organize *sotnias* and regiments and move on Maikop to pacify the Urupskii regiment," wrote the ataman.⁴¹¹

Odintsov's call seems to have found support in some Cossack communities. At the assembly of stanitsa Plastunovskaia, the local ataman insisted on the necessity for the Kuban stanitsas to join the forces and suppress the mutiny by the Kuban Cossacks' own efforts in order to not "wash their dirty linen in public" (*vynosit' musor iz izby*), i. e. not to seek assistance of non-Kuban military forces, like the Don Cossacks or the regular army.⁴¹²

Curiously, the idea of mass mobilization not necessarily implied the view of the mutiny as an internal, a "home" affair. A witness to the same assembly in Plastunovskaia understood the ataman's appeal the other way around—as a call to the Black Sea Cossacks to intervene in the affairs of the Line Cossacks. As an attempt to prevent what he was

⁴⁰⁹ L. Il'in, *Vosstanie 2-go Urupskogo kazach'ego polka v 1905 g.* (Rostov-on-Don: Sevkavkniga, 1926).

⁴¹⁰ The persecutor of the Ekaterinodar District Court to the Novocherkassk Trial Chamber, 15 January 1906, GARF, f. 124, op. 44, d. 2654, ll. 1, 1 ob.; Published in: Sidorov, *Vysshyi pod'em revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg. Noiiabr'-dekabr' 1905 goda*, vol. 2, 414.

⁴¹¹ D. A. Odintsov, "Prikaz po Kubanskomu kazach'emu voisku ot 24 yanvaria 1906 goda," *KOV*, 31 January 1906, 1.

⁴¹² Ataman Moskalenko, "Korrespondentsii. St. Plastunovskaia," *KOV*, 11 March 1906, 2–3.

afraid would become a struggle of one historical part of the host against another, he urged: “Black Sea Cossacks, be cautious! . . . the fratricidal war of the Line Cossacks and Black Sea Cossacks can break out!”⁴¹³

As the events were unfolding more rapidly than it was expected, the mass mobilization of the Cossacks on their own initiative, envisaged by Odintsov, proved completely unnecessary. The Urupskii regiment surrendered as soon as the Cossack artillery battery began shelling Giaginskaia.⁴¹⁴

3.2. Discipline and Punish: Consequences of the Uprising

The rebellion was suppressed, but it left an imprint that affected the local administration’s view of the region. The local elites came to understand that the Cossacks’ loyalty was not an immutable feature. Rather than taking the Cossacks’ readiness to obey the orders for granted, the Host eventually realized that it had to take measures to maintain their loyalty on a proper level. It was not an immediate conclusion, neither there was a direct causal chain of events and decisions that would lead towards the developments, which are described in detail in the following chapters. Still, the lasting effect of the Cossack “treason,” the far-reaching consequences of the towns’ role in the revolution explain a major shift in the local cultural and political developments in subsequent years.

The rebellion brought into life two common ideologemes, invoked in almost every official or monarchist account of the event. On the one hand, the uprising was portrayed in a way as if no acts of disobedience had ever occurred before. Correspondents to the official newspaper unanimously characterized the rebellion as unparalleled in the history of the host, an act that cast on every Kuban Cossack a shadow of infamy that would endure for centuries. One anonymous author wrote that up to that moment the Kuban Cossacks “knew no reproach,” but now “this shame will go into history, and its stigma will fall on the host for all eternity.”⁴¹⁵ Another correspondent assured that the story about

⁴¹³ Ekho, “St. Plastunovskaia,” *Kuban*, 5 February 1906, 3.

⁴¹⁴ Sidorov, *Vysshyi pod'em revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg. Noiiabr'-dekabr' 1905 goda*, vol. 2, 426.

⁴¹⁵ Kubanskii kazak, “Otvét na vozzvanie izmennikov uruptsev,” *KOV*, 19 February 1906, 2.

the treason would pass into folklore, so that even “a *bandurist* with a gray beard down to his chest will be singing about the treason of the Urupskii regiment [*uruptsev*]!”⁴¹⁶

On the other hand, the authorities and the official press saw the rebellion of the 2nd Urupskii regiment (and, to a lesser degree, of the *plastun* battalions), as not only an act of defiant disobedience, but as a symptom of a new, alarming phenomenon. The mutineers, they lamented, betrayed the precepts of their illustrious forefathers, who selflessly devoted themselves to the service for the throne, faith, and fatherland. The old Cossacks, real and imagined, dead and alive, with their ostensible good judgment and sobriety came to be seen as the most reliable allies of the imperial administration in its struggle against sedition and destructive influences. As early as in late December, in the midst of the uprising, the Caucasus viceroy wrote an appeal, addressed to the old generation of the Kuban and Terek Cossacks. There were no farmers who would be as rich and free as the Cossacks of the North Caucasus, he explained. For it, the Motherland had the full right to call the Cossacks for service at any time, especially in such a hard time like that. Asking the elders to restrain the youth, susceptible to seditious propaganda, from anti-government actions, the viceroy appealed to “the former Cossack glory” as the ultimate disciplining resource: “Do not let the hoary battle Cossack glory fade because of the weeds of the malignant turmoil.”⁴¹⁷

A number of publications in *KOV* repeatedly referred to the argument of the “former glory,” reinforcing its interpretive capacity. The overarching message was always the same: regardless of the reasons and aims of the mutiny, the regiment dealt a blow, first and foremost, to the historical memory of the Kuban host. It was presented in a way as if the 2nd Urupskii regiment acted against not so social, economic, or political order of the day, but rather against the ancient ancestors of the Kuban Cossacks. An author of an article in *KOV* made this idea emotionally more emphatic by specifying, whose glory and whose precepts the mutineers betrayed. “The hoary olden times are looking at us, the descendants of Zaporozhia and the Quiet Don, from the banners, bunchuks, kurins’ ensigns, maces, pernachs, and other regalia of our host . . .” All those numerous signs of the former glory of the Cossacks’ ancestors, as follows from these words, signaled about the presence of the past in the present and made it tangible and visible. The metaphor of the olden times that was looking at the Cossacks of modern time—and, apparently, was

⁴¹⁶ “Eshche neskol’ko slov pravdy ob izmennikakh uruptsakh,” *KOV*, 4 March 1906, 2.

⁴¹⁷ I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, “[No title],” *KOV*, 21 January 1906, 2.

doing so reproachfully—had a logical consequence: the moral authority of Zaporozhia (for the Black Sea Cossacks) and the Don (for the Line Cossacks) was able to exert its power on its progeny. It was able to discipline, but it was also able to punish. The author appealed to the past as the realm that contained recommendations for action: “In the Sich and Don, everyone guilty of a crime against his host’s community [the author used the Ukrainian word ‘*tovarystvo*’], against its honor and valor, was punished severely. But we are the descendants of the Sich, Zaporozhia, and the quiet Don...”⁴¹⁸

It should be noted that the “shame” was likely to have been considered as more a shame of Linia, rather than of Chernomoria. The ataman of stanitsa Plastunovskaia stressed that Chernomoria remained completely loyal. “The Black Sea Cossacks have not forgotten their forefathers, and one cannot so easily led them astray,” he wrote to the newspaper. Even though some Black Sea Cossacks proved to be receptive to revolutionary propaganda, he admitted, all their fellow Cossacks abhorred them.⁴¹⁹

The Cossacks affected most were, of course, those on active service, the 1st Urupskii regiment. A collective letter, written by the first-turn Cossacks, appeared in press, where they tried to dissociate themselves from the “treason” of their second-turn “namesakes.”⁴²⁰

However, the very name of the Urupskii regiments (*uruptsy*) was already discredited to such an extent that the commandment of the 1st Urupskii regiment took more radical measures to overcome the aftermath of the events. In April, a deputation of the Cossacks of the regiment, headed by their commander, went to St. Petersburg to petition Nicholas II for his consent to rename the regiment to the 1st Line regiment. The emperor agreed, expressing his confidence that the regiment will be serving according to the precepts of its ancestors. Here, too, the disciplining potential of the image of the Line Cossacks was employed not merely to dissociate the regiment’s name semantically, but to ensure its loyalty henceforth. The regiment that bore the name of its forefathers was supposed to serve in a way that would not cast a shadow on their venerated memory.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ Kubanskii kazak, “K vernym kazakam kubantsam,” *KOV*, 5 February 1906, 2–3.

⁴¹⁹ Ataman Moskalenko, “Korrespondentsii. St. Plastunovskaia” 2–3.

⁴²⁰ Pervye uruptsy, “Otzyv kazakov 1-go Urupskogo polka o kazakakh 2-go polka, ostavivshikh samovol’no sluzhbu,” *KOV*, 1 March 1906, 2.

⁴²¹ “Letopis’ oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 18 April 1906, 1; Vysochaishii prikaz po voennomu vedomstvu,” *KOV*, 20 April 1906, 1.

3.3. Zaporozhians Convoke: The *Rada* of 1906

Although the revolution did not affect Cossack stanitsas to the extent it touched the towns, regional authorities saw the acts of Cossacks' mutiny as symptoms of a broader and potentially more dangerous phenomenon. The so-called agricultural movement—peasants' grievances, aggression towards, and, often, attacks on landlords, caused by land shortages, which spread across the Russian empire—was seen as an imminent threat that was about to reach the Kuban countryside. In early January 1906, Odintsov introduced martial law in the whole oblast, with the exception of towns and railroads. The official newspaper explained this by “the first symptoms of the agrarian movement.” In two weeks, the law was extended to the towns as well, with their extraordinary direct subordination to the atamans of the respective districts, within which the towns were situated.⁴²²

What was meant by this definition was, nevertheless, unclear. The society knew little about the direct causes of the directive and only could guess about its precise reasons, even if it inferred, as did the editors of a liberal newspaper, that the martial law was somehow connected to the voluntary demobilization of the Cossack military units.⁴²³

There were many social, cultural, and political reasons for the Cossack insubordination. And yet the economic factor did serve as a fertile ground that made possible the growth of the discontent among the people, formerly unaccustomed to any sort of political reasoning. The leader of the 2nd Urupskii regiment's mutiny, Aleksei Kurganov, recalled that the unfair distribution of lands in the mountain territories beyond the Kuban was one of the reasons that prompted the whole regiment to unrest against its commanders. While some, wrote Kurganov, had 30 desiatinas of land, there were such stanitsas in the Maikopskii district that did not had at their disposal even 3 desiatinas. Even worse, while rank-and-file Cossacks suffered from the lack of land, generals and officers possessed the best arable lands in the region. Kurganov claimed to have presented to the ataman the regiment's demands to enlarge land allotments, urging him to take measures for relieving the plight of his fellow Cossacks.⁴²⁴

⁴²² “Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 10 January 1906, 1; “Prikaz po Kubanskoi oblasti, no. 3, 20 January 1906,” *KOV*, 24 January 1906, 1.

⁴²³ P. Shirskii, “Voennoe polozhenie,” *Kuban'*, 12 January 1906, 2–3.

⁴²⁴ *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie na Kubani v 1905-1907 gg.* (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskoe knizhnoe izdatelstvo, 1956), 212.

The pressing calls for solving the land problem remained the most recurrent theme of local discussions on the pages of Kuban periodicals, both conservative and liberal. By the end of 1906, the Kuban Cossack intellectuals resolved the issue in quite a creative way. They saw the way for solving the land problem in what the Cossacks believed to have been the experience of their own past. The Kuban host employed the Zaporozhian myth, as a way out of the revolutionary situation, to alleviate the agricultural problem and to organize important segments of its life on the principles of self-governing and representative democracy.

This major event, which was an exceptional, purely Kuban response to the challenges of the revolution, has recently become a subject of analysis in an article by the historian Ja-Jeong Koo.⁴²⁵ Thanks to his work, the chain of events that led to the solution of the land question and the range of decisions taken in the course of the affair are, in general terms, known. On December 1, 1906, a large Cossack assembly convened in Ekaterinodar to distribute the lands in possession of the Kuban host among different Cossack communities in as equitable way as possible. 506 delegates, all belonging to the Cossack estate and representing every Cossack settlement of the oblast, came together for a sixteenth-day long session. Their task was to jointly, through detailed discussions, redraw the map of the Kuban host's landholdings and to supply the most destitute communities with additional plots of land. The assembly adopted the name *Rada*, which referred to the ancient tradition of Zaporozhian self-rule, when the Cossacks of the Sich convened general gatherings to tackle a wide variety of issues concerning their everyday life and those of a political nature. Indeed, the Rada of 1906 became an unparalleled happening in terms of its representative, egalitarian mechanism and aspirations, and historians who lay stress on its democratic character are quite correct. What was curious, however, is that the Rada owed its existence to a profoundly illiberal, conservative initiative launched by *KOV*, being closely intertwined with and echoing events that took place at another, all-imperial assembly, first convened the same year—the State Duma.

The elections to this first legislative organ, announced in the October manifesto of 1905, were just as calm in the backwater Kuban oblast as they were heated in the industrially developed and politically variegated areas of the Russian empire. The

⁴²⁵ Ja-Jeong Koo, "Universalizing Cossack Particularism: 'The Cossack Revolution' in Early Twentieth Century Kuban," *Revolutionary Russia* 25, no. 1 (2012): 15–19.

population of Kuban, divided into two separate curiae—of the Cossacks and of the non-Cossack estates—voted for electors in their settlements, and the chosen representatives, in their turn, selected the deputies for the Duma among themselves in a ballot in Ekaterinodar. Three deputies, elected from the Cossack curia, Nikifor Kochevskii, Kondrat Bardizh, and Petr Grishai, all had had behind them a considerable administrative experience of running economic and military affairs of their respective stanitsas (Dolzhanskaia, Batalpashinskaia, and Zelenchukskaia) during their tenure as local atamans.⁴²⁶

All of them were rather liberal-minded and, eventually, during the Duma sessions, sided with the Kadets, while Bardizh joined the party as its member. At the same time, the election of their candidatures went unopposed by the Cossack conservatives. An editorial of *KOV* characterized the deputies positively, listing everyone's merits as those of distinguished administrators. Even the lack of education, as was the case of Grishai, was touted as a virtue: although he could not express his thoughts “stylistically correctly,” he did it in a clear and competent way.⁴²⁷

On the day of the deputies' departure for St. Petersburg, the Host organized the farewell at the highest level, with a public prayer in the Ekaterinodar cathedral, attended by the senior assistant of the acting ataman. Both the authorities and the conservative supporters of the Cossack traditional values believed that the deputies would uphold the broadly defined, common interests of the Kuban Cossacks and, most likely, hoped that they would counterbalance the non-Cossack deputies with their explicit liberationist agenda.⁴²⁸

The actual political discussions that took place at the Taurida Palace, the seat of the State Duma, elucidated profound discrepancies among the Cossack representatives and made it clear that the notion of Cossack interests was far too meaningless to suggest any concrete program of legislative action. Deputies from the Duma's Cossack caucus, who had different political leanings and were elected from different hosts, failed to elaborate the common agenda and expressed opposing points of view on basic matters pertaining Cossack life. One major discussion—and the only one in which the Kuban Cossack

⁴²⁶ M. M. Boiovich, ed., *Chleny Gosudarstvennoi Dumy (Portrety i biografii). Pervyi sozyv. 1906-1911* (Moscow: Tipografiia Sytina, 1906), 457–62.

⁴²⁷ “Chleny Gosudarstvennoi Dumy ot kazach'ego naseleniia Kubanskoi oblasti,” *KOV*, 1 June 1906, 2.

⁴²⁸ “Provody deputatov v Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu,” *Kuban'*, 9 June 1906, 3.

deputies took part—became a landmark moment for both the participants of the debates and the Kuban public that kept an eye on reports about sessions of the parliament.

On June 13, the Duma raised a question that was relevant to the Cossack hosts of the empire as to the imperial population at large. Cossacks' notorious participation in dissolving mass rallies throughout the Russian empire, from its core to its most remote corners, the police service that the Cossacks carried out in great variety of towns and cities, all it became the first—and frightening if not painful—encounter of the imperial society with the real, not mythical Cossacks. It comes as no surprise that the Cossacks' role in downing the revolution became a subject of parliament's proceedings. What made it even more remarkable was the circumstances of place and situation. The parliamentary hearings of Duma's request to the war minister, in which a special commission accused him of violating a range of laws and rules in view of the supposedly illegitimate mobilization of the Cossacks on police service, turned into an emotional drama as soon as the Cossack representatives took the floor. The parliament, itself a product of the revolution, composed mostly of liberal-minded deputies, who claimed to represent the people that were affected by the Cossack actions, became a stage for a performed court hearing. It brought together two "warring sides": the representatives of those who beat the people appeared before the representatives of those who were beaten. Following the scenario of the political performance, the Cossack deputies were making excuses for the actions of their electors. For instance, one deputy from the oblast of the Don host depicted a truly apocalyptic vision of the Cossacks' role in the revolution: "It was like a slaughter. It was as if the Tatars or other ancient enemies marched through Rus with the whistle of whips [*nagaiki*], leaving behind nothing but tears, tears, tears!" Lavishly exaggerating Cossack brutality, most of the deputies at the same time put all the blame on the imperial government, the military authorities, and the arbitrary exercise of power in general. The same deputy assured the Duma that it was the "lawlessness" that "moved the Cossacks on Rus and made them hated by it."⁴²⁹ Another Don representative condemned the tsarist military upbringing for making the once free Cossacks "living, artificially bestialized [*ozverennye*] machines."⁴³⁰ Several deputies from other gubernias emphasized the fundamental and striking discrepancy between the myth of the Cossacks they had been

⁴²⁹ *Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Stenograficheskie otchety. 1906 g.*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1906), 1309.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1312.

taught about and the personally experienced reality. The deputy from the Simbirsk gubernia expressed his disappointment that throughout his youth, from primary school to university, the figure of Cossack epitomized for him “all the best and free that the Russian people had.” This image, he bewailed, was endlessly distant from the actual Cossack behavior he had had a chance to observe.⁴³¹

Guided by yet another cultural background, the deputy from the Kiev/Kyiv gubernia insisted that the Cossacks stationed in his native region were not Cossacks at all: “they do not look like Cossacks, they are something vague, not ours at all, because a Cossack is Little Russian by origin.” What he had known from the Ukrainian history and oral tradition had no similarities with what he had seen. After the people got to know those Cossacks, he rhetorically asked, “would [the people] sing about the Cossacks all over Ukraine as before?”⁴³²

Naturally, the liberationist stance in this discussion was not the only one. A few deputies opposed the very idea of challenging the necessity of the Cossack mobilization. Their arguments ranged from the insistence on unquestioned subordination to the will of the tsar and the government, whatever it might be, to the more nuanced and tactical support for the Cossack participation in suppressing the revolution as the justification of the Cossack existence as a privileged estate. As one deputy wondered, “if the emperor would not need the Cossacks, then, I think, he will dissolve them altogether.”⁴³³

Both groups claimed to act on behalf of the ordinary Cossacks and to be the real exponents of people’s opinion and aspirations. Most of the deputies referred to letters in their disposal, handed to them by rank-and-file Cossacks before they departed for St. Petersburg. If the monarchists read aloud the letters, whose compilers expressed loyalist feelings and their unconditional readiness to obey orders and to fight with the rioters as long as necessary, the liberationists demonstrated letters of complaint, whose authors lamented that the hardships of mobilization were unbearable. In his turn, Kochevskii, speaking in support of the request to the war minister, asserted that his fellow Kuban Cossacks had given him a “mandate” (*nakaz*), in which they commissioned him “not to ask but to demand the immediate disbandment of the Cossacks of the 2nd and 3rd turn, both regiments and battalions.”⁴³⁴

⁴³¹ Ibid., 1332.

⁴³² Ibid., 1321–22.

⁴³³ Ibid., 1319.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 1330.

The discussion of the Cossacks' role in the revolution, which bore resemblance to an orchestrated, performative tribunal before the imperial-wide audience, provoked an angry reaction in the Kuban official circles and the official press. One author of *KOV*, condemning the speeches by Bardizh and Kochevskii, warned that the need to fight the revolution was self-obvious for all the Cossacks, because otherwise the Cossacks risked "to lose everything that our ancestors acquired with the help of arms and what we now possess."⁴³⁵ The implication was clear: the loyal service was the guarantee of the Cossack estate's well-being, secured by the state. Another correspondent went as far as to invite stanitsas assemblies to pass resolutions denouncing the speeches by Bardizh and Kochevskii and even to exclude them from the Cossack estate.⁴³⁶

Moreover, the appeal to the voices of ordinary Cossacks, to the instruction they had ostensibly given to Kochevskii and his fellow deputies, the reference to a certain mandate prompted a counter-initiative from the part of the Kuban conservatives. The official newspaper, denying that any sort of instructions had actually been given to the deputies, put forward the idea to elaborate a real mandate to the deputies, "so that they would not dare, in front of the whole Russia, to present their thoughts, opinions, and convictions as the thoughts, opinions, and convictions of all the Cossacks."⁴³⁷

After Nicholas II, who had had increasingly negative attitude towards the Duma, dissolved it in July 1906 and announced the elections to the second convocation of the parliament, *KOV* once again raised the question of the elaboration of the mandate for next cohort of Duma representatives. An anonymous author of a newspaper article outlined his view of how to proceed with this matter. To determine the principal needs of the Cossacks, he proposed to convene a common council, which would consist of five representatives from every stanitsa, settlement, khutor, or aul (three from Cossacks and two from *inogorodnie*) and of one high rank officer (*shtab-* or *ober-ofitser*) from every military unit on actual service or administrative institution of the host.⁴³⁸

If conservatives suggested the idea of the mandate elaboration as a means to accuse Bardizh and Kochevskii of not having had the right to speak on behalf of the Kuban

⁴³⁵ Stanichnik, "Neskol'ko slov po povodu rechei Bardizha i Kochevskogo, proiznesennykh imi 13 iunია s. g. v Gosudarstvennoi Dume," *KOV*, 21 September 1906, 2.

⁴³⁶ Kubanskii kazak, "Vnimaniuu vseh istykh kazakov kubatsev," *KOV*, 7 September 1906, 2.

⁴³⁷ "K rospusku Gosudarstvennoi Dumy," *KOV*, 13 July 1906, 2.

⁴³⁸ P. Bash., "[No title]," *KOV*, 18 August 1906, 1.

Cossacks, liberationist press, too, adhered to the initiative, inverting at the same time its accusatory implication. Kirill Zhivilo, who responded with an article in the left-wing local newspaper *Svoboda*, argued that in view of the absence of any instruction that the deputies were to follow, they could not bear responsibility to the host for the presumed breach of obligations. Instead, it was the host's fault for having not entrusted the deputies with a precise mandate.⁴³⁹

Meanwhile, the initiative developed rapidly. In early September, *KOV* urged stanitsas not to linger with composing resolutions concerning the council.⁴⁴⁰ Even before this call was published, the question of the council had already been discussed at the grassroots level in at least one stanitsa and was well received. A resolution, passed by the assembly of stanitsa Blagoveshchenskaia, expressed its full support for the idea of the council. At the same time, the planned convention got its own, remarkable title. It is not clear, who and when came up with the idea to name it “rada,” but by the early September this name had already been in use. Whereas the mentioned assembly used the word “council” (*sovet*), the newspaper used the word “rada” in the title of the article, referring to a Zaporozhian tradition of regular mass assemblies.⁴⁴¹

At the same time, the initiative took a completely new turn. Instead of becoming a council for elaborating the instruction for the future deputies, it turned into a consultative body, which was entrusted with the mission of solving the long-pressing land question by means of more even reallocation of land to the benefit of the Cossack settlements situated beyond the Kuban River.

In early November, Mikhailov proudly informed the host that the emperor approved the convocation of the Rada—the name that from that time on became official and was confirmed by the emperor's signature. Mikhailov's order proclaimed: “Let the Cossacks come together to the general gatherings and select two representatives each, and the latter would come together into a single Cossack ‘rada.’”⁴⁴²

In this way, the Zaporozhian tradition, ostensibly restored, was utilized to serve as an ideological underpinning of the new political body. Although its declared task was narrow, the overtly revolutionary, subversive rhetoric easily found its way to the Rada's

⁴³⁹ K. Zhivilo, “Kubanskomu kazaku,” *Svoboda*, 26 September 1906, 4.

⁴⁴⁰ Kubanskii kazak, “[No title],” *KOV*, 6 September 1906, 1.

⁴⁴¹ “K voprosu o ‘voiskovoi rade’,” *KOV*, 2 September 1906, 1.

⁴⁴² N. I. Mikhailov, “Prikaz po Kubanskomu kazach'emu voisku ot 4 noiabria 1906 goda №653,” *KOV*, 5 November 1906, 1.

tribune. Fedor Shcherbina, authorized as the spokesman of the Rada and subsequently elected as its chair for his expert knowledge of the local land situation, publicly expressed his gratitude to Mikhailov for the restoration of the ancient Cossack custom. His opening speech presented the Rada's convocation as the turning point in the history of the Kuban Cossacks, whose administrative organization from that moment on was supposed to go back to its Zaporozhian roots. Shcherbina denounced the imperial encroachment on the rights and privileges of the Kuban Cossacks and decried the losses for the local economy the centralism had caused: "The Cossack self-rule, land needs, economic issues, domestic life, in short—the whole ancient Cossack governance [*uriad*] was being changed, rebuilt, and abolished without any participation of stanitsas, of the working rank-and-file Cossacks and, as the impartial Cossack history states, not to our advantage." A century of obscurity ended with the recreation of the Rada. "And now, after one hundred years," said Shcherbina, "thanks to the care of our *Koshevoi Bat'ko* [literally, "father of the Kish/Kosh"], we are elected by all the Cossack population from the stanitsas, which have been in oblivion for over a century, to the host's rada in order to solve the single most important of our issues . . ." Addressing Mikhailov with the Zaporozhian-like title complemented the whole picture—not merely the Rada was restored, but the Zaporozhian chief stood in charge of it.⁴⁴³

What is more, as Shcherbina told Mikhailov at another occasion, the ataman was "twice as *bat'ko* to the Kuban Cossacks—the *koshevoi bat'ko* of the Kuban Cossack host and the *bat'ko* of the host's rada." It is not clear whether Shcherbina invented this fatherly Zaporozhian metaphor or just popularized it during this major event, but the metaphor firmly entered the official use.⁴⁴⁴

Just as semi-officially, and at the same time in the same informal manner, Mikhailov was praised in even more flattering way. At a deputies' dinner in the Ekaterinodar's garden, an amateur Cossack poet from a khutor of the Eisk district performed a song in public, calling Mikhailov the *hetman* of the Black Sea Cossacks:

Our Cossack rada
Used to convene for centuries;

⁴⁴³ "Kazach'ia rada," *KOV*, 3 December 1906, 1.

⁴⁴⁴ "Zakrytie kazach'ei rady," *KOV*, 20 December 1906, 2.

If Mikhailov were not here
We would not have the rada.

You, Mikhailov, the ataman of ours
The Hetman of the Kish
Do not forget the Black Sea Cossacks
And their good fame.⁴⁴⁵

The Zaporozhian rhetorics, engendered by the Rada and endorsed officially, was entrenched even in locales that had little connection with Chernomoria. A resolution passed in early 1907 by the Cossack assembly of stanitsa Yaroslavskaia, of the Maikop district in Transkubania, expressed gratitude to Mikhailov for his patronage over the Kuban Cossacks. Calling him “our Chieftain *Koshevoi Bat’ka*” (a Great Russian rendition of the phrase, Little Russian by origin), the authors of the resolution thanked Mikhailov for the establishment of the *rada*, “which has almost been blurred out from our memory.”⁴⁴⁶

The invented character of the tradition did not go unnoticed. The historian Petr Korolenko authored an article for *KOV*, dedicated to the history of *rada* as a political practice. Recognizing its importance for both Zaporozhia and Ukraine, he pointed out that it lost its significance after Ukraine fell under the rule of Russia. The Black Sea Cossacks did not and could not know this practice in its original meaning. The *rada* of 1906, Korolenko argued, resembled a sort of host’s assembly that was indeed practiced in Chernomoria, but its competence was limited to solving a rather narrow kind of issues.⁴⁴⁷

At the same time, Korolenko celebrated the Rada in a Ekaterinodar liberationist newspaper, devoted to the history of the land of the Kuban Cossacks. In that article, he, in a similar vein to Shcherbina, offered quite a critical reassessment of the imperial treatment of the Kuban Cossacks and their Zaporozhian ancestors, which contravened the officially established view of the benevolent autocracy and the unconditionally loyal Cossacks. Korolenko, hardly an overt and ardent Ukrainophile, gave a perspective that one could easily confuse with that of Ukrainian national activists. The land of the Cossacks was known as *Ukraine* (the term he italicized) already in the twelfth century, and its

⁴⁴⁵ *KOV*, 10 December 1906, 2.

⁴⁴⁶ “[Prigovor stanitsy Yaroslavskoi],” *KOV*, 15 March 1907, 1.

⁴⁴⁷ P. Korolenko, “Rada,” *KOV*, 9 December 1906, 2.

population, which he practically interchangeably called “Russes,” “Ukrainian Cossacks,” and “Ukrainians,” organized themselves as early as the 13th century to defend Ukraine from the nomadic tribes. The independent and heroic era of the Ukrainian Cossacks lasted, as a reader might have concluded, for nearly half a millennium and came to a close due to the reforms, initiated by Peter I. Just as he broke the state order of Russia, Peter “did not let Zaporozhia in peace, too.” Zaporozhians, on whose land the tsar began building fortresses and stationing garrisons, “finally lost their temper” (*etogo uzhe ne sterpeli*) and, during the war with Sweden, joined forces with Charles XII, who promised to restore their former rights and privileges—a voluntary and reasonable choice, which Korolenko neither called “the treason” nor explained by Mazepa’s “deceit.”

The description of the Zaporozhian life in the mid-18th century, after the reemergence of the Sich under the control of St. Petersburg, portrayed an almost idyllic picture of Zaporozhia, fully restored in its rights. Korolenko clearly referred to this was the historical experience as the model for the Kuban host, albeit hardly achievable:

The *rada* of the host managed all the host’s affairs. The Cossacks were complete masters and owners of their land. Newcomer settlers used land allotments on conditions of the Cossacks and were still considered subjects of the Zaporozhian Host, obliged to fulfill all the military and rural obligations.

Korolenko drew poorly covered analogies with the contemporaneous situation of the Kuban host’s *inogorodnie* problem and italicized the word “rada” here and throughout the text, attracting attention to the term that so remarkably entered into the local official discourse. Like the ancient history of the Sich, the more recent history of the Kuban Cossacks demonstrated, as Korolenko emphasized, that the risk of losing the land still remained. It was, of course, the plan of the local authorities to resettle the Cossacks to the mountainous area beyond the Kuban in the early 1860s. The realization of the plan, which the administration was determined to bring to an end, stopped short only thanks to the charter of Catherine II. The powerful document, which the Black Sea Cossacks “put forward in front of themselves” for their protection, like a magical shield, defended the

Cossacks from the imperial encroachments—the task that from that time on the monument of Catherine II with its bronze replica of the charter was designed to carry out.⁴⁴⁸

Korolenko's article was just one among the texts by local intellectuals, for whom the Rada became a good occasion to reflect on the question of Kuban and—more particularly—Black Sea Cossack land as the Zaporozhian legacy and Cossacks' rights on it as opposed to rights of the empire. Were the Black Sea/Kuban Cossacks the sole proprietors of the fertile lands, granted by Catherine II for eternal holding? How inviolable was that right? How “eternal” was this “eternity” in fact? The historian and chief cartographer of Kuban, Nikolai Ivanenkov, responded rather negatively, stating that it was not once that the state violated the rights of the Cossacks for the land, bestowed by Catherine II, as was demonstrated by the resettlement projects of the 1860s.⁴⁴⁹

The Rada successfully completed its task. Several commissions that were formed to elaborate the project of land readjustment reached a mutually satisfactory agreement. The most important stipulation of it implied that largely impoverished and land-hungry settlements beyond the Kuban received 32,000 desiatinas of arable reserve land in former Chernomoria and 20,000 desiatinas of the land of similar quality in former Linia. In return, former Line and Black Sea Cossack stanitsas obtained forest areas in Transkubania. The successful outcome of the work of the commissions, which suited every negotiating side, caused a surge of overall satisfaction, conceptualized on the official level in terms of mutual solidarity and Cossack kinship. On a wave of enthusiasm, Rada members even determined to send a telegram to the emperor that expressed an idea of the Cossack unity, achieved and perceived as a result of bargaining.⁴⁵⁰

Ja-Jeong Koo, who made the Rada the subject of analysis, attached great importance to the rhetoric of brotherhood, so manifested at the days of the Rada's closure. He argued that the convocation of the Rada was a moment of revolutionary significance in the process of fundamental transformation of the Kuban Cossacks' self-image, which asserted “the new organic Cossack identity” and led to “the evolution from *soslovie* to ethnos,” accomplished during the time of the Revolution of 1917 and the civil war.

Leaving aside the issue of whether the occasional emotions, expressed by participants of the sporadic meeting, could in fact be projected onto the whole Cossack

⁴⁴⁸ P. Korolenko, “Kazaki i ikh zemlia,” *Novaia zaria*, 9 December 1906, 2; P. Korolenko, “Kazaki i ikh zemlia (prodolzhenie),” *Novaia zaria*, 10 December 1906, 2–3.

⁴⁴⁹ N. Ivanenkov, “Prava na zemli Kubanskikh kazakov,” *KOV*, 5 January 1906, 2.

⁴⁵⁰ “Kazach'ia rada,” *KOV*, 9 December 1906, 1.

population of the region and determine the Kuban Cossack self-fashioning over the next dozen of years (if the feeling of “brotherhood” was experienced in actual fact and was not a purposeful trope to gratify the authorities), I suggest looking at this rhetoric at different angle. I argue that, instead of being a starting point of convergence of several previously dissociated “sub-hosts,” as Koo pointed out, the discussions of the land question waged at the Rada and local press were quite a radical departure from the official image of the uniform Kuban host, established in the 1860s.⁴⁵¹

The deputies of the Rada—and Koo rightfully stressed that fact—divided themselves into several groups not along the lines of the Kuban oblast’s administrative division, but according to the geo-historical criteria. Thus, the deputies found themselves not as the representatives of the Maikop district or the Eisk district, but as the spokesmen of Chernomoria, Old Line, New Line, and Transkubania. The reason for it were different regulations that determined the amount of land per capita, since each territory initially possessed different legal status and was demarcated separately.⁴⁵²

This geo-historical division, not necessarily obvious from below, from the vantage point of Cossack settlements and their representatives at the Rada, was noticeable rather from above, from the perspective of bureaucrats and intellectuals, who had at their disposal statistical, legal, and cartographic information about the historical demarkation of the Kuban lands. Therefore, the invocation of these four regions was a technical matter, deriving from the size of land plot. And yet, from the very outset, the regional division was interpreted in social terms. The Cossacks of New and Old Linia were referred to simply as the Line Cossacks, as contrasted to the Black Sea Cossacks and the Cossacks from beyond the Kuban. At the opening session of the Rada, Mikhailov appealed to the Cossacks as if they constituted three different groups: “Black Sea, Line, and Transkuban Cossacks, exchange here your thoughts on the raised issue, talk ardently, tell the truth to each other even if it were unpleasant.”⁴⁵³

At the concluding session of the Rada, the chair of the Black Sea Cossack representatives proudly asserted that “the black cat that had crossed the paths of the Black Sea, Line, and Transkuban Cossacks a long time ago, no longer exists,” referring to the

⁴⁵¹ Ja-Jeong Koo, “Universalizing Cossack Particularism: ‘The Cossack Revolution’ in Early Twentieth Century Kuban,” *Revolutionary Russia* 25, no. 1 (2012): 20.

⁴⁵² “Proizvodstvo mezhevykh rabot v Kubanskoi oblasti,” *KOV*, May 22, 1882, 1–2.

⁴⁵³ “Kazach’ia rada,” *KOV*, 3 December 1906, 1.

same three groups. As he added, thanks to the Rada the Kuban Cossacks became “united into a single fraternal family of the host.” But the Kuban Cossack fraternity, itself, was meant to be a fraternity of these precisely three groups.⁴⁵⁴

Framing of agrarian discontent in groupist, socio-historical, terms was not an exclusive peculiarity of discussions within the walls of the Rada. Polemics, unleashed on pages of press in the previous month, too, readily employed these very same divisions in order to seek equitable distribution of land (for some) or to defend their land against encroachments (for others). Authors boasted venerable origin of their respective communities to support their claims and, consequently, denied the right of others to be on equal footing. Several authors from Chernomoria, for example, went as far as to call the Cossacks beyond the Kuban “the rabble” on the ground that they had come from various places, had been artificially included into the Cossack estate and in view of this did not possess the honorable genealogy of a sort of the Black Sea or Line Cossacks. As one correspondent put it, the Cossacks beyond the Kuban “had nothing in common with the past of the glorious Kuban [*sic!*] or Black Sea Cossacks.”⁴⁵⁵

In the same way, his namesake from Transkubania noted that stanitsas of the mountain territories were populated partially “by the Cossacks of the glorious Don host, partially by soldiers of the glorious Caucasian army that conquered the Caucasus, and partially by Little Russians from the Kharkov, Poltava and other gubernias, who were kindred to the Black Sea Cossacks.” At the same time, as he continued, “if we speak about the rabble, then, Zaporozhia, from which the glorious Black Sea host emerged, was the rabble as well.” In view of this, the correspondent asked, “how could it be that they are the native sons, and we are the stepsons?”⁴⁵⁶ This kind of rhetoric was echoed during Rada’s sessions. As reported by one of its members, a certain representative of Black Sea Cossack stanitsas called the Cossacks from beyond the Kuban “the adoptees,” referring to their subaltern and non-native status within the Kuban host’s family.⁴⁵⁷

These discussions, which preceded the Rada and which continued with new vigor at its meetings, brought seemingly obsolete appellations back into the official discourse.

⁴⁵⁴ “Kazach’ia rada,” *KOV*, 9 December 1906, 1.

⁴⁵⁵ Kos’ma Shevyrev, “Neskol’ko slov pravdy ‘po voprosu o pozemel’nom ustroistve v Kubanskoi oblasti,’” *KOV*, September 1, 1906, 1–2.

⁴⁵⁶ Vasilii Shevyrev, “Korrespondentsiia. St. Dagestanskaia,” *KOV*, 9 July 1906, 2.

⁴⁵⁷ Chlen voiskovoi rady, “Po povodu utverzhdeniia postanovleniia pervoi voiskovoi rady o zemel’nom voprose,” *KOV*, 14 March 1907, 2.

Historical communities of Chernomoria and Linia reemerged again as subjects of legal practice, and it was especially the case of the Black Sea Cossacks. On the one hand, deputies representing the inhabitants of former Black Sea Cossack stanitsas eagerly appealed to historical rights of Chernomoria on its own territory, this time defending it not from *inogorodnie* settlers, but from their fellow Kuban Cossacks of non-Black Sea Cossack origin. Even the author of the semi-official brochure about the Rada characterized Chernomoria, as it was represented at the Rada, as “the restored Zaporozhian host, which settled on its own lands within definite borders and formed and formed a completely separate region.” On the other hand, speakers from other stanitsas no less eagerly portrayed the Black Sea Cossacks as a miserly collective owner of spare land and reproached them for their unwillingness to share it with their needy brethren.⁴⁵⁸

The Black Sea Cossacks’ eventual generosity was rewarded at the last day of the Rada. In the host’s cathedral, the priest Arsenii Belanovskii turned it into a triumph of the Zaporozhian symbolism. “How many years passed since Hetman Sahaidachnyi, fearsome to enemies but always dear and close to the Cossack heart, put all his energies and his life for the benefit of ‘his native children and Ukraine [*svoikh ridnykh ditok i Ukrainu*]’? How can the memory of this ‘eagle of Zaporozhia’ ever die in the Cossack’s heart? How can anyone, who loves his motherland, forget, that this gatherer of the shattered Ukraine freed the shrines of the Orthodox faith from defilement, let the enslaved Dnieper breathe freely, and . . . went into battle with people’s darkness and ignorance, taking care of the Cossacks’ enlightenment?” The God, proclaimed the priest, would disown the Cossacks who would forget their ancestors. “An now I will say with particular solemn joy—and I am saying it here, in the Holy of Holies, at the throne of God—that you, the Kuban-Black Sea Cossacks did not forget your heroic ancestors . . .” Belanovskii praised the host as not merely the descendant of the Zaporozhian forefathers, but as a collective reincarnation of the spirit of great Zaporozhian leaders. When they, “having uniting at the Rada under the mace of the Zaporozhian unanimity,” understood the depth of suffering of the Cossacks beyond the Kuban, Holovaty and Chepiha “resurrected” in them. Sahaidachnyi, said Belanovskii, was also “revived” in the host, but due to another resonant initiative of the Host in 1906—the idea of the restoration of the host’s gymnasium in Ekaterinodar.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ *Voiskovaia rada* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia “Osnova”, 1907), 9, 10.

⁴⁵⁹ “Zakrytie kazach’ei rady,” *KOV*, 20 December 1906, 2.

The Rada had almost nothing in common with the initial design conceived by Kuban Cossack conservatives. The only reminiscence of the Rada's initial task were Mikhailov's words, expressed at the assembly's closure ceremony, in which he encouraged the deputy audience to send into the new Duma the delegates who "would not be ashamed of their Cossack rank and for their service, so important for the tsar."⁴⁶⁰ Nor the administration allowed the Cossack delegates discussing other issues of political relevance by. Given the potential perils of Rada's turning into a platform for seditious proclamations, authorities ensured that it would remain aloof from any discussions concerned with politics. According to Shcherbina's memoirs, Mikhailov warned him in private that the discussions at the Rada should not touch upon political matters—a condition, imposed by the emperor himself. Otherwise, Mikhailov assured, he would be obliged to dissolve the Rada immediately.⁴⁶¹

Shcherbina recalled that the Rada had had an occasion to make sure how thoroughly the administration monitored the implementation of the directive. One time, a certain Rada member raised the issue of the 2nd Urupskii regiment's mutiny, suggesting to send a delegation to Nicholas II to express loyalist feelings and beg pardon for the Kuban host's guilt. Mikhailov's senior assistant, Mikhail Babych, timely prevented the discussion, which all but broke out. He pardoned the Rada for the first time, but threatened to shut it down the Rada if it would happen again.⁴⁶²

The issue of the mutiny, though, made its way into the Rada's floor as Mikhailov spoke on it at the concluding session. Evoking the plot-line of *Taras Bulba*, the ataman resorted to the famous Zaporozhian fiction as an allegorical reference point for the explanation of what had happened. When Bulba learned about the treason of his own son, Mikhailov said, he did not allow anyone to punish the son. Instead, Bulba killed him himself. The Kuban Cossacks that suppressed the mutiny, Mikhailov continued, are the Tarases Bulba of the nowadays. "The Kuban Cossacks are not guilty in anything and they do not have to apologize for anything. Those, who are ashamed to be Cossack or for whom being Cossack is disadvantageous, then—good riddance, let them go out from the host."⁴⁶³

⁴⁶⁰ "Zasedaniia Kazach'ei Rady zakonchilis'," *Novaia zaria*, 21 December 1906, 2.

⁴⁶¹ F. A. Shcherbina, "Fakty kazach'ei ideologii i tvorchestva," in *Kazachestvo: Mysli sovremennikov o proshlom, nastoiashchem i budushchem kazachestva* (Paris: Izdanie "Kazach'ego soiuza, 1928), 361.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 364–66.

⁴⁶³ "Zakrytie kazach'ei rady," *KOV*, 20 December 1906, 2.

Beyond the assembly's hall, however, the issues of the mutiny and of the Rada's convocation often blended into a single whole—a question of the collective guilt and collective loyalty. The author of the song at the delegates' dinner, mentioned above, somewhat incoherently sang that

<p>The Black Sea Cossacks are loyal fellows, So loyal are their stanitsas, Nowadays the Tsarina's charter Will prove it. [...]</p> <p>Nicholas, our Tsar and Father, Tell us just a word, Hey, you, Black Sea Cossacks,— So we will be ready.⁴⁶⁴</p>	<p>Chornomortsi virni khloptsi, Virni ikh stanytsi, Shcho dokazhe v nashi vremia Hramota Tsarytsi . . .</p> <p>Nikolaiu tsar' nash Bat'ko, Skazhy odno slovo, Hei nu khloptsi, chernomortsi,— Tak my vsi i hotovi.</p>
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In another song, written by an unknown Cossack from a stanitsa in Transkubania, this question went more articulated:

<p>Tsar, do not be angry with us Not all are guilty, That among us showed up Damned betrayers.</p> <p>Upon the whole host They put a black stigma And covered with shame The honest name of the Kuban Cossacks.⁴⁶⁵</p>	<p>Ne hnivaisia na nas Tsariu Ne vsi vynuhati, Shcho mizh namy ob'iavylys' Zradnyki prokliati.</p> <p>Na vse viisko p'iatno cherne Vony polozhyly I kubantsiv chesne imnia Soromom pokryly.</p>
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The local administration was present at the Rada in full composition: the senior and junior assistants of the acting ataman, the chief of staff, the district atamans, generals on active service and those retired, councilors of the provincial board etc.⁴⁶⁶ Such supervision kept Rada's discussions under control, but at the same time it authorized its

⁴⁶⁴ "Kazach'ia rada," *KOV*, 10 December 1906, 2.

⁴⁶⁵ I. Kasinenko, "Pisnia zakubantsia (Po povodu rady)," *KOV*, 15 December 1906, 2.

⁴⁶⁶ *Voiskovaia rada*, 4.

work, giving an appearance of full legitimacy to everything that was happening at its sessions. The assembly's meetings went smoothly and, with the single exception of the case mentioned above, did not cause any complaints from the part of the officials. It gave its members a room for hope. The Rada's gathering was not conceived to be a one-time event. Its organizers, participants, and the local public envisaged that it would become a long-lasting institutional instrument of tackling the most urgent social, economic, and administrative issues of the day. This conviction was reflected in the mere fact that it was often referred to as "the first rada," either by its deputies or, for example, in a verse, written in Ukrainian vernacular and dedicated to the Rada.⁴⁶⁷

Even before the closure of the Rada, the press published a proposal on the agenda of the Rada's next convention. Its author suggested raising the issue of improving the system of medical care in the oblast (since only a few settlements were lucky to have a doctor).⁴⁶⁸ In his opening speech, Shcherbina expressed his hope that "the present host's Rada will not be an exceptional case, but a general rule for solving all the most important military and rural questions, affairs and undertakings."⁴⁶⁹ Likewise, at the concluding session, he once again addressed to the ataman his belief that due to the restoration of the *rada* many other issues would be solved in the future. He contemplated spreading of people education, development of fisheries, construction of channels and irrigation, connection of the Kuban River with the Black Sea, building lines of communication, and regaining of land plots, owed by officers, to the host's possession. To this end, he even proposed to build a special palace [*khata*] for the next Rada's conventions.⁴⁷⁰ Rada's deputies, as a local newspaper reported, voiced unanimous support for making the Rada the regular institution in charge of Cossack needs.⁴⁷¹

Mikhailov believed that the Rada would raise the prestige of the host in the eyes of the government. In January 1907, he went to personally report about its results first to Tiflis, where, according to his companion, the viceroy and the head of staff of the Caucasus military district expressed their full satisfaction and support, and then to St. Petersburg to the emperor. Pleased with the outcome of the assembly, Mikhailov

⁴⁶⁷ Chlen pervoi rady, "K predstoiashchim vyboram v Gosudarstvennuiu Dumu," *KOV*, 29 December 1906, 1; Kasinenko, "Pisnia zakubantsia," 2.

⁴⁶⁸ Stanichnik, "Pis'mo predstaviteliam kubanskoi voiskovoi rady," *KOV*, 17 December 1906, 2.

⁴⁶⁹ *Voiskovaia rada*, 6.

⁴⁷⁰ "Zakrytie kazach'ei rady," *KOV*, 20 December 1906, 2; *Voiskovaia rada*, 27–28.

⁴⁷¹ "Zasedaniia Kazach'ei Rady zakonchilis'," *Novaia zaria*, 21 December 1906, 2.

presented to Nicholas II an album, containing photos of the Rada's delegates. The emperor, as the press proudly noted, looked through the photos and even recognized some of them as former guards of his Convoy.⁴⁷²

The resolutions of the Rada, indeed, were approved in the capital and acquired the force of law.⁴⁷³ But the seeming personal bonds between the part of the Rada and the tsar, however, did not result in its institutionalization as a consultative regional body. Despite the hopes of some and the firm beliefs of other, no second rada ever convened again. Indeed, in late 1907, Mikhailov made efforts to get permission on the convening of the second Rada assembly. Its task appears to have been the discussion of the question regarding the establishment of the host's gymnasium in Ekaterinodar and the planned introduction of the zemstvo in the Kuban oblast. As in 1906, Mikhailov came to Tiflis and met the viceroy in person, but the further fate of the second Rada remains unknown. According to the newspaper report, the Caucasian administration left the question of the Rada open.⁴⁷⁴

Apparently, the central authorities, who experienced recurring troubles even with the imperial Duma, did not dare to give their approval for the establishment of a separate, not envisaged by the state legislation, and suspicious in terms of its far-reaching ambitions organ. In subsequent years, some of the state officials implicitly accused the Rada in institutional separatism. In 1913, a member of the State Council, Count Fedor Uvarov, while talking with Cossack representatives in Vladikavkaz about the issue of introduction of zemstvo in the Kuban and Terek oblasts, denounced this idea on the ground that it would "very much resemble the former Cossack Rada and, in the end, it would be a state within the state." Remarkably, the case of the Rada was not the subject of the discussion, but served as an obvious, well-known example of what the empire should avoid while dealing with its periphery.⁴⁷⁵

At the first glance, Rada's aims, be it the elaboration of the instruction for the deputies of the parliament, as it was initially conceived, or the redistribution of lands, as it

⁴⁷² "Deputatsiia u Nachal'nika oblasti," *KOV*, 29 December 1906, 1; "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 13 January 1907, 1; D. K. Mikhailopulo, "Kazach'ia rada," *KOV*, 23 January 1907, 1; *KOV*, 20 February 1907, 2.

⁴⁷³ PSZ 3, 28887.

⁴⁷⁴ Kazak-roditel', "Kazakam negde uchit' detei," *KOV*, 23 September 1907, 2; Sotnik M. A. Karaulov 2-i, "Soveshchanie o zemstve na Kubani," *KOV*, 7 November 1907, 2; "Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni," *KOV*, 28 November 1907, 1.

⁴⁷⁵ "Graf Uvarov o kazach'em zemstve," *KOV*, 26 September 1913, 2.

happened to be in the end, were quite moderate in its ambitions. Indeed, the Cossacks' aspiration to made the Rada into an institution that would run Kuban Cossack affairs on the regular basis, a complete "restoration" of the Zaporozhian administrative practice, was far too bold to come true. And yet even the occasional, one-time implementation of this ostensible Zaporozhian tradition to solving the problem of land shortage was a radical move in and of itself, fraught with unwelcome repercussions for the imperial administration. Allowing to convene a local mini-parliament of a sort, the government set a precedent for the mechanism of popular participation in self-government. Even more strikingly, the government allowed the council to adopt a name with strong seditious connotations, which directly referred to experience of autonomy that the Sich and the Hetmanate once had.

How did it happen? In what way the Rada, instead of elaborating the instruction, acquired a completely new function? Although the flow of documentation that would allow answering this question in full measure has yet to be found, a detailed summary of the correspondence conducted by authorities at various levels, anonymously published in a Kuban liberal periodical, reveals the major steps of the decision-making process. Whereas the Duma speeches were raising controversies over the issue of the Kuban host's public representation at the parliament, host's administration was taking pains to settle the issue of land shortage. According to the Hos's prospective solution made in April 1906, vast amounts of spare land, which still was in common possession of the Kuban host, was to be distributed among Cossack settlements according to the geo-historical principle. The reserve land, located on the territory of former Chernomoria, was supposed to be divided among former Black Sea Cossack stanitsas only. Correspondingly, the reserve land of the former Line host was supposed to be reallocated exclusively among stanitsas within the territory of the former Line host. The Cossack settlements of the mountainous territories beyond the Kuban River, and definitely the neediest ones, were to receive vacant forest areas, formerly owned by the state and passed into the host's possession in 1889.

This project, which reflected the Host's adherence to the notion of historical rights of the former hosts over their respective lands, met with objections from the GUKV, which determined to meet the needs of mountainous stanitsas in fertile soil by providing them with steppe areas of Black Sea and Line Cossack land. Thus, Cossacks of Transkubania had to receive their own shares of lands, once constituting Chernomoria and Linia. The Host, refusing to fully carry out the directive of its superiors, only agreed to

make minor concessions and exempt from the possession of former Chernomoria stanitsas as less amount of land as possible (calculated 10 desiatinas per soul). It was only the Military Council that resolved the discussion by deciding that neither local nor central officials had the complete information about the land situation. On October 19, it decreed to grant the acting ataman the right to convoke a “land commission” (*zemleustroitel'naia komissiiia*), which would consist from two deputies from every settlement of the oblast, to resolve the situation on the grassroots level.⁴⁷⁶

The idea of the commission was not the invention of the Military Council, but the result of Mikhailov's endeavor. It can be assumed that at certain moment in August or September the head of the oblast or someone from the host's administration seized the initiative of the proponents of the idea of the convening of the council to elaborate the mandate and adapted it for another task. It was with this idea in mind that Mikhailov went to Tiflis and, after that, to St. Petersburg to seek permission of his superiors. On September 29, he had a talk with Nicholas II over the issue of the council, and the latter, as the further fate of the initiative suggests, sanctioned the proposition.⁴⁷⁷ Rada's case progressed promptly and, just twelve days after the Military Council decreed to convene the “commission,” the emperor approved the decree officially.⁴⁷⁸

Although it is not possible yet to trace in detail of how did the authorities in Tiflis and St. Petersburg addressed the case of the Rada, or who played the pivotal part in permitting the assembly, a semi-official anonymous account, most probably written by Shcherbina, testifies that when Mikhailov requested the Caucasus viceroy for his permission, the latter expressed his moral support, but did not give his written approval. The viceroy did not dare to authorize and assume responsibility for such a risky initiative. Instead, he suggested Mikhailov to seek the Highest permission.⁴⁷⁹

As it was already mentioned in the second chapter, Fedor Shcherbina claimed credit for the eventual approval of the Rada. In his memoirs, he expressed his confidence that the emperor was driven by his knowledge of the history of Zaporozhia. Shcherbina assured that Nicholas II had learned about the great “historical significance” of *rada* as

⁴⁷⁶ N, “Zemel'nyi vopros v Kubanskoi oblasti,” *Novaia zaria*, 13 December 1906, 2–3.

⁴⁷⁷ “Letopis' oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 7 October 1906, 1.

⁴⁷⁸ Mikhailov, “Prikaz po Kubanskomu kazach'emu voisku ot 4 noiabria 1906 goda №653,” *KOV*, 5 November 1906, 1.

⁴⁷⁹ *Voiskovaia rada*, 5.

early as his childhood—from the book, written and presented to him by Shcherbina in 1888, during his and Alexander’s III visit of Ekaterinodar. But if this testimony reveals us much about the intentions behind the welcoming ceremony of Alexander III, it hardly can be taken for granted with regard to the events that took place eighteen years after.⁴⁸⁰

Whether or not any historical knowledge guided the tsar and the Military Council, they were doubtlessly guided by purely pragmatic reason—to improve the economic plight of the Cossacks, to relieve real or impeding social tensions that might have been caused by land shortage, and to prevent possible acts of disobedience from the part of Cossack military units. The government, thus, forestalled the revolution by making a modest, but highly significant revolutionary step toward the needs of the Cossack population. Naturally, it hardly could be possible elsewhere in the empire, while the Kuban region was seen as loyal enough to venture into such a risky experiment. As a result, the imperial government appreciated Rada’s achievements in the issue of land demarcation. What is more, it allowed the Don Cossacks to solve their respective land question collectively, with the help of the same procedure. In Don, a “Host consultative assembly” convened in 1909 (although Nichols II permitted its convocation as early as March 1907). As in Kuban, its participants and the local public as well styled it as the restoration of an old tradition, the *Krug*. In contrast to the Rada, however, it did not adopt the “historical” name officially, and the usage of the word “Krug” was rather limited to the unofficial sphere.⁴⁸¹

3.4. The Caucasus Viceroyalty: Liberal rule in non-Liberal Times

Finally, the understanding of the mechanics of interaction between the center and periphery here would be impossible without attending in more detail to the mediator of these administrative relationship and the direct superior of the Kuban Host—the institute of the Caucasus viceroyalty, indissolubly bound up with the personality of the viceroy, Count Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov. It was due to his political stance and the general administrative framework of rule, introduced by him to the Caucasus, that the Host enjoyed the degree of autonomy it had never been entitled to before. Most probably, the

⁴⁸⁰ Shcherbina, “Fakty kazach’ei ideologii i tvorchestva,” 361.

⁴⁸¹ Boris Kornienko, *Pravyi Don: Kazaki i ideologija natsionalizma (1909-1914)* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Evropeiskogo universiteta v Sankt-Peterburge, 2013), 78–95.

Rada, but also numerous other cultural and political undertakings of the Host besides it, owed their successful getting into the offices of St. Petersburg's bureaucracy (if not implementation) precisely to him.

The establishment of the Caucasus viceroyalty in the early 1905 was an immediate tsarist response to an overwhelming upheaval in Transcaucasia, characterized by violent social tensions that came to be known as the Armenian-Tatar slaughter. Viewed from the center, the South Caucasus and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the North Caucasus as well, appeared as an enormously fragile conglomerate of territories that was about to fall apart due to ethnic enmities unleashed in the course of the revolution. To quell the chaos, Nicholas II decreed to restore the post of the viceroy, abolished as early as 1881, which would be invested with extraordinary powers and considerable freedom of action, being subordinated directly to the tsar. From the very outset, the viceroyalty was designed to a concrete person. It was Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, a friend and close confidant of Alexander III and a long-time Minister of the Imperial Court under his rule. With his earlier invaluable experience of serving as the adjutant of Prince Bariatinskii during the last stage of the Caucasus war, he was the candidature Nicholas II had high hopes for.⁴⁸² With the task of "urgently establishing peace" in the region, Vorontsov-Dashkov moved to Tiflis to head the regional administration.⁴⁸³

As a wealthy aristocrat who reached the peak of his career during the reign of the most conservative emperor, and especially as one of the founders of the Slavophile, ultraconservative group "The Holy Retinue" in the early 1880s, Vorontsov was never considered a nonconformist bureaucrat. However, the principles of governance that he introduced to the Caucasus viceroyalty proved strikingly liberal-looking and ran counter to the manner of rule practiced by the central authorities and their subordinated in the regions. As Ronald Suny aptly put it, Vorontsov was a "somewhat anomalous remnant of governmental liberalism in the era of much more conservative Prime Minister Petr Stolypin."⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² On Vorontsov, see the thoroughly researched biography: D. I. Ismail-Zade, *Graf I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov. Namestnik kavkazskii* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2005).

⁴⁸³ "Vysochaishyi reskript, dannyi na imia grafa Vorontsova-Dashkova," 26 February 1905, RGIA, f. 1276, op. 19, d. 1, l. 4.

⁴⁸⁴ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 171.

Vorontsov's liberalism, whatever limited and moderate it was, was a major departure from the previous policy of steadfast russification and implied considerable toleration of the local cultural diversity and, moreover, the encouragement of local population's initiative. In his manifesto to the population of the Caucasus, which declared the principles of the viceroy's rule for the prospective years, Vorontsov announced his intention to rely on all public forces and, so as to learn more about the needs and aspirations of the local inhabitants, to convoke assemblies of representatives elected from social groups as variegated as nobility, townsfolk, rural communities, or clergymen. Coming together, as the viceroy expected, they would be able to speak about the most urgent measures they would wish him to implement.⁴⁸⁵

Viceroy's contemporaries appreciated his manner of governance as the one that stood out against the backdrop of all-imperial situation. In his letter to Vorontsov-Dashkov, a landowner of the Black Sea gubernia, Illarion Korolenko, the brother of the famous writer Vladimir Korolenko, acclaimed the viceroy for his capacity to maintain peace in the region due to the wise politics of tolerating the peculiarities of local people, which was the kind of politics that contradicted the empire-wide centralizing trend. As Korolenko wrote, "one must have a lot of additional qualities of the soul when these views do not coincide with the most influential currents of the given time." Korolenko called the viceroy's activities "highly farsighted," because "without these persistent, resolute activities, which did not coincide with the general direction of domestic policy, the Caucasus at the moment would be threatened by a major Catastrophe resulting from the explosion of the increasingly growing hostility towards us on the part of different Caucasian people."⁴⁸⁶ And the other way around: the Russian far-right severely criticized Vorontsov-Dashkov, accusing him of sacrificing the interests of the Russians and making concessions to the "seditious" Caucasus.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, "K naseleniiu Kavkazskogo kraia," 1 April 1905, RGIA, f. 1276, op. 19, d. 1, l. 5.

⁴⁸⁶ I. Korolenko to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 24 March 1915, OR RGB, f. 58/I, k. 46, ed. khr. 22, ll. 1, 1 ob.; That the person in question was indeed Vladimir Korolenko's brother can be seen from the memoirs of Vladimir Korolenko's daughter, who wrote that her uncle Illarion Korolenko built a house on the Black Sea shore in Dzhankhot, near Gelendzhik, in 1902. She and her father frequently visited it in summer time. See: S. V. Korolenko, *Kniga ob ottse* (Izhevsk: Udmurtiia, 1968), 123.

⁴⁸⁷ N. A. Bigaev, "Poslednie namestniki Kavkaza (v svete lichnykh vospominanii) (1902-1917)," in *Rossiiskii Arkhiv: Istoriiia Otechestva v svidetel'stvakh i dokumentakh XVIII—XX vv.*, vol. 12 (Moscow: Studiia Trite, 2003), 412.

Here and elsewhere, when it came to the Vorontsov's nonconformist methods of rule, his "pacifying" and "tolerating" policy was meant for the local mountainous population, distinctly non-Russian from every point of view. The Caucasus Cossacks, represented by the Kuban and the Terek hosts, were seen as the agents of Russian presence in the Caucasus periphery and as the veteran colonizers. The Cossacks were sharply different from the natives and, as such, were not seen as the oppressed ones because of their already dominant status. For this reason, they did not require any particular measures. At the same time, the Cossacks could not but benefit from the viceroy's quasi-liberal governance, even though its primary target were their subaltern neighbors, whose plight Vorontsov was determined to enhance. The Rada might have been one such benefit. Even if Vorontsov-Dashkov was not able to authorize the convocation of the Rada on his own, without his consent and sympathy the Host's petition could not have been forwarded further to St. Petersburg. Thus, there is every reason to believe that this extraordinary semi-parliament, fashioned according to the imagined Zaporozhian tradition, owed its existence to Vorontsov. But Vorontsov played a pivotal role in extending the degree of autonomy of the Kuban host. This is the subject of the next section.

3.5. New Administration for Kuban

In the second half of 1907, at the time when the revolutionary labor movement had already died down, Ekaterinodar and the Kuban oblast faced the new wave of politically motivated violence, yet of completely different nature. Having nothing to do with mass action, it was individual terror, organized and practiced by the radical left underground. The burgeoning of political terrorism, targeting both authorities and more or less well-off representatives of local middle classes, shocked the region and signaled a new phase of violent confrontation.⁴⁸⁸ Extortion of money "for the needs of the liberationist movement" under threat of death became a common occurrence. What was even more intimidating, such threats rarely were idle and quite often extortionists did not hesitate to carry them out. Among the groups involved in extortion, robberies, blackmailing and other forms of

⁴⁸⁸ For the general overview of political terrorism in the Russian empire, see: Anna Geifman, *Thou Shalt Kill: Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894–1917* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

criminal activities were members and affiliates of the Socialist Revolutionary party, RSDRP, and, most often, various so-called “anarchist-communist” organizations. At the same time, other gangs acted under the guise of revolutionary groups, having no actual relationship to the left-wing underground.⁴⁸⁹

Besides that, a series of resonant political assassinations occurred in Kuban at the same time. The first victims of extremist groups included the assistant of the chief of Ekaterinodar police, well known for his active participation in crackdowns of opposition’s rallies, the ataman of the Labinskii district, and several police officers in Ekaterinodar.⁴⁹⁰ After the murder of one of them, killed during the failed ambush on a group of extortionists, leaflets were scattered on Ekaterinodar streets, proclaiming the aims of the terror: “the overthrow of the autocracy, the extermination of officials and capitalists, and destruction of property by means of murders and expropriations.”⁴⁹¹

The system of public security, which had been introduced earlier to cope with the post-revolutionary violence, proved no longer viable. The so-called “night watchmen,” recruited from ordinary townsfolk and paid for their service from the additional tax imposed on Ekaterinodar residents, which was established by the Kuban administration in the first third of 1906 to counter the increased urban disorder—non-political violence and banditry, were no longer of help for the town police.⁴⁹² Mikhailov attempted to find effective measures against the spread of terrorism. At a general consultative meeting of local officials with involvement of representatives of Ekaterinodar lower-middle classes, he determined to establish a station of secret security police, dissolve the night watchmen and to increase the number of policemen, provided with better weapon and higher salary (again, a special tax was imposed on petty bourgeoisie).⁴⁹³

However, the terror was gaining momentum. The murder of another victim, highly influential ultra-nationalist official Semen Rudenko, the head of the Host’s Chancellery

⁴⁸⁹ Ekaterinodar police officer (*pristav*) to the persecutor of the Ekaterinodar district court (copy), November 1907, GARF, f. 124, op. 45, d. 682, ll. 2, 2 ob.

⁴⁹⁰ “Pamiati G. S. Zhuravlia,” *KOV*, 25 July 1907, 1; Kh. Zliuchka, “K ubiistvu polkovnika Kravchenko,” *KOV*, 12 August 1907, 2; Odin iz prisutstvovavshykh, “Pokhorony polkovnika Kravchenko,” *KOV*, 15 August 1907, 2; *KOV*, 29 August 1907, 2 “Ubiistvo pomoshchnika pristava Boniaka,” *KOV*, 1 September 1907, 1–2.

⁴⁹¹ Persecutor of the Ekaterinodar county court to the persecutor of Novocherkassk trail chamber, 3 September 1907, GARF, f. 124, op. 45, d. 583, l. 5.

⁴⁹² “Letopis’ oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 27 April 1906, 2; D. M., “K uchrezhdeniiu nochnykh strazhnikov v Ekaterinodare,” *KOV*, 21 May 1906, 1–2.

⁴⁹³ “Letopis’ oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 11 September 1907, 1; “Ob”iavleniia ot Vremenno ispolniaushchego obiazannosti Vremennogo General-Gubernatora Kubanskoi oblasti,” *KOV*, 28 September 1907, 1.

and editor-in-chief of the unofficial part of *KOV*, who had been receiving numerous threats from the terrorist underground during the last weeks of his life, demonstrated the inadequacy of the local police and put into question the ability of the administration to deal with the new type of danger.⁴⁹⁴

In the eyes of the Caucasus administration, the key culprit in the situation was the head of the oblast. In October 1907, Vorontsov-Dashkov wrote a confidential letter to War Minister Aleksandr Rediger, petitioning him to remove Mikhailov from the office. Although the letter has not been preserved, its content can be reconstructed from the second letter to Rediger, sent two weeks later. Vorontsov characterized the situation in Kuban as “utterly discouraging and dangerous,” the major reason for which was “the highly incompetent governance” of Odintsov and, especially, Mikhailov. To leave Mikhailov on his position, alarmingly wrote Vorontsov, “may entail extremely undesirable consequences, the overcoming of which would not only be hard, but hardly possible at all.” Thus, the viceroy insisted on the immediate replacement of Mikhailov by another person.⁴⁹⁵ In place of Mikhailov, Vorontsov-Dashkov opted for Major-General Mikhail Babych who, unlike the last two chiefs of the region, was a native to Kuban and a skilled administrator with seven years of experience of serving as the second of command of the Head of oblast. “Babych is not only perfectly familiar with the needs, conditions, and the way of life of both Cossack and non-Cossack population of the oblast,” characterized him Vorontsov, “but thanks to his tact and excellent administrative skills, he won universal love and respect . . . Besides, General Babych is a resolute, energetic, and capable person, and he proved it in the difficult times of unrest of 1905, when, appearing wherever there was danger, he prevented it by firm and decisive measures and restored the legitimate authority and order.”⁴⁹⁶

The major difficulty here was finding the new position for Mikhailov, which was the necessary condition of his dismissal. There were no available military positions in the army (while administrative career was now closed for Mikhailov), and, after a protracted correspondence with top government officials, the viceroy managed to convince them to

⁴⁹⁴ Sotrudnik, “Na smert’ S. V. Rudenko,” *KOV*, 23 September 1907, 1; Sotrudnik, “K ubiistvu S. V. Rudenko,” *KOV*, 30 September 1907, 1; Kh. Zliuchka, “Ubiistvo pristava 1-i chasti I. T. Velichko,” *KOV*, 23 December 1907, 1; for the investigation of Rudenko’s murder, see GARF, f, 124, op. 45, d. 2235.

⁴⁹⁵ I. Vorontsov-Dashkov to A. Rediger, 15 December 1907, RGVIA, f. 330, op. 51, d. 111, l. 3.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, ll. 3 ob, 4.

adopt an exceptional measure. With the consent of Nicholas II, Mikhailov was provided with the provisional salary until he could find an appropriate position, the period that eventually proved lasting up to September 1908, if not longer.⁴⁹⁷ The exceptionality of these steps, understood by every participant of secret correspondence, shows the importance of the situation, in which the imperial government were determining the fate of the Kuban administration.

As can be seen, the officials involved in the process had no objections against the candidature of Babych. The War minister, the head of the GUKV, the minister of interior all supported the viceroy's choice, which was remarkable given that the very background of Babych was here the most peculiar circumstance. In effect, as a general rule, the imperial government did not keep governors assigned to particular regions in order to avoid too close identification of appointed administrators with their realms of governance. Instead, it encouraged high geographical mobility of regional administrators within the enormously vast space of the empire.⁴⁹⁸ Furthermore, the case of Babych was even more demonstrative with regard to the centrifugal tendencies in the imperial borderland regions that became apparent in course of the revolution and, more particularly, the almost sixty-year-long practice of preventing representatives of Kuban Cossack elites from being appointed to the position of the Kuban ataman.

While promoting Babych, a scion of a noble Black Sea Cossack family, Vorontsov-Dashkov reaffirmed his commitment to the principles of rule he had been methodically applying all over the whole Caucasus. His reliance on local elites and readiness to delegate them substantial powers in running local affairs were the basics of the administrative order of the Vorontsov-Dashkov's viceroyalty. But his freedom of action within the administrative-military sphere was limited by the military administration in the capital. Unexpectedly for Vorontsov, the personality of the prospective head of the oblast became the sticking point between the viceroy and a specific supervisory body of the Main Staff. Babych's candidature was subject to consideration of the Supreme Attestation Commission, an institution created in the aftermath of the Russo-Japan war, in course of military reforms, introduced to enhance army's fighting capacity. Its task was

⁴⁹⁷ A Rediger's note on the letter by Vorontsov-Dashkov to him, 30 April 1908, *ibid.*, 1. 53.

⁴⁹⁸ Richard G. Robbins, *Tsar's Viceroy: Russian Provincial Governors in the Last Years of the Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 38.

examination and verification of qualification of officers of general ranks and approval of candidatures for positions of commanders of various military formations.⁴⁹⁹

In January 1908, the Commission three times discussed the candidature of Babych and, eventually, rejected it on the reason that Babych was a Kuban Cossack and, therefore, he could not be the head of Kuban.⁵⁰⁰ Just two days after the Commission took its decision, Vorontsov-Dashkov sought the help of the emperor. In his personal letter to Nicholas II, Vorontsov outlined the “extremely difficult situation in the Kuban oblast, where robberies, violence and mob trials have become commonplace.” “The main cause of everything that was going on in the oblast, to my opinion,” wrote Vorontsov-Dashkov, “was insufficiently efficient governance” of the region by General Mikhailov.⁵⁰¹ In introducing Babych as the most desirable candidate for the replacement of Mikhailov, the viceroy used the same characteristic as he did in the letter to Rediger, presenting him as the sole person capable of handling the current crisis and looming catastrophe.

Vorontsov reassured the emperor that the reasons for the Commission’s rejection of Babych should be seen, in essence, as the undoubted arguments in Babych’s favor. Only a native, a person with excellent knowledge of the situation on the ground, who was aware of the living conditions and needs of the Kuban population, and who enjoyed overall respect was able to head the region during the mass disorders. On the other hand, the appointment of an outsider to this position was fraught with substantial risks. “We cannot entrust administering the oblast in such a difficult time to a person, who would be not familiar with the region and unknown to it. There is no time to get acquainted with the region, with its specificity, with the character of its diverse population. One need to act. For this, one need to know.” Vorontsov-Dashkov assured the tsar that he could only be responsible for peace in the region if he would not be deprived of the opportunity to choose the candidature himself. “I do not know a person who would be more prepared for this post, and there is hardly anyone else, whereas Cossacks believe Babych and I believe him, too.”⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ A. A. Polivanov, *Iz dnevnikov i vospominanii po dolzhnosti voennogo ministra i ego pomoshchnika, 1907-1916. Tom 1* (Moscow: Vysshii voennyi redaktsionnyi sovet, 1924), 125.

⁵⁰⁰ The Head of the Main Staff to the Head of the GUKV, January 1908, RGVIA, f. 330, op. 51, d. 111, l. 20.

⁵⁰¹ I. Vorontsov-Dashkov to Nicholas II, January 23, 1908, GARF, f. 601, op. 1, d. 1210, 25. The letter has been published in V. Semennikov, “Pis'ma I. I. Vorontsova-Dashkova Nikolaiu Romanovu,” *Krasnyi arkhiv* 26 (1928): 109–10.

⁵⁰² I. Vorontsov-Dashkov to Nicholas II, ll. 26–27.

The viceroy put into question the qualification of the Commission, which dealt mostly with military appointments, to properly determine administrative experience of candidatures.⁵⁰³ Vorontsov-Daskov's laudatory recommendation had its effect and Nicholas II, who, according to Rediger's testimonies, was himself wary about the Commission's interference in the affairs of the army, gave his approval to intervene in the case.⁵⁰⁴ On February 3, Nicholas decreed to appoint Mikhail Babych the head of Kuban.⁵⁰⁵

Thus, it was the revolutionary turmoil to which Babych, the protégé of the Caucasus viceroy, ironically owed his appointment. For the first time since the mid-1850s, a representative of the local Black Sea Cossack nobility was placed in charge of the province. As the son of Lieutenant-General Pavel Babych, whose detachment played a significant part in the final stage of the Caucasus war, Mikhail Babych (1844-1918) belonged to the distinguished family, possessing considerable land holdings and enjoying the confidence of the top military leadership of the empire. Mikhail Babych, himself a participant of the Caucasus war at an early age, was awarded the Cross of St. George IV class for his actions during the take-over of aul Sochi, at the place where the most famous Russian seaside resort now stands. Having served as the commander of several military units during the years 1888–1897, Babych started his rapid administrative career in 1897, when he was appointed as the ataman of the Ekaterinodar district. Just two years after, in 1899, he became the senior assistant of the head of the oblast, where he served until 1906. In this position, he had to repeatedly substitute Malama during his regular vacations in the Ekaterinoslav gubernia. In sum, the total length of the periods when Babych executed the duties of Head of the oblast exceeded a year.⁵⁰⁶ At this time, Babych first made apparent his particular interest in cultural affairs. It was due to his organizational efforts as the head of the commission for constructing the monument to Catherine II that the memorial was successfully built. During the revolution, he took active participation in quelling the unrest, especially in the case of the 2nd Urupskii regiment. Rumors had it that Babych ordered one of the plastun battalions to shoot the mutineers, fraudulently trapping them to the ataman's residence. Still, Babych's manner of behavior at that time attests to his

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 25 ob.–26.

⁵⁰⁴ A. F. Rediger, *Istoriia moei zhizni. Vospominaniia voennogo ministra* (Moscow: Kanon-press; Kuchkovo pole, 1999), 519.

⁵⁰⁵ Decree by Nicholas II to the Governing Senate (copy), 3 February 1908, RGVIA, f. 330, op. 51, d. 111, l. 33.

⁵⁰⁶ As calculated using the data from Babych's record of accomplishment in GAKK, f. 449, op. 9, d. 49, l. 15.

commitment of the public image of strict, yet benevolent, “father,” acting with the help of the power of persuasion and ethical advice.⁵⁰⁷ The revolution, especially the Cossacks’ participation in it, should have left deep impression on Babych, but it also gave him the reputation of a proficient troubleshooter. In 1906, he was promoted to the position of the military governor of the Kars oblast in the South Caucasus, on the border with the Ottoman Empire. His departure for Kars occurred during the final days of the Rada, and the scale of the farewell ceremony, which lasted four days, tells a lot about his reputation within the local public sphere and bureaucratic circles.⁵⁰⁸

At the same time as Vorontsov sought appointment of Babych, he put another descendant of a noble Black Sea Cossack family on one of the most crucial positions of the Host. In December 1907, he chose Andrei Kiiashko for the vacant post of Chief of the Host Staff.⁵⁰⁹ Unlike Babych, Kiiashko had had a much more broad geography of previous service, stretching from Central Asia to the Far East. Like him, he was an ardent supporter of and participant in local cultural undertakings. Both shared the same pride in the Black Sea Cossack pedigree and were strong exponents of local particularism. One of their concerns, concordant with the spirit of time but stemming from local conditions and the overall post-revolutionary situation, was the restoration of the local historical heritage. Patronizing the regional initiatives pertaining to the exploration and promotion of the Kuban past, Kiiashko and Babych, saw recourse to tradition as the ultimate means of preventing the disorientation of the Cossacks in the environment, full of corrupting currents coming from the outside (and, given the scale of *inogorodnie* immigration, from the inside as well). At the same time, they reasserted the status of their Cossack community, its immense contribution to the empire-making and, most particularly, its primacy in the colonization of the Caucasus. In doing so, they fostered the reappearance of the idea of Chernomoria, with its Little Russian specificity and Zaporozhian origin.

⁵⁰⁷ Such was the case when Babych pardoned sixteen detained Cossacks of the rebellious 2nd Urupskii regiment. The same night, the pardoned Cossacks stealthily fled to the headquarters of the mutiny in Giaginskaia: “Prigovor Tenginskogo stanichnogo pravleniia №15,” *KOV*, 9 February 1907, 1.

⁵⁰⁸ “K ot’ezdu generala Babycha,” *KOV*, 19 December 1906, 1.

⁵⁰⁹ Chief of the Staff of the Caucasus Military District to the GUKV, 1 December 1907, RGVIA, f 330, op. 51, d. 107, l. 2.

3.6. Getting over the Revolution

Babych assumed his duties at the moment of the highest destabilization of the Kuban administrative system. The situation was becoming increasingly more insecure and the list of terrorists' targets, more broad and variegated. Not long before the Mikhailov's departure, yet another resonant murder took place in Ekaterinodar. This time, it was the director of people's schools, Grigorii Shkil', an enterprising educator and school administrator, killed in his office during his working hours. The investigators were confident that the reason behind his murder was his monarchist views and his firing of several "politically unreliable" teachers.⁵¹⁰ The actual reason, however, seems to be his refusal to pay 3000 rubles for the needs of an extremist group.⁵¹¹ In either event, his death signified the going of violence beyond the mere targeting of police functionaries and executive authorities.⁵¹²

Soon after his arrival to Kuban, Babych took measures that severely restricted rights and freedoms of Ekaterinodar townsfolk. The cause for this was the demonstrative shooting of a police officer by terrorists in the crowded center of the town, followed by an indiscriminate firing, in which several civilians were shot dead and many more wounded.⁵¹³ The next day, Babych issued a decree that forbade any manifestations of public life from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. At this time, church services, trade, the movement of trams, work of theaters, cinema, any kinds of public gatherings or clubs were outlawed. Even more, nobody could appear on the street during this time. Those traveling by train were obliged to come to the railway station before 8 p.m., regardless of the departure time. Even doctors were prohibited to visit patients in the evening and nighttime. During the rest of the day, people were not allowed to walk along the streets in groups more than two

⁵¹⁰ Persecutor of the Ekaterinodar County Court to the Persecutor of the Novocherkassk Trial Chamber, 20 February 1908, GARF, f. 124, op. 46, d. 309, l. 2 ob.

⁵¹¹ After murdering Shkil', the terrorists continued to extort the demanded sum of 3000 rubles from his widow and children: Persecutor of the Ekaterinodar County Court to the Persecutor of the Novocherkassk Trial Chamber, 6 March 1908, Ibid., ll. 5, 5 ob.

⁵¹² "Ubiistvo direktora narodnykh uchilishch," *KOV*, 16 February 1908, 2; *Oktiabrist*, "K ubiistvu G. M. Shkilia," *KOV*, 17 February 1908, 1.

⁵¹³ Persecutor of the Ekaterinodar County Court to the Persecutor of the Novocherkassk Trial Chamber, 12 March 1908, GARF, f. 124, op. 46, d. 192, ll. 3, 3 ob.

persons. Those defying this regulation were subject to the fee of 3000 rubles or the imprisonment for three months.⁵¹⁴

In the end, this decree and, especially, the establishment of the local branch of secret police (*okhranka*), helped to suppress the left-wing terrorism.⁵¹⁵ With all that, the head of the oblast received his own share of attention from the part of the extremists. The same day Babych issued his decree, members of one of the extremist groups condemned him to death, along with several other officials, in a letter sent to him. Babych himself did not make a personal statement in the press or through an order with regard to the letter, and his silence was meant to demonstrate that the threats provoked no anxiety from his part. However, quite probably due to his interference, *KOV* raised the alarm by publishing an anonymous article that called on the Kuban Cossack community to unite against the menace and confront it. As it turned out later, its author was Kiiashko, who had also received a threatening letter earlier, but published a public response in *KOV*.⁵¹⁶ The Kuban host, Kiiashko assured, had to consolidate its efforts to protect the leader who was the only person capable of taking care of the Cossacks. Babych was one of them, “our Cossack,” “our general,” “our Father-Ataman,” “native by flesh and blood.” Kiiashko drew a paternalistic image of Babych, who would “fatherly listen to and judge everybody.” Thus, he heralded the establishment of the new type of power relationships within the host, a kind of domestic affairs, with the patriarch rather than the chief administrator in its head.

Babych’s appointment, the article went on, marked the coming of the drastically new era, the arrival of the bright days that would substitute the revolutionary gloom. Although Kiiashko did not articulate it clearly, the theme of the mutiny of the 2nd Khoperskii regiment was the underlying implication of his reasoning. He saw Babych’s primary task as the redemption of the host from the sin of betrayal. He applauded the ataman as the savior: “the fate of the native land . . . has finally fallen into the reliable

⁵¹⁴ “Obiazatel’noe postanovlenie dlia goroda Ekaterinodara,” *KOV*, 13 March 1908, 1. Later, meeting the wishes of Ekaterinodar population, Babych postponed the starting hour of the curfew from 8 to 11 PM: “Obiazatel’noe postanovlenie dlia goroda Ekaterinodara,” *KOV*, 28 March 1908, 1.

⁵¹⁵ S. A. Nevskii, V. A. Karleba and I. V. Siritsa, *Organy okhrany pravoporiadka i bezopasnosti na Kubani (vtoraia polovina XIX - nachalo XX veka)* (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskaia akademiia MVD Rossii, 2003); S. A. Nevskii and V. A. Karleba, *Okhrana pravoporiadka v Kubanskoi oblasti (vtoraia polovina XIX - nachalo XX veka)* (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskii yuridicheskii institut, 2002); E. A. Mitiaev, “Bor’ba s terrorizmom na Kubani v khode revoliutsii 1905 - 1907 gg.,” *Obshchestvo i pravo*, no. 1 (2008).

⁵¹⁶ Kubanskii kazak [A. Kiiashko], “Pis’mo v redaktsiiu,” *KOV*, 4 April 1908, 2. On the authorship of Kiiashko, see: “Prigovor st. Tsarskoi №50,” *KOV*, 7 June 1908, 1; “Prigovor aula Ul’skogo №23,” *KOV*, 14 May 1908, 2

golden hands, which will wash all the dirt that had stuck to the primordially valiant host; which will brush off up to the hilt all the rust that is ingrained in the hoary Cossack glory.” Only Babych, he wrote, was “able to rise the glory of the host, so faded nowadays, to such a level of purity and height on which it was from the time immemorial.”

The article meant that it was due to the Babych’s selfless ambitions that he became the target of the radical left underground. Personally, as Kiiasko made it clear, Babych was not afraid of death, but the radicals threatened something more than the ataman’s personality—they defied the whole Kuban Cossackdom. The author called the Cossacks to protect their ataman from “the gang of thugs.” This was a matter of honor, both personal and collective. The time had come, Kiiasko reasoned, for the Cossacks of Kuban to come together to stanitsa assemblies to discuss “this unheard thing.” Officers, atamans, Cossack elders, that is, military, administrative, and moral authorities respectively, and the host at large had to be united in front of danger and “give a cry of anger” so as to make it heard by the radical left: “get out of the host all the things dark, maleficent, mutinous!”⁵¹⁷

In making his call, Kiiasko followed the earlier initiative, which arose out of a joint meeting of atamans of Cossack settlements of the Temriukskii district held in stanitsa Slavianskaia in the late January 1908. Then, the heads of 39 stanitsas came together to react to the escalating crisis. Despairingly declaring that “the politically-motivated murders are becoming increasingly often and there is no hope for the end,” the atamans collectively decided to express their outrage by means of press, making it clear that “the Cossacks will no longer be tolerating violence and will avenge their authorities.”⁵¹⁸ Whether it were the changes within the administration that brought the atamans “the hope” and thus rendered the realization of the idea unnecessary, or it was the mere slowness of taking actions on the ground that hampered the initiative, but the atamans did not launch the announced campaign until Kiiashko published his article.

Kiiashko’s call did not have an official status. Even though it was the chief of staff who authored the article, he did it anonymously, in the unofficial part of the newspaper. Therefore, it would seem, it had no authority to oblige Cossack assemblies to follow its suggestion unless Kiiashko, apart from the article, gave written or oral instructions. Yet his call, reinforcing the earlier resolution of the atamans, provided momentum for various stanitsas communities (or, more correctly, stanitsas’ administrations) all over Kuban to act

⁵¹⁷ Kubanskii kazak, “Pis’mo v redaktsiiu,” *KOV*, 15 March 1908, 2.

⁵¹⁸ “Postanovlenie,” *KOV*, 26 April 1908, 2.

and spurred the flow of loyalist resolutions that condemned the terror.⁵¹⁹ One by one, Cossacks assemblies started to pass resolutions in support of the appeal, sharing Kiiashko's joy over the appointment of Babych and expressing their anger over the assassination threats against him. Every such resolution, published in *KOV*, served as an exemplar for others that followed. Assemblies gladly borrowed cliché, metaphors, or phraseological inventions from resolutions of their predecessors. Curiously, these rhetorical devices, which sprang up as a consequence of a particular public campaign, proved lasting enough to gain a foothold in the local public discourse.

In what follows, I examine the chain reaction of stanitsas' loyalist resolutions as the emergence of the new way of Cossack communities' communication with the authorities of the host and as a new language of self-description, born out of the new political situation. Making resolutions, stanitsas introduced themselves to Babych and asserted their full support to the head of the oblast. More importantly, stanitsas thereby attempted to establish a more-than-official, intimate tie with him, purposely trying to win his favor.⁵²⁰

The metaphor of kinship, which determined the image of Babych and his rule, became the key element of the loyalist addresses to him, a tool that defined the new bonds between the ataman and the society under his control. If Babych was native to the local population, what criteria determined his nativeness? How far did the alleged kinship ties reach? Who belonged to the metaphorical network of kinship and who was excluded? The way stanitsas spoke out provides us with the hint of how the Cossacks imagined the cultural boundaries of their communities.

3.7. The Rhetoric of Nativeness

In effect, several Cossack communities celebrated the appointment of Babych in their resolutions even before the Kiiashko published its momentous call. Korenovskaia and

⁵¹⁹ One resolution stated that the stanitsa community decided to react “[d]ue to the fact that this letter appeared in ‘Kubanskii oblastnye vedomosti,’ to which we are used to believing, which is why we know that this letter is not a fiction or joke, but the honest truth.” See “Prigovor №35,” *KOV*, 18 May 1908, 2.

⁵²⁰ I owe my understanding of loyalist addresses as a channel of communication of imperial subjects with authorities to Yuliia Safronova: Yu. Safronova, *Russkoe obshchestvo v zerkale revoliutsionnogo terrora, 1879-1881 gody* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014), 210–13.

Plastunovskaia, for example, expressed their delight over the fact that “a son of Kuban” was appointed the ataman of the Kuban host.⁵²¹

If the “son of Kuban” was a rather vague metaphor and referred to the whole host as the family unit, the Cossacks of Pashkovskaia laid emphasis on the Black Sea Cossack origin of Babych. Assuring that they all were “faithful to the precepts of the past,” they pledged to be the worthy sons of “the Native Kuban” (*Ridnoi Kubani*), the last phrase being quoted in Ukrainian. It was not translated to Russian as if the official language was not able to express the sense of nativeness, and the very expression “Native Kuban” could be said or written not otherwise than in the “native” language.⁵²²

The community of Pashkovskaia became the first one to respond to *KOV*'s appeal. Two days after the newspaper published the appeal, the Cossacks of the stanitsa gathered to reiterate their support to the ataman. This time, as the situation demanded more emotive language, the assembly of Pashkovskaia even more actively employed the vocabulary of nativeness. It welcomed Babych once again, but this time as “our native Cossack of his Cossack Ukraine” (*nashoho ridnoho kazaka svoei kazachoi ukrainny*) (sic!—OP). The notion of “Cossack Ukraine” referred to the oral tradition that existed outside the sphere of influence of official discourse and served to express the sense of particularism, common Black Sea Cossack origin and cultural traditions, allegedly shared by Babych with the Cossack population of former Chernomoria.⁵²³ Following the new but well-established tradition, the resolution called Babych “the Kosh Father” (*Koshovyi Bat'ko*), and repeatedly used the Ukrainian spelling of the word “native,” making the message of the resolution more apparent. The resolution draw an apocalyptic image of Kuban, “shrouded by unknown people,” who dared to do unheard things: “They condemned our Kosh Father to death. . . . That never happened on Rus and in our native Kuban” (*na nashii ridnii Kubani*). The resolution, written in rather peaceful, not belligerent tone, stated the desire to put an end to the anarchy: “We only wish that in our Ukraine there were no murders, no robberies, no brigandage, no arbitrariness, no violence, no fights . . .” For the assembly, to

⁵²¹ “Stanichniki o naznachenii generala M. P. Babycha,” *KOV*, 9 March , 1908, 1.

⁵²² “Stanichniki o naznachenii generala M. P. Babycha,” *KOV*, 14 March 1908, 1.

⁵²³ Written down in the resolution with a lowercase letter and even with an extra letter “n,” the word “Ukraine” was likely perceived more as a common name than as a proper name, at least as seen by the stanitsa’s clerk who made the record of the resolution.

settle down the violence meant to restore the region to its original condition, to “the primordial level of purity,” as they stated, using the lexicon of Kiiashko.⁵²⁴

Unlike it, stanitsa Tamanskaia took a militant position on not only the radical left underground, but on the Kuban urban centers as its breeding ground. Its resolution was an expression of the Cossack ultra-conservative, traditionalist vision of the nascent local urban milieu as an extraneous phenomenon, incongruous with the Cossack order and the organization of their life. On the one hand, the assembly saw the revolution as something brought from the outside, which is why it demanded the radicals to free their land forever: “Your presence in the oblast cannot be tolerated any longer. Get out of Kuban, you, the revolutionary filth!!!” Otherwise, the assembly warned, the Cossacks would recourse to vigilante justice. On the other, the assembly blamed the towns for letting the revolution take root in the Cossack land. The motive of dishonor, so prevalent from the time of mutinies, dominated the resolution’s message: “Towns of Kuban!!! You are the hotbeds and nests of the revolution; you will be the first to answer for the shame and disgrace that you are causing to our native Kuban Cossack host.” Charging the towns, the vehicles of unwelcome modernity, with the crime against all the things Cossack, the assembly saw for them no other alternative but to become assimilated to Cossack settlements. “It is time,” as the resolution proclaimed, “to convert you to stanitsas . . .” In this interesting example of retrograde rhetorics, “convert” is the approximate translation of the Russian word *perekrestit’* (literally, “re-christen” or “re-baptize”). By this, the assembly implied that refashioning of towns to stanitsas was not the mere changing of the legal status of settlements, but meant the transition from the profane state to the pious one. What the assembly demanded was a sort of exorcist effort: “Under the Cossack administration, the revolutionary devilry [*nechist’*] would not emerge again” in the towns, so that “under the wing of our native [*ridnoho*] host father General Babych the Kuban host will live peacefully.”⁵²⁵

Cossack conservatives’ anxiety with the supposed dangers emanating from the towns found its most eloquent expression in the second collective decree, made by the

⁵²⁴ “Prigovor st. Pashkovskoi №111 ot 17 marta 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 29 March 1908, 3.

⁵²⁵ “Prigovor st. Tamanskoi №39 ot 26 marta 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 9 April 1908, 2; other assemblies used the expression “the nests of the revolution” as well: “Prigovor kh. Dinskogo №43 ot 2 apreliia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 25 April 1908, 2; “Prigovor kh. Chernookovskogo №53 ot 30 apreliia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 22 May 1908, 1–2.

atamans of the stanitsas of the Temriuksii district at the military training camp gathering. Building on the recent resolutions, the group of atamans proposed to make a step further and suggested that the capital of the oblast should be transferred away from Ekaterinodar altogether. “The town of Ekaterinodar, where the revolutionary nest sprang up, where the terrible crimes were committed, where the blood of our best sons was shed, and where the life of our Acting Atman with all his assistants is being threatened, is not worthy of the honor of being the residence of our Acting Ataman.” Atamans proposed stanitsa Pashkovskaia as an alleged new capital, at least temporary. Moreover, they put forward the idea to impose a contribution on all dwellers of Ekaterinodar and Temriuk, which would provide the families of the murdered persons with substantial financial allowance. It goes without saying that the ideas met no support from the Ekaterinodar administration, but the new trend of antagonism toward urban centers became apparent.⁵²⁶

While the assembly of Tamanskaia followed the lead of Pashkovskaia in using the Ukrainian form of the word “native,” the assembly of stanitsa Fontalovskaia combined the rhetorics of both. In its resolution, it praised Babych as its “native [*ridnoho*] Cossack,” whom the emperor appointed as the “head of our Ukraine [*nachal’nika nashoi ukrainy*]” (again, the lower case spelling of the word “Ukraine” was used here). In exactly the same way, the assembly assured that the Cossacks of Fontalovskaia will always remain the loyal sons of the region called both as “native Kuban [*ridnoi Kubani*]” and “the native land [*ridnyi krai*].” Likewise, it borrowed some expressions from the Tamanskaia’s resolution, while, fully ironically, letting the liberationist rhetoric infiltrate the text as well: “The revolutionary filth! Get out of our land—let the working people live peacefully in our Ukraine.”⁵²⁷

The use of the metaphors of nativeness proliferated in the resolutions that followed. As a general rule, these metaphors were used along with the original linguistic constructions they were first found, but not necessarily. “*Ridnyi* father of the host,” “*ridnyi* son of Kuban,” “*ridnyi* father [*bat’ko*],” “the father of the native host [*bat’ko ridnoho voiska*],” “our native Cossack [*svoego ridnago kazaka*]”—all these tropes persistently employed the Ukrainian form, whereas the resolutions as such were written in Russian.

⁵²⁶ “Postanovlenie,” *KOV*, 5 June 1908, 2.

⁵²⁷ “Prigovor st. Fontalovskoi №26 ot 3 apreliia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 25 April 1908, 2.

The Ukrainian inclusions were designed to demarcate the symbolic space of belonging, shared by the Cossacks of former Chernomoria with their ataman.⁵²⁸

Some stanitsas as Umanskaia considered the appointment of Babych as the restoration of the interrupted continuity, the tradition of Kuban self-rule. In so doing, the assembly automatically extended the vocabulary of nativeness to the former epoch: “We, the Kuban Cossacks, are being put on the path to the better future after more than half-a-century-long break, because 52 years have passed since the time when our native Cossack General Ya. G. Kukharenko was our Acting Ataman.” Thus, “nativeness” was seen not as a personal quality of Babych, but as a trait characteristic of every administrator, if only he was of local, Black Sea Cossack, origin.⁵²⁹

The Cossacks from another stanitsa from the Eiskii district in its resolution assured that Babych, native to them “by flesh and blood” and appointed as *Koshevoi Bat’ko*, could rely on them “as on a stone mountain.” Here, the metaphor of Kosh Father functioned not as a trope, but as a title of administrative position, synonymous with “acting ataman” and “head of the oblast.” The assembly asked Babych to convey to the emperor the Cossacks’ loyalist feelings for his making favor to the host by having appointed “the native Kuban Cossack” to this position.⁵³⁰

Whereas all the resolutions mentioned were written in literary Russian, with Ukrainian insertions, the resolution from stanitsa Popovichevskaia was by far the most original in terms of its composition. It was entirely, starting from the head of the document to the last letter, written in Ukrainian vernacular, although with inconsistent orthography, largely chaotic syntax structure, and numerous lexical borrowings from the official (i.e. clerical Russian) language. The resolution, which in itself is a rare example of popular speech and vocabulary of the day, is of particular interest in terms of its rhetorics. Its authors fashioned the text as a Zaporozhian-era letter, with the terms no longer in use and the deliberately familiar, cheerful, and naive tone. Calling themselves a Cossack *hromada* (a Ukrainian term denoting community) and their assembly “a Cossack rada,”

⁵²⁸ “Prigovor st. Vyshesteblievskoi №40 ot 18 maia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 30 May 1908, 2; “Prigovor st. Starokorsunskoi №157 ot 8 maia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 6 June 1908, 2; “Prigovor st. Tamanskoi №57 ot 22 apreliia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 30 April 1908, 2; “Prigovor №78 st. Poltavskoi ot 10 maia,” *KOV*, 31 May 1908, 2.

⁵²⁹ “Prigovor st. Umanskoi №112,” *KOV*, 26 September 1908, 2.

⁵³⁰ “Prigovor st. Kopanskoi № 54 ot 30 marta 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 20 May 1908, 2; For a similar expression of loyalist feelings, see: “Prigovor st. Poltavskoi №76 ot 10 maia,” *KOV*, 31 May 1908, 2.

they hailed Babych as the new “Kosh Father.” The authors of the resolution sympathized with the “native kosh father” for his “having a very hard time” due to the threats and assured him of their loyalty and full support: “we are his still faithful sons of Kuban, the descendants of the former faithful Black Sea Zaporozhian Cossacks of his Tsar’s Majesty; [we are] those Cossacks that will not give you, our native father, to anybody, and we would pay back for your violent death tenfold, and would pay back in such a way that the earth would be shaken and native Kuban would tremble.” The language chosen and the style of the address allowed much greater extent of familiarity, rendered as the children’s familiarity with the father. “Kind father! Be with us, we love you, and we ask you to expel from our native Kuban those Reds . . .” The Cossacks hoped to make the communication with Babych as immediate as possible, for which reason they declared the intention to seek permission of the ataman of the Temriuk district, whom they in the Zaporozhian manner called the “Kurin Father,” to personally present the resolution to Babych so that he would see their “love and devotion.”⁵³¹

The absolute majority of the resolutions published in *KOV* were composed by assemblies of Cossack settlements of former Chernomoria. Most of these settlements belonged to the Temriukskii district, which demonstrates that the flow of resolutions was, to a large extent, an orchestrated process that resulted from the joint meetings of atamans of stanitsas in January and April. At the same time, the geography of assemblies, which transcended the boundaries of the district, attests to the fact that administrations and assemblies of other settlements saw joining to this initiative as a good occasion to demonstrate their loyalty. In this way, a range of assemblies of settlements from the Eiskii and Ekaterinodarskii district, contributed to the campaign as well. Apart from them, there were also assemblies of the settlements outside Chernomoria that made resolutions modelled on those by their predecessors. Although the resolutions did not use the idiom of nativeness in full, in the way resolutions of Black Sea Cossack settlements did, they nevertheless employed some of the metaphors introduced by the latter before. For example, one assembly of a stanitsa of the Maikopskii district directly addressed to Babych as *Koshevoi Bat’ko*, while another stanitsa assembly of the same district called him “our father of the host [*voiskovogo nashego bat’ka*]”. In both cases, the Ukrainian

⁵³¹ “Pryhovir №44,” *KOV*, 27 May 1908, 2–3.

spelling of the word “father” (the first being in nominative and the second, in accusative) here betrays the borrowed character of its usage.⁵³²

Another literary trope that gained currency during the campaign was the expression “native by flesh and blood [*rodnoi po ploti i krovi*]” and its variations, such as “native by flesh and spirit” etc. Used by Kiiashko in his article with reference to Babych and taken up by stanitsas assemblies, it entered into common parlance and retained popularity in the following years. Apparently, the expression as such had its source in Orthodox religious texts.⁵³³ Yet in the Cossack usage this wording, pointing to the affinity that Babych shared with the host on the basis of his Cossackness (a quality that implicitly contrasted him with his predecessors on the post), acquired specific connotations. Such affinity was expressed—even if metaphorically—in terms of spiritual cohesion and genetic belonging, as if being a Cossack was a feature of race. Other examples of loyalist addresses, such as congratulatory telegrams of the day, sent to Babych on different occasions, register this figure of speech as well. For example, on the fiftieth anniversary of the conquest of the Caucasus in August 1909, a colonel of a Cossack battalion drank for the health of “the nakaznoi ataman who is native to us by flesh and blood.” In a similar way, the assembly of stanitsa Temizhbekskaiia of the Caucasus district greeted Babych with the New Year in 1909 as “native by spirit and blood.”⁵³⁴

Curiously, the nativist rhetoric was adopted even by assemblies of the settlements of mountainous peoples. In April 1908, about a thousand of dwellers of aul Ul'skii made prayer in front of the mosque, expressing loyalty to Babych and denouncing the radical left terror. The resolution made on this occasion threatened the extremists that the mountaineers will move to “the exhausted towns” along with the Kuban Cossacks in order to “cleansing them [the towns] from the revolutionary contagion.” The resolution characterized the Cossacks as akin to the mountaineers “in their prowess and bravery” and called Babych “*bat'ka*”—a clear sign that the paternalistic language became the conventional way of addressing the ataman's personality.⁵³⁵ In September, the second resolution of the assembly of Ul'skii, made after a mass prayer, once again reassured that

⁵³² “Prigovor st. Nizhegorodskoi №35 ot 25 marta 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 18 May 1908, 2; “Prigovor st. Apsheronskoi №8 ot 27 apreliia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 6 June 1908, 2.

⁵³³ For example, Matt 16:17; Cor 15:50; Eph 6:12.

⁵³⁴ Zen'kovskii to M. Babych, 26 August 1909, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9818, l. 71; “Prigovor stanitsy Temizhbekskoi,” 25 January 1909, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9823, l. 33.

⁵³⁵ “Prigovor aula Ul'skogo №23 ot 18 apreliia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 14 May 1908, 2.

Babych was as dear to the mountaineers as to the Cossacks. The reason for this, the resolution stated, were the bonds of spiritual kinship that tied the mountaineers, the Cossacks, and the personality of Babych into a single whole. As the authors of the resolution argued, “living among the Cossacks, we are their native friends by spirit and life, belonging to one family—the subjects of the Russian Tsar.”⁵³⁶ A similar resolution made by the assembly of aul Temirgoevskii also declared its devotion and love to Babych on the reason that the mountaineers were no longer “alien to the host.”⁵³⁷

The flow of resolutions produced a new idiom for describing the Kuban social and cultural reality, the idiom that was anchored in the semantics of nativeness, which postulated a watershed between the traditionalist realm of Cossack *stanitsa* and the corrupted world of urban centers. This language shift did not go unnoticed. A correspondent to *KOV* contemplated that prior to this campaign the Cossacks were disoriented by the revolutionary developments and could not distinguish between the good and the evil. But after Babych had been sent to the host, “everybody at once began speaking in the language, understandable to everyone.” What this process brought about, the author wrote, was the new feeling of coherence, which previously had existed only at battlefields: “all for one and one for all.”⁵³⁸

This rhetoric was perfectly suited for solemn celebrations. In October 1908, at the ceremony of the opening of the progymnasium in the closest Cossack settlement to Ekaterinodar, *stanitsa Pashkovskaia*, its ataman Andrei Lysenko delivered a solemn speech. It was a verse, written in a vivid Ukrainian language with Church Slavonic stylizations and addressed personally to Babych, who honored the opening with his presence. Speaking on behalf of the *stanitsa* community members, Lysenko assured the head of Kuban of their love and loyalty to the throne, the empire, and Babych himself. Lysenko fully employed the rhetoric of kinship, and the formulaic expressions of the Cossack affinity abounded in the verse. While Babych figured in the speech as “our *Koshovyi Bat’ko*,” “our native *Bat’ko*,” “our native Ataman,” the Cossack community was presented as his “native children” and the “most loyal sons.” The verse portrayed Babych as equal to everyone’s father:

⁵³⁶ “Prigovor aula Ul’skogo №58 ot 3 oktiabria 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 25 October 1908, 2.

⁵³⁷ “Prigovor aula Temirgoevskogo №53 ot 3 oktibia 1908 goda,” *KOV*, 26 October 1908, 3.

⁵³⁸ Lineets, “Kazach’i boliachki,” *KOV*, 22 July 1908, 2.

Come to us, Our Ataman,
The glorious Lord among the
lords,
And in a circle of native Cossacks,
Sit down among our fathers!

Hriady do nas, nash Atamane
Pomizh panamy slavnoyi Pane,
I v koli ridnykh kazakiv
Sidai mizh nashykh ty bat'kiv!

As the one who brought education to the stanitsa, Babych was presented as the enlightener carrying with him the light of science and order and thus struggling with the gloom of ignorance and dispelling the chaos of revolution. As the light would penetrate all the murky nooks of Kuban, the order would be finally restored, Lysenko proclaimed:

Look into every corner,
And chase away the darkness
In this unsure time.

Vsi zakutochky podyvysia,
I temriavu het' prich vid nas,
Zheny pid tsei ne pevnyi chas.

The public performance in Ukrainian was not received unfavorably by the head of the oblast or the members of the right-wing camp, such as the newspaper's editor-in-chief Anatolii Muranevich, who published it. As the witness reported, Babych, deeply moved by this verse, raised a toast for Lysenko in his turn. Moreover, the newspaper published the entire verse, presenting it as the creation of Lysenko.⁵³⁹ Lysenko, though, hastened to correct the author saying that the actual author of the verse was Yakov/Yakiv Zharko. The involvement of the latter, one of the most devoted Ukrainian national activists of the region and a member of the local "Prosvita," is a remarkable testimony of the national agitators' collaboration with the local authorities. What is more Lysenko proudly boasted that he not simply read the verse aloud, but memorized it and recited it from memory.⁵⁴⁰

The scarcity of the materials does not allow us to answer the question of how influential this scenario of love was: did the idiom of nativeness enter into use among ordinary Cossacks? Was it something more than a mere rhetorical device to win favor of the administration? Did those who adhered to it take it seriously? Can we treat it as a reflection of popular sentiment? Was its spread a transitory fashion, bound with the

⁵³⁹ Kubanskii kazak, "Otkrytie Pashkovskoi progimnazii," *KOV*, 11 October 1908, 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Andrei Lysenko, "Oshybka," *KOV*, 4 November 1908, 2.

changes in the system of local rule, or did it take root in the local discourse and exert influence in the long run?

In all likelihood, even if we can hardly assume that this rhetoric was naturally born out of Cossack sensibilities, it was not completely ephemeral. It seems that the figures of speech, introduced in the years of 1906-08, retained their influence in the early 1910s. Thanks to the means of language, the figure of Babych took the place along the figure of the emperor, and even challenged him as the object of primary loyalty. In 1910, at the New Year celebrations at the primary school of stanitsa Il'inskaia, its head proposed the children to recall the “little father tsar” (*tsaria-batiushku*) and the “beloved Father [*liubimogo Bat'ka*], the Kosh Ataman.”⁵⁴¹ The figure of Babych was given more emphasis. At the same time, just as it was with the metaphor of “Kosh father,” the metaphor of “native father,” came to be associated more with the administrative post than with the personality of Babych. In 1910, the assembly of stanitsa Kliuchevaia sent Babych a telegram, in which it wished him “to be their [the Cossacks'] native and dear father forever.”⁵⁴² Here, to be the native father implied to be the head of the oblast and the other way around, which meant that with the passing of time a new native father might come, even though the Cossack assembly declared its unwillingness to have it happen.

Back in 1908, “nativeness” was a personal feature of Babych. A Taman correspondent to the official press claimed to have observed that the words “our, native” (*svii, ridnyi*) were often used in conversations as soon as it came to Babych. The locals coined a saying, he claimed further: “The father is ours, so everything will be ours.”⁵⁴³ True or not, this saying perfectly shows that the notion of “our,” of something shared, gave the grounds to hope for collective benefits, justified by this very sense of affinity. Repeatedly articulated, it was becoming increasingly real—as a language reality, an established medium of addressing the chief administrator.

3.8. Conclusion

Just as it was throughout the empire, the revolution of 1905-06 was a major turning point in social, political, and cultural developments in Kuban. The participation of the Cossacks

⁵⁴¹ D. Teplov, “Korrespondentsii. St. Il'inskaia,” *KOV*, 24 February 1910, 2.

⁵⁴² “Prigovor st. Kliuchevoi №13,” *KOV*, 9 March 1910, 2.

⁵⁴³ V. Y. Demianik, “Taman’,” *KOV*, 13 September 1908, 2.

in suppressing the mass rallies in the region and elsewhere earned them the reputation of the watchdogs of the tsarist regime, always ready and willing to quell the protests wherever they appeared. At the same time, various acts of disobedience and open resistance questioned the purported loyalty of the Cossacks. Seeing the Cossack mutinies as the results of harmful extraneous influences, local administration and representatives of the right-wing camp came to attach greater importance to the moral disciplining of the Cossacks as a prerequisite for their being loyal. As I show in the next chapter, both the authorities and conservatives came to consider the mythologies about the past, the “precepts of ancestors” as a well-suited and easy-to-use resource able to ensure the Cossacks’ adherence to traditional values and the throne.

One of the Cossacks’ responses to the revolution was the establishment of the Rada, conceived as an autonomous, quasi-parliamentary organ for running the local affairs. The initiators of the Rada designed it as a restoration of the ancient Zaporozhian custom. In the end, reference to the experience of the past made the convention of the Rada possible, but only as a one-off event. The Rada’s task was to redistribute the spare lands of the host. Yet, in addition to it, discussions at its sessions brought to the fore the collateral question of the enduring disunion of the Kuban historical territories. In a sense, the Rada objectified the ideas of Chernomoria and Linia and rendered the division between them still existing, allowed to be spoken about in public. In what follows, I trace the ways the idea of Chernomoria, at once “former” and at the same time persisting in the 1910s, came to the fore as a given reality.

The outburst of the radical-left terrorism destabilized the political situation in Kuban and resulted in the appointment of a representative of the Black Sea Cossack nobility to the post of the head of the oblast. This was an exceptional move made by the Caucasus viceroy, who tended to advance local elites to important administrative and military positions within the Caucasus viceroyalty. With the appointment of Babych, the Kuban oblast and the host achieved greater autonomy than ever before over the time of the Kuban Cossack host’s existence. From the very beginning of his assumption of office, a mass campaign of demonstration of loyalty by Cossack settlements led to the emergence of the new public language that framed the relationships of subordination as the ties of kinship. This rhetoric of “nativeness” was meant to cut the social distance between the chief administrator and its subordinates. At the same time,—owing to Babych’s and some

of his associates' own cultural allegiances,—it had as its side result the burgeoning of local Little Russian cultural peculiarities, not merely tolerated, but even endorsed in the public sphere. The next chapter reveals these developments in more detail.



4. Chapter 4: The Triumph of the Sich: The Taman Festivities of 1911

By the end of 1908, the Kuban authorities exerted full control over the situation in the oblast and eliminated the last pockets of the radical terrorism. The sedition was over, but it left a lasting legacy, with which the administration of the host had to deal on a daily basis. Those military and civil officials, who were holding positions in the administration during the following years, had had a personal experience of participation in counter-revolutionary activities and fresh memory about the events that they saw as a major blow to the image of the faithful Kuban host, allegedly resistant to propaganda and seditious calls. On top of that, they were haunted by fears that the system of imperial governance can be shattered again. The authorities saw the cessation of mass disturbances as a successful result of their own oppressive actions and not of a sincere reconciliation with dissatisfied masses. In April 1909, Vorontsov-Dashkov requested the lifting of the martial law in Kuban and elsewhere, introducing instead the state of “reinforced security” as a provisional measure that would ensure the gradual transition of the region back to normal.⁵⁴⁴ Nevertheless, this exceptional regime, which provided the authorities with extraordinary powers, remained in force until the outbreak of the Great War. As late as 1912, Babych argued for the extension of the security state: “Since 1905, anti-government ideas have become widespread and deeply rooted among both intellectuals and common people. If nowadays they [these ideas] do not manifest themselves in any active protests, it is only because the state of emergency, introduced in the oblast, somehow constrains them.”⁵⁴⁵

Suspicion towards the “common people” (*prostonarodie*, as Babych called them in his letter) permeated the official rhetoric of the day. *Inogorodnie*, townspeople, educated classes, all came to be seen as an “unreliable element,” as opposed to the Cossacks, but the condition of the latter also became a matter concern. Time and again, Kuban conservatives

⁵⁴⁴ I. I. Vorontsov-Dashkov to Nol'de, 19 April 1909, RGIA, f. 1276, op. 19, d. 46, l. 155 ob.

⁵⁴⁵ “Svod zakliuchenii Gubernatorov, Nachal'nikov oblastei i otdel'nykh okrugov Kavkazskogo kraia,” *ibid.*, l. 307.

raised the alarm that Cossacks' living side-by-side with the "outsiders" resulted in the decay of the Cossacks' conventional way of life. Customs, songs, dress, behavior—all the constituents of the Cossack's image were coming out of fashion, giving way to the new influences, brought about by non-Cossack residents. As many believed, Cossacks' morale, too, deteriorated steadily, and the mutinies of 1905-06 became an eloquent proof of that. In this situation, the Kuban administration sought for solution in the realm of historical tradition. With the vigor never seen before, Babych, Kiiashko and their subordinates, set about the work on a broad range of cultural projects designed to make the Kuban Cossacks' past more visible and tangible, to increase its presence in the present as a disciplining measure and a model to follow. Being in charge of the host, the Black Sea Cossack elites used their administrative advantage to break with the constructed, official mythology of the Koper Cossacks as the ancestors of the host. Instead, they turned to the primordial, ostensibly authentic imagery of Zaporozhia, for only the genuine, natural past was able to serve as a repository of organic values and didactic examples.

4.1. Paying Homage to Zaporozhia: The Taman Monument Revisited

The very first cultural project that the Host undertook and carried through in the post-revolutionary years, and by far the most significant one, was the construction of the monument to the Zaporozhian ancestors in Taman. By 1908, Malama's plan of building the monument had been neglected for several years due to the ultimate failure of the administration to collect the required amount of money to cover the construction costs. Neither Odintsov nor Mikhailov had ever tried to raise this issue again, since the revolution, in its turn, put it onto the back burner for the time being. The new political situation that emerged in the aftermath of the revolution drew attention of the authorities to the almost forgotten project and allowed them to revisit the issue of the monument in a different context.

In effect, the project reemerged in the midst of the terrorism-caused Kuban crisis, in late March 1908, shortly after Babych assumed office. It was more than a mere coincidence. The person who triggered the initiative anew was a scion of an Azov Cossack family, the senior assistant of the chief of staff, esaul Konstantin Gadenko, whose

grandfather's coming to the North Caucasus in 1837 was part of the imperial strategy of recruiting yet another branch of the Zaporozhian host for the needs of the Caucasus war. Gadenko, thus, was not of Black Sea Cossack stock, but he thought of himself and his ancestors as the genuine Zaporozhians, the same as the Black Sea host, which he characterized as "native to it [the Azov host] by spirit and blood."⁵⁴⁶ In his parlance, this expression denoted the community bound by its members' shared Sich ancestry. Kiiashko and Babych, the new team of local administrators, as Gadenko strongly believed, belonged to this community as well. Mikhail Babych became the new master of the magnificent Ataman's Palace on February 25. Just in a month, Andrei Kiiashko presented him a letter by Gadenko, who portrayed the forgotten issue of the monument as the duty the Kuban offspring of Zaporozhia was obliged to fulfill. In his memoirs, Gadenko explained his motives through the rhetoric of nativeness. Kiiashko was "our Cossack," Babych was "our 'ridnyi' Cossack," and both were "native to us by flesh and blood," "our native fathers" (*ridni bat'ky*).⁵⁴⁷ The reaction of the head of the oblast, as described by Gadenko, was deeply emotional. With "goodwill" and "love" to, but also with "cordial regret" and "sorrow" over the fate of the project, Babych took it under his personal patronage.⁵⁴⁸

In July 1908, within quite a short time for this kind of activities, Babych issued the order for the Kuban Cossacks, urging them to support the project and take it as seriously as possible. The order, written with assistance from some of his associates, was a historical manifesto that determined and explained for its broad audience the significance of the past. The extensiveness of the order's text, full of moralizing pathos, was supposed to ensure the persuasiveness of its main message—to convince the Cossacks to make as many donations as they can. Babych presented the project as a moral obligation, a tribute to memory, which everyone was required to pay to the best of his ability, since the Kuban Cossacks were beholden to the Zaporozhians for all what they had. As Babych put it, "we, the Kuban Cossacks, possessing the region, which is richly abundant in every respect, owe it exclusively to our valiant ancestors, the Zaporozhian Cossacks." In his appellation to

⁵⁴⁶ K. Gadenko, *Azovskoe kazach'e voisko (1830-1865 g.)* (Kashira: Tipografiia V. A. Tret'iakova, 1912), 46; for the Gadenko's ancestors, see: *Ibid.*, 47–52.

⁵⁴⁷ K. Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam* (Ekaterinodar: Elektro-tipografiia tovarishchestva "Pechatnik," 1911), 45–46.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

Cossack communities, Babych's line of argumentation had a major difference from the rhetoric, employed by him and his fellow conservative-minded Black Sea Cossack officials and intellectuals in other contexts and for other purposes. The portrayal of the Zaporohnian's merits here did not contain references to their struggle for the nationality, faith, or tsar. Instead, it referred to the notion, understandable, without exception, to every rank-and-file Cossack—the land. Although bound up with different ideas, such as the loyal imperial service (and the reward for it), colonial presence (that followed the colonial conquest), or successful taming of the wild nature (and, implicitly, the wild natives), the question of land as the most material and tangible aspect of Zaporozhian legacy was at the heart of the picture.

A concise historical summary of the emergence, growth and decline of the Sich, which comprised a major part of the order's text, was intended to make Babych's words even more compelling. In this interpretation, the Black Sea host was portrayed as the gatherer of all the remnants of the former Sich. Babych pompously stressed that “the establishment of the Black Sea host was a moment of reunification of the dispersed groups of Zaporozhians, who were happily brought together into a family, native by blood and spirit.” The last assertion was of particular emotional appeal—the common descent of the Cossacks of Chernomoria predetermined their cohesion as a clearly outlined group, a community of kinship and soul.

Having been deprived of the opportunity to participate in the elaboration of the design of the monument in 1898, the Line Cossacks' half of the host was not supposed to take part in the initiative further on. As the head of the entire host, Babych nonetheless anticipated the initiative to be a matter of honor for Chernomoria proper, speaking on behalf of and to the Black Sea Cossacks. No wonder that Chernomoria figured in his order as a separate, stable, and self-sufficient entity. “It is to you, the stanitsas of Chernomoria, that I appeal separately. You are the direct descendants of your fathers and grandfathers [*sic!*], who arrived to your present domain, you enjoy all the benefits of the land, obtained by their blood and labor, you . . . indeed live richly and without sorrow . . .” This was an obvious reason for the Cossacks of the stanitsas to contribute to the cause not only personally, but to make donations from the community funds. Since the capital of many of the stanitsas was quite substantial, as Babych did not fail to mention, reaching tens or even

hundreds of thousands rubles, the ataman suggested that they give a share of money for the good undertaking.⁵⁴⁹

The appeal sounded as an imperative, and so it was. Unfortunately, the details and circumstances of the flow of money from stanitsas and Cossack units to the host's budget are unknown, but there is a reason to believe that there was an element of coercion (or, rather, demonstrative compliance) in a sense that Cossack assemblies allocated funds following the form of the order, not its message. One way or another, in half a year, the Host had at its disposal about 9500 newly received rubles, as opposed to the 712 rubles received over the entire preceding decade.⁵⁵⁰ This was an impressive achievement, but in the end, the total amount turned out to be insufficient as well. Gadenko, later appointed the head of the commission for the construction of the monument, somewhat evasively wrote that the "native fathers" managed to "find" the sum that even exceeded the cost of the project.⁵⁵¹ Indeed, an official newspaper informed in 1910 that the population of the Eiskii district gathered additional eight thousand rubles.⁵⁵² If true, this evidence can tell us more about the Black Sea Cossack patriotism of the district ataman, Major-General Aleksandr Kukharenko, and his ability to use the administrative resource for the enforced fund-raising, than about the readiness of Cossacks to pay extra sums.

⁵⁴⁹ Prikaz po Kubanskomu kazach'emu voisku №251 ot 12 iulia 1908 goda; published in: Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam*, 47–53.

⁵⁵⁰ The data taken from: M. Babych to Ataman of the Caucasus Cossack hosts (copy), 21 February 1909, RGVIA, f. 330, op. 53, d. 2167, l. 3.

⁵⁵¹ Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam*, 63.

⁵⁵² "K postroike pamiatnika Golovatomu," *KOV*, 12 May 1910, 1.



Fig. 5. The Zaporozhian monument in Taman. Source: P. Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv v staitse Tamanskoj* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografii Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1912), 35

Although we cannot measure the enthusiasm to the project on the part of the rank-and-file Kuban Cossacks, it did generate a positive response from those who took pride in their Zaporozhian lineage, real or imagined. In one letter to the Kuban administration, written in a mixture of the Ukrainian vernacular and Russian literary language, its author, clearly a non-Kuban resident, “hastened to express his great spiritual joy” over the Host’s decision to build the monument (about which he learned from a newspaper). He believed that the initiative was so important that it transcended the borders of the Kuban oblast. Proud that “the deeds of our common forefathers were not in vain and the Cossack glory will never die,” he argued that “the monument will be evidence of the great deeds of our glorious Zaporozhians and will remind our grandchildren about the glorious origin of the Kuban Cossack host.” He asked where to send donations for the monument, so that even “the forgotten descendants of the Chernihiv Cossacks could take part in the common

celebrations.” In his excited imagination, the Sich and the Kuban host coalesced into a single whole: “Long live the glory and bravery of the Zaporozhian Kuban host for the blossoming of the state, for the glory of Cossackdom, for the joy of the little father tsar!”⁵⁵³

4.2. Elusive Personality: Controversies over the Monument’s Figure

The Host did not have much problems with the monumental composition for the monument as it approached Boris Eduards with the suggestion to return to the work on the monument for the second time, using to the project he designed before. The major difficulty was the question who would personify the bronze Cossack statue. Despite the fact that the Host initially agreed on the idea by Petr Kosolap, who proposed to portray a figure of a rank-and-file Cossack, all the participants engaged in the work on the monument had troubles imagining a nameless figure on the pedestal. The tradition of thinking of great monuments as embodying great persons was not that easy to break with, and the developers thought of the future figure as of the personification of one of the founding fathers of the Black Sea Cossack host. Back in December 1903, as follows from the letter to Eduards, the authorities came to the idea of portraying the figure of Sydir Bilyi, the actual chieftain of the group of the Cossack settlers who landed in Taman in 1792.⁵⁵⁴

After relaunching the project, the Kuban authorities gave preference to yet another “iconic” figure. In his petition to the Caucasus viceroy, written in February 1909, Babych informed him and the central imperial authorities, to whom the Tiflis administration forwarded the petition afterwards, about the Host’s decision to commemorate another founding father. “Although the first group of the Zaporozhian Cossacks came to stanitsa Tamanskaia under the leadership of Colonel Savva Belyi [at that time, Bilyi’s name was subject to controversies], the main petitioner and, so to say, the culprit of granting this land was Host Judge Anton Holovatyi, who later became the Kosh Ataman of the Black

⁵⁵³ “Zagovorilo rodnoe,” *KOV*, 20 August 1911, 1. His surname is indeed encountered in the register of the Cossacks of the Chernihiv regiment in 1649, see F. P. Shevchenko, ed., *Reestr Viis’ka Zaporoz’koho 1649 roku* (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1995), 480–81.

⁵⁵⁴ 24 December 1902, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9563, l. 5.

Sea host. For this reason, the desire was expressed that the statue of the Zaporozhian Cossack would embody this historical figure, thank to whose efforts and energy the subsequent generations of the Zaporozhian [*sic!*] Cossacks make use of the generous gifts of the benevolent Tsaritsa.”⁵⁵⁵

The figure of Holovatyι was indeed the most convenient one, since it was a direct reference to the empress’ charter and the idea of the host’s eternal possession of the land. But the changes of the personality being perpetuated in bronze did not reflect on the appearance of the statue. As historians in Kuban and elsewhere knew no portraits of both Bilyι and Holovatyι, this was a matter of nothing more than the official appellation. The features of face or dress of the bronze statue could not be affected. Controversies over the question of personality continued. Just in a year, in the next petition to the Caucasus authorities, Babych denounced his previous decision, stating that since the monument was dedicated to the first Zaporozhian Cossacks landed in Taman, it would be “more correct historically” to portray not Holovatyι, but a Zaporozhian Cossack with a banner, who happily stepped onto a stony and deserted shore after a long journey by sea.⁵⁵⁶

The decision is likely to have not been final. The actual creator of the monument, Boris Eduards, called the sculpture as the monument to Holovatyι as late as September 1910.⁵⁵⁷ It was only in November 1910, at the meeting of a committee for the construction of the monument, that the issue of the personality embodied by the monument was finally solved, albeit after a lengthy exchange of views. The members of the committee abandoned the thought of portraying either Holovatyι or Bilyι and approved the original idea of portraying a rank-and-file Cossack. However, they did it at the expense of some concessions in favor of both Cossack chieftains. They honored Bilyι on the pedestal with a special mention as the commander of the first settlers in Taman, while Holovatyι’s name made it to the pedestal together with his song, continuing to cause misunderstanding of who the Cossack was in fact.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid, l. 2; Cited from the original letter: M. Babych to Ataman of the Caucasus Cossack hosts, 21 February 1909, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9563, l. 35.

⁵⁵⁶ M. Babych to the Chief of Staff of the Caucasus military district, 13 March 1910, Ibid., l. 124 ob.

⁵⁵⁷ B. Eduards to A. Kiiashko, 27 September 1910, Ibid., l. 133.

⁵⁵⁸ Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam*, 75–76.

4.3. Unveiling the Monument

On September 30, 1911, Petr Orlov, a prolific Kuban journalist, self-trained amateur historian and public figure, serving as the senior assistant at the host staff, wrote in his travel diary: “An unwitting excitement came over me—different feelings, having swept over me, swirled and embraced me. I was entirely ahead, there, at Taman. There flew all my thoughts, all minds, it was there where my heart drew me, there my soul sought to get. I forgot about the steamship and everything that surrounded me. I remembered only one thing—I am a pilgrim, going to worship to sacred sites, and this promised land was visible, close, and soon I would be feeling it.” The sacred sites he had in mind were the settlement of Taman and its vicinities, the “land, sacred for a Kuban Cossack.”⁵⁵⁹ Orlov’s exalted imagination translated him back to the late eighteenth century. Peering into the sea, he looked for the waves raised by the Cossack flotilla and imagined that he saw Taman in precisely the same way the first Cossack colonists saw at it. On the steamship, sailing along the Black sea shores, he was just one member of a large delegation, composed from the Kuban administration, clergy, Cossacks, musicians, choir, theatre actors, and many others who were heading to Taman to take part in the solemn ceremony of the unveiling of the monument to the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Orlov was a participant as well, but of particular kind. He had a task of documenting the festive events and publishing his observations for the broad audience. Given Orlov’s position, this task must have been envisaged by his boss, Andrei Kiiashko. The significance of the event stood in sharp contrast to the remoteness of the locale. Except of the participants of the celebration and the dwellers of the stanitsa itself, few could afford to visit the festivities and enjoy the public spectacle.

Kiiashko ensured that the Zaporozhian holiday would not go unnoticed. Due to his initiative, early October saw the launching of a new periodical, *Kubanskii kazachii listok* (hereinafter, *KKL*), which has proved as a mouthpiece of the Cossack ultra-loyalists and a forum for discussions about both political and culture-related themes.⁵⁶⁰ Having emerged out of the need to cover the festivities accompanying the unveiling of the monument, the

⁵⁵⁹ P. Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv v stanitsa Tamanskoi po povody otkrytiia 5 oktiabria 1911 g. pamiatnika pervym zaporozhtsam* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1912), 1, 12.

⁵⁶⁰ On Kiiashko as the initiator of the newspaper, see: S. Az, “Pechat’ v kazachestve,” *Golos kazachestva*, 5 September 1912, 492.

newspaper became both the source of information about the celebration and the official interpreter of its meaning. As the local cultural sphere ballooned, *KOV* just did not have enough space to devote proper attention to local cultural developments.

On October 5, 1911, the editorial of *KKL* excitingly informed its readers about a major happening that was taking place in stanitsa Tamanskaia that day: “The eyes of entire Kuban today are turned there, to Taman, where the name day of August Ataman is being celebrated, where the veil will fall from the mighty figure of the Zaporozhian *bogatyr*. There is our present. There is our past as well; there is all the best that our ancestors left to us: the precept to live truthfully and serve faithfully.”⁵⁶¹ As the official guide to understanding the celebration, *KKL* suggested the audience the feelings they were supposed to experience while looking at or, rather, thinking about, the monument. “Let us remember that the idea of Cossackdom, as a military estate, is where there is the mutinous life, where there is the battle glory.” According to this curious portrayal of the Zaporozhian Cossacks everyone was supposed to remember the precept of the Sich to “serve the Tsar, serve for the Tsar.”⁵⁶²

The newspaper had every reason to be exalted. The Kuban, Black Sea Cossack by origin, conservative circles saw the unveiling of the monument as a landmark moment for the host’s self-fashioning, which, as they hoped, would signal the coming of a new era in the history of the host, demarcating the symbolic boundary between the former period of turmoil from the coming period of prosperity based on traditionalist values. The Black Sea elites, however, did not manage to resolve the major issue of how to accommodate the Zaporozhian imagery of the celebration within the post-1860 reality and the compound nature of the Kuban host. Was the celebration related to the entire host, or it was only restricted to a part of it—those, who claimed Zaporozhian ancestry for themselves? In other words, was it the holyday of Kuban, of Chernomoria, or of both?

October 5 was a peculiar date. As the nameday of Aleksei Nikolaevich, the heir to the throne and the August ataman of all the Cossack hosts, this calendar day was established in 1905 as the Kuban host’s annual holiday instead of the previous date of August 30, the name day of Alexander III.⁵⁶³ The choice of this date was called to reaffirm the bonds between the ruling dynasty and the host, while the meaning of the holiday,

⁵⁶¹ [Editorial], 5 October 1911, *KKL*, 1.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*

⁵⁶³ “Letopis’ oblastnoi zhizni,” *KOV*, 22 May 1905, 2; *SPRKV* 41 (1905), no. 306.

similar to military holidays of the army units, was to strengthen the coherence of the host as a military community. As such, Kuban host's holidays, of course, belonged to the whole host, regardless of the origin, seniority, or composition of its constituent parts. Parades, regalia processions, and church sermons were the regular elements of the festive agenda, participants of which were Cossack units and representatives from all corners of the oblast. The host's holiday of 1911 differed from all the previous ones. On the one hand, the holiday took place not in the host's capital, Ekaterinodar, but in quite a remote settlement. On the other, for the first time, and in clear violation of the very idea and procedure of the holiday, only a part of the host was allowed to participate in the festivities, while another part was excluded from participation in it altogether.

In, were the purported descendants of the Zaporozhian Sich—the Cossacks of the former Black Sea host. Out, were all the rest. Apart from the Black Sea Cossacks, representatives of yet another Cossack formation were invited to the celebration. They were the Cossacks of the former Azov host, the less numerous institutional offspring of the Sich, resettled to the North Caucasus in the 1860s. At the holiday, the two “communities” epitomizing two branches of the Zaporozhian host, were represented by atamans and delegations sent from forty initial Black Sea Cossack settlements, formerly known as *kurins*, and nine settlements founded by Azov Cossack families.⁵⁶⁴

Aside from the open space in front of the monument, the main venue of the festive ceremonial in stanitsa Tamanskaia was the local church, which was not only a place of celebration, but also the object of celebration in its own right. Founded by the Black Sea Cossack colonizers in 1793, immediately upon their arrival to the peninsula, the Taman church was the first religious building erected in the lands of the Black Sea host. By the late 1900s, the church had undergone some changes in its construction, made in different times. Most significantly, it was rebuilt in the 1860s, after having been seriously damaged during the Crimean war. At some point in 1910, in the course of the preparations for building the monument, the commission in charge of the construction works put forward the idea of a side project, related to the monument if not in design, then at least in spirit. The commission, headed by Gadenko, decided to restore the Taman church as a cultural and historical heritage of Chernomoria and an immediate link with the host's Zaporozhian past. Restoration of “our sacred relic” and the “living witness of the distant past,” as

⁵⁶⁴ I. Zolotarevskii, “Pamiati predkov,” *KKL*, 5 October 1911, 1.

Gadenko called it, however, turned out to be something more than a mere renovation and upgrading of the church's interior and exterior.

The church itself did not conform to the commission's perceptions of how the ancient Zaporozhian temple should look like. Gadenko was frustrated with the church's actual ordinariness and modest appearance. Lamenting over the fact that it was just an "ordinary house," by no means as magnificent as it was supposed to be, he attributed this sad reality to recent changes in its structure, made without respect to the original shape. Declaring the need "to preserve it for many distant ages in memory of those who created it," the commission at the same time saw the process of restoration in a peculiar way, because it determined to "preserve it for the future times in the most original condition possible." Thus, preservation of the church meant its returning to the initial state. Gadenko "knew" that the church had "changed beyond recognition" due to "the people's indifference to the old times," and everyone in the settlement agreed that it was completely different. Just as everybody else, however, he could not know how it looked in the very beginning. Removing the extraneous superfluous architectural layers, which distorted its genuine Zaporozhian backbone, proved an uneasy task. The commission mistook ancient marble columns of Greek origin for the remnants of the church's colonnade. As a result, the commission ended up with a project of an antique-like temple with the colonnade. To implement it, the restoration works were not enough. What was needed was the complete dismantling of the building, with the construction of the new one, truly authentic and Zaporozhian.⁵⁶⁵

Just in a year, on the eve of the host's holiday, on October 1, the "restored" church, which costed nearly 10,000 rubles, was solemnly consecrated.⁵⁶⁶ The structure, described by a contemporary archeologist as "a tetrastyle Doric temple, with small columns along its longer sides, which never existed in reality, and which were impossible in the ancient time," was supposed to symbolize the Zaporozhian continuity of the host.⁵⁶⁷ In the solemn speech, the priest presented the event as a part of the same Zaporozhian spectacle, blessing the church to serve "as a living witness of the distant past, of the first years of life of our grandfathers and fathers, the Zaporozhians." Both the monument and the church were to discipline the Cossacks following the example provided by the Sich. "From now on, let

⁵⁶⁵ Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam*, 75–76.

⁵⁶⁶ "Restavratsiia samoi drevnei tserkvi v Kubanskoï oblasti," *KOV*, 28 July 1911, 2.

⁵⁶⁷ A. A. Bert'e-Delagarda, "Zametki o Tmutarakanskom kamne," *ITAUK* 55 (1918): 95.

the monument to the Zaporozhians teach their descendants, now the children of the Kuban, to diligent and zealous service for the Autocratic Russian Tsar and the Motherland. Let it awaken and maintain the spirit of bravery and courage in the future generations of Cossacks. And let this holy Intercession Church teach [them] to keep our Orthodox faith, for which the Cossack ancestors died with honor . . .”⁵⁶⁸

Orlov, an observer of one of the first prayers in the church, left an eloquent description of the emotions that embraced him during the church service. The barely constructed building of the church, with all its pseudo-antic appearance, seemed to him an antique Zaporozhian sanctuary and a resting place of Zaporozhian ghosts:

I was gradually seized by the prayerful mood and I, surrendering myself to it, involuntarily looked up, where there was a dome-lantern. There, above, reigned semidarkness, in which and below which an incense smoke, slowly condensing, was sometimes creeping as a veil and sometimes curling, while the waves of new, slowly wreathing and melting, were pouring into it. And it seemed to me that there, in the heights, in the twilight, in the clubs of incense, a miracle was happening: the ghosts of an old, remote past, the witnesses of fights, battles, and Cossack events were silently hovering there, emerging and disappearing again. . . And it was pleasant for my heart to dream of such a fusion of the life beyond the grave with the earthly life.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv v stanitse Tamanskoi*, 22.

⁵⁶⁹ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 19.



Fig. 6. The “restored” church in stanitsa Tamanskaia. Source: P. Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv v stanitse Tamanskoi* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1912), 18.

By the moment of its unveiling, the monument to Zaporozhian ancestors came to be understood as a symbol of Cossack particularism, traditionalist Cossack values, and military spirit. In a certain way, it epitomized all those merits that distinguished the Cossacks from the non-Cossack *inogorodnie* category or, in a broader sense, from civic commoners. It also had an additional meaning, closely associated with the particularistic one. The monument emblemized the suppression of the recent turmoil. The host emerged victorious in the struggle with the menace that had been threatening the Cossack social and political order, and the primordial Cossack figure was the symbol of the achieved victory. The faithful Cossackdom reaffirmed its exclusive rights on the land and secured its exclusive position as the sole—and the collective one—master of the territory. The seditious proletariat failed to destabilize the Cossack rule. These were some of the key points of the belief, shared by Kuban Cossack conservatives. Thus, the ancestral Zaporozhian body, cast in bronze, assumed particular, almost sacred, status. Neglected in this abstract picture, intended for the official usage, was the material aspect of the question. While the Cossacks were those who ordered the monument for their own use, it

were the non-Cossack workers, who conducted the necessary construction works. In all respects, the very creation of the figure's body, so meaningful for the Cossacks, its installation and the adjustment of the details, fully depended on the workers' efforts. This circumstance became a cause of a serious conflict, which can be better understood if seen as a reflection of the ideological confrontation between the Cossack elites and the non-Cossack "elements," the working class in particular.

The construction works on the monument continued up until the last moment, and even on the eve of the unveiling festivities, it still was a work in progress. On the evening of October 2, when the participants of the celebrations came to the site of the construction to witness the end of the works, they found the figure in a flagrant state. The Zaporozhian ancestor's body was "mutilated"—*its* or, rather, *his* hands, together with the Zaporozhian banner, laid at the foot of the memorial, while the workers had gone to rest. The look of the dismembered body and the lying symbol of the Cossack glory angered the participants, who interpreted the workers' leave as a strike. Kiiasko ordered to call back the workers and force them to work at nighttime under his control until the monument was done. The entire delegation determined to stay with him. An account of an eyewitness presented the participants' decision to stay as a heroic deed. Suffering from a piercing wind and snow, the members of the delegation withstood a stormy night to protect the chief of the staff from potential mutineers, declaring their readiness to die the same night for Kiiashko. Of course, the hardships experienced by the workers went unmentioned.⁵⁷⁰

The celebrations were replete with references to the recent revolution. The most comprehensive articulation of the conservatives' anxiety and fear of the revolution was the speech delivered by the priest Arsenii Belanovskii (Bilanovs'kyi) in front of the monument during the unveiling ceremony. Belanovskii presented the revolutionary situation as a treat of a new yoke, akin to that of the Mongols, but far more destructive, for the danger was coming from within. He blamed "traitors," "renegades," "aliens" (*inorodtsy*), and people of other faith (*inovertsy*) for what happened in 1905 and the terrorist attacks that followed it. In the difficult time, Kuban had to serve as the mainstay of the entire empire. The Kuban Cossacks, with their "devotion to the Orthodox Tsar, love to the precepts of the Savior, unity under the mace of the Kosh Father, and the Zaporozhian oath to fight for all the things honest, Russian, Orthodox," will not allow the

⁵⁷⁰ Zabytyi, "Iz vospominanii o Tamanskikh torzhestvakh," *KKL*, 8 February 1912, 2.

revolution to succeed. Traditions of the Sich and the Zaporozhian origin of the Kuban Cossacks were the guarantee of security for the imperial order: “treachery and betrayal will never reign in Rus’, much less in Kuban, as long as at least one descendant of Bilyi, Chepiha, and Holovatyi [Belanovskii used the Ukrainian spelling of their names] lives!!!”⁵⁷¹

If Belanovskii had long been known for his adherence to the Zaporozhian myth, the speech by Archbishop Agafodor, by far the most honorable guest of the ceremony, who was in charge of the Stavropol and Ekaterinodar diocese, testified to the readiness to accept the Zaporozhian mythology from the part of the Church’s elite. Archbishop provided the Zaporozhian myth with a church blessing as he sanctified the monument, “in the face of heaven and earth,” to the “first Kuban Cossacks, the descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians.” Speaking at the bottom of the statue at the culminating moment of the holiday, Agafodor superimposed the history of the Sich over the overtly colonial vision of the Kuban past. Just as their ancestors had to defend the borders of their native Sich and the “Russian land” from the Turks and Tatars, the settlers on the Kuban land had to defend “their country” from the “predatory mountaineers from beyond the Kuban”. Thus, the Cossacks of the early twentieth century owed their peaceful life to their ancestors, who overcame the omnipresent enemies in the protracted struggle. Following their suit, the Kuban Cossacks were to defend their land in case of an external threat. A Russian nationalist, Archbishop praised the Kuban Cossacks as the ultimate Russifiers of the North Caucasus. Thanks to the Kuban Cossacks, the entire space from the Black Sea shores to the highest mountains of the Caucasus, asserted Agafodor, was “dominated by the Orthodox faith, Russian life, Russian customs, Russian nationality”.⁵⁷²

The most spectacular part of the celebration was the solemn procession with Kuban or, rather Black Sea Cossack, regalia, —the regular ritual carried out by the Host twice a year on the host’s holidays. However, two crucial circumstances differed the Taman regalia procession from the rest of the cases. The host’s main treasure, the regalia, which always were at the core of every host’s holiday, for the first time in the history of the holiday’s tradition—and in the history of the Kuban host at large—were transferred from Ekaterinodar to another place. What is more, it was the first time in the history of processions when the regalia, always thought of as a coherent whole, were divided into

⁵⁷¹ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 41.

⁵⁷² Agafodor, “Rech’ pri otkrytii pamiatnika,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10185, ll. 22–23.

parts, so that only a portion of them made it to Taman. The principle of division of the regalia was the same that the organizers of the celebration applied to the selection of Cossack representatives. Only what was believed to be of Zaporozhian origin, including all the gifts by Catherine II, was taken to the celebration, with the single exception of the jubilee banner granted by the emperor in 1896.⁵⁷³ From the Intercession Church to the more central Church of Ascension, built in 1880, and then to the square with the monument, covered with a veil, slender ranks of Cossack delegates marched through the settlement carrying the sacred remnants of the Black Sea Cossack past, as the signs of the host's glory and the favor of the tsars. *KKL*, which described the procession in an elevated tone, characterized the regalia as the material objects that embodied the historical experience of the host in the most direct way possible. "These *pernaches*, maces, silver pipes, drums—these are not the soulless things, no, it is you, me, he ... It is every Cossack, as their owner, who inherited this treasure from his ancestors. It is our history, [inscribed] not in words but in facts, in deeds, in documents, where each of these items is a whole long story, a whole edification, related to the names of our glorious ancestors."⁵⁷⁴



⁵⁷³ "Otkrytie pamiatnika v Tamani," *KKL*, 6 November 1911, 2.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Fig. 7. The unveiling of the monument. The Cossacks on the right are dressed in historical Zaporozhian attires. Source: P. Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv v stanitse Tamanskoi* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1912), 43.

The scenario of nativeness and love, so emphatically manifested during the campaign of stanitsas' resolutions in 1908, was an underlying motif of the holiday. The official account of the event portrayed the scene of the steamship's arrival to Taman, where the local Cossacks welcomed the participants of the celebrations, as a family meeting. As Petr Orlov put it, "brothers came to brothers," "relatives meet relatives." Kiiashko, the head of the delegation, assumed the lead in performing this scenario by greeting and kissing everyone who was standing at the pier. "It was evident," wrote Orlov, "that these kisses were not a mere formality, but the kisses of heart and soul."⁵⁷⁵

Babych, too, demonstrated his devotedness to the idea of bonds of kinship and love that tied together the Cossacks of the host and his own personality. On the second day of the festivities, during the farewell ceremony with Babych at the pier, the delegation of atamans of Chernomoria's stanitsas, headed by the ataman of stanitsa Blagoveshchenskaia, Konstantin Yukhno, played out a performance that symbolically reaffirmed the affinity between the head of the oblast and the Cossack community of Chernomoria. In front of the gathered crowd and the delegation of honorary high-ranking guests, Yukhno and the group of stanitsas' atamans, which half-jokingly proclaimed themselves the "Sich," approached Babych with an empty sack and a basket with groceries—the gifts dedicated to the acting ataman on behalf of Chernomoria. Thanking "the Father" for having honored the ancestors and demanding him to take a seat, Yukhno handed him the sack as a sign of gratitude for "having broken the abominable darkness in 1905 and for having trampled it with your feet." The sack was to be filled with the edible presents: *horilka* (the Ukrainian term for vodka), kvass, lard, bread, cheese, two apples, garlic, watermelon, and sausage. Here, the choice of simple, traditional food for the role of meaningful gifts emblemized the modest way of life of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, their austerity, and stressed the Babych's closeness to the ordinary Cossacks, at least, in terms of diet. The entire action, as performed by Yukhno with the involvement of Babych, was held in a pronouncedly informal manner. What was particularly important, both spoke in Ukrainian language, which was the most obvious tool that allowed maintaining the informal spirit of the spectacle. After presenting each of the gifts, Yukhno asked the head

⁵⁷⁵ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 13.

of the oblast if he needed it, while Babych responded approvingly every time: “Put in!” (*Klady!*). After he received the last gift, he responded “That’s enough!” (*Tai hodi!*) and kissed Yukhno, thanking him and the whole “hromada” (the group of deputies) in Ukrainian.⁵⁷⁶

The rhetoric of nativeness, which was tied to the Zaporozhian myth and served as a way of cutting the social distance between the authorities and their subordinates, did not go unnoticed by observers. Grigorii Kontsevich, the author of the detailed description of this episode, interpreted it as a reference to—if not a reenactment of—the old Zaporozhian tradition of Cossacks’ communication with their leaders “without ceremony” (*zaprosto*). In Zaporozhia, harsh discipline within the host, maintained by the ataman, did not exclude—but rather implied—the host’s emotional attachment to him. “In these days, Taman, the cradle of the first Zaporozhians settled to Kuban, was living the life of its forefathers, where the strict compliance with the military subordination was combined with the sincere love of its Kosh Father to his Sich . . .” Kontsevich was struck by the new, ostensibly heartfelt character of communication, which became apparent during the festivities. As he wrote, “the cordial ease of relationship touched to tears the eyewitnesses of these celebrations.” He thought of what he had seen as a birth of a new community. “The whole family, gathered in Taman, represented a powerful, invincible force, bound by solidarity, the faith in its Ataman, and the love to the Motherland.” Kontsevich did not articulate the scope of the “Motherland” he wrote about, but all the evidence leaves little doubt about what motherland he had in mind. Rather than the empire at large, Holy Rus’, or even Kuban as such, he most likely meant Chernomoria.⁵⁷⁷

4.4. Staging Zaporozhia: Havrylo Dobroskok and his Plays

The solemnities reached their apogee in the open-air staging of a play, written especially for two occasions, the first being the bicentenary anniversary of the Kuban host’s choir, and the second, the unveiling of the monument. Its author was a prolific Ekaterinodar-based writer and public activist Havrylo/Gavriil Dobroskok. The plot of the play, named *The Cossack Forefathers* (*Kozats’ki pradidy*), was centered on the foundation moment for

⁵⁷⁶ G. M. Kontsevich, “Iz vospominanii o Tamanskikh torzhestvakh,” *KKL*, 12 January 1912, 1.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

the Black Sea Cossack host—its emergence from the scattered groups of Zaporozhian Cossacks in the 1780s in the territory between the lower reaches of the Dniester and South Bug, prior to the Black Sea Cossack colonization of the North Caucasus. This play became the key reenactment scenario of the holiday, in which the past of the host appeared before the eyes of the celebrating public in the guise of the large actors' team dressed in exotic and colorful historical costumes. Those, who were not able to attend the play, could enjoy the publication of the play and thus become familiar with the artistic reinterpretation of the history of the host's origin, sponsored and propagated officially. What was the oddest thing here was that the persona charged with an important task of visualizing the official myth of the host's descent from Zaporozhia was, in effect, an earnest adversary of the myth's loyalist implication. Strange as it might seem, the Kuban administration entrusted the composition of the play to an ardent Ukrainian national activist with socialist allegiances.

Havrylo Dobroskok did not belong to the Cossack estate, being born outside of Kuban, in a peasant family in the Kharkov/Kharkiv gubernia. Perhaps, he was not the most famous child of his parents, for his brother Nikolai Dobroskokov earned notoriety in the imperial capital as an experienced agent provocateur, responsible for the debacle of the social democratic underground in St. Petersburg in the inter-revolutionary years.⁵⁷⁸ Dobroskok belonged to the cohort of enterprising Ukrainian nationalists who moved to Kuban in the early 1900s with the aim to agitate the local population to win their sympathies for the Ukrainian national cause. In Ekaterinodar, he was fortunate enough to assume the position of the director of the town's public library, holding this post for almost thirteen years.⁵⁷⁹ Being of a leftist persuasion but with no party affiliation, Dobroskok had an aversion to the local pride in the subjugation of the North Caucasus and the dominant imagery of the Cossack colonizers as the ones who brought the fruits of European civilization to the "barbaric mountainous tribes." Turning the local colonial rhetoric upside down, he characterized the Cossacks of his time as unsuccessful colonists, whose own economy and the way of life remained at a lower level of development. In the countryside, as he wrote in one of his articles, the Cossack population "reside in such a wild and ignorant condition, in which, it may be, live the Hottentots" (which was a cliché

⁵⁷⁸ V. Levitskii, "Provokator 'Nikolai-Zolotyie ochki'," RGALI, f. 1337, op. 1, d. 131, ll. 1–27. See also the Department's of Police file on N. Dobroskok: GARF, f. 102, op. 316, d. 202-1913, ll. 1–17.

⁵⁷⁹ On Dobroskok, see V. Chumachenko, "Do istorii ukrains'koi dramaturhii (H. V. Dobroskok)," *Donets'kyi visnyk naukovoho tovarystva im. Shevchenka* 5 (2004): 458–68.

from the repertoire of the European colonialist discourse). For him, the Cossacks themselves were living “on the ruins of the disappeared culture,” being the immediate cause of its very disappearance. The colonizers did not make the land to which they came cultured, but rather the cultural deepness of this land made them more civilized. As Dobroskok put it, “in the times of Zaporozhia, the Circassians were more cultured than the today’s Cossacks.”⁵⁸⁰

For all his anti-Cossack stance, Dobroskok highly evaluated the capacity of the Zaporozhian imagery to serve as a means of affecting the affinities of the population in the region. Like Symon Petliura a few years before, Dobroskok did not hesitate to utilize memory issues for political needs, referring to the Zaporozhian origin of the Kuban Cossacks in his agitation. In doing so, he shared the practice of his rivals from the part of imperial loyalists. Both sides considered the figures of Zaporozhians as convenient, amenable assistants in promoting the values they strove to instill in the Kuban society. Both agreed that in order to achieve certain changes the Kuban Cossacks should follow the lead of their forefathers. Beyond that, both laid exclusive claim to the right of being the mediators in the communication between the dead and the living, and to the knowledge of the true history of the Sich that the Zaporozhians left for the posterity.

Dobroskok first gained notice as a playwright in 1906, just in the midst of the revolution, with his play *The Eagle of the Sich* (*Sichovyi orel*). Set in 1653, one of the culminating years of the Khmelnytskyi uprising, which one might think of as the heyday of the Zaporozhian glory, it was the first historical play by a local author to have been staged in Kuban. Although not welcomed by the theater critics for its amateurish character, it nonetheless was a remarkable event in the cultural life of the town—not in terms of its artistic merits or dramatic excellence, but in terms of its apparent and implicit ambitions. *The Eagle of the Sich* aimed to acquaint the audience with an unfamiliar realm of the past—a land that was far away from Kuban and an era that long preceded the Kuban colonization. What Dobroskok expected from the part of the audience was that it would recognize this exotic locale and its inhabitants as the origins of their own history. In effect, Dobroskok familiarized the Kuban Cossacks with their “genuine” homeland and their “own” forefathers. The plot of the play, awkward in its dramatic conception, was seemingly built upon a tragic love story. Two Zaporozhian Cossacks, Andrii and Hordii,

⁵⁸⁰ G. Dobroskok, “V tiur’me,” *Kuban*, 18 January 1906, 2.

underwent the ritual of fraternization, vowing mutual fidelity just to suddenly reveal that both were fallen in love with the same woman, Mariia. Devastated and totally unable to find any way out, they sought an advice of the kurin ataman, Ocheret, who, without knowing of their oath, suggested that only the duel would resolve their rivalry and decide the winner of the contest for Mariia's hand. Hordii took the upper hand and mortally wounded Andrii. Fully obedient to the fate, dying Andrii blessed the marriage of his blood brother, but instead of putting an end to the despair, his death merely triggered a chain of further tragedies. As the supreme Cossack authorities found out about what happened, they sentenced Hordii to death by burying him alive together with the corpse of Hordii's sworn brother. The plot unfolds around the approaching execution, the efforts of some characters to prevent it, and Hordii's fortunate salvation by ataman Ocheret, who took full responsibility for what had happened and committed suicide before the eyes of the Zaporozhian community. The seemingly thrilling storyline, however, was essentially more of a subservient function. Dobroskok appears to have been more concerned with edifying the audience than conveying it aesthetic pleasure. Scattered throughout dialogues was information about the Cossacks' exploits, the hetmans of Zaporozhia, basic knowledge about the most significant Siches, and other details that provided incognizant dwellers of Kuban a glimpse into the Zaporozhian past. In parallel with that, all the dialogues were overladen with the repeated use of the word *Ukraine*. In this regard, the play was a means of instilling the audience the feeling of national awareness and teaching them a lesson in the history of their purported motherland.

In the play, Ukraine figures as the entity of utmost importance, which gives meaning to everything that is happening and is conceived of as the measure of all things: everything makes sense only with relation to Ukraine, having either positive or negative impact on it. Cossacks act nowhere but in Ukraine, for Ukraine, and on behalf of Ukraine, whereas neither notions of "Rus" or "Russia" nor the Orthodox faith as the driving force of the Cossack fight, the essential components of the classic imperial depiction of Zaporozhia, were ever mentioned in the play's text. The *raison d'être* of the Zaporozhian Sich is the struggle for Ukraine as such. The aim of the rebellion, led by Khmelnytskyi, is to "expel the enemies from Ukraine" (43). Virtually every man who joined the ranks of the Zaporozhians, regardless of his origin or the personal motives that brought him to the Sich, became a fighter for Ukraine, as a young Cossack Ivas asserted: "There are those who speak in languages entirely different from ours, certainly from remote alien lands, but

they also fight well for Ukraine” (40). It comes as no surprise that Ukraine is presented not merely as a geographic reality, but as a living organism, capable of acting and feeling. This is how ataman Ocheret envisioned Ukraine when he mentally warned Bohdan Khmelnytskyi: “Watch out, don’t sell Ukraine out to the lords [*panam*]. So much hot blood it shed for its freedom, so many holy widow’s tears it wept.” (21) What is more, Ukraine appears as a sacred entity, a substitute of God, invoked in the most dramatic life events, such as the ritual of Cossack fraternization or death. Thus, to become sworn brothers, Hordii and Andrii had to vow “to live as one soul and to love Ukraine with one soul” (5). In the climactic scene, a few moments before killing himself, Ocheret utters the last words in his life—all addressed to Ukraine. „Forgive me, mother Ukraine, I haven’t born the burden to the end! Live then, Ukraine, forever and ever [*od viku do viku*]!! Blossom with cherry orchards, thrive with dark meadows! Show the beauty of father Dnieper, give birth to sons, free and mighty, so that they would forever stand up for the smallest of their brothers and fight for freedom and land. Let your glory spread anywhere and everywhere for many, many years!” (61).

A crime against the foundations of the Zaporozhian life meant a crime against Ukraine. It was a kind of crime committed by Hordii after his killing of Andrii and the subsequent effort to flee from the Sich with the help of his fellow Cossacks, once saved by him on a battlefield. Rather than an atrocity in its own right, it is conceived as a betrayal of Ukraine. Mariia blamed her lover for what he did, cursing him in the name of Ukraine: “Your fathers! Your ancestors! All your glorious Cossack progenitors shed their hot blood for the will of Ukraine, while you ventured to be the villain Judah!” Indeed, according to her, it was precisely Ukraine that would remember Hordii’s evil deeds. “In Ukraine, you will be remembered with great disgrace and terrible outrage, as a great sinner, the bards will sing their songs about the horrible traitor” (45). Likewise, her accusation of Hordii’s fellow Cossacks sounded in the same way. “While the whole Ukraine rose to fight, you conceived the betrayal! You let infamy and disorder in the Zaporozhian host and by this help the enemies of the Ukrainian land!” (47).⁵⁸¹

To make the audience feel the scenes from mid-seventeenth-century Ukraine to be a part of their own history, Dobroskok played on the sameness of the names of Cossack quarters in the Sich and the names of the original settlers’ settlements in Chernomoria.

⁵⁸¹ G. Dobroskok, *Sichovyi orel* (Ekaterinodar: Typografiiia t-va “Soglasie,” 1906).

Thus, he presented the main protagonists of the play as the Cossacks of the Pashkivs'kyi and Vasiuryns'kyi kurins—the toponyms well known to Ekaterinodar inhabitants, for they sounded just the same as the names of Pashkovskaia and Vasiurinskaia stanitsas, the Cossack settlements in close proximity to Ekaterinodar (which were also called “kurins” until 1842). Indeed, the trick worked well. An announcement, published in a local liberal newspaper, characterized the play as the one depicting “the historical themes and scenes of everyday life of Pashkivs'kyi and Vasiuryns'kyi kurins.” Obviously, the author referred here to the Black Sea Cossack stanitsas, and this is exactly how the newspaper's readers could understand his words.⁵⁸²

The play's nationalist sentiment did not go unnoticed. One of the liberal critics, skeptical about the artistic values of the play but giving Dobroskok his due for his “love to Ukraine” and the desire to glorify the “knights of Zaporozhia,” was highly surprised by the play's subversive, revolutionary sounding subtext. As he reported, at the premiere, one Cossack officer left the hall in protest, which is why he had thought that both the author and the director of the show would be brought to justice. Yet he was surprised twice as much subsequently by the authorization of the publication of the play, with all its politically precarious allegations, by the administration.⁵⁸³

The struggle with the imperial loyalists over the right to speak on behalf of the Zaporozhians was the subject of the Dobroskok's play *In Kuban (Na Kubani)*, published in 1909. Its plot revolved around the return of two Cossack brothers to their home in an unknown Kuban stanitsa. Having left the family in their youth, the long-absent Cossacks came back home with drastically different experience behind them and, consequently, outlooks on life, heavily impacted by the recent revolution. One became a Cossack officer, an ardent adherent of autocracy holding extreme right-wing views, while another was an erudite university graduate and a partisan of the revolutionary ideas. The former extolled the tsar, orthodoxy, and the Russian nationhood, while the latter was a devoted Ukrainian nationalist. Their names, Ostap and Andrii respectively, were a direct allusion to the main characters of the Gogol's novel *Taras Bulba*.

The controversy raised over the question of how should the Kuban Cossacks react to the revolutionary challenges. For both Andrii and Ostap it was clear that they should behave as the genuine Zaporozhian descendants who abide by the will of their ancestors.

⁵⁸² “Zimnii teatr,” *Novaia Zaria*, 20 October 1906, 3–4.

⁵⁸³ “Sichevyi Orel,” *Novaia Zaria*, 3 November 1906, 3.

In their view, the response to the revolution was to be predetermined by—and could not go beyond—the precepts of the Sich. As an exponent of the official discourse, Ostap believed that the true Zaporozhian heirs cannot but fight it. Andrii, as the Dobroskok's alter ego and a spokesman for the Ukrainian national myth, portrayed the Sich as a prototype of the progressive, democratic society. Ostap was outraged by the changes the revolution brought to the Kuban countryside, particularly by the revolutionary songs sung by *inogorodnie* that he heard in the stanitsa on his way to home. This led him to speculate about how the new times corrupted the values of old Zaporozhia:

What good can we expect in our state, then, if it has gone so far that in our Cossack stanitsa where the Cossacks faithfully served to the fatherland from the times immemorial, some outsider rabble sings revolutionary songs. How did they dare to desecrate us in the very nest of the Cossacks! Do they know who are we? The Kuban Cossacks are the direct descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians, and the Zaporozhians shed their knightly blood for the faith and the fatherland for so many centuries. We must brag about it, it is our national pride, so we have to ceaselessly extend the glory of our grandparents, not to diminish it. (10)

No one in the family put into question the Kuban Cossacks' origin from Zaporozhia, and everyone took pride in their genealogy. Moreover, each agreed that they needed to act according to Zaporozhian principles. Each, however, understood these principles differently. For Ostap, the idea of Zaporozhia served to strengthen his monarchist allegiances. Andrii referred to Zaporozhia to substantiate his anti-imperial stance:

Ostap: If you praise the Zaporozhians, then do as they did! They were fighting for the faith, for Russia, and for the Orthodoxy!

Andrii: That is why they run away from Russia to the Turks twice. Have you, Ostap, ever heard about Ataman Hordienko, or about Kalnyshevs'kyi? (19)

As Ostap began pointing to the Zaporozhians' atrocities against the Jews as the justification for modern Cossacks' anti-Semitism, the youngest brother, Yurko, attacked Ostap for perverting the Ukrainian history: "Because of your ignorance, you severely denigrate the very best that the Ukrainian people has. You disgrace, without knowing it, its great past, you attribute to it reactionary [*chornosotenni*] events, which actually did not

take place.” (23) In Yurko’s—and Dobroskok’s—view, reactionary interpretation of the Zaporozhian myth wholly distorted the actual past. “Had you known the history of Ukraine better than you do,” as Yurko continued to reproach Ostap, “you would have known that the Ukrainian people has been distinguished by its tolerance since the ancient times, that all sorts of foreign nations have freely lived in Ukraine since the ancient times We Ukrainians can and must proudly remember our mournful past, instead of imposing on it the inverted [interpretation of] events as you do.” (24)⁵⁸⁴

The examination of the play by GUP, conducted after the Dobroskok’s request to allow him staging it in theater, led to the prohibition of its public performance.⁵⁸⁵ Quite surprisingly, censorship did not pay attention to the Ukrainian nationalist overtone of the play. The censor of dramatic works Mikhail Alferaki, who carried out the expertise, made no mention of real or supposed “dangers” of the Ukrainian separatism that the play would contain—an odd attitude given the entirely different way in which censorship commonly treated Ukrainian-language texts that used to come under its scrutiny. It was not to imply that the Dobroskok’s nationalist subtext went unnoticed by the censor. Rather, the socialist constituent of the play overshadowed the nationalist one. Alferaki described the whole essence of *In Kuban* as a political debate between a committed socialist, who won the credence of the rest of family members, and a lone representative of the right-wing camp, who was portrayed “in a false position of a defender of ideas that, in the author’s opinion, do not withstand criticism.” Arguing for the ban of the play, Alferaki advocated it as a measure demanded by the current moment: “I do not think that at the present troubled time the performance of this play on stage would seem desirable.” Such wording left some room for the play to be allowed for staging in the years to come, when the situation would come down. Apparently, GUP never reconsidered its decision, but it did not prevent the publication of the play in Ekaterinodar in 1909 as a separate brochure.⁵⁸⁶

Already in 1910, a month before the Taman celebrations, yet another novel by Dobroskok found itself in center of a scandal. In September 1910, the Rostov censor, Vasiliï Kanskii, drew attention of the central censorship committee to the brochure *To the Shadows of the Past (Teniam proshlogo)*, which caused his anger by its hostile attitude

⁵⁸⁴ G. Dobroskok, *Na Kubani* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia “Osnova,” 1909).

⁵⁸⁵ G. Dobroskok to GUP, March 26, 1907, RGIA, f. 776, op. 25, d. 891, l. 96.

⁵⁸⁶ M. Alferaki to the Head of GUP, 7 April 1907, RGIA, f. 776, op. 26, d. 26, ll. 99, 99 ob.

toward the Russian empire's victory in the battle of Poltava.⁵⁸⁷ "The author," informed the censor, "condemns the celebration of the victory of Poltava and tries to belittle its significance." As the celebration of the victory was the government's initiative, held at the official level, the author of the brochure should be charged with a crime against the government for his provoking the hostile attitude toward its activity on the part of population. Kanskii reported about imposing a provisional arrest on the publication and requested the Ekaterinodar district court to raise the issue of the brochure's arrest and to initiate criminal proceedings against the person in response of publication. Remarkably, it was not Dobroskok whom Kanskii suggested to persecute, but the owner of the publishing house, Ivan Boiko.⁵⁸⁸ As a result of the following requests of GUP to find and punish the guilty, which reached the Kuban ataman, the only person to whom the Kuban side put the blame proved to be a manager of the typography, who committed the crime "by an oversight." In the end, nobody was punished. Moreover, in December 1910 the Ekaterinodar district court quashed the arrest warrant on the Dobroskok's brochure.⁵⁸⁹

In his works, Dobroskok's perspective on the Cossack history appears as shaped, profoundly influenced by, and fully accordant with the Ukrainian nationalist imagination of the time. With their evident anti-Russian overtone and the passionate love to the Sich as the self-sufficient Ukrainian republic, Dobroskok's texts quite eloquently reflected the author's allegiances. The somewhat complicated fate of his writings with regard to censorship, which, in the end, did not prevent their publication for the broad audience, only contributes to the complexity of the situation. As concerns the history of Zaporozhia and its fate, Dobroskok's sympathies clearly were on the side of those, who fell victims of the Russian government, like the last ataman of the Sich, Petro Kalnyshevs'kyi. He even attempted to organize the celebration of the anniversary of Kalnyshevs'kyi's death (103 years, which was hardly an appropriate date to celebrate), but the administration did not give its approval.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁷ I have not found the brochure in Russian library collections, but the censor's letter gives an idea of its overall mood and purpose.

⁵⁸⁸ Rostov Inspector for the Press to GUP, 30 September 1910, RGIA, f. 776, op. 16, ch. 2-1910, d. 1049, ll. 1,1 ob.

⁵⁸⁹ Rostov Inspector for the Press to GUP, 28 December 1910, RGIA, f. 776, op. 16, ch. 2-1910, d. 1049, l. 5.

⁵⁹⁰ H. Dobroskok to D. Yavornyts'kyi, 12 November 1906, *ESAYa* 2: 159. Instead, he confined himself to publishing a small article: G. Dobroskok, "Pamiati P. I. Kalnyshevskogo," *Svoboda*, 1 November 1906, 3.

In contrast to his praise of Kalnyshevs'kyi, Dobroskok felt little, if any, sympathy for the Zaporzhian leadership that brought to existence the Black Sea host. After the destruction of the Sich, while ordinary Zaporozhians escaped to Turkey, as Dobroskok explained in one of his articles, the mercenary Cossack officers, headed by Holovaty, "received estates and thought to build cute nests for their families on the ruins of the great republican nest." It was only after they realized their helplessness without the host that the officers, "licking the hands" of the imperial authorities, requested the host's restoration.⁵⁹¹ What made the views of Dobroskok particularly remarkable was the fact that, his disdain for the dishonest *starshyna* notwithstanding, Dobroskok did not openly attack it in his texts, intended for the broad audience. To win the attention and gain the trust of the Kuban readers, he did not encroach on the foundation myth of the Black Sea Cossack host, rather positively characterizing the host's founding fathers. As Dobroskok himself admitted, he used this tactics in one of his earliest writings, showing false sympathy for the historical figures whom he actually disliked. "Making use of my right of fiction writer, I distorted the history, idealizing their names and portraying them as knights, ready to sacrifice for the *narod* their souls and bodies, whereas in actual fact they belonged to that kind of *starshina*, which... had sold Zaporozhia and put Kalnyshevskii and the honest *starshina* into monasteries and prisons."⁵⁹²

In 1911, Dobroskok produced his most celebrated play, *The Cossack Forefathers*. On the surface, the officially commissioned play presented the audience a cheerful story of the emergence of the Black Sea Cossacks. Imbued with the celebratory atmosphere of the holiday, the play portrayed the ancestors of the Kuban Cossacks as courageous warriors, whose military achievements during the Russo-Turkish war brought them fame and respect of the imperial army commanders. Black Sea Cossack characters of the play enjoyed particular favor of the greatest Russian general Aleksandr Suvorov and were on close terms with Grigorii Potemkin, the almighty ruler of the newly acquired territories of the Russian Empire. Dobroskok narrated a story with happy-end story, in which the Cossacks eventually arrived to Kuban, "the promised land" of their own, "like the ancient Israelites" (82).

Behind the façade of imperial loyalism, however, one could easily find a nationalist, anti-imperial foundation of the play. Multiple dialogues, scattered through the

⁵⁹¹ G. Dobroskok, "V tiur'me," *Kuban*, 18 January 1906, 2.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

play, worked to undermine the very idea envisaged by the organizers of the celebrations. Dobroskok smuggled into his play numerous politically charged scenes, covertly criticizing the imperial order at every turn. In a brief dialog between the founding fathers of the Black Sea host, Sydir Bilyi and Anton Holovatyi, the two chieftains set up the legal foundations of functioning of the future Cossack community that they had conceived of as the successor of Zaporozhia:

Bilyi: Give the land to the Cossacks! Give them our freedoms! Let them held councils so that they could elect their leader [*koshovoho*] and other senior military executives [*starshynu*] by free votes! Then the Cossacks will be the Cossacks. Then the old Cossack glory will unfold and blossom, and our enemies will learn about our heroic deeds.

Holovatyi: It will be! Indeed, it will be! Let my fellow Cossack beat me with sticks if I lie, but everything will be! [It is so great that] I want to sing. (13)

Thus, the idea of the Zaporozhian republicanism, so crucial for the political aspirations of the Ukrainian national movement, found its way into the play commissioned by representatives of the authorities that were anything but elected by free vote. In the play, the first chieftains of the Black Sea host bequeathed the principle of self-government to their heirs as a necessary precondition for the Black Sea Cossacks' well-being, warning against its violation. As the audience was supposed to be perfectly informed that the local authorities had long been appointed rather than elected, it might be easy for it to deduce the reason for the Cossacks' actual problems.

His views on the political foundations of the host aside, Holovatyi, as Dobroskok portrayed him, had not forgotten neither the fact of the destruction of Sich, nor the fact of who was its actual destructor. In the same scene described above, Holovatyi indeed began to sing. However, instead of singing the glory to the empress, he unintentionally mourned devastated Zaporozhia:

Oh, a bomb was flying
From the Moscow side
And it fell in the midst of Sich.
Hey, though the Zaporozhians were perished
Their glory has not been lost.

As if having suddenly thought that it was the wrong song, he recognized the mistake and started another one:

Oh, from the town of Elyzavethrad
The gray eagles were flying out. (13)

Dobroskok did not let the audience to hear the rest of the song as he switches to the next episode, which is why the second singing attempt by Holovatyi appeared not as seditious as the previous one. In actual fact, had the audience proceeded to hear, it would have heard a song that directly incriminated the imperial authorities in the tragic fate of Zaporozhia. This song, recorded in the late nineteenth century, blamed the Muscovite “senators, generals, and colonels,” who gathered together to come up with a plan of taking away the lands of the Sich and dividing it among themselves. As the Muscovites succeeded in carrying out their cruel plans, the Zaporozhians escaped to the Ottoman territory in search of a better life.⁵⁹³ Dobroskok stopped short of citing the song through the help of the Holovatyi’s character, but an initiated reader or viewer would have recognized the hidden message.

Dobroskok’s characters repeatedly mentioned defectors from the Sich to the Ottoman lands, who found there an asylum from the oppressive empire, bringing into the picture this Cossack community, ostracized in the imperial discourse, as yet another offspring of Zaporozhia. For the author, perhaps, a more genuine one.

If the Cossack leaders easily found mutual understanding with the Russian army commanders, for the ordinary Zaporozhians the Muscovite language seemed incomprehensible. A conversational exchange between two rank-and-file Cossacks that were listening to a speech of imperial representatives, passingly lays stress on the unlikeness of the Russians and Ukrainians. “Hush. Let’s hear what they are talking about. For it’s the Muscovite language. We don’t grasp it,” told the first speaker. “It’s not that bad. We’ll figure out a tenth part, at least,” assured him his companion (31). While the Cossacks did not understand the Russians, they did not treat them positively, too. “He is a generous soul, although a Muscovite,” spoke one Cossack about Suvorov. Although a favorable characteristic on the surface, it concealed a negative attitude toward Suvorov’s compatriots (38).

⁵⁹³ D. I. Evarnitskii, *Zaporozh’ie v ostatkakh stariny i predaniakh naroda*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Izdanie L. F. Panteleeva, 1888), 163.

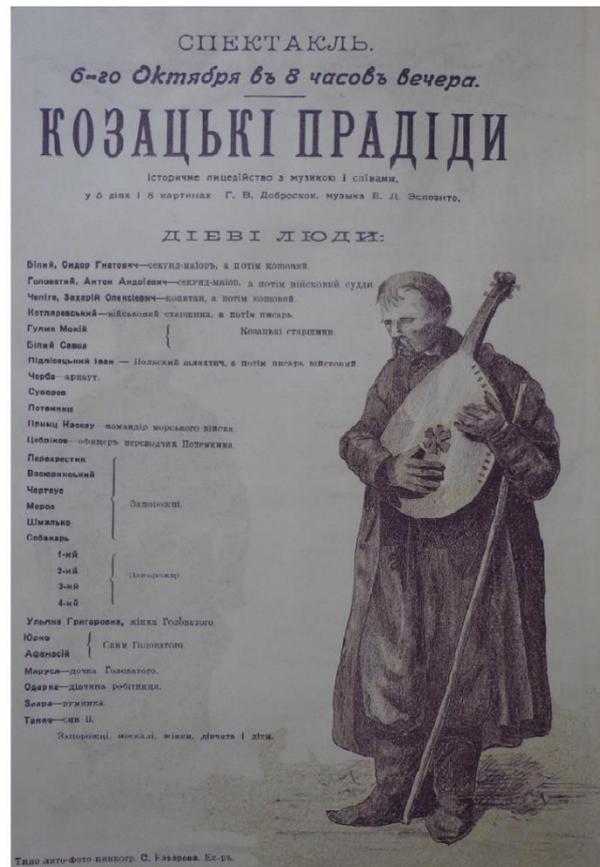


Fig. 8. Decorated pages of the playbill of the celebrations in Taman. 1911, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Krasnodarskogo kraia, Krasnodar.

Dobroskok questioned the whole idea of the fest, which celebrated the succession from the Zaporozhian host to the Black Sea host. In some dialogs, he drew a line of distinction between the two, implicating that the transition dramatically changed the Cossacks. Cossack figures representing the newly established Black Sea host declared that they no longer felt themselves as Zaporozhians: “We were ‘Zaporozhians’ once, but now we found ourselves as ‘Black Sea Cossacks’.” Here, the first interlocutor fixed the semantic break, while his peer loaded it with the negative connotation, saying, “Neither we are Zaporozhians, nor our songs are mirthful.” (75)

In the concluding scene of the Cossacks arrival to Taman, Dobroskok portrayed no mass excitement among the newcomers about their entering into possession over the new domain. Instead, the overall atmosphere of the moment was permeated by another feeling—a sorrow of parting with their homeland. As the dialog below demonstrates, Dobroskok used his personages to didactic ends, not only inculcating the audience with the national feeling, but also presenting it as a duty toward their ancestors:

1st Black Sea Cossack: Farewell, our native land! We will never forget you!

2nd Black Sea Cossack: Just as a child cannot forget its mother, a Cossack will never forget Ukraine.

1st woman: Because there lay the bones of our parents and grandparents. (74)

The final chorus of the play was an open ode to Ukraine, Dobroskok's overt disclosure of his Ukrainian national sentiment. The play's characters appeared in front of the audience, joining their voices in the song that was more of a manifesto of their belonging to the wider Ukrainian whole.

We drenched with blood for long,
our faraway Ukraine,
our great family,
not giving it to the foes.

As a matter of fact, the pronoun "our" here was meant to designate not only the group of artists, but to embrace the community of spectators as well. Dobroskok's special emphasis on the firm ties between the last Zaporozhians and the land they were leaving was unequivocal: whereas the Zaporozhian Cossacks loved Ukraine above their lives, their descendants, too, should keep this love in their hearts. What is more, the main outlet for their love was to be, ideally, a political action that would bring Kuban back into the arms of Ukraine. All the more so that it was an idyllic land, worthy of being longed for. As the song went on, Dobroskok was even more generous on epithets:

We had to leave
a cheerful land, like the God's heaven,
shedding bitter tears. (82)⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁴ G. Dobroskok, *Kozats'ki pradiy* (Ekaterinodar: Typografia tovarystva "Rekord," 1911).



Fig. 9. Actors of the troupe dressed in Zaporozhian costumes. Source: P. Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv v stanitsa Tamanskoi* (Ekaterinodar: Tipografiia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia, 1912), 62.

How did the Host ventured to entrust the composition of the key text to the Ukrainian nationalist playwright? Presumably, town hearsays in Ekaterinodar characterized Dobroskok as a favorite of the Kuban authorities. In the mid-1960s, the Ukrainian Krasnodar-based writer Omelian/Emel'ian Rozumiienko recounted a second-hand testimony he had heard from a local poet Oleksa Kyrii. The latter assured that the *nakaznoi* ataman enjoyed his first play *The Eagle of the Sich* so much that he granted to Dobroskok two thousand rubles in gold and the position of director of the Ekaterinodar public library, which was “a great honor from the ataman.” The portrait of Dobroskok was hung in the ataman’s personal cabinet, and the guard of the costumed Cossacks protected the entrance to it. Moreover, the authorities organized a special train with a stage, which

moved around from one stanitsa to another, showing the performance of *The Eagle of the Sich* so that as many Kuban Cossacks as possible would see it.⁵⁹⁵

Some details pertaining to the occasional collaboration between Dobroskok and the Host have become clear thanks to a financial confusion that occurred in connection with the play. In September 1911, soon after the Host solemnly staged the play in Ekaterinodar, an agent of the Society of Dramatic Writers visited Kiiashko to collect royalty for the public performance of the play. It turned out, instead, that the copyright on *The Cossack Forefathers* belonged not to Dobroskok, but to the Host, which had bought the play for 400 rubles “in perpetuity,” for which neither the author, nor even his heirs could make financial claims against the Host. The correspondence that followed sheds light on some interesting nuances: most of the actors, who performed the play, were not professionals, but rank-and-file Cossacks. Thus, it was more of a carnival show, in which the descendants of the Zaporozhian Cossacks reincarnated into their own ancestors, rendering the time distance separating the Sich from the Kuban host irrelevant and bridging the gap between the two. As the rest of the Cossacks could watch the play, in either Ekaterinodar or Tamanskaia for free, the play acquired even more significance, turning into a common heritage.⁵⁹⁶

The correspondence also reveals important circumstances related to the unusual contract. First of all, the Host representatives attached great importance to the play. As they bought it for perpetuity and for a considerable amount of money, they clearly had an intention to stage it for a long time to come. They also planned to reprint the text of the play repeatedly in the future, ignoring and, moreover, authorizing, its Ukrainian nationalist message. We do not know how much of what Dobroskok planned to include in his work he really managed to convey to the audience. According to the testimonies of Dobroskok, his play went through various alterations made by the director of the performance. Writing to the head of the Society, Dobroskok complained about multiple cuts, corrections, and insertions, which noticeably changed the play. Curiously, Dobroskok even appealed for the protection of the state censorship, which approved the text of the play and, therefore, was obliged to protect it from the further potential

⁵⁹⁵ E. D. Rozumienko, “Pis'mo V. N. Orlu,” in *Vtorye kubanskie literaturno-istoricheskie chteniia*, ed. V. Chumachenko (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskii gosudarstvennyi universitet kul'tury i iskusstv, 2000), 221.

⁵⁹⁶ The agent of the Society of dramatic writers in Ekaterinodar to the Head of the Society, 28 April 1911, RGALI, f. 2097, op. 2, ed. khr. 546, ll. 223–25.

correctives.⁵⁹⁷ Although it does not seem possible to trace what kind of changes did the director make, the Ukrainian nationalist meaning of the original text did not undergo substantial revision.⁵⁹⁸

Surprisingly, the Kuban authorities did not suspect *The Cossack Forefathers* of having a seditious subtext and did not question its loyalist purport. Moreover, in the autumn of 1912, the official Kuban delegation presented the brochure with the text of the play to the emperor, as a gift to Aleksei Nikolaevich.⁵⁹⁹

4.5. Congratulations to the Host

Various officials, officers, Cossack assemblies, institutions, and establishments sent many dozens of letters and telegrams sent to the organizers of the celebrations. Their rhetoric embodied a radical shift in the perception of the Kuban history and the image of the Kuban host. Just as the broad segments of the Kuban educated society celebrated the Khoper anniversary in 1896, now they readily acknowledged and embraced the new, Zaporozhian vision of the local tradition. Although those letters and telegrams fulfilled quite a simple function—congratulating the Kuban host and its administration with the host’s holiday and, more importantly, unveiling of the monument to the Zaporozhian settlers, they present an important source for analysis.

In 1911, the Zaporozhian lineage of the Kuban Cossacks emerged as an undisputable fact. Formulaic expressions of the dignitaries expressed the idea of Zaporozhia as the genealogical root of the entire Kuban host. Thus, the viceroy, Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov called the Zaporozhian Cossacks “the valiant predecessors [*predki*]” of the Kuban host.⁶⁰⁰ Another metaphor was even more demonstrative. The viceroy’s assistant for military affairs, Infantry General Nikolai Shatilov, referred to the

⁵⁹⁷ G. Dobroskok to the Head of the Society of Dramatic Writers, 12 October 1911, RGALI, f. 2097, op. 2, ed. khr. 546, ll. 236–37 ob.

⁵⁹⁸ At least, the personality of the director who staged the play, Onysym/Anisim Suslov, gives no reason to assume that he could “Russify” the ideology of the play. As a famous Ukrainian/Little Russian actor and theater entrepreneur, Suslov was a disciple of Marko Kropyvnyts’kyi, the founder of the modern Ukrainian theater, whose troupe was as much a group of professional artists as a zealous itinerant proselytizer of the Ukrainian nationhood.

⁵⁹⁹ “Mestnaia zhizn’,” *KKL*, 23 February 1912, 3; “Spisok knigam, otpravlennym s deputatsiei,” GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 213, l. 21 ob.

⁶⁰⁰ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 81.

Zaporozhians as the Kuban Cossacks' "immortal progenitors [*rodonachal'niki*]," implicitly characterizing the host as an organic community, united by genetic bonds.⁶⁰¹ Georgii Berkhman, the chief of staff of the Caucasus military district, used the same term, calling the Zaporozhian Cossacks "the progenitors [*rodonachal'niki*] of the glorious Kuban Cossacks."⁶⁰² Lieutenant General Ivan Soimonov, the director of the Vladikavkaz Cadet Corps, mentioned the Zaporozhians as "the ancestors of the present-day Kuban Cossacks."⁶⁰³ In his telegram, the former long-term ataman of the Ekaterinodarskii district, the retired Lieutenant-General Vasilii Savitskii, congratulated the Cossacks with "the realization of the long-cherished dream" of the Kuban host to "worthily commemorate its glorious ancestors, who constituted the core of the Kuban Cossack host."⁶⁰⁴ Emphasizing the "core" place of the Black Sea Cossacks within the Kuban host, Savitskii saw the holiday as restoration of justice with regard to Cernomoria and negation of the wrong premises of the jubilee of 1896.

The festive rhetoric went as far as to make the Zaporozhian Cossacks the universal ancestors of every Kuban Cossack unit, including its commanders. Remarkably, even the commanders of Cossack cavalry divisions of the Caucasus, who were of non-Kuban origin, spoke of the Zaporozhian Cossacks as of "our" ancestors. The former head of the Kuban oblast, Nikolai Mikhailov, who then served as the commander of the 1st Caucasus Cossack division, wrote that he and his division honored "the memory of our ancestors, the glorious Zaporozhians."⁶⁰⁵ Likewise, Lieutenant General Sergei Fleisher, the commander of the 2nd Caucasus Cossack division, called the monument "the epitome of our internal connection with the glorious Zaporozhians, our ancestors"⁶⁰⁶

The flow of complimentary telegrams and letters from different settlements across the Kuban oblast provides an insight into local imagination. Numerous greetings were addressed not to the Kuban host, but to the Black Sea host, as if this community persisted into the early twentieth century, representing a coherent and distinct whole that existed separately from its Line Cossack counterpart. Thus, for example, the school of khutor Sosyyskii greeted "the Black Sea host" with the unveiling of the monument.⁶⁰⁷ In the

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 85.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., 129.

same way, the teachers of khutor Chernookovskii congratulated “the faithful Black Sea Cossacks” with the fete.⁶⁰⁸ While these settlements were located in the lands of Chernomoria, similar greetings were coming from elsewhere in the oblast. For instance, the teachers and schoolchildren of stanitsa Giaginskaia greeted “the glorious Black Sea Cossacks.”⁶⁰⁹ Members of the railroad school in the major center of the former Line host, stanitsa Kavkazskaia, greeted “the valiant Black Sea Cossacks with the memorable day.”⁶¹⁰ The school community of stanitsa Tiflisskaia conveyed their greetings to “*Koshevoi Bat’ko* and the Black Sea host.”⁶¹¹ In so doing, the senders of congratulations did not refer to the Black Sea Cossacks as a phenomenon related to the past, which was doomed to extinction. On the contrary, they emphasized the future-orientedness of the Black Sea Cossack community as such. In stanitsa Starominskaia, the teachers and schoolchildren of the local school wished “our Black Sea Cossack host” prosperity.⁶¹² The teachers and schoolchildren of Staroshcherbinovskaia wished the Black Sea Cossacks welfare and further prosperity “for the good of the holy Church, the glory of dear Russia, and the joy of beloved Monarch.”⁶¹³ Far away from Chernomoria, in the Caucasus resort settlement of Goriachii Kliuch, the local school greeted “our native Black Sea host” and prayed “for prosperity of our dear Black Sea Cossacks.”⁶¹⁴ The active major of Eisk, the town that was seemingly adverse to all the things Cossack, “sincerely wished the Black Sea Cossacks to be the faithful pillar of the tsar and the dear motherland.”⁶¹⁵

Some of those, who congratulated the host, lumped the names of the Black Sea and the Kuban host together into an odd compound title, thus rendering them equal. The non-Cossacks school of stanitsa Krymskaia called the festivities to be “the celebration of the Kuban-Black Sea host.”⁶¹⁶ Similarly, the school of stanitsa Akhtanizovskaia greeted “the Kuban-Black Sea host” (using this designation two times).⁶¹⁷ Hyphenated were also the names of the Kuban/Black Sea Cossacks and their Zaporozhian ancestors, which made the differences between the two virtually inessential. The commander of the 2nd brigade of

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid., 140.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid., 145.

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 125.

⁶¹² Ibid., 134.

⁶¹³ Ibid., 125.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 130.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 146.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., 142.

the 1st Caucasus Cossack division greeted “the Kuban-Zaporozhian Cossacks” with the double holiday.⁶¹⁸ The *nakaznoi* ataman of the Don host, Pavel Mishchenko, mixed the names of Zaporozhia and Chernomoria into a single whole, addressing to the Kuban Cossacks as to the descendants of “the Zaporozhians of the faithful Black Sea host [*Zaporozhtsev vernogo voiska Chernomorskogo*].”⁶¹⁹ In one case, the author of the greeting telegram addressed it neither to the Kuban host nor to the Black Sea Cossacks, but simply to the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Nikolai Bukhteev, the commander of the 1st Umanskii regiment, congratulated “the representatives of the glorious Zaporozhian Cossackdom” and wished “long live to the glorious Zaporozhians, the proud and invincible Kuban Cossacks.”⁶²⁰

The attitude of the former Line stanitsas to the idea of the festivities is of particular interest. As the Line Cossacks found themselves excluded from the celebrations, their representatives reacted very differently to the anniversary and the Line Cossacks’ role in it. Some thought of it as of the holiday belonging to the entire Kuban Cossack community. The commander of the 1st Line regiment wrote in his address: “let the Line Cossack join the common festivity of the Kuban Cossacks.”⁶²¹ This logic betrayed a contradiction: although the holiday was common, the heroes of the occasion still were the Cossacks of Chernomoria. The address by the administration of stanitsa Nevinomysskaia stated that the local dwellers, “the descendants of the valiant Khoper Cossacks,” joined “the common Cossack holiday” and expressed “hooray” to their “native host, brothers Black Sea Cossacks, and Kosh father [*bat’ke Koshevomu*].”⁶²² Yet another congratulation sent by the administration of stanitsa Ladozhskaia on behalf of its members, “the Line Cossacks,” greeted “their brothers, the Black Sea Cossacks,” with the centenary of Zaporozhian colonization.⁶²³

These texts dissociated the Cossack communities they claimed to represent from the Black Sea Cossacks, pointing to their distinctive historical experience and historical names (Khoper and Line). At the same time, other “historically” non-Black Sea Cossack settlements proved to be much less “conscious” of their own particularities. The

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., 90.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 94.

⁶²¹ Ibid., 97.

⁶²² Ibid., 113–14.

⁶²³ Ibid., 113.

community of stanitsa Ust'-Labinskaia, one of the main centers of the former Caucasus Line, readily recognized the Zaporozhian Cossacks as their ancestors. As the stanitsa's Cossacks wrote in their greeting, they "prayed for the repose of the souls of the forefathers, the creators of the present-day Kuban host."⁶²⁴ The teachers of stanitsa Labinskaia, founded by the Don Cossacks, commemorated "the forefathers of the Cossackdom, who gave birth to our host."⁶²⁵

Although the monument was at the heart of the celebration, there was no consensus over the issue of whom it portrayed and symbolized. Different greetings related the bronze Cossack figure to different Cossack formations. Teachers of stanitsa Novodereviankovskaia, called it the monument to the "first Zaporozhians."⁶²⁶ The assembly of stanitsa Primorsko-Akhtarskaia, congratulated Babych with the unveiling of the monument to the "first Black Sea Cossacks."⁶²⁷ According to yet another opinion, expressed by the Cossack community of stanitsa Slavianskaia, it was the monument to the "first Kuban Cossacks."⁶²⁸ These views reflected the official vision of the monument as a nameless figure, a typical Cossack of the bygone era. There were also others, who saw it as one of the renowned chieftains. In their telegram, officials of the Ekaterinodar police celebrated the unveiling of the monument of "valiant Ataman Holovatyi."⁶²⁹ Contrary to them, the school community of stanitsa Prochnookopskaia endorsed the appearance of the monument to "the knight of duty and honor, Sidor Belyi."⁶³⁰ Worse still, the retired Major-General Nikifor Darkin considered it to be the monument to two chieftains at once—to "really glorious ancestors Chepiha and Holovatyi."⁶³¹

In light of such a curious amalgamation opinions over the holiday and the monument, the understanding of the host's origins appears to have been too obscure not only for illiterate Cossack communities in all corners of the Kuban oblast, but even for educated strata in the largest settlements and urban centers of the region. The very question of the host's seniority, so pompously celebrated in 1896, was far from being clear to the general public as can be seen from the address sent by the school community of

⁶²⁴ Ibid., 127.

⁶²⁵ Ibid., 127.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 137.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 128.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 138.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 107.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 120.

⁶³¹ Ibid., 92.

stanitsa Starokorsunskaiia. Its authors greeted the Kuban host with its centenary anniversary, disregarding the bicentenary anniversary marked fifteen years before.⁶³²

4.6. Advertising the Monument

As a physical object, the Zaporozhian monument stood in plain sight. Everyone travelling to or from the Crimea could not avoid passing by it on his or her way from the stanitsa to the pier or vice versa. The everyday steamship connection between Taman and Kerch provided the monument with large amount of passersby.⁶³³ At the same time, Taman was an outlying place in all other respects, too remote from Ekaterinodar to be visited by persons wishing to witness the monument. In fact, the symbolic value of the monument far exceeded its merits as a material thing. Those, who could not afford themselves experiencing the awe-inspiring sight of the bronze Zaporozhian figure, were supposed at least to be aware about its existence. Schoolchildren were among the first to be acquainted with the monument. As early as 1909, Director of Primary Schools Mikhail Ponochevnyi proposed Kiiashko to supply the schools with the miniature copies of the monument modeled on the sculpture created by a teacher of handicraft in Eisk. A special commission found that model of bad quality, for which reason the Ponochevnyi's plan failed. Of interest here was a particularistic implication that Ponochevnyi had in mind—the copies were to be distributed among the schools and stanitsas of Chernomoria proper, demarcating a symbolic boundaries along the lines of memory between the land of the former Black Sea Cossacks and other parts of the oblast.⁶³⁴

Soon after the unveiling of the monument, Ponochevnyi came up with another solution of how to ensure the familiarity of Cossack children with the monument. This time, he asked Kiiashko to provide him with no less than 900 copies of the book, devoted to the creation of the monument, for distribution to the local schools. Ponochevnyi promised to introduce “this beautiful, sincere” book into schools “in the best way possible.”⁶³⁵

⁶³² Ibid., 124.

⁶³³ Sokolov, “St. Taman’ Kub. obl.,” *KKL*, 6 November 1912, 3.

⁶³⁴ M. Pomochevnyi to A. Kiiashko, 21 May 1909, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9563, ll. 58; on the commission’s decision see Ibid., l. 61.

⁶³⁵ M. Ponochevnyi to A. Kiiashko, 24 October 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10185, 27.

The book, authored by Konstantin Gadenko, indeed, was the most comprehensive, first-hand source for information about the history of the monument from the inception of the project in 1894 to its implementation in 1911. Along with Kiiashko, Gadenko was the main coordinator of the construction process—the fact, publicly recognized by Kiiashko himself, who called Gadenko “my best assistant in this matter, who was persistently and steadily pursuing the goal.”⁶³⁶ By its design and purpose, Gadenko’s book, based on a vast array of documents, was at the same time more than a mere collection of facts. The author saw his task in explaining “the historical and educational value” of the monument by making the audience, “ordinary Cossacks and, especially, children,” familiar with the origins of the Kuban Cossack host, with Chernomoria as its undoubted core—its Zaporozhian ancestors and the land they came from, “glorious Ukraine, the cradle of Cossackdom.”⁶³⁷ The usage of the word “Ukraine” was not accidental. This term served as a watchword for the Gadenko’s idea of the history of Chernomoria, a colonial extension of the Ukrainian heartland, reflecting the overall mood of the book. In a way that might seem odd in what has often been seen as the empire of increasingly polarizing, conflicting, and irreconcilable loyalties, Gadenko combined expressions of Ukrainian patriotism and imperial allegiance.

Gadenko began the book with an epigraph by Shevchenko. Readdressed to his Kuban readers, it looked emphatically, as if calling them to go to Ukraine in search for the supreme heartiness, and linking their sympathies to this land:

Go to Ukraine, children,
To our Ukraine:
There you will find a sincere heart,
And a tender word,
There you will find a sincere truth
And, maybe, glory...

For Hadenko, Ukraine was the key for the understanding of the history of the Kuban Cossacks and, consequently, the starting point from which to begin the narration. “Ukraine, a native and dear word for us, Cossacks,” he asserted in the very first sentence.

⁶³⁶ “Mestnaia zhizn’,” *KKL*, 7 October 1912 (appendix to the issue).

⁶³⁷ Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam*, 3.

The community of the Kuban Cossacks was supposed to not only know Ukraine. It ought to keep it in their minds as a remembrance of their own past, loaded with a multitude of meanings.

How many stingingly sad and at the same time utterly hilarious memories should unwittingly appear in our imagination when we remember about Ukraine—the cradle of the Cossackdom on the whole and our, the Kuban Cossacks, as the direct descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians, in particular. In the whole vast mother Russia, as we can say with confidence, one can hardly find a more meaningful corner in terms of its past than beautiful and long-suffering Ukraine, the homeland of our ancestors.

The history of Ukraine, with which Gadenko made familiar his readers, was exceptional in both its misfortune and the role it played for the empire. Echoing the widespread myth of Ukraine as *Antemurale Christianitatis*, Gadenko called it “the bulwark of Russia against the Asian nationalities,” which was repeatedly invaded by the steppe nomads that caused to it devastation and chaos, but used to emerge victorious from all the hardships it faced. Shielding Russia from the dangers of the steppe, Ukraine gave it the possibility to evolve and strengthen. As a result, its inhabitants, who were accustomed to fight on a regular basis, matured into the fearless people who would prefer to die in battle rather than to be a slave. “Thus, by the will of fate, the Ukrainian people and the Zaporozhian Cossackdom emerged, strong by spirit and mighty in body.”⁶³⁸

4.7. Making Sense of the Holiday

In their appreciation of the festivities, local commentators celebrated the fete as the rehabilitation of the Sich and the restitution of the historical pride of the Black Sea Cossacks. The appearance of the monument, they believed, asserted the parity, if not priority, of Chernomoria as compared to the Line host. As one of the correspondents to *KKL* contended, “the part of the Kuban host that was formerly called the Black Sea host has the same right, just as the Line Cossacks do, to boldly, without fear, look back at the distant past.” The formerly troublesome past of the Black Sea host became fully

⁶³⁸ K. P. Gadenko, *Kubanskii pamiatnik Zaporozhskim kazakam* (Ekaterinodar: Elektro-tipografiia tovarishchestva “Pechatnik”, 1911), 5–6.

legitimized and cleared of all suspicion. “Being the direct descendants of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, the Black Sea Cossacks have the right to consider themselves the heirs of the glory they earned. Having ended their history on the Dnieper, these Cossacks continued it on the Kuban . . .” This was the first monument to Zaporozhia ever made and the first tribute to the memory about them. Those, who were concealing the glorious history of the Sich over the long time, the author argued, were civic teachers hostile to Cossack spirit. “Although the Zaporozhians, the color of Cossackdom, played such a major role in the great Russian history, they were dedicated only two or three pages in thin textbooks of this history, and that is all. Our schoolteachers, enlightened by prophets of anti-militarism and full of hatred of all the things military, of course, did not say practically anything about the Zaporozhians to their schoolchildren. Or they just never said *anything* good, because they did not even want to and, finally, would not be able to tell.” Whoever was guilty for suppressing the memory of the Sich, he bore responsibility for the cheerless condition of the present-day Cossackdom. Zaporozhians, the author assured, were the ideal role models for the young generation. They had all those features that children adored. “They were knights from head to foot. In contrast to modern Cossacks in jackets, they were thoroughly imbued with belligerence.”⁶³⁹

The knightly image of the Sich became an important attribute of the portrayal of the Zaporozhians in the texts ensuring the ideological support of the festivities. *KKL* depicted Zaporozhia as a typical order of knighthood, the main *raison d’être* of which, just as it was throughout Western Europe, was the spread and maintenance of Christianity. The only quality that substantially differed the Zaporozhians from their European counterparts was their lack of arrogance. This could be explained by the fact that “modesty is embedded in the nature of Little Russians in too large a portion.”⁶⁴⁰ Speculations about the Ukrainian/Little Russian ethnic nature became a characteristic feature that the celebrations brought about. A correspondent of *KKL* shared with his readers an observation he made during his trip to Taman. All stanitsas of Chernomoria, he wrote, looked practically the same. Upon their resettlement to the right bank of the Kuban, the Zaporozhians “spread their hereditary traits across the steppes of Chernomoria and passed them to their offspring.” The Zaporozhian peculiarities were instilled so firmly that even more than a

⁶³⁹ I. Zolotarevskii, “Pamiati predkov,” *KKL*, 5 October 1911, 1.

⁶⁴⁰ “Otkrytie pamiatnika v Tamani,” *KKL*, 27 October 1911, 2.

hundred years after their settlements were developing at precisely the same pace. These peculiarities were, of course, Little Russian, and their most eloquent cultural manifestation were Little Russian songs. It was “the finest poetry,” in which the Little Russians (*khokhly*) expressed their soul, “tormented in the course of the continuous struggle for independence [*sic!*].”⁶⁴¹ *KKL* actively propagated the sense of the Black Sea Cossack unity, either Zaporozhian or Little Russian, resorting to the rhetoric of nativeness. “The names of the Zaporozhians are our native names, with which we are bound by blood, organic kinship.”⁶⁴²

Numerous verses, dedicated to the unveiling of the monument, served as an ideological underpinning of the festive ceremony, tracing continuity between Zaporozhia and Chernomoria and stressing its cultural specificity. One of the verses presented Kuban as the extension of Zaporozhia, just on another place, where the local geophysical features substituted those of the Sich, but retained their symbolic role for the Cossacks:

<p>Kuban, our native mother, Replaced the Dnieper, The Great Meadow is our mountains, We'll live with them. We'll find the island of Khortytsia, Our stanitsa, There are kurins in the steppes, No ends to them.</p>	<p>Kuban', ridna nasha maty, Dnipro zamynyla, Luh Vylykyi—hory nashi, Budym zhyty z nymy. Ostrov Khortytsiu naidem, My nashu stanytsiu, Po stepam kureni est', Nyma im hrianytsi.</p>
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The author of the verse, not necessarily attentive to the grammatical correctness of what he wrote, implied that the era of Zaporozhia was continuing into the present and that the Zaporozhian Cossack had not yet perished, as long as the Kuban host existed and remembered its ancestors:

<p>In a word, the age of forefathers Is lasting now here, A Zaporozhian Cossack even now</p>	<p>Slovom pradidivskyi vik U nas teper' dlytsia, Zaporozhets i teper'</p>
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⁶⁴¹ “Otkrytie pamiatnika v Tamani,” *KKL*, 25 October 1911, 2.

⁶⁴² M. Golovnia, “Otkrytie pamiatnika v Tamani,” *KKL*, 14 October 1911, 1.

Shows up in the world.
Let us, brothers, more often
Recall our ancestors,
They are the most dear in the
world,
Needless to say.

V sviti shyvlytsia.
Budem, bratsi, my chastishe
Predkiv pomynaty,
V sviti vony naimylyishe,
Nichoho i kazaty.⁶⁴³

Local poets and cultural activists gladly seized the opportunity to stress their loyalty to the head of the oblast. A verse by Grigorii Kontsevich, eloquently entitled “The Kosh Father,” included Babych into the local pantheon of glory, placing him alongside the founding fathers of the host. In his verse, Kontsevich rhetorically asked his readers if they had heard about the host’s first chieftains: Chepiha and Bilyi, who gathered the Cossacks together and gave the legally regulated foundations for the host’s existence, and Holovatyi, who solicited and obtained the land for the Cossacks and gave them good fame. These were the most celebrated historical figures of the Kuban history, but Kontsevich also expected the readers to have remembered about their Zaporozhian roots:

[Have you heard] about our
Zaporozhians,
The ancestors of the Black Sea
Cossacks,
Who loved Ukraine,
As a mother loves her child?

So bravely did they fight,
Shed their blood for the faith!
You must have heard about all it,
And have not yet forgotten it?

A pro nashykh Zaporozhtsiv,
Predkiv Chornomortsiv,
Shcho liubyly Ukrainu,
Yak maty dytynu?

Dobrezh vony voiuvaly,
Kriv za viru prolyvaly!.,
Vy pro vse tse mabyt’ chuly,
Ta shche i ne zabuly?!.

Love for Ukraine was presented in the verse as an honest virtue, shared by all Zaporozhian Cossacks and, implicitly, bequeathed by them to their descendants as a moral precept. The Zaporozhian era of great heroes, Kontsevich implied, continued into the present, and an evidence of such a continuity was Babych himself.

⁶⁴³ L. Kharchenko, “Vspomyny zaporozhtsiv,” *KOV*, 27 August 1911, 1–2.

Our Kosh ataman of Kuban
 Is just like them,
 He is a descendant of the
 Zaporozhians,
 A Black Sea Cossack!

Ottakyi i nash Koshovyi,
 Otaman Kubans'kii,
 Vin potomok zaporozhs'kii
 Kozak Chernomorskii!

The portrayal of Babych contained all characteristics inherent to his public image. He, wrote Kontsevich, “teaches us to respect truth and love order” — a reference to his success in overcoming the revolution. Babych also taught to “protect elders and edify young children,” which was a reference to his image of the guardian of tradition, old customs, and conservative values, as well as his adherence to discipline the young generation according to the uncorrupted spirit of the olden times. Finally, the ideologemes of love and nativeness crowned the panegyric: “native Father,” although he was “very, very strict,” said Kontsevich, “loves everyone sincerely.”⁶⁴⁴

In a panegyric verse addressed to Babych, another poet praised the ataman on behalf of the Cossack community of stanitsa Novonizhesteblievskaia (renamed to Grivenskaia the same year) for his being the first administrator to have taken care of the memory of the Zaporozhian ancestors. Addressing Babych as “Kosh Father” and laudatory calling him the “gray-winged eagle,” the poet conveyed the gratitude of his settlement, styled in the ancient manner as *kurin*:

You are the first, who with his
 sincere heart
 Recalled the glorious Cossack
 forces,
 Recalled those, who are in a grave
 And laid down the gravestone.

Ty pershyi sertsem svoim
 shchrym
 Zhadav kozachi slavni syly,—
 Zhadav pro tykh, kotri v mohyli
 I polozhyv pochyn nadhrobku.

Now that the monument (called by the author “the gravestone,” as if there was a real mass grave, a bed of honor of Zaporozhian ancestors) was built, the poet hoped that it would be transmitting the bright pictures of the past to the generations to come. “Let the memory not vanish forever, / And let the gravestone depict in vivid colors / The past to the children at every moment.” As he assured, during the solemn celebration of its unveiling,

⁶⁴⁴ H. Kontsevych, “Koshovyi Bat’ko,” *KKL*, 4 February 1912, 2.

the monument, indeed, began to exert its influence even from afar. Stanitsa Grivenskaia or, rather, *kurin* Hryvens'kyi, recalled—if not revealed—its origins at that very moment. “When you, Father, in Taman / Raising a glass at the banquet / Was speaking to the grandchildren / To the descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians / We also recalled the whole past / The grandfathers, parents, all of the Black Sea Cossacks.”⁶⁴⁵

Several verses in Ukrainian, published by *KKL* and playing with the Zaporozhian imagery, contributed to the interpretation of the Cossack colonization by pointing out that the land, once granted by the empress, had yet to be conquered by the Cossack themselves. Hnat Shevel' emphasized hardships the Cossacks faced in the new land. Overwhelmed by the inhospitality of the new home, “the Sich was numbed”:

<p>The land met us severely, adversely, Hostile Circassians took away our peace; We had to fight with them relentlessly, We shed our blood like water for this land.</p>	<p>Krai nas zustrityv surovo-pohano, Voroh-cherkesy ves' spokii vzially; Bytys' dovodylos' z nymy nevhaino, Krov my mov vo du za krai sei lyly.</p>
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The Cossack colonizers paid with their “grief, destitution, and death” for the acquisition of the land. But once the wild land was tamed, it became just as dear and native as the land of their origin. Remarkably, it came to be called Ukraine as well. “So be happy now, Ukraine,” wrote Shevel', anticipating the heavenly perspectives of the region. Indeed, with the native peoples perished and “pacified,” “everything will be fine / the happiness will come / and here will be the paradise.”⁶⁴⁶ In such interpretations, there was plenty of room for imperial Orientalism. Yakiv Zharko, his leftist sympathies and Ukrainian national allegiances notwithstanding, adhered to the imperial Orientalizing narrative. Upon the Cossacks' arrival to Kuban, as he wrote in his verse, they found themselves face to face with uncivilized, malicious forces. “Predatory mountaineers” watched every Cossacks' move from their mountains and attacked them. The Cossacks

⁶⁴⁵ Yus Malyi, “Promova kozakiv Hryvens'koho kurinia do svoho Koshovoho Bat'ka ‘Babycha’,” *KKL*, 8 January 1912, 2.

⁶⁴⁶ H. Shevel', “Marsh Chornomortsiv,” *KKL*, 12 April 1912, 2.

managed to smash their enemies, because they were “the Zaporozhians — a huge power,” which for the centuries of its existence “gained great glory.” In the new war on a new place, the Zaporozhians “repelled the predators,” who, like a chthonic devilry, “hid themselves in the mountains, in their huts, in their dark holes.”⁶⁴⁷

Laudatory odes to Zaporozhia came from the outside as well. In one such verse, an ultra-conservative poet from the empire’s Far East, a Terek Cossack by birth, greeted “the sons of the Kuban River, the children of the knights of the Sich,” assuring that their Cossack brethren living beyond the lake of Baikal “honor the glory of Zaporozhia, the fame of which has spread around the world.” As one might conclude from the verse, the Sich exerted tremendous influence upon this remote periphery. The Cossacks of Eastern Siberia, the author wrote, strayed beyond Baikal a long time ago, according to “the precepts of Zaporozhia and Ataman Ermak.” They followed the lead of Zaporozhia while coming there and while organizing their life. Like the Zaporozian Cossacks on the southern verge of the empire in the ancient time, the eastern Cossacks defended Holy Rus’ against the “yellow locust,” drawing inspiration from the former glory of the Sich and, in difficult situations, setting “the children of Zaporozhia as their ideal.”⁶⁴⁸ This and others writings served as a sign of external recognition of both the Zaporozhian glory and the Kuban descent from the Sich. Not only the Kuban host praised the valor of its ancestors, but the Cossacks from the other side of the Russian empire recognized the primacy of the Sich among the rest of the Cossack formations. The rehabilitation of Zaporozhia, it would seem, became an accomplished fact.

This was what the Cossack conservatives wanted to achieve, but this also served the interests of Ukrainian national activists, who rejoiced the celebration of their beloved Sich at the official level. A number of congratulations, sent by representatives of Ukrainophile groups and Ukrainian nationalist organizations to the organizers of the holiday demonstrates that both opposing camps could be occasional allies and share common interests. For example, Sergei Glazunenکو/Serhii Hlazunenکو, the leader of a Ukrainophile artistic troupe that frequently toured in Ekaterinodar, sent a greeting letter, where he offered a prayer for the “Christ’s martyrs, glorious ‘Sich forefathers and their giant eagles-sons’ [*pradiv-sichivikiv i za ikh veletniv orliv-syniv*].”⁶⁴⁹ The Kyiv

⁶⁴⁷ Ya. Zharko, “V novim kraiu,” *KKL*, 26 February 1912, 2.

⁶⁴⁸ I. Tomarevskii, “Privet,” *KKL*, 8 March 1912, 3.

⁶⁴⁹ S. Hlazunenکو’s letter, 28 September 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10185, l. 11.

Ukrainian Club, a group with a pronounced political agenda, congratulated the Host with a telegram, declaring that it “sincerely greets the descendants of the glorious Zaporozhian host and wishes that even in new Cossack places will shine immortal glory of the former eagle’s nest of our glory and defense.”⁶⁵⁰ Likewise, members of the Ukrainian hromada of St. Petersburg greeted the Cossacks with their jubilee. The hromada, reads the telegram, “conveys its greetings to the descendants of the glorious Zaporozhians in the days of the Cossack holidays over the centenary of the Black Sea host. Let the spirit of the glorious ancestors live among the Cossacks forever.”⁶⁵¹ The monarchists did not enjoy hegemony of the interpretation of the celebration they themselves conceived of. The idea of the holiday touched upon the cultural origins of all those who claimed descent from Zaporozhia.

4.8. Conclusion

Standing at the foot of the monument, Mark Zhezhel experienced an ecstatic feeling, caused in no small part by its very appearance. “This is a poetic truth! Look at the folds of his pants [*shtaniv*], the bend of his boots [*chobit*]. By golly, I would like to look at it infinitely.” Zhezhel used Ukrainian words in quotation marks, as if it was the Ukrainian vocabulary that could describe the Zaporozhian body in the best way possible. What he saw around strengthened his faith in the monument’s mission. “Then, having taken my eyes of it, I looked at the descendants. I looked at them long, peering into their faces and, very fortunate for me, I found what I searched for: we will fulfill their precept and will give away everything, everything, when the time comes.”⁶⁵² The times he anticipated—the Great War—came sooner than he expected.

Several months after the celebrations, stanitsa Tamanskaia came to the focus of public attention for another reason. The local authorities revealed the existence of a network of treasure hunters who traded valuable antiquities, excavated from ancient mounds in the vicinities of the settlement. More than fifty were prosecuted, while much more, apparently, were involved. The crime would probably not have been so scandalous

⁶⁵⁰ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 116.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵² “Otkrytie pamiatnika v Tamani,” *KKL*, 6 November 1911, 3.

if it would have been committed in other place, but its very scene enraged Babych. In his circular, the ataman characterized it as the betrayal of the Zaporozhian ideals, referring to the Zaporozhian statue as an arbiter. “Prove . . . that you are the faithful sons of Kuban, the glorious offspring of Zaporozhia. Do not let the monument, erected in your stanitsa, look at you reproachfully, as at unworthy sons of Zaporozhia.”⁶⁵³

Needless to say, even if some could question the right of the Kuban Cossacks to be called the worthy descendants of their Zaporozhian ancestors, no one questioned the unimpeachable image of Zaporozhia as such. The Kuban Cossack society celebrated the Zaporozhian Cossacks as the absolute heroes, the embodiment of human virtues, and the model to follow. However, as ironical as it might be, below of the surface of celebratory rhetoric there also was a level of more immediate first-hand experience with the reality that was anything but supportive of the ideology of the day. The travel notes of Petr Orlov, one of the most enthusiastic onlookers of the fete and the official chronicler of these events, demonstrate it. The stories he heard on the ship while heading to Taman did not fit to the idealistic picture of the Sich which he himself adhered to. One of his companions shared with Orlov his grandmother’s memories about her encounter with the Zaporozhian settlers of Taman. “Those Cossacks sailed to Kerch, but what good are they? They drank all the vodka in drinking saloons, beat saloonkeepers without paying any ruble, and then sailed off!”⁶⁵⁴ What is more, Orlov’s personal impressions of Taman, so coveted and sacred, proved rather disappointing. What he saw did not much to his expectations. “The central part of Taman made an impression of an ordinary backwater town, but once you turn to any side street, you cannot but wonder: where am I? Is it really our Kuban stanitsa? Unlikely so—rather, it is either a Crimean Tatar village or a Middle East [*Zakaspiiskii kishlak*, or something else of this kind.” Earthen walls and huts made of adobe and covered by reed appeared to Orlov Asiatic, but he managed to accommodate this striking impression with the image of Zaporozhian Taman by which he was so captivated. This, he explained, was the primeval type of the Zaporozhian buildings that remained unchanged up to the modern era.⁶⁵⁵

Whatever the Zaporozhian heritage was, the Taman festivities definitely established the historical myth of the Zaporozhian succession of Chernomoria and

⁶⁵³ “Deistviia i rasporiazheniia pravitel’stva,” *KKL*, 3 April 1912, 1.

⁶⁵⁴ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 11–12.

⁶⁵⁵ Orlov, *Opisanie torzhestv*, 15.

centrality of this myth for the whole Kuban region. By the same token, affection for the roots implied cherishing local cultural and language peculiarities, which meant rather favorable conditions for the Black Sea Cossacks' Little Russian distinctiveness. The assimilationist project of the 1860s spectacularly failed and, with it, the Kuban host's seniority from 1896 seemed no longer valid. It came as no surprise that voices arguing for its reversal began to appear in local press. At the beginning of 1912, *KKL* published an article, whose author pointed to a long overdue need of division of the Kuban host into two separate parts: the Khoper host and the Zaporozhian host. Reminding that the Kuban Cossack community had received the year of 1696 as the date of its seniority, with the Khoperskii regiment as the senior unit of the host, he cast doubt the objectivity of such a state of affairs. "The Black Sea Cossacks, not as the Kuban Cossacks, but as the Zaporozhian Cossacks, has nothing in common with this date," he wrote. The common name notwithstanding, the Kuban host comprised "two completely different hosts: the Line (Khoper Cossacks) [host] and the Black Sea (Zaporozhians) [host], each having its distinct combat glory, traditions, and origin." Such a division, he envisaged, would not break the friendship between the two, but only strengthen it, all the more so that the division existed in fact. He proposed to restore the old names of the hosts, calling them Khoper and Zaporozhian again. The author went as far as to suggesting the restoration of the historical costume for the new Zaporozhian host, while the Khoper Cossacks were supposed to wear their current uniform. Babych, he believed, could successfully initiate this reform after the unveiling of the Zaporozhian monument.⁶⁵⁶ Of course, it was an unrealistic idea, but the very fact that the newspaper made it public soon after the celebrations attests to the profound changes in the Kuban public sphere. The awareness of differences between the Kuban host's two major constituent parts only grew in the aftermath of the celebrations. It were not only the Cossacks of Chernomoria who underscored the cultural and historical distance that separated them from the Line Cossacks. The latter contributed to the rethinking of the host's unanimity in no lesser extent.



⁶⁵⁶ G. Emmanuel', "Po povodu stat'i 'Kavkazskoe kazach'e voisko'," *KKL*, 8 January 1912, 2–3.

5. Chapter 5: Back to the Roots: Kuban Authorities' Obsession with the Past

Commemorating Zaporozhia and celebrating local particularities as the remnants of Zaporozhian legacy, the Host demonstrated remarkable devotion and unusual creativity. The festivities of 1911 were but one example of the nascent cultural trend—commemorative obsession with the Zaporozhian imagery. The very same time the Kuban administration was busy constructing the statue and preparing for its solemn unveiling, it found itself engaged in a series of other memory initiatives that substantially strengthened the Zaporozhian self-image of the Kuban Cossack elites, drastically altered their attitude toward the use of memory for political ends, and paved the way for the Taman fete. If the Kuban educated society entered 1911 well prepared ideologically for the celebration of its Zaporozhian origin, it owed it to the surge in the promotion of the Zaporozhian mythology that had occurred in 1909 and 1910. With all that, these processes were not a cultural phenomenon that originated within the host. It owed its origin to a set of initiatives that came into existence well beyond the Kuban oblast. From its inception, the project of “perpetuating the memory” of the Zaporozhian Sich emerged in cabinets of imperial officials, high-ranking militaries, and intellectuals in cities as distant as Odessa, Ekaterinoslav, and St. Petersburg. The members of this occasional network considered the Kuban host as a community, responsible for taking care of the memory of Zaporozhia—the memory that, as they came to believe, was able to cement the imperial rule in the south of the empire. Who, how, and why made the Kuban administration obsessed with the Zaporozhian myth? To answer these questions, we have to shift the focus of attention from Kuban to the lower Dnieper.

5.1. A Sentimental Trip: The Imperial Expedition to Former Zaporozhia

In May 1909, a group of high-ranking military officers and officials set out for a four-day expedition along the Dnieper River. This expedition, conducted in an informal atmosphere, fulfilled a specific function. The aim of its participants was to familiarize themselves with the meaningful historical sites in the lower reaches of the river, which were supposed to be associated with the most remarkable events of the past and, especially, with the Russian military exploits. The participants had to survey, compare, and single out those places that would be best suited to serve as symbolic reminders of the former deeds and, thus, most worthy of remembering by generations of Russians. Exploration of the traces of the past with a view to turning them into the showcases of imperial glory was largely an extemporaneous process, with no decisions taken beforehand. The trip proved only partially successful, and no remarkable memorials appeared in the end. But the expedition made an important contribution to the Kuban host's vision of the past and became a boost to the Zaporozhian imagery.

The trip was a local initiative of the Emperor's Russian Military Historical Society (*Imperatorskoe Russkoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo*, hereinafter IRVIO). Founded in 1907, the society, whose honorary chief was Nicholas II himself, brought together the distinguished military historians from all around the Russian empire in order to study the martial exploits of the imperial army. The IRVIO, with its various branches in different cities of the empire, saw its task in the edification of the present and future generations of imperial soldiers as well as strengthening their fighting spirit and morality.⁶⁵⁷

The idea of undertaking a trip to Dnieper's sites of memory was implemented by the society's Odessa branch, responsible for the territory of the Odessa military district, including Bessarabia, Ekaterinoslav, Taurida, and Kherson gubernias. Already at the opening ceremony, the members of the branch boasted about the deep historicity of the region under its supervision, the depth of which reached all the way back to the medieval

⁶⁵⁷ On the IRVIO, see A. N. Kochetkov, "Russkoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo (1907-1914)," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* 9 (1965); V. A. D'iakov, "O vzniknovenii, sostave i deiatel'nosti Russkogo voenno-istoricheskogo obshchestva (1907-1917)," in *Problemy istorii obshchestvennogo dvizheniia i istoriografii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1971); V. N. Samoshenko and N. A. Petrova, "Nauchno-izdatel'skaia deiatel'nost' Russkogo voenno-istoricheskogo obshchestva," in *Izdanie istoricheskikh dokumentov v SSSR* (Moscow, 1989).

times. The secretary of the section, Pavel Andrianov, described the main object of the Odessa branch's interest: "In hoary antiquity our region was crossed by the historical path 'from the Varangians to the Greeks.' In the fragile boats, the squads of Askold and Dir used to go down into the raging sea along the wide Dnieper on their way to fabulously rich Constantinople. Sullen Igor and Prophetic Oleg raided Byzantium through the same path. Brave Sviatoslav led his squad across the Dnieper and the Black Sea into the Danube, fighting the Bulgarians and the Greeks. Holy Vladimir besieged Korsun here and here he baptized."⁶⁵⁸

Such a glimpse into the origins of the Russian statehood suggested that the trip would be a symbolic campaign for calling forth the heroes of Old Rus. No wonder that at the first meetings of the Odessa branch, its participants set up the idea of travelling along the Dnieper, "along the path from the Varangians to the Greeks," as one of the priorities. The organizers of the expedition added two other points of destination on the river: Kherson, where the society members planned to visit the graves of the soldiers fallen during the takeover of Ochakov, and the island of Khortitsa, where they expected to find the remains of the Zaporozhian Sich.⁶⁵⁹ Yet, it was the latter that appeared in the focus of the attention of the Odessa branch's members. While thinking that they would go for a trip to Old Rus, the members of the expedition found themselves in early modern Cossack Ukraine.

The guide who brought those time travellers into another temporal dimension was Dmitrii Evarnitskii/Dmytro Yavornyts'kyi. His organizational excellence and oratorical skills gave the participants a sense of ownership for the Zaporozhians' afterlife. The detailed account of the travel, left by the branch's secretary Pavel Andrianov, gives an impression of how the participants of the expedition experienced their trip.

Before embarking on the travel, in the morning of May 14, twenty-six members of the expedition headed by Baron Aleksandr Kaulbars, commander of the troops of the Odessa Military District and the head of the Odessa branch of the IRVIO, gathered in Ekaterinoslav and met Evarnitskii. Their main place of interest there was the museum of Zaporozhian antiquities. Created by Evarnitskii, it was the richest collection in the Russian Empire and beyond. During three hours, the visitors were examining the exhibits and

⁶⁵⁸ "Otchet ob otkrytii Odesskogo otdela IRVIO," Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 47, l. 14.

⁶⁵⁹ "Kratkii obzor deiatel'nosti Odesskogo Otdela," Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 47, l. 29.

listening to the stories about the Zaporozhian past “with particular interest.”⁶⁶⁰ In effect, those objects were the only Zaporozhian legacy they encountered. All what they saw further was, by and large, an empty landscape: water, hills, rocks, and islands with rare traces of Zaporozhians’ presence in those places in the bygone times. Evarnitskii’s task was to fill this landscape with meaningful tales.

According to Adrianov’s description of the places that the expedition members visited during the tour, they saw the remains of two fortresses—the Novobogoroditskaia fortress, erected by Prince Vasili Golitsyn in 1688 during his march on Crimea, and the Old Kodak fortress, the Polish stronghold in the Lower Dnieper built in 1635. After that, the mission participants visited the spots of the former Siches: Mykytyn, Chortomyk, and Pidpil’na. Following their route, they visited the island of Khortitsa, having reached it from Aleksandrovska by a steamship with a symbolical name *Ukraine*. However, the travellers’ initial enthusiasm about this place faded as Evarnitskii warned his companions that the image of Khortitsa as the main centre of the Cossacks and the cradle of Zaporozhia was nothing more but a fallacy. In addition, the expedition attended the graves of two legendary Zaporozhian chieftains: Ivan Sirko and Osyp Hladkyi.

Although the expedition members usually used steamships while travelling along the river, Evarnitskii dared to add some thrills into this voyage. On his initiative, the members passed the dangerous Dnieper rapids on boats made of the tree trunk (*duby*). It was a truly hazardous venture, which ended successfully, although, as Andrianov wrote, “there were victims in every boat—those who were abundantly drenched with water.” Evarnitskii calmed his fellow travellers by calling it the “Zaporozhian baptizing.”⁶⁶¹

In the course of the expedition, the participants emotionally attached to their confident, reliable guide and a brilliant storyteller. They spent the first night in the manor of Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, where Evarnitskii was amusing them all the evening. “The vivid, fascinating story about the history of those places complements a charming experience of the trip. Before going to bed, we listened his story again,” wrote Andrianov.⁶⁶² Evarnitskii “became a close, dear person to all of us,” as he admitted

⁶⁶⁰ P. Andrianov, “Poezdka po Dnepru,” *Russkii invalid*, 16 July 1909, 3.

⁶⁶¹ P. Andrianov, “Poezdka po Dnepru (prodolzhenie),” *Russkii invalid*, 17 July 1909, 2. This was a favorite ritual of Evarnitskii, which he resorted to with other expeditions he led. For example, he organized the passage through the rapids for members of archeological expeditions in 1878 and in 1927:

O. M. Lysenko, *M. V. Lysenko. Spohagy syna* (Kiev: Mystetstvo, 1966), 299; V. Mynko, *Chervonyi Parnas: Spovid’ kolyshniioho pluzhanyna* (Kiev: Radians’kyi pys’mennyk, 1972), 65, 66.

⁶⁶² Andrianov, “Poezdka po Dnepru,” 3.

describing the adventures of the last day of the trip. “Evarnitskii’s live speech, flavoured with wonderful Ukrainian humour, will for a long time remain in the memory of the participants of the trip.”⁶⁶³ Another participant of the expedition, Matvei Sulkevich, assessed it in similar vein: “The trip has been very successful. The skilful and vivid leadership of Evarnitskii, wonderful weather, picturesque area, hospitality of the landowners who welcomed us left the most enjoyable impression.”⁶⁶⁴ As if explaining excessive emotionality of his report, Andrianov addressed to presumable sceptics: “A succession of the strong sensations that you experience at the sight of historical places will leave in your mind and your heart an indelible trace for a whole life. You are not only captured by what you have seen, but you also get a strong need to share your impressions with other, with all those around.”⁶⁶⁵

Evarnitskii’s own attitudes to the expedition and his participation in it might have been more ambivalent. As a scholar, public figure and collector of antiquities, he could not help but enjoy attention to his persona and his activities on the part of power-holders and decision makers, willingly doing business with them if he could take advantage of it for his personal benefit or the benefit for his numerous historical projects. On the other hand, Evarnitskii pursued his own agenda. While the members of the IRVIO were concerned with employing memory in the interest of the empire, he saw it as a wonderful opportunity to rehabilitate and commemorate the Sich at the state level. As a passionate Ukrainophile, in his correspondence with Ukrainian national activists he demonstratively distanced himself from his future monarchist fellow travelers. In early 1909, in his letter to Yevhen Chykalenko, one of the leaders of the Ukrainian national movement, he mocked his companions: “At the beginning of May I will have to lead a whole excursion of an ‘Orthodox host’ [*pravoslavnoho voinstva*] of the Odessa district, which approached me, through the commander of the district, Baron Kaulbars, to take them to entire Zaporozhia and to show all the places interesting in historical respect. Many locals are lining up to get on this excursion.”⁶⁶⁶

Evarnitskii persistently invited Chykalenko to join the excursion, seemingly not feeling that bringing together political adversaries would affect the party atmosphere of

⁶⁶³ P. Andrianov, “Poezdka po Dnepru (okonchanie),” *Russkii invalid*, 19 July 1909, 4.

⁶⁶⁴ M. Sul’kevich to Strukov, 23 May 1909, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 47, l. 68.

⁶⁶⁵ Andrianov, “Poezdka po Dnepru (okonchanie),” 4.

⁶⁶⁶ D. Yavornyts’kyi to Ye. Chykalenko, 5 April 1909, *ESAYa*, 4:257.

the event. Highly enthusiastic about the Zaporozhian myth, Chykalenko anticipated the trip with excitement. “The trip with you attracts me very, very much. To make a trip with you means to pass through the whole past; with you one can imagine the Zaporozhian life in every detail, and it’s utterly interesting.”⁶⁶⁷ He did not manage to make this trip, but those who did experienced similar emotions.

The survey expedition evolved into a sentimental trip, which enthralled its members. Never before the Zaporozhian Cossacks had been rewarded with such level of attention from the part of high-ranking imperial functionaries. The role of Evarnitskii in this process is difficult to overestimate. The Kuban Cossacks benefited from it as nobody else.

5.2. The South Remembers: Commemorating Zaporozhia in the Dnieper Steppe

Evarnitskii’s charisma could explain the eventual enthusiasm of the IRVIO, but among the participants of the expedition there was another person, who can be called the main lobbyist of “Zaporozhian interests”—Matvei Sulkevich, the commander of the 57th Modlin infantry regiment. He would gain prominence after the breakup of the Russian empire as the prime minister, minister of interior and war minister of the German-controlled Crimea in 1918 and, later, as the chief of General Staff of the armed forces of Azerbaijan in 1919. Muslim by faith and Lithuanian Tatar by origin, Sulkevich felt an amazing attraction to the image of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. He hatched the idea to rehabilitate them on the all-imperial scene and for the all-imperial good. As early as November 1906, in a letter to Evarnitskii, Sulkevich introduced him his plans. “I cannot but share with you my long-cherished thoughts about the restoration of memory of the glorious Zaporozhian host in our army, which is now going through such difficult times. It is from the valiant past that we have to draw strength and confidence in the might and greatness of our motherland, which broke all the obstacles in its path to its glory.”⁶⁶⁸

By the “difficult times,” Sulkevich meant military uprisings across the empire that had barely died out by the moment he wrote his letter. One of them was the rebellion of

⁶⁶⁷ Ye. Chykalenko to D. Yavornyts’kyi, 3 February 1909, *ESAYa*, 1:606.

⁶⁶⁸ M. Sul’kevich to D. Yavornyts’kyi, 8 November 1906, *ESAYa*, 3:581–82.

the 2nd Urupskii regiment, and the Kuban Cossacks were the targets of his commemorative efforts. Sulkevich suggested that Evarnitskii wrote to the acting ataman of the Kuban host, as well as to Evarnitskii's own powerful acquaintances, to petition the responsible authorities to assign the names of Zaporozhian chieftains, "Doroshenko, Sahaidachnyi, and others" to the Kuban plastun and cavalry regiments that did not have any chiefs yet.⁶⁶⁹ The reaction of Evarnitskii is unknown, but in three years, Sulkevich, now the member of the IRVIO's Odessa branch, with his fellow members' support, eagerly embarked on the practical implementation of his brainchild.

Soon after the expedition ended, Sulkevich, on behalf of the Odessa branch, petitioned the IRVIO's Council in St. Petersburg for permission to implement a broad range of commemorative measures that would recover the rich and glorious past of the steppe lands of the lower Dnieper. Only one of those measures had relation to medieval Rus'. Sulkevich proposed to commemorate Prince Sviatoslav the Courageous by carving an inscription on the stone surface of a rock near the Dnieper rapids, where Sviatoslav fell in a battle with the Pechenegs. Two other suggestions concerned the honouring of the memory of Catherine II. Sulkevich suggested the relocation of the monument of the empress in Ekaterinoslav to a more noticeable place and the assignment of the Catherine's name to some of imperial army's regiments. The vast majority of the commemorative ideas, however, were dedicated to the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Sulkevich requested permission to erect two monuments: a column to Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi near the ruins of the Kodak fortress, built by the Poles in the 17th century, and a memorial to Zaporozhia on the place where the last Sich was located. While making his request, Sulkevich presented the need to commemorate Zaporozhia as something too obvious to substantiate in detail: "Its [Zaporozhia's] merits to Rus' are well known and need to be fixed in the people's memory. Now this abandoned wasteland, with traces of former fortifications, makes sad impression to anyone who had even a cursory knowledge of the history of the glorious Zaporozhian Host."⁶⁷⁰

Apart from the plans to materialize memory in massive physical objects, Sulkevich proposed to capture memory verbally—in various types of verbal signs. First, he expressed the desire to rename a part of the imperial railroad that passed through the

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁰ M. Sulkevich to the D. Strukov, September 9, 1909, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 47, 101, 101 ob.

former Zaporozhian domains and which was named after Catherine II (2nd Ekaterininskaia railroad) into the *Zaporozhian railroad*. In addition, he proposed to change the name of the Osokorovka railway station to *Chertomlyk Sich* and, by the same logic, to rename the town of Nikopol to *Nikitin Rog*, both suggested names referring to the names of the former Siches. Finally, Sulkevich did not abandon his idea to invite, or rather involve, the Kuban Cossacks to his commemorative project. If, as Sulkevich reasoned, “the Kuban host is the direct descendant of the Zaporozhians,” the Zaporozhians’ name had to be returned to the Kuban Cossacks as the name of one of its regiments. To this end, he envisaged one Kuban regiment to change its name into “Zaporozhian.” He also proposed, just as he did it in 1906, to name several other Kuban Cossack regiments after Zaporozhian chieftains, ataman Ivan Sirko, hetman Petro Sahaidachnyi, and hetman Bohdan Khmelnyts’kyi.⁶⁷¹

The original letter by Sulkevich, just as the Council’s response to it, have not been found yet, but the content of both can be reconstructed sufficiently thanks to Sulkevich’s second letter to the Council, written in September. As follows from the letter, the Council of the IRVIO agreed to implement a number of commemorative measures, but questioned the practicability of the renaming of the 2nd Ekaterininskaia railroad, Osokorovka, and Nikitin Rog without explaining the reason. It also objected the erection of the column, calling it a “political matter.” Besides, the Council ignored the issue of the assignment of the names of Sirko, Sahaidachnyi, and Khmelnyts’kyi to the Kuban regiments altogether.⁶⁷²

We only can guess about the reasons the central office of the IRVIO was driven by. In either case, the Odessa branch did not abandon its plans. Having decided to seize the initiative, it dared to bypass the Council’s recalcitrance by looking for support at the highest level. In the autumn of 1909, Baron Kaulbars met Nicholas II in the emperor’s palace in Livadia. In an informal talk, he asked the tsar to approve all the mentioned commemorative initiatives of the Odessa branch, including those rejected by the Council, except of the renaming of the railroad and the Osokorovka station. The results of Kaulbars’ request are unclear. Several known reports gave different details about the reaction of the tsar. Kaulbars himself stated that Nicholas II agreed to assign the name of Catherine II to one of the regular regiments and approved the renaming of one of the

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Ibid., 100.

Kuban regiments (the Eisk regiment) to “Zaporozhian.” According to Dmitrii Skalon, the head of the IRVIO, Nicholas II supported the idea of building the monument to the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Finally, the official report by the IRVIO informed that the emperor approved all of the ideas put forward by Kaulbars.⁶⁷³

If so many commemorative initiatives directly concerned the Kuban Host, what was the role of the Kuban representatives in this undertaking? The absence of documents that could attest to the Kuban Host’s involvement leave us wondering about its part in the Odessa branch’s commemorative project. Did Sulkevich involve the Host in his project at the outset, or did the Host join it at a later stage? There are no materials evidencing of the Host’s participation in the initiative before the autumn of 1909, but after the audience of Kaulbars with the emperor, the administration of the host became yet another actor of the game.

As follows from the article, published in 1912 in *KKL* and written by its editor-in-chief, who had gained access to the bureaucratic correspondence related to this case, Babych must have learned about the project soon after the emperor’s approval of the Kaulbars’ request. In his letter to Babych, Kaulbars, informed the ataman about the decision of the tsar and suggested that the Host, as the heir of Zaporozhia, should take on the issue of erecting the monument and make all the necessary official arrangements. In so doing, Kaulbars and the Odessa branch made the Kuban Cossack host the sole subject in charge of the Zaporozhian memory, not only in Kuban but in Ukraine as well. It was not for nothing, since they put the major financial burden upon the Kuban Cossack community. In December 1909, Babych responded positively, but put forward a condition for proceeding with the preparation. He requested that the island of Chortomlyk, where the most famous Sich existed, as the proposed site for the construction of the monument, would be transferred into the possession of the Kuban Host on a free basis.⁶⁷⁴

The boldness of this condition is striking. On the surface, the Kuban administration, sought to benefit from the initiative by enlarging the host’s holdings. Yet the symbolical implementation of having the island far exceeded the practical one. The ataman of the Kuban host argued for the incorporation of Chortomlyk into the territory of

⁶⁷³ A. Kaulbars to Minister of War, December 13, 1909, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 42, 42 ob.; D. Skalon to M. Babych, October 15, 1910, *ibid.*, l. 117 ob.; *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Imperatorskogo Russkogo Voенno-Istoricheskogo obshchestva v 1909 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1910), 43.

⁶⁷⁴ E. Orel, “Pamiatnik Zaporozhtsam na ostrove Chertomlytskoi Sechi,” *KKL*, 3 November 1912, 2.

the Kuban host, implying that it was the core of the Zaporozhian Sich and, therefore, the ancestral home of the Kuban Cossacks. If it belonged to Zaporozhia, it could belong to the Kuban host by right of heredity. Now the Cossacks were to take care about the memory of their predecessors and to perpetuate them by building a monument in their honour. What was even more revealing was the fact that neither the Odessa branch nor the Council of the IRVIO put this argumentation into question. The island was a private property of Grand Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich, and during the trip, the members of the delegation enjoyed their stay in his estate near the village of Hrushivka.

All of a sudden, on December 5, the same month Babych wrote his letter, Mikhail Nikolaevich died. The leadership of the IRVIO in St. Petersburg was forced to pass the issue to his son, Grand Prince Nikolai Mikhailovich. Given the importance of the question, it was the IRVIO's head, Dmitrii Skalon, who wrote a letter to the prince with a request to grant the island of Chortomlyk to the Kuban Host. In June 1910, the grand prince responded with a polite but unequivocal refusal. Nikolai Mikhailovich, who was the head of the Emperor's Russian Historical Society and the Emperor's Russian Geographic Society, and the most liberal-minded member of the royal family, assured that he fully sympathized with the desire of the IRVIO to perpetuate the glorious past of the Zaporozhian Cossacks in a dignified manner. "With pleasure" he allowed erecting the monument on the site of the former Zaporozhian Sich, which belonged to his estate. Still, it did not mean that the Kuban host would obtain it in its property. The island, he claimed, constituted a part of the entail established in 1888 at the behest of his father, for which reason "it could not be alienated by law."⁶⁷⁵

The failure of the Kuban Host's fantasy about returning the ancestral homeland had no impact on optimism of the IRVIO, determined to proceed with the monument. In 1910, due to the efforts of the Odessa section, the task of perpetuating the memory of the Zaporozhians became the main business of the Council of the IRVIO, as the society itself admitted. Apart from the building of the monument to the Zaporozhian Cossacks, the issue of renaming the Kuban regiments in Zaporozhian and assigning to them the names of the Zaporozhian chiefs were the most important items on its agenda.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁵ Grand Prince Nikolai Mikhailovich to D. Skalon, June 5, 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 97.

⁶⁷⁶ *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Imperatorskogo Russkogo Voенно-Istoricheskogo obshchestva v 1910 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 21.

The initial zeal, however, faded as the most active proponents of the project were redeployed from Odessa and lost the opportunity to continue their work in the IRVIO's Odessa branch. Baron Kaulbars moved to St. Petersburg after being appointed a member of the Military Council in December 1909. In January 1910, a close associate of Evarnitskii regretted the Kaulbars' removal: "I've read that Nikopol will be called in the ancient manner, as under the Zaporozhian Cossacks, Mykytyn Rih. You did a good thing, Dmytro Ivanovych; it is not for nothing that you were traveling with Kaulbars. But will they do the thing you told me about on Chortomyk? Kaulbars is now removed from Odessa, there will be nobody who would support this case."⁶⁷⁷

In June 1910, Sulkevich retired from his position in Kherson and received another position in Irkutsk. Again, as seen from Evarnitskii's correspondence, his acquaintances lamented over his new appointment. One of them called Sulkevich "the most active member of the Odessa section" and his departure, "a great loss."⁶⁷⁸ Sulkevich himself doubted that the IRVIO would continue the work on his brainchild. As he wrote to Evarnitskii, "[w]ith me and Kaulbars gone, there is nobody left to run the affairs."⁶⁷⁹ Sulkevich, who was residing in St. Petersburg several months before moving to Siberia, took a number of steps to make himself sure that the Council would keep furthering the commemorative initiative. In the same letter, he told Evarnitskii that while in St. Petersburg, he was still able to help with "clerical tasks." Sulkevich composed a draft of the letter to Babych (subsequently signed and sent by Skalon), where he elaborated and explained in detail all of the commemorative plans in which the Kuban host was supposed to take active part. To his utter disappointment, the Kuban administration was nowhere near as active as he had expected it to be. Sulkevich resented the Kuban authorities for their improper, to his mind, treatment of the memory of the ancestors. In a confidential manner, he wrote that he "composed a letter to Babich [sic] to shake up the lazy slackers [*rastolkat' lenivyykh 'srakochesov'*] with the case of the monument to the Zaporozhian Sich."⁶⁸⁰

In early October, apparently not long before his departure for Irkutsk, Sulkevich delivered the report at the session of the Council, where he presented his views about

⁶⁷⁷ V. Stromenko to D. Yavornyts'kyi, 15 January 1910, *ESAYa*, 5:552.

⁶⁷⁸ A. Korsun to D. Yavornyts'kyi, 30 June 1910, *ESAYa*, 3:160.

⁶⁷⁹ M. Sulkevich to D. Yavornyts'kyi, 20 August 1910, *ESAYa*, 3:583.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

what, how, and where should both the IRVIO and the Kuban host commemorate as far as Zaporozhia was concerned. This was the main theses of his letter to Babych. Having approved it pro forma, the Council got in touch with the head of the Kuban oblast.⁶⁸¹ The letter to Babych, signed by Dmitrii Skalon, not only represented Sulkevich's views, but also reflected the official position of the IRVIO, which is why it offers us a glimpse into an important realm of imperial imagination: the imagery of the Zaporozhian Cossacks as seen from the imperial perspective, the measures the imperial bureaucrats were about to undertake to commemorate them, and the bonds between the Kuban host and the Sich that this imperial institute of memory was ready to acknowledge.

Skalon (hereinafter, I refer to his name) shared with Babych the idea about the assignment of the names of Sirko, Khmelnyts'kyi and Sahaidachnyi, "the heroes and fighters for the Cossack glory," to Kuban regiments or plastun battalions in order to "strengthen the memory of the glorious past of the Kuban host." By this wording, Skalon clearly indicated the extent of expansion of the boundaries of the Kuban history, which transcended the thresholds of both 1788 and 1792 and embraced the entire history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks and early modern Ukraine. He asked Babych to prepare a petition for the assignment of these names and gave instruction of how should Babych motivate the choice of the figures. The merits of Khmelnyts'kyi and Sahaidachnyi, he argued, were well known and did not require any additional substantiation for the supreme authorities. Sirko was a less known figure, but Evarnitskii well described his feats in his monograph, so he suggested that Babych might attach the extracts from the book to the petition.⁶⁸²

Next, Skalon informed Babych about the reaction of Nikolai Mikhailovich to the Host's request regarding the island. He proposed to abandon the idea of erecting the monument on Chertomlyk due to the island's remoteness from any convenient means of communication. Skalon argued that it was "a wasteland, which is being eroded by the waters of the Dnieper floods, and abandoned a long time ago." Therefore, the optimal solution was to build a small chapel instead—on the place where the former Zaporozhian church was located in ancient times. As for the pertinent place for the monument to the

⁶⁸¹ *Zhurnal Imperatorskogo Russkogo Voennno-Istoricheskogo obshchestva* 3 (St. Petersburg, 1911), 19.

⁶⁸² D. Skalon to M. Babych, 16 October 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 117. The same month, Skalon asked Evarnitskii to send his works to the library of the IRVIO and to share his suggestions about the "desirable measures of glorifying" the history of the Sich. He also asked Evarnitskii to organize a series of lectures in St Petersburg if possible, calling him "the only expert in the history of Zaporozhia," according to the Council's general opinion: D. Skalon to D. Yavornyt's'kyi, 16 October 1910, ESAYa, 3:322–23.

Zaporozhian Cossacks, Skalon opted for Nikopol, a large trade town near the Dnieper, which had its own railroad station. On the one hand, Nikopol was built on the site of the former Nikitin Sich. On another, it was a place where Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi started his war with the Poles and won the first battle at Zhovti Vody, which he called the first step toward the unification of Little Russia and Great Russia. Nevertheless, Skalon left the right of choosing the proper place for the monument up to the Host's decision. He suggested that the Kuban representatives visited the sites of the former Zaporozhian Siches themselves in order to explore the area. Evarnitskii, Skalon reminded, had already invited all those interested to make such an expedition in May 1910, but the journey did not take place through the fault of the Kuban side.⁶⁸³

The same month, in the promptly written response letter, Babych readily agreed to perpetuate the memory of the three Zaporozhian chieftains and identified the most appropriate regiments for the Zaporozhian chiefs. He suggested the assignment of the name of Kmelnitskii to the 1st Black Sea regiment, Sirko—to the 3rd Kuban plastun battalion, and Sagaidachnyi—to the 5th Kuban plastun battalion. As Babych explained, these combat units were the only ones that met two necessary criteria at once. They still did not have the honorary patrons and, simultaneously, were composed from the former Black Sea Cossacks, being the “direct descendants of the Zaporozhians.” This was the principle that was gaining a foothold in Kuban cultural politics under the Babyh's rule, which implied the line of distinction existing between Chernomoria and Linia.⁶⁸⁴ The message was clear—having the Little Russian/Zaporozhian heroes as the patrons was the exclusive right of the Little Russians themselves.

At the same time, Babych was much less eager to come to terms on the question of the island. He emphasized that building the monument to the Zaporozhian Cossacks would mean possessing the piece of land on which it was supposed to stay. Babych assured that the Kuban host's representatives indeed wanted to visit, observe, and evaluate the sites of the former Siches. But the Host, he wrote, waited for the visit of Evarnitskii to Ekaterinodar, where he promised to give several talks about the history of Zaporozhia, so as to jointly depart from the Kuban's capital for the Dnieper.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸³ Skalon to Babych, 16 October 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 118.

⁶⁸⁴ M. Babych to D. Skalon, October 30, 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 131.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 131 ob.

This letter was soon followed by Babych's progress report on the measures taken to commemorate Zaporozhia. He wrote that it was the most cherished dream of the host to perpetuate the memory of the figures, important for "the history of both Little Russia and the Kuban Cossacks, which are composed predominantly from the Little Russians." Babych gave a brief characteristics for each of the figures. He anachronistically characterized Sahaidachnyi as "the Hetman of the Zaporozhian host and of Little Russia of both sides of the Dnieper," called Khmelnyts'kyi "the Hetman of Little Russia, who fostered the unification of Little Russia, with its multimillion population, with Great Russia," and described Sirko as "the Kosh ataman, who epitomized the type of a genuine Zaporohian knight." In addition to them, Babych proposed to assign the names of Black Sea Cossack leaders to other three units. It were Fedor Bursak (2nd Kuban plastun battalion), Nikolai Zavodovskii (Kuban Cossack division, stationed in Warsaw), and his own father, Pavel Babych, "a brilliant military talent, which occupies a prominent place in the history of the conquest of the Western Caucasus" (4th Kuban Cossack battalion). The assignment of those names was not only about memory, but also about discipline and loyalty. It, as Babych went on, "would serve a major edifying purpose." He reported to Skalon to have already sent the petition to Vorontsov-Dashkov and asked for the intercession of the IRVIO to help with advancing the case.⁶⁸⁶ In its turn, the IRVIO reacted without delay and, at a meeting of the Council in January 1911, resolved to petition the war minister for the approval.⁶⁸⁷

The rapid advance of the case at the preparatory phase was all the more remarkable given the very choice of the names for the small pantheon of the Zaporozhian glory. Only the name of Khmelnyts'kyi raises no questions and seems fully explicable: he was the key figure of the imperial narrative of the Little Russian history—as the person to whom Muscovy owed the acquisition of the Ukrainian Cossack polity in 1654. The image of Khmelnyts'kyi had already been widely used as a figure of compromise for monarchists and Ukrainian national activists. No wonder that the monument to Khmelnyts'kyi in Kiev, built by Mikeshin as a symbol of the Ukraine's eternal wish to be a part of Russia, eventually became a symbol of the Ukraine's will to be sovereign. On March 19, 1917, the

⁶⁸⁶ M. Babych to D. Skalon, 22 December 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 86, ll. 2, 2 ob.

⁶⁸⁷ *Zhurnal Imperatorskogo Russkogo Voennno-Istoricheskogo obshchestva*, 44; "Zasedanie soveta 10 yanvaria 1911 goda," Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 113, l. 5.

area around the monument became the venue of the so-called Freedom's Day—arguably the largest Ukrainian political demonstration of the 20th century.

Unlike him, the appearance of Sirko and Sahaidachyi in the pantheon seems far stranger, given their controversial and complicated relationships with Muscovy. Sahaidachnyi led a twenty thousand strong Cossack army in its march on Moscow as a part of the Polish campaign of 1617-1618 to put Prince Władysław on the Moscow throne. Sirko was the most eminent ataman of the Zaporozhian Sich, who refused to swear allegiance to the Russian tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1654, and who frequently acted against Muscovy in the following years. These aspects of their biographies made Sirko and Sahaidachnyi prominent and fully convenient figures for the Ukrainian activists, who laid stress on their anti-Muscovite activities. However, the imperial narrative proved to be flexible enough to include Sirko and Sahaidachnyi to its own pantheon of the Little Russian Cossack heroes on a par with Khmelnyts'kyi. In this case, their merits as the defenders of the Orthodox faith outweighed their sins. Besides, the inclusion of Sirko and Sahaidachnyi to the list of imperial heroes deprived the Ukrainian national awakeners of the exclusive rights on these figures. Recognizing this kind of the imperial logic does not imply that the Ukrainian-minded intellectuals resisted the use of the images of Sirko and Sahaidachnyi in the centralist imperial imagery. On the contrary, they could themselves be initiators of such use, insofar as these figures could serve as the smugglers of needful ideas. An example of a tale by the Little Russian writer Vasilii Radich can show how the image of Sahaidachnyi could function within the imperial context.

Although almost unknown today, Radich authored numerous popular novels for undemanding readers (for “children” and “the people”), which were being published starting from the mid-1890s, and even more intensely—posthumously after the Radich's death in 1904. Radich often drew his subjects from the early modern history of Ukraine, so he focused many of his works on the Cossack themes. The novel *Sagaidachnyi*, built on the anti-Polish motives, described the story of the emergence of the Ukrainian Cossack polity, which the Polish authorities were forced to reckon with. The portraying of the confrontation between the Polish oppressive elites and the Orthodox peasantry, where the latter eventually took the upper hand, ensured the book's patriotic appearance and made it useful in the opinion of censorship. Yet Radich did not omit the theme of *Sagaidachnyi*'s participation in the war with Muscovy. According to his words, the Muscovite regiments,

which went out to meet the Cossack army led by Sahaidachnyi, were “crushed and dispersed [*smiato i rasseiano*].” It was just one brief sentence in the whole text, but the use of these emphatic participles reveals not so much the author’s intention to fix the historical fact as the author’s admiration for the Cossack victory over the Muscovite army. The Radich’s consistent use of the names “Ukrainian” (*ukrainets*) and “Ukrainian people” (*ukrainskii narod*) with respect to the population of the 17th century Ukraine merely added to his text the possibility to be read in the manner opposed to the centralizing perspective. The Sahaidachyi’s response to the Władysław’s question of what he wants for his military assistance—“Freedom to Ukraine”—crowned the book’s ambiguities and demonstrated the plasticity of the Sahaidachyi’s image, malleable to different interpretations.⁶⁸⁸

When Evarnitskii introduced the Zaporozhian Cossacks to the Odessa branch of the IRVIO, he was driven by similar motives of teaching the empire to respect the fighters for the Ukrainian will, and with it their nineteenth-century descendants’ aspiration to enjoy the rights and liberties. Commemorating Sirko and Sahaidachnyi should only contribute to this purpose.

The idea to assign the names of the Zaporozhian leaders to the Kuban regiments did not come to fruition. The IRVIO’s decision to petition War Minister Vladimir Sukhomlinov is the only precise information about the advancement of the initiative that we have at our disposal, and the further fate of the case is unclear. There are no reasons to believe that Sukhomlinov consciously opposed this initiative—not only because the Kuban Host, the Caucasus viceroy, and the IRVIO supported the case, but also because Sukhomlinov himself expressed some sympathies toward the things Little Russian. As it was mentioned above, he used the Little Russian peasant-sounding pseudonym “Ostap Bondarenko” while publishing his stories, and his literature alter-ego profusely used Little Russian phrases and idioms in dialogues. Such oddity was not groundless. Sukhomlinov’s ancestors were Ukrainian nobles (in his memoirs, he used the words “Ukrainian family” while describing his origin⁶⁸⁹), which is why being—and speaking—Little Russian for him could be a carnival impersonation that allowed him performing the role impossible in the real life.

⁶⁸⁸ V. Radich, *Sahaidachnyi* (Moscow: Izdanie M. V. Kliukina, 1910), 15, 25.

⁶⁸⁹ V. A. Sukhomlinov, *Vospominaniia* (Berlin: Universal’noe russkoe izdatel’stvo, 1924), x.

What is more, Sukhomlinov was a long-time associate of Mikhail Dragomirov, himself of Little Russian origin, who was the Kiev, Podolia, and Volhynia Governor General in the years 1897-1904, famous for his support for the Little Russian culture.⁶⁹⁰ Sukhomlinov was the chief of staff of the Kiev military district from 1900 to 1904, and the head of the same governorate general in 1905-7. In his memoirs, Sukhomlinov positively characterized Dragomirov through the terms of ethnic belonging: “a genuine *khokhol*, Little Russian with all his advantages and weaknesses, though not a Ukrainian but Great Russian [sic!].”⁶⁹¹ Some of Ukrainian national activists even characterized him, “as a disciple of Drahomirov,” as “not hostile towards the Ukrainian movement [*ukrainofil'stvo*].”⁶⁹² It was not true, since Sukhomlinov steadily opposed the attempts of Ukrainophiles to introduce the Ukrainian language to primary schools and generally viewed with their activity with high suspicion.⁶⁹³ And yet his pride in his Little Russian origin made him an unlikely candidate to fight the commemoration of Sahaidachnyi and Sirko.⁶⁹⁴

In the end, only one of the Kuban units among those that Babych suggested for the assignment of the historical chiefs was given this favour. In December 1913, Nicholas II assigned the name of Colonel Afanasii Bursak the Second, the son of Major-General Fedor Bursak, to the 1st Black Sea regiment. But this fact seems to have had no direct connection to the original initiative. We can assume that the idea of this assignment owed its origin to the 1912 festivities over the centenary anniversary of the war with Napoleon, which drew attention to the figure of Bursak as the host's most celebrated hero of the war. On the occasion of this event, *KKL* informed that the commander of the 2nd Kuban plastun battalion, Colonel Dzhaliuk petitioned the authorities to assign the name of one of the historical figures, proposed in 1910, such as Khmelnyts'kyi or Babych, to the unit under his command.⁶⁹⁵ However successful the advance of this petition could be, the breakup of the First World War was likely to have been the last and the major obstacle for it.

⁶⁹⁰ On him, see Shandra V. S., *Heneral-hubernatorstva v Ukraini: XIX-pochatok XX stolittia* (Kiev: Natsional'na akademiia nauk Ukrainy, 2005), 330–31.

⁶⁹¹ Sukhomlinov, *Vospominaniia*, 91.

⁶⁹² Ye. Chykalenko, *Spohady (1861-1907)* (Kyiv: Tempora, 2011), 321.

⁶⁹³ O. Lotots'kyi, *Storinky mynuloho*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1934), 106–112.

⁶⁹⁴ Curiously, Repin used Dragomirov's face as the model for the Sirko's image on his painting “The Zaporozhians.”

⁶⁹⁵ M., “Vysochaishaia milost',” *KKL*, 29 January 1914, 8. It is worth noting that Colonel Ivan Dzhaliuk was not a Kuban Cossack native, but came from a Podolia peasant family and received military education at

The initiative for the monument to the Zaporozhians on the Dnieper also stopped at a certain point. The Kuban Host reported on preparations for constructing the monument only in October 1912, and did it in the letter not to the leadership of the Odessa branch of the IRVIO, but to Matvei Sulkevich, who became something of a patron of the project. Chief of Staff Vladimir Liakhov, who by then succeeded Kiiashko on this post, wrote Sulkevich that the Host needed more time before proceeding with the case in order to prepare carefully to realization of the project. To this end, the Host decided to study comprehensively the history of the Zaporozhian Host and to visit the sites of the former Zaporozhian Sichs, all with the help of Evarnitskii. As Liakhov explained, the Kuban administration invited the historian to read several lectures in Ekaterinodar in the winter months, while the expedition of the Kuban representatives to the Dnieper, analogous to that of 1909 and guided by Evarnitskii, was supposed to take place in the spring of 1913. Basing on the expedition's conclusions, a special commission would determine the place for and the shape of the monument. Liakhov also revealed the plans of the Host to announce the subscription for donations not only in the Kuban oblast, but in the Kiev, Poltava, Kharkov, Ekaterinoslav, and Kherson gubernias—the gubernias whose Ukrainian-speaking population might also be considered as descending from the Zaporozhian Cossacks.⁶⁹⁶ This intention meant that while the Kuban Cossacks saw themselves in charge of Zaporozhian inheritance, they did not deny the rights of others to be entitled to a share of it. At least, as long as the inhabitants of those gubernias were ready to pay.

In November 1912, *KKL* made the case of the monument to the Sich known in its article, which became the first source from which the public could learn about this very idea.⁶⁹⁷ The initiative belonged to monarchists and was designed to strengthen the Cossacks' allegiances to the dynasty and traditionalist values. Nevertheless, the publication in *KKL* about the first memorial to the Zaporozhian Sich to be built in the Russian empire received the sympathetic feedback among Ukrainian nationalists. Such was the case of Mykola Bohuslavs'kyi/Nikolai Boguslavskii, an entrepreneur Ekaterinoslav Ukrainian activist and the initiator of creation of the famous Ukrainian-language journal *Dniprovi khvyli* (Dnieper waves), who had just moved to Kuban with a

Chuhuiv/Chuguev Junker infantry school. S. Volkov, ed., *Generalitet Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2009), 447.

⁶⁹⁶ V. Liakhov to M. Sulkevich, October 26, 1912, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 87, l. 234.

⁶⁹⁷ E. Orel, "Pamiatnik Zaporozhtsam na ostrove Chertomlytskoi Sechi," *KKL*, 3 November 1912, 2.

view to organizing the work on nationalist agitation among the Cossack population. In the end of 1912, fully enthusiastic about the Kuban undertaking, he published a detailed retelling of the article of *KKL* in his journal.⁶⁹⁸

Soon afterwards, Bohuslavs'kyi sent a letter to *KKL*'s editor-in chief, Efim Orel, expressing his delight at the idea and assuring his support. In his own words, he “warmly took to heart the thoughts, expressed in the article and the desire of the Kuban Host to strengthen the memory about the glorious Chortomlyk Sich for eternity” and welcomed the undertaking “with a sense of genuine satisfaction, feeling deep love to our glorious ancestors.” The only objection he had was the proposed location for the monument. Bohuslavs'kyi opted for Khortytsia, “the beginning of all the Siches.” He proposed to Orel a plan of purchasing the lands of the island from the German colonists. A Kuban cooperative society, to the budget of which its members would pay from 50 to 100 rubles, Bohuslavs'kyi wrote, would be able to buy eventually all the land allotments belonging to the Germans. In the end, the Kuban host would emerge the sole possessor of the territory of Khortytsia, while funds on the monument could indeed be received from the zemstvos of the Poltava, Kharkov, Kherson, and Ekaterinoslav gubernias, as well as from various city councils.⁶⁹⁹

Thrilled at the dream of the Kuban Cossack-owned Khortytsia with the monument to Zaporozhia on its surface, Bohulavs'kyi pictured an idyllic scene of collective joy. “The monument to the Zaporozhians... A Cossack orchestra in Zaporozhian costumes plays near the monument in the summer. A mass of cottages spread out around. Vacationers and visitors are flocking from everywhere. Noise, talk, fun! And the capital, spent on land purchase, pays off in a short time and then begins to bring sizable profit.” Bohuslavs'kyi laid particular emphasis on the fact that the Germans were more proactive (even though inaccurate) with the uses of the Zaporozhian imagery. “We will find funds for the construction of the church, just the same as was in the Sich. Near Aleksandrovsk and, therefore, Khortitsa the Germans built a beautiful sanatorium, and on the bank the Dnieper, on a rock, one German put a monument to Taras Bulba, who never existed. A

⁶⁹⁸ Zakubanets', “Lyst z Kubani,” *Dniprovi khvyli* 22 (1912): 299.

⁶⁹⁹ E. Orel, “K stat'e o pamiatnike Zaporozhtsam na ostrove Chortomlytskoi Sechi,” *KKL*, 13 January 1913, 1.

German did it. Is not it the time for us to do the same, is not it the time to remember ‘who we are, whose children.’”⁷⁰⁰

Bohuslavs’kyi’s letter attests to his sincere interest in the Kuban expedition to Khortytsia. Perfectly familiar with the locality, he bothered to draft the plan of the trip, having estimated the approximate expenses for crossing the Dnieper rapids, and offered his assistance in organizing a special railway carriage that would bring the delegation from Rostov to Ekaterinoslav and back. In his ambition to do everything to facilitate the expedition and to contribute to realization of the Host’s plans, Bohuslavs’kyi was guided by considerations of both tactical and sensuous character. On the one hand, his reaction betrays the irrational, emotion-driven attachment to the idea of the Kuban Cossacks’ symbolical return to, and taking care of, the ancestral land, as well as the excitement over the forgotten Sich. On the other, he clearly pursued the interests of his own and of the community on behalf of which he claimed to be acting. The monument to the forerunners of the Ukrainian statehood was about to emerge on the historical lands of former Zaporozhia, Ukrainian activists’ opinion notwithstanding. What is more, the monument already had the emperor’s sanction, and the powerful Cossack Host, with all its fiscal competence and organizational abilities, was in the charge of its construction. For Ukrainian activists, joining to the undertaking offered opportunities of diverting its original monarchist meaning by injecting their nationalist agenda into the ideological underpinnings of the project. When Bohuslavs’kyi’s recommended Orel to invite to Ekaterinodar such specialists on the history of Zaporozhia as Dmitrii/Dmytro Doroshenko or Lev Padalka, both having more explicit Ukrainian nationalist views than Evarnitskii, he aimed to use the initiative to the advantage of the Ukrainian nationhood.

Despite of the optimism of the Kuban Host, the hopes that the monument to the Zaporozhians would be built somewhere in the southern Dnieper steppe did not come true. The last official document related to the project was a letter by Sulkevich to the IRVIO, written in November 1912 and revealing the plans of the Kuban authorities for the next year, which was read aloud at the session of the Council.⁷⁰¹ Neither the Host nor the IRVIO returned to the elaboration of the issue. A probable reason for this was the disruption of the Evarnitskii’s travel plans, the beginning of the Great War, and an apparent redundancy of yet another monument to the Zaporozhian Cossacks.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ “Zasedanie soveta 22 noiabria 1912 goda,” Arkhiv VIMAIviVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 113, l. 99.

5.3. Empire's New Zaporozhians: The Emergence of the Zaporozhian Regiments

Not all the intentions of the IRVIO and the Kuban Host were bound to remain unrealized. While much of what they had hoped to implement in the course of their joint commemorative activities failed, some of their efforts yielded highly symbolical results. The fate of the idea of assigning the name “Zaporozhian” to one of the Kuban Cossack regiments, which was promptly taken into consideration by the upper echelons of authorities, demonstrates that the imperial officialdom had no fundamental objections to the rehabilitation of the Zaporozhian Cossacks and to the official recognition of the Zaporozhian lineage of the Kuban Cossacks.

As already mentioned, Nicholas II expressed his support for this idea in his conversation with Baron Kaulbars in Livadia in the autumn of 1909. With the emperor's approval, it was up to the Kuban administration to advance the issue, and it took on the case full of enthusiasm. Babych, involved to the IRVIO's commemorative projects soon afterwards, proved to be not only sympathetic to the idea, but also showed remarkable creativity and interest. His was the task to compose a petition with a detailed rationale, which would ensure the successful advance of the case through the imperial chain of command. In November 1909, Babych sent the petition to the Caucasus Viceroy, where he advocated for the renaming of one of the regiments (he made specific reference to the Eisk regiment) of the Kuban Cossack host into “Zaporozhian.” Babych explained his request by the need to raise the fighting spirit of the Cossacks and to reinforce their loyalty to the Tsar, Faith, and Fatherland. To find the way out of the modern “egoistic age” and escape its corrupting influence, the host should have an example to be followed, which would exemplify moral virtues for the present and future generations of the Cossacks. Naturally, it was the Sich, widely known and remembered throughout the empire and beyond, but nowhere as dear as in Kuban: “The thoughts first of all turn to the ancestors of the host—to the Zaporozhians, to those brave knights, whose fame is still alive everywhere. Especially—in the entire region of Kuban, granted by the grace of Empress Catherine the Great to the faithful Cossacks of the former Zaporozhian Sich. The memory of the

Zaporozhians, these heroes [*bogatyri*], who were truly brave in their spirit and honest in their heart, it should seem, should not be forgotten.”⁷⁰²

Babych’s reflections attest to his unusually modern, up-to-date understanding of the nature of memory. For Babych, material means for transmitting the memory were insufficient to imbue the society with essential meanings and images. Literature could not satisfy the society’s demand to remember. Historical narratives about the deeds of the ancestors “perpetuate them in the memory of the descendants, but what has been read may be forgotten, and books are not yet available to everyone.” Here, low literacy rate, small print runs, and the limited capacity of the human memory imposed constraints on the cultural memory. So too did the geographical factor with regard to monuments. “The memorials and monuments, dedicated to them [the ancestors], are grand by their design and vividly remind us of their era, but the monuments are not visible to everybody.” Only the assignment of the name of the Zaporozhian Cossacks to a Cossack cavalry unit, wrote Babych, would perpetuate the Zaporozhian epoch, “to which every Cossack should turn his spiritual gaze as often as possible,” in the memory of all Kuban Cossacks.⁷⁰³

As in the case of the Mikeshin’s monument (and, virtually, all the other commemorative initiatives), the memory of Zaporozhia went hand in hand with the image of the empress, to whom the Kuban host owed its newfound homeland. “We should be grateful to the memory [of Zaporozhia] and must keep it forever and inseparably with the memory of the Great Empress, who did a great favour to the Zaporozhians, and then to the Black Sea host,” wrote Babych in his petition. To this end, he asked to assign the name of Catherine II, as an eternal patron, to the would-be Zaporozhian regiment. No regular unit of the imperial army, stressed Babych, had the empress as its patron.⁷⁰⁴ Now there was one to have laid claim. It was, however, not the only one—after Matvei Sulkevich first proposed to assign the name of the empress to one of the imperial regiments in the summer of 1909, his idea found support of the imperial military authorities. When Babych sought recognition of Catherine II as the patron of the Zaporozhian regiment, the General Staff had already started its own search of worthy candidates for the empress’ patronage, requesting the IRVIO to determine the proper regiment, to which the name of Catherine II

⁷⁰² M. Babych to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 25 November 1909, GAKK, f. 318, op. 2, d. 4123, ll. 1, 1 ob.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, l. 1 ob.

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 1 ob., 2.

should be assigned.⁷⁰⁵ The IRVIO suggested that two units, the 81 Apsheron infantry regiment and the 6th Glukhov dragoon regiment, could bear the name of Catherine II as their patron.⁷⁰⁶

Without any objections from the part of Vorontsov-Dashkov and the GUKV, the petition by Babych shortly reached Nicholas II.⁷⁰⁷ On August 8, 1910, the emperor made a landmark decision, approving the renaming of the Eisk regiment by issuing a decree, which was the first supreme act officially rehabilitating the formerly disgraced name and, simultaneously, recognizing the Zaporozhian pedigree of the Kuban Host. The text of the emperor's decree read as follows: "In order to fix in the memory of posterity the glorious merits for Russia of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, who carried a hard border guard service over the long years, and a direct descendant of whom is now the Kuban Cossack host, it is Highly commanded for the first Eisk regiment of this host to call itself eternally the first Zaporozhian regiment of Empress Catherine the Great, and for the second and the third Eisk regiments—to call themselves the second and the third Zaporozhian regiments."⁷⁰⁸

This symbolic act "turned" the Kuban Cossacks—at least one of the Kuban regiments—back into the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Moreover, neither the emperor nor the authorities in Tiflis and St. Petersburg opposed the assignment of the name of Catherine II to the Zaporozhian regiment, thereby permitting simultaneous existence of three military units that had the same eternal patron. This was not a result of a certain negligence or oversight. The Apsheron and Glukhov regiments received the name of Catherine II as their chief just at the same time as the Eisk regiment did—on the 8th and 10th of August respectively.⁷⁰⁹

Soon after the decree was released, the Host turned its attention to the issue of change of the regimental symbols, which every Cossack of any rank bore on his own body—the marks on the shoulder straps. The insignia on epaulettes expressed the

⁷⁰⁵ "Zhurnal zasedanii soveta obshchestva," 22 January 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 41; The General Staff to the IRVIO, 3 February 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 7, l. 135 ob.

⁷⁰⁶ *Otchet o deiatel'nosti Imperatorskogo Russkogo Voennno-Istoricheskogo obshchestva v 1910 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1911), 23; "Zhurnal zasedanii soveta obshchestva," 3 March 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 32, op. 1, d. 7, l. 140; A. Baiov to the General Staff, 28 December 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11. op. 1, d. 32, l. 59.

⁷⁰⁷ I. Vorontsov-Dashkov to GUKV, 16 December 1909, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 32, op. 1, d. 32, l. 5.

⁷⁰⁸ V. K. Shenk, *Kazach'i voiska* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V. D. Smirnova, 1912), 131; Vysochaishii prikaz po voennomu vedomstvu ot 8 avgusta 1910, GAKK, f. 318, op. 2, d. 4123, l. 6 ob.

⁷⁰⁹ "Apsheronskii, 81-i pekh., Imperatritsy Ekateriny Velikoi, nyne E. I. Vys., Vel. Kn. Georgiia Mikhailovicha polk," in, *Voennaia entsiklopediia*, 2:620; "Glukhovskoi, 6-i drag., Imperatritsy Ekateriny Velikoi, polk," in, *Voennaia entsiklopediia*, 8:343.

correlation between the two constituents of the regiment's name in its own way. In September, Babych petitioned the chief of staff of the Caucasian military district to introduce the new encryptions for the epaulettes. He suggested that the 1st Zaporozhian regiment, which carried out the actual military service, would have a monogram of the empress as the encryption on the epaulettes. Unlike it, the 2nd and the 3rd Zaporozhian regiments, which carried out the military service in reserve and did not receive the Catherine's II patronage, were to have the insignia with letter "Z," signifying the name of the regiments. For the imperial military system of symbols, the prestige of bearing monarchs' monograms was far greater in comparison with abbreviations of line units' names. After the monogram was approved, the 1st Zaporozhian regiment became the only Cossack regiment in the Caucasus that could boast such an honorary mark. Driven by a desire to obtain the same prestigious encryptions for the remaining two "Zaporozhian" units, Babych petitioned Tiflis asking to assign the empress' monogram to the 2nd and the 3rd Zaporozhian regiments instead of the letter "Z."⁷¹⁰ This attempt betrayed Babych's poor understanding of the principles of the symbolic system of the shoulder stripes: Catherine II was the patron of the 1st regiment only, and the two other regiments were not entitled to the right to have these insignia.⁷¹¹ Yet his petition demonstrated an important aspect of the official Zaporozhian myth of Kuban. Within the imperial framework, the Zaporozhian lineage was less prestigious than the symbolic protection of Catherine II.



⁷¹⁰ M. Babych to the Staff of the Caucasian Military District, 10 November 1910, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10032, l. 11.

⁷¹¹ The Main Intendancy Department to the Staff of the Caucasian Military District, 14 December 1910, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10032, l. 12.

Fig. 10. The encryptions on the epaulettes of the Caucasian Cossack hosts. The first and the second shoulder marks in the bottom-left corner represent the samples of encryptions of the 1st (the monogram of Catherine II), 2nd, and 3rd (letter “Z”) Zaporozhian regiments respectively. Source: V. K. Shenk, *Tablitsy form obmundirovaniia Russkoi Armii* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Smirnova, 1911).

Of course, not all of the members of the Kuban/Black Sea Cossack community were satisfied with this view. Those with Ukrainophile sympathies, who blamed Catherine II for the destruction of the Sich, resented the assignment of her name to the regiment. One of the officers of the 1st Zaporozhian regiment, Maksim Nedbaevskii/Maksym Nedbai, criticized the Catherine’s patronage over the “Zaporozhians” in his memoirs: “Tsarina Catherine II, having repaid with black ingratitude for the efforts provided by the Zaporozhians for Russia, ordered to destroy the Zaporozhian Sich, and in her manifesto on this occasion she ordered to eliminate the very name “Zaporozhian.” As if in mockery, 133 years later its [the Sich’s] descendants called the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Eisk regiments as the Zaporozhian regiments of Empress Catherine II, bearing the monogram images with her name on their epaulettes.”⁷¹²

Others were rather sarcastic. One of them was Colonel A. Korsun, a Kuban Cossack native who resided in Odessa, being allegedly one of the most important intermediaries between the Odessa branch of the IRVIO, Evarnitskii, and the Kuban administration. In a letter to Evarnitskii with a copy of the Nicholas’ II order, Korsun expressed mixed feelings: “There is my humble contribution, but [not] without the irony of fate, i. e. when I fussed over the renaming of the regiment I did not intend to include the second name—this was the initiative of the host administration.”⁷¹³ The actual role of Korsun in this and other IRVIO’s commemorative initiatives remains to be examined, but he was likely to have a negative attitude toward the empress, influenced by Shevchenko’s poetry.⁷¹⁴ With that, Korsun sincerely enjoyed the tsar’s order and congratulated Evarnitskii with the renaming of the Eisk regiment as the main contributor to the initiative and the chief guardian of the memory of the Sich “The honor and glory are yours, of

⁷¹² M. I. Nedbaevskii, “Vospominaniia ofitsera Eiskogo polka Kubanskogo kazach’ego voiska,” GAKK, f. 670, op. 1, d. 67, l. 150. Quote from O. V. Matveev, *Iz istoricheskogo i voenno-kul’turnogo nasledii kazachestva Kubani* (Krasnodar: Ekoinvest, 2011), 212.

⁷¹³ A. Korsun to D. Yavornyts’kyi, 29 August 1910, *ESAYa*, 3:160.

⁷¹⁴ At least, the same 1910 year, during his visit of the memorial at the Shevchenko’s grave, he left a message in the visitors’ book: “A bow from the sons of Kuban to native father Taras” [“*Ridnomu bat’kovi Tarasu poklin vid syniv Kubani*”]. See T. F. Bazylevych, ed., *Iz knyhy narodnoi shany* (Kyiv: Promin’, 1989), 10.

course . . . ! You, only you are the sole bearer and custodian of the former glory of the valiant knights.”⁷¹⁵

If Evarnitskii, along with a range of Odessa-based imperial high-ranking officers, was responsible for the success of this undertaking, the Kuban authorities took full advantage of the renaming to push forward their political and cultural post-revolutionary agenda. An important part of it was the assertion of the exclusive Cossack rights on the Kuban territories and the struggle against the growing influence of the towns. The Kuban Cossack conservatives’ suspicion and distrust towards workers and disguise for the bourgeois order can help to understand better the very choice of the regiment, the name of which the Kuban administration determined to change.

In the petition to Vorontsov-Dashkov, Babych argued that the Eisk regiment was called so after the town of Eisk, inhabited not by the Cossacks, but by burgers (*meshchane*). For that reason, such a regimental name “tells nothing to the Cossack’s heart.” As Babych wrote, in Eisk “there are no things Cossack, though in the meantime the [Eisk] regiment is recruited exclusively from the Black Sea Cossacks, the descendants of their glorious ancestors—the Zaporozhians.”⁷¹⁶ The renaming, thus, was a means to rid the host of an unpleasant name, associated with the events of 1905-06 and with the social organization, hostile to that of the Cossackdom. It may be regarded as a particular case of the continuous general strategy of the Kuban Cossack elites to marginalize the role of urban centres in the administrative structure of the host lands. Towns, with their destructive influence on the Cossack population, were seen as the exogenous objects on the healthy body of the Cossack region. As a result, the Cossack authorities were making efforts to exclude or isolate them from the administrative body of the Kuban host.

The renaming of the Eisk regiment can be better explained if seen against the background of local administrative developments brought about due to similar ideological challenges. Over the two preceding decades, the Kuban authorities conducted the policy of restricting the influence of the towns by transferring district administrations—the centres of local power—from towns to stanitsas. The Host first undertook this measure in Taman in 1897, when the Kuban authorities gained permission of the State Council to move the administration of the Temriukskii district from the town of Temriuk to stanitsa

⁷¹⁵ A. Korsun to D. Yavornyts’kyi, 2 September 1910, *ESAYa*, 3:161.

⁷¹⁶ M. Babych to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 25 November 1909, GAKK, f. 318, op. 2, d. 4123, l. 1 ob.

Slavianskaia.⁷¹⁷ Similar changes took place in another part of Chernomoria. The same year, the Kuban administration raised the question of moving the district administration of the Eiskii district from Eisk to stanitsa Umanskaia. For some reason, the transfer of the center was accomplished only in 1903, due to the efforts of district ataman Aleksandr/Oleksandr Kukharenko.⁷¹⁸

In the course of the the dispute between the town officials and the Host that followed the Host's decision, the local authorities insisted that Eisk was the only place in the area with such essential attributes of modernity as the post office, judicial and educational institutions, doctors, drugstores, market, and the sea port that was currently under construction. The Kuban authorities defended its own decision, claiming that the Cossack administration of the district would better live among the "disciplined Cossack population," in the stanitsa, with its location in the middle of the district, low food prices and the proximity of a military training camp.⁷¹⁹ St. Petersburg found the Cossack arguments well substantiated. The town administration of Eisk once again attempted to challenge this decision as late as 1911, even after the Eisk regiments received the new name and the verbal connection between Eisk and the local regiments became broken. Appealing to Vorontsov-Dashov, the town mayor asked the viceroy to return Eisk its central status, for the construction of the railroad made the town's peripheral position within the district irrelevant in terms of its accessibility. Moreover, remoteness of Eisk from the geographical centre of the district was not an argument at all, since plenty of the Russian empire's administrative centres were located far from the centres of their respective territories, a prime example being St. Petersburg itself.⁷²⁰ Once again, St. Petersburg's authorities found the counterargument of the head of the Kuban oblast more convincing. As Babych wrote, the Cossacks normally travel not by the railroad, but on horseback.⁷²¹

Apart from the relocation of the district administrations, by the moment the Host requested permission for the renaming of the Eisk regiment, it had already dealt with

⁷¹⁷ PSZ, III, 17, 15890.

⁷¹⁸ PSZ, III, 23, 23609.

⁷¹⁹ "O peremeshchenii upravleniia Eiskogo otdela Kubanskoi oblasti iz g. Eiska v st. Umanskiu," OR RGB, f. 169, k. 47, ed. khr. 34, ll. 3, 5.

⁷²⁰ V. Nenashev to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 12 June 1911, RGVIA, f. 400, op. 25, d. 3107, l. 3 ob.

⁷²¹ Acting Chief of Staff of the Caucasian Military District to the Main Staff, 24 September 1911, RGVIA, f. 400, op. 25, d. 3107, l. 1 ob.

renaming of an administrative part of the oblast as part of the Cossack bureaucracy's counter-revolutionary campaign and a manifestation of its anti-urban sentiment. In May 1909, the ataman of the Temriukskii district, Vasilii Mishchenko, sent the Kuban administration a resolution of stanitsa and khutor atamans of the district, in which they expressed their wish to rename the Temriukskii district into Tamanskii district and asked the Kuban administration to accommodate their request. The district, they wrote, "received its current name after the town of Temriuk, while this town is inhabited by an element, totally alien to the Cossacks, which since 1905 has served as a residence center of revolutionary-brigand gangs." Hence, the current name was "improper" for the Cossacks of the district, especially because this district constituted the historical heartland of Chernomoria as the starting point of the Zaporozhian colonization and was the home for one of the oldest regiments of the host—Tamanskii.⁷²² The petition referred to the recently launched construction of the monument as an additional argument in favor of the renaming: if the Cossacks were recovering the memory of their ancestors, it could not take place in the district, the very name of which cast shadow on the memory's untainted nature.

Dozens of stanitsas resolutions in support of the renaming, adopted promptly after the GUKV put into question the right of the atamans to promote such an idea bypassing stanitsas assemblies, were intended to make this line of argumentation more expressive. Composed with the participation of the same atamans (and, undoubtedly, under their guidance), the resolutions based their reasoning on the same two points: the impropriety of the non-Cossack name and the significance of the memory of Zaporozhia. Some argued that "to be named after the town known for its revolutionary activities is insulting," or that "except of disturbances, Temriuk does no good for the Cossacks even today, for which reason half a hundred of Cossack station there now." Others assured that the new name "will serve us a reminder of the historical olden times of our glorious Cossackdom, which we should be proud of," would "perpetuate the memory of the faithful Zaporozhians," would be "more dear [*srodnyi*] to our Cossack heart," or that it was desirable since "our glorious ancestors from Zaporozhia gave birth to the Cossack souls in the peninsula."⁷²³ In the view of the proponents of the renaming, the name of Taman was intrinsically linked to

⁷²² "Zhurnal prisutstviia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia (copy)," 30 June 1909, RGVIA, f. 330, op. 53, d. 2092, ll. 2, 2 ob.

⁷²³ Quotations are given from the resolutions of stanitsas Vyshesteblievskaia, Popovichevskaia, Troitskaia, Krymskaia, and khutor Stepnoi. See RGVIA, f. 330, op. 53, d. 2092, ll. 8-8 ob., 9-9 ob., 34, 36, 50.

the Zaporozhian past of the Kuban Cossacks. According to their plan, the renaming was to coincide with the unveiling of the monument. However, Nicholas II approved the renaming earlier, in August 1910.

Following the two milestone changes in the Kuban administrative structure, the Host made an attempt to change the names of two other districts of the Kuban oblast. In December 1910, Andrei Kiiashko wrote a letter to the ataman of the Eiskii district, Petr Kokunko, proposing him to rename the district under his supervision. The district, “inhabited by the descendants of the Zaporozhians,” Kiiashko wrote, “in all fairness should be named after these glorious knights.” Since the Eiskii regiment had already been renamed into Zaporozhian, “it would befit for the district to be called the Zaporozhian district.”⁷²⁴ If Kokunko had agreed to this suggestion, Zaporozhia as a geographical reality would have again appeared on the imperial map. There are no documents indicating his answer, but he most likely considered the suggested renaming too radical since the Eisk district retained its name until the breakdown of the Russian Empire. At least, that was the reaction of the ataman of the Maikopskii district, Petr Lagunov. Kiiashko made him an analogous suggestion—to change the name of the district so it would be named not after the town of Maikop, inhabited by burgers, but after the name of the Caucasus Line regiments, which were recruited from the Cossacks of this district.⁷²⁵ For Kiiashko, the name of “the Line (Lineinyi) district” was supposed to restore the lost historical tradition. For Lagunov, however, the ostensible “restoration” of tradition was itself a violation of the really existing one. As he responded, “For saving the olden times, the name of the district should not be changed to any other.”⁷²⁶

5.4. Renaming Stanitsas: Place Names as a Form of Memory

The Kuban Host’s attempts to rename the Eiskii and Maikopskii districts were only a part of a broader campaign, launched by the Host with the aim of filling the map of the Kuban oblast with a variety of “meaningful” place names that would serve as the reminders of the Kuban Cossacks’ past. Kiiashko and other Ekaterinodar officials sought to substitute the

⁷²⁴ A. Kiiashko to P. Kokunko, 19 December 1910, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 2.

⁷²⁵ A. Kiiashko to P. Lagunov, 19 December 1910, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 3 ob.

⁷²⁶ P. Lagunov to A. Kiiashko, 14 August 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10228, l. 27.

names of the districts due to their “insulting” character, but they directed their efforts toward another type of names as well—those of *stanitsas*, which, although not being “offensive,” were too “meaningless” for the Cossack population of Kuban. In the heart of this renaming campaign was an idea that place names were capable to transmit memory of the past, serving as a kind of historical textbook, which one could “read” simply by travelling throughout the Kuban oblast, or at least glancing over its map.

The mechanism of the campaign, though, did not imply giving new names to old, large and well-known Cossack settlements, *stanitsas*. Rather, its plan envisaged assigning new names to a number of settlements of smaller size, *khutors*, the administrative status of which was being upgraded to that of *stanitsas*. In the opinion of the authors of the initiative, the elevation of the status of a settlement had to go hand in hand with the revision of the settlement’s name. In case the etymology of the name was not “telling” and patriotic enough, the assembly of the respective settlement had to propose its own name. The key developer of the project was the chief archivist of the Kuban Host and the chief of staff’s brother, Ivan Kiiashko. Both brothers took active part in the realization of the renaming: the latter excavated the memory from the historical materials, while the former provided administrative support and controlled the implementation of the program.

In November 1909, Ivan Kiiashko sent a request to Babych, where he complained about what he thought of as a major oversight in the administrative practice of the Kuban oblast of the day: many *khutors*, while being reorganized into *stanitsas*, received new, strikingly “vague and even preposterous” names. Those names, he reasoned, sounded entirely senselessly in contrast to the names of the oldest *stanitsas* of Chernomoria, founded in the 1790s and named after the *kurins* of the Sich (military units in Zaporozhia; in the original sense—Cossack barracks). The names of those old *stanitsas* were imbued with memory referring to the Zaporozhian past. These names, Kiiashko wrote, “unwittingly evoke the memories of the ancestors, the Zaporozhians, and of their former glory and exploits.” As the transmitters of memory, they could serve as the models for other settlements to follow. The plan, designed by Ivan Kiiashko, suggested that the new *stanitsas*, too, would receive the names referring to the Kuban past.⁷²⁷ Babych endorsed the initiative and entrusted its implementation to the Host Staff. The next month, the atamans of all the districts of the Kuban oblast received a circular, penned by Andrei

⁷²⁷ I. Kiiashko to M. Babych, 16 November 1909, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10228, l. 1.

Kiiashko. The chief of staff urged them to take direct part in the Host's commemorative rush. "In order to educate the young generation in the spirit of the great ancestors and to perpetuate the famous names and events from the history of the Kuban Cossack host," wrote Kiiashko, "we undertook a number of measures, part of which has been already implemented, while another part is scheduled for implementation. Among the latter measures, it is planned to assign historically famous names to some settlements of the host, many of which have names that are either unreasonable or have been formed by addition of the prefix "*novo-*" (new) to the names of stanitsas, after the names of the founders of those khutors, or, finally, after names of ravines, rivers, etc."⁷²⁸ Kiiashko required the district atamans to ensure the realization of program on the ground. Every settlement assembly had to revise the settlement's name. In case dwellers of stanitsas wanted to leave current names, they had to motivate the need of leaving the stanitsas' names unchanged. Those who failed with providing the satisfactory motivation were obliged to choose a proper name from the special list, drafted by Ivan Kiiashko. Due to this toponymical euphoria, Kuban was expected to become the region of absolute glory, where dozens of place names would be narrating the "glorious" past of the Kuban Cossacks. There was little room for "ordinary" names as long as they were telling nothing to the Cossacks rather than motivating them to serve the tsar and the Fatherland.

The enterprise proposed by the Kiiashko brothers was likely to have been built on several precedents, which took place some months before. As early as June 1909, the assembly of khutor Dinskoi attempted to break the administrative ties with—and the dependence on—stanitsa Dinskaia by soliciting for the settlement the status of stanitsa. To make the argument more convincing, the assembly petitioned the Kuban authorities to rename khutor Dinskoi into stanitsa Zaporozhskaia.⁷²⁹ The location of the khutor on the Taman peninsula, in the vicinity of stanitsa Tamanskaia with its monument to a Zaporozhian Cossack under construction, gave the assembly full right to claim the name that the administration of the oblast could not help but applaud. Indeed, the Kuban authorities promptly endorsed the initiative and approved the petition without requesting the permission of the government. In May 1910, Babych only informed the GUKV of the

⁷²⁸ A. Kiiashko to P. Kokunko, 19 December 1910, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 1.

⁷²⁹ "Zhurnal prisutstviia Kubanskogo oblastnogo pravleniia," 20 February 1910, RGVIA, f. 400, op. 25, d. 1108, l. 7.

fait accompli.⁷³⁰ Around the same time, yet another khutor, Velichkovskii, achieved the stanitsa status and a new name—stanitsa Chepiginskaia, after Zakharii Chepiha.⁷³¹ Other khutors-turned-stanitsas, now, were supposed to undergo a similar procedure, and the Kiiashko brothers saw their task as providing stanitsas assemblies with the guidance that would help them to orient in the local memory and to make the right choice of the name. To this end, Ivan Kiiashko prepared the lists of the names, from which every assembly could choose the one it would deem the most appropriate. Every district of the oblast was given a distinct set of names, dependent of the district's peculiarities and history. Expressed by means of place names, the historical memory of both Chernomoria and Linia diverged, each having its own heroes and events to be remembered.

Among the historical figures that were supposed to give their names to stanitsas, there were military commanders who led the Russian conquest of Caucasus, e.g. Prince Aleksandr Bariatinskii, General Aleksei Ermolov, Prince Mikhail Vorontsov. There were also atamans of the Black Sea and Kuban Cossack Hosts: Sydir Bilyi, Anton Holovatyi, Timofei Kotliarevskii, Fedor Bursak, Aleksei Beskrovnyi, Nikolai Zavodovskii, Grigorii Rashpil, Yakov/Yakiv Kukharenko, Nikolai Evdokimov, Feliks Sumarokov-Elston etc. Ivan Kiiashko also included in his list Prince Grigorii Potemkin-Tavrisheskii as one of the key figures in the creation of the Host, and Sysoi Kosolap, the ataman of the Azov Cossack host. At the same time, the list contained a range of “Zaporozhian” names. Ivan Kiiashko added the names of the leaders of the Zaporozhian Cossacks that had been already proposed by the Odessa branch of the IRVIO as the patrons for the Kuban regiments: Petro Sahaidachnyi, Ivan Sirko, and Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi, as if it was a stable and unalterable pantheon, which encompassed all worthy and admissible figures. Ivan Kiiashko designated each of these names for one district of former Chernomoria—the Eiskii, Tamanskii, and Kavkazskii districts respectively, whereas the Ekaterinodarskii district did not receive any name of Zaporozhian leaders for commemoration.

Unlike historical personalities, the Zaporozhian Siches were to be commemorated in full. Ivan Kiiashko included into his list most of the existed Siches: Khortitskaia (1550s), Tomakovskaia (1560s–90s), Bazavlutskaia (1590s–1630s), Nikitinskaia (1630s–52), Chortomlitskaia (1652–1709), and Podpilenskaia (1734–75). Only three of the

⁷³⁰ M. Babych to GUKV, 21 May 1910, RGVIA, f. 400, op. 25, d. 1108, l. 6.

⁷³¹ “Pereimenovanie,” *KOV*, 6 February 1910, 1. Remarkably, the new name reflected Ukrainian spelling of Chepiha's second name.

Zaporozhian centres were omitted: Kamenskaia (1709–11 and 1728–34), Aleshkovskaia (1711–28), and Danubian (1775–1828), and for a good reason. As these Siches existed on the territories under the Ottoman control, Kiiashko did not deem them as worthy of commemoration. The geographic distribution of the Siches' names was different from that of the Zaporozhian leaders' names. All of the names, with the exception of Nikitinskaia, were to appear within the area of the Eisk district—the idea that was a logical continuation of the ongoing “Zaporozhianisation” of the district.⁷³²

Ivan Kiiashko was well aware of the constructed nature of memory and was far from assuming that inhabitants of the Kuban stanitsas could “remember” the name of every Sich at a genetic level. What he called “memory” here was, in fact, the introduction of the new knowledge. In an explanatory note about Zaporozhia he made this point clear: “How many of us, the direct descendants of the glorious knights, know the names of the listed Siches? One can hardly be mistaken in assuming that many, many people hear these names for the first time. Yet these Siches were the cradle of the glory, with which the courageous knights filled the world. It seems that fixing these names . . . in the memory of the Black Sea Cossacks should correspond to the grateful memory of the descendants of these truly miraculous heroes.”⁷³³ What Ivan Kiiashko did not take into consideration was the question of whether the dwellers of stanitsas wanted to begin “remembering,” and, especially, to abandon the names of their settlements, where they were born, lived, and would most probably die, for the sake of this new “memory.”

How, then, did the inhabitants of former khutors react to the Kiiashkos' initiative? The decisions of whether their settlements should better be renamed or retain their current names intact depended on rank-and-file Cossacks as far as they could express their opinions at the settlements' collective meetings. Although there are no archival records of the individual voices of the Cossacks, a bulk of collective resolutions, passed by khutor assemblies (*sbory khutorov*) with the participation of all adult male inhabitants, allow tracing several scenarios of reactions. Since the Kiiashko brothers' initiative looked rather recommendatory than imperative, the khutor assemblies often clung to the possibility of leaving the names unaltered (only the gender of the names was to be changed from male to female). A whole range of settlements refused to change their names. The reasons, by

⁷³² On all the names mentioned here and below see the draft of the Ivan Kiiashko's list: GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, ll. 4–6.

⁷³³ I. Kiiashko, *Zaporozhskaia sich'*, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 11 ob.

which the assemblies justified their unwillingness, varied. In some cases, the assemblies assured the Host Staff that the expenses related to the renaming would be higher than the budgets of settlements could afford. For example, the assembly of stanitsa Ubinskaia used such an excuse in its resolution.⁷³⁴ Others explained their wishes to leave the current name of their native settlement intact by referring to the old tradition of the name's usage. The Cossacks of stanitsa Fontanovskaia defended the settlement's name by arguing that the settlement "has existed under that name for more than one hundred years."⁷³⁵ Some were straightforward enough to say that they were simply accustomed to the present name, as it was in a case of stanitsa Razdolnaia. Thus, the inhabitants of Razdolnaia intended to preserve a name with no meaningful connotations—the type of name the Kiiashko brothers wanted to get rid of. When the ataman of the stanitsa was asked to clarify why Razdolnaia was called in such a manner, he explained it simply by the fact that it was "convenient in pronounce" (*udoboproiznosimo*).⁷³⁶

And yet, a number of stanitsas assemblies dared to adopt new names. The conditions under which the assemblies acted left them enough room for creativity, so they could either vote for the names proposed by the Kiiashko brothers or come up with their own alternative. In other words, the choice of a particular name depended on the will and imagination of assembly members and/or the settlement's ataman. What was the "memory" stanitsas opted for? Contrary to the Kiiashko brothers' expectations, the behavior of the assemblies showed little willingness and readiness to commemorate the distant, unfamiliar past. The assemblies were more inclined to use the recent images or events of the imperial-wide significance. For instance, the assembly of khutor Ladozhskii opted for the name "Vostochnaia" or "Dalne-Vostochnaia" (literally, "Eastern" or "Far-Eastern") in order to commemorate the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5.⁷³⁷ Andrei Kiiashko objected to this decision and prescribed the khutor to find a more appropriate name since "(Dalne-)Vostochnaia" did not express any ideas related to the history of the Kuban host.⁷³⁸ The Cossacks of stanitsa Kirpilskaia decided to choose the name of Mikhail Skobelev, the popular hero of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–78, as the eponym

⁷³⁴ "Prigovor stanitsy Ubinskoi," 20 January 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, ll. 9, 9 ob.

⁷³⁵ "Prigovor stanitsy Fontanovskoi," 17 April 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 17.

⁷³⁶ "Prigovor stanitsy Razdol'noi," 23 January 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 6.

⁷³⁷ "Prigovor khutora Ladozhskogo," 19 January 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 8 ob.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, l. 57 ob.

for the settlement.⁷³⁹ Other settlements preferred to choose names of contemporary high-ranking officials—the practice that reflected not so memory-related issues, but the desire to benefit from flattering the authorities. Such was the case of stanitsa Kaluzhskaia, the assembly of which opted for the name of Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov.⁷⁴⁰

The reluctance of the settlements to implement the program of the Host Staff compelled Andrei Kiiashko to intervene. He went so far as to force those who did not succeed in explaining the necessity of preserving their former names to choose any historical names as an obligatorily measure. In some cases, he personally determined the names he thought of as the most appropriate. In so doing, he violated the seemingly democratic procedure of the decision-making of the assemblies, but in such circumstances he no longer relied on the assemblies' good will. The most embarrassing for Kiiashko was the unwillingness of settlements to “remember” Zaporozhia. While trying to propel the renaming campaign in the Eiskii district more actively, he sought the assistance of the district ataman Petr Kokunko, rhetorically appealing to Kokunko's alleged sentiment toward Zaporozhia. In a letter to him, Kiiashko wrote that since he knew him “as a true and sincere son of glorious Zaporozhia, who always sincerely respected, loved, and took care of the hoary glory of our native Cossacks,” Kokunko only had to countenance this initiative and to help him with forcing the settlements to accept new names.⁷⁴¹

These efforts had some success. Due to both direct and mediate Kiiashko's intervention, one stanitsa and several khutors of the Eisk district eventually agreed to accept the “historical” names. These were the names of the Black Sea host atamans: Holovatyi, Kotliarevskii, Rashpil, Kukharenko. Along with it, the assemblies of two local khutors took the decision of changing the khutors' names in memory of the Zaporozhian Siches: khutor Novoplastunovskii was renamed to Podpilnyi and Starovelichkovskii—to Tomakovskii.⁷⁴² It is noteworthy that the khutors, which changed their names, were not subject to renaming simply because they retained their khutor status. Thus, their renaming could not be justified by the initial conditions and demands of the Kiiashkos' renaming program. They adopted new names for the sake of “memory” only, without any additional reasons.

⁷³⁹ “Prigovor stanitsy Kirpil'skoi,” 20 January 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 4.

⁷⁴⁰ Prigovor stanitsy Kaluzhskoi, September 24, 1911, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 42.

⁷⁴¹ A. Kiiashko to P. Kokun'ko, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 65.

⁷⁴² A. Kiiashko, Po Eiskomu otdelu, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, ll. 60, 60 ob.

The extent of the assemblies' sincerity concerning their attitudes towards the new names can be seen from the outcome of the initiative. In December 1911, Andrei Kiiashko left his post of Chief of the Staff, being appointed as acting ataman of the Orenburg Cossack host. The campaign of renaming lost its leader, and the settlements immediately jumped at the chance of rejecting the new names. In March 1912, the assembly of khutor Starovelichkovskii withdrew its earlier decision of accepting the name "Tomakovskii."⁷⁴³ By April 1912, all the settlements in the Eiskii district that had accepted the historical names during the campaign decided to return their previous names. The exception was khutor Novoplastunovskii, which canceled its decision to adopt the name "Podpilnyi," but preferred instead another new name—Babychevskii.⁷⁴⁴ It honoured a famous participant of the Caucasian war, General Pavel Babych; it could also be a sign of respect to his son, Mikhail Babych.

The discrepancies between the expectations of the Kuban authorities and the actual behavior of the Cossack assemblies attests to their indifference to the official memory or, as one might call it, the memory from above. The past did not preoccupy the minds of the ordinary Cossacks. Almost no stanitsas dared to change the place names for the sake of memory proper. In most cases, they preferred to live in the world of familiar, habitual names, where the most meaningless (from the standpoint of local authorities and intellectuals) of them seemed far more telling than those names that referred to the most vivid historical images. At the same time, the cases of the renaming of some of the local settlements, which preceded and followed the initiative by the Kiiashko brothers, however exceptional they could be, demonstrates that occasionally the memory could become more important than a habit of name. In subsequent years, two khutors decided to rename themselves to names with Zaporozhian connotations, when in 1913 khutor Rogovskii started to call itself stanitsa Dneprovskaia, and in 1914 khutor Ponurskii turned into stanitsa Khmel'nitskaia.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴³ Prigovor khutora Starovelichkovskogo, March 11, 1912, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, l. 72.

⁷⁴⁴ P. Kokun'ko to the Host Staff, 20 April 1912, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 10020, ll. 70, 70 ob.

⁷⁴⁵ Azarenkova A. S., ed., *Osnovnye administrativno-territorial'nye preobrazovaniia na Kubani, 1793–1985 gg.* (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskoe knizhnoe izdate'stvo, 1986), 249, 271.

5.5. Laying Claim to the Regalia Again

The memory boom, instigated by the Black Sea Cossack elites, resulted not only in a number of entirely new projects seeking to reinforce the idea of the Zaporozhian ancestry of the Kuban Cossacks. Similarly to the relaunch of the initiative of constructing the Zaporozhian monument, the Host dusted off yet another two-decades-old unimplemented project, embarking on it with renewed energy, greater devotion, and good reason to believe in its ultimate success. It was the by-then neglected project of transferring to Ekaterinodar the Zaporozhian regalia, stored in collections of St. Petersburg, put forward by Mikhail Mikeshin as early as the 1890s, but rejected by the government in the early 1900s. Despite the earlier failure of the idea, the Host's representatives thought that the new era, new demands, new political climate, and new ideologies, brought about by the post-revolutionary changes, would provide new conditions and opportunities conducive to the successful implementation of the plan.

Although we do not know when precisely the Host came to the idea of laying claim to the regalia stored in the imperial capital, we know that at a certain point in late 1910 Babych received a report written by Kirill Zhivilo, in which the latter raised the issue of the Zaporozhian banners displayed in the Hermitage. Zhivilo, the director of the host's museum of ethnography, natural science and history, took great interest in all sorts of historical artefacts of relevance to Kuban. In his report, Zhivilo shared his impressions of what he had seen in the Hermitage during his visit to St. Petersburg. The Zaporozhian banners, he wrote, hung in the hallway next to Polish banners, so high that visitors to the museum hardly could have a closer view, passing by them without paying any attention. In Ekaterinodar, "such valuable signs of Zaporozhian greatness" would find much better place.⁷⁴⁶

On December 22, 1910, Mikhail Babych launched the new round of the operation aimed at acquiring the Zaporozhian antiquities. In a petition, addressed to Vorontsov-Dashkov, he referred to the recent tsar's decree on the renaming of the Eiskii regiment to the Zaporozhian regiment as the long-awaited act of supreme recognition of the "inextricable link" between the "genuine knights" of Zaporozhia and the Kuban host—of

⁷⁴⁶ K.K., "O zaporozhskikh znamenakh," *KOV*, 6 January 1911, 1.

course, represented by its Black Sea Cossack constituent. As the officially acknowledged heir of the Sich, the Kuban Cossack host had every right, in the view of the Kuban authorities, to claim the Zaporozhian cultural heritage for itself. The overall reasoning of the petition was representative of the general concern of the local conservative elites over the dynamics of social and political changes in the region. The petition proudly declared the Kuban Cossacks' firm commitment to the tradition they ostensibly inherited from the Sich: to protect the church, the Tsar, and the Fatherland. The history of Zaporozhia, thus, had never been as relevant with regard to the pressing needs and interests as in the post-1905 era. It was a perfect resource from which to "draw examples of honest service to the Motherland," Babych wrote. And yet beyond the façade of triumphant rhetoric lied the profound uncertainty of the conservatives in their ability to cope with the modern challenges and influences. "To keep the ideas of Cossackdom alive," Babych warned, measures must be taken to instill the traditional values in the young generation and to edify children "in the spirit of their ancestors."⁷⁴⁷

Babych characterized the Zaporozhian regalia as an essential means of instilling a sense of loyalty in the young Cossacks both to the traditions of the past and the vital needs of the present. The Cossack youth in Ekaterinodar, not the museum visitors in St. Petersburg, was the genuine target audience for the Zaporozhian relics. As the petition called on, "Let the younger Cossack generation see all the time the banners and flags that inspired their ancestors to great military achievements. Let the contemplation of these dear military shrines make the younger generation pervaded by the awareness of the need to unconditionally sacrifice their lives for the idea of military duty—the idea that infinitely drove their ancestors." The Kuban host, as Babych assured, hold all its regalia with high reverence, parading them during the host's processions on every host holiday. There, at these regular rituals, "among the old and the young [Cossacks], among other regalia," was "the most proper place for all what the Zaporozhian Cossacks had earned." Rather than being peacefully stored in collections of antiquities in the capital, the regalia should better be used in the host's military ceremonies on the regular basis. Babych especially complained on the way the Zaporozhian banners were treated in the Hermitage. The fact that the museum displayed them as if they were military trophies run counter to the ideological foundations of the Zaporozhian myth. Babych bitterly objected to this,

⁷⁴⁷ M. Babych to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 22 December 1910 (copy), GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 108, l. 1.

referring to the historical injustice of the situation. “If earlier the Cossacks could think about the rapprochement with Poland, over the course of history their views have changed so drastically, so tightly did the Cossacks merge with the Russian people under the rule of the Russian tsars, that the presence of the Zaporozhian flags and banners along with the defeated Polish banners appears somehow anachronistic.”⁷⁴⁸

Putting forward the old claim anew, the Host sought review of the 1902 resolution by the GUKV, in which the main administration substantiated its refusal to satisfy the request of the Kuban authorities. In a second letter to the viceroy, written in February 1911, Babych argued against the GUKV’s principal argument—that the Zaporozhian regalia could not be considered “hereditary” for the Kuban Cossacks because they used to belong not to the loyal Zaporozhians of the Black Sea host, but to the ones who fled to Turkey. The latter, too, according to Babych, stormed the island of Berezan on the lower Dnieper in 1788 under the command of Holovatyi during the Russian empire’s war with the Ottomans (which was an event considered to be the most glorious military victory of the Black Sea Cossacks, for which they have received the grace from the Empress). Hence, the Kuban host still had the right to take over the regalia.⁷⁴⁹

The central military authorities in St. Petersburg were likely to be unaware about the matter that had already been the subject of consideration by military bureaucracy almost a decade ago. Their reaction to this case, thus, is indicative of the imperial army leadership’s attitudes to the Kuban increasingly bold and radical claims to the Zaporozhian heritage. The Main Administration of the General Staff did not reject the arguments of the Kuban administration. Although it appears to have not had any elaborate position on the issue, the administration was rather sympathetic to the Host’s request.⁷⁵⁰ However, Dmitrii Tolstoi, the director of the Hermitage, which hosted the Zaporozhian banners, insisted that there was no malicious intent in the display of the banners side by side with the Polish ones. He claimed that they were too long to be placed elsewhere. At the same time, he warned that the banners require special conditions of storage. Long transportation of the banners from St. Petersburg to Ekaterinodar would inevitably damage

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid, l. 1 ob. The same day, Babych informed the head of the IRVIO about the wish to have the Zaporozhian regalia in Ekaterinodar: M. Babych to D. Skalon, 22 December 1910, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 86.

⁷⁴⁹ M. Babych to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 2 February 1911, GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 108, ll. 9 ob., 10.

⁷⁵⁰ GUGSh to the Ministry of the Emperor’s Court, 17 March 1911, RGIA, f. 472, op. 49, d. 960, ll. 1, 1 ob.

the fragile fabric of the old banners: wind, sunlight, moisture, and jolting would ruin them, while the conditions in which the Host would hold the banners in Ekaterinodar could be no less dangerous.⁷⁵¹ In the same vein, the Main Administration of Artillery ruled out any possibility of transferring two Zaporozhian cannons from the museum of artillery to Kuban. These items, he reported, were the heritage of the entire state, not of the Kuban host exclusively, and thus had to be available for a wide audience, serving also as historical objects for studying the past. The commander of the Preobrazhenskii regiment, which was in charge of the Transfiguration Cathedral, wrote that “Kuban is no place” for the banners, because they were owned by the “Turkish Zaporozhians.” The use of the banners in the ceremonies of the host—the main Babych’s argument for claiming them for the host—was especially unacceptable, particularly since the cathedral had already spent large sums of money to repair the banners.⁷⁵² These considerations received the approval of Nicholas II. Nothing went to Kuban.

In the meantime, representatives of the host were likely to have expected the positive outcome. Zhivilo, who triggered the reconsideration of the regalia issue, was harboring the hope to move further than the mere transfer of the regalia from St. Petersburg and announced his far-reaching plans to collect all material artifacts left over from the Zaporozhian Sich, especially in the territory of former Zaporozhia. Some gold vestments, a gospel, a holy cross, and a shroud kept in a church in Nikopol were among the items that, according to his plan, were to be transferred to Ekaterinodar, to the descendants of those whom those sacred shrines once belonged. “The time has come,” wrote Zhivilo, for Cossack historians to visit Nikopol and other places where the Zaporozhian Siches once were.⁷⁵³ Neither of his plans succeeded in the end. The ultimate failure of the initiative, however, did not mean that the central imperial authorities denied the Kuban host’s right to claim a share of the Zaporozhian heritage. In September 1912, *KOV* informed that the minister of interior, in accordance with the war minister, decreed to transfer all files with historical documents related to the history of the Zaporozhian Sich from the archives of the Odessa city administration (*gradonochal’stvo*) and the archives of

⁷⁵¹ Director of the Hermitage to the Ministry of the Emperor’s Court, 24 March 1911, RGIA, f. 472, op. 49, d. 960, ll. 4 ob., 5.

⁷⁵² GUGSh to the Chief of the Caucasus Military District, 9 July 1911, GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 108, ll., 12, 12ob.

⁷⁵³ K. Zhivilo, “O zaporozhskikh drevnostiakh,” *KOV*, 10 June 1911, 2.

the Bessarabian and Tauric gubernia administrations to Ekaterinodar.⁷⁵⁴ If true, this decision would testify to the readiness of part of the imperial government to recognize the Kuban host the legal successor of at least part of the Sich's legacy. The next section looks at how the question of Zaporozhian succession of the Kuban host became a subject of consideration by the imperial authorities.

5.6. Restoring the Continuity: The Host's Attempt to Gain Recognition as the Successor of the Sich

Commemorating the Zaporozhian Cossacks on every occasion, the Kuban administrative and intellectual elites brought the Zaporozhian imagery into the forefront of the local cultural representations. The view of the Sich as the cradle of the Kuban Cossackdom became firmly entrenched in the official narrative of the local past. As the myth of the Zaporozhian origin of the Kuban host became increasingly influential and the presence of "Zaporozhia" in various spheres of public life became increasingly pronounced, however, the notion of the year of 1696 as the sole legally established date of the host's seniority never lost its validity. The first historical mention of the Khoper Cossacks continued to demarcate the officially determined starting point for the entire history of Kuban. In actual fact, two competing narratives of the origins of the host functioned in parallel with each other. Meanwhile, the further the Kuban authorities went in their claims to the legacy of Zaporozhia, the more inconsistent and odd the date of the Kuban Cossacks' seniority seemed. Whereas this discrepancy grew more and more apparent, it was only a matter of time before the Host would take steps to revise the already out-of-date narrative. In 1911, in the midst of the Taman commemorative festivities, it happened.

The impetus that prompted the local administration to put into question the date of the Kuban host's seniority emanated from the Nicholas II's decree of the renaming of the Eiskii regiment. Considering it as the long-awaited rehabilitation of the Zaporozhian Cossacks and, at once, the recognition of the Zaporozhian genealogy of the Kuban Cossacks, the Host jumped at the opportunity of taking the issue of changing the seniority date to its logical conclusion. Indeed, the tsar's explicit words about the host as the

⁷⁵⁴ "K istorii Zaporozh'ia," *KOV*, 16 September 1912, 2.

“descendant” of the Zaporozhians, as well as his acknowledgement of the Zaporozhians’ “merits,” gave the Black Sea Cossack elites reasons to hope that the case would receive a positive outcome. With this hope in mind, in February 1911, Mikhail Babych sent a petition to Illarion Vorontsov-Dashkov, which was to be forwarded to the War Ministry officials and—if successful—to the emperor. The petition was a long, comprehensive set of arguments by which the Kuban host’s administration sought to resolve the issue of the Zaporozhian legacy of Kuban once and for all. The whole line of reasoning led to the principal conclusion: as far as the Kuban Cossack host received the emperor’s recognition as the direct descendant of the Zaporozhian Sich, the host should receive a new, redefined date of seniority—the date of the Sich’s establishment. Given the importance of the case, the host’s administration made every effort to make the arguments as convincing as possible.

The question of seniority, according to the petition, should be determined on the basis of quantitative criteria. Babych and his co-authors or advisors argued that the descendants of the Kholer Cossacks constituted a tiny minority of the total number of the Kuban Cossacks. The capture of Azov in 1696, however significant, was but an episode in the continuous history of the Kuban Cossacks’ ancestors, which had started a long time before. The petition portrayed the descendants of the Line Cossacks not as a half of the Kuban host, but as a relatively minor part of it, which formed only four regimental districts out of eleven. The Line regiments did not constitute a coherent community and came to Kuban at different times. The Line Cossacks’ real history, the authors of the petition explained, began with the beginning of the Caucasian war, and could not date back earlier than 1794, while some of the Line Cossack units settled in the region as late as 1858. These circumstances made the date of 1696 irrelevant for most of the Cossacks of Linia as well. In contrast to them, the Black Sea Cossacks were a cohesive group, which constituted the absolute majority within the hosts’ administrative and military structure, forming six regimental districts and, thus, shaping the face of the host at large.

The date of the host’s seniority was unjust, but it also was meaningless. As the petition assured, it “does not revive the cherished images and events of the distant past, which exist in the memory of the majority [of the Kuban Cossacks], being passed from generation to generation.” The horizon of the actual memory of the vast number of the Cossacks reached the deeper past and the visions of another kind, better corresponding to the empire’s vital needs. “The cherished thoughts of the descendants of the Zaporozhians,

as it is quite natural,” the petition read, “ are directed to the olden times of the Lower Dnieper knighthood [*nizovogo rytsarstva*] and its memorable struggle against the enemies of Orthodoxy and the Russian nationality [*Russkoi narodnosti*].” As for the historically fair date of seniority, which would substitute the date of 1696, Babych pointed to the year of 1556. In that year, as he stated, the Zaporozhian Cossacks established the first Sich on the island of Khortisa and started their service for the Muscovite tsar, Ivan the Terrible. Such date would neatly fit the range of the seniority years of other old Cossack hosts: the Don (1570), Terek (1577), Siberia (1582), and Ural (1591) hosts, all of which signified both the first historical mentions of the hosts and the beginning of their service to the tsar.⁷⁵⁵

The petition included a concise account of the history of Zaporozhia, which portrayed the Sich as a pillar of Russianness on the borderland with Catholic and Muslim people. The final, figurative part of the attachment exploited the already familiar motif of an abandoned Little Russian land that begged the Kuban Cossacks to honor the memory of the Zaporozhians who inhabited it in bygone days: “Three and a half centuries have passed since that time [since the foundation of the Sich]. The banners and maces, granted for the first time by the king Bathory, are lost; the charters are rotted or disappeared. But the Dnieper river is still washing old Khortitsa, which is calling to pay a tribute to the memory of those who were the first to have laid the eagle’s nest on it, from which the glorious Lower Dnieper Zaporozhian Host originated.”⁷⁵⁶

The petition, an eloquent and unambiguous expression of the Black Sea Cossack local pride, was too bold an attempt to challenge the government’s decree to pass without consequence. The Host gambled and lost. A year later, Babych received a response from St. Petersburg, which crushed any belief in the success of the case. To make the things worse, the response dealt a major blow to the results of the Host’s efforts over the last years, aimed at the rehabilitation of the image of the Zaporozhian Sich. It was a letter by the Main Administration of the General Staff, in which the yesterday’s heroes, the Zaporozhians, were represented as the empire’s enemies and traitors. The letter

⁷⁵⁵ M. Babych to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 12 February 1911, GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 139, l. 1, 1 ob. This document was published in V. Chumachenko, “Pro shcho movchat’ pam’iatnyky, ale promovliaiut’ dokumenty,” *Pam’iatky Ukrainy: istoriia ta kul’tura* 3-4 (2007): 49–51.

⁷⁵⁶ “Spravka otnositel’no vremeni, s kotorogo možno schitat’ starshinstvo Zaporozhskomu voisku,” GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 139, l. 28 ob.

categorically denied any possibility of changing the date of seniority to 1556 because at that time the Zaporozhian Cossacks were in the service of Poland, the Russia's foremost foe. Throughout the next hundred years, the letter went on, Zaporozhia remained independent from Russia, and even after 1654, when Little Russia merged with Great Russia, the Zaporozhian Cossacks did not swear allegiance to the Russian tsar. It was only in 1686 that the Sich became subordinated to Russia. But even long after that, as the Main Administration of the General Staff stated, the Zaporozhian Cossacks did not recognize themselves as belonging to the Russian state and used every opportunity to secede from Russia. They supported the rebellions of Kondratii Bulavin and the Don Cossacks, conducted diplomatic relations with Poland and Crimea, and took the side of Hetman Ivan Mazepa and Swedish king Karl XII in 1709, entering the war with Peter I. In revenge, the Russian army razed the Sich to the ground.⁷⁵⁷

Such a view on the role of the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the Russian history, of course, left no room for the satisfaction of the Kuban Host's expectations. The General Staff did more than merely reject the Host's petition—it cast a shadow on its ancestry. While none of the years preceding 1686 could be chosen as the date of seniority because of the Zaporozhians' service for the Russia's adversary, the year of 1686, as the General Staff concluded, could hardly be accepted as well, since soon after that the Sich betrayed the allegiance it owed to the Russian suzerain. Hence, the problem was not in the year as such, but in the overall attitude of Zaporozhia toward Russia throughout its history. In this regard, the Khoper lineage was more reliable in political terms, even though it appeared artificial.

This document appears weird if seen against the backdrop of the growing enthusiasm for all the things Zaporozhian, and even more so—in contrast to the preceding behaviour of the St. Petersburg authorities, which readily sanctioned most of the measures to commemorate the Sich. Instead, it threatened to reverse the achievements of the Kuban elites in their restoration of the good name of Zaporozhia and the construction of the myth of the Sich as the empire's southern stronghold. Once issued, this decision could set a precedent for future imperial decisions dealing with the Zaporozhian imagery, heralding the beginning of the end of the Zaporozhian myth as the one that was imbedded in the

⁷⁵⁷ Main Administration of the General Staff to I. Vorontsov-Dashkov, 20 January 1912, GAKK, f. 318, op. 6, d. 139, ll. 30–31. First published in V. Chumachenko, "Pro shcho movchat' pam'iatnyky," *Pam'iatky Ukrainy: Istoriiia ta kul'tura* 3–4 (2007).

foundation of the imperial self-image. How, then, the decision of this kind could be accepted at all, and what it resulted from?

The earlier fate of the Kuban host's petition did not foreshadow the failure. Even more, in a certain sense it could be considered even promising. Soon after receiving the petition, Vorontsov-Dashkov forwarded it for consideration by the St. Petersburg military officialdom. Already by March 1911 at the latest, the petition had reached the Main Administration of the General Staff. The latter, in turn, submitted it to the institution that since its inception was in charge of determining dates of seniority for imperial military units, Cossack hosts included—the IRVIO. Ironically, the organization that initiated the campaign to commemorate the Sich, so eagerly supported by the Kuban administration, had to deal with the fruits of the latter's overzealous activities. As these activities went far beyond the agenda of the IRVIO itself, the society found itself in confusion. In April, the council of the IRVIO entrusted the task of preparing the report on this issue to its leading specialist (and concurrently the society's treasurer), the military historian Aleksei Baiov.⁷⁵⁸ Thus, it was Baiov who was in response of the Host's fiasco, since it was his report that provided the basis for the decision by the Main Administration of the General Staff. The text of the decision was a rather shortened version of the report, prepared by Baiov. The discrepancies in the attitudes of the IRVIO members to the Zaporozhian myth are difficult to interpret. Still, there are several clues that can shed light on some of the circumstances surrounding this case. First, it can be argued that Baiov's conclusions were met with rejection on the part of the leaders of the IRVIO. Baiov presented his report to the council of the IRVIO two times. While the council listened to his report in September 1911, deciding to submit it to the Main Administration of the General Staff, some obstacles prevented the submission. In the end, the IRVIO submitted the report (most probably, revised and edited), presented by Baiov in November the same year.⁷⁵⁹

The only final version of his report that we have at our disposal, written in November but submitted to the council only in December, was subject to editing as well. The author of the editorial changes—allegedly, Dmitrii Skalon—crossed out some fragments that seemed to him inappropriate. The most interesting here was the Baiov's concluding paragraph, completely deleted by the reviewer. The paragraph reflected his

⁷⁵⁸ "Zurnal zasedanii soveta IRVIO," 1 April 1911, Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 113, 22 ob.

⁷⁵⁹ Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 113, ll. 44, 55.

view on the Nicholas II's decree on the renaming of the Eiskii regiment and the motives that pushed the emperor toward issuing it. According to Baiov, the tsar's decree was a condescending concession rather than a deserved reward, and the Kuban Cossacks had no moral right to ask for more, since they had already received far too much:

Remembering that the Zaporozhians, while they existed, nevertheless, were the Russian Orthodox people, the Sovereign Emperor in his inexhaustible mercy deigned to acknowledge the present Kuban host as the descendants of those people. It would seem, however, that the Tsar's grace should not be abused. His Imperial Majesty in his regal love has consigned to oblivion such facts as the repeated betrayals of the whole Zaporozhian Host, and the necessity of the Russian troops to carry out military actions against their Sich twice, due to which they [the troops] suffered losses. But, of course, it does not mean that, based on this, it is allowed for the descendants to ask for determining the seniority by that time when their ancestors served to the enemies of Russia.⁷⁶⁰

Indulging in psychological intricacies of the case (which had nothing to do with his actual task), Baiov continued by exposing the hidden motives of the Host. Although, as he assured, he “was not able to look inside anybody's minds and hearts,” he claimed to have unravelled the hopes of the authors of the petition. “Apparently,” he wrote, “the authorities of the Kuban host relish the idea to seek for the Kuban host the earliest seniority among all the other old Cossack hosts.”⁷⁶¹

The source Baiov referred to in his conclusion was a chapter from a voluminous jubilee book *The Centenary of the War Ministry*, describing the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks.⁷⁶² This thirteen-volume book, despite its somewhat misleading title, was an all-encompassing work, which covered a huge number of topics related to the Russian military history and the Russian military system. The chapter about the Sich constituted a part of the volume, devoted to the history of the Cossack hosts and the way they were administered by the Russian authorities. Authored by a team of military historians, headed by Aleksandr Nikolskii, this historical account was indeed far from idealizing the Zaporozhians. It repeatedly emphasized their complex and uneven relationships with Muscovy and the Russian Empire. However, it differed from the Baiov's interpretation by

⁷⁶⁰ A. Baiov, “Zakliuchenie o starshinstve,” Arkhiv VIMAIViVS, f. 11, op. 1, d. 94, l. 119.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Ibid., 116.

the pronounced neutrality of its language, free from the words like “traitors” or “betrayal.” To a certain extent, it was a kind of the text that might have been written by Ukrainian-minded nationalist historians as well. It repeatedly mentioned the “independence” of the Zaporozhian Sich from both Poland and Russia, and pointed to the hostile attitude of the Sich toward the strengthening of the Russian influence in Little Russia after 1686 (the authors used the word “recalcitrance” (*uporstvo*) to describe such behaviour).⁷⁶³

To what extent did the chapter in question influence the views of Baiov on the phenomenon of the Zaporozhian Cossacks? How did his sharply negative stance toward Zaporozhia relate to the interpretation offered in the chapter? Did Baiov oppose preceding efforts of his colleagues from the IRVIO, who made Zaporozhia a centerpiece of their commemorative activities? Apparently, in the previous years Baiov did not exhibit his distaste for the Zaporozhian enterprise of the IRVIO. Quite the contrary, he portrayed himself as a supporter of the initiative. The previous year, sending a letter to the ataman of the Tamanskii district, Baiov urged him to foster and boost the construction of the monument. In the letter, he referred to his personal interest in the case and, by and large, demonstrated sympathetic, even encouraging, stance to the Zaporozhian commemoration.⁷⁶⁴ It does not imply, however, that the reading of the chapter profoundly changed his opinion, although some statements of the chapter could have made a certain impact on him.⁷⁶⁵

Whatever the effect of the chapter’s portrayal of the Zaporozhians on the views of Baiov might be, to understand the IRVIO’s ultimate refusal to encourage the Zaporozhian frenzy of the Kuban elites one may look at the personality of the society’s chief. Dmitrii Skalon, the head of the IRVIO, owed his reputation and high position not the least to his having been the chief editor of *The Centenary of the War Ministry*, a successful historical project.⁷⁶⁶

As a person responsible for the texts included to the volume, Skalon was informed about the intricate relationships of Zaporozhia with Russia. Nevertheless, in 1909-11 he

⁷⁶³ D. A. Skalon and A. I. Nikol’skii, eds., *Stoletie Voennogo ministerstva: Glavnoe upravlenie kazach’ikh voisk, t. 11, kn. 1* (St. Petersburg: Sinodal’naia tipografiia, 1902), 29–31.

⁷⁶⁴ A. Baiov to P. Kosolap, March 21, 1910, RGVIA, f. 400, op. 25, d. 1503, ll. 44 ob., 45.

⁷⁶⁵ Such was the mention of the participation of the Zaporozhians in the massacre of almost the entire population of the town of Uman, which might have sounded for Uman-born Baiov in a special way.

⁷⁶⁶ For Skalon’s involvement in the project in 1900 see A. F. Rediger, *Istoriia moei zhizni. Vospominaniia voennogo ministra*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Kanon-press; Kuchkovo pole, 1999), 355.

was a firm supporter of the commemorative initiatives aimed at glorification of Zaporozhia. In this regard, Skalon's case was paradigmatic for many imperial intellectuals and officials. They purposefully represented the Russia's rather dubious subjects, and frequently—foes, as its most adherent defenders as long as this trick relieved the nation-framed tensions and served to strengthen the imperial coherence. Simultaneously, such activity required cautiousness and was full of covert pitfalls. The excessive enthusiasm could bring along plenty of undermining ideas, which was a purpose that opponents of the imperial centralism, like Evarnitskii, indeed, were willing to achieve. They allowed the images of their heroes to exist within the imperial context because it was the only possible way for them to exist in public and be honoured at all. Besides, it was a kind of double coding—addressing to two different audiences in different ways by using implicit meanings and hidden hints. For both sides, it was an unsteady mutual agreement: so long as it was beneficial for both, it continued.

5.7. Speaking Zaporozhian: Language, Rhetoric, and Official Speeches

The idea of Kuban as the last refuge of the Zaporozhian Cossacks, so actively propagated by the local administration during the years of Babych's atamanship, gained particular strength and momentum in the wake of the administration's efforts. The Zaporozhian ancestry of the Kuban or, to put it more accurately, Black Sea Cossack host became an established wisdom—if not for broad segments of the local community, than at least for the official parlance. Speeches on different occasions, welcoming greetings, appeals to the public made by representatives of governing authorities or addressed to the authorities by their subordinates, exploited the idea of the Zaporozhian roots of Chernomoria as a shared experience, the feature that the leadership of the host and those under their command had in common. In a sense, the Zaporozhian theme, brought into public use mainly due to the efforts by Babych and Kiiashko, became an influential fashion embraced by many contributors to the local public sphere. The official press, which had become a mouthpiece of Cossack ultra-conservatives, extensively published records of meetings and encounters of different Kuban host's representatives with the Kuban administration. Sources of this kind provide an important insight into the language and imagery of local power as well as

a sense of local pride and particularism. The rhetoric of love and nativeness, analyzed in the previous two chapters, became even more pronounced. Simultaneously, its connections with the cultural peculiarities of the Kuban Cossacks grew even stronger. The Ukrainian language turned into a conventional tool for underscoring the Black Sea Cossack distinctiveness and, although its sphere of use remained undoubtedly restricted, it nevertheless considerably expanded its presence in the public, officially authorized space, in the direct line of sight of the governing authorities. Moreover, the authorities themselves, just as the Cossack ultra-conservatives, were quite eager to promote the Ukrainian vernacular as the Cossacks' undoubted and demonstrative part of their Zaporozhian legacy.

The conservative press continued to employ the “fatherly” metaphors as applied to the host's leadership. Such was the portrayal of Andrei Kiiashko, whose charisma and enthusiasm made him no less popular than Mikhail Babych. In one of publications in *KOV*, its anonymous Cossack correspondent described his chance encounter with Kiiashko in Tiflis. Kiiashko, under whose command the author had served in the 1st Caucasian regiment, who not only recognized the Cossack but warmly embraced him. The excited Cossack penned a letter to the official newspaper, praising Kiiashko's merits as the Cossack chief and his sincere love towards his own subordinates. The Cossack wrote the letter in the perfect literary Russian language, but in the very end he suddenly switched to the Ukrainian vernacular once he touched upon the issue of the Kuban Cossacks' Zaporozhian origin. The author wished Kiiashko to be “the father of the Kuban Cossack host, which is by nature Zaporozhian—the word that in the old times frightened the enemies” (*ot pryrod'ia Zaporizhskaho, yake slovo v drevnosti bulo strashnym dlia vrahiv*).⁷⁶⁷ The notion of Zaporozhianness, the idiom of nativeness, and the Ukrainian vernacular—all were intertwined together. The first thing implied the second one, and both could better be expressed by means of the third.

A welcoming toast, given to Kiiashko at a dinner in stanitsa Slavianskaia on the occasion of his visit, was even more indicative of the extent to which the Cossacks employed the Zaporozhian rhetoric while addressing the authorities. The author of the toast, the esaul of the 2nd Poltavskii regiment Nikolai Kamyshan, made Zaporozhia an overarching theme of the whole speech, as if he waited for an occasion to speak out about

⁷⁶⁷ Oklik Kazaki, “Vostorg kazachestva,” *KOV*, 9 May 1908, 2.

the issue that had long been occupying his mind. Kamyshan invited the audience to mentally travel back in time and space to the Lower Dnieper and imagine the Sich in all its greatness. Kamyshan unleashed his imagination: not once the foes razed the Sich to the ground, he exclaimed, but every time it reemerged again with renewed strength. So mighty was the Sich that once the ataman sneezed, “the walls of Istanbul trembled and whole enemy cities and provinces turned into piles of stones.” It was invincible, it never vanquished, and so it has never ceased to exist.

Kamyshan was well read and repeatedly quoted from Pushkin, Gogol, and Shevchenko. He argued that Kuban was not just the heir of the Sich. In effect, Kuban itself was the Sich that survived into the turn of the 20th century. In view of this, such an undoubted sympathizer of the Sich as Shevchenko appeared to have been mourning the loss of what was in fact alive. “What do we hear now: ‘The Sich is gone, and gone is he who led it’... No, a thousand times no. I do not agree with that.” The Sich, Kamyshan assured, was merely transferred to Kuban. “It is there, on the banks of the Kuban, that the glorious Zaporozhians, hugging their sworn brothers, no less brave Line Cossacks, awakened the great Sich from a long sleep, having called it the Kuban [Sich] and having passed it the great spirit, the motto, their testaments and ideals, which we, comrades, will never betray and which we will preserve sacredly and inviolably.” Kamyshan generously peppered his speech with Ukrainian words and phrases, and he always used Ukrainian while imitating the direct speech of the Cossacks. Betraying the strong influence of Gogol’s *Taras Bulba*, Kamyshan replayed one of its most famous scenes, saying that if the tsar would ask the Cossacks whether they still had force, the Kuban Cossacks, just as their Zaporozhian ancestors (*didy-zaporozhtsi*), would respond “we do have, our Almighty Father, the powder in the flasks and the Cossack force will never decline!” This phrase, indeed, was a rough quotation from *Bulba*, although with a major deviation—it was translated into Ukrainian. Suggesting a toast for “immortality, glory and magnificent moral and intellectual blossoming” of the “native, great Kuban Sich,” Kamyshan greeted Kiiasko as “vois’kovoï pysar’ [Host Chancellor]” the second most influential post in the Sich, “the person who in that time was the most enlightened and who enjoyed unlimited trust.” The vocabulary, by which he described the rest of the audience: *polkovniki* (colonels), *starshyna*, and the whole Kuban *Hromada*,—all reinstated the ancient

Zaporozhian order, turning the toast into a brief, but eloquent verbal scene of historical reenactment.⁷⁶⁸

Kiiashko remembered the toast by Kamyshan. His own congratulatory speech, given to Archbishop of Stavropol and Ekaterinodar Agafodor in honor of the 50th anniversary of his priesthood, had much parallels to it. Kiiashko's speech, too, was more a panegyric to Zaporozhia than to the hero of the occasion. What makes it look even more peculiar, however, is the overall context. Kiiashko's speech was intended not for the Kuban Cossack milieu, but for the external public of Stavropol, the seat of the eparchy, led by Agafodor from 1893. It was addressed not to a representative of the military or secular authorities, but to the head of the Orthodox church on the North Caucasus. Such circumstances, it would seem, made the Zaporozhian theme an unlikely choice for the official greeting. As a rule, this genre required the rather conservative language of religious piety, bound up with the notions of Holy Rus' and the God-blessed autocracy. And yet Kiiashko, speaking on behalf of the whole Kuban Cossack host, allowed himself to manifest the Black Sea Cossack local pride. The Christian faith, said Kiiashko, was "the soil, in the depths of which the Zaporozhian Sich, the foremother of the Kuban Cossacks, has grown." The Cossacks of Zaporozhia were brought together by their faith and piety, the only requirements for entering the ranks of the Cossacks. Once they emerged, they kept in awe the rulers of adjacent states. "Proud Istanbul trembled, fear attacked the Polish king, the pillars of the Crimean khan's throne wobbled." Kiiashko went on by reading aloud the same lines by Shevchenko (whom he called "our people's poet") as Kamyshan did, though, unlike the latter, agreeing that "the Sich is gone". It is the irrevocable past, the world has changed much since then, Kiiashko claimed, "they ruined [*zruinovali*] Zaporozhia, but with the help of God the new Cossack host emerged from the ruins of the Sich, and it gave life to the nowadays Kuban host."⁷⁶⁹

Kiiashko's exaltation in this particular case may be explained by the circumstances of time, given the memory initiatives that were under way in Kuban. The initiatives, however, were the results of his own ideological efforts, being in a sense a corollary of

⁷⁶⁸ N. G. Kamyshan, "Rech', proiznesennaia 26 oktiabria 1909 goda v st. Slavianskoi," *KOV*, 14 November 1909, 2.

⁷⁶⁹ D. K. Mikhailopulo, "Chestvovanie v gor. Stavropole 9 i 10 oktiabria 1910 goda Vysokopreosviashchennishego Agafodora Arkhiiepiskopa Stavropol'skogo i Ekaterinodarskogo, po sluchaiu piatidesiatiletia ego Sviashchennosluzheniia," *KOV*, 19 October 1910, 2–3.

Kiiashko's personal commitment to the Zaporozhian myth. The chief of staff's primary devotion, thus, predetermined the way in which representatives of the host addressed him on solemn occasions. In November 1910, on the name day of Kiiasko, during the celebration at the Host Staff, one of the members of the deputation of clerks that gathered to greet him, gave a long speech in Ukrainian, reducing the social distance between "the father chief [*Bat'ko Nachal'nyk*]" and his subordinates. When we heard that you were appointed as *Viiis'kovyi pysar* of our native host, said the spokesman, "the Cossack heart fluttered with joy," and it was a great happiness for anyone to "serve under the wing of the man who is native by spirit and covenants and who is the only one to be able to comprehend our thoughts, our hopes, and the covenants of our great ancestors." You are the only one, continued the spokesman, "who came to us as the conductor [*providnykom*] and the guard of the great Zaporozhian covenants." As both the "father" and the chief, Kiiashko, he said, was the only patron who had shown his "native care [*ridnu zabitylvost*]" of the team of clerks and, as the real children of their father, the clerks expressed their "filial [*synovne*] greetings" and wishes.⁷⁷⁰

Kiiashko's notable enterprise could have guaranteed him an illustrious career, if it had not been for the revolution of 1917. In March 1912, he was promoted to the ataman of the Transbaikal Cossack host, which was a position he could not even dream of in 1907. The Kiiashko's farewell ceremony gives yet another insight into the scenario of nativeness, of which Kiiashko was one of the most important developers. A number of addresses, presented by representatives of different institutions, was made in Ukrainian. The deputation of clerks of the Host Staff made a speech "in the Little Russian language." The delegation of representatives of the singing and music choirs of the Kuban host ended its greeting with a Ukrainian verse, composed and performed by a young boy. So too did the editor-in-chief of Kiiashko's brainchild, *KKL*. He read aloud his verse, which compared Kiiashko's achievements with heroic deeds of the Zaporozhian colonizers and equated his service in the Host with a "glorious Zaporozhian service." The verse portrayed Kiiasko as both the "leader" and the "father," as "our beloved one," and presented the host's *hromada* (community) as his "children." These bonds determined Kiiashko's belonging to the collective body of the host. As the verse read, "you are ours by flesh and spirit" (*Ty tilom nash i nash dushoiu!..*).⁷⁷¹ The group of members of the Ekaterinodar

⁷⁷⁰ "Shanovnyi nachal'nyk," *KOV*, 5 December 1910, 2.

⁷⁷¹ "Provody A. I. Kiiashko chinami Voiskovogo Shtaba," *KKL*, 12 May 1912, 2-3.

military-artisanal school was yet another delegation that greeted Kiiashko in Ukrainian. If for those congratulators the Ukrainian language was a means of expressing themselves, Grigorii Kontsevich made it the subject of his own speech. As a personal “gift” to Kiiashko, Kontsevich recited a local Christmas carol. The carol had no relationship to the occasion, but its sounding, he hoped, would be a pleasure in its own right. As Kontsevich said, he only wanted “to show how beautiful and magnificent Kuban songs are, which captivate not only the Kuban oblast or the Kiev, Poltava, Kerson and other gubernias, but even the population of such gubernias as Stavropol, Tambov etc., which does not know Ukrainian language.”⁷⁷²

Another illustration of the use of the rhetoric of nativeness, which smuggled the Ukrainian vernacular into an official speech, was a congratulatory address presented by the delegation of the Kuban host, headed by Babych and Kiiashko, to the His Imperial Majesty’s Own Convoy on the occasion of its centenary in May 1911. Although this emperor’s personal guard unit had complex make-up, with its guardsmen recruited from both Caucasus Cossack hosts, the delegation addressed the greetings specifically to the Black Sea Cossack descendants. Reminding that the guardsmen’s “great-great-grandfathers and great-grandfathers were the Black Sea Cossacks,” the representatives of the host reiterated the bonds of genetic kingship that tied together the Cossacks of the convoy and the Kuban host on the basis of their shared provenance. The guardsmen were, the delegation proclaimed, “bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh.” The metaphors of kinship were present in abundance, making the logic of the message sacrificed for the sake of eloquence. For instance, the delegation congratulated the convoy on behalf of the convoy’s “native mother” (*tvoiei ridnoi materi*), the Kuban host, and his “native brother” (*tvoho ridnoho brata*), the host comradeship (*tovarystva*), describing the Kuban Cossack community by means of at once maternal and fraternal metaphors (all in Ukrainian). Furthermore, the speech ended with a final wish in Ukrainian: “May your fate not shun you, may you live long in the world” (*Shchob tvoia dolia tebe ne tsuralas’, shchob tobi v sviti dobre zhylosia*).⁷⁷³

Official representatives of the host used Ukrainian in speeches made not only during domestic (or, as was in the case with the convoy, what they thought of to be almost

⁷⁷² “K provodam gen. A. I. Kiiashko,” *KKL*, 13 May 1912, 2.

⁷⁷³ [Adres ot Kubanskogo voiska S.E.I.V. Konvoiu], *KKL*, 15 January 1912, 1.

domestic affair) ceremonies, but also while meeting supreme bureaucrats. Such was the case of the visit of Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov to Ekaterinodar in October 1909. During the official reception ceremony, Mikhail Ponochevnyi, as the director of people's schools, proclaimed a verse in Ukrainian, written by him specifically for the occasion of the viceroy's coming and calling everyone to join his words:

Let the song of the native land	Nekhai lunae skriz' na
Be heard all over Kuban	Kubani
So that the grandfathers' glory will never	Pisnia rodnoi krainy
perish	Shchob didnia slava vvik
And will edify children	ne vmyrala
	I v nauk[u] stala dytyni ⁷⁷⁴

Ponochevnyi's point here was similar to that of Kontsevich, discussed above. Cossack folklore and language were a means of disciplining young Cossack generations and instilling in them a sense of patriotism and loyalty. Allegedly, it was a repository of authentic memory about the ancestors. These qualities of the Ukrainian language made it a fully acceptable form of self-representation, especially if it was limited to songs and poetry.

The use of the Little Russian/Ukrainian idiom in public, however restricted, can be explained by a special attitude of the Kuban (Black Sea) Cossack elites to the spoken vernacular. As noted above, they saw it as a legacy of Zaporozhia, passed by the Cossacks of the Sich to their offspring. The Ukrainian language was a part of the Cossacks' collective patrimony, something that marked the boundaries of Chernomoria and designated belonging to the Black Sea Cossack community. In that capacity, it was a language of uneducated peasant masses—a situation that was common in many gubernias of Little Russia.⁷⁷⁵ An illustration of this idea was an essay entitled “About the Ukrainian

⁷⁷⁴ “K prebyvaniu v g. Ekaterinodare Namestnika Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva na Kavkaze Gr. I. I. Vorontsova-Dashkova,” *KOV*, 14 October 1909, 2.

⁷⁷⁵ Characteristic in this regard was Kiiashko's attitude to the written form of Ukrainian. In 1911, Konstantin Gadenko wrote a report about the trip of the Kuban delegation to the emperor's residence in Crimea, the Livadia Palace, where the delegation presented to Nicolas II a miniature bronze model of the monument of a Zaporozhian Cossack. Since his report concerned the personality of the tsar, Gadenko's text had passed several censorship instances prior to its publication. As Gadenko's direct chief, Kiiashko was the primary censor of his draft. At the very beginning of the typescript Gadenko quoted a sentence from Oleksii/Aleksei Storozhenko's humorous story *Mustaches [Vusy]*, written in Ukrainian. Instead of deleting the whole sentence, ill-placed in the text of the report and written in Ukrainian in the Russian alphabet, Kiiashko reworked it according to the principles of the Ukrainian phonetic alphabet, so-called

language,” penned by Aleksandr/Oleksandr Piven’, a prolific and widely published Kuban writer. Humorous, like the rest of his writings, by its genre, this essay raised a serious issue—a future prospect of the Ukrainian language’s development into a full-fledged literary idiom. “Although the Ukrainain language, indeed, is still too poor in its vocabulary to express vividly any thought of any man, and it is still far from being equal with languages of other people, no other language can match it when it comes about describing a battle, fight, military way of life [*lytsarstvo*], waging war, and so on.” In this way, it captured the Cossack masculinity, because, as Piven’ wrote, “it was the language spoken by the Zaporozhians, the best knights in the world, people from the Sich and steppe, the sons of their father the Great Meadow and their mother free Sich, the sons of the Cossack freedom and will.” Piven’, who sympathized with the idea of the separate Ukrainian nationhood, thought of the Zaporozhian heritage as common for all Ukrainians, the Kuban host being only a part of it: “The Zaporozhians were the real knights, and with them all the Ukrainian people [were the knights].”⁷⁷⁶

Many Cossack conservatives would not necessarily agree with the use of terminology by Piven’ (namely, the term “Ukrainian” as applied to the name of the people). Many would object to his readiness to think of the Ukrainians/Little Russians as equal heirs of the Zaporozhian legacy. Nobody would doubt, though, that this legacy was a binding element for the descendants of the Black Sea Cossacks, which prevented the idea of Chernomoria from being vanished. The sense of Black Sea Cossack particularism grew increasingly stronger. At the same time, apart from the effect the Zaporozhian imagery had within the boundaries of the Cossack community of Chernomoria, it also affected the sense of belonging of the elites of another part of the host. The next section shows how the idea of Linia, glorious and coherent, emerged as a consequence of these cultural developments.

kulyshivka. In doing so, Kiiashko made so many corrections that, in the end, the sentence became even more “Ukrainian” (and, consequently, less “Russian”) than it was in the original text by Storozhenko. See K. Gadenko, “Poezdka kubanskoj delegatsii v Livadiiu” (masinopis’), GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 213, l. 2.

⁷⁷⁶ Aleksandr Piven’, “Pro ukrains’ku movu,” in idem, *Kozats’ka rozvaha* (Moscow: Tipografiia Sytina, 1907), 197–98.

5.8. A Monument for Linia

On January 25, 1913, the top military and administrative commanders of the Kuban host came together in this middle-sized (with the population of 8260 dwellers in 1913) Cossack settlement in the vicinity of Armavir for an uncertain purpose. Met by the local ataman and a small Cossack convoy at Prochnookopskaia's outskirts, the high-ranking guests followed to the settlement's square, where the stanitsa's assembly, gathered in full, had been already waiting for them. The guests' aim was indeed unusual, being unrelated to any administrative or military matter in a strict sense of the word. The Kuban Host's second in command, General Petr Kosiakin, together with the heads of several Kuban districts (Labinskii, Maikopskii, Batalpashinskii, and Kavkazskii), accompanied by other Cossack officers, all of whom represented or claimed to be the heirs of the Cossacks of old Linia, came there in quest of the historical essence of the Line Caucasus Cossack host. Their task was to determine the most historically meaningful site within the whole oblast, which could be regarded as the symbolical center of the former Linia and, as such, as the place for the future monument—the monument to the glorious Line Cossackdom. This undertaking was a direct consequence of and response to the Zaporozhian pride of Chernomoria. Unsatisfied with the Zaporozhian festivity in Taman, a group of former Line Cossacks determined to honor what they felt to be their own: memory, history, and a shared sense of belonging.⁷⁷⁷

This expedition was a result of a rapid progress of an initiative first put forward just few months before. In mid-October 1912, ataman Lobachev, the then head of stanitsa Vozdvizhenskaia, sent a letter to the ataman of the Maikopskii district, asking him for support in a matter that, he hoped, would be of paramount importance for a significant part of the Kuban host. It stated: "I, as a genuine son of the Line host, am deeply grieved that here, in 'Linia,' we do not have a memorial, a monument that would for eternity immortalize the memory of our valiant ancestors and which would be an eternal witness of our solemn promise to be their worthy sons, the defenders of the honor and dignity of Little Mother Russia and our dear Little Father Tsar." Quite obviously, the Taman monument, which went unmentioned in these words, was the source of inspiration and, even more so, the cause of resentment for the author of the letter. His was the only voice

⁷⁷⁷ "K sooruzheniiu pamiatnika Lineinomu Kazach'emu voisku," *KKL*, 31 January 31 1913, 3.

that we know that expressed concern over the hegemony of the Black Sea Cossacks' cultural initiatives, but *KOV*, which jubilantly reported about the Lobachev's idea, presented it as a "long-cherished," "passionate" dream of the Line Cossack part the Kuban host. During the Taman festivities, wrote the newspaper, numerous Line Cossacks that nurtured the idea to have their own monument, complained over the fact that there were no person, enterprising enough to carry out its construction. Now, as the idea found warm support in the host's administration, *KOV* voiced confidence that "donations would flow as a golden river."⁷⁷⁸

In the end of January, after Babych gave his sanction, the special commission convened in Armavir, the administrative center of the Labinskii district. The commission took no decision with regard to the desirable place and form of the monument. In contrast to it, the prospective site for the monument was subject to the public discussion. The commission invited the broad number of Cossacks to share the suggestion in the official press, while taking into consideration some necessary circumstances. The commission supposed the place to be a central, crowded, and often passed through. Moreover, its location was supposed to be limited by the valley of the Kuban River, from stanitsa Voronezhskaia on the west to stanitsa Nevinomysskaia in the east—the core of historical Linia, the fortified line that in former times separated imperial domains from hostile lands of Circassian Transkubania.

Of particular interest was the way the commission resolved the financial question. Every Cossack living within the area of the former Line host and having a land allotment, was obliged to pay one ruble from each *pai* of land in his possession. The commission called this taxation "voluntary," but laid stress on its obligatory character: the commission's plan envisaged that stanitsas' communities would willingly impose the tax on themselves in order to diligently pay the taxation installments. Voluntary donations beyond the fixed rate, of course, were only encouraged. Thus, the commission drew the dividing line within the legal and administrative space of the oblast, singled out a certain area, and obliged its population to perform extra financial duties, all because of the population's presumed attachment to the Line Cossack community. Due to this ascription

⁷⁷⁸ "Pamiatnik kazakam lineitsam," *KOV*, 12 February 1913, 1.

of allegiance, the part of the Kuban administration dismantled the constructed body of the Kuban oblast.⁷⁷⁹

In the appeal to the Cossack population of the stanitsas of the former Caucasus Line host, written with the aim to introduce the idea and meaning of the monument to the broad public (and to make it more ready to pay contributions), General Kosiakin underscored the primacy of the Line Cossacks in the colonization of Kuban, thus challenging the Black Sea Cossack descendants' sense of pride. In 1783, as one might infer—a decade before the coming of the Black Sea Cossack colonists, Kuban was colonized by the Khoper regiment. With their fortified centers, Prochnyi Okop and Pregradnyi Stan, the Khoper Cossacks became “the first settlers and the first guardians of the Caucasus line, hitherto deserted [over the entire length of the Kuban] from the River Kalasus to the sea.” Together with subsequent Cossack regiments, which would later constitute the Line host, those first colonizers, “as a living semicircle” “blocked the right bank of the Kuban from the warlike and predatory Transkubania peoples.” It was thanks to their efforts that the population of nowadays Linia, “the land . . . densely fertilized with the blood and bones” of the Line Cossacks, lived safely and peacefully. It implied that now was the time to pay the smallest share of their wealth back to the dead. The homage to the memory of those Cossacks was the moral obligation of everyone. As Kosiakin urged, “give up one ruble once in your whole life and you will fulfill the Sacred duty to the memory of your ancestors.”⁷⁸⁰

As it became clear very soon, the question proposed for discussion of the Line Cossacks was far more intricate than it appeared at first. Representatives of different Cossack stanitsas claimed their settlements to be the most significant in terms of historical accomplishments, but no one seemed the self-evident choice that overshadows all the others. Correspondents to the newspapers indulged in contemplations about the most appropriate form of the monument. The remarkable and exceptional Zaporozhian body, symbolizing the historical experience of Chernomoria, had no analogues with regard to Linia. No bodily expression of the Line Cossacks' distinctiveness could be found to serve as the epitome of the Line host.

⁷⁷⁹ “Pamiatnik lineinym kazach'im voiskam,” *KOV*, 6 February 1913, 2.

⁷⁸⁰ P. Kosiakin, “Vozzvanie k kazach'emu naseleniiu stanits byvshego Kavkazskogo Lineinogo voiska,” *KOV*, 12 February 1913, 1–2.

One correspondent suggested approaching the question of the place for the monument following the lead of the Black Sea Cossacks. He advised using the same principle as they did. While many stanitsas of Chernomoria had the right to challenge the primacy of Taman in the dispute over the most appropriate site for the Black Sea Cossack monument, the author argued, Taman was nevertheless chosen due to its character as the “gates” of colonization (of course, as we have seen, nobody addressed the question of where to place the Zaporozhian monument, since from the very outset it was the initiative of stanitsa Tamanskaia). Whereas Taman was the westernmost point of colonization, the correspondent proposed the southernmost one, the forgotten fortification of Khumara in the mountains in the south of the Kuban oblast. This, he believed, was the first point of the Line Cossacks’ colonial advancement. The main merit of this option was that it would suit Cossacks of every former Line regiment, since Khumara was in the territory of neither. The main weakness—and the author tended to pass over this circumstance—was that it was an abandoned, literally no one’s territory, and the question of who would see the monument in such an out-of-the-way place was left unanswered.⁷⁸¹

At its second meeting, the commission decided to narrow down the selection and focus on the two options, Kavkazskaia and Prochnookopskaia. According to the commission’s plan, to determine the precise place for the monument every stanitsa of former Linia had to take part in a special plebiscite. In the discussion that followed, of paramount importance was the criterion of attendance rather than any historical substantiation. Advocates for both settlements argued that their stanitsa was the most frequently visited and best seen from the roads. At the same time, as one author pointed out, the readiness of their dwellers to pay could be a decisive argument: while the inhabitants of Prochnookopskaia allocated 2000 rubles, the Cossacks of Kavkazskaia gave only 150.⁷⁸²

If the commission was not able to reach the consensus with regard to the place for the monument, the debates about its appearance ended with a more definite resolution. One idea was to erect a statue of Prince Mikhail Nikolaevich on the top of a grandiose

⁷⁸¹ Vrach Grechishkin, “Po povodu postanovki pamiatnika Lineitsam,” *KKL*, 16 February 1913, 2.

⁷⁸² Kazak Lineets, “Mesto dlia pamiatnika Lineinomu voisku v stanitse Prochnookopskoi,” *KKL*, 25 April 1913, 1; A. Lamanov, “O meste postanovki pamiatnika byvsheemu Kavkazskomu Lineinomu Kazach’emu voisku,” *KKL*, 28 April 1913, 1; Ya. Zemtsov, “O meste dlia pamiatnika Lineitsam,” *KKL*, 9 May 1913, 1.

rock. The author called the prince, who was the head of the Caucasus administration in 1862-81, “the organizer of the economic and social life [*ustroitel' byta*]” of the Line Cossacks, although the Line host had ceased to exist by the time of his governance,—an odd statement that betrayed the author’s particularistic vision. On the sides of the figure, he proposed to place groups of the Line Cossacks portraying their everyday life, as it was done on the model gifted to the emperor in 1888.⁷⁸³ Two correspondents of *KKL* argued that since the Cossacks’ fortified line—*Linia* proper—was dotted with watchtowers, it would be reasonable to portray a watchtower with a guard, as on the model of 1888. Besides, they added, since the Line host did not have its own *plastun* brigades and consisted of cavalry units only, a figure of horse should also be portrayed on the monument.⁷⁸⁴

Another correspondent protested against the idea of constructing human figures and groups of historical personalities. “Groups,” he claimed, “look quite badly, seem puzzling and make one smile.” So too do the sculptures of separate personalities. The monument in Taman attracted the attention of passersby thanks to the elements of its appearance, as moustaches and trousers, which outshone the idea it served to express. Instead, the author proposed to build something more symbolic: “The simpler [the monument would look], the better.” The monument could have a form of a Cossack watchtower or a redoubt. To make it visible, it was supposed to stand in open space, for what purpose he proposed to erect an artificial mound. In case the commission would collect a larger sum of money, the correspondent wrote, there was even better idea. He proposed to build a historical museum that would host collections of artifacts related to the past of the Line Cossacks. *Linia*, he claimed, did not have such a repository of antiquities as Chernomoria had in Ekaterinodar. Hence, in accordance to his imagined geography, the Kuban host’s museum was a foreign establishment, and Ekaterinodar—a capital of a rather foreign land.⁷⁸⁵

The commission was likely to have preferred the latter proposal, albeit partially. Soon after it was published, *KOV* informed that the commission decided to raise the monument “from that very soil” that the Line Cossacks “conquered.” The memorial to the Line Cossacks, thus, was supposed to acquire the form of an earth mound, whereas the

⁷⁸³ Zemtsov, “K sooruzheniiu pamiatnika Lineitsam,” *KKL*, 5 March 1913, 1.

⁷⁸⁴ Kuznetsov and Udovenkov, “Na vozzvanie o sooruzhenii pamiatnika Kubanskomu Lineinomu voisku,” *KKL*, 13 February 1913, 1.

⁷⁸⁵ Vrach Grechishkin, “Eshche o pamiatnike Lineitsam,” *KKL*, 20 February 1913, 1.

article did not say anything about any sculpture on its top. The monument, *KOV* wrote, would be “in a mystic way a miraculous revival of the fallen heroes, as if made from bones, flesh, and blood of glorious Line Cossack ancestors, who densely soaked the Kuban land with their entire beings.”⁷⁸⁶ Behind the newspaper’s elevated rhetoric, with its motifs of revival and the right to the colonized land, fertilized by the blood of the colonizers, were, apparently, more rational consideration, which determined the choice of the commission. It was the relative simplicity and relatively low cost of the construction works, which would not require skillful labor and, thus, would not be as extensive as artistic work. Contrary to expectations and eloquent claims, the project did not come to fruition. In November 1913, one of the most active participants of the discussion of the project in *KKL*, complained in the same newspaper that there had not been any news about the fate of the monument since April.⁷⁸⁷ No information became available ever since.

The need for Linia to have its own monument dedicated to the ancestors of the Line Cossacks, similarly to Chernomoria with its monument to the ancestors of the Black Sea Cossacks, became a theme of a Russian-language verse written by a Chernomoria-born author. Without his Line Cossack counterpart, the “mighty bronze knight” stood in Taman as an “orphan,” missing his beloved “brother,” mourning and grieving for hours over their “eternal separation.”⁷⁸⁸ Poetically expressed brotherhood of two monuments—one real and the other, imagined—implied, above all, fraternity of Black Sea and Line Cossack constituents of the Kuban host. But it also implied the growing dissociation of Chernomoria from Linia within the one Cossack host. On the level of public representations, two communities were becoming more exclusive and particularistic. Administrative and military elites were making efforts to present their respective Cossack communities as the most venerated and heroic. In doing so, they reified the old boundaries between the two parts of the host.

⁷⁸⁶ “Pamiatnik, kazakam Lineitsam,” *KOV*, 27 February 1913, 2.

⁷⁸⁷ Ya. Z[emtsov], “Za pamiatnik Lineitsam,” *KKL*, 19 November 1913, 3.

⁷⁸⁸ I. S. Bezridnii, “K Lineitsam,” *KKL*, 20 November 1913, 3.

5.9. Conclusion

In April 1911, the population of stanitsa Starovelichkovskaia, one of those oldest settlements of Chernomoria that emerged during the first years of the Cossack colonization of this territory, witnessed a “Cossack holiday.” Organized by the order of Babych, it was a military tournament in which various generations of Cossacks—from youth belonging to the preparatory category to those of the 2nd and the 3rd turn—demonstrated their weapon and horse riding skills. The event was quite similar to the tournaments that had taken place before, for the Kuban administration regularly practiced this sort of military competitions throughout the region. What was new was the ideological lenses through which the local press looked at the holiday. An eyewitness account presented it as evidence of the Kuban host’s Zaporozhian essence and, literally, as a sign of the Sich’s revival.

“A wondrous picture emerged in the minds of the audience,” wrote one of the witnesses in his article in *KOV*. “It was something native, something that has been long dead. There, under the banners and bunchuks, is standing the Zaporozhian hetman with a traditional mace and fearless, sunburnt, bronze face and long grey moustaches. It seems that one word from him and his entire ‘loyal host [*virne viis ’ko*]’ will go to the end of the earth without reasoning about anything.” If there was a major message behind the event, it was to demonstrate the continuity of the Kuban host from Zaporozhia. At least, this was how the author grasped it. “You want shout it to the world: come quickly, look and see firsthand what the Cossack really is—that he is just the same Zaporozhian in spirit as his ancestor was two hundred years ago, and that he has not grown shallow a bit and would not change, neither in his Cossack dignity nor in his views and traditions, and that he will be able to stand up for the Little Father Tsar and motherland when the time comes.” The continuity, thus, was evident in spiritual terms. At the same time, it was no less pronounced in terms of genetic belonging. “The Cossack, as it has proven in practice, has remained the genuine descendant of his worthy ancestors, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh.”⁷⁸⁹ In a similar vein, *KOV* described other military maneuvers, held in other part of Chernomoria, as the demonstration of the Cossacks’ genuine Zaporozhian prowess.

⁷⁸⁹ Grigorii Groz’, “Kazachii prazdnik v st. Starodereviankovskoi,” *KOV*, 28 April 1911, 1–2.

“The iron Zaporozhians are having a blissful sleep,” wrote a witness of the maneuvers, implying that the Cossacks, indeed, lived up to the expectations of their ancestors.⁷⁹⁰

The motif of the revival of the Zaporozhian spirit found its expression in the poetry of the day, which made its own ideological contribution into the overall picture. One of the verses written in 1911 obscured any difference between the Zaporozhian and the Kuban Cossacks and equated them altogether. From that time on, as followed from the verse, the enemies of the Kuban Cossacks should learn that fighting them would mean fighting the Zaporozhian host. Not only the Kuban Cossacks were the direct descendants of Zaporozhia—they and the Sich were the same thing. It was the Kuban Cossacks who lived on the island of Khortytsia/Khortitsa and, thus, fought the Zaporozhian wars. The author of the verse encouraged the Cossacks to make it clear that Zaporozhia was still alive. In a curious way, he considered the notions of “Kuban” and “Zaporozhia” identical to such an extent that, instead of exhorting them to prove that Zaporozhia did not die, he urged them to prove that they, the Kuban Cossacks, did not die themselves.

Let your enemies know	Shob vas znaly vorohy,
That you are those Cossacks	Sho vy ti kozaky,
Who used to be on the	Sho na “Khortytsi” buvaly,
Khortytsia	I z nymy odynaky.
And you are the same with	Pravdoi viroiu sluzhyte
them.	Nashemu Tsarevi
Serve our Tsar faithfully	I vo vsim vy dokazhyte
And prove in every way	Sho vy ne pomerly. ⁷⁹¹
That you are not dead.	

Ubiquitous statements and loud declarations about the sameness of the Zaporozhians and the Kuban Cossacks became a hallmark of the local official discourse in the years 1908–12. And yet one should not think of the pompous declarations about the Zaporozhian ancestry of the Kuban (Black Sea) Cossack as a real manifestation of the deep-rootedness of the memory about Zaporozhia in the Kuban cultural tradition. Or, at least, as a demonstration of the Kuban elites’ belief in the triumph of a “Zaporozhian

⁷⁹⁰ Vyzyvaiushchii, “Po povodu manevrov mezhdru stanitsami Novodzherelievskoi i Rogovskoi,” *KOV*, 29 October 1911, 2.

⁷⁹¹ Kharchenko, “Sovit molodym kozachatom,” *KOV*, 21 May 1911, 2.

spirit” of the Cossack population of the oblast. Rather, mushrooming commemorative actions and celebratory rhetoric of the day can be interpreted as an indication of their utmost disappointment and concern about the Cossacks’ unwillingness to maintain their cultural distinctions as well as their uncertainty in the Cossacks’ unconditional loyalty to the throne, as had been evidenced by the revolutionary events.

Amid all the cliché eulogies, the conservative press left some room for materials that decried the lack of respect on the part of the Cossacks to their own cultural heritage and traditional way of life. In a half-joking amateur verse, published in *KOV*, its author presented the loss by the Kuban Cossacks of their Zaporozhian qualities as an accomplished fact:

<p>But where have the Zaporozhians gone? For some reason, they are no more... There are no Zaporozhians left, those old are dead, While the young Zaporozhians became the Black Sea Cossacks. Needless to say, it is a glorious host, But it is no match for the old Cossacks...</p>	<p>No de dilys’ zaporozhtsi? Shchos’-bo ikh ny stalo... Nyma teper zaporozhtsiv, stari povmiraly, A molodii zaporozhtsi—chernomortsi staly. Slavne viis’ko chornomors’ke nichoho kazaty, No z starymy kozakamy vzhe ikh nyzrivniaty...</p>
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The author listed the differences between the Zaporozhian and the Kuban (Black Sea) Cossacks. The latter could no longer drink that much as their ancestors, they wore Caucasian costumes instead of traditional Zaporozhian dress, they danced too clumsy if compared to the Zaporozhian Cossacks, they were no longer singing their old historical songs and, finally, they were gradually forgetting the old Zaporozhian (i.e. Little Russian/Ukrainian) language.⁷⁹² This was a caricatured picture of the Kuban Cossack community, but the overall manner in which the author wrote it did not render the matter raised by him less serious.

⁷⁹² N. A. Kolosovskii, “Zaporozhyts’,” *KOV*, 21 October 1912, 2.

Another article, also published in *KOV*, dealt with the deteriorating Zaporozhian spirit of the host with all seriousness. Entitled “What is left of Zaporozhia in the Kuban oblast?,” the article argued that after slightly more than one hundred years of the Zaporozhian colonization of Kuban, almost nothing in the region could serve as a reminder of the Zaporozhian era and attest to the Kuban Cossacks’ Zaporozhian ancestry. The Cossacks, it claimed, turned from warriors into farmers, who lost the vigour of their predecessors. Unlike them, the contemporaneous Cossacks wore not the costume of their Zaporozhian ancestors, but the costume of highlander Muslims, guilty for having shed lots of blood of the Zaporozhians. By the same token, the Kuban Cossacks could not sustain the spoken idiom of the ancestors—the Little Russian language underwent significant changes, and it became nearly impossible to distinguish the Little Russians from the Great Russians (quite remarkably, the author faulted the Cossacks for this). This reality was an obvious disruption in the host’s Zaporozhian succession, and the Kuban administration directed energetic efforts to restore the historical continuity. The article urged everyone who cared about the revival of the Kuban Zaporozhian traditions to support the activities of the Host. “General Babych is attempting to lift the Zaporozhian spirit in the Kuban Cossacks, and persons who have at least a drop of Zaporozhian blood must come to his aid.”⁷⁹³

In pair with the idea of revived Zaporozhian (or Line Cossack) grandeur of the turn-of-the-century Kuban host, the idea of Cossacks’ vulnerability to corrupting influences of modernity continued to be a recurring theme in the local conservative press. In the first, New Year’s issue of *KKL* in 1914, the newspaper presented the decline of Cossack traditionalist values as the characteristic of the time. It was the verse “The Cry of the Kuban,” written by an anonymous Cossack officer. There, the Kuban River, which epitomized indefinite wisdom of the host, mourned the indifference to the region’s traditions and glorious past on the part of the contemporaneous Cossacks. As in the previous examples, the author catalogued trespasses of the Cossacks. They, as he wrote, did not care about the covenants of their old grandfathers; they gave up their traditional Cossack attires for fashionable urban jackets; they were not interested in listening old men’s tales about the history of the host; they forgot their native songs, whereas factory

⁷⁹³ “Chto ostalos’ ot Zaporozh’ia v Kubanskoi obl.,” *KOV*, 24 June 1911, 2.

songs gained striking popularity. In the verse, Babych was the sole person who attempted to reverse these trends:

Only the grey Ataman pleases his mother [Kuban], Making every effort To raise the spirit of the Cossackdom For the greatness of the native land.	Lish' sedoi Ataman veselit svoiu mat', Vse staran'ia svoi prilagaia, Dukh kazachestva khochet podniat' Na velich'e liubimogo kraia. ⁷⁹⁴
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The politics aimed at raising “the spirit of the Cossackdom” was the most distinctive peculiarity of the years of Babych’s rule, which pursued various yet interrelated goals. It intended to secure the Cossacks’ loyalty to the throne, seriously shattered during the revolutionary years of 1905-07. It was at the same time an attempt to bring Cossacks together in the face of the terrorist chaos of 1908 as a coherent, self-conscious, reactionary force. Similarly, this politics sought to restore the Cossacks’ morale, capacity and willingness to fight against internal and external enemies, being a side result of the Russian Empire’s scandalous defeat in the war with Japan. In a broader sense, the Kuban administration directed its efforts to oppose what it considered to be the corrupting impact of urban centers and decadent fin-de-siècle. All this aims could be achieved only if the Cossacks would be edified according to their genuine traditions. The recourse to tradition and ancient values brought another dimension to local politics. It was the pride in history and cultural peculiarities, the sense of distinctiveness that became the overriding factor of the Kuban politics. As descendants of Black Sea Cossack nobility happened to occupy the major positions within the administration, the myth of the Kuban host as the direct continuation of Zaporozhia came to be the guiding principle of the administration’s activities. As shown at the first section of this chapter, the Kuban Host’s obsession with the past had its genesis in the expedition of the Odessa branch of the IRVIO in 1909 and personal initiative of Dmitrii Evarnitskii/Dmytro Yavornyts’kyi. The Host used this occasion to put forward much more radical demands than the IRVIO had anticipated. In the end, few of them become reality. The reason for this, however, was not the opposition of the central officialdom, but rather a combination of various factors, ranging from indifference of officials on the ground and insufficient funds to the Great War, which

⁷⁹⁴ Sotnik B., “Plach Kubani,” *KKL*, 1 January 1914, 2–3.

overshadowed much of those projects. Indeed, the role of top-level imperial functionaries in the decision-making process regarding the Cossack initiatives reveals them as sometimes indecisive and sometimes—manipulative actors. Although they tended to tolerate or endorse the loyalist Zaporozhian myth of the Kuban host, they could also oppose it when the situation reached extremes, as was the case of the revision of the host's seniority. The imagery of the Sich was still a contested matter in the imperial ideology, system of power, and center-periphery relations.

Rather curiously, the Host manipulated its Zaporozhian origin as well, when the moment demanded. Even though having the Zaporozhian Cossacks as the host's direct progenitors was a valuable symbolic capital, it could also entail some unwanted implications. Incessantly boasting its Zaporozhian splendour, the Kuban administration was cautious in its usage and tended not to overuse the Zaporozhian imagery. At times, it was more appropriate for the Kuban officials to stop associating themselves with Zaporozhia. Such was the pompous celebration of bicentenary of the victory of Peter I over Swedish king Charles XII at the Battle of Poltava. The festivities on the occasion of what was considered one of the Russian Empire's most momentous battles, which were supposed to be held in June 1909 on the same site where the actual battle took place, were designed to bring together representatives of the imperial military units that fought under the sceptre of Peter two hundred years before. The organizers invited the Cossack hosts to the jubilee as well. In December 1908, as the preparations for the celebration were in full swing, the head of the GUKV, Evgenii Garf, sent a telegram to the Kuban authorities with the urgent request to let him know whether the ancestors of the Kuban Cossacks were engaged in the battle and, if so, what Kuban Cossack regiments could be considered their successors and whether the host possessed any regalia, banners, or insignia bestowed upon them for the battle of Poltava.⁷⁹⁵

The ancestors of the Kuban Cossacks, or, at least, the ones whom the local propaganda of the day called to be such, indeed were engaged in the battle. In 1709, some months before the armies of Peter I and Charles XII clashed near the town of Poltava, Zaporozhian Cossacks headed by ataman Kost Hordiienko switched to the side of the Swedish king, following the lead of Hetman Ivan Mazepa. Even those who did not, were punished for the treason of their fellows: in revenge for betraying the tsar, Peter's punitive

⁷⁹⁵ Head of GUKV to Babych, 27 December 1908, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9829, l. 1.

expedition razed the Sich, located at that time on the island of Chortomlyk on the Dnieper, to the ground. Later in June, the Zaporozhians suffered defeat along with Mazepa and Charles XII, and the survivors fled the Ottoman-controlled lands. For this reason, the query by GUKV, in its aim to bring together descendants of the victorious military units—and the heirs of their battle craft—in the historic battlefield, was a serious challenge for the Host, capable of damaging its reputation by recalling the undesirable past. As a matter of fact, during the celebrations that were to come, Zaporozhian descendants would have stood among the ranks of the defeated, not the victors. In this way, the otherwise glorious forefathers of the Kuban Cossacks turned, in this particular case, to the unwelcome relatives, who could compromise the host's prestige.

Since speaking about infidel Zaporozhians was risky and disadvantageous, the Kuban authorities acted in a reasonably prudent manner. In their choice of ancestors, they opted for a different genealogy, far more safe in terms of imperial loyalty. Babych's response letter assured that although the archives did not preserve the information about this matter, it was "historically true that those who took part in this battle were the Little Russian Cossacks, from whom the Black Sea Cossacks descended, who became part of the Kuban host." Thus, due to the Babych's purposive calculation, not Zaporozhia, but the Cossacks of the Hetmanate became the occasional ancestors of the Kuban host. In doing so, the authorities of the host, although breaking with the Sich out of necessity, proudly emphasized the merits of Chernomoria for the all-imperial cause and its well-earned primacy within the Kuban host. Babych's response to his superiors explicitly revealed the sympathies of the Kuban bureaucracy. To his mind, the delegation for the Poltava celebrations was to be composed "from the Black Sea Cossacks."⁷⁹⁶ The Kuban Host managed to turn the jubilee of the Battle of Poltava into the celebration of the local Black Sea Cossack particularism. Putting the decision into practice, the Host Staff ordered to choose the delegates among the Cossacks of the territories that once constituted Chernomoria—the Eiskii, Temriukskii, and Ekaterinodarskii districts.⁷⁹⁷ The former Line Cossacks found no room in this ceremonial representation, as if Kuban of the day was a mere continuation of Chernomoria, and the Line Cossack constituent of the host was an extrinsic appendage to the Kuban authentic history and the local self-image.



⁷⁹⁶ Babych to GUKV, GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9829, l. 3.

⁷⁹⁷ GAKK, f. 396, op. 1, d. 9829, ll. 11-13.

Conclusion

In 1890, a gendarme officer of Eisk reported to his superiors in St. Petersburg about a strange and, in his view, unwelcome phenomenon that became apparent during the last years:

. . . the Cossack gentry—the old Black Sea Cossack officers—some time ago suddenly remembered their glorious descent from the Zaporozhian Cossacks and began calling themselves on their business cards ‘Pavlo’ instead of ‘Pavel,’ ‘Hryts’ko’ instead of ‘Grigorii,’ talking to ordinary Cossacks in Little Russian and, running counter to the truth, assuring that the honor of the conquest of the Caucasus belonged to them . . . In view of this, ordinary Cossacks, who have long forgotten the tumultuous history of their glorious Zaporozhian ancestors, have come to think of themselves as something separate from their foster-mother, the rest of Russia, filling themselves with the spirit of grandeur, which they have not deserved at all.”⁷⁹⁸

Hastening to inform his bosses of the worrisome tendencies in Kuban, the officer aptly—even though in an exaggerated way—caught the mood that took hold of the mind of many representatives of local Cossack elites at some point in the late 1880s. It was the process of coming to think of themselves as the last and only successors of Zaporozhia. The gendarme called the cultural oddity in the behavior of Cossack officers the “sudden remembering,” but contemporary historians would rather call it the “invention of tradition,” a term for the late-nineteenth-century intellectual fashion heralding a new kind of attitudes to the past. The past came to be seen not only as a historical experience, but also as a point of orientation in the present. Rather than merely “knowing” the past, intellectual, political, and upper-class elites began actively “remembering” it and using it for the needs of the day.⁷⁹⁹

The tone of this letter was strikingly similar to that of the Caucasus administrators of the 1860s, who framed Cossack grievances in terms of Chernomoria’s Zaporozhian,

⁷⁹⁸ “Politicheskii obzor Kubanskoi oblasti,” GARF, f. 102, d-3, op. 88, 1890, d. 47, ch. 55, l. 10 ob.

⁷⁹⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 [1984]).

even Mazepist spirit. The difference was that this time the author's observation was much more grounded in reality. The gendarme officer was alarmed by the Zaporozhian myth for a good reason. He saw it as a vehicle for a growing sense of particularism, which entailed plenty of concomitant ramifications. First and foremost, evoking the idea of their Zaporozhian origin, the Black Sea Cossack elites revived their Little Russian pride—not so much as a shared experience of the past, but as a prospective for the future. As he argued, this idea served to level the social distance between the Cossack nobility and rank-and-file Cossacks, providing them a sense of common culture. Consequently, this process, he believed, led to the top-down descending of the memory about Zaporozhia, the engagement of masses in the subversive ideology and, ultimately, separatism. Reasonable as they were, his warnings fell on deaf ears—at least, in terms of their consequences. The empire was no longer afraid of the Zaporozhians in Kuban. Instead, it was eager to put them at the service again.

We can discern several factors that conditioned the outbreak of the interest to the past and made possible the commemorative initiatives in Kuban. It would not have been possible if it were not for the fin-de-siècle passion for all sort of commemorations that brought the past as relevant as never before. The process of bringing the past back was celebrated throughout Europe both from below and from above. Authorities invented and widely used pompous ceremonies and festivities that relied on historical myths to substantiate their power, while those who wanted to challenge their rule employed historical myths just as actively. By the turn of the century, the fascination with commemorative dates in Western Europe reached its apogee. Jay Winter claimed that “at the end of the nineteenth century, new nation states and pre-eminent imperial powers deepened the repertoire of their ceremonial activity. Such flourishes of the majesty of power were then immediately sanctified by a spurious pedigree. To display ceremonies with a supposed link to ancient habits or forms located in a foggy and distant past created an effective cover for political innovation, instability and insecurity.”⁸⁰⁰ Along with solemnities, penetrated with images of the past, ideas of power were expressed and embodied in stable, permanent material objects. Alon Confino observed that “one fundamental change in the physiognomy of European urban space in the last decade of the nineteenth century was the appearance of a great number of monuments and statues. It was

⁸⁰⁰ Jay Winter, “Sites of Memory and the Shadow of War,” in *Cultural Memory Studies*, eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin; New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2008), 63.

a way for the ruling groups to affirm their dominant position by shaping the public sphere according to their image.”⁸⁰¹ The Russian Empire did not remain on the sidelines of the general trend. In cultural centers and provinces, different communities widely celebrated centenaries, bicentenaries, and other anniversaries of various events.

The sense of insecurity was the main driving force behind the commemorative enthusiasm of the day. The past served as a pillar for those who had a vague understanding of how to take hold in the present, providing them with a universal recipe. The existence of a given community in the past certainly justified this community’s existence in the present and future. This kind of logic was common for the societies that experienced crisis of their social development. In Italy, the appeal to the imagery of ancient Rome as the historical precedent of the Italian statehood was the foundational principle of Risorgimento. “Italy is—or rather will be, will return to being—because it was; it was founded on the memory of having been, and having been great—compared to its present lowliness.”⁸⁰² Much to the myth of the Zaporozhian essence of the Kuban host, the myth of *romanità* was bound with uncertainties of the modern world, being viewed as a waymark on an intricate path of the social evolution. In this sense, as Joshua Arthurs put it, it “served as a vocabulary of anxiety. Fears about population decline, revolution, and social hygiene were mapped onto the barbarian invasions and the fall of Rome.” Traditions of the past were seen as the obvious solutions to these problems.⁸⁰³ Such dissatisfaction with modernity, a reaction to the fears that it caused, induced many to resort to the myths about good old days. According to Alon Confino, “The nation-state and the capitalist economy expanded both time and space, thus changing the traditional community, once closed within itself, and irreversibly connected it to the world. On the other hand, the alternation of time and space did not simply obliterate the old community; it revived it as well. Overwhelmed by modernity, people looked back at the old local community, real or imagined, as a point of orientation.”⁸⁰⁴

As I have shown, the Zaporozhian myth was precisely such a point of orientation for the Kuban elites, which allowed them to seek refuge in the grandeur of the past and, on

⁸⁰¹ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 44.

⁸⁰² Mario Isnenghi, “Italian luoghi della memoria,” in Erll and Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 27.

⁸⁰³ Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 3.

⁸⁰⁴ Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*, 125.

the top of that, to look in this past for the solution of the pressing problems that the host faced. Its main anxiety was the influx of migrants from internal gubernias of the empire, who by the end of the century outnumbered the Cossacks. The authorities and conservatives saw the migrants, officially called *inogorodnie*, those exemplary Great Russians and Little Russians coming to the oblast in large quantities, as the main threat to the Cossack way of life, traditions, spirit, and economy. Closely related to the migration issue was the issue of land. Migrants settled on the territory that legally belonged to the Kuban host as the collective owner, which created an impression that they were responsible for the Cossacks' shortage of land. Apart from *inogorodnie*, however, the Host had plenty of reasons to be afraid of the loss of its land. The construction of railroads and the growth of towns required exempting from the host's ownership increasingly more territories and passing them under the state control in violation of Catherine II's charter. Being often involved into controversies and disputes over the land question, the Host sought for a symbolic solution. Hailing the Zaporozhian Cossacks as the conquerors of these lands, who sacrificed their lives for the prosperity of their grandchildren, the Kuban Cossack elites reasserted their rights over the territory. There was even more tremendous, existential fear that loomed large throughout the whole history of the host, starting from the 1860s—the fear of de-Cossackization (the abolition of the Cossack estate in view of its inconsistency with the demands of the modern warfare) or a forced relocation to another periphery of the empire. The Zaporozhian myth underscored the ancient genealogy and organic unity of the host, suppressing the fact that it was, in effect, an agglomerate of disparate groups of population, brought together as a result of an imperial colonial experiment. Finally, the preoccupation with the past served to overcome the consequences of the Russian Empire's loss in the war with Japan, the revolution, and the subsequent outbreak of terrorism. Here, it was a means of patriotic education according to the “precepts of the forefathers.”

There was yet another anxiety that contributed to the emergence of the myth at this particular time and no earlier. As some historians have established, celebrations of the past appear at a certain distance from the events they glorify. Pierre Nora stressed that the need to remember comes to the fore at the point when a living memory fades away, being in the stance of “no longer quite alive but not yet entirely dead.”⁸⁰⁵ The real, physical and oral

⁸⁰⁵ Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 1: 7.

memory, the knowledge about past events, received through personal experience or mediated by the communication with those who had such experience, persists and is transmitted through generations within a limited time period. Jan Vansina argued that this period embraces approximately three generations, encompassing roughly one hundred years.⁸⁰⁶ At this point, communicative memory recedes and cultural memory appears, which is not oral but written, not spontaneous but standardized. This is what is closely associated with the notion of myth. Jan Assmann figured out this interconnectedness in this way: “Myths are also figures of memory, and here any distinction between myth and history is eliminated. What counts for cultural memory is not factual but remembered history. One might even say that cultural memory transforms factual into remembered history, thus turning it into myth. Myth is foundational history that is narrated in order to illuminate the present from the standpoint of its origins. [...] Through memory, history becomes myth. This does not make it unreal – on the contrary, this is what makes it real, in the sense that it becomes a lasting, normative, and formative power.”⁸⁰⁷ Starting from the early 1880s, the local press began accentuating the need to remember, to preserve the traces of the distant past that would disappear in the not so distant future. Eventually, however, the process of remembering the past increasingly changed into its creative rediscovering, reinvention, and restoration. The Zaporozhian myth, thus, stood for something more than remembrance for the sake of remembrance.

The Eisk gendarme officer rightly assessed the Zaporozhian myth as a cultural phenomenon that entailed evoking the notion of Little Russian origin of the Black Sea Cossacks. Indeed, the idea of the Zaporozhian pedigree of the Cossacks of Chernomoria went hand in hand with the idea of Ukraine as the land of their origin and, thus, their Ukrainian/Little Russian essence. I have shown that this conjunction of meanings resulted to the emergence of a loophole, through which even subversive, seditious ideas and implications were able to sneak into the official conservative discourse and scenarios of celebrations. Paradoxically, right-wing public figures, imperial loyalists, ultra-conservatives, supporters or even members of Russian nationalist organizations at times behaved not unlike Ukrainian national activists. More importantly, Ukrainian nationalists frequently offered them their services—or expressed support for—when it came to

⁸⁰⁶ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 34.

⁸⁰⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory*, 37–38.

Zaporozhian commemorations. In effect, drawing the line between the “Ukrainian” and “Russian” activists across the Kuban politically and culturally active community appears an impossible task, for substantial parts of these groups actually overlapped.

How was, then, the tolerance of the central authorities toward public manifestations of Kuban/Black Sea Cossack “Little Russianness” possible in the period of increasingly illiberal, intolerant politics and an intense struggle with the broadly understood menace of Ukrainian “separatism”? My argument lies in the assumption that the circumstances of the place, the remoteness from the Western periphery of the empire, the specific nature of the Kuban host as an estate in arms and its role for the imperial governance in the Caucasus—all it contributed to the relative softness of the imperial authorities’ policy toward the Cossacks’ cultural peculiarities and the Zaporozhian imagery of the Kuban elites. Just as it was with the classic example of invented traditions, the kilt of the Scottish highlanders, the Zaporozhian imagery was a subject of acute concern of authorities, who suspected it to be a vehicle of separatist ideas in Ukraine. And just as it was in the case of kilt, which the British authorities allowed to wear in Scottish regiments that gained fame for their military actions in America and India, the authorities of the Romanov Empire endorsed the Zaporozhian myth in Kuban, considered to be the pillar of the imperial rule and Russian influence in the Caucasus.⁸⁰⁸ To a certain extent, the tsarist flirting with the Zaporozhian myth bore a resemblance to the Habsburg Monarchy’s restricted tolerance for historical myths of different language groups, even if they were widely used by national activists to their own ends, as long as those myths were able to affirm the positive popular attitudes towards the dynasty.⁸⁰⁹

To what extent were the rank-and-file Cossacks receptive to the Zaporozhian mythology? Sources do not allow address this question by tracing popular beliefs and sentiments on the ground, but they suggest some answers. As a rule, stanitsa communities reacted with indifference to the projects put forward by the Kuban administration, be it the subscription for constructing the monument to the Zaporozhian ancestors or the assignment to stanitsas the “historical” names. Even stanitsa teachers, who were supposed to be the most educated individuals of their settlements, had a poor understanding of the

⁸⁰⁸ Hugh Trevor-Roper, “The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 25.

⁸⁰⁹ Ernst Bruckmüller, “National Consciousness and Elementary School Education in Imperial Austria,” in Laurence Cole and Daniel Unowsky, *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial Symbolism, Popular Allegiances, and State Patriotism in the Late Habsburg Monarchy* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 29.

Kuban host's Zaporozhian lineage, as the Taman celebrations in 1911 testified. Authors of articles in the press and members of the administration alike repeatedly lamented Cossacks' indifference to their "own" traditions: they did not sing their own songs, did not wear their own cloth, did not remember their own history and, finally, did not keep up the pristine integrity of their vernacular. As a rule, they blamed *inogorodnie* for the corrupting effect and saw institutional influence, the edifying power of military service, as an important prerequisite for bringing tradition to the masses. Some believed that even this factor was insufficient. At the celebrations of the bicentenary of the Kuban host in the Khoper regiment, Yakov Malama told that in view of the shortening of the term of military service for rank-and-file Cossacks, Cossack officers were "the only representatives and keepers of the traditions of the past."⁸¹⁰

Many Ukrainian nationalists who came to Kuban in the hope to find a living Zaporozhian tradition, found themselves disappointed by the "apathy" of ordinary Cossacks. The poet Mykola Voronyi/Nikolai Voronoi was frustrated by a low level of "national consciousness" that he had expected to find in the last refuge of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Writing to the editor-in-chief of the leading Galician newspaper *Zoria* in 1895, he gave an eloquent testimony about his disillusionment with the Zaporozhian myth:

Indeed, it would seem that the Cossack traditions, the need for national freedom, should live here, in the nest of the glorious Zaporozhians' grandchildren. But what you notice here is a kind of lower-rank humility, and if you find some activists here, they only deal with culture, for the benefit of the Moscow regime, the Moscow government. Where have gone the seasoned spirit, strength, unity, which made the Cossacks famous? Who knows where it all is!

For Voronyi, the Zaporozhian essence of Kuban turned out to be neither apparent nor latent. He found there no dormant Zaporozhian spirit that would awaken when the time comes. "May it be that it is waiting for a moment when a spark falls?" rhetorically asked Voronyi. "No, it is unthinkable."⁸¹¹

⁸¹⁰ Khaberets, "Iz lageria khoperskikh kazakov pod st. Batalpashinskoi," *KOV*, 13 June 1897, 3.

⁸¹¹ M. V. Sementsov, "Iz istorii ukrainskoi periodiki (Pis'ma M. Voronogo v redaktsiyu l'vovskogo zhurnala 'Zoria')," in *Vtorye kubanskii literaturno-istoricheskie chteniia*, ed. V. Chumachenko (Krasnodar: Krasnodarskii gosudarstvennyi universitet kul'tury i iskusstv, 2000), 97.

This brings us to the closing remarks. Throughout the text, I avoided using the terms “identity,” “national,” or “ethnic” because of their inappropriateness and incapacity to be the proper means of describing the complex reality of turn-of-the-century Kuban. “Starting out a study of empire with categories of ethnicity, or religion, or nationality,” as Jane Burbank and Mark von Hagen rightfully warned, “shapes the description of people and their aspirations in ways they may not themselves have chosen. The national should not be set as scholarship’s problem where it might not yet—or ever—have been an issue for the people under study.”⁸¹² The processes that were dealt with in this study can only be understood in that imperial context that implies the existence of odd for contemporary observers—but much more prevalent in the past—entanglements of fragile allegiances, ambivalent loyalties, and cultural uncertainties.



⁸¹² Jane Burbank and Mark von Hagen, “Coming into the Territory: Uncertainty and Empire,” in Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and A. V. Remnev, eds., *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700–1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 21–22.

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