Ivan Mazepa and the Russian Empire, by Tatiana Tairova-Yakovleva, translated by Jan Surer, Montreal and Kingston, London, Chicago, McGill-Queen's University Press and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, Edmonton, Toronto, 2020, xiv +

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This important study has been written by one of Russia's leading specialists in the history of early modern Ukraine. Tatiana Tairova-Yakovleva, Director of the Centre for Ukrainian Studies at St. Petersburg University, has published widely on Russian-Ukrainian relations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, edited invaluable collections of archival documents (such as the correspondence of Ukrainian hetmans with Moscow and St. Petersburg), and assembled the inventories of the Little Russian Office (*Malorossiiskii Prikaz*), Russia's most important historical archive on early modern Ukraine. In sum, few scholars would be more qualified to write objectively about one of Ukraine's most controversial historical figures, one who is frequently demonized as a traitor in Russia (even by some historians) and often glorified in Ukraine as a national hero (also by some historians).

The current volume is a translated, revised, and somewhat abridged version of the original Russian monograph that appeared in 2011. It is the culmination of many years of research in Russian archives and offers a differentiated look at the complexities, contradictions, and entanglements of Ukrainian-Russian relations during the Petrine period. The focus is on the personality of Ivan Mazepa, who became hetman of the Zaporozhian Host with Peter I's support in 1689, served Peter loyally for almost twenty years, and then joined the invading army of Sweden's King Charles XII in late 1708. For this he was branded a traitor by Peter I and anathematized by the Russian Orthodox Church, a fate that befell only a few rebel leaders in Russian history (such as the Cossack ataman Emel' ian Pugachev). As Tairova-Yakovleva points out, however, Mazepa was neither a traitor nor a rebel. In fact, he worked closely with Peter and his courtiers and implemented many of Peter's policies. He also helped the Petrine regime suppress rebellions that broke out on the western and southern peripheries of the Russian Empire (including the Semen Palii and Kondratii Bulavin revolts). But Mazepa also upheld and defended the ideals of Ukrainian statehood, liberty, and independence. This was indeed a hard juggling act, if not an impossible conundrum.

The book's greatest accomplishment is its heavy reliance on unstudied archival evidence. Most importantly, the author draws on treasure troves of letters that Mazepa exchanged with Peter I, Aleksandr Menshikov, and "almost all the leading political figures of Russia" (216). Some of these correspondences are voluminous. For example, Mazepa received 114 letters from Fedor Golovin, the head of the Foreign Office (*Posol'skii Prikaz*); Tairova-Yakovleva found them together with Mazepa's responses in the Baturyn Archive, the confiscated archive of the Cossack Hetmanate, which she discovered in the collections of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts. This huge repository, which comprises thousands of documents and papers, provides the backbone of this study; the author's deep immersion in these forgotten archival riches makes this book uniquely valuable.

Mazepa appears in this volume in his full complexity; there were many sides to his character and he played many different roles. First and foremost, he was a shrewd politician who knew how to cultivate good relations with Russia's powerbrokers; he also made himself indispensable as a government advisor and source of foreign policy information (drawing, for example, on his elaborate spy network in Crimea, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire). He strove ruthlessly to maximize his power, viciously denigrated his opponents ("volatile, dastardly heads [. . .] that disturb the national peace," 70), and showed no regard whatsoever for popular rebels ("unbridled brigands," 115). At the same time, he "waged an unyielding struggle on behalf of the Ukrainian Hetmanate" (3). He acted as a defender of Orthodoxy in Right-Bank Ukraine

and then merged the Right and Left Banks in 1704 to resurrect the Ukrainian Cossack state of Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi. When Peter I insisted that the Right Bank be returned to Poland, Mazepa "applied all his skills of persuasion" (174) to change the emperor's mind. As the leader of unified Ukraine – glorified by Orthodox clergy as "Grand Duke of Rus'" (*Dux Magnus Rossiae*) – Mazepa promoted the idea of a Ukrainian fatherland, enlightened cultural policies, and economic development.

Why, then, did Mazepa switch sides and join the Swedish invaders in October 1708? This is one of the core questions that Tairova-Yakovleva investigates in great detail. She makes it very clear that Mazepa had no preconceived plan to defect; rather, the decision was born out of a complex web of deteriorating circumstances: a growing political conflict with Peter's favourites, popular resentment about Peter's administrative reforms (which Mazepa had helped implement), the growing curtailment of Ukrainian autonomies, Peter's refusal to defend Ukraine against the Swedes, his scorched earth policy, and finally, the threat of Mazepa's own General Staff rising up against him. According to Tairova-Yakovleva, Mazepa's choice was reluctant: he had made no prior agreement with the Swedes, prepared no uprising, and not surprisingly the Swedes doubted his loyalty and put him under house arrest.

Two weaknesses need to be pointed out: first, the author does not discuss the substantial historiography on Mazepa; she references other historians' work only intermittently or in footnotes. Some remarks are rather dismissive; for example, Tairova-Yakovleva repeatedly reproaches her predecessors of thinking in clichés (73, 230, 272, 326). A more balanced engagement with the works of Sergei Solov'ev, Mykola Kostomarov, Mykhailo Hrushevs'kyi, and Orest Subtelny – to mention only a few historians – would have been helpful. Second, the author shows an unfortunate tendency to assimilate Mazepa's own derogatory language when it comes to popular rebels. For example, the outspoken protests of peasants and townsmen against Mazepa's economic reforms are described as "the howls of mob anarchy" (93). Those Ukrainians who objected to a state monopoly on tobacco and alcohol were "only drunkards and idlers" (92). Tairova-Yakovleva concedes that Mazepa was very unpopular, but unlike Kostomarov and Hrushevs'kyi she does not explore the reasons for this unpopularity. This, however, is not entirely Tairova-Yakovleva's failing; recent historians of early modern Ukraine and Russia almost uniformly look at elites and show little interest in ordinary people.

This is an excellent work of original scholarship that has great contemporary relevance. When read against the backdrop of a horrendous war driven by Russian imperial mythologies and lies about Ukrainian history, one wonders whether such a differentiated study can be written again in Russia in the foreseeable future. Tairova-Yakovleva was forced to leave Russia after publicly condemning the invasion of Ukraine; she is currently being tried in absentia. Her courageous and independent scholarship is extremely admirable and she must be congratulated for having produced such a carefully researched, meticulously documented, and honest account of one of Ukrainian history's most important personalities. The book should be of great interest to Ukrainian, Russian, and east European historians as well as a wider public concerned about the past and present of independent Ukraine.

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