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# At the Root of the 'Ukrainian Project': how Panteleimon Kulish was 'Nurtured' by Poles and 'Exposed' by Russians

**Annotation**. The article has a complex structure made up of several interconnected threads: Ukrainian nation-building as a 'national project'; the 'imitation' theory of the origins of 'national projects' and its critique; the personalities of Panteleimon Kulish (as a pioneer of the 'Ukrainian project'), Michał Grabowski, and Mykhailo Yuzefovych; the sources of Kulish's national self-identity; the role of the Polish factor in its formation; and attempts to distort and discredit Polish-Ukrainian cultural interaction in the 19th century and today. The article draws on the letters and memoirs of Panteleimon Kulish and his contemporaries, as well as official documents, in particular those relating to the background of the Ems Act of 1876. The author's main focus is on the accusations by Yuzefovych against Kulish and Grabowski as the creators of an anti-Russian Polish-Ukrainian discourse in the 1840s, the veracity of these accusations, and their instrumentalization by some modern historians. The author argues that Grabowski and his milieu did exert a significant intellectual, cultural, and emotional influence on Kulish during the 1840s; but the allegations by Yuzefovych regarding Kulish's 'Polonization' and consequent anti-Russian bias are not supported by fact. These allegations, however, were actively instrumentalized both in the 19th century, becoming one of the justifications for the Ems Act, and in modern times, when they fed into the so-called 'imitation' theory of the origin of the 'Ukrainian project'.
**Keywords**: nation-building, national project, Ukrainian project, national identity, Panteleimon Kulish, Michał Grabowski, Mykhailo Yuzefovych, 19th century.

**U podstaw „projektu ukraińskiego": jak Panteleimon Kulisz był „inspirowany" przez Polaków i „demaskowany" przez Rosjan**

**Streszczenie**: Artykuł ma złożoną strukturę, na którą składa się kilka powiązanych ze sobą wątków: budowanie narodu ukraińskiego jako „projekt narodowy"; „naśladowcza" teoria genezy „projektów narodowych" i jej krytyka; osobowości Pantelejmona Kulisza (jako pioniera „projektu ukraińskiego"), Michała Grabowskiego i Mychajło Juzefowycza; źródła tożsamości narodowej Kulisha; rola czynnika polskiego w jego powstaniu; oraz próby zniekształcenia i dyskredytacji polsko-ukraińskich interakcji kulturowych w XIX wieku i współcześnie. W artykule wykorzystano listy i wspomnienia Pantelejmona Kulisza i jemu współczesnych, a także dokumenty urzędowe, zwłaszcza te dotyczące tła ustawy Emsa z 1876 r. Autor skupia się przede wszystkim na oskarżeniach Juzefowycza wobec Kulisza i Grabowskiego jako twórcy antyrosyjskiego dyskursu polsko-ukraińskiego w latach czterdziestych XIX w., prawdziwość tych oskarżeń i ich instrumentalizacja przez niektórych współczesnych historyków.

Autor argumentuje, że Grabowski i jego środowisko rzeczywiście wywarli znaczący wpływ intelektualny, kulturowy i emocjonalny na Kulisha w latach czterdziestych XIX wieku; jednak zarzuty Juzefowycza dotyczące „polonizacji" Kulisha i wynikającej z niej antyrosyjskiej stronniczości nie mają poparcia w faktach. Zarzuty te jednak zostały aktywnie zinstrumentalizowane zarówno w XIX w., stając się jednym z uzasadnień ustawy Ems, jak i współcześnie, kiedy weszły w skład tzw. „naśladowczej" teorii pochodzenia „projektu ukraińskiego".

**Słowa kluczowe**: budowanie narodu, projekt narodowy, projekt ukraiński, tożsamość narodowa, Panteleimon Kulisz, Michał Grabowski, Mychajło Juzefowycz, XIX wiek.

Problems of Ukrainian nation-building during the imperial era (or the 'long' 19th century) are often viewed in 21st-century Ukrainian historiography through the prism of the concept of 'national projects'[1]. This essay offers a fresh take on the theory and practice of this approach (using the categories 'Little Russian project' and 'Ukrainian project'), characterizes the factors that influenced the formation of the national self-identity of Panteleimon Kulish and his role in the formulation of the 'Ukrainian project' in the first half of the 19th century, and tests against the available evidence both the accusations against him on this account and, to some extent, the entire so-called 'imitation' theory of the origin of the 'Ukrainian project'. Operating in the field of intellectual history and nationalism studies, we draw particularly on the works of Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Miroslav Hroch, and Anthony D. Smith, and employ the conceptual apparatus delineated above as a working toolkit.

The concept of a 'national project' is often left undefined in academic works on the subject, which opens up room for different interpretations of its meaning, and therefore

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[1] See for instance: Н. Попова, *Участь інтелігенції у реалізації українського національного проекту в 50-70-х рр. XIX ст.*: дис. ... канд. іст. наук, Черкаси 2007; М. Гаухман, *Російська національна політика на Правобережній Україні (1905–1914): чотири національні проекти в одному політичному просторі*, [in:] *Дриновський збірник / Дриновски сборник*, Харків; Софія 2011, т. 4, с. 141-150; О. Неменский, *«Чтобы быть Руси без Руси». Украинство как национальный проект*, URL: http://www.perspektivy.info/srez/theory/chtoby_byt_rusi_bez_rusi_ukrainstvo_kak_nacionalnyj_projekt_2012-05-22.htm. (accessed 17.10.2014); В. Венгерська, *«Українські проекти» та націотворення в імперіях Романових та Габсбургів: ідеї, концепції, практики (кінець XVIII – початок XX століття)*: дис. ... д-ра іст. наук, Київ 2013; et al.

for different approaches to historical material. As a result, almost every researcher offers their own vision of the 'Ukrainian project', or indeed 'projects'[2]. The understanding of the concept's reach also varies – 'national project' can be interpreted as the idea ('ideal image of a nation'), idea and program, or idea, program, and practice of nation-building.

This state of affairs pushes us to outline once again our own approach to the problem, put forward in several earlier publications[3]. In our observation, in the modernist-constructivist paradigm of nation-building, the 'national project', from the point of view of its genesis, is mainly interpreted as a specific reaction (one of many) on the part of intellectuals to the social realities of their time (modernization, the condition of the population, government policies, etc.) under the influence of nationalism or exclusively as a result of the absorption of the ideology of nationalism and borrowing of its schemes. In terms of content, it appears as a process in which a certain social group claiming a leading role (at first, as a rule, a handful of intellectuals) creates a new ('national') image and society's new understanding of itself (as a 'nation') and attaches it to a more or less arbitrarily defined human community[4]. Often (perhaps as a rule) there are several 'claimants' competing for a given community, each of which offers its own 'image' with a corresponding historical retro- and perspective. In the case of the population of the Dnieper Basin (Ukrainian lands within the Russian Empire) in the 19th century, the most significant such claimants were the 'Little Russian' (over time integrated into the 'project of the great Russian nation') and 'Ukrainian' 'projects' (of course, they were not articulated as coherent wholes in some document and must be reconstructed from the body of contemporary works and ideas). In the first of these, emphasis was placed on the integration of the Dnieper lands into the imperial political and cultural structures while preserving regional specificity. The second underscored the special historical path and national individuality of the Ukrainians.

With regard to the initial phase of nation-building, both the 'ideal image of a nation' itself and the factors, actors, and ways of its fashioning deserve the researcher's attention. One of the first and key questions in the study of any 'national project' concerns its 'creators': who can be considered as such, and how and due to what factors their personal 'nationalization' takes place – that is, what exactly prompts such individuals to start thinking in categories of nationalist discourse and to set about creating a 'project' of a nation of their own. In the case of Ukraine, we should note that the mechanistic combination of the concept of 'national projects' (basically constructivist) with Hroch's rather un-constructivist three-phase scheme of nation-building (phase A – academic, B – organizational/cultural, C – mass/political), often found in Ukrainian historiography, can lead to an obvious distortion of historical realities, in particular because the latter scheme does not take into account the possibility of alternative (competing) visions and the nonlinearity of nation-building.

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[2] О. Журба, *«Українські» національні проекти довгого XIX століття в імперському просторі*, [in:] *Історія та історіографія в Європі*, Київ 2019, вип. 6, с. 61-68.

[3] С. Наумов, *«Болгарська тема» в українському націотворенні імперської доби: до питання про взаємодію «національних проектів»* [in:] *Дриновський збірник / Дриновски сборник*, Харків; Софія 2011, т. 4, с. 113-126; Idem, *«Малоросійський проект» XIX століття: до постановки питання* [in:] Ibidem, 2014, т. 7, с. 79-86; Idem, *«Малоросійський проект» XIX ст. vs «український проект»*, [in:] *Известия на Института за исторически изследвания*, София 2017, т. 34, с. 113-134; et al.

[4] С. Наумов, *«Малоросійський проект» XIX століття: до постановки питання*, с. 79.

If we consider the process of nation-building literally, starting with phase A ('academic'), it would be logical to see the cultural figures of that particular moment as the initiators of the 'Ukrainian project'. But cultural developments characteristic of phase A (at least in the Ukrainian case) mostly served only as a preparatory stage, 'prelude' to nation-building – the possibility of such a prelude was indicated, in particular, by Hroch himself in one of his later works[5]. Figures such as the 'Kharkiv Romantics' of the 1820s-1830s operated in national categories only sporadically and even then in terms of a 'Little Russian', rather than Ukrainian, identity, and they certainly did not set themselves any nation-building tasks or showed any intentions of that nature (which is generally characteristic of phase A). Further, many of them were interested in 'Little Russian' culture for reasons purely academic and scholarly, perceived it as a dazzling, but doomed and dying phenomenon, and did not identify themselves with it in any way.

At the same time, objectively, these individuals' creative accomplishments in the field of Ukrainian ('Little Russian', as it was then usually called) history, literature, and ethnography, which made up the contents of this phase, represented (at least to a certain extent) a 'Little Russian response' to the formation of Russian national culture, a 'soft' alternative to its undivided dominance; they ensured the presence of 'Little Russian' themes in social, particularly cultural, life and fueled romantic and nostalgic dispositions. In the first half of the 19th century, these efforts still fed primarily and directly into the 'Little Russian project' integrated into the imperial system of loyalties/identities. But, going forward, the materials thus accumulated could (and to a greater or lesser extent did) serve as the groundwork for the spread of a 'national sentiment' as the indispensable emotional basis of a Ukrainian identity, and for the formation of a full-fledged ('high') modern Ukrainian culture and the ideological postulates of a national movement[6].

Having performed their 'prelude' to nation-building and laid the necessary foundations, these actors 'in the field of historical-antiquarian dilettantism'[7] passed the baton to a new generation, the immediate creators of the 'national project', who possessed the appropriate identity, purposefully forged the theoretical framework and basis of the conception of the future nation, and endeavored to popularize them. A characteristic feature of the 'long' 19th century in the history of Ukraine, as already noted, was the existence of two competing 'autochthonous' (not counting, so to speak, 'allochthonous', 'external', Russian and Polish) 'national projects' – 'Little Russian' (chronologically earlier, but never properly completed due to integration into the project of the triune 'great Russian nation') and 'Ukrainian'.

In this context, the main initiator of the transition from the 'Little Russian' to 'Ukrainian' project and the key figure in laying the groundwork for and popularizing the latter in its early years (1840s to early 1860s) was the prominent Ukrainian writer,

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[5] M. Hroch, *From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe* [in:] *Mapping the Nation*, ed. by G. Balakrishnan, London - New York 1996, p. 83.

[6] In more detail, see: С. Наумов, *Імператорський Харківський університет і «українське відродження» першої половини XIX ст.* [in:] *Дриновський збірник / Дриновски сборник*, Харків, Софія 2018, т. 11, с. 191-193.

[7] І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Інтелектуальні початки нової України* [in:] Idem, *Історичні есе*, Київ 1994, т. 1, с. 173.

historian, and public figure Panteleimon Kulish[8]. Among the Little Russian/Ukrainian patriots of the first half of the 19th century, he is distinguished by his clear national self-identity, intention, and understanding of his own role in the fashioning of the 'national project', purposeful creation of its components, and steady progress towards the chosen goal. We have laid out this argument in more detail in an earlier article[9]. Here we will just cite the authoritative testimony of Ivan Franko, characteristic in defining Kulish's role in the formation (spiritual development) of the Ukrainian nation in the first half of the 19th century. On the one hand, Franko pointed to the collective role of the three most prominent representatives of the Ukrainian spiritual life of that period, noting that Kulish and Mykola Kostomarov "along with Shevchenko started a new era of Ukrainian literary and generally spiritual development"[10]. On the other hand, Franko, having a fairly low opinion of Kulish as a writer and historian overall, singled him out and gave him pride of place precisely from the point of view of the national character of his work:

> The first, in my view, truly national Ukraiian, i.e. writer who tried to the best of his ability to respond to the needs of his society, to depict its views and to be with it, as the German says, *in der Fühlung* [in contact] and to keep pace with its national and social development – that was Panko Kulish. Already in 1842, in his poem *Ukraine*, he showed himself as such...[11].

Franko particularly stressed another aspect of Kulish's pursuits that had a nation-building import – the efforts to promote and instill new, Ukrainian national values in the 'Little Russian' society, to realize a 'national image': "This was a prominent for his time organizer of spiritual work, who not only endeavored to portray Ukrainian society, but also strove to stir it up in every corner towards a new, social, spiritual, and national life"[12].

We must admit that our argument about Kulish's sole precedence in the making of the initial version of the 'Ukrainian project' has not found widespread support (though it has not been refuted, either). And we are not just talking about the extensive literature in 'Kulish studies' (its volume grew considerably in connection with the nation-wide celebration of the writer's 200th anniversary in 2019), in which this idea is present only marginally. In specialized research on the 'Ukrainian project', Kulish often

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[8] About him, see such recent works as Є. Нахлік, *Пантелеймон Куліш: особистість, письменник, мислитель*, Київ 2007, т. 1-2; *Пантелеймон Куліш: письменник, філософ, громадянин*, Київ 2009; О. Кравченко, *Життя, віддане просвітництву (праця і творча діяльність Пантелеймона Куліша)*, Умань 2012; В. Івашків, *Пантелеймон Куліш – "перший справді національний письменник український"*, "Слово і Час" 2019, № 8, с. 3-13; В. Артюх, *Пантелеймон Куліш про «українську ідею» та «русский мир»* [in:] *Світогляд – Філософія – Релігія: зб. наук. праць*, Суми 2020, вип. 1, с. 5-13; С. Щербина, В. Красюк, *Пантелеймон Куліш як творець модерної української нації та його «хутірська» філософія* [in:] *Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Історичні науки* 2022, т. 33, № 1, с. 124-129; et al.

[9] С. Наумов, *Пантелеймон Куліш як співтворець «українського проекту» XIX ст.* [in:] *Українсько-македонський науковий збірник*, Київ 2014, вип. 6, с. 54-70.

[10] І. Франко, *Нарис історії українсько-руської літератури до 1890 р.* [in:] Idem, *Зібрання творів* у 50 т., Київ 1984, т. 41, с. 281.

[11] І. Франко, *Метод і задача історії літератури* [in:] Idem, *Зібрання творів* у 50 т., Київ 1984, т. 41, с. 19.

[12] Ibidem.

figures only as part of the lineup 'Kostomarov, Shevchenko, Kulish' (expressions such as 'the Dnieper trio', 'the Ukrainian triumvirate', or 'the three prophets of New Ukraine' have been used[13]). Sometimes he is even relegated to the role of a continuator of the ideas of the former two[14]. Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, to take one example, did not single him out at all among the generation of the Cyril-Methodians[15]. In a long conceptual article by Serhiy Svitlenko, Kulish is mentioned only in connection with the post-reform era, when he "acted only as a consistent cultural patriot, proponent of the national and cultural revival of Ukraine..."[16].

However, for the purposes of this essay it is not so important whether Kulish was the first or one of the first. Either way, he is a good case study for throwing light on the motives behind the 'nationalization' of this category of cultural figures, who had simply no one to adopt the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism from (because these still had to be created), and who had to go against the grain of the already widespread ideas of 'Russianness' and 'Little Russianness'. This particular aspect is extremely difficult to study, and much of the research into it is based on assumptions that are not always supported empirically. The reader can find some relevant material in our above-mentioned article on Kulish. Here we will mainly discuss the question of the supposed 'Polish influence' on the formation of Ukrainian national identity.

We should note right away that Kulish himself, as far as is generally known, never mentioned such nationalizing influence (as opposed to cultural, literary, and informational). Instead, he cited factors of his (and his like-minded comrades') spiritual formation connected with the Ukrainian realities of the era: the role of the Ukrainian folklore and early works of the new Ukrainian literature, and the contradictory nature of his linguistic milieu, which made an impression on him as early as his childhood (the disadvantaged Ukrainian language spoken by the majority of the population versus the dominance of Russian in the spheres of education, government, and more – a situation of cultural conflict the importance of which in generating nationalist sentiments was pointed out by Johann Gottfried Herder, Ernest Gellner, Liah Greenfeld, Roman Shporliuk, and others)[17]. By his own admission, a special source of national nourishment for Kulish was

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[13] S. Bilenky, *Romantic nationalism in Eastern Europe: Russian, Polish, and Ukrainian political imaginations*, Stanford 2012, p. 292; О. Ясь, *Історичне письмо пізнього П. Куліша як предтеча консервативного проекту української історіографії початку XX ст. (до 200-річчя від дня народження)*, „Український історичний журнал" 2019, № 4, с. 61; et al.

[14] See for instance: А. Миллер, *Украинский вопрос в Российской империи*, Киев 2013, с. 70; М. Гаухман, *У пошуках себе: як конструювали ідентичність українські інтелектуали в Російській імперії другої половини XIX ст.*, „Наукові записки УКУ" Львів 2019, історія, вип. 3, с. 47-51, 63.

[15] І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Інтелектуальні початки нової України*, с. 178.

[16] С. Світленко, *Українська модерна нація: чинники формування та становлення наприкінці XVIII – на початку XX ст.* [in:] Idem, *Українське XIX століття: етнонаціональні, інтелектуальні та історіософські контексти: зб. наук. пр.*, Дніпро 2018, с. 36.

[17] П. Куліш, *Моє життя (Жизнь Куліша)* [in:] Idem, *Повість про Український народ; Моє життя; Хутірська філософія і віддалена од світу поезія*, Київ 2005, с. 107; Idem, *Историческое повествование* [in:] *Воспоминания о Тарасе Шевченко*, Киев 1988, с. 143; Є. Нахлік, *Пантелеймон Куліш*, т. 1, с. 17-18; О. Кравченко, *Життя, віддане просвітництву*, с. 17-18. On cultural conflict, see E. Gellner, *The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class* [in:] *Mapping the Nation*, ed. by G. Balakrishnan, London - New York 1996, p. 123; Р. Шпорлюк, *Формування модерних націй: Україна – Росія – Польща*, Київ 2013, с. 102, 434.

the Bible, which "kindled my heart to love, friendship, and a kind of patriotism – the patriotism of the Ukrainian word"[18]. Through religion, Kulish established himself in the conviction that the Ukrainian nation, like any other, is a creation of God and must realize itself and fulfill its historical mission. There is nothing surprising in this, because similar primordialist views were widespread in Europe at the time[19].

Kulish's subjective impressions about the sources of his 'nationalization' certainly deserve attention. However, they leave out of sight the important historical context of the 1830s and early 1840s, which was a necessary «prerequisite for the emergence of the generation of the Cyril-Methodians. There were noticeable changes at that time in the cultural life of 'Little Russia', as it was commonly called. In addition to the quantitative accumulation of diverse literary materials, which in and of itself influenced the educated part of society (the example of the young Kulish confirms this), qualitative developments also took place. Until recently purely local provincial cultural phenomena acquired wider social significance, spilling over regional boundaries. The new 'Little Russian'/ Ukrainian literature and new literary language reached new horizons: they began to claim an independent, full-fledged status and, accordingly, became the subject of ardent empire-wide polemics, including in the pages of periodicals.

One consequence was the intensification of the emotional climate of social life: interest, admiration, sense of pride, and local patriotism on the one hand, and rejection, sarcasm, irritation, and anger on the other. Such reactions were all the sharper because they overlapped with new phenomena in imperial society and politics. The fledgling 'nationalization' of the public sphere, culture, and politics and the declared intention to shape these in accordance with the 'true Russian principles' (the 'Uvarov triad') put educated 'Little Russians' before a choice, pushing them to clarify their involvement, or lack thereof, in these developments and in 'Russianness' more generally, and to define their place in the new social and cultural situation[20].

The absolute majority of 'Little Russian patriots' did not embark then on a possible confrontation with the empire, remaining loyal to it and devoted to the values of the 'Little Russian project'. But the social tension around ethno-national issues, among other things, stimulated the birth of Ukrainian nationalism. As Ernest Gellner notes, "people really become nationalists because they find that in their daily social intercourse, at work and at leisure, their 'ethnic' classification largely determines how they are treated, whether they encounter sympathy and respect, or contempt, derision and hostility. ...A member of culture A, involved in constant dealings with economic, political and civic bureaucracies employing culture B, is exposed to humiliation and discrimination. He can only escape by becoming either an assimilationist or a nationalist. Often he vacillates between these two strategies"[21]. It can also be said that the early 1840s witnessed the appearance of a need and opportunity for the inception of Ukrainian nationalism (because nationalism is a necessary consequence or product of certain social

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[18] П. Куліш, *Хутірська філософія і віддалена од світу поезія* [in:] Idem, *Повість про Український народ…*, с. 207.

[19] See *Націоналізм: антологія*, упор.: О. Проценко, В. Лісовий, Київ 2000, с. 49, 59 et al.; Е. Сміт, *Націоналізм: Теорія, ідеологія, історія*, пер. з англ., Київ 2004, с. 53.

[20] С. Наумов, *«Малоросійський проект» XIX ст. vs «український проект»*, с. 121.

[21] E. Gellner, *The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation*, p. 123.

circumstances and conditions[22]), and the latter emerged in the ideas of Kulish and the generation of the Cyril-Methodians as a whole.

Stating the importance of these influences in the formation of the young Kulish's outlook, we must also acknowledge that what has been said does not explain why his 'Ukrainianness' crystallized earlier and went incomparably farther than that of his contemporaries of the first half of the 19th century, making him, to an extent, 'the first Ukrainian nationalist'. In a first approximation, it can be assumed that Kulish was destined to play the leading role in this process, compared to Shevchenko and Kostomarov, because he was more educated and rational (intellectual) than the former and more 'Ukrainian' than the latter, whose identity was somewhat ambivalent.

To overcome our empirical helplessness on this issue (with regard to Kulish in particular and the birth of the 'Ukrainian project', or Ukrainian nationalism as a conception of nation-building, in general), we would do well to turn to the theoretical and methodological developments in modern nation studies. This path is all the easier because it has already been trodden, first and foremost by the Russian historian Aleksei Miller. His works, particularly the monograph *The Ukrainian Question*, were published at the time when he positioned himself as a liberal and pro-Western observer maintaining detachment from the problems of Ukrainian nation-building (he was proud of Yaroslav Dashkevych's statement about his book that "it is not clear whose side the author is on"[23])[24], and they were and still remain popular in Ukraine.

Miller based his own methodology for the study of Ukrainian nationalism on Benedict Anderson's well-known theory of 'imagined communities', but employed it selectively. With regard to the origins of nationalisms (including and primarily Ukrainian, given the topic of the book), Miller emphasized the imitative component as decisive, including for the Slavic world: Anderson "rightly points out the secondary, imitative nature of nationalisms in Central and Eastern Europe, which borrowed ready-made constructions and adapted them to their conditions"[25].

However, Anderson in his generally 'American-centric' study (because of this, his conception has been criticized for its limited suitability for other continents) is rather vague about the possibility (and not the actual or, even less so, common practice) of 'copying' national constructs in the Old World: "...All were able to work from visible models... The 'nation' proved an invention on which it was impossible to secure a patent. It became available for pirating by widely different, and sometimes unexpected, hands"[26]. From further context, it can be concluded that he speaks primarily of 'models' for national liberation/independence movements and nation-state building,

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[22] Е. Гелнер, *Нації та націоналізм; Націоналізм*, пер. з англ., Київ 2003, с. 207.

[23] А. Миллер, *Украинский вопрос*, с. 7.

[24] Over the last decade he, in common with many other Russian liberals, has adopted a pro-regime, pro-imperial stance, becoming in fact one of the 'moderate' ideologists of Putin's regime; see for instance one of his latest works: А. Миллер, *Новейшая история: краткий курс. Исторический нарратив Владимира Путина в 2019–2022 годах,* [in:] *Россия в глобальной политике*, 2023, т. 21, № 2, март-апрель. URL: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/noveyshaya-istoriya-kratkiy-kurs-istoricheskiy-narrativ-vladimira-putina-v-2019-2022-godah (accessed 17.08.2023).

[25] А. Миллер, *Украинский вопрос*, с. 16.

[26] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* revised edition, London; New York 2006, p. 67. URL: https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/SOC571E/um/Anderson_B_-_Imagined_Communities.pdf (accessed 15.03.2018).

which could in fact be gleaned from the American experience: "...The independence movements in the Americas became, as soon as they were printed about, 'concepts', 'models', and indeed 'blueprints'. ...By the second decade of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, a 'model' of 'the' independent national state was available for pirating"[27]. If we can still to some extent speak of the possible impact of such 'models' in connection with the Ukrainian situation of the 1840s, specifically the quixotic reveries of the Cyril-Methodians, nothing of the sort is applicable to the local society of that period in general and to the personal case of Kulish in particular.

Instead, Anderson's remarks on the significance of cultural practices, in particular the so-called 'lexicographic revolution', could be more relevant in this context. Following Hugh Seton-Watson, he states that the 19th century in Europe became "a golden age of vernacularizing lexicographers, grammarians, philologists, and litterateurs"[28]. In this connection, Anderson further underscores the fundamental difference between European and American nation-building practices: "The energetic activities of these professional intellectuals were central to the shaping of nineteenth-century European nationalisms in complete contrast to the situation in the Americas..."[29]. This statement is all the more important because Anderson illustrates it with the Ukrainian material among others, citing, in particular, the contribution of Taras Shevchenko, Mykola Kostomarov, and the Cyril-Methodians and quoting Seton-Watson about the role of the newly-created Ukrainian literary language: "The use of this language was the decisive stage in the formation of an Ukrainian national consciousness"[30].

However, Miller in his study of the genesis of Ukrainian nationalism for some reason chose the 'imitation' paradigm, repeatedly stressing that the Ukrainians copied other, more developed Slavic nationalisms. It is significant that he does this for the first time at the beginning of the introduction to his book, right after a reference to Anderson, essentially *a priori*, indoctrinating the reader into this still speculative, but, apparently, from his point of view extremely important thesis: "On our part, we will clarify that some nationalisms, including Ukrainian, borrowed models from the peoples of Central Europe, first and foremost the Czechs and the Poles..."[31]. Later, Miller reiterates and fleshes out this idea:

> While images, symbols, and texts were often borrowed by the Ukrainophiles from the Poles, the strategy of the movement was formulated based on the Czech model, which more closely corresponded to the nature of the problems of cultural and linguistic emancipation facing the Ukrainian national movement[32].

For our purposes, it is important to note that this time the Russian historian attempted to back his thesis, citing the nation-building (in particular, regarding the creation of a Ukrainian literary language) intentions of none other than Kulish. However,

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[27] Ibidem, p. 81.

[28] Ibidem, p. 71.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] Ibidem, p. 74.

[31] А. Миллер, *Украинский вопрос*, с. 16.

[32] Ibidem, с. 84.

the only evidence offered is a statement from a letter by Kulish that the Ukrainians could create "their own language no worse than the Czechs and Serbs" (why these words were not pressed into service to confirm the borrowing of the Serbian model as well remains unclear)[33].

Perhaps it was the lack of arguments and the desire to prove 'imitation' by any means necessary that then prompted Miller to take a step of questionable validity. First, in order to demonstrate the role of an 'external' (specifically Polish) factor in the birth of Ukrainian nationalism, he used the notorious 1875 *Note* of Mykhailo Yuzefovych *On the So-Called Ukrainophile Movement*, which laid the groundwork for the even more notorious Ems Act of 1876 and has long been treated by researchers as an outright slander. Second, probably due to the dubious (or, rather, scandalous) status of this document, Miller limited himself to retelling part of the text, stating, among other things, that Yuzefovych "told in detail the story of the conversion of Kulish to Ukrainophilism by the Pole M. Grabowski"[34]. In this way, while not explicitly confirming that he shared Yuzefovych's point of view, he did not question it either, presenting the 'story of conversion' as real. But even just mentioning without comment a 'story' in an authoritative publication can give the reader an illusion of its authenticity. One could suppose that this motif made it into the book through oversight, as it sometimes happens, but then it would hardly have survived in the second edition. Rather, the reason lies in the limited evidence at the historian's disposal. After all, there are no other episodes in the book that could corroborate Miller's fundamental thesis about the key role of external influences, or 'imitation', in the origin of Ukrainian nationalism ('the Ukrainian project'), aside from these two involving Kulish.

The title of this article invokes Yuzefovych's libel, picked up by Miller. After all, it is essentially about these Russians' (Yuzefovych was a Little Russian by origin, but always emphasized his cultural and political 'Russianness') 'exposing' Kulish and the Ukrainophiles in general, showing that their nationalism was born not of the circumstances of Ukrainian life, but of the intrigue of forces hostile to imperial Russia. Yuzefovych referred to these forces as 'Austrian-Polish', because at that time the imperial government and the loyal public were closely watching the activities of Polish and Ukrainian nationalists in Austria-Hungary and their interactions with each other and with the similar circles in the Russian Empire, seeing all this as a means and fruit of the anti-Russian policy of the Habsburgs (the significance of Yuzefovych's *Note* was seen precisely in the revelation of this multi-vector 'conspiracy', its genesis, techniques, and prospects). But the 'transformation' of Panteleimon Kulish into a nationalist was attributed specifically to the Polish element (hence another part of the article's subtitle) – in fact, to just one Pole, Michał Grabowski.

Since this motif is central to our essay and will serve as the starting point for a number of our arguments, we will quote the relevant fragment of the *Note* in full:

> The political idea of Little Russian exceptionalism is an invention of Austrian-Polish intrigue, and here it was set in motion by Poles in the early '40s[35].

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[33]  Ibidem.

[34]  Ibidem, c. 198.

[35]  The first publisher of the *Note* F. Savchenko mistakenly has "'60s" (Ф. Савченко, *Заборона*

This happened before my eyes. With funds given by the then Kyiv governor Fundukley, who was collecting historical information about the region, I sent Kulesh [sic], who had not completed his studies at the university but showed himself a literary talent, to describe historic locations of the province and to collect folk ballads and legends about the struggle against Poland in general and Khmelnytsky's in particular, which was then not yet sufficiently studied from written sources. On this expedition, Kulesh (who later renamed himself into the Ukrainophilic Kulish) fell in the Cherkasy district into the hands of the known Polish writer Michał Grabowski, who subsequently, under the Marquis Wielopolski, was Minister of Education in Warsaw. Having gone there as an admirer of Khmelnytsky to the point of adoration, Kulesh came back scolding him to the point of hatred. It turned out that the intelligent and deft Pole, having found a convenient tool in Kulesh, had in a few weeks turned all his previous views and notions his own way: he persuaded him of the independent significance and enormous historical mission of the Little Russian tribe, as a separate people, and convinced him that Khmelnytsky did not liberate this people, but ruined them for good, enslaving them to the alien Moscow yoke, much more harmful than the Polish yoke had been. Due to his easy nature, capable of all sorts of infatuations, and given the cast of his mind, very superficial, but arrogant, with a personality more prone to bad than good gestures, Kulesh surrendered entirely to the suggestions of Grabowski, being inflamed with enmity towards Moscow, and came to hate Khmelnytsky, whom in his writings he still continues to put on the same level as Pugachev, as Grabowski did himself and instructed him. But Kulesh's ravings could not find a receptive soil at that time, and therefore, as purely personal and youthful, they seemed more amusing than serious[36].

Although nowadays the accusations made in the *Note* seem 'more amusing than serious', in the 19th century they had far-reaching consequences. In order to study and react to it, a special council was formed that included the ministers of internal affairs and public education, Chief Procurator of the Synod, head of the Third Section, and Yuzefovych. But, strictly speaking, there was nothing to study, because no other evidence of 'intrigue' turned up. Yuzefovych made a report to the council and the latter's ruling was based on his *Note*; the motivational parts of these documents (including the episode involving Kulish) are textually very close. In particular, the council stated:

The political idea of Little Russian exceptionalism, in the view of P[rivy] C[ouncilor] Yuzefovych, is an invention of Austrian-Polish intrigue, set in motion here by Poles in the early '40s. In this belief he is confirmed by the story of one of the most ardent propagandists of Ukrainophilism, Kulesh, who was perhaps the first to lay the foundation for the further development and spread of the harmful and meaningless doctrine of the separation of Little Russia. Kulesh, who had previously been a worshiper of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, fell under the influence of the known Polish writer Michał Grabowski, who

українства 1876 р., Мюнхен 1970, с. 375).
    [36] *Українська ідентичність і мовне питання в Російській імперії: спроба державного регулювання (1847–1914).: Зб. документів і матеріалів*, відп. ред. Г. Боряк, Київ 2013, с. 120-121.

persuaded him of the independent significance and enormous historical mission of the Little Rus[sian] tribe, as a separate people, convincing him also that Khmelnytsky did not liberate the people, but on the contrary ruined them for good, enslaving them to the alien Moscow yoke, much more severe than the Polish yoke had been[37].

Since then, at the official level in Russia, 'Polish intrigue' and Ukrainian 'separatism' as its consequence were thus personified by the figures of Grabowski and Kulish. But if we translate the idiom of this 19th-century government document into the modern academic vocabulary, it can also be noted that it in fact registers the beginning of the 'Ukrainian project' ("the political idea of Little Russian exceptionalism", "the doctrine of the separation of Little Russia") in the 1840s and asserts the precedence of Panteleimon Kulish ("perhaps the first to lay the foundation...") in its creation.

Mykhailo Yuzefovych is an ambiguous and fairly well-known figure in Ukrainian history[38]. He came from a Cossack family and, while a high-ranking imperial official (he rose to the 'general'-level rank of active state councilor, and shortly before his death received for his loyal service the rank of active privy councilor – the second class in the imperial Table of Ranks), he continued to profess 'Little Russian sentiment', cooperated with Ukrainian figures, but also played a negative role in the destruction of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the closing of the 'Ukrainophile' South-Western Department of the Russian Geographical Society, and the adoption of the Ems Act, which contemporaries, with some reason, dubbed the 'Yuzefovych law', and Kulish – 'Yuzefovychivshchyna'. For more than 30 years, with interruptions, he maintained friendly relations with Kulish, whom he patronized and occasionally helped out and with whom he discussed plans, writings, and the like (the history of their relationship is discussed in a monograph by Ye. Nakhlik, special articles by I. Koliada and V. Mylko[39], and other studies). At the same time, his *Note*'s unfair and humiliating depiction of Kulish, with whom his relations were still friendly at that time, testifies to the questionable moral qualities of Yuzefovych, also repeatedly noted by contemporaries. The incident with Kostomarov, who demonstratively refused to shake Yuzefovych's hand in public[40], and Mykhailo Drahomanov's caustic characterization of him as a "privy councilor and public spy"[41] are widely known. In his diary, Oleksandr Kistiakivsky called Yuzefovych a 'scoundrel', 'bastard', and 'spy and informer'[42]. And Kulish himself, whose eyes were opened after the Ems Act, described his erstwhile friend and patron as a scoundrel, 'puny little man',

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[37] Ibidem, с. 129.

[38] For a bibliography, see: *Юзефович Михайло Володимирович*, В. Милько [in:] *Енциклопедія історії України*, редкол.: В. А. Смолій (голова) та ін., Київ 2013, т. 10, с. 697-698.

[39] І. Коляда, *«Титан національного відродження» та «ворог українства»: до історії взаємин Пантелеймона Куліша та Михайла Юзефовича*, „Науковий часопис НПУ імені М. П. Драгоманова", серія 6: Історичні науки, Київ 2016, вип. 14, с. 122-137; В. Милько, *Пантелеймон Куліш та Михайло Юзефович: міжособистісні відносини в контексті розвитку освіти* [in:] *Історіографічні дослідження в Україні*, Київ 2019, вип. 30, с. 36-58; et al.

[40] Ф. Савченко, *Заборона українства 1876 р.*, с. 61.

[41] Ibidem, с. 14.

[42] О. Кістяківський, *Щоденник* (1874-1885), Київ 1994, т. 1, с. 174.

*oshust* (swindler, rascal), and a 'tightrope walker' who had to "climb up to the very crest of official highness"[43]. Yuzefovych also knew Grabowski, debated with him in periodicals, and exchanged impressions about him with Kulish (the latter once wrote to Yuzefovych, "How is our most honorable and gentle Mikhail Antonovich?"[44]).

The motives that guided Yuzefovych in the preparation of the *Note* were diverse. They included personal grudge and unfulfilled ambition, a belief (rooted in the ideology of 'Little Russianism') in the danger of 'Ukrainianism' and a desire to slow down the latter's development by the government's hand, an eagerness to earn favor with the imperial authorities and demonstrate his own foresight, and more. But in any case this was not a situational whim: for a long time before 1875, Yuzefovych had been trying to convey to the authorities the idea of the danger of a Polish-Ukrainian union, assigning to the Poles the role of the puppet masters. This 'accomplishment' of his was noted as early as 1865 by Vitaly Shulgin's newspaper "Kievlianin" (The Kyivan):

> Mykhailo Yuzefovych very aptly called the Ukrainophile idea a product of Polish intrigue, which merged (albeit unnaturally) with Cossack patriotism... The youth grabbed at this invention with both hands and, once again after Polish suggestion and explanation, developed an entire Ukrainophile doctrine, from which emerged: first complete differentiation, then Russian federalism, and finally separatism. These simple-minded lovers of the people do not notice that they walk with the help of Polish nannies...[45]

In his vision, Yuzefovych was significantly ahead of the official bodies, which did not see any grounds for such assessments at the time. The annual reports and reviews of the Third Section, in which the theme of the 'Polish threat' was always present, never registered its connection with the Ukrainian movement until the end of the 1860s[46]. Moreover, Colonel Mezentsov, who was sent to the Ukrainian provinces in 1863 on a special mission to study 'Little Russian propaganda', stated that it "can be dangerous only if it is combined with Polonism, which is unlikely to happen"[47].

However, in the 1860s Yuzefovych did not yet associate the Polish threat with Kulish. In 1875, he did so, sacrificing his old friend, probably because the connection 'Grabowski-Kulish' looked plausible, and he had at his disposal no other similar 'evidence' relating to the beginnings of Ukrainian nationalism. Keen to illustrate his allegations, Yuzefovych was not deterred even by the threat of possible accusations against himself. After all, he did admit in the *Note* that the whole story with Kulish happened before his eyes; moreover, it was he who greatly facilitated Kulish's expedition to Right-Bank Ukraine in 1843, during and after which he repeatedly

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[43] В. Милько, *Пантелеймон Куліш та Михайло Юзефович*, с. 54.

[44] Quoted after: В. Гнатюк, *Польський літератор М. А. Грабовський і його приятелювання з П. О. Кулішем* [in:] *Записки історично-філологічного відділу ВУАН*, Київ 1929, кн. 23, с. 119.

[45] Quoted after: Ф. Савченко, *Заборона українства 1876 р.*, с. 193.

[46] See: *«Россия под надзором»: отчеты отделения 1827-1869: Сб. Документов*, сост. М. Сидорова, Е. Щербакова, Москва 2006.

[47] Quoted after: Ф. Савченко, *Заборона українства 1876 р.*, с. 198.

received information from Kulish on his contacts with Grabowski[48]. Yuzefovych's thirty-year-long silence on the matter might have raised questions.

The uniqueness of the case of Kulish's 'Polonization' and its convenience for discrediting the Ukrainian national movement is confirmed by its subsequent replication in certain corners of the Russian public sphere. Thus, in the early 20th century it was used, with some modifications, by the notorious Russian nationalist Sergei Shchogolev in a wide-ranging and extremely tendentious overview with the characteristic title *The Ukrainian Movement as the Modern Phase of Southern Russian Separatism*, known at the time as a 'textbook for gendarmes':

> Kulish [sic]... in the early '40s taught in Volhynia in Lutsk and Rivne, cities of purely Polish culture; after transferring to Kyiv, he got along very closely with the Polish writers Świdziński, Rulikowski, and, most importantly, with Mich. Grabowski, who strongly influenced Kulish's national and political views[49].

Shchogolev evidently needed to bring up this case for the same reason as Yuzefovych. For both of them, it was imperative to convince the government and the public that Ukrainian 'separatism' was the result of the anti-Russian work of the Poles (in 1914, Shchogolev published a special opus on the subject, *Ukrainianism under Polish Tutelage*, in the "Kievlianin"[50]), but arguments were lacking. The same predicament (but this time with an academic, rather than political, thesis needing corroboration) probably played its joke on Aleksei Miller.

But even this sparse evidence was largely spurious. To realize this, it is enough to analyze the context of 'Grabowski-Kulish'. Michał Grabowski as a writer, prominent representative of the 'Ukrainian school' in 19th-century Polish literature, critic, and public figure is well known to students of literature and social life both in Poland and in Ukraine[51]. In the Ukrainian historiography of the 1920s, the relationship between the two men was the subject of a special study[52]; today, it is often discussed in the scholarship on Kulish[53].

Kulish visited Grabowski's estate in Oleksandrivka near Chyhyryn several times; his first visit took place in the summer of 1843 during the archival expedition to the

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[48] П. Куліш, *Повне зібрання творів. Листи*, т. 1: 1841-1850, упоряд., комент. О. Федорук, Київ 2005, с. 19-21.

[49] С. Щоголев, *Украинское движение как современный этап южнорусского сепаратизма*, Киев 1912, с. 35.

[50] *Щоголєв Сергій Никифорович*, В. Любченко [in:] Енциклопедія історії України, т. 10, с. 687.

[51] About him, see: В. Єршов, *Міхал Грабовський* [in:] Idem. *Польська література Волині доби романтизму: генологія мемуаристичності*, Житомир 2008, с. 242-249; І. Руденко, *Політичні погляди та слов'янофільські ідеї Міхала Грабовського* [in:] *Волинь-Житомирщина: Історико-філологічний збірник з регіональних проблем*, 2009, № 19, с. 96-105; Н. Głębocki, *Grabowski Michał* [in:] *Polski Petersburg,* URL: https://www.polskipetersburg.pl/hasla/grabowski-miachal (here the reader will find, among other things, a Polish bibliography of Grabowski);

[52] В. Гнатюк, *Польський літератор М. А. Грабовський і його приятелювання з П. О. Кулішем* [in:] *Записки історично-філологічного відділу ВУАН*, Київ 1928, кн. 21-22, с. 227-248; 1929, кн. 23, с. 97-124; *Куліш і Грабовський*, О. Юровська, Україна, Київ 1929, кн. 36, с. 72-85.

[53] See for instance: Є. Нахлік, *Пантелеймон Куліш*, т. 1, с. 32-37; О. Кравченко, *Життя, віддане просвітництву*, с. 28-29, 134-135; С. Наумов, *Пантелеймон Куліш як співтворець «українського проекту» XIX ст.*, с. 59-60; et al.

Right Bank under the patronage of Yuzefovych. The much older Grabowski was already a literary celebrity, while the young Kulish was just beginning his career as a writer. Nevertheless, warm relations and mutual respect immediately developed between them and carried through the rest of their lives. Both were interested in Ukrainian folklore and the antiquities of the Cossack era and used this material to write works in a romantic style, with Walter Scott as their model (Kulish called Grabowski 'the Ukrainian Walter Scott'[54]).

Kulish admired (or, in his own words, "was in love with"[55]) Grabowski. The latter's personal qualities, hospitality shown to the as yet unknown, but very ambitious and sensitive to praise young man, and Grabowski's fairly high opinion of Kulish's literary efforts all contributed to this feeling. Emotional influence went hand in hand with intellectual and cultural. We may speak of a worldview turn of sorts that Kulish went through in the company of the Polish intellectual (of course, not all at once). This included, first and foremost, the understanding of those phenomena with which the Ukrainian was particularly occupied at the time – his homeland's past (primarily the Cossack era) and its spiritual world as reflected in folklore. Grabowski warmly supported his protégé's enthusiasm for these subjects, helped him free himself of naivety and credulity in perception, taught him critical attitude, balance, and scrupulousness, preached the need to draw on a variety of sources, and provided access to the large number of Polish historical and literary works in his library, which significantly changed Kulish's view of the events the Polish era in the history of Ukraine. A serious step was thus taken in the development of Kulish as a scholar – in his evolution from a romantic storyteller limiting himself to fictionalizing oral or written texts to a researcher armed with critical thinking and engaging with reliable historical sources in the spirit of 19th-century scholarship. Later, he recalled that his acquaintance with Grabowski, Konstanty Świdziński, and Edward Leopold Rulikowski led him to a document-based understanding of Ukraine's past and a critical approach to the fictions of chronicle writing[56]. It was likely here that his progress towards positivism began, even though his reception of this trend, according to O. Yas, was ambiguous, selective, and idiosyncratic, and in general he remained a historian of 'two faiths' – romantic and positivist[57]. Finally, indirectly, through Grabowski and his Polish circle, Kulish received a powerful charge of European cultural influences – literary, scientific, and ideological ("everything attained by the Polish intelligentsia, everything it had learned from Europe through culture became my own thanks to Michał Grabowski"[58]). All this (as well as other cultural factors and channels of influence) truly enriched Kulish and to some extent changed his view of the world.

However, this does not make true the accusations leveled by Yuzefovych and his followers, particularly that of 'Polonization'. Kulish, despite the undeniable cultural

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[54] *Куліш і Грабовський,* с. 72.

[55] Є. Нахлік, *Пантелеймон Куліш,* с. 34.

[56] *Куліш і Грабовський,* с. 81, 83; С. Світленко, *Історія України в історіософському осягненні молодого П. О. Куліша* [in:] Idem, *Українське XIX століття: етнонаціональні, інтелектуальні та історіософські контексти,* с. 418.

[57] О. Ясь, *Історичне письмо пізнього П. Куліша як предтеча консервативного проекту української історіографії початку XX ст.,* с. 68, 71.

[58] П. Куліш, *Хутірська філософія і віддалена од світу поезія,* с. 209.

and personal Polish influences that he assimilated and was conscious of, did not turn 'Polish' – just like he did not turn 'Russian', even though the influences from that quarter were much more intense. One gets the impression that Kulish, who seems to have been the first to position himself as a 'Ukrainian' (and not a 'Little Russian'), was aware of the vulnerability of his situation and watched out for possible threats from his 'other-national' environments. In this regard, he particularly stressed the correctness and delicacy of his Polish friends, who did not try to 'Polonize' him and avoided discussions from which "one could have concluded that the Poles tried to make me an instrument of Catholicism or Polonism"[59]. At that time, Kulish found funny the fears about his possible 'Polonization'; he more than once expressed skepticism about Polish Ukrainophilia; many of his works dealing with Ukraine's past and the history of Ukrainian-Polish relations have a distinct anti-Polish slant. We may mention a revealing episode from Kulish's biography – his service in Warsaw in 1864-1867, which caused a wave of indignation on the part of Ukrainophiles and Russian liberals. Involving Kulish in administrative work, the authorities counted precisely on his Polonophobia[60]. Regardless of the Ukrainian's justifications and true motives, he was aware that his work contributed to the resolution of the 'Polish question' in the imperial vein; he made considerable efforts in the field of depolonization, including measures promoting Russification. His letters from Warsaw speak of the restoration of historical justice – "we will triumph over the *panstvo* [lords] that used to despise our rights"; "it is the portion of the Cossacks' children to rule in the Polish country"; "it is well to put a halter on the Pole", and the like[61]. True, the situation with these statements by Kulish and his service more generally is far from clear-cut, but it gives grounds to assert, at least, that the 'Kulish as a Pole' project did not really work out, all his respect for Polish culture and its leading figures notwithstanding. After all, Kulish himself denied the 'nationalizing' (in the Polish direction) influence of Grabowski: "He was a Pole and a Catholic to the core, but this did not prevent him from sympathizing with my pseudo-patriotism then"[62]. In the words of a modern researcher, Grabowski was one of the few Polish public intellectuals who, in spite of his conservatism, understood the "znaczenie nowoczesnej ukraińskiej tożsamości narodowej o cechach etnonacjonalizmu"[63].

The allegation that Kulish changed his view of Bohdan Khmelnytsky under the influence of Grabowski is also groundless, which further undermines the 'Polonization' thesis. The poem *Ukraine*, probably written in part during the first visit to Oleksandrivka and published less than six months later, had the revealing subtitle *From the Beginnings of Ukraine to Father Khmelnytsky*. Commenting on the poem, the author wrote to Yuzefovych on 14 August 1843 (fresh from Oleksandrivka): "Here the Poles reach the greatest barbarism, martyrs' souls ascend to God and plead for revenge. Revenge is being prepared in Khmelnytsky, terrible for Poland"[64]. Meanwhile, Grabowski had a very high opinion of the work: "...He exalts him [Khmelnytsky] with such praises that I

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[59] Ibidem, с. 213.

[60] *Западные окраины Российской империи*, Москва 2006, с. 190.

[61] Ibidem, с. 226; Є. Нахлік, *Пантелеймон Куліш*, т. 1, с. 225.

[62] Quoted after: В. Гнатюк, *Польський літератор М. А. Грабовський і його приятелювання з П. О. Кулішем* [in:] *Записки історично-філологічного відділу ВУАН*, кн. 23, с. 120.

[63] H. Głębocki, *Grabowski Michał*, URL: https://www.polskipetersburg.pl/hasla/grabowski-miachal.

[64] П. Куліш, *Повне зібрання творів. Листи*, т. 1, с. 20.

myself begin to believe in his merits"[65]. This made such a strong impression on Kulish that even late in life he continued to recall that Grabowski had commended the poem "...beyond all measure, despite the fact that it breathed the incongruous malice of the spurious Konysky and other Little Russian chroniclers [that is, malice against Poles – S. N.]"; moreover, Grabowski "...made large extracts from my praise of Khmelnytsky and heroes like him in Polish characters and sent them to his friend Kraszewski for printing..."[66]. *The Tale of the Ukrainian People* (1846) contains a detailed and fairly favorable description of Khmelnytsky's exploits; the author considers the hetman sent by Providence (for the very religious Kulish, this meant a lot) and notes that by joining Ukraine to Russia he earned the respect of both nations[67].

While the 'Polonization' of Kulish is an obvious libel, the accusations regarding his anti-Russian political indoctrination by Grabowski are even more so. It is well known that politically the latter man was completely loyal to the Russian Empire (in modern literature he is categorized as a loyalist and conservative, often with the prefix 'ultra-')[68], and he did not share the views of the Polish opposition, which consequently saw him as a traitor and a sellout. Similar epithets were used to characterize his closest circle – the famous 'St. Petersburg coterie' and the weekly "Tygodnik Petersburski", with which Grabowski was tightly involved[69]. Of course, it is worth keeping in mind that Grabowski, just like Kulish, underwent a certain ideological evolution. But the views in question fully crystallized precisely at the beginning of the 1840s. They are reflected in a letter to Juliusz Strutyński, a member of the 'St. Petersburg coterie' and adjutant to the governor-general of Kyiv Dmitry Bibikov (who was the end addressee), written in February 1843, shortly before meeting Kulish. This document is described in Polish scholarship as a "manifest konserwatywnego, monarchicznego panslawizmu", "symbol niebezpieczeństwa narodowej kapitulacji"[70], and the like. One often-quoted fragment sums up the gist of the letter:

> Mniemana historii polskiej samoistność jest zakończona, odtąd być ona tylko może, jako członek Rosji lub słowiańszczyzny. Patryotyzm więc polaków zakładam na tem, ażeby być działaczem powolnym i użytecznym w losach wielkiego rossyjskiego państwa. Myślę z innej strony, że w żywiołach narodu polskiego jest niemało tego, co wnieść on może ze znaczną korzyścią do

[65] Ibidem.

[66] Quoted after: Ibidem, c. 360-361.

[67] П. Кулиш, *Повесть об украинском народе*, Санкт-Петербург 1846, c. 29, 59 et al.

[68] A. Waśko, *Geopolityka i literatura romantyzmu* [in:] *Przeklęte miejsce Europy? Dylematy polskiej geopolityki*, pod red. J. Kloczkowskiego, Kraków 2009, URL: https://www.omp.org.pl/artykul.php?artykul=313 (accessed 12.08.2023); S. Bilenky, *Romantic nationalism in Eastern Europe*, p. 6; *Michał Grabowski* (powieściopisarz), URL: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micha%C5%82_Grabowski_(powie%C5%9Bciopisarz) (accessed 6.07.2023); H. Głębocki, *Grabowski Michał,* URL: https://www.polskipetersburg.pl/hasla/grabowski-miachal; et al.

[69] Д. Бовуа, *Шляхтич, кріпак і ревізор: польська шляхта між царизмом та українськими масами (1831-1863),* Київ 1996, c. 294; Н. Дейвіс, *Боже ігрище: історія Польщі*, пер. з англ. П. Таращук, Київ 2008, c. 608; В. Єршов, *Міхал Грабовський*, c. 176; *Koteria Petersburska,* URL: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koteria_Petersburska (accessed 11.06.2014); et al.

[70] H. Głębocki, *Grabowski Michał*, URL: https://www.polskipetersburg.pl/hasla/grabowski-miachal

wielkiej współki. Myślę, że jedność słowiańska nie może się spełnić tylko pod patronatem Rosji[71].

Thus, Grabowski could not have instilled anti-Russian political views in Kulish at that time, contrary to Yuzefovych's insistence. And the only 'evidence' in support of this charge – Kulish's 'anti-Russian' historical vision, which was allegedly the fruit of his interactions with Grabowski – was, as has been shown above, an outright fiction.

Perhaps Yuzefovych resorted to such obvious slander expecting that, after more than 30 years, this little-known episode would be hard to refute. Another motive could be the fact that this fiction was absolutely necessary given the lack of other supporting material to discredit the 'Ukrainian project'. Yuzefovych's *Note* was partly motivated by personal issues (unsatisfied ambition, conflict with the Ukrainophile circles, desire to settle scores, etc.). In the end, however, it was part of a wider plan to sway the public opinion and push the inflexible and short-sighted imperial authorities to decisive action against the Ukrainian national movement – in both empires. The ideas expressed in the *Note* were not overly original and had many supporters in both public and official circles from Kyiv to St. Petersburg (and among the Muscophiles of Austria-Hungary as well), which ultimately ensured it a favorable reception at the highest political level (the intricacies of the struggles surrounding the Ems Act are described in detail by F. Savchenko and A. Miller). But it is important to emphasize that the author of the *Note* was a local, a 'Little Russian'; the initiative came from the Kyivan supporters of 'Little Russianism', who in this way sought to strike a decisive blow against the hated 'Ukrainianism'. The events of the mid-1870s became one of the high points in the confrontation between the 'Little Russian' and 'Ukrainian' projects, which significantly affected their further evolution[72].

Summing up, we may observe that the sources of Kulish's national identity remain insufficiently understood. However, the available material is enough to refute the politically-motivated theory of its 'Polish' origin (formation under the decisive impact of Polish political and personal factors) and anti-Russian bent resulting from Polish influences. In the case of Kulish, the undeniable Polish connections and influences in the 1840s were rather of a general cultural, intellectual, and emotional nature. The same, but to an even greater extent, applies to his Czech contacts. The evidence collected in Ye. Nakhlik's thorough study[73] testifies to their sparseness and 'pan-Slavic' context, which probably indirectly influenced national identity formation. The influence of Serbian, Montenegrin, and other Slavic literatures can also be noted. But nothing we know today about Kulish's activities in the 1840s gives basis for arguing that he 'imitated' (copied, followed) other 'national projects' in those years.

The story of the 'Kulish case' and its uses demonstrates, among other things, the importance of scholarly detachment and balance between theoretical constructions

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[71] Quoted after: В. Гнатюк, *Польський літератор М. А. Грабовський і його приятелювання з П. О. Кулішем* [in:] *Записки історично-філологічного відділу ВУАН*, кн. 23, с. 123.

[72] In more detail, see А. Котенко, О. Мартинюк, А. Міллер, *«Мы сами принадлежим к племени малорусскому»: до історії поняття «малорос» у Російській імперії* [in:] *Український гуманітарний огляд 2012*, вип. 16-17, с. 88-114; С. Наумов, *«Малоросійський проект» ХІХ ст. vs «український проект»*, с. 129-131.

[73] Є. Нахлік, *Пантелеймон Куліш*, т. 1, с. 51, 67 et al.

and empirical evidence, especially in dealing with issues relating to nationalism – a highly politicized irritant for many individuals and communities. As political thinkers and actors, Kulish and other creators of the 'Ukrainian project' absorbed, and were shaped by, widely circulating political ideas and cultural phenomena of different relative influence and origins (Western European, South and West Slavic, Russian, and others). At the same time, their outlook took shape primarily on local soil and derived from the Ukrainian ethno-cultural material and imperial socio-political realities. It is telling that Ivan Lysiak-Rudnytsky, postulating the "influence of the Polish element" on the crystallization of "the modern Ukrainian consciousness" during the 19th century, admitted that it happened "in an elusive way that is not easy to define"[74]. So, when judging the role and weight of various factors in such a complex matter as the formation of a national identity, the researcher's approach should be especially delicate, balanced, and grounded in evidence.

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[74] І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Інтелектуальні початки нової України*, с. 178.

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