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Reviewed work(s):
Source: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3/4 (December 1990), pp. 415-426
Published by: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41036396
Accessed: 11/08/2012 15:28

The Slap, the Feral Child, and the Steed: Pasek Settles Accounts with Mazepa

ROMAN KOROPECKYJ

In 1661, on his way from an army encampment in Kielce to Belorussia, Jan Chryzostom Pasek, a petty gentryman in the army of the then *wojewoda* of Ruthenia Stefan Czarniecki, encountered Jan (Ivan) Mazepa, "an ennobled Cossack" and a trusted page (*pokojowy*) at the court of King Jan Kazimierz.[1] The meeting was not auspicious. Believing that Pasek was relaying secret letters from a confederation (*związek*) formed in Kielce by soldiers demanding back pay to supporters in Belorussia, Mazepa quickly rode to the king in Hrodna (Grodno) and mistakenly informed on the unsuspecting Pasek. Apparently (nine pages of the manuscript are missing at this point) the king's men arrested Pasek and escorted him to Hrodna. On the way, a contingent of Lithuanian confederates attempted, unsuccessfully, to free him, which further compromised Pasek in the eyes of the king.[2] However, at the inquisition in Hrodna Pasek, an accomplished orator, managed to convince the senators and subsequently the king himself of his innocence. The king not only exonerated the offended gentryman from Mazepa's accusations but, according to Pasek, asked him for forgiveness and gave him five hundred ducats, saying, "A man who does a good deed should not be tossed out over the fence" (262). As for Mazepa, Pasek has the king say: "He who has deceived (*udał*) us has already been rewarded for his thoughtlessness (*płochość*), since he has lost our favor and will never be able to restore it" (261).[3]

This is how Pasek describes his 1661 encounter with Mazepa in his *Pamiętniki*, perhaps the most fascinating and idiosyncratic specimen of Old Polish memoiristic writing. At the time the memoirs were being composed

[1] Jan Pasek, *Pamiętniki*, 5th ed., ed. W. Czapliński, Biblioteka Narodowa, ser. 1, 62 (Wrocław, 1979), p. 211. All references in the text are to this edition. All translations are mine, with the help, however, of C. S. Leach, trans. and ed., *Memoirs of the Polish Baroque. The Writings of Jan Chryzostom Pasek, a Squire of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania* (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 104–22, 152–56.

[2] See Czapliński's reconstruction of the events in Pasek, *Pamiętniki*, p. 211, fn. 259.

[3] Pasek's is the only source of information on this moment in Mazepa's biography, and he provides no further information with regard to exactly how this temporary fall from the king's favor manifested itself.

(between 1690 and 1695),[4] the young Cossack at Jan Kazimierz's court had already become leader of the Hetmanate (1687), a confidant of Peter I and of some of his most powerful advisers, and, consequently, an influential personage on the political landscape of Russia, Ukraine, and Poland-Lithuania in the last decades of the seventeenth century. It is not surprising, therefore, that a meeting with such a prominent figure well before his emergence into the spotlight should merit a place in the memoirs of a provincial gentryman, and all the more so since it had very nearly caused Pasek to lose his reputation and perhaps his life. The encounter of 1661 was not, however, the last between the two men, although by the same token it could not but affect both the tenor of their second encounter in 1662 and, more importantly, the manner in which the Polish memoirist figures the person of Mazepa in his narrative.

Pasek's memoirs are organized chronologically, with the notation of each new year (from 1656 to 1688) constituting as it were a separate chapter heading. Although within this scheme Pasek often discourses on the flow and meaning of larger political events, he adheres primarily to his "*propositum*" of describing "only. . . *statum vitae meae, non statum Reipublicae*, in order *reducere in memoriam* each of my *actiones*" (172). But, while much of the work is a rather dry chronological account of personal experiences, there are a number of sections that stand out by virtue of their narrative organization and artistry, by their very tendency, as one critic put it, toward narrativity.[5] These sections, as Bronisław Chlebowski was the first to point out, were probably anecdotes that Pasek had repeated many times throughout the course of his life in a society particularly appreciative of the art of storytelling. As a result, he "developed greater ease of expression and a greater perfection of form, omitting that which did not make an impression on his listeners and emphasizing those details and expressions which were to their taste."[6] Pasek, by the same token, is not loath to recount anecdotes heard second-hand or even to project himself as their hero, to say nothing of his capacity for exaggeration, for blurring the line "between actual events, both 'historical' and 'personal,' and those which are invented or anecdotal."[7] As such, the best of his anecdotes share their structure, their methods of characterization, their irony and humor—including culmination

[4] Cf. Czapliński's introduction to *Pamiętniki*, p. LIV.

[5] J. Trzynadlowski, "Sztuka pamiętnikarska Jana Chryzostoma Paska," *Prace Polonistyczne* 20 (1964): 273.

[6] B. Chlebowski, "Jan Chryzostom Pasek i jego *Pamiętniki*" (1879), in his *Pisma* (Warsaw, 1912), 3:352.

[7] J. Rytel, Pamiętniki *Paska na tle pamiętnikarstwa staropolskiego. Szkic z dziejów prozy narracyjnej* (Wrocław, 1962), p. 72.

in a well-turned pointe—with that most popular of Old Polish narrative genres, the *facetia*.[8] And if, as is most commonly the case, these anecdotes appear in isolation, surfacing as a solitary unit in the course of mundane descriptions of events, they also appear as parts of cycles, some (the Danish campaigns, the wars with Muscovy) of almost epic proportions, others (the anecdotes about the trained otter, the hunting stories) limited to a few stories linked together by a common subject or theme.[9]

Although Pasek's preference for the self-enclosed narrative that transcends the chronological mode of organization through associative digressions and the introduction of non-personal anecdotes has led some scholars, most notably Brückner, to overstate the coherence of the whole or parts of the work,[10] the memoirist's account of his second encounter with Mazepa in 1662, together with the anecdote about the *juvenis ursinus Lithunanus* at Jan Kazimierz's court and the hearsay story about the (now legendary) punishment inflicted on Mazepa by a jealous husband, constitutes just such a single, consciously constructed, and most certainly consciously intended, narrative unit. As I shall try to demonstrate, the coherence of this unit is as much a function of its formal narrative features as it is of its "motive."

In order to understand Pasek's figuration of both the 1661 incident in Hrodna and the series of episodes listed under the year 1662, it should once again be stressed that the events described occurred some thirty years before the actual composition of the memoirs. Faulty memory and a penchant for exaggeration aside, the respective fortunes of the two "protagonists," but particularly those of Mazepa, had changed radically over the course of this period. From a retainer at the court of Jan Kazimierz, the "ennobled Cossack" had risen to the highest office in the Hetmanate and had become a prominent actor on the East European political scene.[11] By contrast, Pasek, a man proud of his gentry origins, was at the time of the

[8] Cf. J. Krzyżanowski and K. Żukowska-Billip, *Dawna facecja polska (XVI–XVIII w.)* (Warsaw, 1960), p. 19; and R. Pollack, "Pasek i jego *Pamiętniki*," in his *Wśród literatów staropolskich* (Warsaw, 1966), p. 435.

[9] On cyclicity in Pasek's memoirs, see Rytel, Pamiętniki *Paska*, pp. 75–81; and Trzynadlowski, "Sztuka pamiętnikarska Paska," pp. 273, 274.

[10] "This is the first Polish historical romance (*historyczny romans*) that is worthy of standing side by side with *The Three Musketeers* and the heroes of Sienkiewicz": A. Brückner, *Dzieje literatury polskiej w zarysie* (Warsaw, n.d.), 1:268. Cf. Czapliński's introduction to *Pamiętniki*, pp. XLIX–L; and Trzynadlowski, "Sztuka pamiętnikarska Paska," p. 272.

[11] Of the many books and articles on Mazepa, see, above all, F. M. Umanec, *Getman Mazepa, Istoričeskaja monografija* (St. Petersburg, 1897); E. Borschak and R. Martel, *Vie de Mazeppa* (Paris, 1931); C. J. Nordmann, *Charles XII et l'Ukraine de Mazepa* (Paris, 1958); O. Ohloblyn, *Het'man Ivan Mazepa ta joho doba* (=Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im. Ševčenka, 170) (New York, 1960); and W. Majewski, "Mazepa, Jan (Iwan)," *Polski słownik biograficzny*, s.v.

writing of his memoirs an embittered petty landowner whose life consisted of a series of land suits and trials that culminated in his disgrace and banishment.[12] Pasek, therefore, may have held more than just a grudge against the *szalbierz* Mazepa for the incident in Hrodna. There is, as we shall see, a distinct element of resentment against the Cossack for his early successes at the royal court and, one may assume, for those that were to follow. In fact, if the memoirs are viewed as the *apologia pro vita sua* of a gentryman whose own behavior—rapaciousness, cruelty, litigiousness, and adventurism—was in fact no less contemptible than that of which he accuses Mazepa,[13] the malicious figuration of the Cossack—a foreigner and a parvenu—becomes a form of self-righteous self-justification. At the same time, however, the petty gentryman from Gosławice cannot refrain from both boasting of his acquaintance with the now famous personage and, by the same token, reveling at the chance to expose his "feet of clay" by recounting certain youthful indiscretions and humiliations. How much truth there is in the episodes that Pasek records under the year 1662 is difficult to say. But in his old age the memoirist appears to have jumped at the opportunity to give satisfaction, at least in the form of literary displacement, to his grudge against Mazepa:[14] had he lived he would certainly have nodded knowingly at the hetman's shifting alliances and with no little satisfaction at his demise after Poltava.

The first of Pasek's 1662 stories involving Mazepa concerns an exchange of insults and an aborted duel between the two men at the king's court in Warsaw. A transition typical of Pasek's memoirs[15] indicates that we are indeed dealing with the first element of a cycle. A lengthy (264–320) and factually detailed day-by-day account of events (in this case a trip from Hrodna to Warsaw, where he is received by the king after successfully completing a mission entrusted to him), interspersed with citations from several official letters, concludes, in marked contrast to the preceding section, with a chronologically unspecific recapitulation: "The king commanded me to come every day for consultations and to get money for victuals. . . . We drank often with courtiers. . ." (320). The function of the passage immediately following—

[12] For a good, concise biography of Pasek, see W. Czapliński, "Pasek, Jan Chryzostom," *Polski słownik biograficzny*, s.v. For an earlier sketch, see Chlebowski, "Pasek i jego *Pamiętniki*," pp. 313–50.

[13] On the "hidden" facts of Pasek's life, see J. Czubek, *Jan Chryzostom z Gosławic Pasek w oświetleniu archiwalnym (1667–1701)* (Cracow, 1898).

[14] For a similar view, see V. Lutsiv, *Het'man Ivan Mazepa* (Toronto, 1954), pp. 16–17.

[15] See Rytel, Pamiętniki *Paska*, p. 78.

Mazepa had by now made his apology to the king for that misrepresentation (*szalbierstwo*) in Hrodna and had come back to the court again. We would rub shoulders, going about there side by side, for his accusation had done me no harm, indeed it had brought me profit and fame. . . but even so, I did often grumble angrily at him, and particularly when drunk, since usually it is such times that one's grudges loom the largest (320)

—also chronologically unspecific and transitionally somewhat abrupt, is not so much to provide a factual account of events as to introduce the central components—Mazepa, the king's court, daily proximity, the grudge, alcohol—of the narrative that follows.

In an inebriated state, Pasek taunts Mazepa by alluding to his Cossack origins (he calls him an "*assawuł*"), to which Mazepa retorts by alluding to the former's capture in Hrodna. Pasek, only waiting for such an occasion, hits Mazepa across the mouth and both men reach for their swords. Only the presence of the king in a nearby room prevents them from engaging in a duel (a capital offence at the royal residence). Deprived of the opportunity of receiving satisfaction by force of arms, Pasek nonetheless feels himself completely vindicated—or, rather, vindicates himself some thirty years after the fact—by writing that, "None of the courtiers stood by [Mazepa], for they also did not look very kindly upon him, he being a bit of a fraud (*szalbierz*) and, in addition, a recently ennobled Cossack (*Kozak niedawno nobilitowany*)." He adds maliciously that, "Mazepa went off almost in tears; it was not so much the blow that pained him as that the courtiers had not stood by him like a colleague" (321–22). And, despite the gravity of Pasek's behavior toward a courtier of the king, even Jan Kazimierz ultimately refuses to take his protégé's side, remarking, according to the memoirist, "Good that Mazepa paid only with [the blow to the mouth]; let him know next time not to spread false rumors (*fałszywe udawać rzeczy*)" (322).

Whatever the veracity of this story,[16] it serves to introduce—or, rather, reiterate—the most important motifs and sets of relationships of the Mazepa

[16] Both Borschak and Martel, *Vie de Mazeppa*, p. 9, and Majewski, "Mazepa," dismiss the story as a product of Pasek's vengeful imagination. Earlier biographers—for instance, Umanec, *Getman Mazepa*, p. 17, and A. Jensen, *Mazepa. Historiska Bilder frå Ukraina och Karl XII:s Dagar* (Lund, 1909), pp. 36–40—accept Pasek's version of events. In the preface to his publication of several of Mazepa's letters, August Bielowski, while accepting the fact that the incident did indeed take place, maintains that Pasek passes over in silence the real reason for the argument: the Polish gentryman picked a fight with Mazepa at the instigation of Piotr Opaliński, who was seeking revenge on the Cossack for having caused him to lose his position at court: A. B[ielowski], "Jan Mazepa i jego listy," *Biblioteka Ossolińskich*, n.s. 4 (1864): 152. However, Bielowski identifies his source only as "one of our honorable countrymen from far away" (p. 162).

cycle. In the first place, it identifies dissemblance as the outstanding trait of Mazepa's character—"*udał*," "*szalbierz*," "*szalbierstwo*," "*fałszywe udać rzeczy*"—a trait that not only Pasek ascribes to the Cossack, but also the king's courtiers and the king himself. To what extent this perception of Mazepa was a function of his personality as an individual is difficult to say, but it is by no means irrelevant to note here that a common seventeenth-century Polish stereotype of the Ruthenian was precisely that of a dissembler, of someone untrustworthy.[17] That we may indeed be dealing with at least a conflation of personal and ethnic characteristics is partially reflected in the second thematic structure of the anecdote, namely, the "solidarity" of the courtiers as well as the king with Pasek against Mazepa. However, more important in this respect is the other component of the second motif: Pasek—and by extension, the courtiers and the king (who, we should remember, was himself a foreigner)—views Mazepa as a parvenu, "*Kozak to był nobilitowany*," "*Kozak niedawno nobilitowany*," an upstart outsider as much by virtue of his estate origins as by virtue of his origins as a Cossack. The two, it would appear from the memoirs, are inextricably linked in Pasek's mind, a linkage that is, in my view, pivotal for the intentional structure of the cycle.

The second episode in the cycle—the story of the *juvenis ursinus Lithuanus*—is presented by Pasek as a direct chronological continuation ("The next day—a Saturday it was. . ."; 322) of the preceding account of the incident with Mazepa. At the same time, however, it shares its anecdotal structure and, more importantly, its central motifs. Having finally found the courage to return to Jan Kazimierz's court after learning that the king was not angry with him for his behavior toward his Cossack courtier, Pasek, or so he writes, joins the royal couple for a meal. After describing the meal briefly and remarking that "sweets were being served at the time," he adds: "And there was a small bear (*niedźwiadek*), *alias in forma* a man, *circiter* about thirteen years old. . ." (323). Although the presence of this bear-child[18] provides the memoirist with an opportunity to recount the history of

[17] See, for example, a 1650 variation on Camerarius's *Arithmologia Ethica, Sententiae Morales Certis Numeris Comprehensae*: "Graeci Russi inconstantes, infideles, fures, iugum ferre assueti. . . ." Cited in S. Kot, "Nationum proprietates," *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 6 (1955): 5; cf. ibid., pp. 42–43, and A. Kępiński, *Lach i Moskal. Z dziejów stereotypu* (Warsaw and Cracow, 1990), pp. 24–27.

[18] Whether Pasek actually saw this feral child or only heard about it second-hand, its existence is apparently not a product of his imagination. In his 1758 edition of *Systema Naturae*, Linnaeus records a *juvenis ursinus Lithuanus* at the court of Jan Kazimierz sometime in the late 1650s or early 1660s. Linnaeus himself drew his information from a 1721 work by Gabriel Raczyński, entitled *Historia naturalis curiosa Regni Poloniae, Magni Ducatus Lituaniae annexarumque provinciarum*, which relies on several eyewitness accounts of the

its capture (according to him, by Marcjan Ogiński in Lithuania while bear-hunting) and to discuss its possible origins (either "*ex semine viri cum ursa*"; or snatched by a she-bear when very young, the child "*ubera suxit* and *assumpsit* as a consequence *similitudinem animalis*"; 323), the digression in fact constitutes the set-up for an anecdote. Noting that "the scamp was capable neither of human speech nor human behavior, only animal," he goes on to recount how, given a sweetened pear peel by the queen, Marie-Louise (Ludwika Maria), the bear-child "with great eagerness put it in his mouth; but tasting it, spat it into his hand and hurled this slobbery peel right between the queen's eyes," all to the great merriment of the king and his company, and to the furious consternation of the queen (323–24).

The shift in Pasek's own projection of his role from central protagonist in the earlier incident with Mazepa to that of a simple observer would appear to signal that Pasek may not have actually witnessed the queen's humiliation, that he may only have heard about it at the court (as he did the opinions concerning the boy's origins) and decided subsequently to include it in his memoirs as a "personal" experience.[19] However this may be, the placement of the anecdote here, precisely within and at this point of the Mazepa cycle, is, as we shall see, motivated not so much by chronology as by composition and theme. Indeed, not only does the story of the bear-child serve to develop motifs introduced earlier, it in fact constitutes the necessary pendant to Pasek's figuration of Mazepa and his relationship to him. After all, it is during this dinner that, according to the memoirist, the king "made [Mazepa and Pasek] shake hands, apologize" (324).

As in the incident with Mazepa, the pleasure Pasek derives from the anecdote with the *juvenis ursinus* stems from the humiliation experienced by an outsider, in this case the French queen of Jan Kazimierz, and the "solidarity" of the reaction to it by the king and his courtiers. If throughout his memoirs Pasek generally exhibits affection and respect toward the king, like the great majority of his fellow petty gentrymen he expresses dislike for Marie-Louise and downright contempt for the French and for Polish Francophiles. Under the year 1664, for instance, he enthusiastically concurs with Jerzy Lubomirski's complaints about "the rancor and intrigues (*zawziętość i praktyki*) of Queen Ludowika, *natione* a French woman determined *inducere gallicismum* upon our freedoms by installing a French

wild boy. For a full account of this first recorded case of a Lithuanian bear-child (there were two more in the 1690s), see J. A. L. Singh and R. M. Zingg, *Wolf-Children and Feral Man* (1942; reprint, n.p., 1966), pp. 211–15. See also L. Malson, *Wolf Children* (London, 1972), pp. 39–40, 80.

[19] On the variety and significance of Pasek's roles in *Pamiętniki*, see Rytel, Pamiętniki *Paska*, pp. 82–112; and Trzynadlowski, "Sztuka pamiętnikarska Paska," p. 273.

dandy on the throne. . . , that. . . there are more Frenchmen in Warsaw than fanned Cerebrus's fires; they throw money around and carry on intrigues, and especially nocturnal (*praktyki czynią, a najbardziej nocne*), enjoying great freedom in Warsaw and great esteem;. . . a Frenchman is always free to enter at the court, while a Pole must stand up to half a day at the door" (353). In the episode with the feral child, therefore, Pasek's feeling of frustration in a changing society is again translated into a sense of malicious satisfaction at the humiliation of shifty ("*praktyki czynią, a najbardziej nocne*") foreigners whom he views as usurping—and, at a distance of thirty years, perhaps as already having usurped—the rightful privileges of the Polish *szlachta*. And whether out of guilt or self-delusion, it is a satisfaction he makes all the sweeter in his memoirs by claiming that it was shared not only by fellow gentrymen, but by the king himself.

However, if the (probably retrospective) interpolation of the anecdote about the queen and the feral child into Pasek's account of his relationship with Mazepa would appear to reinforce the theme of the outsider and his/her humiliation, it at the same time introduces a new element—ingratitude—to an equation that becomes evident only in the epilogue of the third and final story of the Mazepa cycle. The equation in fact functions as the pointe to the entire cycle.

Tellingly enough, Pasek recounts the best-known anecdote of the Mazepa triptych in one breath with the reconciliation scene at the king's dinner: "And so we made our peace, and afterward we sat down together and drank; but true to form (*po staremu*) Mazepa in the next year departed from Poland in shame for this reason. . ." (324). What follows is the famous story of Mazepa's ride strapped naked to a steed, a story that would enjoy its heyday in the Romantic period among such artists as Byron, Hugo, Słowacki, Delacroix, Vernet, Liszt, as well as a host of imitators.[20] Pasek's story, told with particular verve and undisguised glee, concerns Mazepa's amorous visits to the wife of one Falbowski, a neighbor of his in Volhy-

[20] The fullest, although woefully inadequate and often inaccurate, treatment of the Mazepa theme in European Romanticism is H. F. Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend in European Romanticism* (New York, 1974), which provides a useful list of the various Romantic reworkings of the legend (pp. 151–53). See also Z. Raszewski, "Mazepa," in *Prace o literaturze i teatrze ofiarowane Zygmuntowi Szweykowskiemu*, ed. J. Maciejewski et al. (Wrocław, 1966), pp. 435–41. For an earlier study, see A. Jensen, "Mazepa in der modernen europäischen Dichtung," *Ukrainische Rundschau*, 1909, no. 7, pp. 299–305. One of the more curious theatrical reworkings of the legend, but not mentioned in any of the studies devoted to the subject, is Charles White's *Mazeppa. An Equestrian Burlesque in Two Acts* (New York, n.d.). Based on Byron's "Mazeppa," it was written sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century for black actors and audiences as part of Brady's Ethiopian Drama series and reset in Long Island and Weehawken, N. J.

nia.[21] Having found out about the visits from his servants, Falbowski sets a trap for both Mazepa and the unfaithful wife. He intercepts an invitation from the latter to her lover and asks his servant to relay it to Mazepa with the request that he inform Mrs. Falbowska in writing of his intentions of visiting her. The servant then turns Mazepa's answer over to Falbowski who, upon stopping Mazepa on his way to the tryst, confronts him with it. Caught red-handed, Mazepa at first lies unconvincingly, "that 'it's but the first time I'm riding there, I've never stopped there before' " (325). But the servant's testimony forces a confession and, what in the eyes of Pasek's milieu would certainly be considered cowardly, a plea for his life. Falbowski decides to punish the Cossack by tying him naked to his own spirited steed and sending it crashing through thickets and brambles. When the horse finally arrives at Mazepa's homestead, its rider is so disfigured that he at first terrifies his servants who recognize him only after some pleading on his part. The husband's punishment of his unfaithful wife is no less cruel: tying a pair of spurs "somewhere around his knees," he knocks at his window where his wife is expecting Mazepa. She greets Falbowski as the expected guest, but Pasek tactfully omits what followed, noting only, "*Sufficit* that it was a conspicuous and celebrated punishment and reminder for immoral people" (327).

That Pasek's story was not completely a product of his imagination is evinced by the existence of at least three other more or less contemporaneous and more or less independent accounts—the anonymous *Pamiętniki do panowania Augusta II* (1696–1728); Marquis de Bonac's *Mémoires* (early eighteenth century); and Voltaire's *Histoire de Charles XII* (1731)[22] —of an

[21] Stanisław Falibowski, a resident of Volhynia, appears in Kasper Niesiecki's *Herbarz polski* (Leipzig, 1839–45), 4:12–13. Cf. I. Kamanin, "Mazepa i ego 'prekrasnaja Elena,' " *Kievskaja starina* 16 (1886): 524 (Falibowski/Xvalybozskyj); Bielowski, "Mazepa i jego listy," p. 154 (Falboski); and Raszewski, "Mazepa," p. 436, fn. 2.

[22] *Pamiętniki do panowania Augusta II napisane przez niewiadomego autora*, ed. E. Raczyński (Poznań, 1838), pp. 173–74; "Mémoire du Marquis de Bonac sur les affaires du nord, de 1700 à 1710," *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* 3 (1889): 101–2; Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII, roi de Suède*, in his *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 16 (Paris, 1878), p. 237. Voltaire may have received his information from de Bonac, although it is quite likely that he also may have heard about it from Hetman Pylyp Orlyk's son, Hryhor, who acted as an emissary for his father in France. See Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend*, p. 8. In any case, it was Voltaire's account that became the source for André Constant Dorville's 1764 novel, *Mémoires d'Azéma, contenant diverses anecdotes des règnes de Pierre le Grand, Empereur de Russie et de l'Impératrice Catherine son Épouse*, and subsequently of Byron's "Mazeppa" (1817–1818), which spawned in turn a string of reworkings in various media. See Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. J. J. McGann (Oxford, 1986), 4:493–94; and Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend*, pp. 5–46. By all accounts, the first work to have been inspired directly by Pasek's anecdote was the poem "Dumka Mazepy" (1824) by Bohdan Zaleski, who in a note to the poem says he saw a manuscript of the memoirs (the first full book edition of *Pamiętniki* appeared in 1836). See

analogous incident involving Mazepa. All of them contain the essential elements: a cuckolded husband extracts revenge on the Cossack by tying him (in some versions after covering him with tar) to a spirited steed and turning it loose; the rider at first terrifies those who finally rescue him. This convergence has led several scholars to investigate the ostensible historical basis of the anecdote,[23] with the result, at least, that the future hetman's reputation as a ladies' man cannot be relegated completely to the realm of fiction. Yet, the truth factor of Pasek's anecdote about Mazepa is, as in the case of his story of the queen's humiliation by the feral child, ultimately irrelevant. It would appear from the existence of the various, closely related accounts that by the time the gentryman from Gosławice was composing his memoirs the story of Mazepa's amorous misadventure must have had rather wide currency. Indeed, the manner in which Pasek recounts the episode—no pretense on the part of the narrator of personal involvement, the regular use of the *praesans praeteritum* (in contrast to the past tense of the preceding stories), the short, elliptical phrases, the rapid exchange of dialogue, the accumulation of concrete details as a means of developing tension—gives every indication that we are dealing with a stock anecdote, colored, characteristically for the genre, by the personal style of the storyteller. However, if, as presented in Pasek's memoirs, the story of Mazepa's ride constitutes a typical Old Polish *facetia*,[24] what sets the anecdote apart is Pasek's ability to imbue it with an almost allegorical function by cleverly integrating it into a cycle of stories that figure his own relationship with Mazepa.[25]

Józef Bohdan Zaleski, *Wybór poezyj*, 3rd ed., ed. C. Gajkowska, Biblioteka Narodowa, ser. 1, 30 (Wrocław, 1985), pp. 38–39n.; and Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend*, pp. 92–94.

[23] See, for instance, Kamanin, "Mazepa i ego Elena," passim, who on the basis of archival documents identifies the woman as Helena Zagorowska/Olena Zahorovs'ka, née Kowalewska/Kovalevs'ka, wife of Jan Zagorowski/Ivan Zahorovs'kyj, a prominent citizen of Volhynia (cf. Niesiecki, *Herbarz polski*, 10:24, 25), and dates the incident to 1663. Umanec, *Getman Mazepa*, pp. 20–25, believes that in about 1664 some sort of incident between Mazepa and Falbowski did indeed take place, but that for various reasons it became conflated with the Zahorovs'kyj affair, which he dates to 1669. Drawing on the anonymous *Pamiętniki do panowania Augusta II*, H. Krasiński, *The Cossacks of the Ukraine: Comprising Biographical Notices of the Most Celebrated Cossack Chiefs or Attamans. . . and a Description of the Ukraine. . .* (London, 1848), pp. 93–94, names the well-known seventeenth-century Polish artillerist Marcin Kątski ("Martin Kontsky") as the betrayed husband. Finally, Bielowski, "Mazepa i jego listy," pp. 154–56, claims that the whole incident had nothing to do with cuckoldry but with a personal-political grudge against Mazepa on the part of Jan Sobieski, and that "Faliboski" simply acted as an instrument of the latter's revenge.

[24] On the history, structure, and generic features of the Old Polish *facetia*, see Krzyżanowski and Żukowska-Billip, *Dawna facecja polska*, pp. 5–21; and T. Michałowska, "Facecja," *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 14, no. 2 (1972): 181–85.

[25] In one of the very few studies devoted to the literary aspects of Pasek's version of Mazepa's ride, X. Pelens'ka, "Pol's'ka lehenda pro Mazepu," *Vidnova* 3 (1985): 79–86, rejects any factual basis for the anecdote and, intriguingly enough, analyzes it as Pasek's own rework-

Like many authors of *facetia*, Pasek, too, appends a brief moralizing poem to the anecdote about Mazepa's ride. The first stanza (the second addresses Mrs. Falbowska) concerns the memoirist's nemesis:

> Adulterium i szalbierskie fochy
> Widzisz, Mazepa, jak to handel płochy:
> Szpetnie łgać i kraść, zostawszy szlachcicem!
> Niesmaczna to rzecz cudze wracać licem.
> Na szlachectwo cię król nobilitował,
> Na rycerstwo zaś Falbowski pasował (327).

[You, see, Mazepa what lousy business are adultery and deceitful pranks: Having become a gentryman, it's odious to lie and steal! It's distasteful to return what is not yours after being caught red-handed. The king raised you to the status of a gentryman, Falbowski, in turn, beknighted you.]

Though not on the level of his prose by any means, the poem performs the pivotal function of integrating, as it were, the impersonal Falbowski anecdote into Pasek's personal experience with Mazepa by drawing a none too subtle parallel between the Cossack's behavior vis-à-vis Falbowski ("*adulterium*") and his behavior vis-à-vis the memoirist himself ("*szalbierstwo*"). And, by stressing the incompatibility of such behavior with Mazepa's newly acquired social position, the poem explicity recapitulates the two central motifs of the first story in the Mazepa cycle: the dishonest nature of Mazepa's character (the operative word here is, of course, *szalbierstwo*) and his status as a parvenu ("*zostawszy szlachcicem*"; "*Na szlachectwo cię król nobilitował*"), someone Pasek deems unworthy of nobility.

However, the moralizing doggerel constitutes only the first of the two-part epilogue to the cycle. If the poem serves to link themetically the Falbowski anecdote with the Hrodna incident of 1661 and the aborted duel of 1662, a final pointe in prose links the Falbowski incident with the story of the feral child:

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ing of the Hippolytus myth (via Seneca's tragedy as well as the *vita* of St. Hippolytus). While to be sure, many *facetiae* (a context Pelens'ka does not consider) have their origins in classical mythology and its medieval variants, it is asking too much to maintain, as she does, that Pasek himself constructed the story on the basis of the myth as a form of literary revenge on Mazepa. Although the popularity of the Falbowski story may in fact have been due to its resonance with the Hippolytus myth, the existence of several independent versions appears to point to at least some factual basis for the anecdote, but in any case not to Pasek's authorship. Finally, Pelens'ka examines the anecdote independently of the cycle to which it undoubtedly belongs; and, its "originality," "authorship," or "truth factor" notwithstanding, it is precisely as an element within the Mazepa triptych that the story of his ride acquires full significance.

[25] See, for instance, "Facecje polskie" (ca. 1572) or Maurycjusz Trztyprztycki's, "Co nowego abo dwór mający w sobie osoby i mózgi rozmaite" (1650), in Krzyżanowski and Żukowska-Billip, *Dawna facecja polska*, pp. 78–127, 212–33.

So then, having mentioned these two eminent royal courtiers—the Cossack fled from Poland; on the other hand, how the bear turned out, whether they made of him a man or not, I don't know; what I do know is that he was handed over to the French for lessons and he began to learn speech well—I return here to the subject undertaken (327).

Once again Pasek resorts to a less than subtle, and certainly more insulting, parallelism that unambiguously ties the entire cycle of three stories together. By equating Mazepa with the feral child (and, by extension, with the French) via the third element of courtiership, the memoirist reiterates the theme of ingratitude for royal favors, behavior characteristic only of uncivilized creatures for whom there is no place in the "commonwealth of nobles." Indeed, the parallel suggests that, like the actions of the feral child, Mazepa's ungentlemanly behavior with regard to both Pasek and Falbowski is only to be expected of a parvenu, and—perhaps in compensation for Pasek's inability to satisfy his insult "honorably" by force of arms—that, like the reaction of the king and his courtiers to Marie-Louise's fury, one can only dismiss it with malicious laughter.

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