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PYLYP ORLYK AND UKRAINIAN-EUROPEAN RELATIONS

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The emergence of Pylyp Orlyk as a champion of European values occurred in the Hetmanate's capital, Baturyn, during the reign of Hetman Ivan Mazepa. The period of the 17th and 18th centuries in Ukraine is often referred to by modern historians as the Hetmanate. The leader of the Hetmanate was the hetman, elected by free votes in the Cossack council. Baturyn served as the Hetmanate's capital for 53 years, where members of the hetman's government resided and conducted state affairs.

In the year 1700, the Great Northern War between the Swedish and Russian coalitions began, and the Hetmanate was forced to participate. In November 1708, the Muscovites burned, destroyed, and razed the Hetmanate's Baturyn to the ground, killing the entire local population. The reason for this inhumane atrocity was Hetman Ivan Mazepa's desire to break free from Russian domination [1]. At the beginning of the 18th century, Ivan Mazepa, having secured the support of King Charles XII of Sweden and King Stanisław Leszczyński of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, chose the European path of development. His decision was supported by all members of the government, with Pylyp Orlyk as his closest ally. In this article, we will explore Pylyp Orlyk's activities and his struggle to liberate the Cossack nation from Russian dominance.

Pylyp Orlyk was born in 1672. He studied at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, the most prestigious educational institution in Eastern Europe in the 17th century. He received a good education, exhibited literary talent, and had a knack for learning foreign languages, mastering eight of them. From 1699 to 1708, he lived in the Hetmanate's Baturyn with his family. The Orlyk family had eight children, three of whom were born in Baturyn: Grigoriy, Mykhailo, and Varvara. They built their own estate in Baturyn, a fact supported by archaeological findings, including a tile with the Orlyk family coat of arms «News» and the initials «F.O.» found on the territory of Pylyp Orlyk's known estate in Baturyn.



Addition 2. Stove tile with the family coat of arms of the Orlyks «News» and the initials «F.O.», 18th century. It was found in 2018 during archaeological research of the estate of Pylyp Orlyk in Baturyn. From the stock collection of the National Reserve «Hetman's Capital».

In Hetman Ivan Mazepa's government, Pylyp Orlyk held the position of General Secretary, a role equivalent to the foreign affairs minister today. He was responsible for international negotiations and diplomatic correspondence with representatives of contemporary Sweden, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate.

Voltaire aptly described the situation in the Hetmanate during this time: «Ukraine has always sought to be free. But surrounded by Russia, she the dominions of the Grand Sultan, and Poland, it had to seek a protector. She initially turned to Poland, which treated it as a servant. From there, she fell into the hands of Moscow, which turned it into a slave...» [2].

In April 1710, Pylyp Orlyk was elected Hetman in Bendery (modern-day Moldova). This day is enshrined in Ukrainian history as the adoption of the first Constitution, developed by Pylyp Orlyk and ratified at the Cossack council in Bendery. Today, the Latin-language Constitution of Pylyp Orlyk, titled «Agreements and Resolutions of Rights and Freedoms of the Zaporozhian Host», is preserved in the National Archives of Sweden (Diplomatica Muscovitica collection, Cosacica).

Hetman Pylyp Orlyk continued Ivan Mazepa's mission of liberating Ukrainian lands from the Muscovites with determination. His political views received support from Karl XII of Sweden, Stanisław Leszczyński of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Ahmed III of the Ottoman Empire, and Devlet II Geray of the Crimean Khanate.

During his exile, the Ukrainian Hetman embarked on a challenging journey through modern-day Moldova, Sweden, Poland, Greece, and Romania. It was a long and arduous struggle against Moscow's aggressors. Imperial and subsequent Soviet propaganda either suppressed this period of history or portrayed Pylyp Orlyk as a traitor, a «Mazepinets».

While in exile, Pylyp Orlyk, like many contemporary Ukrainians abroad who have united against Russian aggression, continued the fight for Ukraine's liberation from Russian oppression. He rallied human and material resources, reevaluated the reasons for defeat, and made countless efforts to create a strong European coalition, without which Ukrainian independence was deemed impossible. He never stopped seeking support from European nations, writing letters to French, Polish, Swedish, and Ottoman political figures about freeing the Cossack nation from the Russian yoke. He believed that the struggle of the Ukrainian people for their liberation and the restoration of their statehood was vital for all of Europe. Stanisław Leszczyński stated in support of the Ukrainian cause, «Without the freedom of the Cossack nation, there will be no peace in Eastern Europe» [3]. As we can see, these words, like 300 years ago, remain relevant.

Pylyp Orlyk's elder son became a valuable ally in the fight for Ukrainian independence. He played a crucial role in the diplomacy of one of the powerful European nations of the 18th century, France. For 30 years of his life, Grigory Orlyk devoted himself to secret French diplomacy while deeply caring about the interests of the Cossack nation. With unquestionable authority, his opinions were heard at the Versailles royal court. His persuasive words were discussed by King Louis XV of France with cardinals and ambassadors, shaping their perception of our Ukrainian nation and its main problem, tyrannical Russia. King Louis XV of France noted, «I have

reason to believe that allowing the Russians to seize Ukraine would mean taking part in a real injustice» [3].

The figure of Pylyp Orlyk serves as an example of enlightenment, perseverance, and purposefulness. His political and diplomatic activities aimed at liberating the Ukrainian people from Russian domination were oriented toward Europe. His persistence, compelling arguments, diplomatic skill, and exceptional dedication to the cause garnered admiration among European elites. At the same time, Ukrainians awaited him to help cast off the unbearable Russian yoke.



Addition 2. Portrait of Hetman Pylyp Orlyk. Artist Natalia Pavlusenko. 2021. From the stock collection of the National Reserve «Hetman's Capital».

Pylyp Orlyk ensured the presence of Ukrainian issues in the combinations of Swedish, Polish, French, and Ottoman foreign policies in the 18th century. It can be confidently stated that Hetman Pylyp Orlyk is an unquestionably significant figure in Ukrainian-European relations.

References:

- [1] Pavlenko S., Death of Baturyn on November 2, 1708, part. IV Perehovori, «Ukrainian Publishing Union», Kyiv 2007.
- [2] Voltaire. Histoire de Charles XII. Paris 1854.
- [3] Dmytryshyn I. Grigory Orlyk, or the Cossack nation in French diplomacy. Tempora, Kyiv 2019.